

Social and emotional learning in schools



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Academic and Social Learning

A school or educational institution is a place where children acquire not only academic skills (reading, writing, and applying what they learn in tests and assessments) but also social skills. Even though standardized tests and academic endeavors are still necessary, a child's success in school relies on more than them. The tests determine how the students have mastered the contents the teachers have taught. The scores are typically used by the teachers to identify areas which need improvement to enhance their teaching strategy as well as the students' learning. Standardized tests and academic endeavors are an unreliable way to measure a child's success because their performance is usually determined by some social factors in addition to the knowledge and skills they acquire in class.

The world is changing, and teachers need to help students develop skills which they can apply in the fields of specialization and that which can enable them to live with people from different parts of the world. Standardized tests are of value as they determine the academic success of an individual in academic learning. The victory is mostly achieved when one performs well in the trials and academic education. Academic achievement is significant as it is associated with positive values and outcomes. For instance, according to Regier,

Adults who are academically successful and with high levels of education are more likely to be employed, have stable employment, have more employment opportunities than those with less education and earn higher salaries, are more likely to have health insurance, are less dependent on

social assistance, are less likely to engage in criminal activity, are more active as citizens and charitable volunteers and are healthier and happier”.

Hence, they give one the confidence to develop essential academic skills which are useful for a student from one level of studies to another.

Standardized tests are designed to measure the ability of students to memorize information. Most of the students come from different backgrounds and have diverse life experiences which may in a way affects their performance. According to Klodell, “ none of your achievements or ambitions in life matter, and these tests don’t measure your personality. The people who grade these have no idea who you are as an individual, and what you are capable of”. Some people claim that it is a measurement of intelligence, but it is not. The teachers focus on topics which will be examined in the tests in future while the students always look for a clue from past assignments and exam questions to predict which are likely to be assessed and concentrate on them more than the other concepts. My friend is a teacher in a particular community college, and he entirely concurs with this. She claims that everything she prepares for the lessons in a semester will be of benefit to the students because that is what will be tested at the end of the year. Hence, it is the high time teachers encourage both academic and social learning to the students for them to fit in the changing world.

Social learning is crucial as it provides every learner with an equal opportunity to develop despite their socio-economic differences. The teaching enables an individual to improve both social and emotional intelligence and excel academically. “ Intelligence is about more than

remembering facts” (Dodge). Furthermore, “ a secure and emotionally open family environment supports the development of emotional competencies.”

To achieve this, educational institutions should ensure that the students have the chance to flourish through academic and social learning. “

Evidence-based SEL (social and economic learning) programming provides opportunities and rewards for positive behavior, greater attachment, engagement, and commitment to school, and better performance and success in school and life” (Cristóvão et al.). Therefore, in addition to academic excellence, a student also acquires values such as caring, being responsible and knowledgeable.

Although the academic and social learning may seem to be different, they share a universal value which is enabling students to acquire the right skills and knowledge which can be of value in future and their daily lives. When a school integrates academic learning with social learning, the academic achievement of the students improves. Due to the values they develop, incidences of lousy behavior reduces, relationships grow, effective communication is enhanced, and the students get along with others well.

The classroom environment changes, and this makes them even have group work with the help of the teachers which in turn also boosts their academic and social skills.

Measuring the success of the students in an environment which involves both academic and social learning is done through both formal and informal assessment. The outcomes of the students cannot be measured by only one approach but the incorporation of different strategies which will not only evaluate their academic skills but also their personality and ability. The goal

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of the success measurement in the two learning methods is to determine the academic and personal growth of a student at the end of a course or lesson. Greater school success is influenced by the competencies they have acquired primarily through the social learning such as “ self-awareness, social awareness, self-control, relational skills, and responsible decision making” (Cristóvão et al.) and how they employ them to pass in their formal tests.

Students seem to be academically successful in an area which they are motivated to pursue what they like. The schools value and care for the students and treat them as resources rather than learners. Such a classroom and school environment encourages the students to be confident in what they do and can apply them to the real world. Measuring their success in both academic and social learning can be evaluated with the help of how what they acquired can improve their way of living now and in the future. It can be evident in the way they answer the standardized tests which should also examine what they have understood and how they can apply it to their daily lives.

Works Cited

- Cristóvão, Ana M et al. “ Social and Emotional Learning and Academic Achievement in Portuguese Schools: A Bibliometric Study” *Frontiers in psychology* vol. 8 1913. 8 Nov. 2017, doi: 10. 3389/fpsyg. 2017. 01913

The article explains the importance of social and emotional learning in academic achievement and student development. The authors assert that the learning is gaining populace in the world due to the changing needs and

demands which a student should meet. They further explain how social and emotional learning can improve relationships, reduce crime activities and facilitate citizenship. The article also explores the relationship between the adoption of learning in schools and the academic achievement of the students

- Dodge, Terri. “ Impact of Standardized Testing Emphasis on Teaching and Learning in Kindergarten through 12th Grade in United States Schools: East Tennessee Principals’ Perspectives.” (2007).

It is a study which the researcher investigated the perceptions of standardized testing. It describes the impact of the measurement (both positive and limitations) on teaching and learning. It was based on the aim of the United States to improve academic performance with a heated debate on which strategy should be adopted.

- Klodell, Claire. “ The Two Words That Make Every Student Cringe.” HuffPost, 2014, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/claire-klodell/standardized-tests_b_5448020.html. Accessed 14 Jan 2019.

It is a blog from Huffington post that primarily describes what standardized tests is, and the contributor provides views on the cons of the tests. The author points out how the standardized tests are irrelevant, biased and unreliable in the current society. The author also criticizes how the school system still finds them useful despite their adverse effects on academic success and personal growth.

- Regier, Janelle. “ Why Is Academic Success Important?” Saskschoolboards. Ca, 2011, <https://saskschoolboards.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/2011SIAST.pdf>.

The article explains the importance of academic success in society. The author ascertains that the most successful people, for instance, those who have better and well-paying jobs are academically successful. She also explains the positive values associated with academic success.

- Zeidner, Moshe, Richard D. Roberts, and Gerald Matthews. “ Can emotional intelligence be schooled? A critical review.” *Educational psychologist* 37. 4 (2002): 215-231. DOI: 10.1207/S15326985EP3704_2

The authors provide a critical review of whether emotional intelligence can be schooled. It also evaluates the role of emotional intelligence in the school and education setting. The article explains that a conducive environment can influence the development of emotional intelligence. Furthermore, it describes the factors one should consider before developing an EI program for it to be effective.