Welcome!

Welcome to the thirteenth newsletter of the SEAL Community. We've two interesting case studies from schools, practical teaching tips and the usual round up of news, resources and research.

If you missed our earlier newsletters, you'll find them in the Newsletter archive on the SEAL Community members' pages. The theme of the first (Keeping SEAL alive and growing) may be of interest if you have been using SEAL resources for some years and are looking to refresh your approach. The second focuses on diversity. The third is all about Ofsted/Estyn, the fourth is about SEAL and academic learning, the fifth focuses on SEAL and early years, the sixth on SEAL in secondary schools, the seventh on SEAL developments and the eighth on SEAL in practice. In the ninth is a case study from a brilliant primary school; the tenth is about assessment and in the eleventh there are ideas for using film in SEAL work. The twelfth focused on using fiction to support SEAL themes, and on the Prevent duty.

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News Update

UK Youth Parliament chooses a 'curriculum for life' as its 2017 priority campaigning issue

The UK Youth Parliament has voted to make a 'curriculum for life' – including comprehensive, statutory PSHE education – its main campaign priority in England for 2017. A ballot of over 978,000 young people decided which topics should be debated, with a curriculum for life the most popular.

The UK Youth Parliament also chose a curriculum for life as its main campaign in 2014 and in recent years has campaigned on PSHE related topics including mental health and reducing racism and religious discrimination.

Free workshops on measuring and monitoring children's wellbeing

The Anna Freud Learning Network is hosting a series of free, regional workshops to help schools and those working with them to measure and monitor the mental wellbeing of children and young people. The workshops will be delivered from January to March 2017 across England.

Register your interest by emailing network@annafreud.org

National Children's Bureau launches mental health and wellbeing toolkit for schools

A 2016 NCB and Association of School College Lecturers (ASCL) survey amongst school leaders reported that more than half had seen a large increase in anxiety or stress, while 79 per cent reported an increase in self-harm or suicidal thoughts amongst students.

With such increasing numbers of complex mental health issues, the NCB and its Partnership for Well Being and Mental Health in Schools has produced 'A whole school framework for emotional well-being and mental health - A self-assessment and improvement tool for school leaders. Find it at https://www.ncb.org.uk/resources-publications/resources/whole-school-framework-emotional-well-being-and-mental-health

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Resource round-up

New resource compendiums

For the SEAL Community website we have uploaded lots of new resources for the primary Going for Goals theme and the secondary Keep on Learning theme. They cover setting and reaching goals, persistence, resilience and learning to fail. Find them at http://sealcommunity.org/member-resource/new-2017-stuff-going-goals-new-year-resolutions-setting-goals-resilience-learning-fa. And robins aren't just for Christmas - have a look at this too http://sealcommunity.org/member-resource/working-persistence-and-resilience-why-not-use-waitrose-robin-new-year

On the website at http://sealcommunity.org/member-resource/every-school-assembly-three-minute-film-about-trust-and-hope-new-year you will also find a really moving three minute film about differences, belonging, trust and hope. Recommended for every upper KS2 and secondary assembly.

Secondary resources for work on the Keep on Learning theme

Inspiring Purpose is a free personal development teaching resource designed specifically for 10 to 16 year olds. Using poster templates, pupils are guided through a journey of self-reflection where they reflect upon their own personal strengths, explore who and what inspires them and then use this insight to talk about their future aspirations and goals.

Pupils are first asked to reflect on their character attributes and write about their key strengths and the qualities that challenge them, or that they believe they need to work on most. Then they complete activities exploring what inspires them; these include asking about a favourite story or poems, an inspirational figure, pictures and/or inspirational quotes. This gives pupils the opportunity to reflect on a role model or other important things to them and look at the connections to their own person. The final section asks pupils questions about their future or aspirations, looking at long and short term goals and asking young people to reflect on what matters to them and how they can become the person they wish to be.

Once young people complete the programme, teachers and organisations send in their most inspiring pieces of work (this year, by Tuesday 2nd May 2017) so that an external panel of judges can select some of the young people who inspire them the most.

The achievement of all participants is celebrated with digital awards ceremonies (a personalised video message from a high profile inspirational figure to be played as part of schools' own end of term events). After completing the programme, pupils and teachers are directed to a What Next? page which signposts them to a range of organisations who can help them take action on things that matter to them.

To take part, schools complete an application form at http://inspiringpurpose.org.uk/applyhere

or call 01334 844 900 or email admin@inspiringpurpose.org.uk. After a school or organisation applies to take part in our 'Global Citizens in the Making' or 'WW1' programmes, resources will be posted out to them.

DEAL – a resource for 14+

The DEAL (Developing Emotional Awareness and Listening) resources by the Samaritans offer teachers a comprehensive package of engaging teaching material focusing on emotional wellbeing and communication skills. The resources are aimed at students aged 14 and over and are free. The lesson plans and materials included are split into units which focus on

- Emotional health

- Coping strategies

- Dealing with feelings

- Connecting with others (communication skills)

Each of these units has clearly outlined learning outcomes and splits the key content into both 60 minute and 20 minute sessions. The units outlined are designed to be flexible and allow teachers to adapt it to their pupil's specific needs.

The programme includes teachers' notes, lesson plans, guidance on staff training and assessment activities. The resources are linked to both the National Curriculum framework and the PSHE Association Programme of Study.

Find the programme at http://www.samaritans.org/your-community/supporting-schools/deal-teaching-resources/deal-introduction

Measuring and monitoring children and young people's mental wellbeing toolkit

This mental health indicators toolkit is for schools and was commissioned by Public Health England. The toolkit helps schools and colleges think through why and how they might choose to measure student mental wellbeing and lists a range of validated survey questions and instruments (many of them free) that can help them to do this. There are also interesting case studies of how schools have used the tools. Find the toolkit at http://sealcommunity.org/member-resource/evaluating-and-monitoring-wellbeing

Relax Kids: Aladdin's Magic Carpet

By Marneta Viegas £6.99 on Amazon UK

Using well-known and loved fairy tales, this publication is a gentle and fun way of introducing children to the world of meditation and relaxation. It is designed to counteract some of the
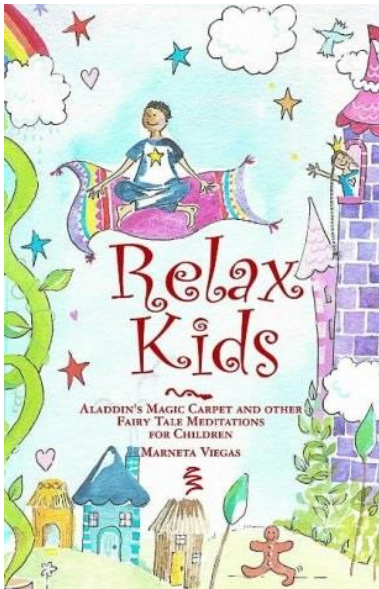
tensions with which we are all familiar and offers adults and children together some quality time to relax and share.

The meditations and visualizations aim to develop children's imagination and provide them with skills that should be invaluable for the rest of their life. Using 52 fairy stories and nursery rhymes, like flying on Aladdin's magic carpet, climbing Jack's beanstalk, flying through the air like Peter Pan, swimming in the ocean with the Little Mermaid, asking a question of the Wizard of Oz, listening to the sounds of the forest with Snow White and many others, children are encouraged to go on magical journeys in the mind.

The Other Side of the Report Card. Assessing Students' Social, Emotional and Character Development

By Maurice Elias, Joseph Ferrito and Dominic Moceri   £22.08 on Amazon UK

Finding ways to assess children and young people's social, emotional and character is difficult when teachers are so busy. Maurice Elias and his colleagues have come up with an innovative idea of how to get round this barrier, making use of an existing, teacher friendly tool – the report card. This book provides a roadmap on how to design and implement a report card comment system; it includes guided exercises for analysing existing report cards, suggested report card designs, tips on improving teacher-parent communication and case studies from schools.

Sharing practice

'Oh no not another initiative'- avoiding the usual reaction by collaboration

Clare Erasmus is head of mental health and wellbeing at the Magna Carta School in Surrey. Here she describes how the school put in place a whole-school plan to helps students to make choices about their

emotional and physical wellbeing – without staff feeling this was yet another initiative being imposed on them.

'You know you are sitting on a mental health problem in your school when you repeatedly see the following scenarios: a student, feeling overwhelmed with school pressure, rushes out of class with a panic attack; another hangs around your class after the lesson because he just needs to talk; a

student's weight is beginning to dominate her life; or a 15-year-old boy is displaying serious, defiant antisocial behaviour and violation of the rules.

These are not uncommon problems in schools, but we tend to view them as isolated incidents rather than a connected group of behaviours that need to be tackled with a cohesive, overarching strategy.

We decided to create such a strategy, putting in place a programme that seeks to help students to be literate about their mental health, and to make informed choices about their emotional and physical wellbeing. Here's how we did it.

1. Make it official

We made tackling mental health part of our school development plan, with targets for both staff and students. This meant we had a whole-school vision, but also that we were accountable to those targets and reporting on progress was built in from the start.

2. Decide the role you will play

We recognised that our role was not to diagnose but to be pre-emptive. School staff did not try to replace child and adolescent mental health services. We saw our role as:

- Raising awareness of what mental health is and its related illnesses.
- Learning the signs to look out for and giving advice for students to be able to support themselves and seek help.
- Creating an inclusive environment that did not discriminate against students facing mental health challenges, but instead sought to find ways to promote emotional literacy, resilience, optimism, generosity, appreciation, healthy physiology, social connection and growth mindset.

3. Appoint leaders

We appointed staff to lead on mental health support. These adult wellbeing mentors have training in youth mental health and are experienced in delivering non-directive supportive therapy. They are available to students at all times.

4. Clarify aims

We separated mental health and special educational needs support. We let students know that learning needs and mental health needs, although often linked, were essentially different; we have two different spaces and different staff allocated. In this way, we hope to profile and start vital campaigns, such as #TimeToTalk, in our school.

5. Make it interactive

We started at the top, by surveying teachers' response to mental health and wellbeing in the workplace. We then created a "You said, we did" response to it; offered free weekly in-house yoga classes; training to introduce mindfulness; and ran a course to get staff started. We introduced a room for staff for quiet reflection and ran a mental health panel with a cross-section of staff over

the course of the year to feed back on the research results. It was out of this panel that a staff wellbeing action group was formed.

Our student voice was ascertained through a comprehensive project with an external researcher. The qualitative data was gathered from focus-group sessions. These results then informed the type of detailed questions we asked in the questionnaires as we gathered the quantitative data. Based on the initial results, we were then able to make informed decisions about what our students needed in each year group and as a school.

For example, most of our student results revealed that:

- They did not always know *where* to get support for mental health.
- They did not know *who* to talk to.
- They felt the amount of information online was overwhelming.

Out of this, we created a wellbeing zone. This space was transformed with murals, information and signposting, all with a view to welcoming our students to a place where we get to talk about issues affecting mental health. There are four spaces: an anti-bullying pop-in room; a wellbeing pop-in room; "club chill" – an invitation-only lunchtime room specifically for our most vulnerable to hang out; and the wellbeing centre for private meetings by appointment with adult mentors. The students can self-refer at lunchtime or they can be referred by a staff member.

We already had a successful peer-mentoring anti-bullying ambassadors programme, so using the same model, we created wellbeing ambassadors. These have been trained by relationship-support charity Relate and offer a lunchtime listening service, focusing on empathy rather than giving advice, although they are in a position to signpost further support in the school or online.

Another thing we created was a free student-led mental health and wellbeing app, My TeenMind. On the app, students have all the key information they need on the various topics of mental health; it clearly lets them know where they can go in the school and who they can talk to.

The provision of this digital support, along with lots of physical signs throughout the school, ensures that our students now have easy access to the information they need.

We will build on our progress this year, rolling out our own in-house My TeenMind mental health qualification. Every Year 7 student in the school will be expected to complete a series of lessons in personal, social, health and economic education, and will be given a mini assessment. This will provide evidence and ensure that the students are all completely literate on mental health before they reach Year 8.

6. Engage parents

We engaged parents by starting up a parent wellbeing-ambassadors group. It is visible as a Twitter community ([@wellbeingparent](#)), and they will be volunteering their skills to the school to aid the ethos of wellbeing. It could be anything from breadmaking classes for students and their parents to acupressure massages for staff. They will also be helping us to run a new project in this new year with a local charity, involving drop-in coffee mornings for parents to come and talk about mental health and their families.

They are a key driving force behind the whole-school #familyMH5aday campaign, for which we will be rolling out initiatives during the academic year.

After one year, what effect has this had? It's led to the best set of attendance figures we have ever achieved; a busy wellbeing zone at lunchtimes; a growing number of student applicants to become ambassadors; a growing number of proactive parents who want to come on board; greater awareness of what is good mental health; greater awareness of support available in the school and the community; and our best-ever set of school results.'

Are you in the red, yellow, green or blue zone? A whole-school approach at Symonds School

Through a complex web of schoolwide strategies and practices focused on social-emotional learning, Symonds Elementary provides students with a safe, supportive space and ensures that they're ready and available for deeper learning. Strategies like mindfulness, emotional regulation, and supportive small groups help Symonds meet the academic and social needs of their students.

A 100-Piece puzzle

Symonds Elementary is known as a go-to school for social-emotional learning: they help students who've had behavioural issues. Symonds believes that they're often able to make inroads with students who have struggled in other schools because they work to create a supportive environment addressing all of a child's needs, not just his or her academic needs.

Some of this is done through strategies from the Responsive Classroom approach to learning, which emphasizes students' social and emotional growth as well as their academic growth. But distilling Symonds' mindset about SEL into a single approach or practice is nearly impossible. The school's strategy is a 100-piece puzzle that involves everything from music to small-group work to teaching students mindfulness.

"Social-emotional learning for our students takes place throughout their day," says first-grade teacher Sue Meehan. "Somebody [might] come in and teach a skills lesson. But those isolated lessons are never going to be enough, in that the children need to see it and hear it in many, many different ways."

"It really is the forum of the whole thing that makes it such a rich experience," adds guidance counsellor Joan Murphy. "And because it is so integrated, you almost can't pull it apart."

Start by identifying feelings

Before students can start working on better controlling their feelings, they must be able to identify them. Symonds teachers start working with students as early as kindergarten on examining and naming their feelings. One of their tools is a framework called Zones of Regulation.

Zones of Regulation is a systematic, cognitive behaviour approach used to teach self-regulation by categorizing all the different ways we feel and states of alertness we experience into four concrete

zones. The Zones curriculum provides strategies to teach students to become more aware of, and independent in controlling their emotions and impulses, managing their sensory needs, and improving their ability to problem-solve conflicts.

The four zones are divided by colour.

- The Red Zone is used to describe extremely heightened states of alertness and intense emotions. A person may be elated or experiencing anger, rage, explosive behaviour, devastation, or terror when in the Red Zone.
- The Yellow Zone is also used to describe a heightened state of alertness and elevated emotions; however, one has some control when they are in the Yellow Zone. A person may be experiencing stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, the wiggles, or nervousness when in the Yellow Zone.
- The Green Zone is used to describe a calm state of alertness. A person may be described as happy, focused, content, or ready to learn when in the Green Zone. This is the zone where optimal learning occurs.
- The Blue Zone is used to describe low states of alertness and down feelings, such as when one feels sad, tired, sick, or bored.

The zones are used throughout the school, starting in first grade with a series of eight sessions from school counsellor Joan and occupational therapist Laura Dubois. Joan and Laura spend about 30 minutes during the sessions educating students about the zones, and using activities to help them learn not only to identify but also articulate their feelings. Activities include asking them what the expected zone might be for a certain situation, or talking about how their behaviour might affect a group setting.

Once students can actively identify and discuss how they feel, they're ready to explore strategies for handling those feelings. This is done in either the classroom sessions or small-group settings with Joan or the school psychologist.

Using small groups for big results

Small groups are used all the time in classrooms but Symonds utilizes these for social-emotional learning as well as academics. While different staff members may call their groups different names or utilize different strategies, they all centre on helping children feel supported, emotionally regulated, and capable of handling their own feelings.

Symonds school psychologist Susan Brennan-Sawyer uses small groups during lunch and snack times to "have a smaller place for kids to interact and know that if their teacher is too busy, there's a contact person for their sort of emotional world."

"Two things that I teach them from the very beginning," says Susan. "No matter what anybody says about their problems, you can always just say that you're sorry, or that you hope it will be better. So [the group is] a place where they can learn the basics of empathy and problem solving."

Susan typically meets with students in groups of four to five once a week for 15 to 20 minutes, so that students still have some break time at the end of their lunch. "I also believe that kids need to go outside," she says. "So I'm not having them choose between doing this with me and going outside. And, really, after a certain bit, they would choose to not be in my group if they wanted to

go out to play, and who can blame them? So this way, they get away from the lunchroom, which can be really over stimulating."

Susan meets with different groups every day, with the intention of seeing every student at least once by the end of fifth grade (Year 6). Her groups include a mix of students that might need SEL support and those who may not need as much, so that those who are better at self-expression and self-regulation can serve as role models to the others. At each meeting, the students take turns sharing a happy thing and something that's troubling them. They may also play games to help them recognize and identify their emotions, such as Fishing for Feelings.

"I use a lot of different social-emotional games," says Susan. "I could have a group that has more anger control problems, so I would do more games focused on anger control or self-regulation, but it depends on the kids." She works to keep the structure of the groups consistent so that students will know what's expected of them. "I do a lot of affirmations," she explains. "We say the same repetitive thing, and it simulates what they maybe didn't have at home . . . so that they have a sense of security when they go into the world."

As the school counsellor, Joan Murphy uses small lunch groups for a similar purpose, but may use different techniques or tools. One recent example involved the Zones of Regulation to help students discuss appropriate behaviour and uncomfortable situations.

"The particular focus was that there are different times of the day, and different experiences that we have that create different feelings," says Joan. "We read a playful book . . . and then have them talk about different times during the school day and recognize how they might be feeling. Next we ask, 'Is that feeling expected or unexpected during that time of the day? And how do others feel if they're with me and I'm acting in an unexpected way?' So to get them to understand what their feeling state is, and if it's an uncomfortable feeling state. 'What tools do I have to bring myself back into the Green Zone?'"

Support without stigma

By making the groups a fun schoolwide practice, rather than a punitive one, Joan and Susan are able to help students that need SEL support without stigmatizing them with their peers.

"There are so many groups going on simultaneously," says Joan, "so nobody feels like they are standing out in an uncomfortable way. From our morning meeting, we are known entities. So, it's not like, 'Oh, I only go see Mrs. Murphy when there's a problem.' All of us try to interact with the kids in a variety of ways, all day long."

Fifth-grade teacher Gretchen Hoefer agrees, pointing to the groups' direct benefits in her classroom.

"The kids would happily be involved in lunch groups like every day if they could," says Gretchen. "They love that social piece, because they love talking, [and] it's really their chance to connect with other kids, to think about what's on their mind . . . In that small lunch group setting, it's a safe place for them to let out what's been weighing them down a little bit . . . That's hard to do with a full class when you want to really talk about something and break it apart." But in smaller groups

of two or three, she observes, "Everyone has that opportunity to share and be heard. And then they bring that kind of energy and that feeling back into the classroom. It can be really helpful."

Staying mindful

Mindfulness is another practice that Gretchen finds helpful in her classroom. The school piloted the practice in 2014, but the idea of using mindfulness in schools has been around for years, through programs like the Mindfulness in Schools Project or the MindUP™ program.

"I started with mindfulness because I've been teaching self-regulation to the kids who have emotional issues," Susan says. "And it was always as if they knew, in hindsight, what the answer was. 'Well, I shouldn't have called my teacher stupid. I should have done this or that instead.' . . . But when the situation came . . . the kids would just react. And I realized that [calming their brains] was something that they couldn't do."

So Susan began asking teachers if she could come into their classes and teach mindfulness. Some weren't on board at first, but others, like Gretchen, decided to give it a try.

"I didn't know how it would work out, [but] it's been amazing," she says. "They've had a chance to realize, 'Oh, when I'm really feeling stressed out, I'm going to stop, take some breaths, slow myself down, think about what's going on, and be in a better place or be more ready to handle what's happening in my day.'"

Susan visits classes once a week for 15 minutes and teaches kids to be aware of their thoughts and their breathing, and how to take a moment to pause and be in themselves when they're feeling stressed.

After some initial wariness, Gretchen saw her students warming to the process. "[They're saying,] 'I'm feeling stressed, and I can see that now. Either my heart's going faster, or I'm feeling sweaty,'" she says. "And a couple of kids have even approached Susan in the hallway and been like, 'Oh, Mrs. Brennan-Sawyer, I was at home and this was happening, and I was getting really worried, and then I remembered what you shared with me in class, and I tried it, and I felt so much better.' So that was really neat to see the connections that they're making with mindfulness, not just here in school but also at home or in any part of their day."

While not all Symonds teachers are using mindfulness, those who are see a clear benefit in their classrooms and are bringing more of their peers to the practice each year. Susan hopes that eventually, with her modelling, the teachers can implement the practice on their own without setting aside times for her to come to their rooms.

Making connections regardless of resources

While many of the strategies outlined here involve staff members other than teachers, Susan is quick to point out that you don't need a school psychologist or counsellor to begin using these practices.

"Teachers everywhere are implementing mindfulness in their classrooms," she says. "There is an abundance of books, articles, curriculum and videos online. Things like lunch groups could be led by teachers. The purpose is to provide an opportunity to express real concerns or joys in a safe

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place with a caring adult and a group of peers. I see teachers having lunch with kids they have a special relationship with. That is good, since the single most important healing tool in children with many adverse childhood experiences is a relationship with an adult who believes in them. I always tell teachers, that person could be you. It may not be, but it could be. That is what has kept me going, anyway."

Resources

- [Developing Young Children's Self-Regulation Through Everyday Experiences (NAEYC)](#)
- [Mindfulness Resources for Teachers and Students (Mindful Schools)](#)
- [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)](#)
- [How Do Children Learn to Regulate Their Emotions? (Huffington Post)](#)
- [The Need for Social and Emotional Learning (ASCD)](#)
- [What Is Social and Emotional Learning? (CASEL)](#)
- [SEL Classroom Activities (Centre for Social and Emotional Education)](#)
- [Tips for Teaching Mindfulness to Kids (Greater Good Science Center)](#)
- [Mindfulness: A Teacher's Guide (PBS)](#)

Practical tips

The go-to box

After teaching children relaxation techniques, give each a small 'go-to' box in which they keep objects to help them if they feel angry, upset or anxious. In it might be a feather for breathing, a smooth stone to touch, a calming bottle with glitter that settles slowly, or a little card they have made with things they can read and do.

Language suitcases

We liked this way of supporting pupils who find it really hard to communicate what they are feeling and manage strong emotions. Staff at a special school use a common set of phrases and vocabulary to describe emotions, and scaffold pupils' communication with 'suitcases' containing set phrases. Children choose the Velcro word or phrase to attach to sentence stems like 'I feel ...' and 'I will...'. These help pupils reflect on their emotions during points of crisis.

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Using mental contrasting

If you are working with children on setting and reaching goals, you need to know about 'mental contrasting'. Here's how to do it. Get children to :

Step 1 Write down or think about several positive aspects associated with completing your goal. For example, if they are trying to eat healthily those positive aspects could be: being able to run faster, getting your mum to stop nagging you, feeling more lively etc

Step 2 Hone in the most positive aspects. This could be one especially large benefit, or a few smaller ones. Then take a few moments to visualize those benefits. The longer and the more detail, the better.

Step 3 Write down or think about several obstacles in the way of you completing your goal. For example, if you're trying to eat healthily, those obstacles could be: being tempted by snacks, seeing friends eating cake, being offered fizzy drinks etc

Step 4 Hone in the largest obstacles. This could be one especially large obstacle, or a few smaller ones. Then take a few moments to visualize those obstacles and you overcoming them. Picture how you will do this. The longer and the more detail, the better.

That's it. Research has shown it works. Angela Duckworth and others have investigated the effectiveness of teaching mental contrasting to 10-year-olds. Compared with children receiving bland "Believe it and you can achieve it!" messaging, the kids taught the mental contrasting strategy had better academic performance.

BUT here is a health warning. This only works if children set goals that they **believe are achievable.** In nearly all studies which tested the impact of mental contrasting, those with a lack of confidence were hurt by the technique. For example, in one study, those in the mental contrasting condition who had low expectations of success did three times worse than those in the control condition. This is not a technique which should be used to bolster confidence. Instead, this technique translates cerebral thoughts of success into concrete emotions of motivation.

If you'd like to read more about the technique and why it works, there is a paper at
http://sealcommunity.org/member-resource/reaching-goals-using-mental-contrasting

Interesting new research

What makes children share?

Malti, T et al (2016) "Who is worthy of my generosity?" Recipient characteristics and the development of children's sharing *International Journal of Behavioral Development January 2016 vol. 40 no. 1 31-40*

In this study, 160 four- and eight-year-old children received six equally attractive stickers. They were then given an opportunity to share any number of those stickers with a hypothetical child in a picture.

Children were shown multiple pictures that depicted four different conditions, which included "needy" recipients and "not needy" recipients. The needy recipient was described as "She/he has

no toys," "She/he is sad." And the non-needy or neutral recipient as "This girl/boy is four/ eight years old, just like you."

The researchers found that children tended to share more stickers with a needy recipient- but more so if they were older. Eight-year-old children shared on average 70 percent of their stickers with the needy recipient (versus 47 percent with the neutral recipient). The four-year-olds shared only 45 percent of their stickers in the needy condition (versus 33 percent in the neutral condition). This confirms previous research showing that the majority of 8-year-old children share valuable resources equally with others, whereas 4-year-olds are more likely to favour themselves in their sharing allocations.

The authors note that the age difference is probably due to children's growing abilities to put themselves in others' shoes. A recent review study that summarized the findings of 76 studies looked at a total of 6,432 children aged between two and 12 years to find out how children's perspective-taking abilities and prosocial behaviour were related to each other. Results revealed that children with higher ability to take another person's point of view showed more prosocial behaviours, such as comforting, helping and sharing. Furthermore, when the researchers compared preschool-aged children between two and five years of age versus children aged six and above, they found that this relationship became stronger as children got older.

So how do we encourage children to become empathetic toward others? The ability to feel concern for others is one of the key characteristics that make us human. Empathy binds individuals together and increases cooperation among the members of the society. This has been observed in developmental research. For example, in a long-term study conducted with 175 children, it has been found that when children showed high levels of empathy at age seven, they were better accepted by peers and shared more with others up to age nine.

To encourage empathy, the researchers conclude that we should use the time-honoured strategy of asking children to think about others' emotions by putting themselves in their place. For example, when a child grabs a toy from his friend, the adult asks the child, "How would you feel if your friend took away a toy from you?"

The proof of this comes from research by Brad Farrant, who, along with his colleagues, studied the relationship between parenting and children's helping and caring behaviours and found that children aged 4-6 showed more actions of helping and caring when mothers encouraged their children to see things from another child's perspective. For example, if a child was "picked on" by another child, mothers who encouraged perspective-taking would guide their child to try and work out why the other child was picking on the child.

How many schools have specialist mental health support for children?

Sharpe, H., Ford, T., Lereya, S. T., Owen, C., Viner, R. M. and Wolpert, M. (2016), Survey of schools' work with child and adolescent mental health across England: a system in need of support. *Child Adolesc Ment Health*, 21: 148–153

This study surveyed 577 school staff from 341 schools in England (not necessarily a representative sample) about the provision of specialist support for mental health problems in their school, including what support is available and who provides it.

Over two thirds of schools reported having some specialist support available, with specialist provision more common in secondary schools. Staff training and whole-school approaches were the most frequently employed specific approaches. Only a small minority used themed support groups, mindfulness or peer support.

These were the percentages using various approaches

	PRIMARY	SECONDARY
Staff training	77	82
Whole-school approaches	67	66
Learning in the curriculum	58	57
Therapy provision	59	57
Nurture groups	55	58
Family work	60	47
Anger management	34	53
Peer support	15	41
Mindfulness	18	27
Themed support groups	12	29

Specialist support was most often provided by educational psychologists, followed by counsellors. School staff particularly valued support and feedback within the schools context. The most frequently cited barrier to mental health support was the limited capacity of specialist CAMH services.

Schools perceived specialist services they organised themselves within school as very much more helpful than NHS CAMHs services.

The authors note that the finding of more specialist support in secondary than primary schools is interesting given the evidence from the national TAMHs project that mental health support in the primary years may be more effective than in later years. They also note that universal approaches like staff training and whole school approaches were the most common strategies while evidence suggests that such approaches need to be complemented by targeted interventions such as themed support groups.

A tough nut to crack? Developing teachers' own social and emotional skills

Harvey S. et al (2016) Warming the Emotional Climate of the Classroom: Can Teachers' Social-Emotional Skills Change? *International Journal of Emotion Education* Special Issue Volume 8, Number 2, November 2016 pp 70-87 www.um.edu.mt/ijee

This study tested an intervention to improve teachers' own social-emotional skills. Changes in their teaching practices and emotional awareness in the classroom were then measured, along with changes in students' social-emotional behaviour as a result of changes their teachers may have made.

Teachers were recruited from 20 public and state-assisted elementary and middle schools in New Zealand. The intervention involved three one-day workshops per teacher group, followed by a half-day follow-up session. Each workshop was delivered three weeks apart, so that the intervention required three months to complete. The workshop topics included: the classroom emotional environment, emotional awareness, emotional relationships, emotional interpersonal guidelines (standards and boundaries), emotional intrapersonal beliefs (philosophy, attitude, and acceptance), and emotion coaching (emotional expression as a teachable moment). Specific topics within each target area were introduced for discussion in Quality Learning Circles, in which small groups of teachers explore the topic area, provide support for each other's learning, and compare practices.

Results were mixed. In line with predictions, decreases in teachers' undesirable relating and setting limits (such as rigidity and criticism) were found in the intervention group. But there were no increases in desirable limit-setting approaches, relationship development, emotion coaching, or awareness of students' emotions.

An analysis of outcomes indicated that not all teachers improved. It is concerning that just over a third of teachers worsened on behavioural CLIMATE ratings. Whether teachers improved or not appeared to impact on students. Compared to non-improvers, teachers who improved on CLIMATE were perceived by students to be comparatively higher in leadership, more helpful/friendly and understanding, and foster more student responsibility/freedom. However, no relationships between teacher changes and students' pro-social behaviour and emotion were evident.

This may mean that changing target teacher emotional behaviours has little or no relationship to changes in students' emotions and emotional skills—or simply that changes take longer to occur from environmental changes than the time allocated in this study (just three months) .

One interesting finding was that teachers' behaviour became less emotionally supportive over the course of the study. The authors say it is possible that 'teachers with decreasing CLIMATE scores exhausted the emotional resources required to enact emotional practices as the school year progressed. Their first film segment may have reflected a time at the start of the school term when they felt energized, fresh, and able to sustain a moderate level of emotional practice. However, as the school year progressed, difficulties may arise that hamper the ability to sustain these behaviours.'

That's something we will all recognise!

Scouts and guides have better mental health in later life

Dibben, C, Playford, C., Mitchell, R. (2016) Be(ing) prepared: Guide and Scout participation, childhood social position and mental health at age 50—a prospective birth cohort *study J Epidemiol Community Health* doi:10.1136/jech-2016-207898

Children who participate in scouts or guides organisations– which aim to develop qualities such as self-reliance, resolve and a desire for self-learning – are likely to have better mental health in middle age.

The findings were drawn from a lifelong study of almost 10,000 people from across the UK who were born in November 1958, known as the National Child Development Study. Scientists from the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, who analysed the data, found that those who had belonged to the scouts or guides tended to have better mental health at age 50, after accounting for other factors (such as disadvantage) that might have led to the results. Around one-quarter of study participants had been in the scouts or guides, and those were found to be around 15 per cent less likely to suffer from anxiety or mood disorders, compared with others.

Researchers say their findings suggest programmes that help children develop skills such as self-reliance and teamwork, and encourage being active outdoors, may have lifelong benefits.

Early Years PATHS

Mihic J et al (2016) Promoting Social and Emotional Competencies among Young Children in Croatia with Preschool PATHS. *Int Journal Emotional Ed Special Issue* Volume 8, Number 2, November 2016 pp 45-59 www.um.edu.mt/ijee

Preschool PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) is an evidence-based universal prevention program focused on promoting children's social and emotional competencies and reducing the likelihood of behaviour problems and negative relationships with peers and teachers. This paper examines changes in the social and emotional competencies of 164 children, ages 3-6, in 12 preschool classrooms in three cities across Croatia, who participated in the classroom-based Preschool PATHS curriculum.

At the beginning and end of the preschool year, teachers completed well validated and reliable assessments of social and emotional competencies on each child. The researchers found statistically significant and substantial improvements in prosocial behaviour, emotion regulation, emotion symptoms, peer problems, relational aggression, conduct problems, and hyperactive-impulsive behaviour, even after controlling for classroom and teacher effects.

There was no control group in this study, so the results could just have been due to the children's maturation; however, as other research using measures included in this study have found the measures show little change scores from year to year, this suggests that the changes in scores observed in this study reflect a real impact for Preschool PATHS.

Breakfast clubs raise attainment- but maybe not because of the breakfast!

Crawford, C. at al (2016) *Magic Breakfast: Evaluation report and executive summary*. London: Education Endowment Foundation

Breakfast clubs that offer pupils in primary schools a free and nutritious meal before school can boost reading, writing and maths results, according to the results of a randomised controlled trial published by the Education Endowment Foundation.

Over the course of an academic year parents of around 8,600 pupils from 106 primary schools in England with higher than average numbers of disadvantaged pupils were encouraged to send their child to free breakfast clubs. The evaluation found that for Year 2 children the provision of a breakfast club led to a significant improvement in the main outcome measures of mathematics and reading when compared with schools running "business as usual". For Year 6 children, the impact on assessments were positive but slightly smaller. But, surprisingly, there were larger improvements for pupils not eligible for free school meals than for those eligible.

So maybe the effects are less to do with the actual breakfast, and more to more to do with the social and emotional benefits of being cared for and being with other children in a group. The evaluators also reported that pupils' attendance, behaviour and concentration improved.

More success for anti-bullying programme

Nocentini, A. & Menesini, E. (2016) Anti-Bullying Program in Italy: Evidence of Effectiveness in a Randomized Control Trial. *Prevention Science* (2016) 17: 1012-14

In this study researchers evaluated the effectiveness of the KiVa anti-bullying programme through a randomised controlled trial of over 2,000 students aged 10-12.

KiVa is a research-based anti-bullying programme developed in Finland and now widely used across the UK and Europe. It is a schoolwide intervention that is focused on the bystanders' reactions to a bullying situation, which assist and reinforce the bully, and aims to change their attitudes and behaviours.

The research showed significant results for KiVa for bullying, victimisation, pro-bullying attitudes, pro-victim attitudes, empathy toward victims amongst ten year olds. The odds of being a victim were nearly twice as high for ten year olds not involved in KiVa than for those in KiVa schools. In 12 year olds, KiVa also significantly reduced bullying, victimisation, and pro-bullying attitudes, but the effects were smaller than those for the younger children.

Benefits of SEL research round up

The Cambridge Education Review recently had a whole issue on social and emotional learning. We've extracted here some key bits that summarise recent research on the benefits. If you'd like to follow up any of the references, you'll find them at http://sealcommunity.org/member-resource/recent-research-benefits-sel. We've also uploaded a useful research paper on what matters in implementing SEL programmes effectively in schools. Find it at http://sealcommunity.org/member-resource/research-paper-what-matters-implementing-sel-programmes-schools

The influence of SEL on academic outcomes has been comprehensively tested in three large, rigorously conducted meta-analytic reviews (Durlak et al., 2011 ; Casey, & Paulson, 2011; Sklad et al., 2012). Findings from these studies revealed that students who received SEL programming in addition to the regular educational classroom curriculum showed improved academic outcomes compared with those who did not receive any additional SEL in their classrooms.

Whereas the majority of research has focused on identifying benefits of SEL for students, some initial empirical research and theoretical considerations suggest that the benefits of SEL may also extend to teachers (Cain & Carnellor, 2008). In classrooms in which SEL is implemented effectively, teachers need to spend less time on classroom management (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). In fact, a recent study of two classroom-based SEL interventions found that teachers who implemented a comprehensive model that integrated an SEL programme with a positive behaviour programme reported higher levels of efficacy and personal accomplishment at the end of one year compared with teachers in control classrooms and teachers who implemented the positive behaviour programme alone (Domitrovich et al., 2015). Feeling competent in implementing SEL in the classroom has further been linked to experiencing a less disruptive and more positive classroom climate, and reporting lower stress levels, higher job satisfaction and higher teaching efficacy (Collie et al, 2012).

Several longitudinal studies support the effectiveness of SEL programming over time. For example, children and adolescents who participated in school-based SEL programming, compared with a comparison group, showed improved problem-solving skills (Espada et al , 2012) reduced behavioural problems (Fraser et al, 2011) and improved stress-related coping (Kraag et al , 2009) six to 18 months after programme completion. A small number of studies have also tracked SEL intervention outcomes from childhood to adulthood. For example, the 'Seattle Social Development Project' (see http://www.ssdp-tip.org) has followed a cohort of 808 children throughout their adolescent years up to the age of 33 to assess the longitudinal effectiveness of SEL. Some select and important research findings in this project were that greater social and emotional competence was linked to increased chances to enter college, career success, better mental health, engaged citizenship and a lower rate of sexually transmitted infections in adulthood (Hawkins et al., 2008 ; Hill et al., 2014). In addition, a recent meta-analytic study of more than 80 school-based universal intervention evaluations revealed that positive student outcomes could be sustained over time (i.e. for at least six months after programme completion), supporting the long-term effectiveness of SEL interventions (Taylor et al , 2015) .

Making the case for SEAL

More and more schools are getting involved in metacognition and self-regulation – top of the list of the Education Endowment Foundation's list of 'what works' in raising attainment.

The EEF Teaching and Learning toolkit explains: 'Metacognition and self-regulation approaches (sometimes known as 'learning to learn' approaches) aim to help learners think about their own learning more explicitly. This is usually by teaching pupils specific strategies to set goals, and monitor and evaluate their own academic development.' Metacognition and self-regulation, we are told, provide 'high impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence'; we are also told that these practices are 'widely applicable' across different subject areas.

We need to remember, though that while metacognition is confined to the realm of thinking and reflecting, self-regulation has a broader focus, and is often defined as the monitoring and control of one's own motivations, emotions and behaviour. Self-regulation can refer both to immediate

situations, as with the pupil who is feeling angry or anxious but still gets on with their work, and to longer time frames - particularly, it involves being able wait for what you want, go for the long term satisfactions of learning rather than immediate gratification.

SEAL is absolutely about self-regulation. Without it, work on metacognition alone will not succeed.