Teacher Change and Development during Training in Social and Emotional Learning Programs in Sweden

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The paper presents the results from a thematic analysis of the process diaries of teachers involved in teacher training in social and emotional learning (SEL) in Sweden. Twenty-nine out of the 122 diaries available were analyzed until saturation was reached. The following themes and sub-themes were extracted: development (professional and personal, and classroom climate), and concomitants of development (need for collaboration and unease). The themes and sub-themes are related to theoretical aspects of specialised teacher education and to the debate in Sweden on how to proceed with SEL programs, and more generally with life skills programs. The results suggest that training generates both general teacher improvement and better implementation of SEL programs.

Keywords: social and emotional learning, process diaries, teacher development, teacher education

Introduction

A growing international literature supports the implementation of universal school-based preventive approaches, called social and emotional learning (SEL), to reduce problem behavior and promote academic learning among young people (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). SEL programs, which were formerly prevalent only in the US, are now being initiated in Europe as well, for example the Social and Emotional Learning (SEAL) initiative in the UK (Humphrey, Ledrum, & Wigelsworth, 2010), and

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projects in Germany (von Marées & Petermann, 2010) and Portugal (Moreira, Crusellas, Sá, Gomes, & Matias, 2010).

SEL is a set of educational techniques, based on cognitive and behavioral methods, developed to train students to improve self-control, social competence, empathy, motivation and self-awareness (Diekstra & Gravesteijn, 2008). Although many factors have been identified as influencing the implementation of school-based prevention programs (Cohn, Brown, Fredrickson, Milkels, & Conway, 2009; Jacobsson, Pousette, & Thylefors, 2001), training of the teachers is probably the most important factor. Such training has been found to cover many different aspects of program delivery, such as general classroom management, preparation, understanding students, and engaging high-risk young people (Durlak & DuPre, 2008).

Social and Emotional Training (SET) is an SEL program which was implemented in a suburb of Stockholm, Sweden, between 2000 and 2005. Its outcomes for students on a variety of mental-health variables, generally favourable, have been extensively reported upon in quantitative studies (Kimber, 2011; Kimber & Sandell, 2009; Kimber, Sandell, & Bremberg, 2008a, 2008b), but so far the views of teachers have not been systematically examined. For this paper, we performed a qualitative analysis of the views of SET teachers/trainers and their development, based on process diaries written during their training.

Teacher professional development and training

Teacher professional development, including teacher quality and teacher training in general, have been in focus, not only in societal debate, but also in a substantial body of the international research literature (Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006; Eriksson, 2012; Parker, Martin, Colmar, & Liem, 2012). It refers to the ways in which teachers acquire the knowledge, skills, and values needed to serve the people with whom they are involved. Researchers have also examined training and teacher quality in relation to school-based prevention programs (Chang, 2009; Fredrickson, Coffey, Pek, Cohn, & Finkel, 2008; Gu & Day, 2007; Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Jennings, Snowberg, Coccia, & Greenberg, 2011; Larsen & Samdal, 2012).

Despite this extensive body of research, there is still no clear answer to the question of how teachers should be trained (see McEwen & Sapolsky, 1995), which is also the case for SEL training in particular. Thus, new approaches to the study of teacher development might be needed. One possible way of improving understanding in this regard, is to listen to what teachers themselves have to say about the training process (Larsen & Samdal, 2012). It might also be important to study teachers' personal development in relation to working with SEL programs, given their nature and content (Brown, Ryan, & Cresswell, 2007; Larsen & Samdal, 2012). Although observations of teachers have been used in evaluating and developing the teaching of SEL (see, for example, Farrell & Collier, 2010), little attention has been paid to teachers' views on their own personal and professional development during SEL training. We are concerned to see whether considering such qualitative matters illuminate implementation issues in Sweden and internationally

Teacher development – theory and implications

In general, there are a variety of theoretical approaches to teacher development, which, for our purposes, we can divide into two categories: those that are concerned with stages or phases of development, and those that are concerned with how teachers, through activities in workshops and courses, develop their professional abilities.

The stage theories point to certain aspects of teacher development to which we should pay attention. For example, Conway and Clark (2003) point out that the professional development of young teachers "can be summarized as a general movement *outward* from concerns about self, changing to concerns about situation and task then culminating in concerns about students" (p. 466). However, they note about the interns they studied that: "in addition to this outward journey, interns also engaged in a progression toward greater self-awareness/self-knowledge and subsequently made efforts at greater self-organization and self-development – a journey *inward*" (Goodman, et al., 1998, p. 468). Conway and Clark (2003) also state that "attention to self-as-teacher might be fruitfully revitalized even for more experienced teachers" (p. 473). The teachers in our study were all experienced, and had reached the stage of "maturity" described by Katz (1972). The teachers had clearly made an inward journey, and had heightened "critical reflection" on concerns like curriculum, their teaching, and "self-as-teacher".

Moving to more situation-based theoretical accounts, Vescio, Ross and Adama (2008) state in a review that "(1) participation in learning communities impacts teaching practice as teachers become more student centered. In addition, teaching culture is improved because the learning communities increase collaboration, a focus on student learning, teacher authority or empowerment, and continuous learning; (2) when teachers participate in a learning community, students benefit as well, as indicated by improved achievement scores over time" (p. 85). SEL teachers can arguably be described as constituting a professional learning community (PLC).

According to Hattie (2009), the things that will enhance students' learning are very closely connected with the teacher. The teacher's ability to relate positively to the students and to give and receive feedback about the students' learning is crucial to the process of learning. When teachers understand how and when students learn, they will create a learning environment where students feel safe and where they feel it is OK to make mistakes, and both teachers and students will learn from the feedback they give each other.

Finally, if teachers have negative thoughts about their students, they are likely to develop negative relations and interactions with them (Bishop et al., 2012). To enhance the relationship between teachers and students, the teachers in the SET training were encouraged to describe their students in a neutral or positive way.

Research objectives

There are conflicting views on whether or not engagement with the relevant literature is advantageous or disadvantageous prior to embarking on a qualitative thematic analysis. As Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 86)

put it ". . . [t]here is no one right way to proceed with reading for thematic analysis, although a more inductive approach would be enhanced by not engaging with literature in the early stages of analysis, whereas a theoretical approach requires engagement with the literature prior to analysis". Our analytic proceedings brought this conflict to the fore, in that two of the analysts acted inductively, the other more theoretically (albeit more from the perspective of development during SET training than teacher development in general).

In relation to the theoretical literature on teacher development, we would not have been able to state specific hypotheses, which are not testable in thematic analysis, but we might have had certain specific expectations:

- Teachers would achieve greater self-awareness/self-knowledge, that is, they would make a journey inward;
- In particular, teachers would become more aware of how important they are to their students;
- Teachers would relate more positively to and have more positive views about their students;
- Teachers would give more feedback to their students;
- Teachers would have greater concerns about their students;
- Students' achievement scores would improve.

Using qualitative thematic analysis, applied to a body of material, process diaries, obtained from the training of SEL teachers, the primary aim of the study is thus to provide an interpretation of the views of teachers on participation in the teaching of SEL, with an emphasis on how they themselves develop in the process. Secondary aims include providing a qualitative supplement to previous quantitative analyses of the SET program in Sweden (summarised in Kimber, 2011) and examining whether qualitative issues shed light on any of the substantive issues related to the implementation of SEL in Sweden and internationally.

Method

Content of the SET program

School teachers administer SET to junior and intermediate students (grades 1-5) twice a week, each session lasting of 45 minutes, and to senior students (grades 6-9) in one 45-minute session a week, throughout the school year. The program is guided by detailed manuals for the teachers, one volume for each grade. It also includes a workbook for students of each grade. Altogether, the program consists of 399 concrete exercises. SET focuses on helping to develop the following five characteristics of the students: self-awareness, managing one's emotions, empathy, motivation, and social competence. Typically, the components merge into one another, and an exercise according to the manual may address several functions. The following themes recur in the tasks: responsible decision-making, problem-solving, coping with strong emotions, appreciating similarities and differences, clarification of values, conflict management, interpretation of pictures and narratives, doing more of what makes one feel good, resisting peer pressure and being able to say "No", knowing what one is feeling, reading people and situations, cooperation, communication skills, setting goals

and working to attain them, giving and receiving positive feedback, and stress management.

The participants and the data

To become a SET teacher in Sweden, the teachers participate in eight sessions of training (each of 2 hours, making a total of 16 hours) at intervals of at least one week. The trainers are SET teachers, who themselves have received the SET training, and who have also undergone seven full days of training in the teaching of SET (starting with 2 consecutive days, followed by a further 5 days spread over 6-8 months). Most of the teachers who become trainers have been practicing teachers for some years.

The training of the teachers involves going through the SET program, its background, its theoretical underpinnings, and its different kinds of exercises. The teachers also try out several exercises in practice, in particular those that help members of a group to get to know each other. The training also includes lectures on and discussions of classroom management, based on educational research (for example, Hattie, 2009). There is an emphasis on how to create a positive classroom climate by minimizing the use of negative strategies and enhancing positive ones.

During the first two days of the training, the teachers learn about the theories underpinning the program and also about aspects of prevention. Child and youth development are discussed, as is the importance of what perspective a teacher has on particular students. They are trained to describe each student objectively and concretely, with minimal use of adjectives. They are also asked to observe a student with a minor problem for a few weeks, and record when that student displays the problem behaviour and also the opposite behaviour, that is, the positive behaviour the teacher wants. This procedure is designed to explore how often the problem behaviour occurs in comparison with the goal behavior, and to see whether that behaviour is prompted by a particular situation (for example, group constellation, teaching method, subject, activity, time of the day, etc.) rather than manifesting a problem intrinsically possessed by the student. It is also designed to avoid developing negative relationships and interactions (McEwen, 2004). General teaching and proactive strategies are discussed, including how to structure lessons and teaching days, routines and support. Communication skills are enhanced, with regard not only to students but also to parents and colleagues. The importance of the teacher as a leader is emphasised. After the first two days, the teachers are asked to decide what they specifically need or want to practice during the rest of the course.

The training days have the following approximate structure. First, the teachers report on what they have tried out, which is followed by discussion and, often, problem-solving. New exercises and other specific tasks are then tried out, such as follow-up observations of a student. Towards the end of the course, emphasis is placed on planning the training they are about to implement. The whole course is conducted in a process-oriented manner. Teachers try out or explore things that are then discussed in detail by others in the group; feedback is then given, following the teachers' own reflections over what the process has implied for them.

During the training period, the teachers are asked to write a so-called "process diary", where they write their ideas, thoughts and development during the training. The procedure is rather flexible, and the

teachers are asked to note down their own feelings, as well as what they experience in the classroom and in relation to their students. It is up to the teachers to determine what they want to share with others, and it is very important for the instructor (the person who does the training) to show respect for the integrity of the teachers in this respect. That is, each teacher will share what he or she wants to share. The process diaries are sent to the instructor the week before the last day of training.

We had access to 122 diaries from training courses administered by two SET instructors between 2008 and 2011. We did not have exact demographic data on the participants, since they had the right to respond anonymously. From those, however, who did not exercise this right, it can be said that most were women, and had fairly lengthy teaching experience. All student ages and grades were covered by the participants. After examining 29, random selected diaries, we deemed saturation – defined as the point when no new information was being obtained – to have been reached. Towards the end of scrutiny of these 29 diaries, no new codes were being generated by any of the analysts.

A qualitative thematic analysis

In the thematic analysis of teachers' self-reports in their process diaries, we followed the six phases described by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 35), namely: "1. Familiarizing yourself with your data; 2. Generating initial codes; 3. Searching for themes; 4. Reviewing themes; 5. Defining and naming themes; 6. Producing the report". In our reporting, but not in our practice, we subsume the thematic steps (3 to 5) under one subheading: 'From codes to themes'.

Each case in the sample was examined in depth by three analysts: Birgitta Kimber (BK), Therése Skoog (TS), and Rolf Sandell (RS). The extent of the involvement in SET of the three analysts varies: BK has been heavily involved, both as the originator of the SET program and as an instructor; TS has acted as an instructor; RS has performed statistical analyses of SET outcomes, but had no involvement in its construction or application. Accordingly, although all three analysts agreed to examine the material inductively, BK in particular, and also TS to some extent, might have been expected to have a more theoretical and committed stance to it. In this sense, RS can be regarded as acting as an outside, objective observer.

After familiarizing themselves with the data, each analyst prepared a list of interesting citations (approx. 170 in total), and then generated initial codes. Manual code generation was preferred to computerised one. Following the removal of duplicates, and discussion of how to name the codes, a list of twelve named codes was finally generated.

Results

We present the results strictly in accordance with the procedure in qualitative thematic analysis, moving from data extracts and codes, through themes, to provisional thematic maps, and finally to thematic maps. This has the disadvantage of not having an analytic commentary as in the case of framework analysis (see, for example, Larsen & Samdal, 2012), but it is faithful to the thematic-analysis procedure described

above. The commentary largely appears in the discussion session of the paper.

Data extracts and codes

Improving communication

"[A]nd conversation methods have been covered in other course literature, but it isn't always easy to remember everything when you're 'at the sharp end'. That's why it has really been quite rewarding to practice alongside people who are also motivated; and I definitely think that it has influenced me in my contacts with the students, both generally and in detail. Quite simply, I have a broader register of strategies, which have become fixed in my consciousness, so to speak."

"Teachers don't use a professional language in their occupation. Doctors and other care professional have a language of their own, but we, in the teaching profession, don't have a 'language'; everything comes out individually, from teacher to teacher. Here, we can get much better; step-by step, I have tried to get my colleagues to use other words when they describe students' problems . . . since some are insulting, and others don't really have any meaning."

Promotion of self-esteem and self-awareness

"For me, this course has focused on the emotional side; I have definitely developed what lies inside me. It's fun to use several of the senses in your teaching. That's why I've had great benefit from the various practical exercises; they have got me to reflect over myself, both privately and in my professional life as a special needs teacher."

"I have the [SET] training to thank for a lot of new things, but it has also confirmed that I too have already been doing many things more or less in the right way, have had a similar way of thinking; and this has strengthened me in my everyday work."

Strategies for creating a positive relationship with students, a positive climate, and healthy students and teachers

"It's hard to have time for all the students, and 'see' them all every day; here, I really feel that new tools are being made available in the profession: choosing to see the positive, and highlight and reinforce it to create balance, since nothing develops out of negative inputs or telling-offs from an adult."

"I feel that I have embraced the approach, and that both I and my students feel good as a result."

Obtaining in-depth knowledge, both theoretically and in application

"Good leadership and a good attitude lay the foundations for a healthy classroom climate, and make a good learning environment possible. We have received many suggestions for how to receive and treat children so that you're always one step ahead. Clear goals for the lesson or the day are always important for giving the

children structure in their work. There's nothing new in that, but it's worth saying however many times you like. 'Catching children red-handed, but only when they're doing something right' is a lovely expression, and a very useful way of breaking many downward spirals."

"I've obtained a whole new ground to stand on when working with basic societal values with my students."

Imposing high demands on oneself

"Thoughts have been set in motion inside me. … I feel such a strong force inside me, and I think it'll be great when the students come in on Monday. But, what I'm afraid of is that I will fail."

"After a few meetings, I started to doubt whether I'd be able to communicate all this to my colleagues. Stand there and be an expert in the subject? Help!"

Developing contacts with parents

"Beforehand, I felt that it would be very hard work to make contact with parents when something happened, and now I know them better, and they are positively disposed to me. That is something I'll continue to develop, and think a lot about when I get new parents the next time round. Great to feel that quite a little effort can pay such a very large dividend."

Need to improve problem and conflict resolution

"Here, we can get much better; step-by-step, I have tried to get my colleagues to use other words when they describe students' problems . . . since some are insulting, and others don't really have any meaning."

Enhancing relationships with colleagues

"We have had had many discussions over the years about our attitudes in school. Now, I am prepared, but I can't just shut my eyes when my colleagues put children down."

"Our joint work on course meetings, SET performances and the curriculum has also strengthened community within the group."

Highlighting the importance of the teacher

"What probably has affected me most during the training is how little you need to change yourself to make such a large and positive change for many in the class: thinking about what you're really saying; focusing on what works rather than what doesn't work."

Highlighting the importance of school management

"From having been exclusively positive towards SET, I went through a very disagreeable down

period, caused by practical problems, but also, in part, by 'Day 5' [a reference to a specific disagreement with the trainer]. After working with my colleagues, I now believe in SET again, and hope to sow positive seeds in my colleagues, naturally with the help of well-planned scheduling, for which my bosses will set the practical time frames."

Feelings and ideas about how the exercises and lessons might impact negatively on weak or sensitive children

"I can imagine that some of the exercises may be sensitive to children, and also to us adults. Children are really good at answering as they are expected to answer, which might not always be what they want to answer. Some exercises are best when the group is secure enough for them to work."

"There have never been any problems with the simple exercises, and the children have taken part; but I have noticed that when the underlying theme is more serious, like with bullying, they are problematic, at least with two students in my class. I have pondered over this a bit, since everyone should be able to take part, and practice so as to get new insights, understanding and strong emotions."

Nuancing perspectives on children and students

"See increasingly what a charming guy S is and the resources he has. 'I see his fine sides more and more, above all his sense of humor. And what a nice and mature guy he is when you talk with him'."

The discussions, exercises and other examples of problems and issues concerning work with children's and students' health and well-being, socially and emotionally, have enabled me to be better able to identify what really is important to look at in the individual."

From codes to themes

We searched the codes for themes independently, and then jointly arrived at five candidate themes: professional development, personal development, development of the classroom climate, need for collaboration, and unease. "A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of *patterned* response or meaning within the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). It should be noted that a theme is not selected simply on the basis of the frequency of thematic ideas or response patterns, but also because it is of importance in relation to the research question. We illustrate our actively selected candidate themes to the codes in Table I below. Naturally, any one theme will refer to several codes.

Looking at the candidate themes, it can be said that the emphasis on development is not at all surprising. Indeed, the primary task of the teachers when they wrote their process diaries was to describe what happened to them during their training. Nevertheless, the thematic analysis did serve to variegate the idea of development, since – despite the fact that professional development was referenced in all the codes – professional, personal and classroom development were designated, jointly by the researchers, as distinct themes.

**Table I. Candidate themes in relation to the codes.**

Candidate theme	Codes
Professional development	Improving communication Promotion of self-esteem and self-awareness Strategies for creating a positive relationship with students, a positive school climate, and healthy students and teachers Obtaining in-depth knowledge, both theoretically and in application Imposing high demands on oneself Developing contacts with parents Need to improve problem and conflict resolution Enhancing relationships with colleagues Highlighting the importance of the teacher Highlighting the importance of school management Feelings, ideas about how the exercises and lessons might impact negatively on weak or sensitive children Nuancing perspectives on children and students
Personal development	Improving communication Promotion of self-esteem and self-awareness Imposing high demands on oneself Nuancing perspectives on children and students
Development of the classroom climate	Strategies for creating a positive relationship with students, a positive school climate, and healthy students and teachers Obtaining in-depth knowledge, both theoretically and in application Developing contacts with parents Need to improve problem and conflict resolution Highlighting the importance of the teacher Feelings, ideas about how the exercises and lessons might impact negatively on weak or sensitive children Nuancing perspectives on children and students
Need for collaboration	Improving communication Strategies for creating a positive relationship with students, a positive school climate, and healthy students and teachers Developing contacts with parents Need to improve problem and conflict resolution Enhancing relationships with colleagues
Unease	Improving communication Imposing high demands on oneself Need to improve problem and conflict resolution Feelings, ideas about how the exercises and lessons might impact negatively on weak or sensitive children

In the spirit of thematic analysis, which usually involves toing-and-froing between data materials at different levels, this may be worth illustrating by referring back to some of the more striking data segments (see Table II).

Table II. Candidate Themes with Illustrative Data Segments.

Candidate theme	Illustrative data segment
Professional development	From 13:1. "… here, I really feel that new tools are being made available in the profession."
Personal development	From 6:3. "… That's why I've had great benefit from the various practical exercises; they have got me to reflect over myself, both privately and in my professional life as a special needs teacher."
Development of the classroom climate	From 6:2. "Good leadership and a good attitude lay the foundations for a healthy classroom climate, and make a good learning environment possible."
Need for collaboration	From 39:1. "Our joint work on course meetings, SET performances and the curriculum have also strengthened community within the group."
Unease	From 100. "I can imagine that some of the exercises may be sensitive to children, and also to us adults. … Some exercises are best when the group is secure enough for them to work."

Having moved back two levels (from themes to codes to data extracts), we now move forwards, to draw thematic maps from the candidate themes. In many instances of thematic analysis, this is an involved procedure, involving reconsideration of the candidate themes in terms of overlap or incoherence, and a return to lower-level data to resolve logical conflicts. Here, however, there is a clear structure; there are developments, and what we might call concomitants of development. The developments are professional, personal and classroom-climate-related, and the concomitants are the need for collaboration and unease. Both the developments and concomitants of development were expected on the basis of our sketch of theories of teacher development above, and are encapsulated by the idea of inward and outward journeys. Thus, we arrive at a final thematic map, with two themes and five sub-themes, as depicted in Figure 1.
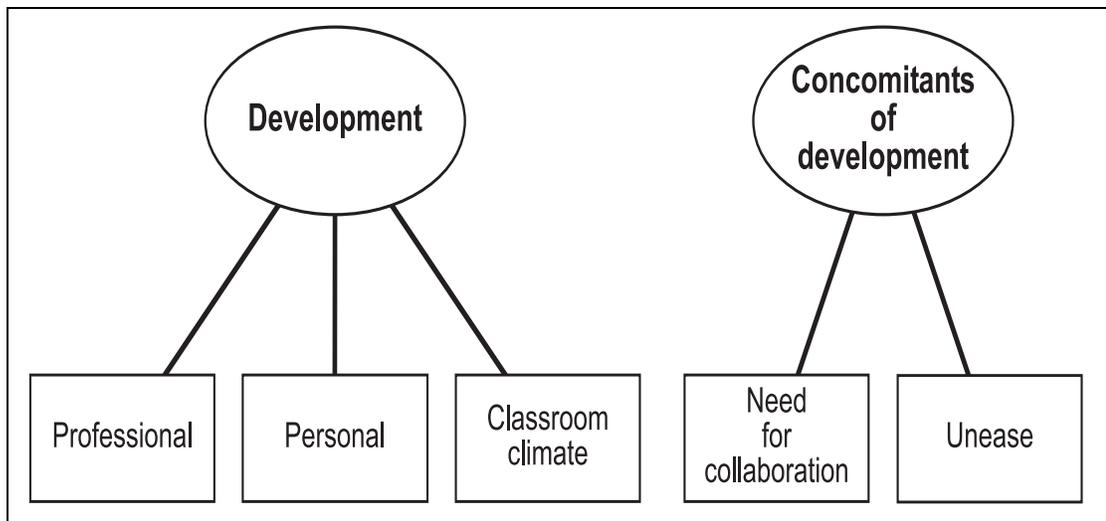
Figure 1. Final thematic map with two themes and five sub-themes.

Discussion

In this study, we analyzed the views of teachers undergoing training to become SET instructors and their development, based on process diaries written in the course of their training. We expected that teachers would (1) achieve greater self-awareness/self-knowledge, that is, would make a journey inward, (2) become more aware of how important they are to their students, (3) relate more positively to and have more positive views about their students, (4) give more feedback to their students, and (5) have greater concerns about their students. Taken as a whole, the results were in line with our expectations. Teachers' descriptions indicated development on behalf of both themselves and their students. The themes that emerged from the diaries concerned professional development, personal development, development of the classroom climate, the need for collaboration, and unease. These were collapsed into two higher-order themes: development and concomitants of development. The designated themes with regard to development are in line with Gadd's (2003) findings from the early days of the SET program. She interviewed thirteen teachers about teaching SET, and found that regardless of whether or not they enjoyed working with the program itself, they thought that they developed professionally and personally, and also that the classroom climate was affected positively, for example, students being more focused in the classroom. The diaries provide descriptions of both inward and outward journeys, as described by Conway and Clark (2003). According to Hattie (2009), teachers' ability to relate positively to students promotes the learning process. One of our main results was that teachers viewed students more positively as a result of the SET instructor training. This suggests that the training might not only benefit and develop their abilities to teach and train SET but also their general teaching skills.

The findings are also to some extent in line with an earlier qualitative developmental analysis of different aspects of teachers' professional development with regard to the training, implementation, and delivery of an SEL program (Larsen & Samdal, 2012). In that study, as in the present one, it was found that

program teachers perceived improvements in their classroom management abilities, viewed the students in a more positive way, and described themselves as having adopted a more student-centered approach. This has also recently been reported in a small-scale Norwegian study in which teachers working with the Second Step prevention program, which resembles the SET program in many respects, reported becoming more student-centered and more socially skilled as a result of working with their program (Larsen & Samdal, 2012). The quality of the delivery of prevention programs such as SEL is crucial to the effects the program will have on students (Durlak & DuPre, 2008).

There are two further points worth mentioning related to development, which can only be gleaned from looking at the material as a whole, rather than particular extracts. Firstly, we got the impression that the teachers who tended towards the negative were less personal in their process descriptions in comparison with those who were generally positive; possibly, they were more distanced from the material. Secondly, specific exercises were only sparsely mentioned, while virtually all the teachers referred to attitudes or changes in attitudes. Probably, this was because we explicitly asked the teachers if and how they changed during the course, rather than how they used the teaching materials. A methodological aspect to consider here concerns the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research. Both these observations could be verified by the counting of cases after coding, and the relationships could be assessed using appropriate statistical techniques. Such assessment, however, would not be a matter solely of the interpretation of content, suggesting that there are quantitative aspects even to qualitative studies.

The findings on development and its concomitants are much was in line with the theoretical expectations listed above. There were indications that the teachers would become more aware of their importance to the students; that they would relate more positively to, and have more positive views about, their students; that they would have greater concerns about their students, and that they would give more feedback to their students. In our study we could not test the expectation that students' achievement scores would improve.

In line with theory-based expectations, the developmental process was accompanied by both a sense of the need for collaboration as well as unease. However, there were some SET-specific aspects to the kinds of concerns expressed. First, with regard to the need for better collaboration, it should be noted that SET imposes wide-ranging demands. This has been demonstrated in many empirical articles and international reviews concerned with SEL programs and their implementation (for example, Humphrey, et al., 2010; Mihalic, Fagan, & Argamaso, 2008) The need for collaboration, which requires communication, applies not only between teachers, but also between teachers, on the one hand, and students, parents and school management, on the other. In our view, it was significant that the importance of school management was allocated a code in its own right, since attention had been drawn to the difficulties in obtaining support from (ever-changing) school leaders and municipal authorities by many active SET practitioners.

Secondly, with regard to unease, SET imposes qualitatively new demands on teachers. Given that the teachers on the course started at very different levels in terms of knowledge and experience of SEL, it was

unavoidable that there would be concerns about self-competence. Nevertheless, we were encouraged by the reporting, by many of the teachers, of increases in self-awareness and self-esteem, albeit, by virtue of their participation, the teachers concerned might have been expected to be favorably disposed towards SEL. We were reminded that the exercises must be formulated and implemented with care, and subjected to continuous review.

Following the completion of the SET trial, BK considered how the SET program had developed (Kimber, 2011). Some of the issues to which attention were drawn, many of which are echoed in the international, largely American, literature, were: implementation, including program fidelity (Durlak, et al., 2011), delivery of SET, degree of structuring of the program (Payne & Eckert, 2010), relationships with school management, including school leaders and municipal authorities, the question of program ownership (Werner, 2009), and the relationship of SET to academic achievement (Baer, et al., 2006).

In our view, the current study at least bears upon these issues, with the exception of the relationship of SET to academic achievement. The latter can only be addressed quantitatively by comparing the documented performances of SET and no-SET students over time, with due control for moderating and mediating variables .With regard to the other issues, which are more amenable to qualitative analysis, the study serves largely to confirm that there are areas that need to be addressed. In that sense, there is nothing especially outstanding about the findings.

On the other hand, the study does provide some novel insights into teacher development during SEL instructor training. Unease is one aspect that, so far as we know, has not been documented in previous research. Teachers' concerns about their abilities to perform well, and their concerns that some students risk being negatively affected by SEL programs, need to be addressed in future training. Another novel finding is that the teachers had perceptions of improved collegial networks and collegial support. The feeling of social support from or relatedness to colleagues is associated with work commitment and relatedness to students among teachers (Klassen, Perry, & Frenzel, 2012), which makes this a possible effect of the program important.

The matters of fidelity, delivery and program structuring are related, in that it has been claimed that teachers lack the capacities to implement programs of this kind, or that – if they do touch upon social or emotional issues – they should do so without any formal program. Rather, it has been stated, that the issues should be treated within the confines of other subjects, as they come up, in a manner similar to the way in which sex education tends to be provided in Sweden (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011). The generally favorable accounts of development provided, however, suggest that there is merit in having structured programs, like SET, adhered to and delivered by school teachers who have received some professional training in SEL (Farrell & Collier, 2010).

Some limitations of the study should be noted. Because the teachers knew that they were to hand in their diaries to their instructors, the content of the diaries may suffer from a social desirability bias. Also, teachers' views of their development during SEL instructor training is a hitherto virtually unexplored area in

the literature, and the findings need to be interpreted with caution. Further, the data were primarily used for instructional not research purposes which is a limitation in itself, and – due to lack of availability – are backed up only by the findings of a relatively small survey of the perceptions of SET teachers (Gadd, 2003).

Conclusion

This study has important implications for how we should understand the professional and personal development of teachers (both inward and outward) undergoing training in SEL programs in schools, and also ultimately for how such training should be pursued. For example, program developers and instructors need to be aware that the training may have an impact on teachers' personal lives, not only their professional work, and that it may put teachers in positions where they feel that they "know" what works, but that organisational and other factors may hinder them from acting accordingly. These issues may need to be considered in future training.

The study identified what teachers themselves regard to be important for the transfer of knowledge, skills, and values from training into practice. Provider attitudes towards program characteristics, feasibility, and the need for intervention affect the implementation process (Humphrey, et al., 2010). Accordingly, paying attention to the factors identified as important for teachers in the current study, including the need for collaboration and social support, should improve the quality of future implementation efforts. As examples, both the feeling of having principal support and good teacher–principal communication seem to be important for teachers' experiences of working on school-based prevention programs. This is in line with the findings of quantitative research from other countries showing that principal support predicts implementation quality (Cohn, et al., 2009; Skolverket, 2009). Some American studies show that the nature of the social support system at work predicts how well skills acquired during augmented vocational training are incorporated into work performance (Blazer, 2010; Tracey, Tannenbaum, & Kavanaugh, 1995).

The findings also have implications for the promotion of teachers' professional development at a more general level. Among other things (see, for example, Appeltofft, Björklund, Engström, Mogren, & Rosengren, 2011), the discussion has concerned the extent to which the promotion of students' social and emotional development is included in the mission of being a teacher. In this study, we hear teachers saying that working with SET benefits them as teachers in general, although given that these teachers had explicitly chosen to undergo this kind of training, there is the problem of response bias. However, emotions have generally been regarded as central to teaching, and it has also been argued that "the caring nature of the teaching role is largely neglected in educational policy and teacher standards" (O'Connor, 2008, p. 117). So, it may well be time to draw further attention to the social and emotional aspects of teaching, not only with regard to the prevention of mental ill-health, but also on a broader, more general level by recognizing that they make up an important component of being a teacher. If that is the case, teacher training in this area is a "must", not just a desirable enhancement.

Our results suggest that the training generated both general teacher improvement and better

implementation of the SET program. Because of the positive general teacher development, an interesting question for the future is whether all teachers, not only those working with SEL programs, would benefit from receiving this type of training. The positive implications of the training for contact with parents or home-school relations, which also has been documented previously in relation to working with SEL programs (Larsen & Samdal, 2012), should be particularly important, since teachers may be often ill-prepared to handle such contacts (Farrell & Collier, 2010). Also, parental involvement in school is associated with better school performance (Izzo, Weissberg, Kasprow, & Fendrich, 1999).

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