



Frontiers in the Science and Practice of Social-Emotional Learning in Preschools and Schools

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Bennett Lecture

Penn State University

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Outline

- I. What are the skills?
- II. What do we know about them?
- III. What works to promote them?
- IV. Frontiers: Building the field by increasing transparency and access

What are the skills?

As schools adopt social-emotional programs, a new guide offers help

The Washington Post

Answer Sheet

Why it's (long past) time for social and emotional learning

Social and Emotional Learning

What if the Secret to School Reform is Social and Emotional Learning?

CBCnews

Home World Ca

World Photo Galleries

7 traits kids need to succeed

Character traits include grit, self-control and social intelligence

By Janet Thomson and Manmeet Ahluwalia, CBC News Posted: Nov 23, 2012 5:13 AM ET | Last Updated

The Psychological Approach to Educating Kids

Increased focus on kids' psychological health may seem like the education world's flavor of the day, but it's achieving results.

VICTORIA CLAYTON | MAR 30, 2017 | EDUCATION

The Economist

School reform Stay focused

Social-Emotional Learning: States Collaborate to Craft Standards, Policies

Magazine

REGION BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY SCIENCE HEALTH SPORTS OPINI

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THE EDUCATION ISSUE



This Is What Anger Looks Like
 By JENNIFER KAHN
 Can emotional intelligence be taught?

Can Emotional Intelligence Be

What gets included?

“...different disciplines have produced a great many frameworks and organizational systems that describe and define social and emotional skills. ... Frameworks also vary in the type of construct they aim to describe— from skills, behaviors, and attitudes to traits, strengths, and abilities...”

(Jones & Doolittle, 2017)

In general...



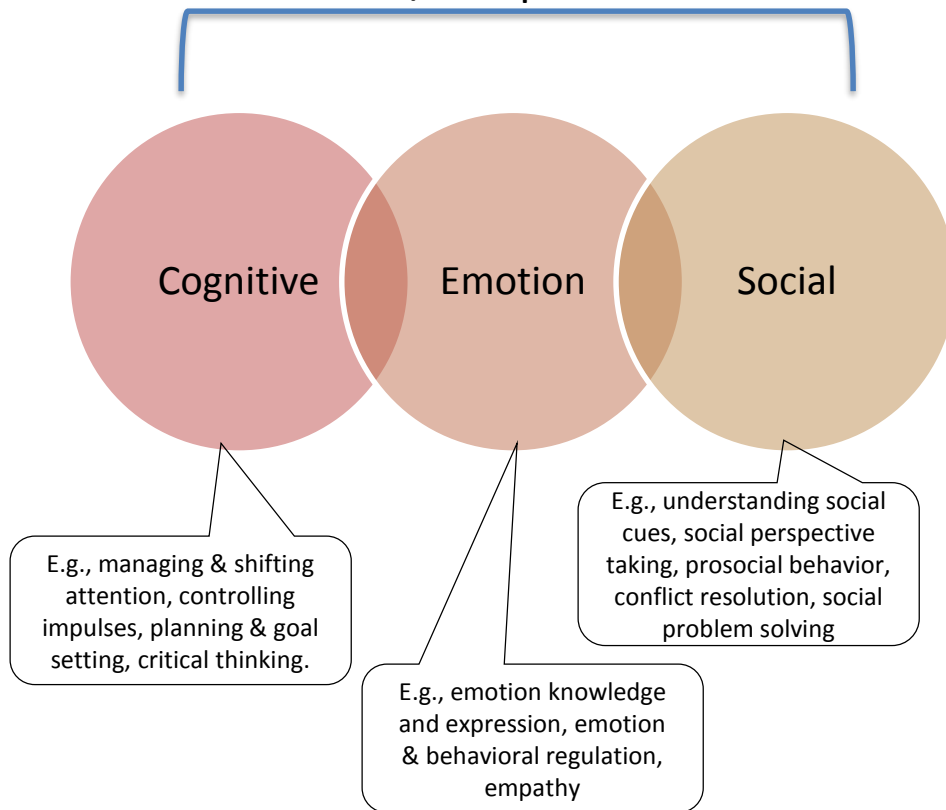
Social and emotional learning, or SEL, refers to the thinking skills, behavioral skills, and regulatory skills needed to interact effectively with others, and to make, form, and deepen relationships.



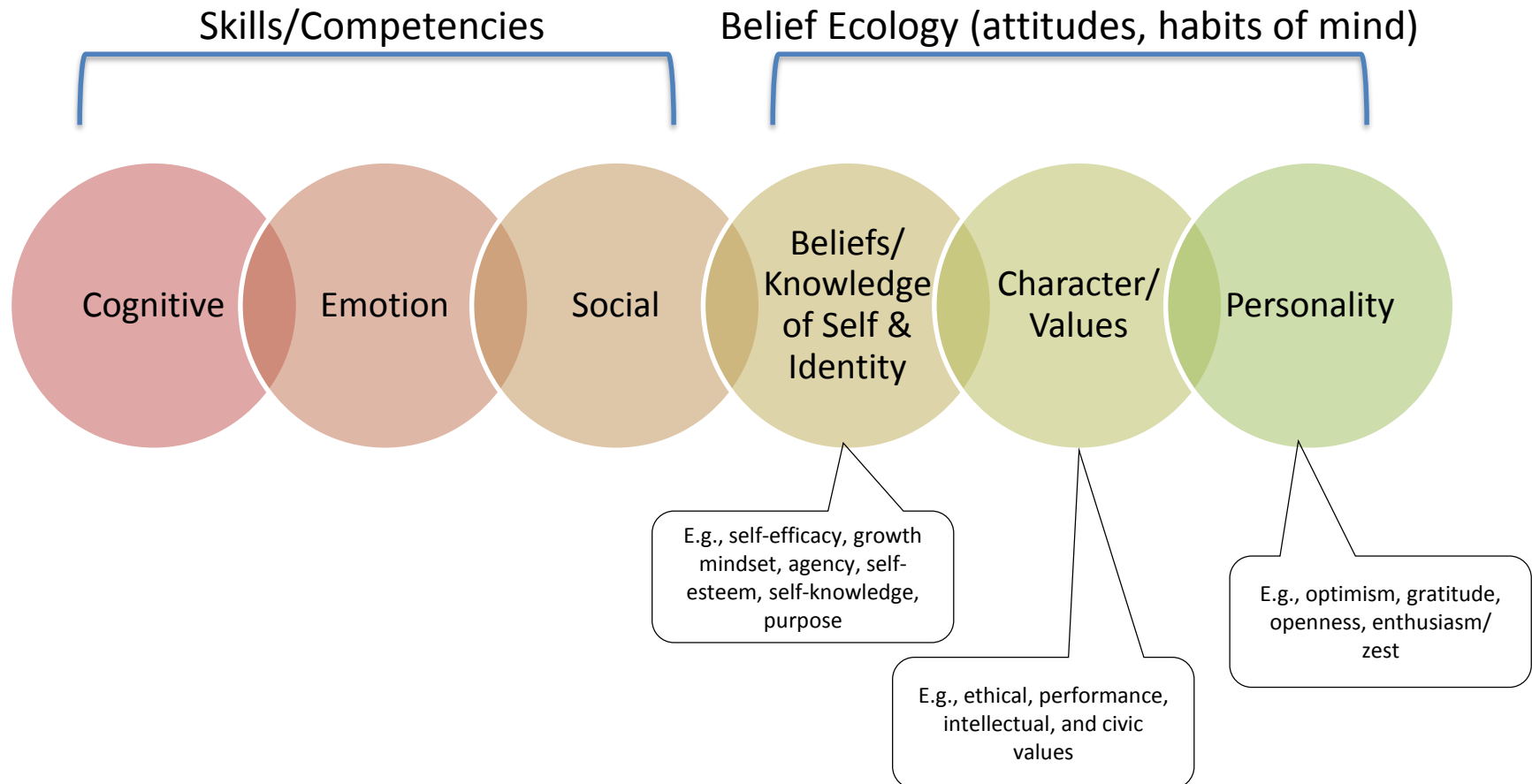
A student's ability to focus, manage emotions, and stay engaged, plays a large role in his or her ability to perceive, process, and ultimately learn. Students who can work collaboratively and communicate effectively are better able to harness their academic knowledge to perform in school now and in the workplace later. At the same time, these competencies help young people build the strong relationships that are such a big part of leading a fulfilling life.

Specifically...

Skills/Competencies



and...



What do we know about them?

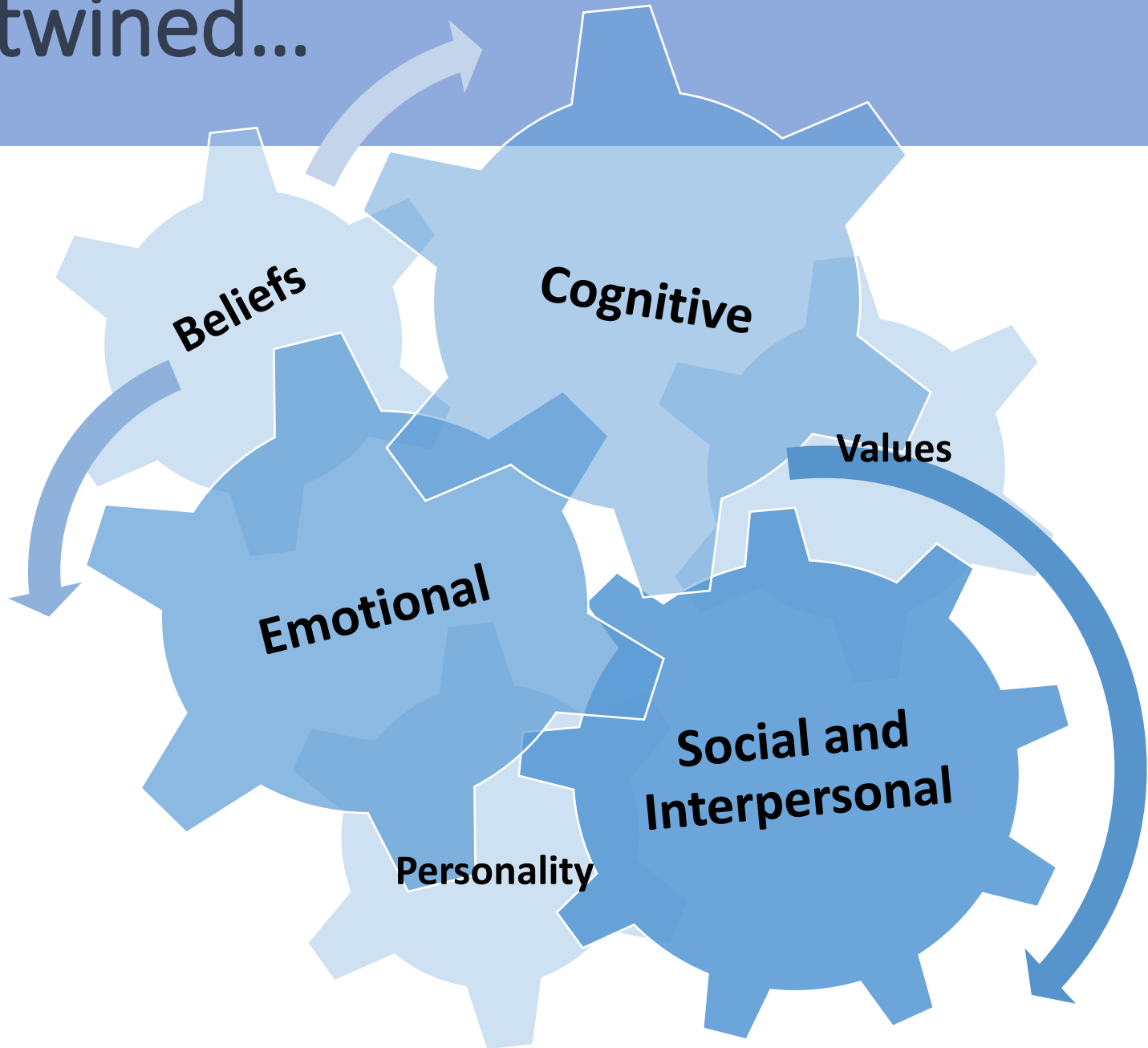
What do we know about them?

They are intertwined.

Domains of human development—**social, emotional, cognitive, academic**—are connected in the brain and in behavior.

All are central to learning.

Intertwined...



What do we know about them?

They are malleable...

Skills and competencies emerge, grow, and change over time from **infancy and throughout childhood and adolescence.**

**Working on Teams to
Solve Complex Problems**

**Working Cooperatively
with Others**

Social Domain

**Planning Ahead /
Organizing Your Day**

Cognitive Domain

**Holding Multiple Ideas at
the Same Time**

Cognitive Domain

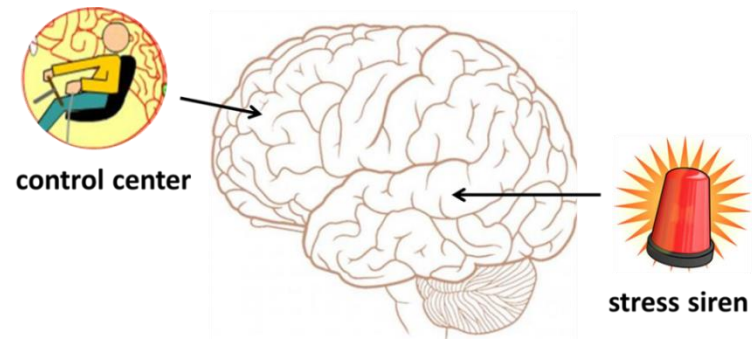
**Focusing Your Attention
on One Task**

Cognitive Domain

What do we know about them?

They are closely linked to context and experience.

Skills and competencies develop in a complex system of **contexts, interactions, and relationships** and are particularly vulnerable to stress and adversity.



What works to promote them?

What works?

1. Long-term correlational studies
2. Large multi-program studies & trials of interventions in preschool, school and afterschool contexts
3. A broad array of disciplines are contributing
4. Both quantitative and qualitative forms of data are being used to understand families, children and youth, schools and districts, communities
5. Meta-analyses; cost-benefit analyses

Tell us about critical life outcomes.

Tell us about behavioral, physiological, academic outcomes; variation by groups; classroom and school-level.

Economists are getting involved...

Challenges faced in the field, perspectives of those who are the target of interventions.

Broad expectations and return on investment.

What works?

Two coordinated strategies:

1. Instruction in social and emotional skills in developmentally, contextually, and culturally appropriate ways (CASEL = SAFE).

modeled, taught, practiced, discussed

2. Establishing safe, caring learning environments with effective classroom management and teaching practices (*means supporting adults too*).

A context that fosters the skills is one that is experienced as safe and supportive

What does that mean?

Exposure (Modeling)

I feel _____ because _____ ?
(Me siento...) (...porque...)

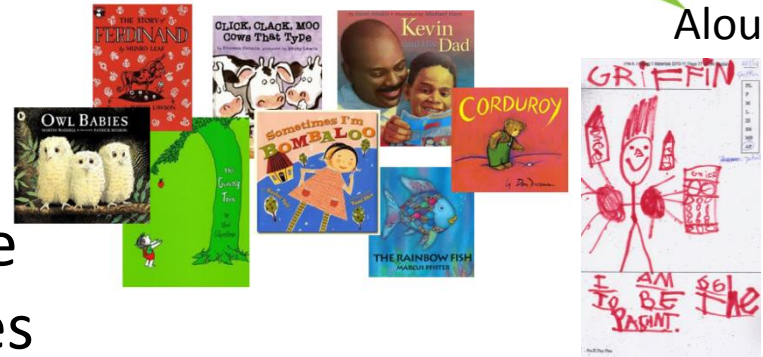
I can see it is hard to be quiet during church. When I need to sit still for a long time, I sing a favorite song silently in my head, or I doodle on a piece of paper.

Think
Aloud

- Adults and peers who model the language a behaviors, across environments

Explicit Instruction (Teaching)

- Children's books & literature
- Lessons, Skill-based activities



Opportunities to practice (Practice & Discuss)

- Routines and games
- Prepared role-play; paired learning
- Real-world experiences as they arise – key contexts for learning and applying skills



Frontiers: Building the field by increasing transparency and access

The approach, the content, the lexicon

Frontier #1: Implementation

It varies – quality, quantity, fidelity. Sometimes we don't even know how much because we don't have a target in mind.

Why? Many reasons.

1. SEL is often considered “extra-curricular”
2. Adults (e.g., teachers) are not consulted or supported

One approach: **Integration**

Weaving social and emotional learning into the fabric of schools and schooling.

How? Not sure.

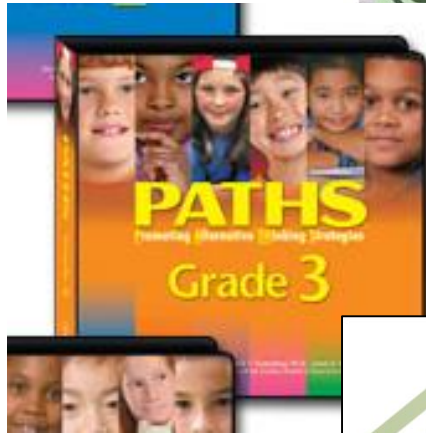
Identify and test common denominators of practice [programs] that are more implementable, meaning more easily done, more seamlessly **embedded** into the structures and practices of schools and schooling.

THE 4RS PROGRAM

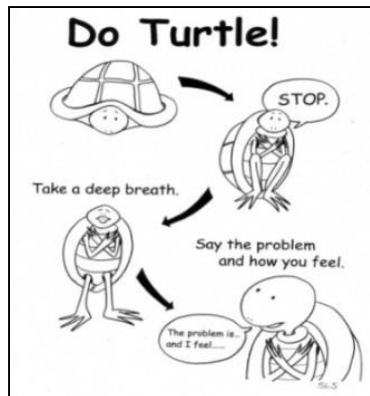


1. What are the common denominators (**KERNELS**) of *practice* in these programs?
2. Do they *work* when tested on their own?
3. Would they provide additional *options* (or a *starting point*) for those who won't/can't adopt programs?
4. Are they a *mechanism* for integration and for *translating* the core ideas of SEL?

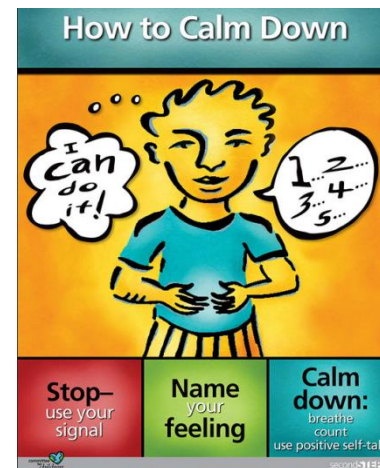
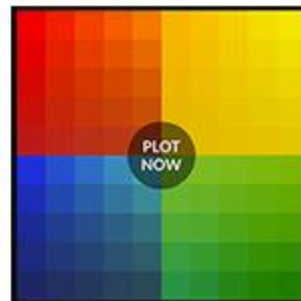
THE 4RS PROGRAM



E.g., Routines to support physiological/behavioral regulation....



Stop and Stay Cool Steps



ons of a

KERNEL OF PRACTICE



Germ: The core part of a kernel that must be in place for success.

Outer shell/wrap on: The aspects of implementation that are flexible, allowing for tailoring and personalization.

Soil: The type of environment necessary for the kernel to succeed. Will it be effective in any setting (like a dandelion), or does it need other ~~surrounding~~ factors to be in place (like an orchid)?

Weather: What are the supports needed to begin and to sustain growth, use?

LEARNING SPACES

Schools
Homes
OST Settings
Other...



Teachers, parents, other adults have a "menu" of kernels to choose from, depending on their goals, the needs of their students, and their preferred teaching style and approach.

Flexible, adaptable, portable, engaging, appealing – connected to plan.

Based on evidence, derived transparently, input from the user, tested, revised...

“A

Stage
Define
and make
set of S

EMOTION REGULATION: A PROTOTYPE

To test the pilot program, our team used it to identify 5 kernels of Emotion Regulation:

436
original
strategies

Step 1 – From our data, we identified 436 strategies that directly addressed emotion regulation.

Step 2 – These 436 strategies were then coded for their focus, mode of instruction, and description.

Step 3 – We then used this information to determine if each strategy met the criteria for a kernel (i.e., low-cost, brief, easy to use, and not tied to a specific curriculum). For example, strategies that required significant preparation or complex materials were eliminated. After this step, 212 qualifying strategies remained.

212
qualifying
strategies

Step 4 – These 212 strategies were then sorted by focus in order to identify five major kernels: deep breathing, positive self-talk, step-by-step procedures, yoga and exercises, and “toolboxes” of strategies.

Step 5 – The kernel below is an example of one emotion regulation kernel that emerged from our analysis and might appear in a teaching guide.

5
kernels

EXAMPLE KERNEL

Belly Breathing – Have students place their hands on their belly. Practice taking slow, deep breaths that cause the belly to expand. Model what it looks like to use belly breathing: act angry and then take slow, deep breaths. Allow students to see you becoming more relaxed and calm. Practice belly breathing throughout the day, particularly during transitions.

1
guide

Starting point: and Approach to SEL” (CZI)

VE...
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An example:
Emotion Regulation
436 original strategies
212 qualifying strategies
5 kernels
1 tool/each

Stage 4 **SHARE**:
Adapt kernels for
accessible platforms

Frontier #2: Getting Inside the Box

**What do programs actually target
and
how do they do it?**

One approach: Content Analysis



KNOWLEDGE CENTER

Navigating Social and Emotional Learning from the Inside Out

Looking Inside and Across 25 Leading SEL Programs: A Practical Resource for Schools and OST Providers (Elementary School Focus)

 REPORT



Navigating SEL: Background

- Recent meta-analyses have demonstrated that high-quality, evidence-based SEL programs produce positive outcomes for students (Durlak et al., 2011)
 - Improved behavior and attitudes about school
 - Improved mental health
 - Higher academic achievement
- However, we don't know much about **what is inside these programs** that may drive these positive outcomes
- Large number of SEL programs that vary widely in focus and approach – schools and OST organizations **need information to make informed choices**



**Report on Content Analysis of
25 Leading SEL Programs**

Goals

- Provide general information to the field:
 - What skills and strategies are used most often?
 - What is unique to specific programs?
 - What is common or shared among many different programs?
- Provide schools and OST programs with tools to identify programs that align with their specific needs, goals, and resources:
 - Meet specific SEL goals or needs (address specific behaviors or skill areas)
 - Align with specific outcomes, funding, or guidelines
 - Align with, or complement, other school-wide and OST initiatives
- Offer recommendations and resources for alignment between SEL and OST programming

What did we do?

Data collection designed to capture 3 types of data for each program:

1 Curricular Content & Focus

- **Detailed coding of lessons** (Grades 1,3,5 or K,2,4)
- **Domain codes** capture the specific SEL skills targeted by each lesson (e.g., empathy, conflict resolution, etc.)
- **Activity codes** capture the instructional methods used in the curriculum (e.g., discussion, books, games, etc.)

2 Additional Program Features

- Recorded information about **program features beyond core lessons** (e.g., support for family engagement, academic integration, school climate, etc.)
- Used program materials and online resources (e.g., teacher guide, website, etc.)

3 Evidence of Effectiveness

- Recorded **program effects** (e.g., child, adult, classroom outcomes) and **implementation experiences** (e.g., fidelity of implementation, user feedback)
- Collected from research reports, papers, etc.

Products

25 Leading SEL Programs for Elementary Schoolers

School-Based and Out-
of-School Time Settings

CONTENT ANALYSIS

SEL Skills

Cognitive, Social,
Emotional, Character,
Mindset

Instructional Methods

Strategies and activities
used to teach skills

Program Components

Key program features, such
as training, support, and
specific topic focus

TOOLS FOR INFORMED DECISION-MAKING

Program Snapshots

Brief individual program overviews
providing key program information and
details

In-Depth Program Profiles

A comprehensive look at each program's
evidence base, skill focus, instructional
methods, and additional features

Tools for Looking Across Programs

Tables, graphs, and analyses to explore
relative skill focus, instructional methods,
and additional features across programs

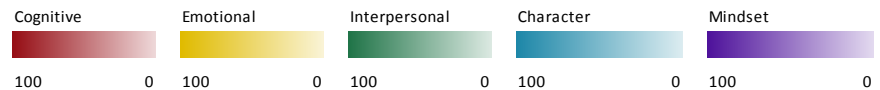
Planning Tools

Worksheets to support a data-driven
decision-making and program selection,
including a guide for OST settings

Some Examples

Program	Cognitive Regulation	Attention Control	Working Memory/ Planning	Inhibitory Control	Cognitive Flexibility	Emotional Processes	Emotion Knowledge/ Expression	Emotion / Behavior Regulation	Empathy/ Perspective-taking	Interpersonal Skills	Understands Social Cues	Conflict Resolution	Prosocial Behavior	Character	Mindset
4Rs	12%	9%	4%	1%	2%	27%	16%	10%	11%	43%	4%	19%	26%	14%	0%
Before the Bullying	4%▼	1%	1%	1%	0%	39%	16%	2%	27%▲	55%	1%	6%	52%▲	37%▲	17%▲
Caring School Community	8%▼	5%	1%	0%	3%	33%	15%	0%▼	28%▲	78%▲	1%	18%	71%▲	13%	0%
Conscious Discipline	14%	4%	7%	2%	2%	75%▲	47%▲	49%▲	6%	54%	15%	11%	37%	4%	7%
Character First	29%	8%	15%	9%	1%	11%▼	3%▼	3%	6%	38%	0%	6%	37%	71%▲	39%▲
Competent Kids, Caring Communities	30%	8%	19%	5%	8%	28%	22%	17%	6%	23%▼	2%	11%	18%▼	10%	23%▲
Good Behavior Game	33%	0%	33%▲	0%	0%	0%▼	0%▼	0%▼	0%▼	100%▲	0%	0%▼	100%▲	0%▼	0%
Girls on the Run	7%▼	0%	7%	0%	0%	11%▼	7%▼	4%	3%	35%▼	0%	11%	31%	20%	49%▲
I Can Problem Solve	65%▲	11%	10%	7%	47%▲	65%▲	57%▲	2%	46%▲	55%	19%▲	37%▲	20%▼	3%	0%
Lions Quest	18%	1%	14%	1%	3%	23%	19%	4%	5%	60%	6%	12%	51%	19%	7%
MindUP	44%▲	41%▲	3%	4%	2%	28%	20%	7%	11%	18%▼	4%	0%▼	15%▼	4%	19%▲
Mutt-i-grees	10%▼	1%	3%	4%	6%	45%	28%	11%	24%	56%	23%▲	3%	40%	10%	6%
Open Circle	20%	3%	10%	0%	11%	38%	28%	18%	10%	65%▲	14%	18%	44%	2%	1%
PATHS	30%	6%	16%	0%	12%	75%▲	61%▲	41%▲	24%	59%	15%	25%▲	37%	12%	2%
Playworks	37%	31%▲	11%	5%	0%	1%▼	1%▼	0%▼	0%▼	49%	0%	0%▼	49%	0%▼	0%

KEY



▲ = High relative focus

▼ = Low relative focus

Program Profiles

For Each Program

- **Program Snapshot**
- **Evidence of Effectiveness**
- **Domain Focus**
- **Skill Focus**
- **Heat Map**
- **Instructional Methods**
- **Program Components**
- **How It Compares**
- **Purchasing Information**

Examples

PROGRAM FOCUS

VI. PURCHASING AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Purchasing Information

Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility works flexibly to meet the needs of schools. For more information about bringing the 4Rs Program to your school, please contact Director of Administration Lillian Castro using the contact information provided below.

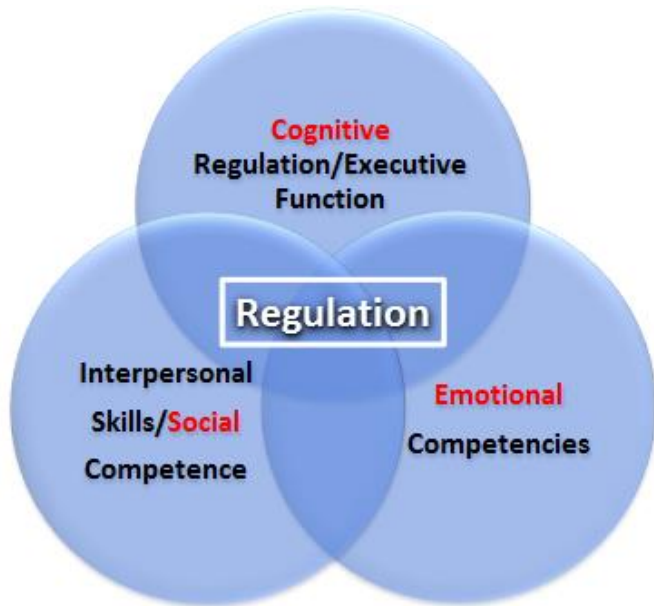
Contact Information

Website:	http://www.morningsidecenter.org/node/36/
Contact:	Lillian Castro, Director of Administration
Phone:	212-870-3318, ext. 33
Email:	lcastro@morningsidecenter.org

	Cognitive Regulation	Emotional Processes	Interpersonal Skills	Character	Mindset
Skill Focus	12%	27%	43%	14%	0%
Instructional Methods	Most frequently uses discussion				
Unique Features Relative to Other Programs	-Typical focus on all domains -Typical use of all instructional methods -Support for building adult social-emotional competence -Extensive resources for family engagement, including parent workshops				

Frontier #3: Manage the Terminology

Social-emotional [and related] constructs are conceptualized, operationalized, and measured with great variety and imprecision, depending on framework, discipline, content, context, and developmental stage.



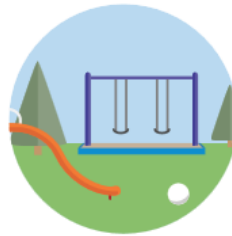
Attitude



Grit



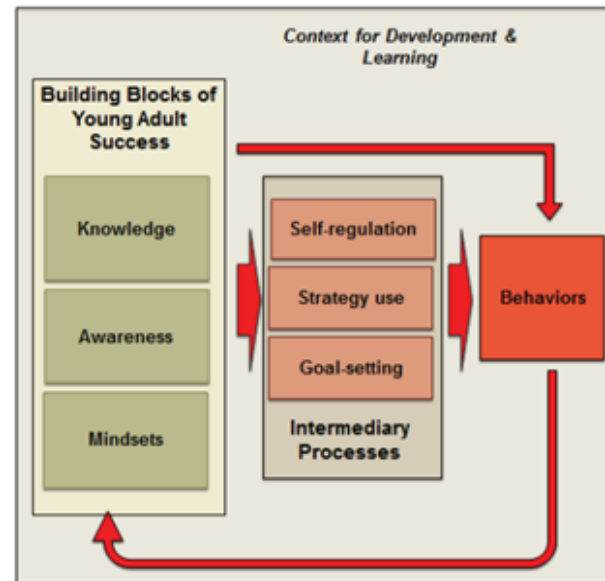
Optimism



Social Intelligence



Social Intelligence



Institutional, Societal, & Economic Context for Adult Outcomes

Young Adult Poised for Success

- Who am I and what do I value?
- What are my goals and do I know how to accomplish them?
- Do I believe I can accomplish them?
- Am I capable of accomplishing them?
- Who are my allies and how can they help me?

Successful Young Adult Outcomes

An example from the EF literature

(From the EF Mapping Project; Jones, Bailey & Partee, 2015; OPRE)

UMBRELLA SKILLS: Self-Regulation, Behavior Regulation, Self-Control

COMPOUND SKILLS

Examples in the Cognitive Domain:

Planning, Problem-Solving,
Goal-Setting

Examples in the Emotion Domain:

Persistence, Grit,
Emotion Regulation



**Executive
Function** **Effortful
Control**

SINGLE SKILLS

Working Memory

Attention
Control

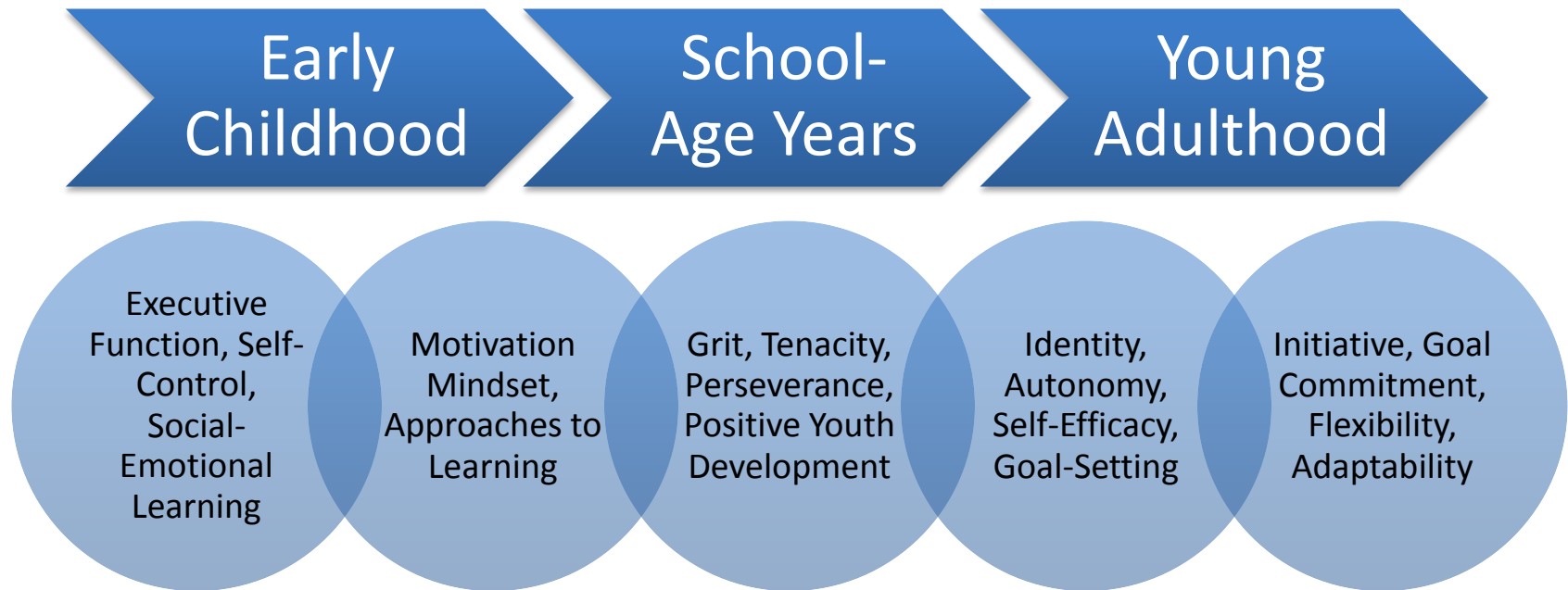
Attention
Shifting

Inhibition

Wait / Delay

One approach: **Create a Taxonomy**

Create coherent, systematic, field facing,
developmental taxonomy of social-
emotional, character, life
(etc., *gulp*, “non-cognitive”) skills...
and aligned tools for research
[measurement]/practice.



1. What are the common denominators of **concept** in these terms and frameworks?
 - What is the **difference** between self-discipline, self-control, perseverance, and conscientiousness (and what is the **same**)?
2. What are the **actual behaviors** (in context) that we expect to see, how to those line up with the terms?
3. Are there a small number of through-lines, or **pathway skills** that are important across development but that look different within period?
 - Regulation, Motivation...?

The Taxonomy Project

Stephanie M. Jones

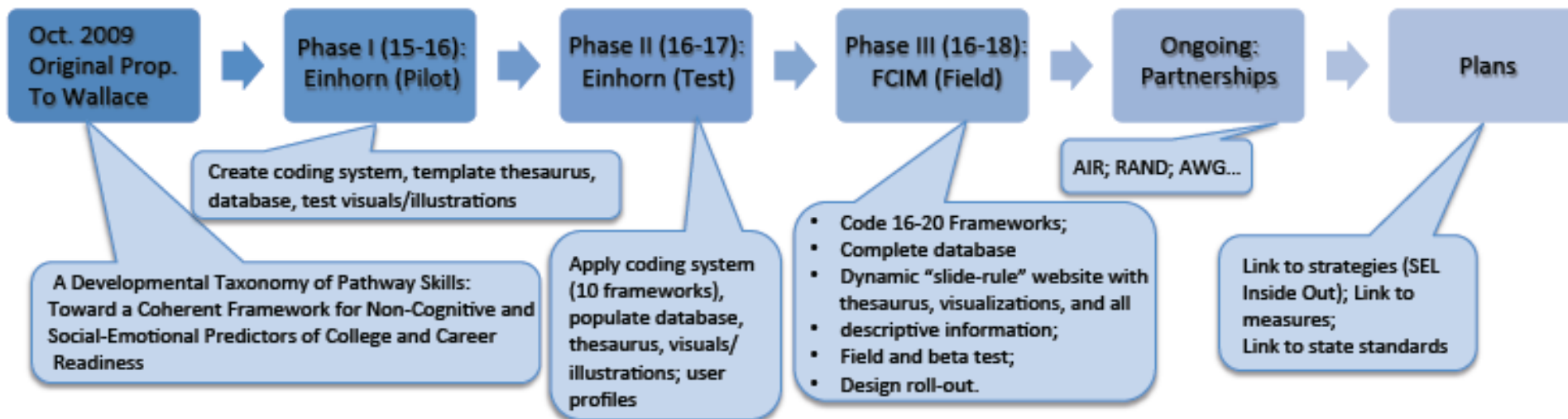
EASEL Lab, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard University



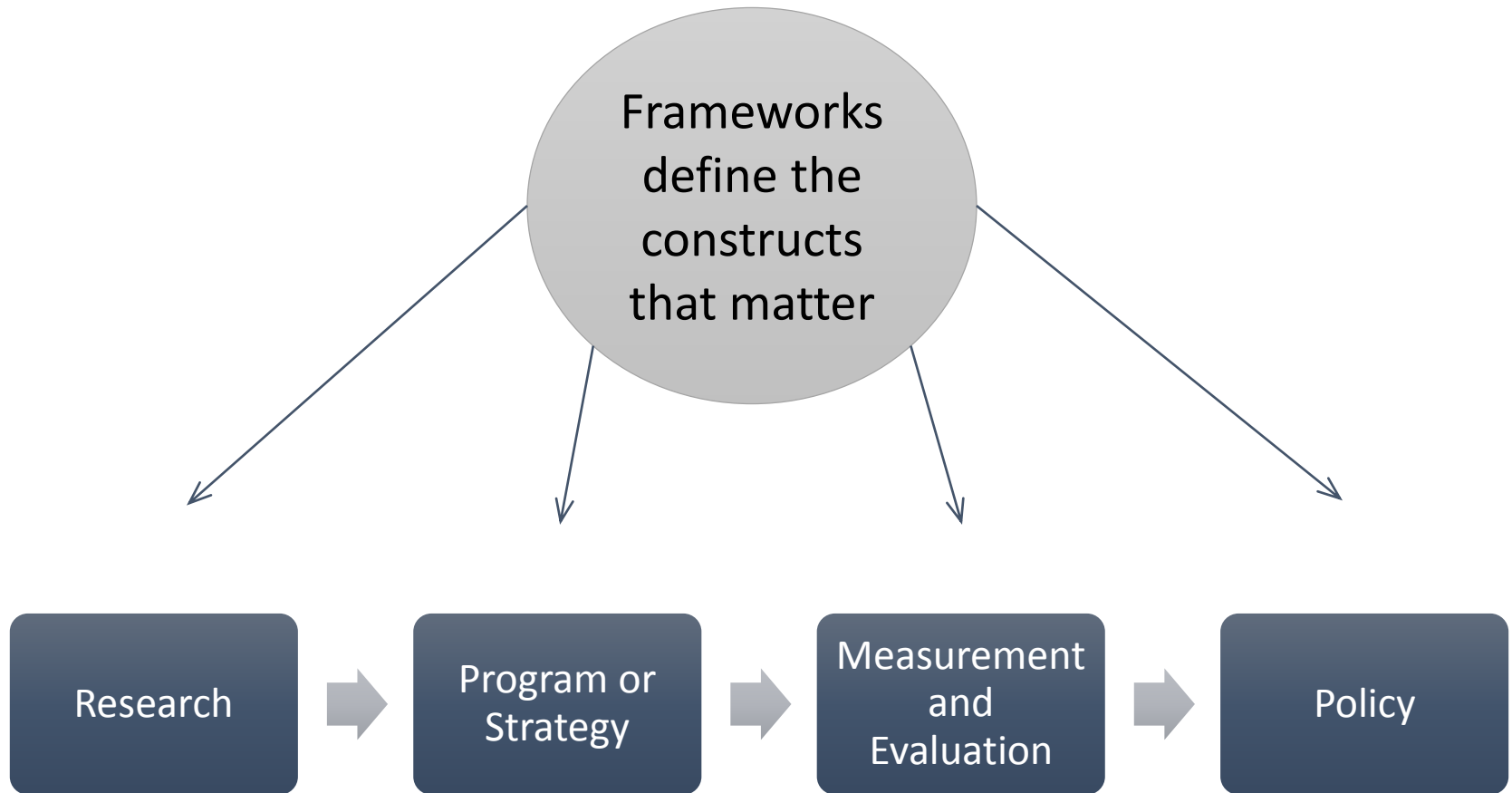
EASEL
lab

Goal: The broad goal of the project is to clarify and connect the various **frameworks** (i.e., organizational systems used to guide research, practice, and policy) and **terms** (i.e., the specific skills or constructs and what they are called) in the field. In doing this, we seek to create greater precision and transparency and facilitate more effective translation between research, practice, and policy.

Timeline:



Why frameworks?



PROJECT DELIVERABLES

Coding

- Coding system
- Database of coded frameworks
- Literature review and project report

Website

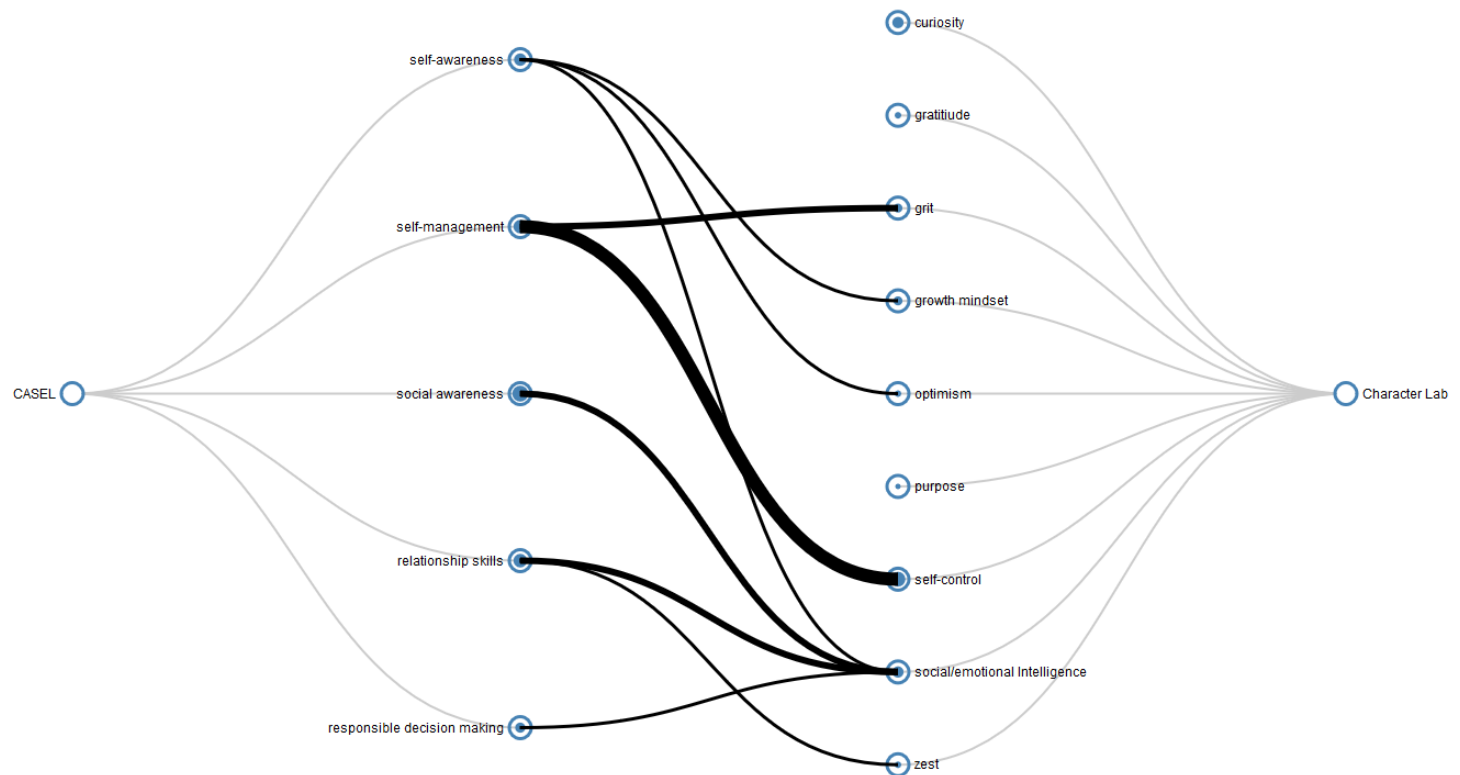
- Online, searchable thesaurus that shows how terms are related to each other and where they are connected to specific evidence
- Interactive visuals that make it easy to look within and across major frameworks of the field (identify what is unique and what is shared)

Outreach

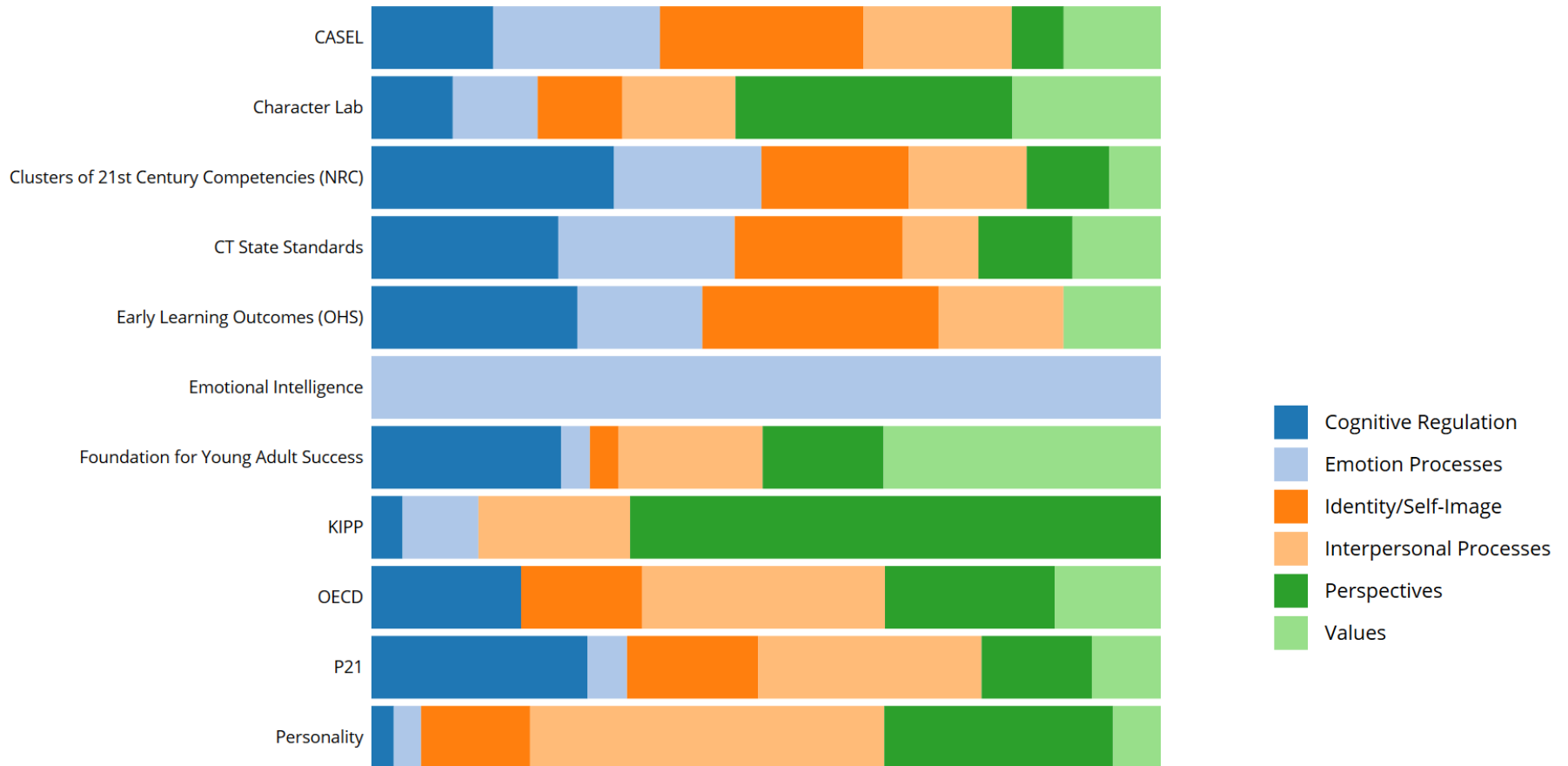
- Briefs describing project findings
- Buy-in from field (interviews, meetings, presentations, etc.)
- Beta testing and rollout of website

Example Visuals

How do frameworks compare to each other?

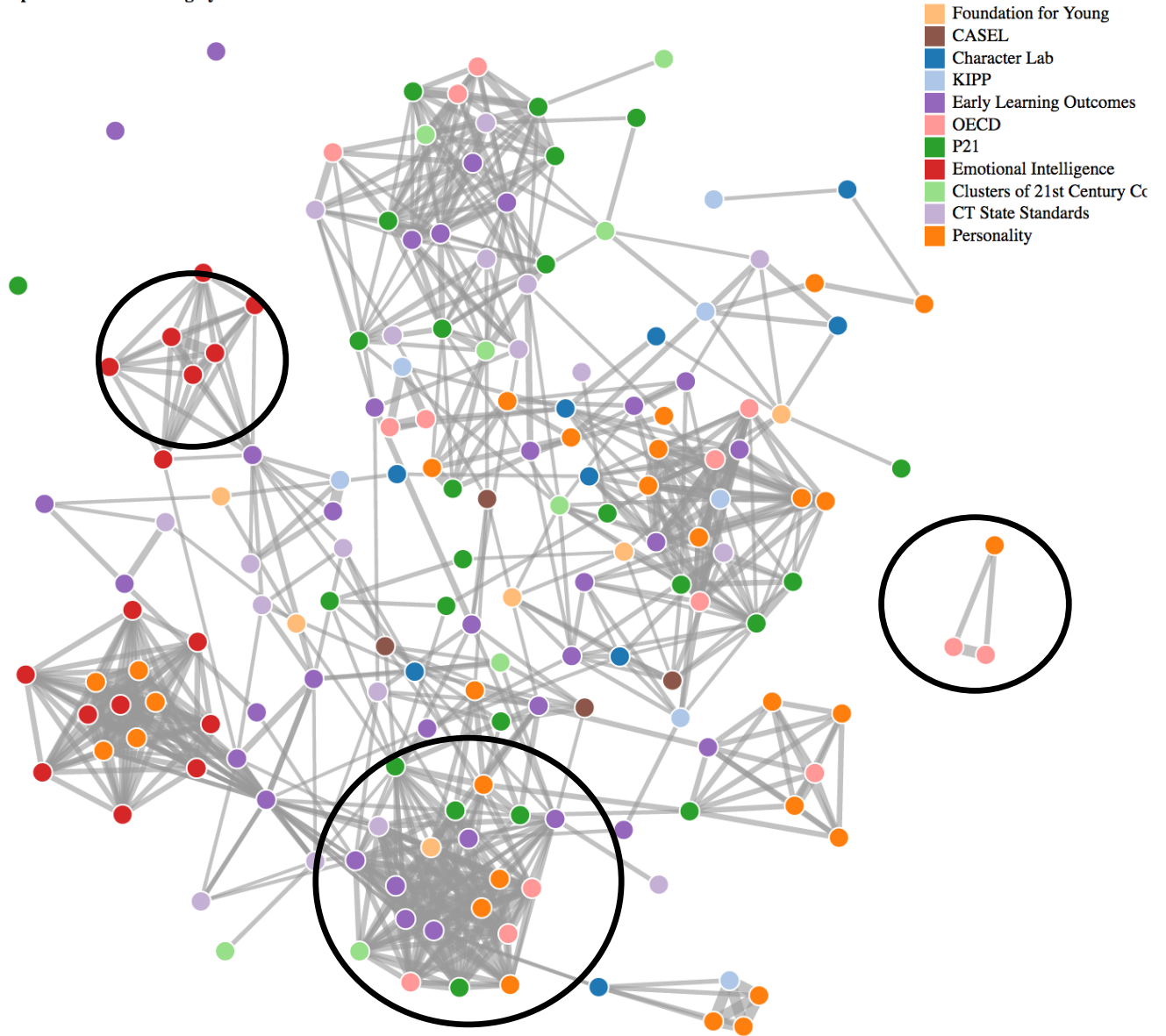


How are domains represented in each framework?



How relate frame

Force-directed Network Representation of Coding System: Links where distance <.7



Force-direct
Links where distance <.7

To Capitalize on Interest Sweeping Policy and Practice Circles and Drive Deep Change...

- Be clear about what we mean, what we are targeting, why it is developmentally & contextually relevant: **Build Transparency (terms and programs)**
- Maintain commitment to evidence: **Understand Context**
- Take on integration: **Identify Kernels and Test Them**

Thank you!
(jonesst@gse.harvard.edu)



The Children's Aid Society



Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute
of Child Health and Human Development



ASCEND

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

