

The Impact of Social Emotional Learning and Conflict Resolution Skills

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Abstract : During adolescence, many students engage in maladaptive behaviors that may reflect a lack of knowledge in social-emotional skills. Oftentimes these behaviors lead to conflicts and school-related disciplinary actions. Therefore, conflict resolution skills are vital for academic and social success. Conflict resolution is one component of a social-emotional learning (SEL) pedagogy that can effectively reduce discipline referrals and build students' social-emotional capacity. This action research study utilized a researcher-developed virtual SEL curriculum to provide instruction to eight adolescent students in an urban school in New York City with the goal of fostering their emotional intelligence (EI), reducing aggressive behaviors, and supporting instruction beyond the core academic content areas. Adolescent development, EI, and SEL frameworks were used to formulate this curriculum. Using a qualitative approach, this study inquired into how effectively participants responded to SEL instruction offered in virtual, Zoom-based workshops. Data included recorded workshop sessions, researcher field notes, and Zoom transcripts. Descriptive analysis involved manual coding/re-coding of transcripts to understand participants' lived experience with conflict and the ideas presented in the workshops. Findings highlighted several themes and cultural norms that provided insight into adolescents' lived experiences and helped explain their past ideas about conflict. Findings also revealed participants' perspectives about the importance of SEL skills. This study illustrates one example of how evidence-based SEL programs might offer adolescents an opportunity to share their lived experiences. Programs such as this also address both individual and group needs, enabling practitioners to help students develop practical conflict resolution skills.

Keywords : social, emotional, learning, conflict, resolution

Conference Title : ICES 2025 : International Conference on Educational Sciences

Conference Location : Stockholm, Sweden

Conference Dates : July 15-16, 2025