Social Emotional Skills and their impact on Kindergarten Students

by

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Education.

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Capstone Project

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Introduction

Social skills are an integral part of early childhood education. Many of my students were coming into kindergarten with gaps in their social skills. They struggle to problem solve, communicate effectively, and build and maintain peer relationships. This led to more behavior problems within the classroom, and less learning overall. The solution to this problem became quite obvious that our kindergarten program needed to teach more social skills to help children.

Through research into social skills acquisition I was able to design a social skills curriculum to address the needs of kindergarten students. This curriculum will help students meet their academic and social potential at school. My research question that correlates with my project is \textit{How does teaching explicit social skills in the area of body awareness and communication impact prosocial behaviors in a kindergarten classroom?}

Project Description

This framework has two main components. The first is to focus on teaching and assessing understanding and to learn to transfer information. Secondly UbD focuses on an efficient way to plan and meet specific needs of students by planning backwards.

Wiggins and McTighe (2011) emphasize the importance of focusing on skill transfer and the ability of students to autonomously transfer and make sense of what they are learning. The goal of UbD is for students to be able to learn a skill and transfer it between settings and situations seamlessly. In order to accomplish that, teachers must be coaches who focus on ensuring that learning is happening. Teachers do this by regularly reviewing curriculum and providing engaging lessons and redesigning and adjusting curriculum to meet the needs of students.
The first step in the design process is to identify the desired outcome(s). For this project, the desired outcome is student’s ability to learn and practice social skills in the areas of communication and body awareness. The second step is designing and giving an assessment to measure children’s social skills. The third part of UbD will be designing lessons to meet the specific needs of the students. This process is cyclical and will continue to evolve as children’s learn and needs change.

As part of the curriculum I included a pre-assessment skills checklist that teachers will assess quarterly with the students in their class. This will provide a formative assessment so teachers are able to spiral back or refocus on important skills that students are lacking.

**Participants and Settings**

This curriculum project takes place in a rural school district in a northern midwest state. The school district is a Title 1 district, with over 35% of students receiving free or reduced lunch. This past year, 57.5% of students who took the state required achievement test, MCA Math met or exceeded expectations and 62.1% of students met or exceeded expectations in reading. The curriculum is designed for students in kindergarten and the average kindergarten class size is 20-24 students. There are three kindergarten classes that will be using the curriculum. The classes are a homogenous mix of genders. The classes are primarily made up of white students, with a handful of minority students within each classroom. The school is made up of students from lower socioeconomic class as well as middle class, the schools district is spread out over a large area, some students bus up to an hour each way, and some students walk to school.

The school has a twelve to one ratio of staff to students and the teacher staff is about eighteen to one. The teaching staff has varying opinions about teaching SEL as well as vast
teaching styles and differences among teachers. Due to the vast differences in experiences and teaching styles, behaviors are not always a primary focus for staff.

Currently social emotional learning is supported through the school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). There is a schoolwide focus on positive behaviors and providing supports for students who are not able to successfully follow those schoolwide rules. The school is in year five of PBIS, there has been a group of eight teachers who have been on the core implementation team. In order to move forward with PBIS, schools need 80% of their staff to buy in. In the beginning of implementation, there was a buy in of 80% as we have had retiring staff. The buy in has increased from recent hires and younger staff. Each year our school does a yearly staff development in PBiS and teachers also have a curriculum based on our school rules that the implementation team created.

I provided K-1 staff with professional development including the curriculum, a powerpoint presentation, and access to books referenced in the curriculum. Staff will also have access to other optional resources needed to fully implement the curriculum.

Summary

My project consists of multiple lessons to be used as whole group lessons within a kindergarten classroom. My lessons are based on UbD principles and can be used in any order to fit your needs. The quarterly pre and post assessment can be used to quantify children’s application of social skills within the classroom. These lessons were designed to be fluid and provide teachers with the ability to pick and choose lessons based on the needs of their students.
Kindergarten Social Skills Curriculum

Made By
Sarah Hutchins-Haavisto
Fall 2018

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Unit 1: Lesson 1 Recognizing Facial Expressions

Facial Expressions help us access the world around us. Understanding facial expressions is one of the first steps in understanding empathy.

Introduction: Read Today I feel Silly by Jamie Lee Curtis. Or Glad monster Sad monster by Ed Emberley and Anne Miranda. Use the books to introduce feelings and what our faces show depending on our feelings.

Partner-turn-and-talk: How do you think your partner is feeling right now?
*Use emotion flash cards to identify how people are feeling.

Common Faces: What they look like

Angry Squinty eyes, pinched face, red face
Scared Eyes wide open, body shaking
Happy Smile, cheeks high
Excited Big smile, eyes wrinkled
Sleepy Eyes partly closed, slack mouth
Surprised Smile, or open mouth, Big eyes

Unit 1: Lesson 2 Recognizing Our Own Emotions

Recognizing emotions helps us know when we need to change how we are feeling.
*Show feelings flash cards, identify the emotion they show.

We all have feelings, but why are they important? Do your feelings make the difference between a good day, or a bad day? Lets check in, how are you feeling right now. How do you know?
*Look in the mirror, what does your face show? Can it tell us how you are feeling?

Introduce: The way I feel clip chart. Have students check in.

Emotions can change, you can change your clip as your emotions change. It let’s me know if I need to help you when your feelings get too big.
### Unit 1: Lesson 3 Our Feelings Can Change

How can we change the way we are feeling or the way that someone else is feeling? Understanding how someone else is feeling is called empathy. Sometimes people say “take a walk in someone else’s shoes.” That doesn’t mean their actual shoes, it means figure out how someone else is feeling.

**Partner-turn-and-talk**: Think about a time you yelled at someone, how did you feel? How do you think they felt?

Introduce scenarios for in turn-and-talk:
- Jimmy’s friends say he can’t play with them on the playground. -how is he feeling?
- Joan cleaned her room at home. -how is she feeling?
- Todd wasn’t invited to Seth’s birthday party, but the other kids in class were. -how is he feeling?
- What can you say to someone who is frustrated?

Have students share out about one of the scenarios.

This week I want you to help one friend by understanding how they are feeling.

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### Unit 1: Lesson 2 Practicing Empathy

We learned about empathy, and understanding how someone else feels. We are going to practice using empathy today.

Read The Invisible Boy by Trudy Ludwig

Pause throughout the story to talk about how Brian and Justin are feeling.

Also discuss what his peers could have done differently to include Brian, and make Justin feel more welcome.

How does Brian feel at the end?

Your challenge this week is to try and notice how one other person is feeling every day.
Unit 2: Lesson 5 Being a Good Friend

Part of being at school is learning how to be a good friend.

What does it mean to be a friend?

Read the book I will Surprise my Friend by Mo Willems, or another book about friendship. After reading the story have the students help you make a can, have, are chart to define a friend. Use this chart throughout this unit and add to it, or come back to it as needed.

Partner-Turn-and-Talk: How are you a good friend.

This week I want to challenge you to try to be a good friend to someone different this week. (If needed brainstorm ideas of what that would look like)

Unit 2: Lesson 6 Sharing

How to share with friends
Read Should I share my Ice Cream? By Mo Willems, or another book about sharing.

Turn-and-talk: Who chose what you and your friends did at recess? Who will choose next time?

Class activity: share ice cream
- needed materials: paper for each student, tape, ball pit balls or similar (to fit in the cone)
- make cones using paper and tape to make a cone that will fit a ball pit sized ball or similar.
- give each child a cone, and a ball for every other student.
- have students share their ice cream with a friend, just like Gerald and Piggy.

Conclusion: How did you feel sharing ice cream with your friends?
Optional extension: draw a picture of you sharing with a friend. Label your picture, or write a sentence about sharing.
Unit 2: Lesson 7 Playing with Others

How to play with a friend/invite someone to play/ask to join a group
Have you ever played with a friend that wouldn’t let you take your turn, or decide what to do? Did you like to play with that friend? (thumbs up, thumbs down)

Read the Recess Queen by Alexis O’Neill
- How do the kids feel about Mean Jean? Does anyone want to play with her? What does Katie Sue do? How does that make Mean Jean feel?

Do you think Jean could have asked to join a group that was playing? How would you ask to join a group?
Make an anchor chart of the steps to ask a friend to join you or to join a group.
- ask a friend to join you. l. “hi name”
- 2. “We are playing _____, would you like to play too?”
- 3. If yes “great!” if no “maybe next time, have fun!”

join a group: l. Ask “can I play too?”
- 2. If they say yes “ok thanks” and start playing
- if they say no “no problem, maybe next time” and go find another group to play with.

Unit 2: Lesson 8 How to decide what to do

Sometimes when we play with friends we can’t decide what to do. We have to work together to decide what to do. How to talk with a friend/decide what to do together?

Brainstorm a list of ideas of how you and your friends decide what to do? How do you decide who goes first?
Unit 3: Lesson 9  Self-Management

Sometimes it’s hard to worry about yourself instead of your friends. Let’s find out how to manage ourselves. Self-management means taking care of you, worrying about yourself.

Read What about Moose by Corey Rosen Schwartz.

Partner-turn-and-talk: Is Moose thinking about his friends or himself? How do you know?

What could Moose have done instead? Lead children in a discussion of doing your part and taking care of yourself. When is it ok to boss someone else?

Unit 3: Lesson 10 Growth Mindset

Our brains are a muscle, can your muscles grow? We have to help our brain grow. Today we are going to learn about a Giraffe who helped his brain grow. Read Giraffes can’t dance by Giles Andreae.

Make a Things we can’t do yet chart.

We learned what Gerald couldn’t do yet, and with practice his brain was able to grow. Let’s think about some things that you can’t do yet. Record the kids ideas of things they can’t do yet, and their name. Encourage students to use the language “I can’t do that yet” when talking about what they can’t do.

*Continue to inforce yet in your daily life
Unit 3: Lesson 11 Calm your body

When our body is too silly or too angry we need to calm it down.

Sometimes our bodies get to wiggly, angry, or sad and need something to feel better. Introduce a calming routine that we can use when our body is feeling not right. Practice the routine multiple times. Also have children check in their emotions on the check-in.

Turn-and-talk: how did your body feel before we used our strategies? How does it feel now?

* I suggest having a calming space available for all kids with our calming strategies posted*

Unit 3: Lesson 12 What to do with Worries

When we are worried it’s hard to learn. Let’s read about a friend who was worried.

-readable Wemberly Worried by Kevin Henkes

Make an anchor chart of things that Wemberly worried, and things we worry about

-turn-and-talk: can you think about your worries on the first day of school? Do you still have those worries?
Sometimes we have problems that make it hard to learn. Let’s learn about what to do with our problems. Materials-size of the problem thermometer, sticky notes with problems, more sticky notes for future problems
Introduce problems as little deals and big deals. Ask kids the following:
-stubbing your toe is a big deal or a little deal. Have a child sticky note where they think it goes on the thermometer.
-a volcano is erupting
-you forgot your lunch at home
-someone else is using your favorite chair
-add in common problems from your class

while placing each of these on the thermometer discuss why kids think they are big or little deals. Keep the thermometer up and have kids check their problems in on the thermometer as they arise.

Sometimes it’s hard to follow the rules. Read I’m in Charge of Me by David Parker, talk about how you can’t control everything, but you can control how you react to situations. This can be for big or little situations.
practice how you could control your body when... follow these steps.
1. Stop
2. Think
3. Make a good choice

What would you do? Partner-Turn-and-Talk:
-your tablemate keeps talking and the teacher just asked your table to quiet down
-you spilled your pencil box on the floor
Unit 3: Lesson 15 Tattling

We’ve been learning about taking care of ourselves. One of the ways we can take care of ourselves is to not tattle. Let’s learn some more about tattling today.

Read one of the following books:
A Bad Case of Tattle Tongue by Julia Cook
Don’t Squeal Unless it’s a Big Deal—Jeanie Franz Ransom

Have students help come up with rules about what is tattling and what is telling.
Examples: is someone in danger? Is someone hurt? Did I try to solve the problem? Am I minding my own business?

Unit 3: Lesson 16 Bugging someone

Sometimes our friends bug us. That doesn’t mean they aren’t our friend. It just means we need to solve our problem.

Sticking up for yourself when someone or something is bothering you is important! Let’s think of some ways I can tell someone to stop.

Make class anchor chart of “When something is bugging me I can say ____”
-Please stop doing that.
-I feel mad when you ___.
-I don’t like when ____.
-Stop, that makes me angry.
-I’m upset because ____.

Or if I’m upset I can:
-walk away
-take deep breaths
-talk to someone else
-write about it
-talk to someone when I am calm
Unit 4: Lesson 17 Being Kind

Being kind means being a good friend.

Read What Does it Mean to be Kind by Rana DiOrio

What does it mean to be kind
Whole group- What was something kind you saw someone else doing lately? Separate answers into categories on the board, small things & big things.

Unit 4: Lesson 18 Random Acts of Kindness

We know that being kind makes us a good friend. Today we are going to learn how to share kindness.

Random acts of kindness, share happiness
Whole group discussion.
-Jimmy dropped his pencil box, and Sadie helped him pick it up.
-Jimmy held the door for an adult.
-the adult helped carry someone’s groceries to the car

how does each person feel after someone helped them?
Turn-and-talk: have you ever had someone do an act of kindness for you? How did you feel?
brainstorm a list of things/ways you can keep kindness going.
-ideas: thank you notes, pictures for others, compliments, help clean up, set table for dinner, etc.
Unit 4: Lesson 19  Compliments

We can be kind by giving a compliment. Let’s learn about compliments. Compliments help people feel good about themselves and the work that they do. I’m going to give a compliment to a friend. Listen and think about how what I said looked and sounded.

(give a specific compliment to a student, make sure you make eye contact, smile “Lance thank you for pushing in your chair on your way to the carpet, that will help everyone get back to their spots safely.”)

ask students what they noticed (said Lance’s name, had a friendly facial expression, made eye contact)

Brainstorm a list of compliment starters:
- I think you
- I like how you
- I like the way you
- you are good at
- you were a good friend when you
- you worked really hard at
- thank you for

Tell students they will have an opportunity to practice compliments over the next few days.

Unit 5: Lesson 20

Sometimes we have problems with friends. We are going to read a story about two characters who have a problem. How to solve a problem

Read There’s a Bear on My Chair by Ross Collins

make a list of ideas that mouse had to get bear out of his chair

brainstorm ideas of what the mouse could have done instead

Were mouse and bear happy?

Turn-and Talk: Think of a time you were unhappy with a friend, what did you do?
Unit 5: Lesson 21 I statements

Sometimes when we have a problem our friends don’t know. We can let them know by using an I statement. We use I statements to help friends understand. We’ll practice after we read a story.

Read You will be your friend by Peter Brown (or another book with conflict) pretend you are a character talking to Lucille.

“I feel ___ because____.” Or “I feel ___ when ____”

Partner-turn-and-talk: have students pretend to be character talking to Lucille and make an I statement.

Whole group: why would it help to use I statements?

Unit 5: Lesson 22 Apologizing

When we upset someone we need to apologize if we know we did something wrong. Today we will learn how to give an apology.

How to give an apology

Read Goldilocks and the Three Bears.

Model Goldilocks giving an apology. “Bears I am sorry for coming into your house uninvited and using your things. This was wrong because they are your things. In the future I will not use your things without getting permission. Will you accept my apology?”

then model the bears accepting the apology. “Thank you, I accept your apology.”

Turn-and-talk: if you were Goldilocks how would you apologize? (Partner is the Bears) take turns apologizing like Goldilocks.
Unit 5: Lesson 23  Peace Keeping

Sometimes our problems are too big and an apology isn’t enough. Today we are going to learn how to solve our conflicts with our friends. That’s called peace keeping.

Read the book Talk and Work it Out by Cheri J. Meiners

Make a class plan for how to deal with conflict on an anchor chart that can be hung in a conflict resolution zone.

steps to peacekeeping:
1. Stay calm (how can we calm our body?)
2. Tell how you feel and why. (I feel___ because___)
3. Think of possible solutions together
4. Agree on a compromise

Do a mock peacekeeping with Goldilocks and the Bears. Encourage students to solve their problems with the new plan.

Unit 5: Lesson 24  My Problems are too big for me

Sometimes our problems are too big to fix by ourselves. Let’s decide what those problems might be and who can help us.

When is a problem too big to solve by yourself?
Brainstorm ideas of when a problem is too big for a kid to handle & who can help.
- emergencies
- if someone is hurt
- if I tried to solve it with a friend and it didn’t work
- if the problem keeps happening (bullying)
### Unit 6: Lesson 25 Bullying

Sometimes people bug us over and over. That’s called bullying. We read a story earlier this year that had a bully. We are going to read the Recess Queen over and see if you can figure out who the bully is, what they are doing, and what you could do if someone was bullying you.

- read the recess queen. Work with your kids to define bullying.
- come up with a plan for when someone is bullying, how to be an upstander.
- say stop, walk away, tell an adult.

### Unit 6: Lesson 26 actions hurt others

Sometimes we accidently or on purpose do something that hurts someone. Today we’re going to do an activity that helps us understand what happens when we are unkind.

**For this lesson you will need a paper heart for each student.**

Read Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes

Give each child a heart. As you read every time a character says something mean to Chrysanthemum child wrinkles the heart. Every time someone says something kind (her parents) try to smooth out the heart.

See if the children can draw the conclusion that even when we say kind things that we can’t undo things that have already happened. Such as saying unkind words, and sorry still doesn’t erase what we did.
Unit I: Lesson 1

Lesson here:

Unit I: Lesson 2

Lesson here:
Angry
Proud
Grumpy
Scared
Sad
Tired
Happy
Lesson 2
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Lesson 1 &amp; 2</th>
<th>Lesson 1 &amp; 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Angry Face" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Happy Face" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Sad Face with Steam" /></td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Sad Face with Frown" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Annoyed Face with Ties" /></td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Sad Face with Headache" /></td>
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<td><img src="image7" alt="Crying Face" /></td>
<td><img src="image8" alt="Sad Face with Black Nose" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image9" alt="Sad Face with Pigtails" /></td>
<td><img src="image10" alt="Sad Face with Tears" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image11" alt="Happy Face with Smiles" /></td>
<td><img src="image12" alt="Happy Face" /></td>
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</tbody>
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Angry
grumpy
sad
happy
hurt
confused

proud
scared
tired
shy
embarrassed
disgusted
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<tr>
<th>Can</th>
<th>Have</th>
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</table>
Draw and write about a time you shared with a friend.
I can share

with a friend.
I can ask someone to join me

1. Hi!
2. We are playing _____, would you like to play too?
3. If yes “Great!” if no “maybe next time, have fun!”

I can join a group

1. Hi, Can I play too?
2. If they say yes “ok thanks” and join in. If they say no “no problem, maybe next time.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do you decide what to do?</th>
<th>Who goes first?</th>
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</table>
Things we can’t do yet...
When my body feels uncomfortable I can calm it down.

- Breathe
- Count 1,2,3,4,5...
- Push the wall
- Squeeze
- Think Happy Thoughts
- Read a Book

Lesson 11
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things Wemberly worries about</th>
<th>Things we worry about</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Lesson 12
What's the size of your problem?

No big deal

Huge
I can control my own body

1. Stop
2. Think
3. Make a good choice
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tattling</th>
<th>Telling</th>
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</thead>
</table>

Am I tattling or telling?
Something is Bugging Me
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<tr>
<th>Small things</th>
<th>Big things</th>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kind</td>
<td>Unkind</td>
</tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

Am I being kind?
Pictures for kind/unkind sort
Give a Compliment

I think you...

You are really good at...

I like how you...

You were a good friend when...

I like the way you...

You worked really hard at...
How did Mouse solve his problem?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What did Mouse do?</th>
<th>What could Mouse have done?</th>
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</table>
We are Peace Makers

1. Stay Calm
2. Tell how you feel and why.
   (I feel ____ because____)
3. Think of Possible Solutions Together
4. Agree on a compromise
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When is a problem too big for me?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are problems that are too big?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Say NO to Bullies

Say Stop!

Walk Away

Tell an Adult