

Teachers Prepare to Infuse Social-Emotional Learning in English as a Foreign Language Classes in Uruguay

Docentes se preparan para integrar el aprendizaje socioemocional en clases de inglés como lengua extranjera en Uruguay

Mayra C. Daniel¹

Ximena D. Burgin

Northern Illinois University, De Kalb, IL, USA

¹ mayra.daniel@gmail.com

Abstract

This qualitative case study examined teachers' views on integrating Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and its role in supporting Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP). A total of 32 K-5th grade English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Uruguayan teachers completed a three-week online asynchronous professional development. Participants' training focused on SEL principles, practices, and strategies for the English as a foreign language classroom. During the training, a three-scale rubric (0 - 3 points) served to formatively assess and provide feedback to the participants on completing weekly tasks. The evaluation examined the content of the teachers' reflection and applications to practice. Feedback focused on how well teachers grasped the theoretical content and its integration. Once the training was completed, participants answered four open-ended questions in an online repository questionnaire. Findings document that after the intervention, the teachers perceived that students benefitted from learning about SEL and its implementation, and they came to believe that SEL principles need to become an integral part of instructional planning in Uruguay's EFL classrooms.

Keywords: Social Emotional Learning (SEL), English as a Foreign Language, Uruguay, Teacher Professional Development, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Resumen

Este estudio cualitativo examinó la comprensión del Aprendizaje Socio Emocional (ASE) adquirida por 32 docentes de inglés como idioma extranjero de K-5° grado después de un desarrollo profesional asincrónico en línea de tres semanas. El entrenamiento se enfocó en los principios, prácticas y estrategias del ASE y su incorporación en clases de inglés. Durante la formación, se utilizó una rúbrica de tres escalas (0-3 puntos) para evaluar formativamente y proporcionar retroalimentación a los participantes sobre la realización de las tareas semanales. La evaluación examinó el contenido de las reflexiones de los docentes y la aplicación de los conceptos a la práctica. La retroalimentación se centró en qué tan bien los docentes comprendieron el contenido teórico y su integración. Una vez finalizada la capacitación, los participantes respondieron a cuatro preguntas abiertas a través de un cuestionario. Los hallazgos documentan que, después de la intervención, los docentes percibieron que los estudiantes se benefician al aprender sobre ASE y su implementación, y llegaron a creer que los principios de SEL deben convertirse en una parte integral de la planificación instruccional en las aulas de de inglés como lengua extranjera en Uruguay.

Palabras Claves: Aprendizaje Socio Emocional, Inglés como Idioma Extranjero, Uruguay, Desarrollo Profesional para Docentes, Pedagogía Relevante

Resumo

Este estudo qualitativo examinou a compreensão da Aprendizagem Socioemocional (ASE) adquirida por 32 professores de inglês como língua estrangeira do ensino fundamental (K-5º ano) após um desenvolvimento profissional assíncrono online de três semanas. O treinamento focou nos princípios, práticas e estratégias da ASE e sua incorporação nas aulas de inglês. Durante a formação, utilizou-se uma rubrica de três escalas (0-3 pontos) para avaliar formativamente e fornecer feedback aos participantes sobre a realização das tarefas semanais. A avaliação analisou o conteúdo das reflexões dos professores e a aplicação dos conceitos à prática. O feedback concentrou-se no nível de compreensão dos professores sobre o conteúdo teórico e sua integração. Ao final da capacitação, os participantes responderam a quatro perguntas abertas por meio de um questionário. Os resultados documentam que, após a intervenção, os professores perceberam que os alunos se beneficiam ao aprender sobre ASE e sua implementação, e passaram a acreditar que os princípios da ASE devem se tornar uma parte essencial do planejamento instrucional nas salas de aula de inglês como língua estrangeira no Uruguai.

Palavras-chave: Aprendizagem Socioemocional, Inglês como Língua Estrangeira, Uruguai, Desenvolvimento Profissional de Professores, Pedagogia Relevante

Increases in worldwide migration have resulted in school populations that are more diverse in language and culture than ever before (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2024). Migration of families forced into exile due to political events has created émigrés who have no choice but to leave their homeland with little more than a suitcase, to confront numerous economic and personal hurdles. In 2020, North America welcomed 59 million immigrants, composing 21% of the world's migration. Europe and Asia opened their doors to 61% of the world's immigrants, reflecting figures of 87 and 86 million respectively (IOM, 2021). Attending to the emotional needs of diverse learners must become a priority of schooling (Bennett, 2019; Greene, 2018) because unexpected influxes of plurilingual and pluricultural learners require educators to modify the school curriculum to address all learners' academic and socio-cultural needs. Culturally responsive educators can address the educational challenges of immigrant learners by investigating students' funds of knowledge (Moll, 2019). Inquiry into learners schooled and non-schooled knowledge ensures the curriculum considers students' socioemotional competencies (SECs) and reflects their languages and cultures.

Uruguay's Emerging Plurilingualism

This research focuses on the growing plurilingualism and pluriculturalism of Uruguay, the second smallest South American nation, nestled between Argentina, Brazil, and the Atlantic Ocean. Uruguay's demographic reflects what is occurring across the world's continents. In the recent past, the population of Uruguay was largely homogeneous but recently the number of immigrants from the Latin American region (Argentina, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Venezuela), and from Syria has led to a notable increase of culturally and linguistically diverse students in the nation's (Caumont, 2020). Many immigrants speak Spanish, a Romance language, and may be literate in it. Immigrants to Uruguay from Syria face different hurdles because Arabic, their first language, has a distinct alphabet system. This inquiry applies to other countries, as valuable insights can be gained by examining the steps Uruguay has taken to address the needs of culturally diverse learners enrolling in its schools.

For the purposes of this study, we use the terms “plurilingual” and “pluricultural” to describe an individual able to interact with others in two or more languages in a manner that serves the goal of the communication. A person does not need a high level of language proficiency to engage in bartering at a roadside stand, but the individual who can successfully barter and buy a product, may consider the ability to interact successfully in such situations defines them as a plurilingual and pluricultural person. Therefore, we believe that immigrant students to Uruguay, while in the process of gaining proficiency in Spanish and English, are pluricultural and plurilingual. Their efforts reflect Uruguay's emerging plurilingualism and evidence the changing demographic in the nation's schools.

Many researchers consider that nurturing educators' culturally responsive ideologies will ensure that diverse student populations see themselves reflected in the school curriculum (Hawkins & Norton, 2009; Ricento, 2019). This research aimed to position EFL teachers as transformative leaders equipped to implement Uruguay's EFL curriculum through a social justice lens. Considering the Uruguayan sociocultural context and events across the world's stage, we proposed that integration of social and emotional learning (SEL) in the Uruguayan EFL classroom requires training teachers to implement SEL and address CRP practices. Supervisors from Uruguay's Department of Foreign Languages (DFL) secured participants for this study, evidencing Uruguay's educational leaders' interest in meeting the guidelines of the *Ley General de Educación* [General Law of Education] (2020). The law views teachers' work from an integral perspective, considering different aspects of the person's development, addresses the social and emotional components of learning, and focuses beyond the goal of teaching only discipline-specific content.

The anticipated promise of this intervention is that providing EFL teachers opportunities to enhance their pedagogical practices with knowledge of SEL practices, and promoting students' SECs, might offer Uruguayan educators an informed path to achieving educational reform (Jagers et al., 2018). Few studies have focused on the influence of SEL on academic performance in EFL classrooms (Bai & Wang, 2021). This research proposes providing Uruguayan teachers with support to build learners' SECs and create equitable learning opportunities for native-born and immigrant students.

Literature Review

Educational leaders in Uruguay agree that learners need more than discipline-specific instruction, especially those who have experienced political and personal trauma, and face adjusting to a new sociocultural context while acquiring one or two additional languages (Gay, 2018; Pentón Herrera, 2020). Immigrants to Uruguay, whose first language is not Spanish, are required to learn Spanish, which becomes their second language, and English, a third language, at school. Spanish is the official language of the country of Uruguay, and English is taught to all students enrolled in schools. Uruguay's educational policies regarding mandatory English instruction legitimizes the language's economic value for the nation (*Ley General de Educación* [General Law of Education], 2008). English empowers the region's reach beyond the southern hemisphere and positions Uruguayan citizens to compete in the world marketplace.

Uruguay's teachers help ensure equitable resources are available to teachers across rural and urban areas of the nation's schools (Díaz Maggioli & Kuhlman, 2010). The

EFL curriculum being implemented is based on the TESOL standards' domains of knowledge and applications to practice that teachers must know and be able to demonstrate (Kahmi-Stein et al., 2017). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, distance learning in Uruguay aimed to meet the demands of teaching EFL across the country, but a focus on SEL was absent. The complete move to e-learning during the pandemic demonstrated to the DFL that EFL educators were unprepared to infuse SEL in EFL instruction (Jagers et al., 2018; Trinidad, 2020). Preparing EFL teachers had overlooked the need to add a hearty focus on culturally responsive instruction (CRP) (Allbright & Hough, 2020) and SEL, nor stressed that learners' emotions are the cornerstone of the curriculum (Rogers, 2019).

Socio-Emotional Learning in the Southern Hemisphere

The Andean Development Corporation and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Huerta, 2019; *Revista de Educación* [Journal of Education], 2017), declared the importance of SEL by encouraging the development of SEL constructs (e.g., self-awareness and self-management) (CASEL, 2024). Three Latin American countries (Uruguay, Colombia, and Ecuador) refer to SEL in their curriculum (*Instituto Nacional de Educación Evaluativa* [National Institute of Educational Evaluation], 2020). Still, the effectiveness of implementing SEL in South America has not been determined. Uruguay's national curriculum (ANEP- CEP, 2022) states that elementary instruction must stimulate SEL components, empathy, and conflict resolution skills, urging teachers to embed SEC development intentionally and systematically within instruction; however, to date there is no official framework to guide or help coordinate SEL integration.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP)

In EFL classes, educators teach both English and the cultural norms that English speakers engage with daily. Understanding the cultural practices and histories of English-speaking populations globally is essential in EFL. Social-emotional learning (SEL) enhances RFL by encouraging intercultural comprehension and appreciation for diversity (Gay, 2018). The principles of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) are integrated with SEL as its implementation encourages self-reflection, promoting equity and social justice (Martínez Agudo, 2018; Rogers, 2019). Teaching SEL concepts ensures learners develop their SECs and master ways to engage in respectful communication in formal and informal situations (Aspen Institute, 2018; Jagers et al., 2018). When EFL teachers explore the sociocultural context of schooling (Freire, 1985), they are ready to plan a curriculum that addresses and validates students' backgrounds (Jiménez, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 2021). Three key tenets inform CRP: teachers' cultural competence,

their instructional expertise, and their level of pluricultural understanding (Pentón Herrera, 2020).

Ladson-Billings (2021) explains that CRP focuses on empowering students to achieve academically, reach high levels of cultural competence, and socio-political consciousness. Similarly focused, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (2024) divides SEL skills into five categories that teachers must support: regulating one's emotions, thoughts, and actions; demonstrating social awareness, empathy, and acceptance of others' social and ethical norms; establishing and maintaining healthy rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups; and making constructive and respectful choices in personal and social interactions based on consideration of the person's identity and well-being. When Ladson-Billings discusses the *so what* of CRP, she focuses on how teachers transform theory into action and explain to learners that the curriculum will prepare them to stand up for their rights and privileges (2021). Teachers meet the equity goals of CRP with a rigorous curriculum that affirms diverse identities and supports students in examining the world through a critical lens.

Socio-Emotional Learning in EFL

Reforms in education require culturally responsive educators (Rogers, 2019). We believe that online self-paced training can engage EFL educators in reflection (Melani et al., 2020). This assumption was important for this intervention, as the impact of COVID-19 on the mental health needs of students and teachers (Trinidad, 2020) continues. Understanding the components of acquiring additional languages requires awareness of the factors of motivation and anxiety and how these are affected by learners' SECs (Dörnyei, 1994; Ellis, 1994). Cultural responsiveness in EFL is present when teachers' SEL and CRP awareness leads students to engage in mindful and respectful behaviors (Oxford, 2015). In such classrooms learners become enthusiastic participants who wish to learn the languages of study and the ways of being of the people who speak the language. Research suggests that developing learners' SECs changes the classroom ambiance and therefore helps close academic gaps (Malloy, 2019). Skills such as self-regulation, perseverance, resilience, and the ability to establish positive peer relationships have been suggested to correlate to higher levels of student engagement, attendance rates, and achievement (Durlak et al., 2011). The respectful relationships that SEL study fosters mitigate the effects of social discontinuity (Dörnyei, 1994), and in addition, students' anxiety decreases as they practice SEL skills (Ellis, 1994). Once students develop their SECs, they will more easily to appreciate their classmates' funds of knowledge (Moll, 2019).

Pentón Herrera (2020) emphasizes the need to remedy learner stress using methods that support SEC development and self-management beyond the classroom.

He suggests using practices that allow learners to think about their attitudes and behaviors. Methods such as bibliotherapy, peace education, yoga, restorative practices, journaling, listening circles, mindfulness and instruction on emotional intelligence help students learn about each other (Pentón Herrera, 2020). SEL helps students recognize their classmates' respectful behaviors and acknowledge positive traits using words such as generous, funny, or open-minded. Teachers and students might select two to three positive words to use each week and reflect on how this type of feedback supports camaraderie.

Theoretical Framework

Insufficient research has explored the ideologies of EFL teachers and how these influence their pedagogy (Adams & Richie, 2017; Bai & Wang, 2021; Martínez Agudo, 2018). The theoretical framework that guided this study was sociocultural learning theory (Freire, 1985; Vygotsky, 1986). In addition, this research was informed by the CASEL (2024) standards for guiding EFL teachers' PD (CASEL, 2024). While the CASEL standards are not considered part of the theoretical framework of this study, their use contributed to the planning of this study and delivery of the teachers' online training. We know that educators cognizant that attention to CRP methods improves the quality of interactions in EFL classrooms, will utilize CASEL to help learners acquire the SECs that lead them to contribute to each other's well-being (Franquíz et al., 2019; Hawkins & Norton, 2009; Oxford, 2015). This work investigates English as a foreign language (EFL) educators' ability to infuse socio-emotional learning (SEL) in culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP).

Two research questions guided this study: What are teachers' perceptions of infusing SEL in EFL? And, what benefits do EFL teachers recognize in using SEL to infuse CRP into classroom instruction?

Methodology

This qualitative case study (Yin, 2009) examined teachers' views on integrating SEL in EFL and its role in supporting CRP. After obtaining approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the researchers' institution and the Uruguayan Board of Primary Education, support was obtained from Uruguay's DFL to coordinate recruitment. Two national supervisors from the DFL emailed an invitation to 550 Uruguayan elementary teachers to enroll in a three-week training through an online platform provided by the Uruguayan government. Of 550 emails sent, 32 teachers agreed to participate. Each participant was assigned a unique number used in the results section to ensure compliance with IRB protocols. The invitation presented information about the course content and the study inclusion criteria: employment as an EFL elementary

teacher; intermediate English language proficiency (CEFR B1); internet access; and ten-hour weekly availability to complete readings and assignments. Participants were sent a digital certificate accrediting 20 hours of professional development (PD) issued by the researchers and the DFL supervisors upon compliance with three requirements: submission of a signed consent form; compliance with all course tasks; and completion of all stages of data collection.

Data Gathering

Participants answered four open-ended questions using an online repository website after completing an online asynchronous three-week SEL workshop delivered on the Moodle platform. They could respond online at their convenience and have time to reflect on their instructional planning. Responses were analyzed utilizing six-phase thematic analysis (TA): data familiarization, generation of initial codes, search for themes, review of identified themes, definition of the themes, and reporting (Clarke & Braun, 2017). TA was chosen because it is a systematic approach for examining perspectives about a topic (Clarke & Braun, 2017; Nowell et al. 2017). After the researchers reviewed the collected data, each developed initial codes that later were collaboratively discussed and refined. The next step was to generate the final themes. The inductive process for generating the codes allowed the researchers to understand the responses based on the situated context of the project. The participants responded to the following questions after completion of the PD:

Post-Workshop Questions

1. What did you learn about implementing SEL and CRP that you will use?
2. How can CRP and SEL improve the level of respect in students' communications?
3. What specific strategies or concepts have you implemented after this training?
4. If additional training is provided in the future, what topics would you like to further explore?

Teachers' Training

The three-week online training provided foundational knowledge and strategies for modeling SEC development. Directions and suggestions allowed the teachers to incorporate new pedagogy into lesson plans. The training included readings and tasks requiring active participation and reflection on the integration of SEL. The work with the teachers during Phase I of this research consisted of online training focused on SEL implementation and a focus on CRP in lesson plans. The training was delivered

asynchronously, and no face-to-face meetings were required. Participants agreed to view training videos, complete readings, and reflective assignments. Phase II of the research involved online collaborative lesson planning between the teachers and researchers before online classroom field visits. *Phase III* has not been completed at this point and is therefore not part of the data reported.

Feedback Provided to Participants

During the training, a three-scale rubric (0 - 3 points) was used to formatively assess and give feedback to the participants on completion of weekly tasks: the evaluation examined the content of the teachers' reflection and applications to practice. Feedback focused on how well teachers grasped the theoretical content and its integration.

Week 1.

During the first week of training, the teachers defined SEL, explained, and provided examples showing how SEL skills help EFL students in school and life. Feedback emphasized that SEL is more than recognizing and managing emotions and that the CASEL (2024) core competencies center on helping students succeed academically and personally. Feedback reminded participants that effective SEL implementation requires constant, intentional, and thoughtful setting of short and long-term goals; promoting active student roles; creating classroom routines; and negotiating explicit goals with students.

The teachers were asked to reflect on their understanding of SEL, its effective integration, and CRP strategies. They responded to four open-ended questions addressing what they had learned and hoped to do in the future. The questions required the teachers to share why they believe SEL contributes to EFL classrooms, how its integration impacts students' inter-personal communication, what methods they anticipate using to teach students about SEL, and how they wish to proceed in the future to gain more knowledge related to what SEL training will add to their teaching methods. The teachers responded to the following questions:

- Considering students' academic and affective needs, what short and long-term SEL goals will be part of your lessons?
- How can your students practice decision-making, self-management, and social awareness skills while working on subject matter content?
- How will you sustain the development of SECs in the long term?
- How will you ensure students' engagement?

- What opening and/or closing activities will you implement to promote and sustain learners' self-management skills?

Week 2.

This week participants explored practical ideas, tools, and strategies to embed SEL and CRP into EFL instruction. They identified a specific group of students and wrote a two-page reflection describing the group's characteristics and demographics. In addition, they explained the instructional modifications they chose to effectively integrate SEL (e.g., teacher language, student actions, classroom rules, and classroom environment). Feedback emphasized the need to set feasible goals that align with students' needs; the creation of safe and positive environments where students feel comfortable sharing and learning together; and the need for routines that support and empower students. Questions shared with the teachers had the goal of helping them reflect and apply what they were learning to practice:

- How will you assess students' social and emotional interaction?
- What steps have you taken, and how will you continue to integrate SEL in CRP in the future?
- How will you help students monitor their progress?

Week 3.

This week, the teachers addressed the use of the Good Behavior Game (GBG) to promote SEL and address CRP in lessons (Kellan et al., 2018). The GBG, a classroom-based behavior management strategy that when incorporated into a lesson plan rewards students who stay on-task (AIR, 2021; Rubow et al., 2018) is built on four core elements that model ways to support SEL skill development: behavioral expectations through a set of clearly articulated rules, opportunities for teamwork, adherence to established expectations and, positive reinforcement. The teachers integrated and negotiated the GBG's four elements into a game lasting up to 45 minutes, including rules, behaviors, and positive reinforcements. The GBG was the first step for the teachers to implement what they were learning. The lesson template shared with the teachers helped them plan lessons around academic concepts, SEL, and CRP. Feedback was provided on the lesson plans designed for the GBG game. The teacher's task was to identify the lesson's SEL goals, to make the learning objectives explicit to students, and to create opportunities for students to relate the targeted SEL skills to their lives, thus ensuring students' reflection on their SECs.

Results

At the end of the three-week workshop, participants (n=32) responded to four open-ended questions that explored their confidence in their ability to use CRP to promote SEL skills and their thoughts on how this learning would affect their students. The teachers were asked how they will assess students' social and emotional interactions, what steps they will take to continue integrating SEL in CRP, and how they will help students monitor their progress. Data analysis generated three recurrent themes: SEL skills and CRP to address behavioral issues, student-teacher collaborative work toward mindfulness and respectful conversations, and routines to teach SEL skills utilizing students' cultural background. Overall, responses reflected the teachers' interest in better understanding methods to infuse SEL and CRP in their EFL lessons.

SEL Skills and CRP to Address Behavioral Issues

The teachers grasped that instruction is positively influenced by consultation of CASEL's standards (2024) and the use of CRP to model SEL skills (Allbright & Hough, 2020; Kahmi-Stein et al., 2017). All the participants indicated that the strategies presented in the training (e.g., calming strategies, feedback, identifying emotions, mindfulness, group work, and game-based activities) helped them understand the benefits of addressing students' emotions as a behavior-management strategy, and will help students succeed in school and life as they develop self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, ability to build relationships, and responsible decision-making. Several teachers made comments such as "SEL includes a series of strategies and tools whose function is to help students adapt to the environment" (Participants # 3, 21, 26, 32) "SEL skills are a decisive factor in the formation of citizens capable of harmoniously integrating into society and managing their life projects" (# 7), "CRP is a student-centered approach" (Participants # 8, 10), and "It is our job to lead students to understand their emotions"(Participants # 9, 24). Another participant shared "I identify SEL goals including behavior expectations, planning cycles and assessments" (# 10). Seven other teachers also indicated that they had begun to use some GBG adaptation. Several respondents commented about the GBG: "I think GBG is an effective approach to support SEC development and emotionally sustaining activities" (Participants # 1, 2, 6, 10, 13, 23, 32). Three participants mentioned "the importance of SEL to help students have a better future" (Participants # 8, 17, 29). Three comments presented the teachers belief that CRP and SEL are important to manage behavioral issues, through the integration of activities that help students learn to control their emotions (Participants # 6, 13, 17). Seventeen participants connected the SEL skills to classroom behavior (Participants # 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 18, 20, 23, 24, 26, 29). Eight comments provided similar reflections on how setting a routine, identifying expected behaviors, and rewarding respectful actions builds a positive environment

(Participants # 11, 18). Four teachers discussed the benefits of helping students to “self-monitor and building a nurturing classroom” (Participants # 5, 15, 18, 20). Six teachers demonstrated a high level of interest in learning more about SEL when they asked questions related to how CRP leads students to recognize and respect each other’s cultures (Participants # 4, 14, 23, 26, 29, 32).

Collaborative Work toward Mindfulness and Respectful Conversations

The second theme, collaborations toward mindfulness and respectful conversations, was assessed by examining how caring teachers create environments where students’ actions and words show they value, respect, and support each other (CASEL, 2024; Durlak et al., 2011). Eight participants (#s 5, 6, 13, 15, 17, 18, 20, 32) connected the benefits of collaborative work focused on developing students’ SECs and mentioned the benefits of teaching SEL concepts.

Thirteen participants agreed on the message in the following comments, indicating that SEL skills should be afforded through “all classroom instruction,” thus providing students time to practice the skills (Participants #s 1, 18). Five teachers mentioned the GBG game and that it helps students understand how to behave and control their impulses (listening to others, respecting turn-taking, etc.). Another five teachers shared that “In SEL development students realize how their decisions affect the group” (Participants # 4, 13, 19, 24, 31) “I calm them [students] down, and then explain that we will play the GBG game for 10 minutes, to do teamwork.” Lastly, six participants indicated that their learning strategies helped them “implement the SEL concepts” (#s 2, 6, 9, 11, 27, 31).

In addition, the teachers mentioned SEL “Signature Practices” that address emotions and equity such as jigsaws, journaling, writing small thoughts on the board, four corners, gallery work, brain breaks, and ice breakers (#s 3, 7, 10). One teacher shared her plan to “create a chart for monitoring how they [the students] are feeling” (# 22). Other teachers (#s 5, 8, 12, 14). acknowledged that as students understand classroom expectations “they [the students] will treat each other respectfully, and their behavior will prepare them for the future as citizens of Uruguay”. Several teachers’ comments (#s 8, 17, 25) supported the statement “[if students were] doing activities that involve using SEL skills, the classroom atmosphere would be less stressful” and “Reflection on emotions will help students do better next time.” Ten participants (# 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 17, 22, 25) shared that involving students in identifying behavioral issues helps them regulate their emotions. A teacher (# 22) suggested “When developing a GBG activity, I spend time with the students selecting the activity, giving them points and rewards to help them reach the expected results.” Another teacher (# 4) echoed colleagues’ perspectives when they said “If I give learners the tools they need to problem-solve, I will be freer to help the children who have learning difficulties.”

Routines to Teach SEL Skills Utilizing Students' Cultural Background

The third theme, routines to teach SEL skills utilizing students' cultural background, was mentioned by 9 participants (# 1, 2, 6, 10, 11, 13, 18, 23, 32). The teachers were focused on the effectiveness of using routines to implement SEL, but few (Participants # 5, 8, 12, 14) stated a pressing need to become informed about the cultural norms of recent immigrants for SEL implementation to be effective. They did, however, demonstrate their concern with giving students time to engage in reflection and conversations about their concerns when they discussed their role modeling respect through routines and development of students' SECs. The same nine teachers who alluded to the role of cultural background, specifically expressed that the modeling that is a key part of routines assists students to develop their SECs (Participants # 1, 2, 6, 10, 11, 13, 18, 23, 32). Four teachers referred to the GBG and how it "helps in seeing the role of routines. They (#s 1, 6, 9, 18) concurred that "habits at the beginning and the end of lessons, and activities with short clear instructions" is the way to support SEC development. Others stated comments reflecting the thought, "I will establish routines to create a safe environment, where students of all backgrounds feel comfortable" (Participants # 2, 3, 11, 27). Other teachers commented that "routines will help me manage SEL skill integration" (# 8); "Setting clear routines is a way to identify expected behaviors, reward the positive ones and build a respectful atmosphere" (# 17), and "the important thing [to teach SEL] is to incorporate clear rules" (# 25). Two teachers saw the benefits of classroom routines for modeling "how to relate and listen to others" (4) and to "practice relationship skills" (#31). Several teachers brought up routines for restorative disciplining and helping students use their leadership and competitive skills. One teacher (#21) shared her plan to resolve conflicts by asking students, "What happened? What can we do to make this right? Will you act differently in the future?" Others (#s 12, 30) shared the benefits of CRP routines is "the collaborative atmosphere that engages students and facilitates conversations about respect, injustice, hate, and inequity" (Gay, 2018; Giroux & Silva, 2010). The teachers seemed to connect their evolving knowledge of SEL to Uruguay's EFL curriculum.

Discussion

The themes that emerged in this study document participants' positive perceptions of the online training workshops. The teachers were asked four questions related to what they learned about the implementation of SEL and CRP in the asynchronous work, how they perceive SEL can raise the level of respect in classroom communications, what strategies and concepts they had used to implement SEL strategies during the training, and what they need to explore further in the future.

The first theme, SEL skills and CRP to address behavioral issues became visible when the participants shared comments that showed they were sold on the idea that SEL reinforces good behaviors and leads students to engage in mindful and respectful behaviors (Oxford, 2015). Implementing the CASEL guidelines offers formative paths to discipline and is a factor in forming responsible and caring citizens. The findings highlight teachers' interest in building students' SECs and suggest that long-term PD will help teachers implement SEL and focus on developing students' SECs.

The second theme, student-teacher collaborative work toward mindfulness and respectful conversations, was evident in the teachers' demonstrated understanding that EFL instruction improves when learners' emotions and funds of knowledge are considered (Adams & Richie, 2017; Rogers, 2019). After the training, the teachers were aware of the value of restorative practices and the need to act when negative behaviors harm students. Many of the teachers mentioned they plan to work to build culturally responsive and equitable learning environments (Allbright & Hough, 2020).

The third theme, routines to teach SEL skills utilizing students' cultural background, was summarized by teachers who shared the perspective that SEL skills contribute to self-reflective processes. The teachers understood that routines that incorporated teaching SEL skills would open doors to conversations about inter-cultural respect, injustice, hate and inequity (Aspen Institute, 2018; Gay, 2018; Giroux & Silva, 2010; Jimenez, 2021; Pentón Herrera, 2020; Martínez Agudo, 2018).

Conclusions, Limitations, and Pedagogical Implications

This study took place in Uruguay, a nation in the southern hemisphere of the Americas. While the country's dominant language is Spanish, educators are now confronting the needs of non-native Spanish speakers in their schools. Some students speak a language from a different linguistic family, and few Uruguayan teachers speak it fluently. The change in the immigrant demographic is challenging a nation of educators now required to offer EFL instruction at all grade levels. This qualitative study aimed to examine the understanding of social and emotional learning (SEL) developed by 32 EFL teachers employed at levels K-5th grade in Uruguay, after a three-week online asynchronous PD.

The reactions of the participants to integrating SEL in their work were positive. They stressed that SEL helps students learn to be respectful and to collaborate with each other (Caumont, 2020). Given the interest in SEL integration from the DFL, we advocate for PD, which gives teachers the tools they need to place a greater emphasis on students' SEC development. As SEL implementation continues, teachers' and students'

reflexivity on their identities will likely increase (Jimenez, 2021). Once Uruguay's DFL supervisors participate in training focused on SEL and CRP, we envision Uruguayan educators becoming South America's educational leaders.

This study's data shows the need for ongoing PD to build teachers' confidence in integrating SEL and CRP. A limitation of this study is its focus on the Uruguayan context, which is characterized by governmental efforts specific to Uruguay, and in this intervention, it centers on elementary grade levels. However, while some immigrants to Uruguay are from South America, many of the country's immigrants reflect the state of world migration. Immigrants to Uruguay from Syria pose greater educational needs than incoming students whose prior schooling was in Spanish. Future research should aim to expand the sample size, include a broader range of grade levels, and diversify the settings of data collection.

This study's findings offer several pedagogical implications. Results can be utilized by researchers, teachers, and administrators across the world to set guidelines that ensure students develop their SECs. This implies the need for PD and support to implement SEL using CRP strategies for teachers. For students, this means enhanced overall well-being and academic achievement. This study's findings will guide educators developing PD programs that prepare teachers with the skills to support SEL in their classrooms, thus bridging the gap between theory and practice. While findings are derived from the experiences of the 32 Uruguayan teachers who participated in the PD, this intervention can guide educators in countries experiencing increased migration and demographic changes in their populations. Study results indicate that SEL training transforms disciplinary approaches from punitive to restorative. This is a valuable insight for educational systems worldwide looking to reduce conflicts and improve school climate. Teachers need time to consult the CASEL guidelines before planning lessons. PD must assist teachers to examine learners' funds of knowledge because classroom interactions are more honest and respectful when the sociocultural context and its influence on learning is addressed in the curriculum (Dörnyei, 1994; Moll, 2019; Oxford, 2015).

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Authors

Mayra C. Daniel is professor Emerita, Department of Curriculum & Instruction, Northern Illinois University, De Kalb, Illinois, USA. Her research focuses on preparing and supporting educators to implement culturally responsive pedagogy in the United States and Latin America..

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2702-0071>

Ximena D. Burgin is an Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Technology, Research, and Assessment, Northern Illinois University, De Kalb, Illinois, USA. Her research centers on culturally responsive pedagogy, and utilizing research-based methodologies to improve academic outcomes for diverse student populations.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3494-569X>