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**KUWAIT EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS' REPORTED NEEDS AND PERCEIVED
BENEFITS OF SOCIO-EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY**

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Mounerah Almukaimy

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The dissertation of Mounerah Almukaimy was reviewed and approved* by the following:

James E. Johnson
Professor of Education (Early Childhood Education)
Dissertation Adviser
Chair of Committee

Edgar Yoder
Professor Agricultural and Extension Education
Professor of Extension Education

Bernard Badiali
Associate Professor of Education (Curriculum & Instruction)
Program Coordinator: Curriculum and Supervision

Rachel Wolkenhauer
Assistant Professor of Education

William S. Carlsen
Professor of Education (Science Education)
Director of Graduate and Undergraduate Education, C&I

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School.

ABSTRACT

Educators have proposed the integration of socio-emotional intelligence (SEI) competences to Early Childhood Education (ECE). Numerous scholars accept as valid theoretical approaches to SEI, as well as distinctive socio-emotional competences, measurement instruments, and educational methods. Vast literature exists on the positive effects that SEI has over classroom processes, including positive interactions, constructive and purposeful play, quality environment, and teacher-family partnerships. However, the nature of SEI studies in Kuwait showed a need for learning the impact of SEI on ECE instruction. This qualitative study explored the perceptions, skills, and reflections about SEI among four ECE teachers in Kuwait, who reported the effects of emotional intelligence over classroom processes after completing a professional development intervention designed to learn SEI competences. A secondary purpose was to identify practices to improve professional development methods with a focus on SEI.

Using Goleman's (1998) conceptual framework to have useful methods and instruments to collect concurrently qualitative data. The qualitative method in the study included the completion of six qualitative instruments. Results of the study suggested a scarcity of professional development activities in the topic of SEI, a lack of embedded SEI behaviors in the Kuwait educational system, the importance of cultural influences on SEI and interventions, existing tensions between teachers and parents, and the resurgence of educational goals as result of in-service education. Six recommendations are: (1) to increase professional development, (2) to implement reflective collaboration through communities of practice (CoPs), (3) to reduce perceived differences among members of the teaching community, (4) to increase cultural awareness through teamwork, (5) to improve parent-teacher relationships, and (6) to increase enthusiastic school involvement.

Key terms: Socio-emotional intelligence (SEI), SEI awareness, professional domain, classroom processes, early childhood education (ECE)

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Chapter One: Statement of the Problem

In 1990, John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey described Socio-Emotional Intelligence(SEI) as the ability to accurately appraise expressions and emotions in oneself and others; the effective regulation of emotions in self and others; and the use of feelings to motivate, plan, and achieve goals. SEI acquired popularity in education during the 1990s due to the work of Bar-On (1997), Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2004), Goleman (1998), and Gardner (2008). However, the affective or SEI construct is an old concept in education, represented by Benjamin Bloom and associates (1971), who incorporated affective educational goals to school curriculum throughout the 1960s to the 1970s. Not until the 1990s was the concept of SEI extended vastly in industry, education, and society. Research during the 1990s provided an SEI significant relevance, as studies found an intrinsic relationship between SEI, positive psychology, greater happiness and wellbeing, self-awareness, positive socialization, optimism, and self-efficacy (Costas & Faria, 2015).

Nevertheless, scholars argued that educational systems have neglected to include fully the benefits of SEI development (Jagger, 2013), adjudicating this policy approach to the fact that educators avoid purposively emotional domain interventions, assuming paternalistic and protective positions (Dunn, 2012). Concurrently, the SEI framework continues generating relevance and more sectors promote the application and study of affective frameworks because of their multiple benefits. Evidence seems to validate that SEI helps adults and children alike to build the foundation of emotional competence, which translates into improved job and academic performance (Vaida & Opre, 2014). This study asks four ECE teachers in Kuwait about the topic of SEI. Through various methodological means they reported how awareness of SEI influences instruction and learning in classroom and educational processes.

Problem Statement

Educational systems and teachers around the world are demonstrating interest in SEI teaching models (Bahman & Maffini, 2008) as a framework to improve socio-emotional competences among teachers, students, and parents. Mayer and Salovey (1997) proposed originally the frame of SEI as the set of skills necessary to adapt successfully to uncertainty and change, developing consequently a paradigm to identify, manage, and regulate emotions. Because the SEI frame has supported positive processes in social contexts, its use has proliferated to both private and public schools. Vast empirical evidence exists on how children with SEI exhibit behavioral characteristics that are more effective in both social and educational contexts (Mattingly, 2010). In the area of education, SEI has been studied from diverse perspectives, including socio-emotional readiness among students (Arbegast, 2010), links between socio-emotional readiness and academic performance (Arda, & Ocak, 2012), and the influence of parents and teachers over socio-emotional readiness among children (Kidwell et al., 2010).

As the quality of interactions with parents, siblings, and teachers shape children's abilities to understand their emotions and control negative attitudes (Ulutas & Omeroglu, 2007), the study of SEI awareness among ECE teachers is necessary to design socio-emotional educational strategies. The problem is that there is an absence of studies about SEI and SEI awareness exists among ECE teachers in Kuwait. Teachers in Middle East cultures, such as Kuwait, can benefit from understanding how their own knowledge of SEI could influence processes in the classroom.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to evaluate the effects that socio-emotional competences (i.e., self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness, and social skills) have in facilitating learning and instruction in the classroom among ECE teachers who have completed a professional development intervention on SEI. This study involved four ECE teachers in Kuwait, who reported their observations about the effects of SEI over classroom processes after completing a professional development intervention designed to learn SEI competences. A secondary purpose of this study is to identify what four teachers report about practices to improve professional development methods with a focus on SEI.

Furthermore, this research incorporated three components associated to affective behaviors in ECE, (a) SEI, (b) SEI classroom interventions, and (c) professional development . SEI encompasses Goleman's (1998) dimensions of socio-emotional competences, which are self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, self-motivation, and social skills. Classroom interventions encompassed expressions, behaviors, and interactions observed through the literature on SEI within ECE environments, including positive interactions, constructive and purposeful play, quality environment, and teacher-family partnerships. The third component was attributed of professional development programs (i.e., continuous improvement, relevance of topics, quality of activities, mentoring opportunities) that have proven to be the best practices.

Justification of the Study

Teachers who are able to understand socio-emotional competences, such as perceiving emotions, facilitating thought, understanding emotions, and managing emotions, are able to create positive classroom environments that are conducive to positive processes, such as academic performance, collaboration, and improved social behaviors (Dunn, 2012). Teachers in

countries like Kuwait can benefit from incorporating SEI interventions at the ECE level, as socio-emotional competence relates directly to school readiness and school adaptation (Waajid, 2010). Therefore, the incorporation of SEI through professional development and classroom interventions is relevant to assist ECE children. Understanding contextual situations, making sense of children's social environments, and acquiring socio-emotional competences will help them to achieve success in both academic and social environments. Furthermore, studies (Denham, Basset, & Zinsser, 2012) demonstrated that teachers who act as socializers of emotional competence exercise a "mirroring" effect among the children they surround. This means, children can learn SEI skills from teachers with increased self-awareness and control of their emotions. Scholars in Kuwait (Burney, Johnes, Al-Enezi, & Al-Musallam, 2013) agreed that teacher preparation is fundamental in achieving educational efficiency in times of complex social activity. The results of qualitative study have analyzed how awareness of SEI influences instruction and learning reflected through observations of classroom processes among ECE teachers in Kuwait will allow confirming what intrinsic relationships exist between SEI awareness, professional development, and classroom processes. The absence of studies in this field among ECE teachers in Kuwait makes the proliferation of exhaustive studies necessary. These studies will allow educators to offer classroom interactions that are more holistic in the integration of the diverse intelligences.

Theoretical Background

Educational systems worldwide adopted the SEI frame (Mayer et al., 2004) as an attempt to improve education during the 2000s (Bahman & Maffini, 2008). However, the study of SEI development was already associated to education through the work of Erikson (as in White & Coleman, 2008) and Bloom (1971). Erikson's theories (1993) explained how individuals develop

socio-emotional competence, which is an interpretative frame adopted by numerous educational communities. According to White and Coleman (2008), teachers incorporated SEI competence to education with the purpose to help children develop independence, self-control, and resilience. Erikson (1993) reported the frame of socio-emotional development through diverse scientific publications, including 1950s classic “Childhood and Society.” Professional psychology communities recognize Erikson’s work as part of the human development theory (Roeckelein, 2006).

During the 1970s, Bloom (1971) published the classification of *emotional competence* educational goals, named “affective goals,” establishing an intrinsic relationship between SEI competences and educational theory. Bloom developed a taxonomy of educational domains (i.e., cognitive, affective, and psychomotor) used broadly as an educational classification system to develop educational goals since the 1960s (Anderman & Anderman, 2009). The most common domain is the cognitive, which focuses on the ability of individuals to learn, apply, synthesize, and evaluate knowledge. The affective domain relates to socio-emotional competence, and the psychomotor domain relates to kinesthetic abilities. Picard et al. (2004) reported that the affective domain is the less popular of Bloom’s educational classifications, because teachers have not been able to separate the concept of emotional growth from learning and rational thinking.

In the 1990s, Mayer and Salovey coined the term “SEI” to define a series of socio-emotional competence observed through empirical studies and inspired in the construct of EQ established by Bar-On (1997). This theory defines SEI as the ability to self-regulate feelings and emotions during the process of thinking (Connelly, Gaddis, & Helton-Fauth, 2008). Mayer and Salovey (1997) explained that SEI increases as the individual matures, and emotions happen

within a context of social relationships. Mayer also proposed that emotions are universal expressions able to transcend cultural contexts (White & Coleman, 2000).

The first SEI scale was the SEI Test (MSCEIT) (Mayer et al., 2012). In 1999, Sullivan introduced a variation of the MSCEIT that was adapted to children, attempting to measure SEI by managing and understanding emotions through facial expressions, stories, and music. Mayer and Salovey defined four main areas of SEI: (a) perceiving emotions, (b) utilizing emotions, (c) understanding emotions, and (d) managing emotions. Another SEI competence model vastly disseminated is Goleman's (1998) framework. Goleman deconstructed SEI into the five dimensions of: (a) self-awareness, (b) self-regulation, (c) self-motivation, (d) social awareness, and (e) social skills.

According to Connelly et al. (2008), children with SEI were able to identify and accurately interpret emotions on them and others. Then, the children were able to apply those emotions positively during decision-making and problem solving. Other scholars (Zohar & Marshall, as in Rowan, 2004) associated SEI to Maslow's model of self-actualization. This means individuals were able to develop rational intelligence, SEI, and spiritual intelligence, which demonstrated increased social adaptability and positive relationships. Experts have studied SEI also from the three approaches of emotional traits, emotional ability, and emotional competence (Vaida & Opre, 2014).

Furthermore, evidence suggests that SEI facilitates instruction and learning among both teachers and young children. Kaplan (2010) presented evidence on how SEI interventions and training helped ECE educators and caregivers to improve significantly emotional competences, such as perceiving, understanding, and managing emotions. Additional research suggested that affective interventions in the classroom influence socio-emotional development, cognitive

development (Feldman & Eidelman, 2009), and academic performance (Domitrovich, Gest, Gill, Bierman, Welsh, & Jones, 2009), among children, especially during the first five years of the children's life.

Studies on SEI have demonstrated that affective behaviors promote an environment of communication, empathy, and collaboration that consequently promotes academic achievement (CASEL, as in Payton et al., 2008). Other benefits of SEI include positive socialization, lower disruptive behaviors, and lower emotional stress across students from kindergarten to twelfth grade.

Additional evidence from SEI research demonstrated that emotional competences improve academic performance in children and adults alike. However, educational scholars (Dunn, 2013; Jagger, 2013) argued that teachers avoided working with emotional competences, because they believed that addressing children's emotions could cause more harm than good, especially at the ECE level. While some teachers were afraid to evaluate the emotional growth of children, others were afraid that teachers could manipulate effective learning goals toward premeditated emotional responses. As a result, most curricular designs are one-dimensional; strongly based on cognitive development, and the curricular incorporation of other domains, such as affective and psychomotor, constitute only a small fraction of school activities. Nevertheless, most teachers recognize the benefits of developing SEI competences in relation to academic success.

Proponents of SEI ECE framework advocate for the use of affective goals to help students develop self-control of their emotions, which eventually influences their capacity to learn. Krathwhol (2002) believed that SEI could constitute a common language for teachers from different subject fields, and a frame that will benefit schools by providing congruence of goals,

extended assessment opportunities, and an ampler scope of teaching methodologies. Jagger (2013), on the other hand, suggested that students who operate within SEI frames could learn important skills to be successful as future members of society. Those skills include awareness, willingness to participate, and responsiveness; as well as listening to others with respect, internalizing, and exhibiting congruent behaviors. Picard et al. (2004) emphasized that an SEI curriculum positively influences children's ability to learn, as affective goals influence brain activity, intrinsic motivation, higher thinking, and cognition.

Efforts exist in integrating affective goals into the educational curriculum. Many ECE program models(e.g. Bank Street, Waldorf) or approaches emphasize the unity of affect and cognition in early learning and child well being (see Roopnarine & Johnson, 2013). Proponents of the creative curriculum (Holt & Hannon, 2006) argued that children who are able to regulate their emotions are able to build better social relationships and create positive learning environments. Nevertheless, the implementation of SEI goals posed special challenges at the ECE level, in part because children at that age are beginning to learn how to verbalize their emotional experiences. Teachers would need specialized training to understand the goals of an SEI curriculum.

SEI approaches proposed that children learn through both the development of individuality and active participation (Arbegast, 2010). Therefore, students are encouraged to demonstrate distinctive personality traits and specific ways of self-expression. Indeed, teachers identified the "ideal" SEI behaviors that the child must develop, such as empathy, cooperation, and compassion. In other words, ECE teachers provided students with the opportunity to make real choices in real environments. Teachers serve as monitoring agents of the learning process by observing, recording, and assessing gaps between SEI goals and expected classroom processes,

and communicating later these gaps to students and parents. Teachers with knowledge and refined understanding of SEI also develop better relationships with students and parents that could lead consequently to greater job satisfaction (Mattingly, 2010).

After analyzing 317 research studies on SEI, the organization Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (Payton et al., 2008) defined emotional learning as:

Social and emotional learning is the process through which children and adults acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to recognize and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, demonstrate caring and concern for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations effectively. (p. 4)

To accomplish an effective SEI training for ECE teachers, content areas must include knowledge about concepts such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (Payton et al., 2008). Studies (Chamorro-Premuzic, Bennet, & Furnhan, 2007) demonstrated that all these are behaviors related to both the individual control of emotions among diverse schools' constituencies and improved academic performance. The benefits of developing SEI competences for both teachers and students are numerous, including:

1. Increased levels of attention and concentration; increased levels of social emotional ability and reduced aggressive behavior; interventions in general reflected post-behaviors such as cooperation, compliance, problem solving, and expressiveness (Arda & Ocak, 2012).
2. Increased socio-emotional competences (Bassett, 2008).

3. Early nurturing control behaviors over young children can interfere with development of emotional competences; multiple roadmaps exist in the way preschool children develop socio-emotional competences (Blandon, Calkins, & Keane, 2010).
4. Children demonstrate gender differentiation in relation to emotional knowledge, expression, and regulation; SEI influences social behavior at the long-term (Denham et al., 2003).
5. Some adult behaviors act as predictors of children's emotional regulation within the emotional and cognitive domains; children demonstrate gender differentiation in relation to emotional competence (Espy, Sheffield, Wiebe, Clark, & Moehr, 2011).
6. SEI interventions and training helps ECE educators and caregivers to achieve emotional competences in children, such as perceiving, understanding, and managing emotions (Kaplan, 2002).
7. Levels of attachment/detachment from parents and teachers are associated with understanding and regulating of emotions; levels of understanding and regulating emotions are associated with the way parents and teachers identify and report special circumstances (Kidwell et al., 2010).
8. A system of peer support liberates time that a teacher can use in providing other instructions; unconditional acceptance from teachers creates positive socio-emotional class environments; under the previous conditions, the number of disruptive behaviors decreased; shared responsibilities increased the climate of caring; qualities, such as an authentic awareness and a nurturing attitude, create a positive climate that leads to socio-emotional competence (Pech, 2013).

9. A correlation between socio-competence curriculum and children's connections with others as well as positive changes in the children's behaviors exists (Schultz, Richardson, Barber, & Wilcox, 2011).
10. SEI educational programs contribute significantly to children's emotional competence levels (Ulutas & Ömeroglu, 2007).
11. Attachment measures with parents have a significant and positive relationship with social competence behaviors; children with safe attachment to parents exhibited higher levels of social engagement; children with safe attachment to parents exhibited higher levels social, emotional, and cognitive skills; children with safe attachment to parents enjoyed higher peer acceptance; attachment security demonstrated to be a central support to peer socio-competence (Veríssimo, Santos, Fernandes, Shin, & Vaughn, 2014).

Theories of professional development among teachers proposed that human beings possess the three psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Edmunds, Ntoumanis, & Duda, 2008). Autonomy comes from the human desire to control the nature of behaviors; relatedness involves feeling connected to others; and competence relates to the human desire to feel useful to and integrated effectively into a bigger organizational system. In accomplishing professional development, teachers must manifest diverse levels of motivation, self-determination, and self-regulation. Thadani, Breland, and Dewar (2015), on the other hand, emphasized the role that self-efficacy has in achieving professional development. Self-efficacy is a socio-emotional competence related to people's beliefs that they can accomplish goals such as generating positive classroom processes among children, student achievement, and student

motivation. Studies (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000) associated self-efficacy levels to teaching motivation and decreases of teaching burnout.

Teachers who are able to understand socio-emotional competences, such as perceiving emotions, facilitating thought, understanding emotions, and managing emotions, are able to create positive classroom environments that are conducive to positive classroom processes, such as academic performance, collaboration, and improved social behaviors (Dunn, 2012). Teachers in countries like Kuwait can benefit from incorporating SEI interventions at the ECE level, as socio-emotional competence relates directly to school readiness and school adaptation (Waajid, 2010). Therefore, the incorporation of SEI through professional development and classroom interventions is relevant to assist ECE children in understanding contextual situations, making sense of their social environments, and acquiring socio-emotional competences that will help them to achieve success in both academic and social environments. Furthermore, studies (Denham, Basset, & Zinsser, 2012) demonstrated that teachers who act as socializers of emotional competence exercise a “mirroring” effect among the children they surround. This means children can learn SEI skills from teachers with increased self-awareness and control of their emotions. Scholars in Kuwait (Burney, Johnes, Al-Enezi, & Al-Musallam, 2013) agreed that teacher preparation is fundamental in achieving educational efficiency in times of complex social activity.

Educational systems recognize professional development for teachers as compulsory activity to foster an educational tradition of trust, accountability, self-efficacy, positivism, and open communication (Nolan & Hoover, 2007). However, the complex demands of school settings challenge teacher’s professional development. Although a systematic definition of what specific activities should be part of professional development (e.g.,

workshops, seminars) (Davey, 2011), Nolan and Hoover emphasized that professional development requires sophisticated skills to deal with today's complex and culturally diverse environments. Nelsen (2014) related professional development to socio-emotional competences, such as self-efficacy, self-regulation, motivation, and initiative. Teachers who exhibit SEI have also demonstrated higher teaching commitment levels and increased collaboration with students and peers alike (Convey, 2014).

Other scholars (Titus & Gremler, 2010) emphasized the importance of self-reflection or "conscientious pedagogical reflection" (p. 182) in developing effective teaching styles. The absence of a teaching philosophy reflects in the way teachers are able to deliver congruent classroom interventions. Theories of social and cultural constructionism have exposed consistently that social practice is inseparable from personal beliefs (Franks, 2008). For example, Klassen, Al-Dhafri, Hannok, and Betts (2011) reported that cultural dimensions continued to influence the way teachers develop their teaching philosophies in Kuwait. A main characteristic of effective professional development programs is making teachers responsible for their professional growth (Nolan & Hoover, 2011). Therefore, self-awareness is necessary to assist teachers in deciding their educational goals, a fundamental part of professional development. SEI also can help teachers to connect with other people and increase collaboration, which are additional ideal attributes of professional development programs. A professional development program integrates the SEI frame and incorporates constructive play, supportive physical environments, and teacher-parent collaborative alliances (Arbegast, 2010). Professional development also requires continuous improvement through a series of cyclical activities, in which mentors and mentees nurture socio-emotional competences such as active listening, feeling empathy, and understanding of cultural differences (Nolan & Hoover, 2011).

A paucity of studies about SEI awareness among teachers in Kuwait exists. However, teachers in Kuwait value education, especially at the ECE level (Al-Habib, 1989) and exhibit positive attitudes toward education as reflection of a collective cultural dimension (Klassen et al., 2011). Teachers in Kuwait are encouraged to practice quiet approaches when dealing with undesirable behaviors (Al-Sahel, 2005).

Research Question

The research questions posed in this study are:

- What do teachers perceive their needs to be regarding improving their own and their children's social-emotional awareness and intelligence in the classroom?
- What do they see as helping in training ECE teachers in Kuwait regarding these needs?

Assumptions, Scope, and Limitations

Diverse conceptual frameworks exist within the construct of SEI. However, not all of them are readily available to communities of scholars seeking to advance their study. This study used Goleman's (1998) SEI competence framework. The researcher selected this framework because it represents a practical scale to measure specific socio-emotional competence behaviors (Sean & Andrews-Brown, 2010). However, the researcher considered other SEI scales when analyzing results, as this scale could not include all the socio-emotional indicators validated by emergent theory.

This study was conducted with four ECE teachers employing in depth qualitative measures (explained below) in Kuwait. Issues of recruitment, withdrawal, and motivation to participate could all be challenges in completing the research. Furthermore, this study encompassed a design that required repeated participation during a period that went from one to four months, which required long-term commitment. The researcher had to sustain active

engagement with participants during the research, especially because some interventions were performed remotely using virtual technologies. Access to virtual technologies was another impairment for completion rates.

Extensive literature exists as a basis for this study, as we will discuss in the upcoming chapter.

Glossary of Key Terms

Awareness: Is the mental state that depends on people's subjective report of their inner states (Kunimoto, 1994). A specific individual is the only person who can have access to his or her internal state of awareness. The gap between what people want to be and how people perceive themselves is called distance.

Classroom processes: Classroom processes refer to the behavioral interaction dynamics that occur as result of educational interventions. Maitlis (2005) reported that the results of social processes come from interactions between individuals while trying to make sense of their realities. The result of classroom processes based on SEI can be positive or negative. Positive classroom processes include positive relationships and collaboration. Negative classroom processes include disruptive behaviors and high stress. It is the cumulative and not the singular exposure to interventions that is considered critical in childhood developmental processes (Evans, 2004).

ECE Teacher: Teachers in charge of administering and delivering educational interventions intended to achieve developmental progress of young children (i.e., infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children in centers, homes, and schools) and their facilities, to prepare these children to enter the elementary school level (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 2011). Their primary mission is to support young children's development and learning. ECE teachers in Kuwait teach children from three to five years old.

SEI: A theoretical frame proposed for the first time by John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey in 1990. SEI is described as the ability to accurately appraise expressions and emotions in oneself

and others; the effective regulation of emotions in self and others; and the use of feelings to motivate, plan, and achieve goals.

SEI awareness: Awareness of the self and self-behaviors is the process for which individuals are able to organize their self-representation, recognizing their feelings and the feelings of others (Mannarini, 2009). Emotional self-awareness also encompasses the ability to link what is happening between what happens inside and outside the individual. Other attributes include capacity for understanding, feeling, and communicating feelings with others.

Professional development: Training and educational activities directed toward improving knowledge continually and practice among members of a profession (“Key Points,” 2010.) Professional development aims to create a culture of learning, mentoring, and continuous improvement.

Socio-emotional competence curriculum: Also known as “affective curriculum,” this is an educational design characterized for the use of SEI competences to enhance classroom processes (Nolan & Hoover, 2009). Affective curricula aim to accomplish positive interactions, constructive and purposeful play, quality classroom environment, and teacher-family partnerships.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Theories of SEI (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) present opportunities for ECE teachers to improve both their instructional practice and classroom processes. Individuals who develop appropriate emotions can develop increased awareness and abilities to acquire knowledge (Pelsler, 2014). Furthermore, Picard et al. (2004) emphasized that separating emotional states from cognitive and psychomotor domains of knowledge is impossible, as children learn through emotions. This literature review explores the topics of SEI through the lens of theories of SEI in education, professional development domains, and SEI classroom processes (see Figure 1). This present research incorporates theories that demonstrate how the use of SEI interventions has influence over students' and teachers' socio-affective competences, as well as attributes of professional development programs that can apply to ECE teachers.

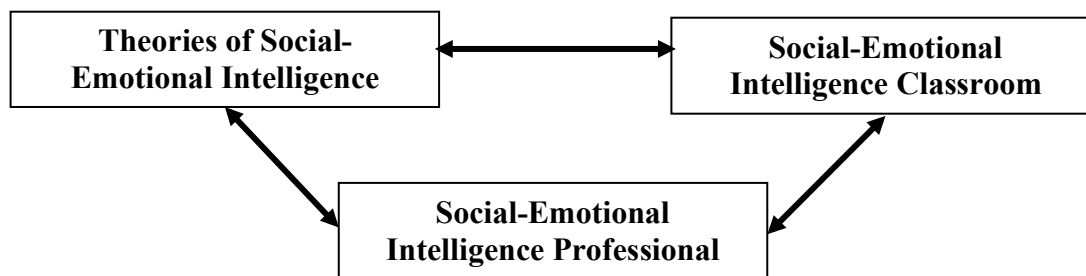


Figure 1. Literature Review Topics

Theories of SEI

Affective Domains in Education

Scholars (Dunn & Stinson, 2012; Picard et al., 2004) emphasized that ECE teachers have slowly introduced concepts of affective domains to existing curricula in the United States. Nevertheless, theories of affective domain expose that emotional competencies learned through affective domain models, such as empathy, connectedness, and ethical sensibility, can help

children to develop better rational behavior, memory retrieval, decision-making, and creativity when combined with a cognitive domain curriculum (Picard et al., 2004).

The affective domain relates to the emotional process of learning through attitudes, dispositions, feelings, motivations, and values. Yount (2012) stated that education sectors integrated affective domain objectives through philosophies of humanism since the ancient Greek and Roman empires. Yount emphasized that educational systems, from Christian heritages, encourage learning objectives based on both emotional sensitivity and scholarship. However, Dunn and Stinson (2012) argued that teachers are afraid to integrate affective domain educational objectives, especially at early childhood schooling levels. Their explanations about affective domain in schools described an environment in which teachers avoid emotional approaches with the false belief that children could be “emotionally harmed.”

According to Peters (2006), proponents of an affective theory of education include Dewey during the 1920s, Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia during the 1960s, Alpren during the 1970s, Home during the 1980s, and Martin and Reigeluth during the 1990s. Although most of these presented similar definitions of affective domain, they also introduced variations in the application of educational objectives. For example, while Krathwhol followed Bloom’s classic view of affective domain as part of a three-legged taxonomy (cognitive, affective, psychomotor), Alpren suggested separating affective and cognitive domains. Martin and Reigeluth (1999), on the other hand, classified the affective domain in six dimensions, including emotional, moral, social, spiritual, motivational, and aesthetic. Nevertheless, scholars (Nelsen, 2014) emphasized how educators can trace affective educational objectives to Dewey and Bloom.

Dewey (as in Nelsen, 2014) contributed to the education field by publishing seminal work from the 1910s to the 1930s that is still cited to justify how human experiences can

integrate to cognition to produce effective educational systems (Peters, 2006). The Dewey school of experiential education exposed that traditional education is adequate when combined with the learners' interests and impulses (Dewey, as in Nelsen, 2014). By acknowledging the capacities and interests of the learner, Dewey's educators maintain continual interactions between *the learner and what is learned*. Dewey classified educational approaches as traditional (e.g., encompassing of information, standards, and rules) and progressive education (e.g., a guided effort to deny traditional education by promoting individualistic growth). In Dewey's opinion, both traditional and progressive education can take extreme positions. A new philosophy of using experiences as a base for education is a solution to provide learners with quality experiences in relation to discipline, methods of instruction, school organization, and social environments.

In general, Dewey (as in Nelsen, 2014) made the teacher responsible for evaluating the direction of learning, individual experience, and physical environments that could lead to academic performance through the recognition of "normal" experiences. In these experiences, children interact with surrounding people and objects, which in turn influences internal personal needs, capacities, and purpose to learn. Dewey proposed that teachers in the affective domain should see education as an experiential process, for which they should purposefully create a school environment that propagates communal activities and social control through play. For this to happen, teachers must be equipped with freedom "of outward action" or the power to coordinate deliberate actions to frame a curriculum that integrates self-control as a type of intelligence. Teachers can accomplish this complex coordination by (a) observing the conditions surrounding the school environment, (b) maintaining an awareness of children's experiences, and (c) utilizing sound judgment to determine the significance of these observations.

Bloom (1971), on the other hand, conceptualized the affective domain as part of a taxonomy of learning that included the cognitive (ability to acquire knowledge), affective (ability to control emotions), and psychomotor (ability to perform physical activity) domains. Bloom emphasized that the affective domain influences time and effort that children put into learning a new skill, and additional scientific evidence (Picard et al., 2004) indicated that affective learning objectives help students to feel better about their education. The affective domain relates to control of emotions and development of attitudes, values, and emotional appreciations. Contrary to the classic notion that learning is about accumulating knowledge, Bloom proposed that emotional values are as important as the cognitive and that those are an inherent part of the development and identity of individuals. Like Dewey (as in Nelsen, 2014), Bloom proposed that teachers must have the freedom and purpose to identify affective objectives of education linked to specific affective processes about attitudes, values, and feelings. In this context, children would learn to transform their attention to emotion into good qualities of persona and character. Therefore, that education should focus on both intellectual understanding of content and belief systems.

Bloom's theories (1971) defined the affective domain as five levels of execution that go from the lowest to highest level of performance. Those five levels (in order of hierarchy) are receiving, responding, valuing, organization, and characterization. Receiving (or level 1) describes the ability to receive new information (Peters, 2006). The work of the teacher in receiving objectives is to make the child motivated to learn and aware that new content exists. Children, in turn, can learn how to control their selected focus of attention. Peters described that this level of attention is irrelevant if the child understands the subject and nature of the studied interest; no judgment of the value happens at this taxonomy level. Responding (level 2) relates to

engaging in activities of learning. In this level, willingness to engage is important as children could pay attention to any other stimuli in the environment. Peters emphasized that teachers write educational objectives at this affective level more often, seeking among children voluntary behavior to engage in specific learning activities.

The next level of the affective taxonomy is valuing (level 3). At this level, children internalize beliefs through a three-step process of acceptance, preference, and commitment of values (Krathwohl, 2002). Peters (2006) reported that most teachers deliver this level by role modeling the desired behaviors as a first step to instill interest among children for the values that teachers want them to develop. However, children would have to see some added benefit in the value to adopt this new behavior (Krathwohl, 2002).

The level of organization (level 4) is the process for which children develop a system of values with hierarchies and classifications. Peters (2006) reported that this process is easier to accomplish successfully during childhood than adulthood, which justifies incorporating the affective domain to ECE objectives. During this level, individuals conceptualize values within a higher level of cognitive activities, such as analysis and synthesis, although conceptualization of the value occurs separately to verbalization of the value. Finally, characterization (level 5) happens when the child is able to fully internalize values, beliefs, and attitudes, connecting those with a personal philosophy of affective behaviors. Numerous scholars (Dunn & Stinson, 2012; Peters, 2006; Picard et al., 2004) argued that most teachers do not write educational objectives at this level because they perceive the affective domain to be outside of the scope of formal education.

Scholars advocating for the integration of affective domain behaviors in the classroom proposed that learning through affective goals would encompass a change in the 'one-

dimensional' view of curriculum design, in which the emphasis is on the cognitive domain (Picard et al., 2004). Developing goals, content, and assessment methods would have to integrate other aspects associated with the effective development of individuals, such as self-identity, personality traits, collaboration, and ability to listen to others (Jagger, 2013). Holt and Hannon (2006) recommended several practices to incorporate affective learning objectives into the ECE curricula, including the validation and planning for affective behaviors such as altruism, compassion, sympathy, commitment, effort, cooperation, and individual goal setting.

Although considerable research supports an affective educational curriculum, few “real” efforts exist to use affective domain as a central philosophy of teaching. From these few attempts, Holt and Hannon (2006) recognized the Creative Curriculum as a valid and reliable assessment model. Theoretical realms associated with the Creative Curriculum have been present with more than 40 years of consecutive advocates, who proposed that learning happens best when children interact with other people within rich environments and learn through collaboration. Furthermore, the Creative Curriculum has adopted the educational objectives for development and learning Teaching Strategies GOLD for Development and Learning. Titled as *The Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies GOLD*, it encompasses 38 educational objectives within 10 content areas, combining socio-emotional, physical, and subject content areas (e.g., math, science).

SEI Theories

Scholars (Ferris, 2010; Seal & Andrews-Brown, 2010) trace the origins of the SEI theory to Dr. Reuven Bar-On, who coined the term *emotional quotient* (EQ) to measure social and emotional competence among human beings in 1985. Bar-On (as in Ferris, 2010) focused on mechanisms for effective social and emotional functioning, such as optimism, motivation, and

positivism, as well as the preferred patterns that individuals use to manifest those behaviors. Some of the accomplishments of Bar-On's work on EQ included the first psychometric EQ scale, the first book on EQ, and the first EQ online self-administered test ("Reuven Bar-On," 2015.)

However, it was Mayer and Salovey who coined the term "SEI" in the 1990s, based on the 1980s emergent theories of EQ of Bar-On, or the emotional ability to cope with the challenges and stress of everyday life (Gayathri & Meenakshi, 2013). SEI is defined as the ability that people have to recognize and manage the meanings of emotions and social relationships (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). According to Costas and Faria, (2015) a basic definition of SEI is "the ability to monitor one's own and others emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use information to guide one's thinking and actions" (p. 5), which interrelates intrinsically with cognitive and intellectual skills (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, & Sitarenios, 2001). Salovey and Mayer (1997) proposed that SEI is a dimension of the human being that meets the standard of traditional intelligence (Mayer et al., 2012). The SEI theoretical frame (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) defined emotions as psychological internal events that can lead to conscious awareness, cognitions, and physiological responses. Changes exacerbate emotions in the internal and external relationships of individuals. Mayer and Salovey (1997) proposed that SEI consists of five skills, including reflectively regulating emotions, understanding emotions, assimilating emotions in thought, perceiving emotions, and expressing emotions.

Mayer and Salovey (1997) considered SEI as complementary to cognitive intelligence (e.g., IQ) and part of the framework of cognitive competences, explaining how human beings process and manage emotional information. As intelligence, Mayer et al. (2001) exposed that SEI reflects conceptual, correlational, and developmental criteria that is part of traditional intelligences. Conceptually, SEI can describe abilities that range from lower to higher skills and

from recognizing and appraising emotions to understanding and assimilating the emotions. Educators use empirical data that relate behaviors with abilities to represent and measure SEI criteria. Mayer et al. reported that SEI encompasses abilities moderately related with each other and their classroom processes. The developmental criteria refer to the capacity of individuals that can develop gradually higher levels of SEI because of age and experience.

Costas and Faria (2015) reported that SEI has produced a considerable body of knowledge with different theoretical perspectives on SEI, personality, traits, and emotion knowledge within diverse social cohorts, educational systems, and organizations globally. A scholar that contributed to the dissemination of SEI as a frame for academic and professional performance was Howard Gardner with the theory of multiple intelligences, which recognized that non-intellective factors, such as emotions, are equally as important as cognitive abilities when measuring total intelligence (Martin & Reigeluth, 2013).

Gardner (2008) defined total intelligence as multidimensional, with seven dimensions of information processing including verbal and linguistic, logical and mathematical, visual-spatial, body-kinesthetic, musical and rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic. The multiple intelligences frame placed scholarly attention on types of abilities that competed with the traditional concept of “intelligence.” Gardner argued that the multiplicity of our intelligence leads to distinctive intellectual profiles with different developmental trajectories. According to Gardner (2008), the theory of multiple intelligences influenced the practice of ECE and special education teachers, who adopted this frame to all type of curricula, and participated in studies that contributed to the body of knowledge of multiple intelligences during 1990s.

Consequently, Daniel Goleman released a series of articles and books disseminating the utility of SEI in social contexts using both Mayer et al. (2001) and Gardner’s (2008) work.

According to Goleman (1998), the main elements of SEI are self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Self-awareness is the ability that individuals have to evaluate continually how they develop and deliver relationships, social skills, and emotions. Kunimoto (1994) defined self-awareness as a mental state that depends on people's subjective report of their inner states. Only the person him or herself has access to his or her internal state of awareness. The gap between what people want to be and how people perceive themselves is called distance. With self-awareness comes self-regulation, or the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and the propensity to suspend judgment before acting (Goleman, 1998).

Arab scholars also concurred on the importance of SEI. For example, Abualnasser (2008) argued that SEI awareness leads to the ability to regulate emotions, reactions, and impulsiveness. It also drives us to face different pressures effectively, and corresponding to variable situations and accepting new ideas, and directing emotions to push teachers and students to achieve classroom goals. SEI assist the individual in striving to exploit the available opportunities, find creative solutions for problems, maintain honesty and integrity, and take responsibility for personal actions. Abdulafattah (2001) conveyed that self-awareness also relates to the ability to learn new vocabulary for expressing feelings, which is crucial for shy children in order to learn social skills and to protect themselves from withdrawal. SEI empowers students with a developed spirit of achievement and resilience during difficult situations. These skills will help them participate in decision-making, and support teachers' roles in developing understanding and sympathy for children and others. Additionally, the skills will assist them in sensing when others are suffering mentally or physically.

SEI Scales

The first psychometric test to measure socio-emotional competence was the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), developed by Bar-On (as in Ferris, 2010) to measure socio-SEI. The EQ-i is a self-report with 133 measurement indicators translated to more than 30 languages and adapted for diverse population sectors. Nevertheless, from the scales to measure SEI, the most recognized is the validated Mayer-Salovey-Caruso SEI Test (MSCEIT) that consists of 141 items in the four skills of perceiving emotions, facilitating thought, understanding emotions, and managing emotions. Iliescu, Ilie, Ispas, and Ion (2013) stated that that MSCEIT is a test in which individuals self-assess their emotional traits applied to the scenario of “how well people perform tasks and solve emotional problems” (p. 16), and that has shown discriminant validity compared to traditional intelligence tests. Nevertheless, scholars such as Joseph and Newman (2010) have criticized the lack of incremental capacity that the MSCEIT has to measure the variance within performance beyond personality and cognitive ability. MSCEIT is rarely found in publications, although diverse private companies offer electronic versions for a fee (“Mayer-Salovey-Caruso, 2015).

Interest in SEI has proliferated among educators with numerous studies published from the 2000s. These studies aimed at relating SEI to positive school classroom processes, including academic achievement, positive social behavior, motivation, and self-discipline. As a result, Sullivan (1999) published an MSCEIT adapted to children, called the SEI Scale for Children (EISC) by adapting subtest items from the SEI scale developed before by Mayer et al. (2012). The EISC is divided in to five subscales, as follows: (a) managing, (b) faces, (c) stories, (d) music, and (e) understanding. Along with the EISC, Sullivan introduced two additional scales to measure empathy and parent/teacher external measurements of children’s SEI. Sullivan tested

this scale for the first time with 100 preschool children from North Carolina, demonstrating low to moderate internal consistency. The EISC was used again in 2007 (Ulutas & Ömeroglu, 2007) with a sample of 120 preschool children within an experimental design. Ulutas and Ömeroglu demonstrated the validity of the EISC scale, and established a significant relationship between SEI programs and the development of increased socio-emotional competences.

Another popular SEI test is Goleman's (1998) emotional competence framework, which describes behaviors and attitudes in the five dimensions of: (a) self-awareness, (b) self-regulation, (c) self-motivation, (d) social awareness, and (e) social skills. The framework encompasses 25 subcategories under these five dimensions for 93 distinctive indicators. Seal and Andrews-Brown (2010) emphasized that Bar-On dealt with patterns of emotional ability, Mayer et al. dealt with potential capacity to promote emotional competence, and Goleman dealt with actual behaviors that reflect socio-emotional competence.

Use of SEI Frameworks in ECE

Numerous scholars (Dunn, 2012; Hernandez, 2010; Jagger, 2013) have criticized the United States educational curricula for excluding affective and SEI educational objectives in general. From the diverse educational levels, ECE scholars have advocated persistently for an SEI curriculum through continual research and empiric systems (Hernandez, 2010). Proponents of an SEI curriculum at the ECE level argued that development of emotional competence at an early age is fundamental for subsequent school readiness (Arbegast, 2010). However, and according to Waajid (2010), scholars have neglected to elaborate on the relationship between emotional competence and school readiness, focusing on the concept of school adaptation, although only 50% of children transition from ECE to primary school with proper emotional

readiness. Jaber (2004) emphasized the importance of learning SEI to improve better academic achievement and learn social skills.

Nevertheless, teachers who want to use the affective domain in their classroom would have to understand human diversity, its components, and differentiators (Picard et al., 2004). Teachers working with affective domains would also have to learn how human affect becomes a distinctive set of social interactions, values and norms, and nonverbal language. Picard et al. emphasized an affective ECE curriculum that recognizes and acknowledges self-expression. Most importantly, the assessment of affective domain processes in ECE can help teachers to identify problematic symptoms of social development during early ages. This comes with the aggregated responsibility of creating communication methods to evaluate and synthesize observations, as children from three to five years are still learning how to verbalize emotions (Dodge et al., 2010).

SEI and Classroom Processes

Vast evidence exists that teachers with SEI can facilitate instruction and learning in the schools through the promotion of affective behaviors. Scholars agreed that the first five years of children's lives are fundamental to their future socio-emotional development, cognitive development, and academic performance (Domitrovich, Gest, Gill, Bierman, Welsh, & Jones, 2009). Other experts alerted about how small children who do not develop SEI competences are more likely to be unsuccessful in school through their whole life (Arbegast, 2010). Socio-emotional competences, such as those learned through SEI, increase the abilities of children to practice new skills and to interact positively with peers and teachers, both activities considered "exceptionally important" to academic success (Arbegast, p. 25).

Wellman and Liu (2004) suggested that SEI is best understood by the relevance of behaviors and actions in the classroom. A meta-analysis from more than 700 research studies and reports conducted by the non-profit organization Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (Payton et al., 2008) in 2007 demonstrated convincingly that the presence of SEI behaviors promotes good attitudes, positive socialization, lower disruptive behaviors, lower emotional stress, and higher academic performance. Moreover, the effects of SEI expressions in the classroom were positive for students from rural, suburban, and urban schools across K to 12 grades. Students within SEI settings demonstrated stronger connections to their schools and communities, as well as an increase of six percentile points (i.e., from 11 to 17) in the general achievement test scores.

Although the inventory of skills for high academic performance encompasses multiple factors, numerous scholars agreed that a single best predictor for positive classroom outcome is difficult to identify, yet there exists conclusive empirical evidence on the benefits of SEI (Fatum, 2008). For example, besides higher academic performance, SEI has been also associated to reduction of violence, connected communities, and caring teachers, parents, and students. Parker et al. applied the Emotional Quotient Inventory for Youth among 667 students in Alabama, finding statistical correlation between SEI in the classroom and positive academic performance and a good predictor of student achievement. In general, students with higher SEI appear to have higher GPA scores (Fatum, 2008).

ECE Processes as Result of SEI Interventions

Numerous studies have reported positive processes after implementing SEI educational objectives in ECE. As a research construct, socio-emotional competences are measured from the perspectives of regulation of emotions, knowledge of emotions, and expressiveness of emotions

(Pech, 2010). Both socio-emotional competences and SEI can define children's ability to manage their emotions, which leads to better relationships, and consequently to better social and academic classroom processes. According to the *National Research Council and Institute of Medicine* (as in Pech, 2010), children with ability to identify emotional signals are more capable to respond to others, interpret their own feelings, and are more adept at understanding and controlling aggressiveness.

Affective educational objectives and SEI interventions have been shown to be effective in the development of school readiness among young children (Basset, 2008; Schultz et al., 2011; Ulutas & Ömeroglu, 2007). Additional benefits of SEI curriculum include increased levels of concentration, increased abilities to focus in the classroom (Arda & Ocak, 2012), reduction of aggressive behaviors, and higher levels of cooperation, compliance, problem solving, and expressiveness (Arda & Ocak, 2012). Conversely, social competence has demonstrated that children with lower social-emotional competence tend to develop negative reputations, and consequently are more likely to be rejected by their peers (Fantuzzo, Bulotsky-Shearer, Fusco, & McWayne, 2005). Furthermore, children who develop poor socio-emotional competences tend to behave disruptively and are emotionally detached from peers (Fantuzzo et al., 2005).

Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicky, Taylor, and Schellinger (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of 213 emotional learning programs among a sample of more than 270,000 children, from kindergarten to high school, demonstrating that SEI educational objectives have a positive influence over social and emotional skills, behaviors, attitudes, and academic performance. Ulutas and Ömeroglu (2007) applied the Sullivan SEI Scale to study the influence of SEI over emotional competences of 126 six-year-old children attending preschool classes. This study demonstrated that SEI educational programs contributed significantly to children's emotional

competence levels. Later, Bassett (2008) conducted a renowned pilot study for the application of the *ABC's of Feelings* curriculum, finding a relationship between curricula interventions and socio-emotional competence among ECE children.

Schultz et al. (2011) conducted another quantitative pre-test and post score study using the Behavior Assessment System for Children Ratings to measure the effects of socio-emotional competence among ECE students. This study found a correlation between socio-competence curriculum and children's connections, and a correlation between socio-competence curriculum and positive changes in the children's behaviors. A relationship between play and the ability of children to develop social emotional competence was also present in this study. Other quantitative findings (Waajid, 2010) suggested that preschool children who learn how to express their emotions are more adept at negotiating conditions, they interrelate better with others, and they interpret emotional verbal and non-verbal cues necessary for social adaptation to primary school.

In addition, Arda and Ocak (2012) conducted quantitative pre-test and post- test interventions, in which several measurement tools were used to evaluate the effects of SEI programs among 95 six-year old children and seven teachers in preschool programs. This study showed that socio-competence interventions influenced levels of attention and concentration, and that socio-competence interventions influenced levels of social emotional ability and reduced aggressive behavior. In addition, SEI interventions reflected other positive post-behaviors to intervention, such as cooperation, compliance, problem solving, and expressiveness. Muljat-Baily (2011), on the other hand, applied multiple quantitative scales and aggregated variables to measure how socio-dramatic play helps to develop socio-emotional competence among 81 children from four to five years old, their parents, and teachers. This study found a significant

relationship between the use of socio-dramatic play and the development of socio-emotional competences.

Furthermore, studies on SEI interventions demonstrated that the absence of an affective curriculum could prevent children from developing refined abilities to understand emotions. Fantuzzo et al. (2005) conducted a study among Head Start children in multiple urban areas through a period of a year that emphasized the importance of emotional regulation in the way children adjust their behaviors, and the relationship between emotional regulation and behavioral problems. The study proposed that intrapersonal skills such as self-awareness and acknowledgement of feelings lead to appropriate regulation of emotion within social interaction, successful peer engagement, and school readiness. Results of this study reflected that negative socio-emotional competence was a predictor of disruptive behavior, maladaptive learning, and emotional liability. Park (2010) emphasized how the development of these socio-emotional competences at an early age facilitates the development of increased school readiness. When emotional competence is not present, children can create dysfunctional behaviors that they can exhibit throughout their lives, and that are predictors of social adaptations and job success.

Qualitative studies on the effects of an affective or SEI curriculum over teaching competence also yield similar results. For example, Pech (2013) conducted a qualitative case study to explore the importance of a positive learning culture in the nurturing of socio-emotional competences, physical abilities, and cognitive abilities in preschool. This study reported that, although building a positive learning culture takes time, SEI behaviors such as self-reflection and dialogue are necessary for teachers to understand different levels of socio-emotional development. Moreover, the unconditional acceptance from teachers created positive socio-emotional class environments, in which the number of disruptive behaviors decreased, shared

responsibilities created a climate of caring, and qualities such as authentic awareness and nurturing attitude created a positive climate that lead to socio-emotional competence.

Influence of SEI among Caregivers in Education

SEI and Parents

The theory of SEI in ECE has established links between the emotional competences of teachers, parents, and caregivers, and the abilities that children have to develop SEI. For example, Espy et al. (2011) compiled data about how adult behaviors influenced children's socio-emotional development through laboratory tasks and variable modeling methods. Results reflected that some adult behaviors are predictors of emotional regulation within the emotional and cognitive domains. Denham et al. (2012), furthermore, explored the role that teachers and parents have in the development of socio-emotional competence, calling them the "socializers of emotion." They provide young children with their first role model on how to handle emotions effectively, how to modify behavior, how to cope emotionally within diverse situations, and how to express emotions appropriately.

Blandon et al. (2010) produced a longitudinal experiment to evaluate the role of maternal socio-emotional competence in 253 children transitioning from preschool to kindergarten. In this study, maternal emotional control yielded different implications for different children. In addition, early maternal control behaviors over young children interfered with development of emotional competences among children. Results from these studies reflected a consistent relationship between the socio-emotional capabilities of parents and caregivers and the development of socio-emotional competences among ECE students (Arbegast, 2010, Espy et al., 2011). Arbegast (2010) measured socio-emotional readiness among 881 preschool children, identifying a relationship between parents' or caregivers' stress and their child's stress. This

study demonstrated a relationship between parents' or caregiver's level of SEI and the presence of socio-emotional disorders among ECE children.

Additional studies found that this influence extends to maternal control (Blandon et al., 2010), as well as levels of attachment/detachment from parents, associated with understanding and regulating of emotions (Verissimo et al., 2014). These were all associated with the way parents and teachers identify and report special circumstances (Kidwell, 2010). In addition, children with safe attachment to parents enjoyed higher peer acceptance (Verissimo et al., 2014). Studies by Muljat-Baily (2011) demonstrated that children from low and high-risk families develop different levels of emotion knowledge when they engage in socio-dramatic play; for example, children from high-risk families demonstrated lower emotion knowledge whereas children from low risk families demonstrated higher emotion knowledge. In general, children from families with socio-emotional risk demonstrated lower knowledge of emotions. This study confirmed Kidwell's et al. (2010) quantitative results about how parental socio-economic level poses a risk for negative childhood experiences.

SEI and Teachers

Waajid's (2010) quantitative work with 58 ECE students from an inner-city preschool program studied if the socio-emotional competence of the teacher would influence school readiness; this study found intrinsic relationships between those two (teacher's SEI and children's socio-emotional competences). On the other hand, Jaber (2004) presented research demonstrating that the development of SEI aspects is significant to improve education and teaching in the Arab world. A new generation of SEI Development has emerged and it is based on scientific research conducted on children's growth and on prevention, and it is used in thousands of schools in certain developed countries. Social and emotional learning programs and

activities that integrate with and fit into the regular education curriculum as well as life in the classroom and school, predominantly achieve the desired effect on students and these effects remain with them as they progress in the school system.

On the other hand, Algharery (2013) reported a correlation between SEI and professional intelligence for ECE teachers. When teachers have a high proficiency in SEI and its dimensions (i.e., self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, and social relations management), this can improve their professional development. According to this author, no matter how many cognitive and academic capabilities teachers possess, they still need awareness of SEI. Emotional events can affect intellectual processes by how emotions interrupt knowledge. Emotional intelligent allows the teacher to understand themselves and others, and to improve their social relations and compatibility with the surrounding circumstances. These are the factors that increase individuals' capacity to succeed in life.

Alsayed (2002) studied the relationship between SEI and the components necessary for professional success in ECE teachers. He reported that ECE teachers' work primarily depends on SEI dimensions, components, and skills. This is because they need these skills for dealing and interacting with children. Their relations with children depend on sentimental links. Teachers are also children's ideal and sample source for unintentional learning through unconscious role modeling. Awareness of SEI permits that teachers help children to express their emotions in acceptable ways. Nevertheless, teachers should be able to solve problems and various conflicts between children in classrooms. Teachers should communicate with parents to follow up with children's growth, problems, and obstacles that affect their normal development, which demonstrates how caregivers can collaborate to improve ECE interventions.

Social Attributes Among ECE Teachers

Hasan (2007) described the emotional attributes ECE teachers should have as:

1. To have a high emotional maturity and balance, self-possession, and self-regulation. Teachers should also be realistic and should not become nervous or emotionally irritated easily. Teachers need to act normal without pretending and should be able to satisfy children's emotional needs and help them to express their feelings. They also should not discriminate children solely because of their behavior. Children's personalities are keys to their emotions.
2. To consider objectivity and justice when dealing with children to avoid hate and jealousy between children.
3. To develop self-awareness: to know more about themselves, know their special qualities and how to effect people, to be able to criticize themselves in order to do better, and not to impose their thoughts and behaviors on their children.
4. To have self-confidence, and a positive perception about themselves that allows them to feel children's respect and love. This only happens when teachers treat children well because they judge adults by how they act and not only how they talk.
5. Teachers need to love children and be able to work with them with love and patience. They should give children the chance to speak and wait until they finish talking or until they are done with what they are doing no matter how long it might take.
6. Motivation: teachers should conduct their work with enthusiasm, sincerity, perseverance, ambition, determination, and a desire to search for new challenges. Their love for children should provide them with the enthusiasm to educate and to

endure the ordeal of any difficulty they might encounter no matter how great. This enthusiasm will motivate teachers to achieve higher professional performance.

7. To be passionate about their work and to understand the significance of their job as ECE teachers, and to acknowledge their importance to society. Teachers need to be interested in their work.

8. Teachers should be optimistic, and positive about the future and their role in life. They need to be happy and smile in order to make children optimistic and smile just like them.

Zayed (1993) reported that social success includes success in dealing with others in social communication professionally and administratively. Hasan (2007) suggested some other social attributes, which are:

1. To have a strong personality and to be a successful leader who is able to negotiate effectively with children.
2. To have effective communication skills.
3. To be able to establish healthy relations with children, colleagues and others who need to communicate with workers, technicians, administrators, and principles. Also, to have the courage to find more effective ways in dealing with others.
4. To cooperate with others and support a spirit of teamwork in tasks and responsibilities both related and unrelated to teaching.
5. To be dependable in taking initiative, and responsibility, and to strive to be dutiful, and to not blame others of one's own mistakes.

6. Leadership: includes courage, bravery, the ability to control and manage, influence others, the ability to take responsibility and exhibit strong decision-making skills, the ability to persuade student to invest their energy appropriately, and plan and calibrate.
7. To avoid criticizing others in a negative way and to welcome and accept the criticism of others.
8. Sympathy: includes understanding others' opinions, being interested in taking into account others' feelings, and sympathizing with and supporting the feelings of others.
9. Democracy: includes respect for pupils personalities and opinions, avoiding the issuance of orders without discussion, compliance to the majority opinion, the use of the majority opinion as the source of one's decisions, and refraining from using one's authority to extend one's power.

Alnashif (2005) stated that teachers should develop children's self-confidence and learn through their experiences with others in a climate that encourages permanent self-learning and self-reliance. Moreover, they should work with parents to build positive relationships that contribute to the parents' understanding about how children learn at this stage, which will lead to developing the skills necessary to form effective communication between them and their children. Nevertheless, teachers should be aware of children's psychological health and create a positive climate for their personal growth. Furthermore, teachers should contribute to a child's upbringing and prepare them for the requirements of schooling, including interaction with others and understanding and controlling their own feelings. They should help children to adapt to the moral values of the society in which they live and respect other societies, and they should work to modify or remove negative trends for children such as discrimination. Lastly, teachers should

provide access to medical and psychological resources and cooperate with the institutions that provide these resources in order to assist the organization for whom they work.

Professional Development

Abdulafattah (2001) pointed out that teachers' professional success does not only depend on academic knowledge, but it also depends on preparing children to learn and strive for positive social relations while developing self-awareness. Butrous (2006), on the other hand, argued that teachers who develop high SEI exhibit a correlation with behaviors and social skills like initiative, reinforcement, building groups, self-confidence, increased level of performance or achievement motivation, understanding emotions, and the ability to communicate with others. Therefore, ECE teachers who are involved in professional development training courses on the topic of SEI can become better teachers, especially because a positive relation exists between teachers' SEI awareness and professional success. Previously, Alsayed (2002) stated that ECE teachers' SEI awareness helps them to create "smart thoughts," which motivate them to perform well, and which make them better professionals. Teachers' SEI can also produce rich environments for children that support creativity and innovation, assisting children to reach a high level of achievement. By bringing new SEI ideas and methods to the classroom, they increase children's performance through open classroom discussions, positive interactions, and acceptance of criticism that develops logical thinking. Teachers with SEI awareness provide children with affective dialogs that help teachers to understand and become aware of children's strengths and weaknesses.

Alsayed-Hasan (2001) stated that ECE teachers who have high professional SEI performance must have:

1. High capacity for social interaction with children.

2. Ability to cope with the problems faced by children and colleagues. Ability to help children to maintain an environment in the classrooms that reflects the feeling of safety and psychological stability.
3. The ability to supervise and guide children while encouraging freedom of expression in the classroom.
4. Ability to help children perform appropriate activities.
5. Ability to strengthen children's behavior and motivate them to work, learn, and socialize.
6. Prepare children appropriately to make them feel satisfied psychologically when they are doing challenging tasks or work.
7. To be able to utilize teamwork, and involve their colleagues in order to develop children's SEI and academic performance, and achieve the educational domains for the ECE period.

Social Constructionism of Culture and Education

The basis of professional development in the field of SEI for ECE requires that teachers understand how cultures have built their belief systems, as these are different among diverse cultures. A philosophical view to explore how cultures create meaning is social constructionism. Stam (2014) described social constructionism as a popular but controversial theoretical perspective that has invaded educational spheres in recent years. Social constructionism establishes that individuals develop social realities in the form of networks of beliefs and values that are transmitted to new generations. Therefore, that culture and society is constructed through social processes. Stam emphasized that social constructionism should not be confused with 'constructivism,' a 19th century paradigm that relates to the cognitive construction of knowledge.

In social constructionism, people build their meaning and understanding of life based on their life experiences, which leads to subjective interpretations (Andrews, 2009).

Daily conversations are one of the main methods for which people construct, maintain, modify, and even reconstruct their subjective realities. Andrews emphasized that social constructionism relates in some ways to *interpretivism*, which values the human subjective experience. Numerous scholars (Andrews, 2009; Stam, 2014) traced the theory of social constructionism to the 1966 Berger and Luckman book titled *The Social Construction of Reality*. Cunliffe (2008) summarized diverse explorations of social constructionism in education, including:

Table 1

Choices within Social Constructionism (Cunliffe, 2008, p. 126)

Nature of Social Reality

- Subjective reality: individuals negotiate meanings within social situations, e.g. Bruner, 1986; Watzlawick, 1984
- Objectivities of social reality focus on social facts, institutional practices, and symbolic products, e.g. June 2006.

Epistemological Interests

- Social construction at macro levels: e.g. cultural, institutional, and ideological; how socially constructed categories are discursively produced and enacted, e.g. gender, race
- Often within broader historical contexts, e.g. Ashcraft and Mumby, 2004; Gergen, 1991
- The process of construction: How discourse and language operate to create meaning in practical contexts, e.g. Potter, 1996.
- Theoretical generalizations about organizations, identities, organizational processes, and linguistic practices and systems; search for patterns.
- Research and learning as a reflective process.

Cultural Interests

- Intersubjective realities: people create meaning and realities with others in spontaneous, responsive ways, e.g. Shotter and Cunliffe, 2002.
- Emerging social realities and focus on processes of meaning making, no one person in control, e.g. Cunliffe, 2001
- Reality construction and sense making as a relational process
- Focus on responsive dialogue and conversation between people, e.g. Cunliffe 2002; Shotter, 1993.
- Social realities as relational and experienced in interaction and dialogue between people, e.g. Shotter and Katz, 1999

-
- Social construction as a benign process, e.g. Watson, 1994
 - Social construction at micro levels: between people in everyday conversations; an interweaving of past, present, and future conversations in the moment of dialogue, e.g. Cunliffe et al., 2004, Katz et al., 2000.
 - Context-related interpretive insights; meaning created in on-going moments.
 - Research and learning as a radically- reflexive process, e.g. Cunliffe, 2003
-

According to Cunliffe (2008), educators have developed interest in social constructionism to examine the institutional practices that are critical to build the realities of younger generations. Consequently, Andrews (2009) emphasized that the incorporation of social constructionism to education is justified by the fact that individuals are more concerned with making sense of their surrounding realities and ontological inquiries than trying to acquire scientific knowledge. Moreover, this degree of the world's understanding is not static through time, but can change with social processes such as communication, rhetoric, conflict, and negotiation (Stam, 2014). Cunliffe (2008) alerted that the interest and orientation of social constructionism in education should be related with situating work in the field of teaching, understanding the different interests and cultures, making deliberate decisions about teaching styles, and thinking how those decisions will influence classroom processes.

Professional Development Program Best Practices

Findings on teachers' capacitation programs (Palardy & Rumberger, 2008) concluded that professional development among ECE teachers is necessary to improve children's social and academic achievement. Palardy and Rumberger conducted a longitudinal study that demonstrated how trained teachers have considerable influence over learning processes. This study also demonstrated that teacher's quality of instructional methods has a bigger impact over children's academic performance than professional background or years of experience. Palardy and Rumberger concluded that a quality of professional domain would exhibit characteristics

such as: (a) sustained efforts, (b) a focus in improving instruction skills, (c) active learning opportunities, (d) interactive environments, and (e) regular feedback.

Landry Swank, Smith, Assel, and Gunnewig (2006), on the other hand, studied professional domains among 750 ECE teachers through the frame of systematic trainings on mentoring and coaching techniques during two years and within 20 different Head Start centers. This quasi-experimental study aimed to demonstrate that teachers with improved professional domains would obtain better classroom processes in all skill areas. The sample of this study was divided as follows, 500 members for the target group and 250 for the control group; teachers were also evaluated based on their level of experience (one vs. two years of experience). The purpose of this study was to evaluate how SEI training for teachers and mentors would compare with the quality of classroom processes. Results of the study confirmed that refined professional domains among ECE teachers would yield to improved academic improvement and social processes. For example, the study reported that teachers with improved professional domains were able to improve vocabulary and phonological awareness, although similar findings were not reflected in the learning of the alphabet. In general, the study reported positive results for language skills as teachers achieved higher levels of education.

Other studies (Neuman & Cunningham, 2009) exposed that ECE teachers would require both a substantial knowledge base about child development and appropriate pre-dispositions to create high-performing classroom environments. This study examined early language and literacy practices among participants from 291 ECE centers through comparison of groups by covariance. The results of this study reported similar levels of knowledge among teachers from different centers, but significant differences on students' performance from teachers who received coaching and coursework information previously to classroom interventions. Neuman

and Cunningham concluded that, although the effects of professional development could be the same across different ECE centers, professional competences seemed to improve considerably when combined with coaching and mentoring.

Several other studies (Powell, Steed, & Diamond, 2010) reported that the use of evidence-based instructional methods for training teachers are more effective in improving teaching quality that enhances instruction and academic performance among ECE children. Powel et al. examined the teaching trajectory of 1,504 ECE teachers in 31 Head Start centers with relation to content coverage, instructional materials, teaching behaviors, and professional development progressions in the areas of phonological awareness, letter-word knowledge, reading, and writing. The results of this study demonstrated that ECE teachers with awareness of instructional improvement plans and coaching could implement students' improvement plans better across the four literacy areas discussed before.

Furthermore, teachers trained on socio-emotional competences are able to demonstrate improvements in the four areas of self-control, problem-solving skills, understanding emotions, and expressing emotions (Domitrovich et al., 2009). Professional domain development programs in general tend to indicate that teachers considerably improve their teaching skills through continual preparation, mentoring, and coaching (Powell et al., 2010).

Recent studies on professional domain development (Thomson, Turner, & Nietfield 2012) related that professional development is associated with positive pre-dispositions toward education actions and activities. Professional development also increases the sense of calling, hope, and commitment. According to Nolan and Hoover (2014), effective professional development is a tool for teacher growth and maturity, collaboration among teachers with diverse

learning curves and teaching experiences, and deeper practical and theoretical understanding of children's social and emotional development.

Nelsen (2014), on the other hand, related professional development with intelligent dispositions that increase teaching motivation. This means, the development of ECE teaching expertise develops self-efficacy that consequently increases dispositions on teaching, motivation, initiative, and innovation. Rots, Aeltman, Devos, and Vlerik (2010) reported that development of professional skills results in lower turnover and higher retention. Contextual factors related to professional development, such as mentor-mentee relationships and continual capacitation reinforces teacher commitment and motivation to the job. Additional attributes developed through professional development included resilience, cognitive ability, self-regulation, and self-determination.

Furthermore, important literature on professional domains (Guskey, 1986) established that teaching development must happen within a context of continual application. Teachers must simultaneously learn and integrate this knowledge to their daily teaching experiences. According to Guskey, professional development happens when visible changes in a teacher's teaching style happen. Teacher beliefs about specific aspects of their teaching change when they see the consequences of teaching in student outcomes over time, as in formative assessments. Guskey's model may be applicable to the SEI domain as well as learning outcomes.

Pelayo (2012) reported that professional development programs for ECE teachers should happen within culturally responsive environments. Diverse research studies (Heisner, 2008; NAEYC, 2007; Palardy & Rumberger, 2008) reported that a theoretical base for ECE professional domain development demonstrates a connection between the learning materials and the professional's attitudes, professional experience, qualifications, and knowledge of

instructional practices. Klassen et al. (2011), on the other hand, categorized professional development themes beyond the realms of attitudes, experience, and qualifications. Besides traditional themes associated to professional domains, such as ability, intrinsic career values, and prior teaching experience, Klassen et al. incorporated (a) personal utility value (i.e., job security, job transferability, and time with family), (b) social utility value (i.e., student formation, social equity, and social contribution), and (c) socio-cultural influences (social influence, religious purpose, and gender roles).

SEI Professional Domain Programs

Sutterby (2011) reported that the main challenge of developing professional domain programs is school politics, even if professional development programs have a positive influence over ECE teacher practice. These school politics relate to the misalignment of offerings and expectations, including teachers who complain of not receiving new information during capacitation experiences, or who perceive that development activities are not relevant or antiquated (Davey, 2011). Furthermore, Sutterby's (2001) studies on professional domain demonstrated that effective professional development requires differentiating from needs of teachers with different levels of experience. When professional development needs are not adequately met, teachers develop negative attitudes that are detrimental to peer collaboration and effective teaching practice. Nolan and Hoover (2011) emphasized that high-quality professional development programs place teachers at the center of their own learning. This follows the model of independent learners who develop accountability of their self-directed growth, performance, and level of collegiality. Merrill-Washington (2008) reported that education professionals could improve SEI through the appropriate curricular design. Jagger (2004) demonstrated that teaching SEI could happen in the context of a formal classroom. Furthermore, Goleman, Boyatzis, and

McKee (2002) demonstrated that once teachers acquire SEI abilities, these competences could be sustained for years.

Effective SEI professional programs encourage teachers to perform to their highest level of excellence, and to understand the impact of teaching affective competences over students' progressive learning. Professional domain programs rely on collaborative approach and inquiry process, in which the continual integration of practice, observation, and coaching takes place (Nolan & Hoover, 2011). Four conditions apply directly to professional development, including mutual respect and trust, sense of ownership and self-direction, collaborative spirit, and voluntary commitment to the program. Professional development often reflects a humanistic approach, which encompasses embracing a nurturing school environment conducive to trust and mutual respect. Arbegast (2010) emphasized that developing effective professional development programs on SEI competences requires supportive environments and role modeling of emotional competences. Professional development also promotes leadership dynamics related to nondirective guidance, locus of control, self-fulfillment, self-awareness, and motivation (Nolan & Hoover, 2011).

SEI professional domain programs often integrate constructive play, supportive physical environments, and teacher-parent collaborative alliances as best teaching practices (Arbegast, 2010). Furthermore, professional development should happen within the scope of continual feedback and continuous improvement. Nolan and Hoover (2011) reported that this type of continuous improvement happens through reflection and inquiry while expanding capabilities for performance practicing empowerment and delegation (Nolan & Hoover, 2011). Teachers within professional development replicate characteristics like those of their students, such as unique experiences, cultures, and needs, crises, family dynamics, and professional expectations.

The role of supervisors is crucial in professional development. Davey (2011) emphasized the role of supervisors in supporting competence by facilitating opportunities of practicing autonomy, decision-making, problem solving, and managing classroom tasks. A supervisor takes the role of the educational leader who motivates performance, delegates responsibilities, and supports collaboration. Supervisors often provide teachers with access to resources, and provide coaching and mentoring; or they match them with other teachers who can share their knowledge about class observation and practice. The relationships between supervisors and teachers in professional development encourage a climate of individualized consideration that promotes learning (Nolan & Hoover, 2011). In general, supervisors can help develop teachers in the three dimensions of interpersonal growth, moral development, and problem-solving activities.

Furthermore, mentoring is a fundamental skill that teachers must develop to sustain good educational practices. Supervisors that serve as professional mentors should act as active listeners to reduce teacher anxieties, transfer knowledge and skills, acquaint teachers with available resources, facilitate professional identity, and engage them in richer teaching experiences (Nolan & Hoover, 2011). The exercise of a new practice will provoke numerous concerns that can be clarified by somebody with more experience to nurture, model, encourage, and counsel a less experienced teacher for promoting later professional development that is fundamental to help teachers in accomplishing success and self-realization (Ghosh, 2013).

Bowers (1994) described the concept of basic mentorship. Basic mentorship relates to providing mentoring, guidance, encouragement, and support to an incipient professional. Mentors exercise developmental activities; they help new teachers to locate resources, learn about the school environment, and plan educational lessons. The mentor's level of experience, and the quantity and quality of time spent in the classroom are associated with successful

mentoring (Dempsey, Arthur-Kelly, & Breda, 2009). Active listening and empathy are skills required to be an effective mentor. Nevertheless, a balanced combination of empathy and detachment is necessary to sustain a healthy relationship with peers and students. Trust is an element that enhances the cohesiveness of the mentor-new teacher relationship. Considerable dialogue happens before the new teacher arrives to the classroom; it soon initiates a developmental process.

Awareness of Children's Social and Emotional Growth

The development of emotional competence during the early education period, especially in the transitions of young children from ECE to primary schools, is a predictor of emotional control, abilities to understand emotions, and ability to perceive emotions in others. These are all abilities for academic success and social adaptation (Waajid, 2010). The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (as in Payton et al., 2008) established that teachers could develop five core social and emotional competences, including self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, and relationship skills. The first step in accomplishing SEI competences is the development of self-awareness (Goleman, 1995). When teachers are self-aware of their emotions, they can form stronger relationships with parents and students. Gruyter (2011) reported that social awareness and self-management are both essential parts of self-awareness. In the area of education, Jesuit schools integrated self-awareness and reflection to professional development philosophies centuries ago. Contemporary practice of SEI in schools have incorporated as well the concept of mindfulness through the use of meditation, breathing exercises, and temporary detachment of physical experiences (Jennings & Greenberg, 2008)

Pelser (2014) associated emotions to the development of moral values, judgments, and beliefs. Knowledge of emotions enables self-awareness, and this, consequently, increases the knowledge of objective values. Goleman et al. (2002) reported that awareness of SEI could be taught by establishing clear goals, establishing manageable programs, setting expectations for success, and providing feedback and support via coaching and mentoring. Lara (2011) emphasized that individuals who develop awareness of SEI are capable to influence others in developing their own SEI. The theory of SEI establishes that people with high socio-emotional competences are able to design interventions conducive to emotional regulation.

Avey, Luthans, and Wernsing (2008) studied the influence of existing attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors over performance; they found that emotions such as efficacy, mindfulness, and emotional resilience have a positive impact over the ability of people to perform at higher levels of excellence. The same study found that negative emotions, such as cynicism and resistance, relate to poor performance. The awareness and presence of SEI trigger positive interactions among school practitioners, who consequently sustain organizational environments in which people exhibit higher compliance, task performance, and altruism (Carmeli & Josman, 2006). Individuals who possess conscious and deliberate control of SEI improve their ability for caring, their ability to perform well, and their ability to create positive environments. In fact, Salovey and Mayer (1997) proposed SEI as a measurement for performance.

Teachers' Awareness of SEI

Hraha (2012) posed that emotions are part of the fundamental aspects of education, but are often overlooked by teaching practice. Teachers must engage in emotional practice if they want to establish positive relationships with students and parents. Emotional practice is also the social fiber for which teachers can improve the transference of cognitive and technical

knowledge. Hargreaves (1998; 2000) described how teachers are able to communicate positive emotions in the classroom, and create synergies in which all school participants engage in positive learning interactions and relationships. On the contrary, teachers who exhibit negative emotions are more susceptible to alienating themselves from positive relationships, and creating tense school environments. Teachers able to recognize their emotions are able to assess better classroom situations, create better classroom interventions, and adapt classroom lessons to the specific needs of children in different developmental stages (Hraha, 2012). Hargreaves (2000), for example, emphasized how teachers with low SEI are quick to judge students, labeling shy or frightened students as “lazy” or “stupid.”

Hargreaves (1998; 2000) also emphasized how teachers’ self-awareness of emotions associates to motivation, collaboration, and willingness to change. Self-awareness of emotions refers also to the conscious and subconscious efforts to control all areas of emotion expression, including behavioral, experiential, cognitive, and physiological. Sutton and Harper (2009) reported that teachers could regulate their emotions through reappraisal and suppression. Reappraisal happens when people reflect about emotions that they had in the past, and suppression happens during the moment of emotion. This reflected as acts of control to avoid disclosing an emotional state. Hargreaves (1998; 2000) called *emotional labor* the process of suppression. In general, teachers who manage these diverse manifestations of SEI are better prepared to handle daily challenges of teaching, are more resilient, and are more motivated to teach (Sutton & Harper, 2009).

Teachers aware of SEI are also able to recognize their strengths and values within themselves and others, cultivating these attributes themselves and helping others to project good qualities (Elias, 2006; Jennings & Greenberg, 2008; Payton et al, 2008). Teachers with

awareness of SEI are also empathetic, good builders of social relationships, and able to treat others with compassion and kindness. Awareness of SEI also allows teachers to appreciate cultural differences, individually and collectively. Finally, teachers aware of their emotions can become effective leaders during ambiguous situations, and are not attached to power. This lack of attachment to power makes them more adept to practice delegation and empowerment, allowing students to develop problem-solving abilities.

Teachers' Self-Awareness of SEI in Kuwait

Teachers in Kuwait show predispositions toward education, such as sense of calling, hope, and commitment. These predispositions are the reflection of cultural dimensions related to collectivism as described by Hofstede (as in Klassen et al., 2011). Characteristics of the culture, such as collectivism, high power distance, high uncertainty avoidance, along with traditional religious beliefs, could increase the level of involvement on professional development, as individuals see their commitment to technology more as a spiritual goal than a way of living (Convey, 2014). Teachers with these characteristics develop as well an *augmented* sense of responsibility in mentoring others, peers and students alike.

An absence of studies in self-awareness among Kuwaiti ECE teachers exists. However, scholars agreed that education is an important value for the people of Kuwait, where most people pay for ECE private education, and kindergarten is perceived as fundamental for school preparation (Al-Habib, 1989; Al-Hooli, 2009). Kuwait was one of the first countries that established a Ministry of Education, and teachers in Kuwait follow the main values: (a) developmental, preventive, and remedial goals, (b) corporal punishment is prohibited, (c) punishment can be used when undesirable behavior occurs, and (d) teachers must follow a quiet approach (avoiding nervousness) when dealing with undesirable behavior (Al-Sahel, 2005).

Next, we will discuss the methodology used to conduct this study.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Researcher Disclosure

The researcher is a former ECE teacher in Kuwait. After the researcher completed a Bachelor degree in Early Childhood education from Kuwait University in 2005, she taught in a kindergarten in Kuwait for two years. Then, in Summer 2011, she completed a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instructions in ECE from the University of South Florida.

The researcher has strong feelings toward children since they need assistance in recognizing and managing their emotions. Maybe this came from her childhood experiences because she faced several family problems that negatively affected her emotional well-being. The researcher's obstacles in life motivated her to success and made her feel that she has a duty to support young children and help them to succeed and overcome any trauma. This has led her to develop a strong interest in the SEI domains and their potential applications with respect to ECE. See the researcher's vitae at the end of the study.

This self-disclosure was necessary in order to ensure that the reader understands the researcher's background and relationship to the study. The researcher had to interpret answers and make decisions and judgments that matched her clinical impressions of what the participants were telling her. It is possible the researcher may have steered her interpretation of these answers to fit her preconceptions on occasion.

Methodology

This study employed qualitative methods to generate an evidential base to seek to better understand how awareness of emotional intelligence influences instruction and learning among four ECE teachers in Kuwait who were selected from a pool of 10 novice and veteran teachers all working at the same school (in Kuwait, teachers with more than 10 years of experience are

considered “veterans”, otherwise they are conserved “novices”). The researcher was able to have a brief conversation with each of the teachers in this school and chose the 10 participants by their work experience and interest to participate. The school was selected according to the recommendation of an education professor in Kuwait University who is knowledgeable about the school system in Kuwait. This school employs 31 ECE teachers who teach between 18 to 22 children per class.

Using a case study design, the researcher described and analyzed the chosen teachers’ decisions, perceptions, knowledge, and opinions concerning the SEI domain, what they see as important as to their teaching needs, awareness of SEI’s importance to themselves and their young students. Planning and doing the research took about nine months and was influenced by Creswell (2008) who emphasized that the case study allows studying a phenomenon within real-life situations, relying on multiple sources of information, and outlining a descriptive narrative of the cases.

A qualitative study is a legitimate inquiry approach because it allows understanding of educational phenomena from a broader perspective and, consequently, yields results free of biases that come from narrow research design (Creswell, 2008). This qualitative method as employed in the present investigation was influenced by Goleman’s (1998) conceptual frame of emotional intelligence competences (i.e., self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills).

Each case explored the backgrounds, current situations, and future projections that are deemed relevant to the research questions using various methods of data collection over a period of four-five months. The methods and procedures included questionnaires, interviews, journals, *in situ* cell phone interviews, document analysis and creation, and teacher input, and the

administering of in-service training materials (see Appendix A). All of these methods and the semi-structured interviews in particular were useful in providing data to help answer the research questions. The methods and procedures followed an orderly path that assisted in keeping the qualitative line of inquiry within the scope of the specific topics of interest to the investigator. The methods used lead to findings about social emotional intelligence awareness. They were also helpful to explore teacher needs in the area of SEI and teachers' perceptions of the value of SEI training and different components of SEI training, with respect to consequences for classroom practices and related practices such as working with parents. Semi-structured interviews were especially helpful because they allowed the researcher to incorporate probing questions to explore additional topics, while ensuring that the core concepts of the phenomena of interest in this study are explored.

Sampling

According to Neuman (2011), sampling strategies should correspond to the nature and purpose of the research. This study used a convenient sample, which is useful among researchers in need of the identification of participants with specific characteristics. The sample was determined based on characteristics such as, (a) ECE teachers, (b) teaching in Kuwait City, and (c) availability to participate. Teachers were recruited using a variety of methods, including communications with Kuwait Ministry of Education, letters to ECE schools, and professional referrals. Potential participants filled out an intake questionnaire with personal and demographic information that served also to screen on pre-determined characteristics indicated above. All 10 teachers selected for screening in this preliminary stage worked at the same school.

Data Collection Methods

The researcher invited ECE teachers through Kuwait's Ministry of Education, writing letters to ECE schools, and using professional referrals. The researcher contacted ECE Teachers through electronic or written communication informing of scope and interest of the research, contact information of the researcher, and exhortation to participate as members of the qualitative samples. This communication included, as an attachment, a Consent Form (Appendix A). ECE teachers in Kuwait interested in participating read, signed, and returned the consent form, and participation was voluntary.

Qualitative Data Collection Method

The researcher scheduled with each participant a series of in-person and virtual semi-structured interviews. Virtual semi-structured interviews were "a specific form of virtual research that enables researchers to use the immediacy of the Internet to access participants and gather data for qualitative research investigations" (Turney, 2008, para. 8). Virtual interviews consisted of a novel way in which peers dispersed globally can interchange experiences and ideas, as well as collect data about perceptions and attitudes. It was estimated that each initial interview would take an approximately 30-45 minutes.

Participants committed to participate in several interviews as data reaches the point of saturation, or the point in which the researcher perceived that all major themes have been identified. However, because the instrument was a semi-structured interview with pre-determined probing questions, the point of saturation is expected to happen in three encounters or less with interviewees (see Figure 2). The last of these encounters constituted the exit interview, in which the researcher collected information about the most significant learning experiences. In addition to the interviews, teacher participants were required to keep journal of

events where they will record at least three reflections about their experiences in the classroom with relation to SEI.

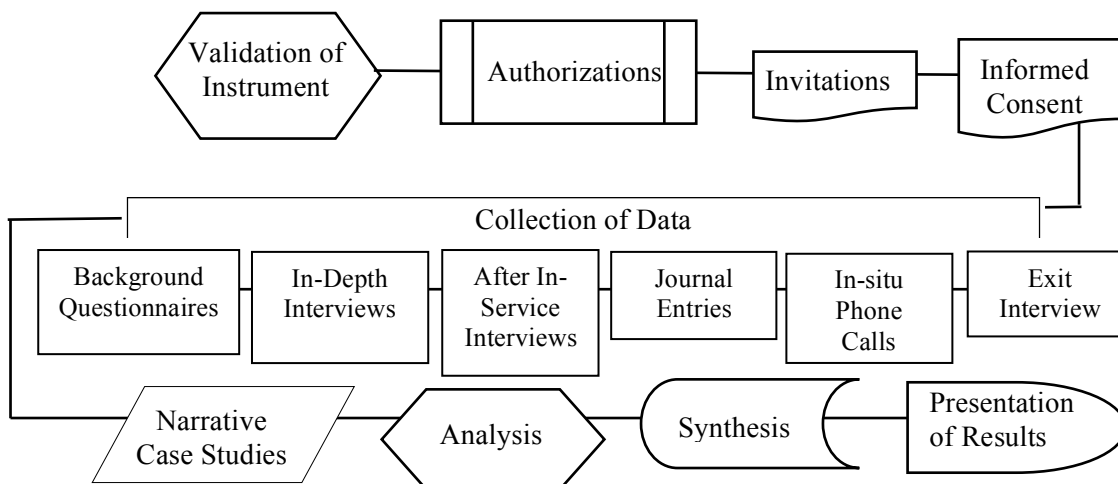


Figure 2. Qualitative Data Generation

Data Procurement Instruments

Semi-structured interviews were based on Goleman's (1998) conceptual frame of emotional intelligence competences (i.e., self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills). By using an emotional intelligence frame used and validated by similar studies (Fuentes, 2012), the researcher protected the validity of research results.

Procedure

1. Preliminary administration of a specially devised questionnaire to select four teachers out of an initial sample of about 10 teachers (Background Interview). The researchers interviewed 10 teachers in order to choose four teachers from them according to specified criteria, (a) interested or knowledgeable concerning Social Emotional Intelligence (SEI); and (2) two novice teachers in order to have an idea about the recent curriculum in Kuwait University and their knowledge related to SEI, and two veteran teachers in order to understand their SEI related to their work experience. - *Month 1*

2. One or more 45-90 minutes' interviews (of four teachers) were conducted following the administration and analysis of a specially devised questionnaire about teacher backgrounds and needs' assessment. - *Month 1*
3. One or more 45-90 minute interviews (of same four teachers) that were conducted to share an educational course about SEI awareness and the significance of understanding this subject. This training course covered subjects such as: Brief history and fundamentals of SEI, theories and definition of SEI, SEI in ECE, SEI benefits, SEI outcomes, SEI awareness, Goleman's SEI Model, SEI best practices, and SEI curriculum strategies. See Appendix A - *Month 1*
4. Asking teachers to keep a journal about events, incidents happening in the classroom where the events are emotionally laden. How the children or child felt in a given situation, how well the child understood why it was happening, how well the child labeled and expressed the kind of feeling, how well the teacher was aware, how the teacher thought about it, what the teacher did, try to obtain different kinds of emotions (happy, sad, angry, afraid, other...) - *Months 2 and 3*
5. Concurrently, conducted to three phone calls on cell phones when they were at work to answer in situation what is happening relevant to the goals of the study. - *Months 2 and 3*
6. Exit Interview 45-60 minutes. - *Months 3 and 4*

Instruments

Instrument 1: Background Qualitative Questionnaire Part I

1. How many years have you been an ECE teacher? Why did you become a teacher?
2. What do you know about SEI? (or related topics)
3. Did you learn about it in school or in PD training courses?

4. Do you think it is as important as the cognitive (traditional intelligence) domain in classrooms? And why?
5. Do your classroom processes have reflected post-behaviors such as cooperation, compliance, problem solving, and expressiveness as result of emotional intelligence interventions?
6. Do emotional intelligence interventions and training help you to develop significant emotional competences, such as perceiving, understanding, and managing emotions?

Instrument 1: Background Qualitative Questionnaire Part II

1. Is a relationship present between play and ability of children to develop social emotional competences?
2. Do your classes incorporate activities such as socio-dramatic play?
3. Do emotional intelligence interventions influence the levels of attention and concentration among your students?
4. Are dialogue and self-reflection needed for teachers to understand different levels of socio-emotional development among their students?
5. Does unconditional acceptance of others create positive socio-emotional class environments in your school?
6. Does the number of disruptive behaviors decrease in your school after administering emotional intelligence interventions?
7. Do qualities such as authentic awareness and nurturing attitude create a positive climate that lead to socio-emotional competence in your school?
8. Does emotional intelligence training help to become aware of attachment and detachment from parents; as associated with the understanding and regulation of emotions?

9. Does emotional intelligence training help understanding and regulating emotions associated with the way parents and teachers identify and report special circumstances?
10. Does emotional intelligence training help for noticing when children with safe attachment to parents will exhibit higher levels of social engagement.

Instrument 2: In-depth Interview

1. How many Professional Development in SEI activities or courses did you participate in over the past year and what topics were covered?
2. What other topics you would like to be included in your Professional Development Program in SEI?
3. Do you feel that the existing Professional Development activities in SEI are relevant to your needs as ECE teacher?
4. How familiarized were you with the topics covered in your Professional Development activities in SEI?
5. How interested were you with the topics covered in your Professional Development activities in SEI?
6. How was the quality of the Professional Activities in SEI?
7. In what format were Professional Activities in SEI delivered? What is your preference?

Instrument 3: After In-service Training Interview

This interview happened after the teacher was exposed to a SEI training course on emotional intelligence competences (see Appendix B).

Questions about Emotional Intelligence Competences

1. First Dimension: Emotional Awareness
 - A. Self-awareness

- a. Main question: Do you recognize your emotions and the effects of those emotions over other people?
 - b. Probing questions: How do you know when you are recognizing your emotions? Are you able to establish a link between your feelings, and what you think, do, and say? Do your emotions affect your performance? What are your greatest values and goals?
- B. Accurate self-assessment
- a. Main question: Do you recognize your strengths and weaknesses?
 - b. Probing questions: When you receive critique, how do you react? What do you do with critiques' comments? Do you consider yourself able to laugh from your own mistakes? How?
- C. Self-confidence
- a. Main question: Are you sure about your self-worth and capabilities?
 - b. Probing questions: Do you utilize impression management techniques (e.g., the way you present yourself to others in social circumstances)? Can you voice your point of view even if this point of view is not the most popular? Are you decisive and able to make sound decisions despite uncertainties and pressures?
2. Second Dimension: Self-Regulation
- A. Self-control
- a. Main question: How do you manage disruptive emotions and impulses?
 - b. Probing questions: How do you manage stress? Do you stay composed and positive during extenuating circumstances? Are you able to stay focused under pressure?

B. Trustworthiness:

- a. Main question: Do you consider yourself an honest person?
- b. Probing questions: Do you have a history of acting ethically and above reproach throughout your life? Do you have a good “ethical compass?” Do people consider you authentic? Do you consider yourself an authentic person? Do you have the ability to admit your own mistakes to others? Are you able to confront unethical actions in others?

C. Conscientiousness

- a. Main question: Do you take responsibility for your personal performance?
- b. Probing questions: Do you always meet your commitments and keep your promises? Do you hold yourself accountable for meeting your objectives? Do you consider yourself organized and careful in your work?

D. Adaptability

- a. Main question: How do you react to change and how flexible are you towards change?
- b. Probing questions: Are you able to handle multiple demands, shifting priorities, and rapid change? Are you able to adapt your responses and tactics to fit changing circumstances? Are you flexible in how you see daily life events?

E. Innovativeness

- a. Main question: Are you comfortable with new information or novel ideas?
- b. Probing questions: How often do you research new ideas? How often are you exposed to a wide variety of sources? Are you able to find new solutions to

problems? Are you able to generate new ideas? Are you able to take fresh perspectives and risks in your thinking?

3. Third Dimension: Self-Motivation

A. Achievement drive

- a. Main question: In which ways you strive to improve or meet a standard of excellence?
- b. Probing questions: Do you consider yourself a results-oriented person, with a high drive to meet your objectives and standards? Are you able to set challenging goals and take-calculated risks? Do you pursue information to reduce uncertainty and find ways to do better? Do you practice learning to improve your performance?

B. Commitment:

- a. Main question: How often do you align with the goals of the group or organization?
- b. Probing questions: Are you able to volunteer readily to make personal sacrifices to meet a larger organizational goal? Do you find a sense of purpose in the larger mission? Do you use the group's core values in making decisions and clarifying choices? Do you actively pursue opportunities to fulfill the group's mission?

C. Initiative:

- a. Main question: How often do you take advantage of new opportunities?
- b. Probing questions: Do you pursue goals beyond what is required or expected of you? Are you able to bend the rules when necessary to complete a project? Are you able to mobilize others through unusual, enterprising efforts?

D. Optimism

- a. Main question: Are you persistent in pursuing goals despite obstacles and setbacks?
- b. Probing questions: Do you operate from hope of success rather than fear of failure? Do you see setbacks as due to manageable circumstance rather than a personal flaw?

4. Fourth Dimension: Social Awareness

A. Empathy

- a. Main question: How often are you able to sense and take an active interest in the feelings and perspectives of other people?
- b. Probing questions: Are you able to be attentive to emotional cues and listen well? Are you able to show sensitivity and understand others' perspectives? Are you able to help others based on the understanding of their needs and feelings?

B. Service orientation:

- a. Main question: Are you able to anticipate, recognize, and meet the needs of students, parents, and administrators?
- b. Probing questions: Are you able to understand students, parents, and administrators' needs and match them to your service? Do you seek ways to increase the satisfaction and loyalty of students, parents, and administrators? How often do you offer appropriate assistance to students, parents, and administrators?
- c. Are you able to understand the perspectives of students, parents, and administrators, and act as a trusted advisor?

C. Developing others:

- a. Main question: Are you able to sense what others need in order to develop, and bolster their abilities?
- b. Probing questions: How often do you acknowledge and reward people's strengths, accomplishments, and development? How often do you offer useful feedback and identify people's needs for development? How often do you mentor, give timely coaching, and offer assignments that challenge and grow a person's skills?

D. Leveraging diversity:

- a. Main question: Are you able to cultivate opportunities through diverse people?
- b. Probing questions: Are you able to respect and relate well to people from varied backgrounds? What do you believe about the diverse worldviews? Are you sensitive to group differences? Are you able see diversity as opportunity, creating an environment where diverse people can thrive? How do you feel about cultural biases and group intolerances?

E. Political awareness:

- a. Main question: Are you able to read a group's power relationships?
- b. Probing questions: How often do you accurately read key power relationships? Can you detect crucial social networks? Do you understand the forces that shape views and actions of students, parents, and administrators? Do you accurately read situations and organizational and external realities?

5. Fifth Dimension: Social Skills

A. Influence:

- a. Main question: Are you able to build effective tactics for persuasion?

- b. Probing questions: Are you skilled at persuasion? Do you develop fine-tuned presentations to appeal to your listeners? Do you use complex strategies like indirect influence to build consensus and support? Can you orchestrate dramatic events to make a point effectively?
- B. Communication:
- a. Main question: Are you able to send clear and convincing messages?
 - b. Probing questions: Are you effective in give-and-take, registering emotional cues, and attuning your message? Can you deal with difficult issues straightforwardly? Are you able to listen well, seek mutual understanding, and do you gladly welcome the sharing of information? Are you able to foster open communication and stay receptive to bad news as well as good?
- C. Leadership:
- a. Main question: Are you able to inspire and guide groups and people?
 - b. Probing questions: Are you able to articulate and arouse enthusiasm for a shared vision and mission? Do you step forward to lead as needed, regardless of your hierarchical position? Are you able to guide the performance of others while holding them accountable? Do you consider that you lead by example?
- D. Change catalyst:
- a. Main question: Are you able to initiate or manage change?
 - b. Probing questions: Are you able to recognize the need for change and remove barriers? Are you able to challenge the status quo to acknowledge the need for change? Are you able to champion the change and enlist others in its pursuit? Are you able to model the change that you expect of others?

E. Conflict management:

- a. Main question: Are you able to negotiate and resolve disagreement?
- b. Probing questions: Are you able to handle difficult people and tense situations with diplomacy and tact? Are you able to spot potential conflict, bring disagreements into the open, and help deescalate conflicting situations? Are you able to encourage debate and open discussion? Are you able to orchestrate win-win solutions?

F. Building bonds:

- a. Main question: Are you able to nurture instrumental relationships?
- b. Probing questions: Are you able to cultivate and maintain extensive informal networks? Are you able to seek out mutually beneficial relationships? Are you able to build rapport and keep others in the loop? Are you able to make and maintain personal friendships among community and work associates?

G. Collaboration and cooperation:

- a. Main question: Are you able to work with others toward shared goals?
- b. Probing questions: Are you able to balance a focus on task with attention to relationships? Are you able to collaborate, as well as to share plans, information, and resources? Are you able to promote a friendly, cooperative climate? Are you able to spot and nurture opportunities for collaboration?

H. Team capabilities:

- a. Main question: Are you able to create group synergy in pursuing collective goals?

- b. Probing questions: Are you able to model team qualities like respect, helpfulness, and cooperation? Are you able to draw all members into active and enthusiastic participation? Are you able to build team identity, esprit de corps, and commitment? Are you able to protect the group and its reputation and share credit for the work done? How do you apply enthusiastic participation in your classroom and with your diverse stakeholders (e.g., students, parents, and administrators)?

Instrument 4: Journal Entries

Each participant completed a minimum of three journal entries recounting a relevant SEI event, one pertaining to the teacher, one to the children, and one to an event involving a child's parent. The entries focused on description of context and consequences of the occurrence of the SEI event, and the teachers' thoughts and feelings about the event(s) recorded. The researcher used Saldana's(2009) method of coding to compile this data.

Instrument 5: Protocol for *in situ* Cell Phone Calls

At a mutually agreed upon time (lunch hour, break time) a 15-20-minute call was made every other week over several weeks (six weeks). Each call focused on what happened that day, similar to journal entries. Again, Saldana's(2009) method was used in coding this data.

Instrument 6: Exit Interview

After the completion of all instruments, one session was planned as exit interview. This exit instrument focused on collecting the teachers' reaction to the study and reaction to the educational material with a focus on most memorable events, and most significant learning. This data was coded using Saldana's(2009) method as well.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Data collection happened through semi-structured qualitative interviews and the other instruments. The researcher recorded the interviews electronically to ease the transcription of responses and to record information of non-verbal communications as those relate to verbal responses. Once the interviews reached a point of saturation, the researcher utilized Groenwald's (2004) five steps to work with qualitative data as follows:

1. Data reduction and bracketing: Identifying unique utterances and points of view.
2. Delineating units of meaning: Generating a list of meaning units by emotional intelligence dimensions, relevance, frequency of occurrence, and manner of statement; this includes discarding ambiguities and redundancies, leaving the researcher with a manageable list of clear and meaningful concepts.
3. Clustering of meaning units to form themes: Identifying areas of significance that have emerged as relevant by rigorously examining these meaning units; these areas of significance serve as the bases for emerging themes.
4. Summarizing each interview: In this step, the researcher summarized each interview, analyzing how themes address the issues and concerns of the interviews (if needed, deletions and modifications were made).
5. Making a composite summary: Examining each interview for its own unique set of themes, discerning common themes across all the interviews, and generating a composite summary that illustrates both the unique and general dynamics.

The process of coding followed guidelines and standards suggested by Saldana (2009), with a three-step process as follows, (a) first cycle coding, (b) second cycle coding, and (c) post-coding. In the first cycle coding the researcher used the descriptive coding method. This type of

coding was selected for this study because it is a suitable method utilizing data that comes from diverse field notes, documents, and interactions, and because it is a good method for beginning researchers learning how to code data (Saldana, 2009). Descriptive coding is close to the traditional qualitative schools of research. The second cycle coding stage served to split descriptions into categories, themes, concepts, or theoretical constructs. This type of coding uses taxonomies and diagrams to demonstrate relationships and associations. Finally, the post-coding stage took results of all relationships and associations and analyzed them from the perspectives of dominance, repetition, and influence. These methods were applied across all instruments in order to derive a cohesive synthesis from which conclusions could be drawn.

Coding and Meaning Units

A data reduction in which codes or themes were created based on the nature of responses. All the codes or themes came from the questions included in the interviews.

After finalizing the process of data reduction, the following codes were isolated. Then the codes were compared with each other for a comparing and contrasting of responses.

If you follow the discussion of qualitative data, you are able to identify the following themes or codes:

- **Instrument 1, Part I:** Previous learning about SEI, how participants came in contact with the topic, importance of SEI in the classroom, and relationship between SEI and classroom behaviors.

- **Instrument 1, Part II:** Relationship between play and SEI, relationship between SEI and attention/concentration, relationship between SEI and disruptive behavior, and relationship between SEI and parental attachment.

- **Instrument 2: In-depth Interview:** Presence and frequency of SEI professional development,

relevance of professional development to teachers' needs, and interests and preferences in professional development activities.

- **Instrument 3: After In-service Training Interview:** First Dimension: Emotional Awareness (Self-Awareness - Accurate Self-Assessment - Self-Confidence). Second Dimension: Self-Regulation (Self-Control - Trustworthiness - Conscientiousness - Adaptability - Innovativeness). Third Dimension: Self-Motivation (Achievement Drive - Commitment - Initiative - Optimism). Fourth Dimension: Social Awareness (Empathy - Service Orientation - Developing Others - Leveraging Diversity - Political Awareness). Fifth Dimension: Social Skills (Influence - Communication - Leadership - Conflict Management - Building Bonds - Collaboration and Cooperation - Team Capabilities).

- **Instruments 4 and 5: Journal Entries and *in situ* Cell Phone Calls:** SEI event related to teacher - SEI event related to parents - SEI event related to student.

- **Instrument 6: Exit Interview:** Most significant learning.

These codes and meaning units helped the researcher to answer the research questions by comparing and making a composite of all the instruments.

Validity of the Method

Validity is the ability that the instrumentation demonstrates in measuring phenomena as intended to be studied. Neuman (2011) described three steps to increase instrument validity, (a) conceptualization of the constructs, (b) operationalization, and (c) application of operational definitions during the collection of data. Ideas that are abstract at the beginning of the research must transform into precise information to interpret as quantities. The rules of correspondence allow a researcher to link conceptual definitions of a construct into measurement indicators. This research design followed three levels of correspondence, which are: (a) selection of a pre-

established measurement framework (e.g., Goleman), (b) alignment of indicators to qualitative instruments, and (c) establishment of a systematic procedure to merge data results into a cohesive composite. This study followed a carefully systematic procedure based on validated research methodologies and methods as follows including Cone and Foster (2006), and Creswell (2008), Goleman (1998), and Groenwald (2004). Furthermore, the use of this method also provided the opportunity to study the phenomenon of emotional intelligence self-awareness from the different perspectives of confirmation and exploration, allowing a valid method to describe results.

Reliability

Neuman (2011) reported that reliability relates to stability, representation, and equivalence. Reliability means dependability and consistency (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). It suggests that the same thing is repeated under identical or very similar conditions. The design of this study replicated Goleman's (1998) socio-emotional competence in qualitative instruments, transferring all main indicators from Goleman's instrument to qualitative interviews to ensure that treat the same levels of measurements.

In the following four chapters we will discuss the four case studies separately.

Chapter Four: Case Study One – Amal

In this chapter, we will examine the case study for study participant #1. The participant is considered a veteran teacher. In accordance with the participant selection criteria, Participant #1 is the first of two teachers of greater experience.

Instrument 1: Background Qualitative Questionnaire (December 13, 2015), Part I

Study participant number one is given the pseudonym “Amal.” Amal is a female ECE teacher in Kuwait with 11 years of work experience in the field of ECE. Amal is 36-years old. She is certified to teach ECE through a Bachelor Degree from Kuwait University, College of Education in ECE. She has never questioned why she became a teacher; she reported that the ability to teach others seemed to come intuitively to her since an early age. She declared not having completed training courses on the topic of SEI in college or during her work experience. However, she took one training course for special needs children where she learned social skills’ techniques to communicate and motivate with children in the classroom. Amal works as an ECE teacher in Kuwait. She expressed that she would like to see an increase of SEI courses in Kuwait. She reported that there is a need for SEI training and knowledge among teachers in Kuwait, and referenced herself as one of those teachers.

Amal learned for the first time about the importance of emotions in one of her psychology classes, but could not remember the entire topic. She highlighted that her opinions and knowledge about emotional intelligence came from her interest in the topic. She complained that she had not received paid training courses during the past two years because schools do not provide sufficient education for veteran teachers. However, she decided to continue with her education taking private training courses for which she has acquired additional teaching skills and strategies that assist her to understand the needs of her students. She considers this situation

as a personal effort as the existing educational system offers annual education opportunities mostly for new teachers. She reported, “teachers in the system for a while are neglected; only new teachers are receiving professional development support.”

Amal has some knowledge of SEI from her self-improvement efforts but this was not learned from school. Her motivation in learning SEI skills came from her interest in helping children with special needs. She claimed that it is important to use emotional intelligence in the classroom. She reported that she usually likes to advance her knowledge of classroom interventions by researching and reading about new topics such as SEI. Amal decided to select SEI as an additional area of study because she associates SEI with concepts such as creativity and emotional and social intelligence of children. She has been researching and reading about these subjects because she believes that it is important to create activities between teachers, children, and parents that will promote good communication in the classroom.

She thinks that teachers should help children to develop their SEI skills to ensure classroom participation. Amal reported that children should learn about emotions and share their feelings with others to understand how they feel and to take ownership of these situations. She reported, “many teachers in Kuwait do not care about SEI.” As a result, a direct use of SEI does not happen in the school setting. Amal reported that she lacked the skills for dealing with SEI situations, problems or competences in the classroom. She makes a great effort to observe if children under her care presently are in need of SEI interventions. She used the example of a child that looked withdrawn and unmotivated to participate. With the support of the other children (and guided by her as a teacher), the child was soon engaged in playing with the other children.

Amal is also concerned with a lack of awareness that teachers and parents, in general, seem to have about SEI. It is her opinion that “teachers involved with this subject need to initiate a conversation about social and emotional intelligence among children.” Her experience, for years, has been helping to discover how children’s development of SEI can help the learning process; kids with a high SEI may develop their own social and academic skills that will contribute to improving the teaching and learning dynamics. Amal is of the opinion that SEI has an important influence on ECE classrooms because children with a high SEI can understand life better, receive any information quickly, and retain what they want to learn. She reported it as, “SEI skills are important; I have learned that kids learn faster and are able to remember lessons that are anchored in their emotions.”

Instrument 1: Background Qualitative Questionnaire (December 13, 2015), Part II

Amal reported that a relationship between play and the ability of children to develop emotionally, and socially is widely accepted in Kuwait’s ECE culture. Nevertheless, this same emphasis is not given broadly to SEI classroom approaches despite the fact that emotional intelligence can improve the ability of children to learn and retain information. For example, she declared that simple interventions could be integrated into the school system to increase the connections that students have with their emotions. Additionally, she suggested that, if one child is absent from school because he/she is sick, other children should be encouraged to discuss their feelings about their classmates’ absence. She believes that supporting and giving importance to the emotions of each child could help to improve their personalities and social skills.

She accepts the idea that teachers with self-awareness can help to improve children’s SEI, and she believes that children’s SEI can be improved through their teachers’ ability and knowledge to work with emotions. She emphasized, “teachers should be willing and prepared to

help children with low SEI and by enacting new approaches in the classroom and the right motivational strategies.” She re-assured with certainty that teachers with high SEI will be, consequently, more aware of children’s SEI needs. Amal believes that children can be successful in social interactions at an early age with help from their teachers and that these same children will be successful when they integrate into society as citizens and workers. She reported that most teachers close to her seem to be unaware of the importance that SEI classroom interventions could have in ECE. For that reason, they might not help children to improve themselves or their approach toward emotion, which can affect their emotional wellbeing during their social life, studies, and future.

She also declared that SEI approaches can help children to identify their strengths and weaknesses. They will also help them to have more accountability over their behaviors, helping them consequently to create a more positive classroom environment. Amal believes in the concept of unconditional acceptance although this is not a concept that all parents can understand. She highlighted, “the existing culture of the Kuwait ECE system is one that cares for the welfare of students and parents but still is anchored in the traditional values of the Middle-East culture.” This is a culture in which parents care deeply for their children, but they do not always treat emotions as if this is a concept that can be studied and managed. As a result, children cannot be understood by their different levels of SEI development. This teacher emphasized that, although teachers frequently use SEI interventions to handle disruptive behaviors in the classroom, these actions are not classified or treated as “true” SEI techniques. Nevertheless, she believes that qualities such as an authentic awareness and a nurturing attitude create a positive climate that leads to socio-emotional competence in her classroom.

Amal emphasized the importance of considering children's feelings, emotions, and happiness in order to create healthy and stable emotions in their lives. She reported, "I see the importance for the teachers to understand the elements of SEI in the classroom to facilitate learning, reading, and training." These elements are necessary in order to focus on people's emotions and to interpret these emotions for real life utilization instead of simply trying to guess what is the best approach toward this subject. Amal emphasized, as well, the importance of education for young children and methods for their learning in life, because the ability to succeed in the future depends so much on ECE.

Amal further said that kindergarten curriculum in Kuwait is focused on the three goals of cognitive, kinesthetic, and affective-social dimensions. Her opinion about the affective social dimension was based on how people need to learn about respect, appreciation, care, and civics. She agrees completely that the affective domains of SEI are to have the ability for good communication and to care about the feelings, happiness, and sadness of the other classmates. Therefore, the classroom environment is important: the teacher should be aware of SEI, creating a good place where the children can feel emotionally happy and express themselves to have good communication with classmates. Data on this participant suggests that she believes that children who experience a healthy SEI classroom environment along with good communication will be able to develop better skills for life. She emphasized that ECE teachers should also be able to express their emotions and feelings as part of their involvement with SEI methods. Amal agreed that SEI methodologies are able to shape the future personality of children, which will be reflected in their ability to achieve quality of life.

Instrument 2: In-depth Interview (December 20, 2015)

Amal reported that parents are a fundamental element in the development of SEI skills, for which they should be involved in school activities. Parents who are able to understand their children's emotions are also able help them to regulate their behaviors. Good communication between parents and children is necessary for these dynamics to happen. The importance for teachers to understand parents' SEI levels also comes from their experience as teachers with children who have exhibited psychological or emotional problems. She shared a real life example as follows, "I had a child who was angry all the time and was ignoring others in the classroom. After an investigation with the psychologist from the school, I found that the child's family had parental violence and continual argumentation." Therefore, this child was being reared in an unstable environment, which was affecting the way he was behaving in the classroom. To alleviate this situation, "I educated the parents on the importance of emotions, which help them to support their child in the transition from ECE to first grade." This methodology from the teacher worked effectively, and the trauma disappeared. After the child had graduated from kindergarten, he continued communicating and visiting her.

However, promoting SEI education among parents is not an easy task. She reported that having getting the parents to be involved in school activities is becoming more difficult in Kuwait, where the use of technologies is beginning to change the traditional behaviors of parents. The technological interventions and the many social activities available to citizens in Kuwait compete with the school system in attracting the attention of parents and members of the community about topics like SEI. Interestingly, this teacher said that schools must be more proactive and engaging toward parents for a true communication between these two (parents and teachers) to happen. Furthermore, she declared "It is difficult to notice when children have a

safe attachment to parents because teachers prefer to ignore any signs of emotional behaviors and parents are sometimes clueless of the changing emotions of their children.” She also emphasized that society is quickly shifting toward an increase in the use of technologies and television. In her opinion, parents are receiving a vast amount of information, but not the information necessary to generate SEI awareness.

Amal expressed concerns about the methodology used to choose the topics for training courses for educators, using as an example the Ministry of Education in Kuwait, which has been more focused on teaching about the use of computers, iPads, and technology courses than about the soft-skills communication approaches such as SEI skills. She reported that the new tendency of the Ministry of Education in Kuwait is focused on a method called “sophisticated curriculum,” which focuses on Arabic, English, literacy, and math.

At one point three years ago, Amal tried to create PD training courses about SEI. She was planning to call this course “There is a genius in your home,” with the goal of encouraging parents to discover their children’s talents and strengths. At that moment, she wanted to create a motivational approach for parents to collaborate with teachers to assign and complete different tasks and to offer new information to estimate children’s academic attainments, memory, and SEI abilities. However, this initiative never materialized. Today, she frequently communicates about education programs and tries to create participation opportunities for teachers, parents, and children.

Amal believes that teachers can understand SEI from classroom learning, training, reading books, and taking PD courses. However, she also reported, “ECE teachers have little opportunity to take PD classes in topics of their interest unless they pay for them.” The agenda of the Ministry of Education seems to be directed toward continuing teaching the fundamentals of

ECE, which is a good topic for incipient teachers, but not for teachers with vast experience in the field. Although most teachers in Kuwait recognize the importance of PD, a disconnect exists between offerings and needs because, in a world that is becoming more diverse (especially in Kuwait where the influx of foreigners is high), SEI approaches continue to be ignored as a subject of academic study or as a form of classroom interventions.

Amal was asked if she would like to increase the number of PD hours she takes in the year, and if any of those topics include SEI. She reported that she has not received SEI training in school. Because a formal PD system does not exist in her school, she pays for these seminars herself. However, the lack of a competitive market for these types of training limits her ability to take courses, even if she would have the resources to pay. Most recently, she has decided to invest the money that she reserved for annual training in buying books through the Internet. She tries to choose innovative topics in education, sociology, and teaching techniques for children with behavioral issues. Beside her interest to learn more about SEI, this teacher declared to have the interest to study how to translate abilities to write, read, and speak Arabic into the teaching of English as a second language, and the effects of technologies on student's academic performance.

Instrument 3: After In-service Training Interview (January 18, 2016)

Instrument three included questions concerning six dimensions of SEI, including emotional awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness, and social skills. In the first emotional intelligence dimension (i.e., awareness), Amal declared that she believes she has a high emotional awareness, as she can recognize her emotions and the effects of those emotions over other people. She can establish this through the observation of non-verbal communication, and the “vibe” that the person projects. She described it as, “I am good at reading people; I

cannot know what the story is behind closed doors, but I can certainly feel positive and negative vibrations.” She also stated that familiarity increases the ability to recognize emotions. She offered small children as an example. When they arrive at the classroom for the first time, it is more difficult for her to identify their emotions (especially if the child is limited in their communication abilities), but this changes as they interact and she begins to know the student better. Helping those students is her greatest value and goal as an ECE teacher.

When asked if she uses humor as part of her SEI skills, Amal reported that she still has difficulties identifying her own strengths and weaknesses, as sometimes it is difficult for her to identify her gaps and what things she can improve. However, she does consider that she has a good sense of humor and does not mind about laughing at her mistakes. Therefore, even when she suffers from occasional hesitation about her talents or lack of skill, she reported, “I believe I can learn new ways of doing old things with the appropriate support and training.” Nevertheless, sometimes she is not assertive enough to voice her concerns in some professional circumstances because those opinions have not been validated in the past. As a result, she has lost the desire to voice those concerns, especially when dealing with school bureaucracy.

In the second dimension of emotional intelligence (e.g., self-regulation), Amal believes that she has a high level of competency, being able to control her emotions and impulses. She has learned meditational techniques that help to alleviate stress and are also helpful in allowing her to remain focused under pressure. She considers herself an honest and trustworthy person, and declared that many people come to her for advice because she is known for having a high “moral compass.” When asked if she would exhibit SEI skills related to political relationships, she reported that she is not as authentic as people believe she is because most of the time she does not communicate what she thinks about situations and people. Amal believes that she has

developed a “political correctness” approach as a coping mechanism to deal with the nuances of the school system.

Regarding conscientiousness, Amal declared that she takes serious responsibility for her performance, sometimes to an extreme. For example, she will feel terribly guilty if she fails and can even get depressed if she performs poorly. Nevertheless, she can be adaptable and flexible when things change rapidly. Managing multiple demands has become part of her daily life, so she is familiar with continual change. She reported, “I feel comfortable adopting new ideas and I consider myself a person curious to learn new things.”

In the third dimension (i.e., self-motivation), Amal reported that she adopted the goal of self-improvement during recent years but that she is not doing it for improving her career options, although this knowledge contributes to having better job opportunities. She feels motivated to achieve these goals for herself and to improve the way she perceives her abilities and weaknesses. She reported, “I am afraid of uncertainty, so I always look for the clarification of ideas, circumstances, and peoples’ feelings.” She reported that she has an issue with committing to the goal of the group or organization if this goal is against her opinion. Although sometimes she does not communicate her opposition openly, she is aware that something is not working well but does not have the energy to go against those ideals. Therefore, she feels that her commitment is only partial. Nevertheless, she continues supporting those ideals because she can be persistent in pursuing those goals despite apparent difficulties

In the fourth dimension (i.e., social awareness), she believes she is empathetic to others’ needs and takes interest in those around her, being able to anticipate, recognize, and meet the needs of students, parents, and administrators, although others are not always cognizant to recognize her needs. She reported it as, “I know what empathy is. I believe that I have empathy

and I use it every day to deal with school situations. Sometimes it is not easy to understand the motivations of people with different interests and lifestyles.” It is for this reason that sometimes she feels that she is more loyal to her students and school in general than the school system is to her. As an ECE teacher, she has learned to be an advisor, mentor, and facilitator for her students to be able to develop social and cognitive abilities. However, she would like to have a better feedback system in which she can learn how she can improve and tell others how they can improve their performance, especially the administrators. She tries to cultivate opportunities to engage with diverse people and feels that she is sensitive to the needs of different generational groups. Nevertheless, Amal does not consider herself as a person with political power and has never been interested in play organizational politics. Although she recognizes the power of networking, she reported that her jobs have emerged from fortuitous circumstances. Once in the school system, her only interest is the classroom.

In the fifth dimension (i.e., social skills), she considers herself to be able to build effective tactics for persuasion, and believes she is more of a follower than a leader. However, she can communicate well in the appropriate circumstances, considers herself an excellent listener, and has a conciliatory personality. She avoids conflict, not because she cannot “handle” the situation, but because of the amount of energy that it takes to be involved in a conflicting situation. She said that she could foster open communication and stay receptive to bad news as well as good as “I know I can do more during some school situations; but sometimes I feel that changes will not happen regardless of what I have to say.” However, contrary to most of the people that she knows, she handles change well although she does not always initiate such changes. However, once a dynamic change is in progress, it is easy for her to adapt to new circumstances.

She has few but significant relationships and is loyal to her friends. She considers herself a collaborator, able to share plans, information, and resources. She likes to work in teams although she is not always invited. However, everybody in school knows that they can count on her, and sometimes she is the “go to” person to answer questions about diverse issues because of her experience dealing with the system. Finally, although she does not consider herself as the leader type, she can commit to common goals and can exhibit active and enthusiastic participation.

Instrument 4: Journal Entries

Amal completed journal entries recounting thoughts and feelings about an occurrence of an SEI event based on context and consequences of the occurrence. The participant completed one entry per week for three consecutive weeks. Three separate SEI events were recorded about SEI dynamics concerning parents, children, and herself. Participants were encouraged to record three situations and record their feelings, emotions, and strategies to deal with those situations.

Entry 1: Parents

On January 30, 2016 Amal wrote about the visible effects of over-protective parents on children when they have emotional issues. She wrote, “I frequently observe cases of concerned parents who become over-protective of children when they have difficulties adapting to social situations. They believe this is the best approach but they are avoiding the development of skills and tools for autonomy and independence.” She also pointed out that facilities in Kuwait could create co-dependency that has advantages and disadvantages. The main advantage of this type of protection is that society in Kuwait demonstrates a genuine concern to protect small children. The disadvantage is that some families curtail their children’s autonomy by taking care of all their needs. She associated this situation to SEI and stated, “nobody asks children about their

emotions; children's criteria are not taken into consideration in making plans." Amal wrote further, "parents in Kuwait could confuse care with an autocratic series of activities."

Entry 2: Children

On February 7, 2016 Amal wrote, "Small children require teachers with high emotional intelligence because the level of care is more intensive and SEI abilities like emotional control and self-motivation are more necessary to have an effective classroom environment." Amal indicated that she had always been cognizant of the SEI component in education. However, after the experience of participating as a volunteer in this case study, she has become more aware of using SEI approaches in the classroom. For example, she is beginning to teach her children at the ECE level an approach that she calls, "stop, breath, and think." "I am sure I took this title from an old SEI reading." "Stop, breath, and think is about identifying negative emotions and stopping to think before that negative emotion becomes a tantrum."

Entry 3: Herself

On February 21, 2016 Amal wrote brief notes about her feelings concerning the role of parents in the development of SEI. She concluded, "I want to do more for helping parents to understand the importance of SEI interventions at home as a continuation of what happens in the classroom." She wrote, "I feel guilty because I know that I can do more," but recently she has conformed to the "ways" of the school system because it is difficult to convince people about new topics. This type of demoralization has decreased the number of times she educates parents and disseminates SEI information.

Instruments 5 and 6: In situ Cell Phone Calls and Exit Interview

The interviewer completed three phone calls with Amal. The phone calls happened after the background interview, after the PowerPoint training session, and as an exit interview (see Table 1).

Table 1

Information about virtual contact and Exit Interview, Participant #1

Purpose of the Phone Call	Date of the Call	Time and Duration
Follow Up to Background Interview	December 14, 2015	12:00 Noon AST 10 minutes
After Training Session	January 22, 2016	9:00 am AST 15 minutes
Exit Interview	March 1 st , 2016	12:00 Noon AST 20 minutes

The researcher thanked Amal for her collaboration in this case study and ensured her about the confidentiality of her data. Interviewer opened the forum of discussion for Amal to express her last comments and thoughts. Amal communicated her gratitude for the opportunity and asked if she could keep the PowerPoint educational training for her personal library of reference materials, a request that was granted. When asked what lesson she found most useful from the experience of participating in the SEI training, she responded that the value for her was to remember about SEI and how it can be used more effectively in her favor. She compared this personal revelation to “not using the good glass that you have at home because you placed it in a hidden place.” She continued to be regretful about the lack of paid PD providers that could create a market for more training for ECE teachers, outside the scope of the mandatory curriculum of teaching techniques.

Synthesis

Amal is an ECE teacher with 11 years of experience working with young children in Kuwait. She identified her desire to become a teacher at an early age. This teacher has not completed professional development training in the topic of SEI. She declared that experienced teachers do not receive professional development in Kuwait, although a great need for SEI training exists. According to Amal, although Kuwait's educational system is one that cares for the welfare of young children, ECE teachers in Kuwait are not aware or concerned about the utilization of SEI teaching methods. She emphasized how cultural values of paternalism and protectionism are embedded in the style of teachers in Kuwait. She used the term "codependency" to describe rooted behaviors about protecting children from experiencing all types of emotions.

However, she acknowledged the importance of understanding SEI, and has personally paid for some private courses. Through this training, she has been able to implement some SEI interventions in her classroom. However, several of her responses suggested few ECE teachers practice SEI methods in their classrooms. Amal remembered times in which she used SEI interventions with positive outcomes. She emphasized that she involved other children in those interventions; an approach that she repeatedly cited in her interviews. In her experience, SEI interventions are better implemented when children and parents are involved actively in these activities. She reported that children with high SEI could learn better, show greater interest in others, and develop well-adapted personalities and high-level social skills. Amal acknowledged that teachers with high SEI skills themselves could be better classroom facilitators because they can help children to identify and channel both weaknesses and strengths.

Amal also demonstrated concern about how the use of technologies has displaced the attention that children give to their school activities, affecting how both parents and children prioritize relationships. Parents involved in the use of technologies can become less attentive to the children's emotional needs. Individuals are receiving more information but this does not mean that they are learning SEI awareness. According to Amal, the Ministry of Education in Kuwait should intervene to provide professional development in the topic of SEI to its teachers. Lack of training and existing resources make it difficult for teachers to provide parents with additional SEI tools. Nevertheless, SEI has become an issue of importance in Kuwait. Amal pays for educational materials herself.

After completing SEI in-service training, Amal had the opportunity to evaluate her emotional intelligence abilities, reporting that she has the ability to recognize non-verbal signs of emotions in others and that has been of great help in the classroom to communicate with small children whose conversational skills are limited. She considers herself as capable of using humor to deal with difficult situations, especially in moments of change. On the other hand, she also recognized that she is not "vocal" about professional situations that are not in agreement with her beliefs. Amal seemed disenchanted with the existing school climate, which she called "bureaucratic." Nevertheless, she declared that she could exercise emotional control, self-regulation, and ability to remain calm under stress, a fact that she attributed to her practice of meditational techniques to alleviate stress. She also took pride in her high "moral compass" and emphasized how others often come to her for advice.

Through diverse statements, Amal demonstrated disdain toward organizational politics, although she hides her feelings by practicing "political correctness" in the workplace. She stated that she is "not authentic" in school but is able to sustain cordial relationships. With regard to

change, she described that she feels comfortable learning new things and can be adaptable, especially in school endeavors, as she feels responsible to demonstrate good occupational performance. Contrastingly, she related that she is not comfortable with uncertainty and she continually seeks information in order to rectify a lack thereof. She also stated that she suffers from depression and mood swings when she is not performing at a high level.

Chapter Five: Case Study Two – Bedour

In this chapter, we will examine the case study for study participant #2. The participant is considered a novice teacher. In accordance with the participant selection criteria, Participant #2 is the first of two teachers of lesser experience.

Instrument 1: Background Qualitative Questionnaire (December 13 2015), Part I

Study participant #2 has the pseudonym “Bedour.” Bedour is a female ECE teacher in Kuwait with four years of work experience in the field of ECE. Bedour is 27-years old. She is certified to teach ECE through a Bachelor Degree from Kuwait University, College of Education in ECE. Bedour declared that she has not taken courses or professional development training in the topic of SEI during her teaching period. However, she is interested in taking classes in the subjects SEI and PD programs. She noted, “I would like to communicate and understand better the behaviors of the children under my care. I believe that SEI courses could improve my communication skills.” Bedour expressed that she is new to the topic of professional development, and that is why she is unaware of the educational methodology used in the subject of SEI. She usually takes professional development courses in the topic of PD once or twice a year as part of her training as she is still considered a “new teacher.”

Bedour commented that cognitive intelligence is as important as is SEI intelligence. She continued that awareness of SEI education among teachers could help resolve problems and find solutions between children and educators. She used an example based on the behaviors of adults, as children mirror the behaviors of adults reflecting the importance of role modeling. She reiterated the importance of having teachers with a high SEI awareness when they are interacting with young children. In addition, Bedour reported that Kuwait’s ECE curriculum values collaboration. She declared, “If we do not teach our children to be good team players at an early

age we will not be able to help them develop into functional adults.” She expressed the belief that SEI education is important because it can help one to understand emotions and resolve social and emotional problems among young children. She confirmed the importance of teaching children to love the school because it is fundamental to becoming successful students. She said that at that moment the Kuwait education system is not focused on SEI courses.

Instrument 1: Background Qualitative Questionnaire (December 13, 2015), Part II

Bedour declared that a relationship exists between play and the ability of children to develop social emotional competences because children make sense of their surroundings by “make believe” play. In reply to questions about how emotional intelligence interventions influence the levels of attention and concentration among her students, she reported, “I cannot tell because I do not have SEI goals in my classroom plan.” The conversation with Bedour revealed that she thinks that SEI interventions happen spontaneously in her classroom and not as part of a prescribed regime of interventions.

Bedour agreed that dialogue is needed for teachers to understand different levels of socio-emotional development among their students. However, she does not see a relationship between self-awareness and SEI, as she reported, “I am not sure that self-awareness relates directly to emotional intelligence in any way.” For Bedour, it is obvious that unconditional acceptance of others would create positive socio-emotional class environments in any school. She also endorses the idea that the number of disruptive behaviors would decrease through emotional intelligence interventions, especially from the way teachers react to their students’ emotions. She reported, “A calm and stable behavior that comes from positive emotions always attracts the same type of calm behaviors.”

Bedour also stated that qualities like authentic awareness and nurturing attitude create a positive climate that lead to good SEI environments. She argued that she believes SEI training could help any teacher to understand and regulate their own and students' emotions.

Furthermore, she declared, "Parents are the ones who need the most SEI education; at least the teacher has professional development classes twice a year and can read different educational newsletters." When asked about the levels of emotional attachment between parents and children, Bedour informed that this topic is often ignored in Kuwait, despite the fact that ECE students remain strongly attached to their parents.

Instrument 2: In-depth Interview (December 20, 2015)

Bedour related that she never learned about SEI education by the school. "I do not have any idea of how to create an effective system in SEI or suggest a professional development program that could help teachers to become more competent about the topic," she reported. Bedour expressed that she is provided each year with professional development activities because she is still considered a new teacher in the school system. The topics covered in these professional development sessions have been related to assessment methods, mentoring, and coaching. She would like to see other topics covered in her professional development, including SEI and cultural diversity. She further opined, "I would like to receive more information on how to deal with disruptive behavior in the classroom." Although she feels that the existing professional development activities in SEI are relevant to her needs as an ECE teacher, she believes that she should receive professional development more times in a year to be really effective.

She noted also that a "real" problem is the follow up between professional development sessions. Her principal is trying to implement a mentoring program to provide support between training sessions. Other teachers have talked about having a Google Docs space to share

effective practices, but they have not been able to find a volunteer to manage the website.

Bedour believes that on-going support between professional development sessions is necessary to increase the quality of training because meeting twice a year for a few hours is not substantial enough support for her job. Bedour expressed, “I prefer face-to-face professional development sessions, but I would not mind interacting in virtual platforms if this will mean additional training support.”

According to Bedour children can learn SEI abilities with the support and cooperation of the school system. She pointed out that the principle role that a teacher occupies in classrooms relates to delegating instructions about different tasks, and helping and advising children with their workshops. She saw the advantages of developing SEI awareness among children, because it is a good way to create intelligent and independent children for the challenging conditions of contemporary life. She emphasized, “I believe that SEI should include topics about learning about love and accepting others.”

Still, Bedour has no idea about the main elements in SEI. She does not know how teachers can understand and help to develop SEI among children with classroom interventions. Finally, she considers SEI as essential in ECE because it is a strong foundation for personal competence in adulthood. Within her last comments, she expressed that teachers should improve their SEI because it is important to educate and understand the students.

Bedour spoke about her experiences dealing with children who exhibited some type of SEI problem, and for which she was naturally available to resolve the situation. She used the example of two children with strong personalities who engage continually in confrontational interchanges. Bedour noticed that the reason for these confrontations was the desire of both children to obtain control over toys and implements in the classroom. She declared, “I feel proud

that I was able to identify the situation and facilitate communication interventions with the children that resulted in their mutual acceptance of each other.”

Bedour explained that her teaching goals in school every day has SEI methods embedded, as they teach in school to focus on cooperation and appreciation for the children’s emotional wellbeing. However, she does not know what SEI domains are. She also communicated that, in her experience, teachers with noticeable awareness are able to create an adequate environment for their classrooms by giving and teaching love for education, and creating smart children. She expressed, “I truly believe that adequate communication and relationships of respect in the classroom will help children with their own SEI skills.”

Instrument 3: After In-service Training Interview (January 19, 2016)

Instrument three included questions concerning six dimensions of SEI, including emotional awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness, and social skills. With relation to the first dimension, emotional awareness, Bedour declared that she believes that she is able to recognize her emotions and the effects of those emotions over other people but she is not sure. She expressed that without somebody from an external position communicating whether or not she is able to recognize emotions, she would not know for sure. Bedour recognized, though, that the emotions sadness, and anger affect her performance in the classroom. She expressed, “I wish that we teachers could have mental days to stay at home when we feel depressed, because it is a bad state in which to facilitate the classroom, but teachers here have difficulties finding suitable substitutes.” The most important values for Bedour are honesty and integrity.

Bedour relayed that she is able to recognize her strengths and weaknesses, although she tends to identify faster her weaknesses over her strengths. She has an issue with receiving criticism, although she has learned how to accept comments from superiors and mentors since

she has been working as a teacher, as feedback is shared continually for her improvement. She stated that she is not able to laugh from her mistakes, and that on the contrary, she tends to become depressed. She expressed that she tends to feel terribly upset when something does not go her way, as she is extremely diligent in striving to avoid making mistakes. In this sense, she reported self-confidence in her abilities to perform well in the classroom and she knows that she has the necessary capabilities to be an ECE teacher, such as patience, ability to empathize with children, and abilities to be a good listener with children, parents, and other teachers in school. However, sometimes she sees circumstances in school that she does not like but she decides not to communicate her concerns. She reiterated that her hesitation to voice concerns does not come from shyness, but from lack of confidence in her experience. “Because I do not have many years of experience in ECE, I do not know what has worked or not in the past, so I do not feel confident to give my opinion in many school matters.” She prefers not be rushed into fast decisions and does not like to work under pressure or uncertainty, although this happens in rare occasions.

Bedour communicated that she manages disruptive emotions by listening to music. Sometimes she also listens to some websites that have sounds of nature, such as ocean waves or water running. Bedour declared, “Thinking about water is always relaxing for me, although I do not have much time to visit the beach during the school year.” To focus under pressure, she learned to use the 10-1 regressive counting technique and deep breathing. However, she admitted that she is not good at dealing with stress.

Bedour values honesty and considers herself an open and trustworthy person. She considers herself an authentic person but, because she has an introspective personality, some peers sometimes “skip” her in conversation thinking that she does not have anything to say.

However, she opined, “This is not true; introspective people have important things to say; it is just that we are not ‘super eager’ to share with others.” Bedour conveyed that she has an irreproachable record as both citizen and professional, and that she takes good care to maintain this status. She stated that she would never do anything that would damage her reputation or the reputation of her family in society. Bedour has not been involved in any major ethical issues, for which she does not know how she would react, although she believes that she would be unable to endorse any activity that is illegal or unethical. In the same way, she takes responsibility for her actions continually, keeping promises and commitments, and being careful and detailed in her job.

Bedour declared that she does not react well to change, although she understands that change is a natural state of life, especially in these “exponential” times. However, she does not look voluntarily for changes and appreciates stability on her personal life. On the job, she is able to adapt to change after a while, although it is not her favorite circumstance. She also stated, “I do not consider myself a creative person but I can appreciate new information and new ideas.” She has great admiration for people who can propose creative ideas in a short time, especially in the middle of a crisis. In her case, it takes her more time to react to changing circumstances. However, once she has acclimated to changes, she moves through them quickly and accurately.

Bedour reported that she has low motivation for accolades, although she does believe in improving or meeting a standard of excellence in ECE. She considers herself as a results-oriented person, who focuses more on the objectives and standards than on methods. However, she commented that, “changing teaching patterns is creative but not creative like making a cake or cooking a gourmet dinner.” She can alter her teaching patterns as long as she can adjust to the needs of her classroom. Bedour claimed that she is able to set challenging goals and take-

calculated risks but only if the outcome is worthy of going through that extra effort. She related that she does not pursue information to reduce uncertainty although she looks for extra information to improve classroom performance.

Bedour asserted that her goals are well aligned with the school where she teaches, as these are universal values among ECE teachers. She finds a sense of purpose in her profession and she wants to work many more years in the field of ECE. She stated, "I entered in the ECE field because I like small children more than I like teenagers." During her preparatory schooling, she rotated through different grades and found that the ECE level of education was a better fit for her core values.

Bedour sounded confused toward the line of inquiry about new opportunities. She asked several times to what type of new opportunities the researcher was alluding. The researcher clarified that new opportunities would be in any aspect of her professional or personal life. The participant denied her involvement in activities for new opportunities and declared that she appreciates stability and routine in both professional and personal life. However, if it is ordered by the school administration to participate in a project, she believes she has the ability to endure the different stages of a project but would not be able to bend the rules. She proclaimed, "Rules are important to be followed, and exist for a reason." She does not consider herself as somebody able to mobilize others although she is a good follower. She would be able to be persistent in pursuing goals despite obstacles and setbacks if the goals are worth the effort. Nevertheless, she admitted that she tends to develop a pessimist mindset quickly when things do not happen as planned, experiencing guilt, and fear of failure.

In the area of social awareness, Bedour believes that she has excessive empathy for others, and takes a personal interest in other people. She considers herself as somebody able to

sense and take an active interest in the feelings and perspectives of students, being able to be attentive to emotional cues, listen well, show sensitivity, and understand others' perspectives. She can also anticipate, recognize, and meet the needs of students, parents, and administrators, and match her her level of service to those needs. She seeks ways to increase the satisfaction and loyalty of students, parents, and administrators by offering appropriate assistance to students and making referrals to the school social worker when she cannot handle a classroom situation.

Although she is able to sense what others need in order to develop, and bolster their abilities, she does not consider herself a "leader among leaders," and prefers to have a silent participation in school dynamics. She encourages her children to accomplish small successes in the classroom as part of her job, but is not able to acknowledge and reward other adults' strengths, accomplishments, and development. She indicated, "I do not work towards offering and identifying people's needs for development outside the prescription in my classroom." She has a supervisor who serves as mentor, but the time of this person is limited because she has many other responsibilities, so she has minimal time for coaching and offering challenging assignments that advance a person's skills.

Bedour declared that she is rarely has the opportunity to cultivate opportunities through diverse people. However, she would like to travel more and learn from people from varied backgrounds and diverse worldviews. She is able to read a group's power relationships but does not participate actively from these interactions. She professed, "I dislike some supervisors because they have little concern for the welfare of children and base all their decisions in personal agendas." She stated that she understands the forces that shape the views and actions of students, parents, and administrators but she prefers to stay separated from those situations unless any of those circumstances directly affect her students.

Concerning the fifth dimension, social skills, Bedour expressed that she had limited opportunities to build effective tactics for persuasion, so she does not know if she would be skilled in this endeavor. She also claimed to have limited experience as public speaker. In her opinion, "public speaking is very different from teaching because I use interventions directing my students through a routine of classroom activities which is not the same as persuading others." She described herself as a simple person who avoids complex strategies like indirect influence to build consensus and support.

Bedour believes that she is able to communicate clearly and convincingly with students and parents although she never thought about teaching in these persuasive terms. She reported, "I am a good listener and I am able to welcome and understand new information." However, she does not consider that she would have the interest in or ability for inspiring and guiding groups and people. Nevertheless, she aspires to be a good role model for her students. She is not good with change and prefers stability, as such, it is difficult for her to identify the need for change. She can identify, on the other hand, when students are in need of special attention. She conveyed, "I avoid disagreements to avoid conflict negotiation." When people in her school have conflicting viewpoints, she prefers to stay outside the scope of those situations.

Bedour believes that she is able to nurture instrumental relationships but she does not cultivate and maintain extensive informal networks, having a limited circle of colleagues and friends. She stated that she can make and maintain personal relationships among community and work associates, "but will not call them friends; friend is an exclusive designation." However, she considers herself a collaborator, able to share plans, information, and resources with other in school and personal life. She emphasized that she can promote a friendly, cooperative climate as long as nobody asks her to be the leader. She considers herself a team player but not a leader.

However, she is a good follower and is able to protect the group and its reputation, share credit for the work done, and try to cater to the needs to all stakeholders (parents, teachers, children, and administrators).

Instrument 4: Journal Entries

Bedour completed journal entries recounting thoughts and feelings about an occurrence of an SEI event based on context and consequences of the occurrence. Bedour completed one entry per week for three consecutive weeks. Three separate SEI events were recorded about SEI dynamics concerning parents, children, and herself. She was encouraged to record her feelings, emotions, and the strategies she used to deal with the recorded situations.

Entry 1: Parents

On January 30, 2016 Bedour wrote how this experience with SEI content has given her concerns about her abilities as a leader in the classroom. She wrote, "I have never considered myself as a leader." She exposed reflective questions such as "Who is a true leader? "I wonder the true meaning of leadership. I wonder if I should be more influential with parents than I have been in the past." She recounted a story in which she had a strong willed mother who came to volunteer in the classroom and, suddenly, was giving orders to her. She felt in that moment that the mother was being intrusive but did not have the bravery to confront the parent or report these circumstances to her superiors. She informed that the mother stopped volunteering for unrelated reasons. However, she never addressed this issue, or talked about how she felt, behaved, or reacted until this journaling experience. She wrote, "I would like to learn how to lead parents to volunteer more effectively." She also wrote, "I give less attention than I am supposed to give to the parents and this is bad because they are responsible for continued educating at home."

Entry 2: Children

On February 7, 2016 Bedour wrote brief notes that, although she always considered herself a good listener, she has become increasingly aware of her levels of empathy and connection with children. She reported, “I never noticed that I have an empathetic connection with until I completed the SEI training, but I believe I was aware in a sense.” She wrote about how she acquired a refined attention to the children’s needs after the training. She wrote, “This level of attention was always there but more as an intuition than a certainty; but now I know it is empathy.” She wrote that she has been connecting with children but because this comes naturally to her, not because she was practicing empathy or closeness with them. She imparted that she is interested in learning more about SEI but directed specifically toward ECE.

Entry 3: Herself

On February 21, 2016, Bedour wrote about how she could identify her lack of interest in others when she was answering the interviews. She intimated, “I feel sad that I am not so interested in developing relationships with others,” although she has a small circle of acquaintances and friends with whom she communicates often. She also wrote, “I am not the leader type but I wonder if I have to consider becoming a leader. If I am a leader I could have greater drive to be the center of attention.” She also considered scenarios of what circumstances would motivate her to take the role of leader. She identified that circumstances in which the welfare of others is in jeopardy, or situations with related causes are what she believes would be necessary for her to take that step to be the leader. She wrote, “I believe that I would become a leader if my family would be in danger;” and “I would be a leader in school if nobody else did it but only if it is for the little ones.”

Instruments 5 and 6: In situ Cell Phone Calls and Exit Interview

The interviewer completed three phone calls with Bedour. The phone calls happened after the background interview, after the PowerPoint training session, and as an exit interview (see Table 3).

Table 3

Information about virtual contact and Exit Interview, Participant #2

Purpose of the Phone Call	Date of the Call	Time and Duration
Follow Up to Background Interview	December 14, 2015	2:00 pm AST 10 minutes
After Training Session	January 22, 2016	10:00 am AST 15 minutes
Exit Interview	March 1 st , 2016	2:00 Noon AST 20 minutes

The researcher thanked the participant for her collaboration in this case study and ensured her confidentiality. The interviewer opened the forum of discussion for Bedour's final comments and thoughts. Bedour communicated that this experience was nothing like she imagined because of the amount of introspection that she had the opportunity to experience. She conceded that this surprised her because she has always considered herself as a meditative and reflective person. However, she also mentioned that having a frame to reflect made this situation different. She clarified that she learned through this experience that a person could be introspective but focus on the wrong ideas. She recognized that she liked the idea of having a structure for the journal entries because it allowed her to reflect on her interactions from three different perspectives. She also opined that it would have been good to have more information about how to deal with other teachers, not only with parents and children, because sometimes other teachers are the "real" impediments to achieving SEI.

Synthesis

Bedour is a 27-year old ECE teacher with four years of experience in Kuwait. Bedour attends to professional development semiannually as part of her “new teacher” status, and participates in a mentoring program. However, she has not taken SEI training and confessed having little knowledge of the SEI construct or how SEI can be translated into a topic for professional development. Bedour communicated that SEI is not part of the existing ECE curriculum in Kuwait. She expressed interest in training on the topic of SEI to improve her communication skills, and emphasized that teachers with awareness of SEI could be better role models of positive emotions in the classroom. Bedour acknowledged the importance of SEI for helping children developing emotional wellbeing and academic performance.

Bedour believes that she is able to recognize her emotions and the effects of emotions over other people. She opined that teachers should not teach when they are feeling emotional but that the existing conditions in Kuwait do not allow to find substitute teachers rapidly. Personally, she tends to get upset when circumstances do not “go her way” and tends to be depressed when she does not perform up to the highest standard of quality. Bedour stated that she is careful in the exercise of her work because she does not allow herself to make mistakes. She also considered herself as an inexperienced teacher, and she refrains from giving opinions in school. However, she demonstrated confidence in her abilities to listen actively parents and children, her patience, and ability to empathize with children. She considers herself a teacher with a good connection with her children and an ability to understand their needs.

Bedour admitted that she tries to manage her stress with different techniques, including listening to sounds of running water or ocean waves, the 10-1 regressive counting technique, and deep breathing. However, she admitted that still cannot handle stress in certain occasions. She

described herself as an introspective person and an “irreproachable” citizen. She demonstrated concern with behavior that could bring shame to her family. Bedour takes pride in her job and declared that she is careful and diligent in her duties as ECE teacher. Bedour does not consider herself a leader but considers herself a good collaborator. She also claimed to stay within the scope of her responsibilities and to be obedient to school rules. Bedour related that she is not comfortable with change although she can adapt to new circumstances after a while.

Bedour manifested appreciating stability and routine in her personal life. She described herself as a person with few but good relationships. Bedour also reported that she avoids power games and has little knowledge of persuasion techniques. She considered teaching as a different endeavor than leadership. Although she considered herself a good listener, she also avoids involvement in conflicting situations. She expressed that friendship is a special designation reserved for a few people in her life. Bedour wrote in her diary entries reflections about her capabilities to be a leader, and her desire to become more active and influential with the parents of her school. She also claimed to become aware of her level of empathy with children after completing an SEI in-service training. Bedour intimated that she is sad because she has no interest in developing new social relationships.

Chapter Six: Case Study Three – Dalal

In this chapter, we will examine the case study for study participant #3. The participant is considered a veteran teacher. In accordance with the participant selection criteria, Participant #3 is the second of two teachers of greater experience.

Instrument 1: Background Qualitative Questionnaire (December 13, 2015), Part I

Study participant number three will be called by the pseudonym “Dalal.” Dalal is a female ECE teacher in Kuwait with 20 years of work experience in the field of ECE. Dalal is 44-years old and has a bachelor’s degree from Kuwait University’s College of Education in the specialty of ECE. She comes from a family of teachers; her father was a professor at Kuwait University and she had aunts from both her mother’s and father’s side who worked as teachers for the Kuwait Ministry of Education. Dalal declared that she learned about SEI while taking professional development classes in the topic of social intelligence. She stated, “I paid for the classes myself because I wanted to know more about emotional quotient.” Dalal reported that the ministry of education used to provide professional development courses two times a year but today they only offer these courses for novice teachers.

Dalal insisted that she knows that SEI is an important concept in education. She proclaimed, “SEI is as important as traditional intelligence; what happens is that SEI is an invisible layer of behaviors and difficult to measure in the classroom.” Dalal also opined that helping children to develop collaborative behaviors is important, especially in the ECE classroom. When the researcher asked if collaboration was one SEI intervention, Dalal responded, “There are not SEI interventions in our classroom plans, but collaboration is a social behavior recognized across all educational levels in Kuwait.” She stated that teaching collaboration is important to develop SEI competences.

Instrument 1: Background Qualitative Questionnaire Part II

Dalal acknowledged that she sees a direct relationship between play and socio emotional competences, and that she uses play on a daily basis in her classroom. When the researcher asked if Dalal perceived that SEI interventions would influence the levels of attention and concentration among her students, she responded, “I know children react better to positive emotions. However, I cannot tell if it is because of SEI. In Kuwait we are also nurturing and motherly to our students.” Notwithstanding, Dalal agreed that dialogue and self-reflection are necessary to understand different levels of socio-emotional development among her students. When the researcher asked if increasing SEI awareness would be associated to the understanding of attachment and detachment from parents, Dalal replied, “I believe experience compensates for the lack of SEI knowledge. After 20 years of ECE experience I can tell when children have a good or bad attachment to their parents.”

Dalal commented that she would be interested in taking any type of training focused on SEI. She claimed to be aware of the importance that SEI has in the development of ECE curriculum. She also reported, “In Kuwait, neither professional development or the ECE curriculum are based in SEI competences.” She opined that these methodologies are not well-focused and that ECE teachers in Kuwait do not develop sufficient skills to deal with SEI issues in the classroom. She declared, “I truly see the importance of learning and developing high SEI as teachers because they will be able to help children to discover the benefits of SEI at school.” She informed that she would be interested in updating her knowledge on SEI as it has been a time since she took classes on the topic. She continued, “I wish they teach us more about SEI because I believe teachers need to have high SEI that will help them in their teaching skills and also to assess children’s SEI.”

Instrument 2: In-depth Interview (December 21, 2015)

Dalal expressed that she has some knowledge of SEI. She informed that she took psychology courses from the University Kuwait. She stated, “I have knowledge in the areas of SEI and this knowledge also helps me to target and help children with high or low SEI.” Dalal recounted a time in which she had a student with evident SEI issues. This child, in specific, could not interact with other children. He had difficulties speaking and was socially withdrawn from the rest of the class. Dalal declared that it was her awareness of SEI that helped this child to integrate into the classroom routine. Dalal insisted, “The real problem of this child was his parents. SEI problems always begin at home.”

Dalal thinks that it is important that teachers focus on understanding their students’ personalities, because teachers can help with the appropriate educational methodology to help students to develop positive relationships. However, when the researcher asked if she would be able to teach SEI, she admitted that she would not know how to create professional development courses related to SEI. She expanded, “I believe SEI courses should be created by SEI experts.”

Dalal believes SEI is an important part of the educational system. She stated, “SEI helps all in school to have better communication,” referring to teachers, parents, and students. Dalal noted that SEI is important because it allows for better communication. She also agreed that students can achieve higher academic performance when they are emotionally stable and socially adapted. Dalal does not believe the educational system in Kuwait is focused enough in SEI, although she tries to instill these values in her classroom. Dalal elaborated, “I usually teach children to appreciate school, cooperate with others, and demonstrate love for our great nation Kuwait.” However, at the moment of this interview, she was not following affective domains in her classroom educational plans.

Dalal emphasized that SEI is needed to create a healthy and successful atmosphere in the classroom. She also shared her opinions about civic behavior and how children must develop cooperation and proper behavior. When the researcher asked how this would be related to SEI, she responded, "Children can learn from their emotions to solve their problems and learn from their experiences; that is how SEI is related." She continued, "It takes a teacher with SEI to detect children with SEI difficulties." When the researcher asked what a teacher must observe to identify SEI issues she replied, "Good teachers can understand SEI in children through their behaviors." Dalal proclaimed that the duty of teachers is to help children to discover SEI abilities, so that they can develop improved personalities. Dalal believes that a good personality is forged starting from an early age. Finally, this participant commented that all teachers should improve themselves in SEI because they can become better educators.

Dalal informed that she has not participated in any professional development activities in the last year. she claimed that professional development in the past did not cover the topic of SEI. Topics of discussion in past training included the new regulations of school, coaching and mentoring initiatives, and how to coordinate the collaboration of parents in the classroom. When the researcher asked why she has not participated in professional development activities, Dalal responded, "I used to have professional development courses twice a year when I was new teacher but not anymore because they only provide professional development courses for new teachers." When the researcher asked what topics she would like to see included in professional development activities, Dalal responded that she would like to learn about SEI and also about how to introduce writing activities at an earlier age (preschool).

Instrument 3: After In-service Training Interview (January 20, 2016)

Instrument three included questions concerning six dimensions of SEI, including emotional awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness, and social skills. With relation to the first dimension, emotional awareness, Dalal insisted that she has the experience to handle multiple demands and rapid change. She declared, “Yes, I think I have the experience now; I did not when I was younger.” Dalal considers herself able to adapt her responses and tactics to fit changing circumstances and to be flexible in the way she perceives life. Dalal stated, “Yes, I like new information and I am not opposed to new ideas as long as they are effective. Change for the sake of change is not always effective.” Dalal claimed to research new ideas once a week before the first business day of the week, exposing herself to a wide variety of information sources through the Internet. She related that many teachers in her school see technology as a threat but she can also see how technology has benefits.

Concerning the second dimension, self-control, Dalal indicated that she is a mature person who is able to manage emotions and impulses. She expanded, “I believe age tempers our emotions; I am not as emotional as I used to be a few years ago.” She intimated that she is a religious person and that religion is the tool that she uses to manage stress. When in extenuating circumstances, she prays to Allah for calm and patience. She emphasized that it is through religion that she also manages her sense of ethics. Dalal seemed very serious and clear about her religious beliefs. She asserted, “If you have Allah in your heart, then you have a natural ethical compass.” She also conveyed that she is humble enough to admit when she makes mistakes, although she does not get involved in many situations in which her superiors have to reprimand her. She also declared that she is not opposed to change and considers herself a resilient person. “Age gives a you a different perspective of life because you have lived so much, and now you

are no longer surprised by change around you.” She can react with calm during critical situations.

Concerning the third dimension, self-motivation, when the researcher asked in which ways she strives to improve or meet standards of excellence, Dalal responded, “I do not mind to pay for professional development courses just to be an excellent teacher.” She considers herself a results-oriented person, with a high drive to meet objectives and standards, especially if those objectives and standards are important to her performance. With relation to uncertainty, Dalal related that she is a “big fan” of finding information on the Internet. Furthermore, she insists that she is able to set challenging goals and take-calculated risks on occasion. She explained, “Yes, but not always. Only if the risks are not big.” Dalal believes that she aligns her goals to the goals of her school all the time.

Dalal also stated that she is able to volunteer to make personal sacrifices for larger organizational goals, as long as other people do the same. She reported, “I do not like to be the only one who works hard and sacrifices; I do that only with cooperative groups.” She also considers herself as responsible person who actively pursues opportunities to fulfill the group’s mission and takes advantages of new opportunities all the time. Dalal also admitted that she uses this initiative to obtain the favor of her supervisors. She elaborated, “I try to impress the principal and the supervisor of my school post by going beyond what is required or expected from me.” She also admitted to bend the rules once in a while as long it is not a serious infraction. She also explained, “For sure I am persistent in pursuing my goals despite obstacles and setbacks; I am very resilient.” Dalal considers herself a “very optimistic” person who can deal with personal flaws.

Concerning the fourth dimension, social awareness, Dalal commented that she is able to sense and take an active interest in the feelings and perspectives of other people “all the time, I am doing my best not to ignore the feelings or others around me.” She also declared, “I guess I am able to understand emotional cues.” Dalal stated that she is aware of others’ perspectives and that she is understanding of the needs and feelings of her students and parents at school. She believes that she is able to anticipate, recognize, and meet the needs of students, parents, and administrators in her school. She noted, “Because of my experience, I am able to offer assistance to students, parents, and administrators all the time.” Dalal informed that she occasionally serves as a mentor to new teachers, coaching and offering when she is asked.

Dalal expressed that she is able to cultivate opportunities through diverse people, being able to relate and respect people from different backgrounds. She stated, “I respect diverse worldviews and I do not like to argue with conflicting views.” However, she also conveyed that she does not have many opportunities to share with people from other cultures. She believes that people in Kuwait do not have issues with cultural intolerance. Dalal considers herself able to read the relationships of power within groups, but not always the crucial networks. She indicated “Maybe, I think it is hard and not easy; but I understand and respect the political forces in my school.” However, she was not so confident in her abilities to read situations in organizational and external realities, as she noted, “Maybe I am not sure if I read it accurately.”

Concerning the fifth dimension, social skills, Dalal believes that she is able to build effective tactics for persuasion. However, she explained that she could be not skilled at persuasion all the time but she becomes committed to persuasion when she believes strongly in a topic. In addition, she reported, “I do not know why I am not that strong in presentation to peers. That is an area of performance that I avoid.” Nevertheless, she believes that she can send clear

and convincing messages sometimes, and that she is able to read people's emotions. She also intimated that, although she is naturally optimistic person, when difficult moments arrive she needs some time to recover from the shock, but she is able to recover quickly once she has adjusted for a moment.

Dalal believes that she can be a leader. She commented, "Yes, I can be a leader and also a person that leads by example." She also believes that she is able to initiate and manage change. She declared, "I am able to challenge the status quo to acknowledge the need for change but it will depend on how necessary it is and if people will listen to me." From the social skills described in this SEI dimension, Dalal believes she needs the most help in negotiating and resolving disagreements, although she considers herself as part of close network of friends. She also considers herself able to collaborate and share plans even within competitive environments. When the researcher asked her if she is able to create synergy, she replied that she has lived that experience as part of "very" cooperative teamwork. She also considers that she is able to protect the reputation of the group, but "Only with those who deserve a share of the credit. If someone did not cooperate, I do not care about reputation. I do not give credit to whom does not deserve it." With relation to applying enthusiastic participation in the classroom, Dalal reported, "I encourage them and show them that I have the enthusiasm and mention the positives of the work or the mission. I motivate them."

Instrument 4: Journal Entries

Dalal completed journal entries recounting thoughts and feelings about an occurrence of a SEI event based on context and consequences of the occurrence. She completed one entry per week for three consecutive weeks. Three separate SEI events were recorded about SEI dynamics

concerning parents, children, and herself. She was encouraged to record her feelings, emotions, and the strategies she used to deal with the recorded situations.

Entry 1: Parents

On January 30, 2016 Dalal wrote about how the experience of reviewing SEI concepts helped to develop a renovated interest for parents in school. She wrote, “It is true that familiarity is a bad thing sometimes. I am so used to managing parents that I do not manage parents anymore.” Dalal reflections revolved around the fact that she realized how she has stopped considering parents as part of the preparatory or follow up work in her classroom. She also wrote, “Sometimes I fake that I am working on my desk when parents come to pick their kids so I do not have to talk to them.” Dalal finished her journal entry committing to give more attention to parents.

Entry 2: Children

On February 7, 2016, Dalal wrote her impressions on children in her school based in SEI experiences. Dalal initiated her journal stating, “It has been a long time since I rationalized my SEI interventions with my children.” She wrote about how her nurturing personality is “soft and calm” with the children in a natural way, “I am like a motherly figure, so I have never questioned if the effect I have on my children is because I am using SEI interventions.” Dalal also wrote, “The SEI training has me already thinking about my students’ behaviors. I have found myself several times trying to match my student’s behaviors with SEI specific manifestations.”

Entry 3: Herself

On February 21, 2016, Dalal wrote her impressions about herself during the experience of receiving personal development training about SEI. She wrote that she realized the importance of learning about SEI after volunteering in this research. She wrote, “There is a lack in

spreading awareness about this subject in the Arab world. I used to deal with my emotions by my nature and life experience. Now, I believe that I am more aware and need to learn more about SEI. I think when teachers have high knowledge of SEI and its dimensions (self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, and social relations management), teachers will develop better in their professions.” She also wrote that she has developed an increased awareness of observing children’s behaviors and trying to interpret them as result of this training experience. She wrote, “In the future, I will try to help children to develop their SEI, encourage those who have high SEI, and will try to help those with low SEI to strengthen their weaknesses.” Dalal wrote that she learned more than she expected about this subject and that she has the intention of continued learning in the topic. Dalal wrote, “I will recommend SEI professional development courses to my supervisor.”

Instruments 5 and 6: In situ Cell Phone Calls and Exit Interview

The interviewer completed three phone calls with Dalal. The phone calls happened after the background interview, after the PowerPoint training session, and as an exit interview (see Table 4).

Table 4

Information about virtual contact and Exit Interview, Participant #3

Purpose of the Phone Call	Date of the Call	Time and Duration
Follow Up to Background Interview	December 14, 2015	2:00 pm AST 10 minutes
After Training Session	January 22, 2016	10:00 am AST 15 minutes
Exit Interview	March 1 st , 2016	2:00 Noon AST 20 minutes

Dalal was reflective during her exit interviews. During conversation with the researcher, it was evident that she was self-reflective about her SEI experiences, interventions, and the

lessons learned during the in-service training. Dalal reported that her greatest insight during this interviewing process was the fact that SEI is embedded in what she does every day. She stated that she would have answered in the past that her work with students was not associated to SEI educational goals. However, after the PD and interviews she feels that she is more aligned to SEI interventions in the way she manages her classroom activities than she imagined.

Synthesis

Dalal is a female ECE teacher in Kuwait with 20 years of work experience. Dalal is 44 years old and has a bachelor's degree from Kuwait University in ECE. She comes from a family of educators and teachers. Dalal reported that experienced teachers in Kuwait do not receive as much training as new teachers but that she has paid for private courses herself to improve her professional development. Dalal declared that she has been interested in the topic of social intelligence as part of her college curriculum. She recognized the importance of SEI in ECE and commented that, although teachers in Kuwait do not work with SEI educational goals, she understands that values associated to SEI, such as collaboration and empathy, are reinforced in the school system in general.

Dalal stated that she uses role play in her classroom as a direct strategy to develop socio-emotional competences. She also associated SEI behaviors with nurturing relationships comparing the role of the teacher with the role of parents. Dalal noted that Kuwait teachers are "motherly" in their approach to young children. However, it is through experience that SEI ability among teachers can increase. She asserted that experienced teachers are able to identify, for example, positive or negative attachment between children and parents because of their extensive experience dealing with family situations in the classroom. Dalal showed interest in

completing any type of SEI training. Her comments suggested that SEI is not part of the professional development curriculum for ECE teachers in Kuwait.

Dalal reported that she possesses foundational knowledge of SEI through her college studies. One indicator of SEI issues identified by Dalal was the environment at home, emphasizing the role that parents have in developing children with positive SEI behaviors. Dalal associated SEI to better communication and collaboration, although she admitted that the existing educational system in Kuwait does not reinforce this topic with enough emphasis or frequency. Another issue identified concerning SEI development was the fact that teachers are not required to incorporate affective educational goals to their lesson plans, despite the need to educate small children on civics and citizenship. By Dalal's responses, it could be assumed that she considers the evaluation of SEI competencies as an embedded activity to her repertoire of classroom techniques, and not as an educational goal or outcome.

It has been a while since Dalal participated in professional development activities. She explained that training is not a regular event and, when it happens, it concentrates on the dissemination of new rules and methods in the Ministry of Education, mentoring and coaching initiatives, and parent-teacher collaboration. Dalal would like to learn how to introduce writing activities at an earlier age in school.

During the self-evaluation of SEI competences, Dalal insisted that she can handle change with relative efficiency as she considers herself a flexible person. She also likes to be exposed to new and all types of information. She emphasized that individuals increase their ability to understand emotions as they grow in experience. Dalal narrated how religion is a large factor in how she demonstrates a sense of ethics and moral values and also in managing her emotions during stressful circumstances. These ethical values motivate Dalal to sacrifice for others,

although she communicated clearly that she would not make sacrifices for those with little spirit of collaboration themselves.

Furthermore, she sees herself as optimistic and resilient; able to recover quickly from setbacks. Dalal considers that she is able to play organizational politics through ingratiating techniques, and she usually does it through “going far and beyond” what is expected from her. However, she admitted that she could bend the rules as long she does not incur serious infractions. By her comments, Dalal appeared to be an experienced teacher, who effectively navigates the politics of the school system, cultivates professional opportunities, and serves occasionally as mentor and coach for younger teachers. She considers herself a leader, especially as a leader that inspires respect through role modeling. Nevertheless, she admitted that she would benefit from improving her conflict negotiation abilities.

Dalal recorded journal entries about how she has developed resistance to engage with parents when those come to her classroom, perceiving parental intervention as work interruptions. She also reflected on the fact that she never separated SEI interventions from her natural way to approach children, as she considers herself “motherly” and a positive influence for emotional control but never thought about those characteristics as part of her SEI abilities. Dalal reported in her journal entries that her culture is not one that likes to deal with SEI dimensions openly. She also stated during the exit interview that she is more aligned with SEI interventions than she knew.

Chapter Seven: Case Study Four -- Fouz

In this chapter, we will examine the case study for study participant #4. The participant is considered a novice teacher. In accordance with the participant selection criteria, Participant #4 is the second of two teachers of lesser experience.

Instrument 1: Background Qualitative Questionnaire (December 13, 2015), Part I

Study participant number three will be called by the pseudonym “Fouz.” Fouz is a female ECE teacher in Kuwait with four years of work experience in the field of ECE. Fouz is 26-years old and has a bachelor’s degree from Kuwait University’s College of Education in the specialty of ECE. Originally, Fouz thought about studying to be a primary grade teacher but she settled on ECE. Fouz noted, “The ages [between ECE and primary grade] are so close but I eventually decided that ECE was the best fit.”

Fouz stated that she learned about SEI in one of her psychology classes in school. She remembered studying some scholars but do not remember their names. She reported that she had never studied SEI in her professional development courses. However, she associated SEI with affective outcomes. She reported, “We practiced how to write socio-affective goals in schools as part of our classes but I do not usually use them in my classroom.”

Fouz recognized that SEI is as important as traditional intelligence because “SEI allows people to deal with social issues.” She also conveyed that she uses many behaviors supported by SEI, such as collaboration, consideration, and empathy. Fouz declared, “We teach children to be considerate with each other and to respect each other’s feelings.” She agreed that teachers with high SEI can help students to develop significant socio-affective skills, describing how teachers shadow or mirror the behaviors that they want their students to develop.

Instrument 1: Background Qualitative Questionnaire (December 13, 2015), Part II

Fouz reported that children who play or engage in socio-dramatic play are better adapted to their social environments. She explained, “Children discover the world through playing and make-believe.” Fouz incorporates socio-dramatic play to her classroom every day. However, when asked if SEI interventions would influence the levels of attention and concentration among her students, she responded, “I don’t know; I have never thought as SEI as a strategy in my classroom.” On the other hand, she agreed with the statement, “unconditional acceptance of others creates positive socio-emotional class environments in my school.” Fouz stated, “It is in our DNA. We live peacefully with each other.”

Fouz indicated that she is not aware of levels of attachment or detachment that children could have with their parents. Nevertheless, she agreed that both teachers and parents play an important role in the development of SEI competences among children. She Proclaimed, “If the adult is in control of his/her emotions, the child is in control of his/her emotions.” Fouz related that she would be interested in participating in training on the topic of SEI.

Instrument 2: In-depth Interview (December 21, 2015)

Fouz declared, “I have four years of experienced as ECE teacher, so the administration still think I am a novice teacher. I take one or two professional development courses each year but I have never received training on SEI topics.” Fouz continued, informing that she would like SEI to be included in her next professional development training. At this moment, she has some ideas about how to apply SEI communication and interactions with people but would like to learn how to apply SEI outcomes into the classroom.

When asked if the existing professional development activities in SEI are relevant to her needs as an ECE teacher, Fouz responded without hesitation, “Not at all.” She continued,

offering as reasons for SEI professional development that, “children and teachers may best understand the significance of SEI when we, the teachers, will be available to express our emotions with maturity, and role model those emotions to the kids.” Fouz also emphasized that SEI is indeed related to education because it is a skill that can help students in their academic performance. She specified that it is not rare to see children in Kuwait with extreme shyness, tantrum tempers, or evidently spoiled but no effort is done in addressing these emotional behaviors as a concern. Fouz stated, “children could develop better appreciation for life and moral values in the early ages with the appropriate interventions because then they could become better persons.” However, she also communicated that the education system in Kuwait does not focus on SEI topics when offering professional development.

When asked what she knew about SEI, Fouz reported that she can relate SEI behaviors with cooperation and appreciation. She also stated, “I don’t have any knowledge of the SEI domains; however, I believe that teachers with awareness of SEI can create a healthy environment for their students.” She continued stating, “I believe the ‘ideal’ SEI is reflected when a child is happy, and the teacher has an important role in helping kids to achieve their goals with cooperation.” Fouz also communicated, “Kids should learn everything from the classroom.” She also expressed, “children can learn quickly through happy emotions.” Nevertheless, she is not aware of what the main elements of SEI are, nor relevant behaviors, or classroom outcomes.

Instrument 3: After In-service Training Interview (January 21, 2016)

Instrument three included questions concerning six dimensions of SEI, including emotional awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness, and social skills. With relation to the first dimension, emotional awareness, Fouz claimed that she is able to recognize

her emotions and the effects of those emotions over other people. She stated “I know when I am recognizing my emotions because I can perceive my feelings and reactions, and feel good or bad about those emotions.” She continued, “My emotions affect performance a lot.” When asked which were her greatest values and goals, she stated, “To be a better person who can communicate with others correctly, to manage my feelings appropriately, and to improve SEI abilities among my children.”

Fouz declared that she recognizes her strengths and weaknesses but that weaknesses are personal and that she prefers to hide them. She explained that she accepts critique well, “if it’s for my benefit.” Fouz stated that she has the ability to reflect on the critiques’ comments that she receives and try to improve herself. She also answered, “Yes, I am able to laugh from my own mistakes if my mistakes won’t affect others.” She proceeded to communicate that she feels guilty if her mistakes affect others.

Fouz intimated that she does not feel sure about her self-worth and capabilities, especially in the school setting. She adjudicated this perception to the fact that she is still a beginner. Concerning the use of impression management techniques, she stated, “I am a shy person and I try to be better in social circumstances. However, I am trying to voice my point of view even if this point of view is not the most popular, although this is not always easy.” She also reported, “I try to do my best and if I cannot make sound decisions, I go by the majority rule. I am also flexible and don’t stick to my ideas or decisions.”

In the second dimension of self-regulation, Fouz related that it is difficult for her to manage disruptive emotions and impulses. She explained, “I cry and find it difficult to manage my feelings when I am too emotional.” She utilizes physical activity to manage stress. However, she admitted, “It’s very hard for me to stay composed and positive during extenuating

circumstances.” She also considers herself an honest person. Nevertheless, she, “prefer(s) to stay silent to avoid problems. It’s not easy to be honest these days.”

Fouz also considers herself an ethical and authentic person who, “will think twice before I do or say something that is incorrect.” She stated that she believes people know that she is shy and they avoid approaching her for opinion. Fouz declared that she always takes responsibility for her personal performance and that she always meets her commitments and keeps her promises. She also noted that she is careful at work although not very organized. With relation to adaptability, she believes that she can handle flexibility and change. She commented, “I am very flexible to change. I like to learn a lot and I don’t think I am always right.”

In the third dimension, self-motivation, Fouz reported that she strives to improve and meet a standard of excellence by focusing on results-oriented approaches. She emphasized that she is not inclined towards taking calculated risks but that having clear goals always help in her in reducing uncertainty and finding better ways to behave. She offered, “It is easy for me to commit with the group through the alignment of common goals.” However, she declared that she is not the “self-sacrifice type.” She will pursue goals beyond what is required of her when necessary but she admitted that she often stays within the scope of her responsibilities.

In the fourth dimension, social awareness, Fouz claimed that she is able to feel empathy and take an active interest in the feelings and perspectives of other people. She noted that this can be also a disadvantage for her because she believes she is “too sensitive” to other people’s pains and concerns, although she admitted that she is not able to anticipate, recognize, and meet the needs of others. She declared, “Sometimes people can exhibit bad emotions around me and I don’t notice. However, once I notice I can connect with people.” She commented that she can do

a better job understanding students, parents, and administrators' needs and matching those needs to her service but that she continues to improve in this performance standard.

In the fifth dimension, social skills, Fouz does not consider herself a leader and perceives that she has little or no social influence. She has no experience as advisor, mentor, or coach. Repeatedly, she self-assessed herself as low in most of the social skills dimensions, reporting that she is not effective in building tactics for persuasion, developing fine-tuned presentations, or using complex strategies to build consensus and support. She expanded, I am not a communicator and choose not be at the center of attention on purpose.” However, she considered herself a good listener and somebody able to negotiate working conditions to seek mutual understanding. She is not always able to recognize the need for change but is able to change if the occasion arises. She also believes that she is able to be a good team player, although not a good team leader.

Instrument 4: Journal Entries

Fouz completed journal entries recounting thoughts and feelings about an occurrence of a SEI event based on context and consequences of the occurrence. The participant completed one entry per week for three consecutive weeks. Three separate SEI events were recorded about SEI dynamics concerning parents, children, and herself. She was encouraged to record her feelings, emotions, and the strategies she used to deal with the recorded situations.

Entry 1: Parents

On January 30, 2016, Fouz completed a journal entry about her experiences in the classroom with parents. She reported, “School request from us [the teachers] to develop good relationships with the parents of our students. Collaboration with parents is an expectation in our classrooms.” Fouz also wrote about how she believes some parents are “entitled to intervene in

classroom routines,” which she described as “an unbearable situation.” She complained in her journal entry that school principals often do not want teachers to tell parents when they become annoying or too intrusive. “It is like principals are afraid parents will stop bringing their children to school.”

Entry 2: Children

On February 7, 2016, Fouz completed a journal entry about her experiences in the classroom with her students. Fouz wrote, “My students are good children but we can do a better job teaching SEI competences.” She admitted that she never considered SEI interventions before taking the in-service training. She expanded her discussion as follows, “This is the first time that I separate in my mind emotional from traditional intelligence in the way I perceive my students. This new knowledge about SEI has opened my eyes to a whole new perspective of intelligence.”

Entry 3: Herself

On February 21, 2016, Fouz completed a journal entry about her self-discovery experiences during this process of interviews and in-service training. She wrote in her journal that she learned more about SEI in these past weeks than in “my whole bachelor’s degree.” “I never imagined that SEI would involve so many aspects of our personality and behavior.” Fouz wrote about how she would like to learn more about the dimensions of innovativeness because she would have never associated this behavior with SEI before taking the in-service training. She wrote, “I would like learn about how SEI relates to innovation and if we become more creative when we develop our SEI attributes.”

Instruments 5 and 6: In situ Cell Phone Calls and Exit Interview

The interviewer completed three phone calls with Fouz. The phone calls happened after the background interview, after the PowerPoint training session, and as an exit interview (see Table 5).

Table 5

Information about virtual contact and Exit Interview, Participant #4

Purpose of the Phone Call	Date of the Call	Time and Duration
Follow Up to Background Interview	December 14, 2015	4:00 pm AST 10 minutes
After Training Session	January 22, 2016	11:00 am AST 15 minutes
Exit Interview	March 1 st , 2016	3:00 pm AST 20 minutes

During the exit interview, Fouz thanked the researcher for the opportunity to participate in this series of interviews. Fouz was encouraged by the researcher to recount which was the moment of greatest insight during her in-service training on SEI. Fouz responded that learning that SEI was much more than empathy and collaboration was a revelation for her. For example, she recalled skills for political power and negotiation as part of SEI that she would like to explore and learn more. She also mentioned that she would like to learn how SEI affects other areas of human performance, not only academic performance, but creativity, problem-solving, and innovation, among others.

Synthesis

Fouz is a 26-year old female ECE teacher in Kuwait with four years of work experience in the field of ECE, and is a Kuwait University graduate. She learned about SEI as part of her undergraduate classes in college. She also reported that she worked writing socio-affective educational goals in college but has never used them in the classroom. Fouz recognized SEI as an important part of ECE and associated to social behaviors such as collaboration, consideration,

and empathy. Fouz also emphasized that teachers in Kuwait embrace these behaviors in the classroom through role modeling and shadowing behaviors. By her comments, it is evident that she identifies herself with collectivistic behaviors.

Fouz showed interest in learning more about SEI topics while indicating that SEI is not a focus of attention in the professional development provided by the school systems in Kuwait. By her explanations of the existing school climate, it is evident that there exists a differentiation between novice and veteran teachers. Although she admitted not having theoretical knowledge of SEI, she also uttered that she can align the “ideal” SEI with children’s happiness, cooperation, and mutual appreciation. She also emphasized that happy children learn better. By her comments, it is evident that Fouz believes the school is one of the main entities responsible for the education of young children.

Fouz was able to recognize herself as someone with empathy, emotional awareness, and good listening skills. However, she also admitted that she is very emotional and that she sometimes has issues with self-regulation of strong feelings, which adversely affects her teaching performance. She is ashamed of her weaknesses although she is able to laugh from her own mistakes. However, if her mistakes affect adversely others she would feel guilty. Simultaneously, she described herself as shy and not a good leader in influencing others. She trusts her ability to make sound decisions but also goes by the majority rules when she cannot make the decision herself.

Fouz also considered herself an ethical and authentic individual who is able to keep promises and meet commitments. Fouz reported that she can be a team player when the conditions for such dynamics arise. She shared contrasting viewpoints about her ability to recognize others’ emotions. Although it is difficult for her sometimes to read other people, once

she can feel the emotions of others she can become over sensitive to the situation, which is bad for her if the other person carries negative emotions.

Fouz refused the title of “leader” and has not occupied supervisory or coaching positions in her career. She perceives that she has limited communication skills and prefers to be follower rather than the leader. She is not always able to recognize a need for change but is able to be flexible if the circumstances require this type of adaptation. Fouz wrote journal entries about the influencing role of parents over her school dynamics, the possibility of separating cognitive and affective educational goals, and SEI behaviors related to creativity and conflict negotiation.

Next we will synthesize the data collected in these case studies.

Chapter Eight: Synthesis of The Cases

The four ECE teachers in this qualitative research are from similar professional backgrounds, although they reported to have different levels of school experience. All the participants hold a Bachelor's Degree in Education from the University of Kuwait, as well as a specialization in ECE. All four participants are certified to teach ECE by the Ministry of Education in Kuwait. However, years of experience in teaching differs between participants. Participant #3 (44-years old) possesses the longest teaching career, with 20 years of experience. The second most experienced teacher was participant #1 (36-years old), with 11 years of experience. Participants #2 and #4 (27-years old and 26-years old, respectively) demonstrated both 4 years of professional experience as ECE teachers.

Instrument 1: Background Qualitative Questionnaire, Part I

None of the participants indicated any difficulty in deciding to become ECE teachers. Participants #1, #2, and #4 never questioned becoming teachers, although participant #1 reported a long-term interest in working with special needs' children. Participant #4 Considered becoming a primary grade teacher, but eventually settled on ECE. Participant #3 comes from a family of teachers.

The participants also reflected different realities with relationship to the quantity of professional development training they received from the school System. Participant #3 declared, "I feel neglected as an old teacher." The four participants reiterated that the school system in Kuwait only offers professional development sessions for novice teachers. Existing training is oriented toward policies, regulations, and selected methods and programs. Some topics identified were assessment methods, coaching, and mentoring. Furthermore, all participants related that SEI is not a topic considered as part of the battery of training necessary for teachers

in Kuwait. Participant #1 mentioned candidly, “Many teachers in Kuwait do not care about SEI.” Regardless, two out of four participants have paid to take private courses that included some SEI related information. They all reported having a genuine desire to learn and receive training about SEI.

None of the participants have received training from the school system or the Ministry of Education on the topic of SEI. However, they have been exposed to the topic in different ways. Participant #1 discovered SEI while seeking tools for self-improvement. Participant #2 has little knowledge of the subject as a topic for professional development but understands the concept. Participant #3 learned about the concept during her years of college. According to her interview, she learned about SEI in psychology courses in college and in private classes. She was the only participant that could associate SEI with the concept of emotional quotient. Participant #4 covered SEI as part of her college classes but admits having limited recollection of the concept.

Nevertheless, all the participants could elaborate on factors associated to SEI. Participant #1 associated SEI with creativity. Participant #2 associated SEI with improving communication skills. Participant #3 reported that SEI was related to the level of students’ attentiveness in the classroom. Finally, Participant #4 related SEI to “dealing with social issues.” Although participants declared that SEI learning outcomes are not directly part of their classroom planning, they all noted that values such as collaboration, mutual consideration and teamwork are promoted and embedded in the way ECE teachers operate in Kuwait. They all claimed to perceive SEI as an important part of the educational process, especially the influence that teachers and parents with good SEI skills exercise in role modeling behaviors.

Instrument 1: Background Qualitative Questionnaire, Part II

All participants reported that they see a direct relationship between play and SEI competences, using play as part of their classroom interventions. Additionally, role play was described as a social construct widely accepted in Kuwait, as “Children discover the world through playing and make-believe.” With relation to the association of SEI to academic performance, the opinions of participants were divided. Two of the participants see that a relationship exists between SEI and class attentiveness that influences learning. After the interviews, the two youngest participants (24-years old and 27 years old) acknowledged the utility of SEI interventions as a teaching strategy.

The influence of cultural values was also evident in the descriptions of some relational associations about SEI activities. For example, Participant #1 reported that Kuwait’s ECE system is one that cares for the welfare of students and parents care deeply for their children, although the way emotions are seen is still is anchored in the traditional values of the Middle-East culture. Participant #3 communicated that she had developed a nurturing and motherly teaching style that is part of her Kuwaiti heritage. Participant #4 , on the other hand, emphasized that Kuwait’s values of unconditional acceptance and peaceful living influences the school environments. However, some participants (#2 and #4) also alerted that SEI would be useful not only to work with ECE children, but to work with other political stakeholders of the educational system, such as parents and co-teachers.

Instrument 2: In-depth Interview

Two (#1 and #2) out of four participants stated that their schools required them to work with parents. However, three out of four teachers admitted having diverse types of issues with parents. Participant #1 complained about how parents in Kuwait are increasingly immersed in

the use of technologies, and they are becoming less interested in school activities. Participant #2 stated that parents are considered as “the teachers at home,” and continual communication between teachers and parents is important, although some parents can become demanding. Finally, Participant # 3 reported that sometimes she “fakes” that she is busy to avoid dealing with parents.

All participants identified issues of concern related to caregiving and SEI. For example, Participant #1 reported that some parents in Kuwait are completely “clueless” about the emotional state or signs exhibited by their children. She described Kuwaiti parents as people who worry and care about their children, as long as the prescribed care is consonant with their own ideas of how “things should be.” With recent technological advances, these parents now have increased outlets from which to get information to assist them in making parental decisions. However, not all are informed on how to capitalize on the use of technologies and Internet possibilities. Participant #2 declared that the teacher is the main individual responsible for role modeling and shaping social abilities among children. She described the ECE teacher as a fundamental factor in preparing children for primary school and become productive adults.

Furthermore, Participant # 3 stated that teachers must go further in their analysis of SEI by analyzing the level of emotional competence among ECE children and developing specific interventions for classroom management. She expanded further, emphasizing the importance of SEI competences for success in school and life, mentioning that teachers must make a conscious effort to assess SEI skills. Participant #4 reported that she has seen how children in Kuwait suffer from emotional issues, such as extreme shyness, temper tantrums, and that there are children who are evidently spoiled but no effort is made in addressing these emotional behaviors as a concern.

All four participants declared their interest in receiving additional support from the educational system in Kuwait to increase their professional competencies in SEI learning outcomes and other topics of interest. Participant #1 would like to study how to translate abilities to write, read, and speak Arabic into the teaching of English as a second language, and the effects of technologies on student's academic performance. Participant #2 would like to increase SEI competencies to deal with parents; and participant #3 would like to learn how to introduce writing activities at an earlier age (preschool), besides learning about SEI. Participant #4 declared that she takes one or two professional development sessions each year, but topics are chosen by the school system.

Instrument 3: After In-service Training Interview

Self-Awareness

The four participants in this study declared that they are able to recognize their emotions and the emotions of others. Participants justified their knowledge of emotions through observation of non-verbal communication (e.g., the “vibe” a person projects) and familiarity with the situations (#1), observation (#2), experience of life (#3), and the identification of negative and positive emotions (#4). Two out of four participants (#2 and #4) use humor to dissolve self-negative thoughts after making mistakes, but three out of four (#1, #2, and #3) reported that they feel sad or depressed when they see that their performance in the classroom decreases. Furthermore, participants #2 and #4 stated that their emotions greatly affect their performance in class but that being absent in school is not a feasible option because of a lack of substitute teachers. Although the four participants reported having the ability to deal with change, only participant #4 self-described herself as assertive enough to initiate the change. Participants #1, #2, and #4 mentioned that they consciously adopt a reactive attitude in school, participating only

when they are called to collaborate. Finally, experience seems to be validated among ECE teachers in Kuwait. More experienced teachers (#1 and #3) mentioned their experience as a benefit whereas younger teachers (#2 and #4) sound tentative in responding to some questions, verbalizing the fact that they are novice teachers.

Self-Regulation

Three of the four participants (#1, #2, and #3) reported that they are able to control their emotions. Participant #1 reported that she practices meditational techniques as a method for self-regulation. Participant #2 uses music with therapeutic purpose, identifying sounds of nature (especially running water), and using these sound to relax. Participant #2 also uses regressive counting methods of relaxation (10 to 1 counting). Participant #3 reported that she uses religion as a tool to deal with negative emotions and stress. On the contrary, participant #4 reported that it is difficult for her to manage strong emotions; this participant engages in physical activities to manage stress. Concerning ethics, the four participants greatly value the concepts of honesty, trustworthiness, and humility. However, although authenticity was also repeated as a valued personal attribute, three out of four participants (#1, #2, and #3) reported that they are not fully authentic in their public persona, keeping to themselves what they “really feel” about their circumstances in school.

Self-Motivation

Participants #2 and #3 related self-motivation with completing professional training. Concurrently, the four participants reported that their personal goals are aligned with the goals of their school and their professions. All of them reported a close link with the ECE profession, and long-term commitment to their students; although two of them seem “obligated” to participate in some school initiatives. Participant #4 communicated that she stays inside her

“scope of responsibilities” most of the time. On the other hand, three out of four participants declared having issues with uncertainty and the unknown. Participant #4 demonstrates a proactive attitude, seeking information on the Internet to reduce her uncertainty. Participant #2 specified an emphasis on the importance of rules, and the benefits of routine and stability.

Social-Awareness

The four participants self-assessed as able to feel empathy toward others and take an active interest in the feelings and perspectives of others. All participants acted as if paying attention to other’s feelings and perceptions would be a moral obligation, although it is not always easy to understand people from different mindsets. Moreover, participants #2 and #4 alerted of the emotional disadvantages of becoming overly empathetic because a sensitive person could “suffer” with the negative emotions of others. Only participant #4 reported having difficulties with awareness of others’ needs in school, including parents, students, and supervisors. Participants #2 and #4 stated that they use their ability to anticipate and satisfy the needs of others to be seen as competent by their supervisors. These same participants reported an interest in getting to know new people and expanding their social network of acquaintances.

Social Skills

Only participant #3 self-declared as a “leader.” Most participants in this study declared that they prefer to act as followers rather than leaders. Participant #1 reported that she has the abilities to be a leader, but she opts out of leading projects. Participant #2 reported that she has had limited opportunities to be a leader, and so she is not aware of her leadership skills; and participant #4 related that she is not effective leading others, neither does she has the experience. Concerning public speaking, they all recognized that they are limited in this communication skill; separating the activities of a teacher from those of the public speaker. However, they all

self-assessed that they would be able to communicate professionally with others. Furthermore, three of the participants (#1, #2, and #3) claimed to be “good listeners.” Simultaneously, although the four participants self-assessed as collaborators and team players, participants #1 and #3 reported that they would benefit in improving their conflict management skills.

Instrument 4: Journal Entries

Entry 1: Parents

Participants recorded journal entries reflecting different perspectives of their relationship with parents. Participant #1 reflected on the existence of parents who are overprotective of children with emotional problems and, as result, curtail the autonomy of these children. By taking care of all their needs, they prevent children from developing their own ability to make decisions. Participant #2, on the other hand, completed a brief reflection about her role as a parents’ leader. This reflection was rooted in her experience with volunteer parents and her ability to set boundaries in the classroom. Concurrently, participant # 3 indicated that she has developed a renewed interest in developing relationships with parents. This participant admitted that sometimes she makes excuses to avoid dealing with parents. Finally, participant #4 accepted her relationship with parents as part of the school mandates. However, she wrote that parents often feel entitled to intervene with the teachers’ classroom routines and interventions, which becomes “unbearable” for the teacher.

Entry 2: Children

Participants completed journal entries with diverse reflections about their relationships with children. Three out of four participants (#2, #3, and #4) mentioned in their journal entries that they never thought about SEI in terms of classroom learning outcomes, although they have all incorporated socialization and collaborative strategies as part of their daily classes.

Participant #1 declared that she has always considered SEI as part of her strategies, although she is not required to write them as part of the lesson plan. All participants reported that the in-training experience influenced their SEI interventions in the classroom. Participant #1 revealed that she had implemented an approach that she calls, “stop, breath, and think,” in which she teaches children to identify negative emotions. Participant #2 reported that she has identified empathy as a common feeling that she shares and experiences with children in the classroom thanks to the information in the in-service training. Participant #3 reported that this is the first time that she is rationalizing the use of SEI interventions in the classroom. Also, for the first time, she has begun to match students’ behaviors with SEI specific manifestations. Finally, participant #4 noted that taking the in-service training has provided her with a new perspective on SEI, separating this concept from traditional intelligence, and admitting that she can do a better job teaching SEI competences.

Entry 3: Herself

Participants completed journal entries with personal reflections about their recent experiences with SEI, reflecting on diversity of perceptual frames. Participant #1 concluded that she needs to be more involved with parents to encourage a better SEI climate in her classroom. She admitted that she has felt guilty because she realized that she has conformed with the status quo and has stopped being proactive as a teacher. Participant #2 admitted feeling sad because she has little interest in establishing new relationship with others. She also reflected on the fact that she is not the “leader type” but could be in cases in which her family or loved ones are in jeopardy. On the other hand, participant #3 realized during this experience the importance of SEI in the Arab culture and is willing to suggest SEI to her supervisor as part of their school

training. Finally, participant #4 intimated that she was surprised that SEI deals with so many social aspects of the personality and its consequent behavior.

Instrument 5 and 6: Phone Call and Exit Interview

All four participants reported to the researcher that they were grateful for this experience in both learning about SEI and having the time for self-reflection. When asked about specific value found in this exercise, participant #1 communicated that the best lesson for her was to consider the topic of SEI with a fresh perspective because it is easy to stop using this approach when it is not part of the lesson plan. Participant #2, on the other hand, reflected on how introspection is good as long as individuals are focused in the “right” ideas. She also reflected about the need of SEI tools to deal with other teachers in school, whom she called “the real impediment to achieve SEI.” She was reflective during exit interviews. Participant #3 reported that her insight in this experience was the recognition that SEI is embedded in what she does every day, but she would have not associated these interventions to SEI in the past. She realized that her methods are more aligned to SEI than she imagined. Finally, participant #4 declared that she discovered that SEI was much more than empathy and collaboration, which was a true revelation to her. She also recalled realizing how she could benefit from learning political power and negotiation as part of her SEI plan. She communicated that she would like to learn how SEI affects other areas of human performance, not only academic performance, but creativity, problem-solving, and innovation.

Lastly, we will discuss the conclusions and recommendations of this study.

Chapter Nine: Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

This study involved four ECE teachers in Kuwait, who reported their observations about social-emotional intelligence and classroom processes before and after completing a professional development intervention designed to learn emotional intelligence competences. All four teachers commented on many SEI-related topics, revolving around the twin concerns of their needs and perceived benefits of SEI for their students and themselves. They identified and discussed their ideas about practices to improve professional development methods with a focus on emotional intelligence.

Participants emphasized several times the fact that the Kuwait educational system does not provide professional development activities to veteran teachers. Professional development for novice teachers occurs twice a year. Veteran teachers attend to their annual teaching evaluations given to them by their supervisors, in which they could learn about new programs and standards but do not receive any additional formal in-service training. Furthermore, all participants agreed in that SEI is not a priority in Kuwait as a topic for ECE or later schooling. SEI is mentioned in college classes but it is not thoroughly covered as part of compulsory topics for training.

Although Arabic studies exist about SEI and ECE and teaching, Alnashif (2005) noticed a gap existing among SEI awareness, ECE work field, and the Kuwait education system-- despite the fact that SEI awareness is recognized as an effective element to achieve a high success rate in ECE. Noteworthy, this lack of comprehensive professional development activities is contrary to what scholars generally recommend as effective practices for professional development. Research supports this assertion. For instance, longitudinal studies (Palardy & Rumberger, 2008)

demonstrated quality of professional domain would incorporate characteristics such as: (a) sustained efforts, (b) focus in improving instruction skills, (c) active learning opportunities, (d) interactive environments, and (e) regular feedback.

The lack of SEI resources provided by the educational system is evident from responses collected in this research, even as ECE teachers are willing to personally pay for private courses. Abdulafattah (2001) emphasized how Arab teachers need both academic and emotional knowledge to be fully equipped to help young children in developing the SEI competences that they will need in order to have a successful academic and social life. Numerous Western and Arab scholars have agreed that teachers with high SEI competences represent stronger and more influential role model figures (Butrous, 2006), and are able to create classroom environments more conducive to teamwork, motivation, and social collaboration (Jaber, 2004; Waajid's, 2010), than do others with less SEI competencies. Professional development in this area of SEI is called for.

Helping somewhat, ECE teachers in Kuwait have reported that the school system in general is embedded with SEI values that include civic behavior, consideration for others, and peaceful relationships. ECE teachers talked with pride about how they can exhibit impeccable behaviors in school and act as responsible citizens. Phrases like “unconditional acceptance” were repeated by several ECE teachers on the pre-training questionnaire. At one point, one of the participants declared, “It is in our DNA. We live peacefully with each other.” The basis of social constructionism establishes that individuals develop social realities in the form of networks of beliefs and values that are transmitted to new generations (Stam, 2014). Culture and society is constructed through social processes and embedded in the way schools operate. Cunliffe (2008)

stated that educators who have developed interest in social constructionism want to examine the institutional practices that are important in building the realities of younger generations.

Although SEI learning outcomes are not part of the nation's educational plan, ECE teachers in Kuwait have some basic knowledge and awareness of SEI activities. Most of the ECE teachers accepted, for example, the use of role play in the ECE classroom as a strategy to help children in "making sense" of their realities, which can be considered part of the affective domain of education. In role play children learn social and cultural norms concerning affect. Participants in this dissertation research apparently were not aware of theories or research findings that role play with peers may lead to improved self regulation, an important developmental base for SEI-related skills.

The affective goals of education are part of the traditional frames of education in the 1970s (Bloom, 1971) that encompass cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of learning. From these, the cognitive is the most popular of the three domains, and used broadly to design educational systems based on intellectual ability (Anderman & Anderman, 2009). Responses from all participants suggests that the affective domain is the least popular of the learning categories, which Picard et al. (2004) attributed to the inability of teachers to separate the concepts of learning and rational thinking from emotional growth.

During the interviews, the topic of teacher-parent relationships surfaced repeatedly as an issue of emotional contention. The ECE teachers in this study reported that they experienced diverse emotions when working with parents, the diverse affect was related to issues which included tension, territorialism, power struggles, and annoyance. Three participants argued that schools require teachers to work with parents but that involving parents has become more challenging especially with the advent of new technologies. All participants demonstrated

concern about how parents who follow cultural viewpoints often protect their children to an extreme, which prevents those children from developing a sense of autonomy and individual expression. These findings connect with those of Espy et al. (2011) who in studies established a link between adult behaviors and children's development of SEI competences. Additional research (Blandon et al., 2010) demonstrated that maternal behaviors of control interfere with the development of SEI competencies. The general responses of the four participants seem to confirm that ECE teachers in Kuwait scored low in social skills, one of the five dimensions of SEI as defined by Goleman (1995, 1998). SEI behaviors under the dimension of social skills include teamwork, influence, communication, leadership, change management, conflict management, building bonds, and collaboration and cooperation. Professional development in Kuwait can target and work on these teacher behaviors. An important question is how to do this?

ECE teachers in Kuwait reported that they have developed self-awareness and are able to perceive the feelings of others through non-verbal signals, as well as to feel people's "energy," and intuition. However, the majority of these participants showed a great concern for being perceived as capable, avoiding change, and following reactive more than proactive behaviors in their school environments. Furthermore, two participants declared during the interviews that they remain "silent" when confronted with conflicting situations in school, avoiding open discussion of uncomfortable topics. Most participants refused to name themselves as leaders, choosing consciously to remain as "followers."

These behaviors, some of them against SEI best interest, could be rooted in cultural predispositions related to collectivism, high power distance, high uncertainty avoidance, and religious belief observed in Kuwait (Klassen et al., 2011). Although teachers with these characteristics can demonstrate good SEI qualities, such as sense of calling, commitment, and

increased sense of responsibility, they can also suffer from limited expressiveness. Arda and Ocak (2012) reported that expressiveness is an important SEI behavior that reduces aggressive behavior and reflects post-behaviors such as cooperation, compliance, and problem solving. Furthermore, generally accepted as a proposition summarizing research findings. Nolan and Hoover(2007) noted that a lack of communication is against the traditions of trust, accountability, self-efficacy, positivism, and open communication, which result in better teachers.

All participants showed some type of emotional reflection, growth, or re-establishment of goals as a result of the SEI in-service training. Participants declared during their exit interviews that they will be committed to improving their relationships with parents, becoming more aware of their role as leaders, and conscious application of SEI interventions. Having and pursuing goals is aligned with the SEI concept of self-efficacy, which is a socio-emotional competence related to the idea that people's confidence in accomplishing goals can become predictors for success. In this vein, Brouwers and Tomic (2000) declared that teachers experience higher teaching motivation and lower teaching burnout, when they have clear goals to follow, and those goals are associated with generating positive classroom processes among children, student achievement, and student motivation.

Finally, the only component of the data procurement process that was intended to educate the participants about SEI was the PD training administered during instrument 3. However, all participants noted beneficial aspects of the journaling and communication components. The self-reflection, and the related communication led to a deeper concern and understanding about their own SEI, and how SEI influences their personal and professional lives. There is evidence that sustained reflection and communication is a necessary part of SEI PD. The formative assessment

process interacts with the training process itself, and any recommendations for SEI training should include opportunities for people to journal about their training and have conversations and possibly focus groups to discuss and collaborate.

To reiterate, the first research question is as follows:

- What do teachers perceive their needs to be regarding improving their own and their children's social-emotional awareness and intelligence in the classroom?

From the feedback given by the participants, it follows that Kuwaiti teachers recognize many unfulfilled needs relative to SEI. Teachers perceive that they need to have a high emotional maturity and balance, self-possession, and self-regulation. They need to consider objectivity and justice when dealing with children to avoid negative behaviors between children. They also need to develop their SEI by understanding self-awareness in order to know more about themselves, know their special qualities and how to effect people. Additionally, they need to be able to criticize themselves in order to do better, and to refrain from imposing their thoughts and behaviors on their children. Teachers believe that they lack in understanding SEI skills and that they need to improve these skills in order to deliver them to children. Teachers also need to learn how to communicate with parents and build good relationships with them.

The second research question is:

- What do teachers see as helping in training ECE teachers in Kuwait regarding these needs?

It is clear from the analysis of the participants responses that Kuwaiti teachers see that supervisors, principals, and those who create the curriculum in the Ministry of Education need to focus more on SEI and not only on social values and religion. They also mentioned their need for self-reflection and SEI training and resources as helping in training ECE teachers in Kuwait.

Recommendations

Statements made by the participants made it evident that currently SEI is covered minimally in the ECE curriculum. Statements also showed they believed the curriculum should include extensive SEI instruction in order to ensure a strong SEI background in Kuwait's ECE teachers. Both theoretical and practical courses are necessary for establishing this background. Teachers with an exhaustive knowledge of SEI will lead to future generations of Kuwaiti people with improved SEI and improved performance in all aspects of life.

Just as it is significant to ensure a strong SEI background in future teachers, it is similarly significant to ensure the same in current teachers. Since ECE teachers experience the school environment embedded with SEI practices, and do not have formal in-service in SEI, they exhibit only partial knowledge of SEI, basing their analysis of SEI interactions more on intuition and common sense than on scientific knowledge and formal reasoning. In order to equip ECE teachers with the necessary tools that they need to implement SEI correctly in the classroom, teachers in Kuwait should receive increased professional development activities in relevant or "actual" topics, including SEI.

Other contemporary topics associated to SEI competencies, such as social constructionism and mindfulness, would be beneficial to ECE teachers in Kuwait. Establishing a professional development program with emphasis on SEI is important for different reasons. Kaplan (2010) demonstrated that ECE teachers increase their SEI competencies through professional development. Teachers with high SEI competencies become the first *socializers of emotion* that will role model to young children how to channel emotions (Denham et al., 2012). Furthermore, Alsayed (2002) associated SEI competencies with professional success among ECE teachers in the Middle East.

On-line programs can increase in usage in Kuwait for professional development of teachers. Such programs should come in the company of a repository of educational resources and free online subscriptions. For example, during the interviews, ECE teachers in Kuwait manifested the need to have access to a virtual space for sharing concerns and classroom best practices.

Other related ideas can be recommended. The establishment of communities of practice (CoPs) could be an appropriate outlet for teachers to engage in reflective collaboration and collective problem solving (Wenger, 2004). Not only do CoPs serve as a platform to share classroom best practices, they also serve as a repository of educational materials that members of the community can access repeatedly with the appropriate implementation of technologies.

Furthermore, the spirit of the CoP is one of peer-to-peer collaboration, in which titles and hierarchies are secondary to the creative process of improving teaching methods. Simultaneously, this spirit of peer-to-peer along with the ability to connect and communicate asynchronously could leverage cultural pre-dispositions related to high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance (Klassen et al., 2011) observed among participants. Furthermore, the building of egalitarian communities can also help to diminish the general attitude of “remain as followers” or “remain silent” (even when they are experiencing discomfort) that was evident among most participants.

Evident tensions between ECE teachers in Kuwait and parents will require intensive team building efforts. A first step must be surveying more in-depth the main issues and opinions among both parents and teachers. By identifying the needs of both parties, schools will be able to design programs to optimize the co-educational roles of parents and teachers in the development of ECE students. Goleman (1995, 1998) identified teamwork as one of the

fundamental social skills, along with influence, communication, leadership, change management, conflict management, building bonds, and collaboration and cooperation. Individuals with high social skills are able to create group synergy, achieve collective goals, model respect, and exhibit enthusiastic participation. Building teamwork will enable teachers and parents to work together to develop success stories, which could be a good strategy for the building of both cohesion and self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is a socio-emotional competence related to people's beliefs that they can accomplish goals (Thadani et al., 2015). Therefore, a story of team success increases self-confidence and boosts team performance. Moreover, Brouwers and Tomic (2000) associated self-efficacy to increased motivation and decreased burnout among teachers.

Lastly, since it is imperative to maintain SEI awareness in ECE teachers, those who are instructing, evaluating, and monitoring the teachers should possess SEI awareness as well. These individuals should undergo SEI training, just as teachers should. If SEI is included as a metric of teacher performance evaluation, the significance of SEI will continue to be impressed upon teachers throughout their career. This will supplement the above recommended teacher PD training in maintaining strong SEI among ECE teachers.

Suggestions for Future Research

1. Examine needs for including SEI in Kuwait University ECE curriculum and teacher PD training.
2. Implement a trial virtual SEI resource repository and discussion space, and examine its usage and evaluate its effect on educators.
3. Investigate the needs of teachers and parents for enhanced collaboration related to SEI.

4. Research criteria for SEI teacher evaluation.
5. Return to the participants and Investigate the topic of SEI further with better use of triangulation.
6. Return to the participants and ask for their assessment of this study's synthesis and conclusions, and give them a chance to comment.

The researcher intends to continue her study of SEI within the Kuwait education system, including following many of the above suggestions for her own research.

Limitations and Strengths

Limitations of the present dissertation include the fact that it examines information about only four teachers who were studied intensively out of ten teachers. These ten were studied thoroughly but still only in a very limited fashion. Future research can examine the issues under consideration using a larger sample of teachers. Another shortcoming of the study is that the teachers came from only one school. Obviously additional research can examine the issues under consideration in a larger number of schools. Administrators could also be studied, and parents could be studied. Additionally, membership checking was not utilized in order to ensure the credibility of the researchers interpretations, synthesis, and conclusions. Comprehensive triangulation is also lacking. The researcher did combine several methods of data collection in order to employ some degree of triangulation. However, different topics arose, and the same questions were not used systematically in order to converge how the participants represented themselves from different sources of data.

On the other hand the present dissertation possesses a number of strengths. There were empirical contributions. The study generated new information about SEI and the curriculum in Kuwait, and unearthed new findings that contributed to the empirical research base. Now there is known documented evidence that Kuwait is not serving as well as it could the needs of the teachers: teachers who perceive needs for SEI training, and report received benefits. Another strength of this study is that it was done using multiple methods and the methods used should remind researchers of the importance of having multiple methods. A strength of this study is that it combined interviews with diaries, and with online in situ interviews, as well as including an exit interview. Finally, the strength of the dissertation is that the research connects with social policy, and educational policy. The study's findings have implications for educational leadership and supervision, policy change, and reconsideration of priorities for education. Kuwait may profit from seriously considering adding SEI to in-service teaching and from reinforcing this in pre-service teaching and putting priority on how SEI is important in academic achievement, academic attitudes, and academic behaviors at school.

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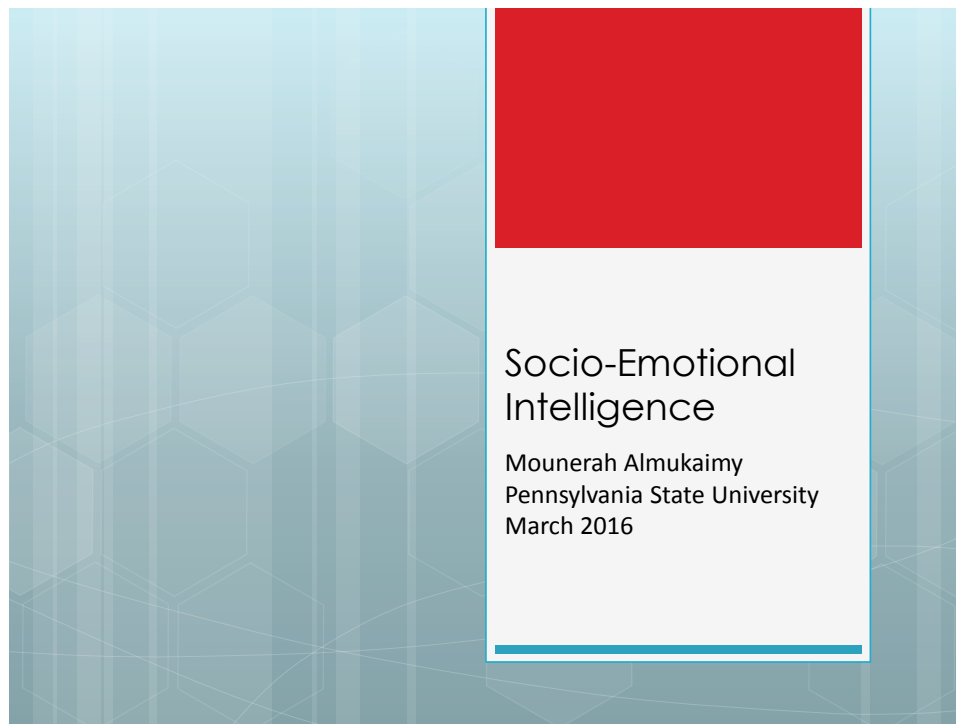
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Appendix A

SEI In-Service Training



Socio-SEI

Mounerah Almukaimy
Pennsylvania State University
March 2016

Purpose

- The purpose of this course is to teach ECE teachers a brief history and fundamentals of socio-SEI (SEI). After completion of this training, ECE teachers will be able to:
- Increase their awareness of SEI
- Learn SEI components according to Goleman’s (1998) frame
- Recognize the benefits of being emotionally intelligent
- Identify methods for which SEI interventions can be introduced to classroom activities

History

- Dr. Reuven Bar-On coined the term *emotional quotient*(EQ)
- Mayer and Salovey coined the term “SEI” in the 1990s
- (i.e., Fives skills: regulating emotions, understanding emotions, assimilating emotions in thought, perceiving emotions, and expressing emotions)
- Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences
- Daniel Goleman utility of SEI in social contexts

- (i.e., self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills)

Content:

- Scholars (Ferris, 2010; Seal & Andrews-Brown, 2010) trace the origins of the SEI theory to Dr. Reuven Bar-On, who coined the term *emotional quotient* (EQ) to measure social and emotional competence among human beings in 1985. Bar-On (as in Ferris, 2010) focused on mechanisms for effective social and emotional functioning, such as optimism, motivation, and positivism, as well as the preferred patterns that individuals use to manifest those behaviors. Some of the accomplishments of Bar-On's work on EQ included the first psychometric EQ scale, the first book on EQ, and the first EQ online self-administered test ("Reuven Bar-On," 2015.)
- However, it was Mayer and Salovey who coined the term "SEI" in the 1990s, based on the 1980s emergent theories of EQ of Bar-On, or the emotional ability to cope with the challenges and stress of everyday life (Gayathri & Meenakshi, 2013). Mayer and Salovey (1997) considered SEI as complementary to cognitive intelligence (e.g., IQ) and part of the framework of cognitive competences, explaining how human beings process and manage emotional information.
- A scholar that contributed to the dissemination of SEI as a frame for academic and professional performance was Howard Gardner with the theory of multiple intelligences, which recognized that non-intellective factors, such as emotions are as equally important as cognitive abilities when measuring total intelligence (Martin & Reigeluth, 2013).
- Consequently, Daniel Goleman released a series of articles and books disseminating the utility of SEI in social contexts using both Mayer et al. (2001) and Gardner's (2008) work. According to Goleman (1998), the main elements of SEI are self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Self-awareness is the ability that individuals have to evaluate continually how they develop and deliver relationships, social skills, and emotions. Kunitomo (1994) defined self-awareness as a mental state that depends on people's subjective report of their inner states. Only a person has access to his or her internal state of awareness. The gap between what people want to be and how people perceive themselves is called distance. With self-awareness comes self-regulation, or the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and the propensity to suspend judgment before acting (Goleman, 1998).

Definition

- Ability to recognize and manage emotions and social relationships
- Ability to monitor one's emotions and ability to recognized emotions in others
- Ability to use emotions to guide actions
- Psychological events that can lead to conscious awareness
- Part of a multi-dimensional intelligence

SEI in Early Childhood Education

- Less exploited from the three educational frames (i.e., cognitive, affective, psychomotor)
- Demonstrated to be fundamental for school readiness

- Helps teachers to embrace and encourage uniqueness and self-expression
- Improves non-verbal communication skills both coding and decoding
- Helps teachers to identify early social issues
- It can be measured and it can be taught

SEI Benefits

- It facilitates instruction and learning
- Children who develop SEI has more chances of school success
- SEI promotes good behaviors and collaboration
- SEI diminishes disruptive behaviors and classroom stress
- Predictor for academic performance at all school levels
- Reduces violence and increases community engagement

SEI Outcomes

- The individual ability to manage emotions and interpreting feelings
- Better relationships and social processes
- Increased levels of concentration and focus
- Improved behaviors and classroom attitudes
- Increased abilities to negotiate social conditions
- School and job readiness

SEI Awareness

- Stronger relationships with parents and students
- Moral values, judgements, and altruistic beliefs
- Influential in the development of others and able to design SEI interventions
- Task performance and compliance
- Motivation and collaboration (e.g., synergies)
- Willingness to change
- Ability to recognize weaknesses and strengths
- Lack of attachment to power

Goleman's SEI Model

- Self-awareness
- Accurate self-assessment
- Self-confidence
- Self-Regulation:
 - *Self-control*
 - *Trustworthiness*
 - *Conscientiousness*
 - *Adaptability*
 - *Innovativeness*

Goleman's SEI Model (cont.)

- Self-Motivation

- *Trustworthiness*
- *Conscientiousness*
- *Adaptability*
- Self-Regulation:
 - Empathy
 - Service orientation
 - Developing others
 - Leveraging diversity
 - Political awareness

Goleman's SEI Model (cont.)

- Social Skills
 - Influence
 - Communication
 - Leadership and change catalyst
 - Conflict management
 - Building bonds
 - Collaboration and cooperation
 - Team capabilities
- Journaling
- Documented benefits of journaling
- Ideas for journaling activities

KWL Chart

SEI Best Practices

- Five basic premises
- Positive interactions are fundamental for life success
- Social-emotional competence is a factor in school success
- Constructive and purposeful play supports learning
- Physical environment influences quality of learning interactions
- Teacher-family partnerships promote learning
- Assessment of SEI educational goals
- Use of observation

SEI Best Practices (cont.)

- Planning and documentation of classroom activities
- Design of naturalistic environments
- Goals based on behaviors, conditions, and mastery
- Goals based on personality profiles and group composition
- Role modeling of acceptable behaviors, including active listening
- Assessment of SEI mastery

SEI Curriculum Strategies

- Opportunities to manipulate materials

- Opportunities to play alone and in groups in collaborative and sensory activities through play, art, and music
- Communication-based classrooms
- Opportunity to make real choices in real environments
- Labeling objects around the room to help children who are less verbal
- Asking parents about the interests of their children
- Reorganizing sequence and rules according to the needs of the child
- Support to parents to integrate affective activities at home

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Appendix B

Consent Form

CONSENT FOR RESEARCH

The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: How Emotional Intelligence Awareness Influences Instruction and Learning among
Early Childhood Education Teachers in Kuwait

Principal Investigator: *Mounerah Almukaimy*

Address: *300 W College Ave Apt 42. State College, PA 16801.*

Telephone Number: 813-766-5325

Advisor: Dr. James E. Johnson

Advisor Telephone Number: 814-865-2230

Subject's Printed Name: _____

We are asking you to be in a research study. This form gives you information about the research.

Whether or not you take part is up to you. You can choose not to take part. You can agree to take part and later change your mind. Your decision will not be held against you.

Please ask questions about anything that is unclear to you and take your time to make your choice.

1. Why is this research study being done?

We are asking you to be in this research because *you are a Kuwaiti Early Childhood Education (ECE) teacher.*

This research is being done to find out *what Kuwaiti ECE teachers' needs are regarding the improvement of their social-emotional awareness and intelligence in the classroom, as well as that of their students.* Also, this research seeks to examine teachers' reactions to social-emotional intelligence (SEI) training.

Approximately 10 people will take part in this research study in Kuwait.

2. What will happen in this research study?

If you agree to participate in the study, it will proceed as follows:

1 – Questionnaire

You will be given a preliminary questionnaire about your knowledge about and interest in SEI. You will be free to skip any question that you feel you do not wish to answer. Four teachers will be selected based on questionnaire results to participate in the remainder of the study.

2 – Interview (recorded)

The researcher will interview you in one or two sessions to talk about the relevant topics (using open ended questions and follow-up probes) that help the assess the needs of Kuwaiti ECE teachers regarding SEI.

3 – Powerpoint Course and Interview (recorded)

The researcher will show you a PowerPoint about SEI awareness and the significance of understanding the subject and discuss it with you (educational course).

4 – Journal

The researcher will ask you to keep a record of how things are going and keep a journal about your concerns and findings. You will be asked to record examples of different kinds of emotions that you observe and what your feelings are and your own strategies in dealing with these feelings

5 – Phone Interview (recorded)

The researcher will schedule times when you're are at work (*in situ*) and conduct three 15-30 minute cell phone interviews during which time you will describe important happenings that day, dealing with your own feelings and those of the children. If more time is needed to talk about the events, another call will be set up for later in the evening. You will also be asked to journal the events discussed.

6 – Exit Phone Interview (recorded)

An exit interview will be held in order to sum up final thoughts about the importance of SEI, for the teacher, and for the children, as well as Kuwait ECE in general.

3. What are the risks and possible discomforts from being in this research study?

There is a risk of loss of confidentiality if your information or your identity is obtained by someone other than the investigators, but precautions will be taken to prevent this from happening. The confidentiality of your electronic data created by you or by the researchers will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

4. What are the possible benefits from being in this research study?

4a. What are the possible benefits to you?

As a Teacher, improving your understanding of SEI can have many benefits. Teachers who are able to understand socio-emotional competences, such as perceiving emotions, facilitating thought, understanding emotions, and managing emotions, are able to create positive classroom environments that are conducive to positive processes, such as academic performance, collaboration, and improved social behaviors. Teachers in countries like Kuwait can benefit from incorporating emotional intelligence interventions at the ECE level, as socio-emotional competence relates directly to school readiness and school adaptation.

4b. What are the possible benefits to others?

Your students will likely benefit from the increased SEI knowledge you may acquire through the course of this study. Experts believe that students who operate within emotional intelligence frames could learn important skills to be successful as future members of society. Those skills include awareness, willingness to participate, and responsiveness; as well as listening to others with respect, internalizing, and exhibiting congruent behaviors. It is also believed that an emotional intelligence curriculum positively influences children's ability to learn, as affective goals influence brain activity, intrinsic motivation, higher thinking, and cognition.

5. What other options are available instead of being in this research study?

You may decide not to participate in this research.

6. How long will you take part in this research study?

If you agree to take part, it will take you about *4 months* to complete this research study. You will be asked to interact with the researcher, via questionnaire or interview, around 6 times.

7. How will your privacy and confidentiality be protected if you decide to take part in this research study?

Efforts will be made to limit the use and sharing of your personal research information to people who have a need to review this information.

- All the recordings will be saved on an external encrypted hard drive that is dedicated to this study. The recorder will be formatted after moving the interviews to ensure that they are saved only on the external hard drive.
- The saved files will not include any personal identifiers of the participants such as their names or schools; instead they will be given numbers. The encrypted hard drive, when not in an active use, will be saved in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office at all times.

In the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared.

We will do our best to keep your participation in this research study confidential to the extent permitted by law. However, it is possible that other people may find out about your participation in this research study. For example, the following people/groups may check and copy records about this research.

- The Office for Human Research Protections in the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services
- The Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies) and
- The Office for Research Protections.

Some of these records could contain information that personally identifies you. Reasonable efforts will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private. However, absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

8. What are your rights if you take part in this research study?

Taking part in this research study is voluntary.

- You do not have to be in this research.

- If you choose to be in this research, you have the right to stop at any time.

9. If you have questions or concerns about this research study, whom should you call?

Please call the head of the research study (principal investigator), *Mounerah Almukaimy* at 813-766-5325 if you:

- Have questions, complaints or concerns about the research.
- Believe you may have been harmed by being in the research study.

You may also contact the Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775, ORProtections@psu.edu if you:

- Have questions regarding your rights as a person in a research study.
- Have concerns or general questions about the research.
- You may also call this number if you cannot reach the research team or wish to offer input or to talk to someone else about any concerns related to the research.

INFORMED CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN RESEARCH

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

Your signature below means that you have explained the research to the subject or subject representative and have answered any questions he/she has about the research.

Signature of person who explained this research Date Printed Name
(Only approved investigators for this research may explain the research and obtain informed consent.)

Signature of Person Giving Informed Consent

Before making the decision about being in this research you should have:

- Discussed this research study with an investigator,
- Read the information in this form, and
- Had the opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

Your signature below means that you have received this information, have asked the questions you currently have about the research and those questions have been answered. You will receive a copy of the signed and dated form to keep for future reference.

Signature of Subject

By signing this consent form, you indicate that you voluntarily choose to be in this research and agree to allow your information to be used and shared as described above.

Signature of Subject Date Printed Name

Vita
MOUNERAH ALMUKAIMY

EDUCATION

- 2012 **Ph.D. Courses in Curriculum and Instruction**
The Pennsylvania State University, State College, Pennsylvania
- 2011 **Master of Education in Early Childhood Education**
University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida
- 2005 **Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education**
Kuwait University, Kefan, Kuwait
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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2000–2005 **Teacher Assistant**
College of Education at Kuwait University, Kefan, Kuwait
- Performed assigned tasks to assist teacher in achieving classroom goals.
- 2005 – 2006 **Kindergarten Teacher**
Alkhama'el Kindergarten, Sabah Alsalem City, Kuwait
- Spearheaded the development of professional workshops to facilitate the sharing of instructional success and the ability of teachers to learn from daily experiences.
 - Volunteered at local private schools to enhance teaching capabilities by implementing superior educational techniques into the public school setting.
- 2006-2008 **Kindergarten Teacher**
Mishref Kindergarten, Mishref City, Kuwait
- Collaborated with fellow teachers to approach and overcome obstacles as a team, thereby enhancing the quality of education provided to students by improving the instructional resources and skills of teachers.
 - Identified opportunities to further integrate technology into the educational environment and pinpointed practical applications of computers in the classroom; shared findings with colleagues in a workshop setting.
-

CONFERENCES, PRESENTATIONS, AND WORKSHOPS

- **The Association for the Study of Play (TASP)** (Presenter about Play Current in Kuwait), 2012.
 - **The Association for the Study of Play (TASP)**, (Presenter about Traditional Play in Kuwait and workshop), 2013.
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VOLUNTEER AND PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- **Volunteer in Metropolitan Ministries**; Tampa, Florida, 2010.