



Move This World Literature Review

Move This World's vision is that all schools are nurturing environments **where healthy self-expression** is valued. Through our multi-step **professional development program**, teachers and school leaders explore self-efficacy in themselves, learn tools to build their school community and incorporate these tools into daily curriculum. Students PreK – 12 engage in **creative arts-based activities** that promote **self awareness, self-esteem and self-efficacy**. MTW works with school communities to raise awareness of **the importance of Social and Emotional Learning in fostering positive school climate** and the role of creative expression in reaching SEL and academic objectives.

A note regarding MTW's approach to M&E and program development:

The Move This World Curriculum has been developed in alignment with the best practices identified in a seminal meta-analysis of SEL programs (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger, 2011). From its inception, Move This World has sought to collect data through which to demonstrate the impact of its programs and make necessary adjustments to ensure program quality. In this way, Move This World has been utilizing design research in order to "support the productive adaptation of programs as they go to scale" (Penuel, et al, 2011). This iterative approach has allowed Move This World to adjust its programs in collaboration with its partners and to learn from experiences in order to strengthen program design.

MTW Key Concepts & Objectives in the Literature

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) / Mindfulness

- SEL leads to Increased Empathy
 - Most educators, parents, students, and the public support an educational agenda that includes social-emotional competence, character, health, and civic engagement (Greenberg, Weissberg, O'Brien, et al, 2003)
 - Empathy (both affective and cognitive) reduces aggressive behavior in human relationships (Pagani, 2001).
 - Increases in empathy significantly predict less aggressive behavior (McMahon and Washburn, 2003).
 - The experience of aggression and violence varies across social and cultural groups, and ethnic minority youth (African American youth in low-income urban environments in

the U.S. in particular) are at particular risk for aggression and violence (McMahon and Washburn, 2003).

- Lack of empathy in people creates the conditions for cruelty and indeed violence (Goleman, 1995).
 - Literature and data (Sams & Truscott, 2004) both suggest that low empathy coupled with high levels of exposure to community violence is a significant predictor of use of violence among adolescents. Thus, empathy can function as an inhibitor to violence and antisocial behavior.
- When children fail to develop empathy they are prone toward antisocial and self-destructive behaviors (Karr-Morse & Wiley, 1997).
- Empathic people are not only more sensitive to the distress of others, they also are more caring in general. That is, they seem more “in tune” with what is happening in the lives of others, more likely to participate in meeting community needs, and more likely to advocate for justice and caring (Noddings, 1992).
- The development of empathic abilities also leads to changes in attitudes toward diversity, including a deeper awareness of one’s own culture, a greater interest in one’s own cultural identity and other cultures, a more critical and rational understanding of cultures, and a greater understanding of and empathy toward people who are different (Pagani, 2001).
- The Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has identified five core SEL competencies (Payton et al., 2000; Zins et al., 2007). :
 - self-awareness
 - self-management
 - social awareness
 - responsible decision-making, and
 - relationship/social skills
- SEL programs yield powerful results
 - Mindfulness education programs have shown significant increases in student optimism, social competent behaviors, and self-concept. (Schonert-Reichel and Lawlor, 2010)
 - SEL has been shown to be critical to children’s success in school, both academically and socially (Greenberg et al., 2003; Payton et al., 2007).
 - SEL programs “provide systematic classroom instruction that enhances children’s capacities to recognize and manage their emotions, appreciate the perspectives of others, establish pro-social goals and solve problems, and use a variety of interpersonal skills to effectively and ethically handle developmentally relevant tasks” (p. 2, Payton et al., 2000).
 - Effective SEL programs positively impacts student learning, growth, relationships, risk for arrest, and even violence in the community outside of the school (Elias et al., 1997).

- A meta-analysis of 526 SEL interventions revealed that attempts to change social systems effecting youth can be successful in a statistically significant manner (Durlak and Weissberg, 2007).
 - Many interventions have been able to improve children’s social and emotional competencies, increase their prosocial behaviors, and, in some cases, reduce levels of negative behaviors at home, in school, or in the local community (Durlak and Weissberg, 2007).
 - Systemic interventions focus on linkages between school, family and/or community. These efforts to effect systemic change, while still rare, have shown success comparable to efforts to effect individual change (Durlak and Weissberg,2007).
- In a meta-analysis of 213 school-based universal SEL programs, Durlak et al. (2011) found that the SEL programs generally had the intended effects on students and schools. In fact, they yielded multiple benefits in every review/analysis conducted to date (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger, 2011). The reviews indicate that SEL programs:
 - Are effective in both school and after-school settings and for students with and without behavioral and emotional problems.
 - Are effective for racially and ethnically diverse students from urban, rural, and suburban settings across the K-12 grade range.
 - Improve students’ social-emotional skills, attitudes about self and others, connection to school, and positive social behavior; and reduce conduct problems and emotional distress.
 - Improve students’ achievement test scores by 11 percentile points.
- Effective programs and approaches are typically S.A.F.E. – **sequenced, active, focused, and explicit** (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger, 2011):
 - S: use a Sequenced set of activities to achieve skill objectives
 - A: use Active forms of learning
 - F: include at least one program component Focused on developing personal or social skills
 - E: Explicitly target particular personal or social skills for development
- The magnitude and scope of these benefits suggests that SEL programs are among the most successful youth-development programs offered to school-age youth (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger, 2011).

SEL and Professional Development

- Teachers are a critical piece of the SEL “puzzle” – empathy training for students required an empathic attitude in teachers themselves (Pagani, 2001).



- Empathy Training at the classroom level can raise the larger community's consciousness of the role and importance of empathy in social transactions. (Feshbach & Feshbach, 1982)
- It is critically important for SEL programs to address changes in classroom organization and routine and to train teachers in proactive methods of classroom management (Gettinger, 1988).
- School-based programs are most effectively conducted by school staff (e.g., teachers, student support staff) indicating that they can be incorporated into routine educational practice (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger, 2011).
- Some research has demonstrated that SEL programs increase organizational and professional commitment from teachers (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2011).
- Several SEL programs have demonstrated success by employing professional development (PD) for program implementation, including:
 - CARE (Jennings et al., 2011; Jennings et al., 2013);
- Responsive Classroom (Baroody, Rimm-Kaufman, Larsen, Curby, 2014; Abry, Rimm-Kaufman, Larsen, Brewer, 2013);
 - RULER (Rivers et al., 2013; Hagelskamp et al., 2013; Reyes et al., 2012);
 - Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility (Brown et al., 2010).
 - Leading Together, a program of the Center for Courage and Renewal

Recommended reading: Mindfulness for Teachers: Simple Skills for Peace and Productivity in the Classroom, by Patricia Jennings

SEL and School Climate

- Social-ecological Theory is an all-encompassing theory of human behavior that addresses the reciprocal interplay between individual, peer group, family, school, community, and culture. This theory provides a model for holistic, systems-based SEL programs. (Espelage and Swearer, 2008).
- An effective SEL program creates a school environment that reinforces, supports, and extends social and emotional learning to the students' lives outside of the classroom (Elias et al., 1997).
- Programs focusing on developing social and emotional competencies for empathetic behaviour could yield community-level decreases in violence (Sams & Truscott, 2004).

Creative Self-Expression

- Creative Expression is a form of Individual and Cultural Knowledge and Expression
 - Dance and movement are culturally situated. (Sklar, 2000)
- Movement is an embodiment of cultural knowledge, conveying ideas about nature, society, religion, order, and meaning that is emotionally charged. (Sklar, 2001)



- Creative Expression is a mechanism for promoting Social and Emotional Learning skills
 - Rhythm engages kinetic sensibilities. (Sklar, 2000)
 - “Empathic kinesthetic perception” refers to the idea that bodily experiences provide a type of knowledge that cannot be conveyed through words alone (Sklar, 2001).
 - Empathy is a cognitive, affective, and kinesthetic construct. The kinesthetic dimension of empathy allows us to feel the physical state of another person with our own body, which is a crucial component in the perception and expression of emotions. (Behrends, Muller, and Dziobek, 2012)
 - Recent research has focused on the concept of Mirror Neurons, observing that the same neurons fire for an observer as for the “actor” of an emotion or a behavior. This concept helps explain the kinesthetic, social, and emotional aspects of cognition and understanding. Mirror neurons can be activated by observing motor actions or facial expressions. (Berrol, 2006)
 - Movement carries meaning through an immediately felt, somatic mode. Movement is a doubled action of moving and feeling oneself move at the same time that creates an awareness of experiencing what is being expressed. (Sklar, 2000)
- Movement can be used to promote empathy, especially through imitation and synchronous movement. Imitation is a genuine human tendency that aids in communication and social bonding, while the experience of whole-body synchrony promotes cooperation. (Behrends, Muller, and Dziobek, 2012)
 - “Embodied cooperation” refers to coordinated, goal-directed action of individuals, co-present in motion. (Behrends, Muller, and Dziobek, 2012)
 - “Interactive movement elements are a rather advanced form of interpersonal engagement and require at least a minimal capacity for reciprocity in the intersubjective relationship” (Behrends, Muller, and Dziobek, 2012, p. 114)
 - “By promoting kinesthetic empathy skills as practiced in imitation, synchronous movement, and motoric cooperation, we assume that also emotional aspects of empathy that are grounded in bodily perception and expression, and also some cognitive aspects of interactivity such as perspective-taking can be influenced in a positive way.” (Behrends, Muller, and Dziobek, 2012)
- After participating in a Drama for Conflict Transformation program, 100% of program participants in Tajikistan reported having increased trust and friendships with people of other ethnicities, religions, and nationalities (IREX Youth Theatre for Peace Program Evaluation by Vadim Nigmatov, 2011).

Recommend reading: Healthy Brain, Happy Life: A Personal Program to Activate Your Brain and Do Everything Better, by Wendy Suzuki – discusses the relationship between exercise (movement), mindfulness, action, and happiness.

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