

Ta(l)king Pictures: Development of an Educational Program (SELVEs) for Adolescents Combining Social-Emotional Learning and Photography Taking

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Abstract : In the last two decades, education systems worldwide have integrated new pedagogical methods and strategies in lesson plans, such as innovative technologies, social-emotional learning (SEL), gamification, mixed learning, multiple literacies, and many others. Visual language, such as photographs, is known to transcend cultures and languages, and it is commonly used by youth to express positions and affective states in social networks. Therefore, visual language needs more educational attention as a linguistic and communicative component that can create connectedness among the students and their teachers. Nowadays, when SEL is gaining more and more space and meaning in the area of academic improvement in relation to social well-being, and taking and sharing pictures is part of the everyday life of the majority of people, it becomes natural to add the visual language to SEL approach as a reinforcement strategy for connecting education to the contemporary culture and language of the youth. This article presents a program conducted in a high school class in Israel, which combines the five SEL with photography techniques, i.e., Social-Emotional Learning Visual Empowerments (SELVEs) program (experimental group). Another class of students from the same institution represents the control group, which is participating in the SEL program without the photography component. The SEL component of the programs addresses skills such as: troubleshooting, uncertainty, personal strengths and collaboration, accepting others, control of impulses, communication, self-perception, and conflict resolution. The aim of the study is to examine the effects of programs on the level of the five SEL aspects in the two groups of high school students: Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Self-Management, Responsible Decision Making, and Relationship Skills. The study presents a quantitative assessment of the SEL programs' impact on the students. The main hypothesis is that the students' questionnaires' analysis will reveal a better understanding and improvement of the five aspects of the SEL in the group of students involved in the photography-enhanced SEL program.

Keywords : social-emotional learning, photography, education program, adolescents

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