

Symposium

Social and Emotional Learning in South Korea: Practices and Perspectives

Organizer: Center for Future Education Research, Ewha Womans University

Co-Chairs: Dr. Tae Seob Shin (Center for Future Education Research, Ewha Womans University) & Dr. Sang Moo Lee (Seoul National University)

Discussant: Dr. Su Jung Hong (Ewha Womans University)

Symposium Abstract

This symposium examines the role of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in addressing contemporary educational challenges across diverse developmental stages and contexts in South Korea. With increasing concerns regarding the ethical and responsible use of digital technologies among younger students, relational aggression among adolescents, and the socio-emotional needs of gifted learners, SEL has emerged as a critical framework for fostering holistic development. This symposium brings together three empirical studies that collectively explore SEL from the perspectives of intervention, perception, and program development. Each paper focuses on a distinct educational level, including elementary school, middle school, and high school, while maintaining a shared emphasis on how SEL can be meaningfully implemented to promote students' emotional well-being, interpersonal competence, and responsible citizenship.

Paper 1. SEL-Based Digital Citizenship Education Program for Elementary Students: Development and Effectiveness

Presenter: Ms. Kyoung Mi Moon (Ewha Womans University)

This study presents the development and evaluation of a digital citizenship program designed for Korean elementary school students based on SEL principles. As digital environments increasingly shape children's daily experiences, there is a growing need for educational approaches that promote responsible, ethical, and empathetic digital behavior. However, research integrating SEL with digital citizenship education at the elementary level remains limited. A quasi-experimental research design

was employed, involving a pre–post matched evaluation with 2,368 students. The program was structured around nine domains, including personal information protection, prevention of over-immersion, cyberbullying response, self-identity, respect for others, collaboration, information discernment, social participation, and value creation. Results indicated statistically significant improvements across all nine domains, with the largest effect observed in cyberbullying responses and the smallest in prevention of over-immersion. The interaction effect between gender and time was not statistically significant across all domains, indicating similar patterns of improvement for both male and female students. These findings provide strong empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of SEL-based digital citizenship education and highlight the importance of learner-sensitive program design.

Paper 2. SEL-Based Program for Preventing Relational Aggression Among Female Middle School Students: Development and Effectiveness

Presenter: Dr. Youn Jung Shin (Youngran Girls' Middle School)

This study examines the development and effectiveness of a Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)-based program designed to prevent relational aggression among first-year female middle school students. Relational aggression, including behaviors such as social exclusion and rumor spreading, occurs across online and offline contexts and is associated with internalizing problems such as depression, anxiety, and social withdrawal. Despite increasing attention to school violence prevention, existing programs often fail to address the integrated online–offline nature of relational aggression and the gender-specific developmental characteristics of adolescent girls. A mixed-methods research design was employed, combining quasi-experimental and qualitative approaches. The program was developed using the ADDIE model, grounded in CASEL's five core competencies and the Social Information Processing model, and implemented over 10 sessions. Quantitative data were collected from 81 students and analyzed using repeated measures ANOVA, while qualitative data were obtained through in-depth interviews. Results indicated significant improvements in social-emotional competencies, with significant interaction effects between group and time. Significant reductions in relational aggression were also observed across multiple forms. Qualitative findings revealed changes in emotional awareness, cognitive restructuring, application of coping strategies, and expansion of social responsibility. These findings provide strong empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of SEL-based interventions and highlight the importance of developmentally and gender-sensitive program design.

Paper 3. Teachers' Perceptions of Gifted Visual Arts Students' Socio-Emotional Characteristics and SEL Practices in High Schools

Presenter: Dr. Ji Won Kwon (Center for Future Education Research, Ewha Womans University)

This study explores art high school teachers' perceptions of the socio-emotional characteristics of gifted visual arts students and their understanding and application of Social and Emotional Learning in practice. Gifted visual arts students demonstrate heightened emotional sensitivity and strong self-expression, while also experiencing internal tension associated with self-criticism and perfectionism. Despite the growing emphasis on SEL in Korean educational policy, empirical research addressing its application in gifted art education remains limited. A qualitative research design was employed, involving semi-structured interviews with six art teachers. Data were analyzed using the constant comparative method, guided by CASEL's five core competencies. Results indicated that teachers recognized students' advanced self-awareness and self-management, while also identifying challenges in emotional regulation and interpersonal collaboration. Teachers further interpreted emotional sensitivity as both a potential vulnerability and a critical resource for artistic development. These findings provide empirical evidence for the integration of SEL in art education and highlight the need for context-sensitive approaches that support both emotional growth and creative development in specialized high school settings.