

Teacher Perspectives on Social-Emotional Learning in Schools

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Abstract: *Social-emotional learning (SEL) has become a central component of school improvement efforts worldwide. While meta-analyses consistently show that SEL can improve students' social-emotional skills and academic outcomes, implementation success depends heavily on teachers' beliefs, perceived role, contextual constraints, and the supports they receive. This article synthesizes evidence from teacher-focused empirical studies across diverse contexts (U.S., Aotearoa New Zealand, Iran, China) to examine how teachers understand SEL, what they value in SEL programming, and what they identify as key barriers and facilitators to implementation. The synthesis indicates that teachers generally endorse SEL as part of their professional responsibility and as foundational to academic learning, but they also emphasize the need for culturally/contextually relevant materials, integration into daily instruction, and sustained leadership and resource support. Common implementation barriers include time constraints, limited training, insufficient materials, and variable family engagement. Facilitators include shared leadership structures, school champions, high-quality and low-complexity program design, and real-time coaching/technical support. Implications are offered for school leaders and policymakers to strengthen teacher buy-in and implementation quality through systemic supports, culturally responsive frameworks, and teacher capacity-building.*

Keywords: social-emotional learning, teacher perceptions, implementation, school culture, cultural responsiveness, professional development, shared leadership

