

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING: WHERE IS THE EVIDENCE FOR ENGLISH AS AN  
ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS?

by

Emma L. Becker

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## **Abstract**

This scoping review explores research on Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and English as an Additional Language (EAL) learning in Canadian K-12 public schools, with focus on whether SEL aids newcomer and refugee students as they navigate unfamiliar cultural and linguistic contexts. Following Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) framework for scoping reviews, this study compiles literature from academic databases to identify instructional strategies and critical gaps in existing research from 2000 to 2025. Results emphasize the importance of SEL competencies, such as identity affirmation, self-awareness and self-esteem, and socialization, in fostering academic performance and social integration for EAL learners. Effective SEL practices follow identity-affirming and culturally responsive instructional methods, offering opportunities for collaborative learning and multilingual classroom activities. Following these approaches can foster EAL learners' confidence, promote socialization with peers, and facilitate successful acculturation, thereby positively fostering language proficiency and overall mental health. Results reveal minimal research conducted within Canada, with limited explicit instruction of SEL, emphasizing the necessity for research on implementation of structured culturally and linguistically sensitive SEL curricula in Canadian public schools. Implications include targeted SEL interventions within Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) frameworks to address the diverse needs of EAL learners in Canada, particularly students with a refugee background.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### **Review of Literature on Social-Emotional Learning and English as an Additional Language Learning**

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) has become a prominent focus in Canadian and international education, aiming to prepare students with essential social and emotional skills for success in school environments and beyond (see Appendix A for a brief list of references to SEL in public discourse and education practice). As immigration and refugee rates rise due to global political unrest, violence, climate change, and Canada's immigration policy, incorporating SEL in English as an Additional Language (EAL) learning education has become more critical than ever to support students as they navigate new languages and environments in their pursuit of safety and opportunity. Well implemented EAL and SEL are pivotal to successfully integrating refugees and newcomers into Canadian society (Bennouna et al., 2019), emphasizing the importance of EAL to include SEL practices for refugee and newcomer youth's future engagement and success. SEL holds potential to play a fundamental role in supporting EAL learners, including benefits to academic success and positive overall well-being. Considering the existing contexts of refugee and immigration resettlement in Canada, along with the incorporation of EAL and SEL into classroom instruction across grades K–12, this subject area holds particular significance, offering unique challenges and opportunities within the public education system across Canada.

With Canada welcoming more than a million refugees since 1980 (UNHCR Canada, 2025), a considerable portion of multilingual learners in Canada have a refugee or resettlement background. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2025), define refugees as individuals forced to flee their homes due to violence or persecution. Learning the

dominant language, particularly the language of instruction in public school for children and youth, is essential for successful communication in their new environment and opens broader opportunities for success. Incorporating SEL into language instruction aids students' integration in both classrooms and society, addressing the unique challenges they may encounter in their new educational and social environments (Castro-Olivo, 2014; Crooks et al., 2020; Stewart & El Chaar, 2020). SEL is essential for academic achievement and overall social-emotional health and mental well-being of students and language learners of all backgrounds, particularly those that may be refugee or immigrant EAL students. To address the developmental and psychological needs of refugees and immigrants arriving in Canada, it is imperative to first take a broader perspective: mapping the existing literature on SEL in EAL to gain a comprehensive understanding of what has already been studied, and to gain an understanding of what has evidence of success within the research.

From this, gaps and opportunities can be identified, creating a roadmap for culturally relevant instructional approaches, targeted interventions, and future research. This thesis aims to examine the intersection of SEL and EAL in Canadian K-12 public education, addressing how these fields inform one another while exploring their collective success and impact on educational procedures and practices in times of substantial demographic change.

### **Youth School Engagement**

Youth engagement in primary and secondary school, Kindergarten (i.e., grade Primary) through to grade 12 (K-12), is essential in fostering academic achievement, positive well-being and personal growth for all students. School engagement is a construct that includes three important elements: behavioural, emotional, and cognitive (Fredricks et al., 2004). Behavioural engagement refers to the observable effort exercised in classroom tasks, such as completing tasks

on time, turn-taking and following established routines. Emotional engagement includes the experience and regulation of positive emotions (e.g., excitement, pride) during classroom instruction and activities in parallel with distress tolerance and regulation of negative emotions (e.g., stress, frustration, vulnerability). Cognitive engagement encompasses attentional processes and applying metacognitive strategies in the classroom (Fredricks et al., 2004). Previous research has found that when students feel connected to their school community, they are more likely to have effective involvement in their learning experiences and are able to see the value in their educational experience, they are more likely to have academic success and develop skills essential for life and future success (Estell & Perdue, 2013; Janosz et al., 2008). In a review of research on students' engagement with school and its contribution to future academic success and individual well-being, Upadyaya and Salmela-Aro (2013) found that strong school engagement is associated with increased academic achievement and lower levels of adverse outcomes (e.g., depressive symptoms and student emotional burnout). It was also found that high engagement in school can enhance students' well-being (e.g., positive emotions, sense of belonging and self-fulfilment), with various contextual factors contributing to increased student engagement (e.g., parental emotional support, encouragement from teachers, and a positive classroom environment). Consistent school engagement encourages academic success, positive well-being, and overall youth development (Upadyaya & Salmela-Aro, 2013), all of which are important factors in the healthy development of students from all cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Taking into consideration the strong connection between student engagement, academic achievement, and positive well-being, it is crucial to also examine how addressing students' social-emotional needs through targeted classroom interventions can further support their positive development and success.

## **Social-Emotional Needs and Development**

SEL broadly refers to explicitly teaching students the skills to help them understand and manage their emotions, understand their strengths and challenges, practice empathy towards others, and build healthy social relationships, ultimately contributing to their overall mental health and positive well-being. Meta-analyses published in recent decades have demonstrated the effectiveness of SEL interventions in promoting positive youth and student development when implemented with fidelity and consistency (Cipriano et al., 2023; Durlak et al., 2010; Durlak et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2017). These interventions focus on enhancing specific social and emotional skills, attitudes and behaviours with the goal of enhancing peer relationships and school functioning among youth. In their meta-analysis, Taylor et al. (2017) found that the most effective SEL programs had clear objectives, structured and interactive activities focused on skill-building, and outcome assessments that were comprehensive. Effective SEL programs followed objectives and content aimed at developing five interrelated behavioural, cognitive, and affective core competencies found to be important for success in school and life: self-awareness (e.g., personal values, strengths and challenges, and emotion recognition), self-management (e.g., emotion and behaviour regulation), social awareness (e.g., understanding and empathy of others' diverse cultural backgrounds), relationship skills (e.g., understanding different types of relationships and maintaining healthy relationships), and responsible decision making (e.g., making productive choices; Taylor et al., 2017). SEL activities evidenced to be most successful and beneficial to students included structured interventions in 30 to 45-minute classroom-based lessons, involved active participation from students (e.g., exercises that focused on skill-building through role-playing and interactive tasks), with some successful interventions focused on integrating SEL into daily instruction, and others in school-wide initiatives, or involvement of

parents/guardians (Taylor et al., 2017). SEL program effectiveness and success was measured through assessment of student outcomes at follow-ups (ranging from six months to 18 years) in seven main areas: social-emotional skills, positive attitudes, positive social behaviours, academic performance, reduced conduct problems, decreased emotional distress, and reduced substance use (Taylor et al., 2017). Taylor et al. (2017) also found that students with enhanced skills in SEL after interventions were predicted to have better developmental outcomes long term, which highlights the importance of skill-building in SEL interventions. These universal SEL interventions for K-12 students were effective across diverse populations (e.g., different socioeconomic, racial, geographic backgrounds), demonstrating that SEL programs can benefit students across cultures, locations, and family backgrounds when implemented with fidelity and consistency (Taylor et al., 2017).

Generally, an objective of SEL is to foster supportive K-12 classroom environments where students can learn to express and manage their emotions, build healthy relationships with others, and make conscientious decisions in support of their learning (Greenberg et al., 2017). A challenge often faced in education is that there is inconsistent operationalization of these broad objectives, and therefore, inconsistent and poorly defined implementation. With a lack of clarity regarding what is actually happening in classrooms (e.g., What does SEL *look* like?), the broad goals of SEL interventions, and their intended outcomes become difficult to assess or communicate. Public education systems aim to help students reduce behavioural issues, navigate social challenges and enhance academic achievement by integrating SEL into curricula. As students progress from elementary to secondary school, the skills acquired through SEL are crucial in preparing them for personal and social challenges they may face in early adulthood.

Fundamentally, SEL is about young children and adolescents developing skills to manage their emotions and social interactions for their personal well-being, including social and academic success (Greenberg et al., 2017). The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), outlined a five-component model of SEL with the goals to teach and encourage children and adolescents to become self-aware, empathetic, conscientious, and engaged lifelong learners who are open to collaboration to reach their own goals and in parallel contribute to a more inclusive, fair society (CASEL, 2025). The main objectives of SEL, according to CASEL's model, focus on fostering positive learning environments that teach students to develop the following five essential skills:

1. **Self-Awareness:** recognizing one's own thoughts and emotions, evaluating personal strengths and weaknesses, cultivating gratitude and optimism, enhancing mindfulness, and promoting overall personal well-being.
2. **Self-Management:** controlling one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviours in various situations, including in managing stress, controlling impulses, setting and achieving goals, and knowing when and how to seek help through self-advocacy.
3. **Social Awareness:** understanding and respecting different perspectives, including those from various social, religious, and cultural backgrounds, deepening a sense of empathy, compassion, and a broader understanding of both local and global communities.
4. **Relationship Skills:** building positive relationships with diverse groups of individuals, communicating effectively, listening actively, collaborating with others, resisting negative peer pressure, resolving conflicts, and forming healthy, confident connections with others.

5. Responsible Decision-Making: making thoughtful, informed choices by realistically assessing outcomes and making decisions that promote safety and well-being and contribute to the greater good of society.

SEL programs with clear objectives (following the five essential skills above), structured skill-building with interactive activities, and comprehensive outcome assessments can effectively enhance student outcomes such as social skills, mental health, and academic performance. When implemented with consistency and fidelity, evidence-based SEL interventions have been found to be successful and effective for students from a wide range of backgrounds (Taylor et al., 2017). Promising research shows that when SEL interventions are implemented with fidelity, explicitly teach core social-emotional skills, and focus on skill-building lessons and interactive exercises, it can result in positive student outcomes, including fewer mental health diagnoses, better academic performance, and reduced risk-taking behaviour (Cipriano et al., 2023; Durlak et al., 2010; Durlak et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2017).

Implementing structured SEL programs can enhance students' attitudes toward learning, improve school relationships, and lead to various positive outcomes including higher education performance. A meta-analysis of 213 universal school-based SEL programs examined various outcomes, including social and emotional skills, self and others' attitudes, positive social behaviours, conduct issues, emotional distress, and academic performance. Durlak et al. (2011) were particularly interested in understanding how effectively schools could implement an SEL program. To measure whether the SEL programs following the SAFE criteria (Sequenced, Active, Focused, and Explicit) were effective, Durlak et al. (2011) analyzed data by coding studies with four specific questions: (1) Does the program employ a connected and coordinated set of activities to meet skill development objectives? (Sequenced); (2) Does the program utilize

active learning methods to support skill acquisition in youth? (Active); (3) Does the program include at least one component dedicated to developing personal or social skills? (Focused); and (4) Does the program aim to develop specific SEL skills rather than promoting general skills or ill-defined positive development? (Explicit). Durlak et al. (2011) found two specific factors that negatively influenced student outcomes in SEL interventions: inconsistency in SAFE practices and logistical barriers to implementation, suggesting that effective programs need to be both well-designed and properly executed.

If implemented appropriately, the benefits of well-designed and well-executed SEL interventions extend beyond academic achievement, ultimately helping to foster resilience, improve mental health, and prepare students with essential SEL skills for future success in their academic and personal lives.

### ***The Jones et al. (2021) Framework***

Jones et al. (2021) sought to capture the full range of meanings of ‘SEL’ by creating a framework based on an extensive qualitative analysis of several existing SEL programs. Their goal was to represent all explicitly stated knowledge, attitudes and skills encompassed in programs that call themselves ‘SEL’. Ultimately, their framework is broader than others, as it describes all elements of SEL as defined in reviewed programs. It is essential to recognize that while the framework presented by Jones et al. (2021) illustrated the knowledge, attitudes and skills included in SEL programs across the United States, their research did not seek to establish what should be taught in SEL or what is effective. Although this framework provides important perspectives on the full range of content in existing SEL programs, it does not imply that all SEL constructs within the framework are necessarily evidence-based.

### ***Social-Emotional Skills as Predictive of School Engagement and Mental Health***

Social-emotional skills are essential indicators of school involvement and mental health and well-being, significantly influencing how students engage with their classmates, handle stress, and face challenges in life. These skills, encompassing emotion regulation, empathy and interpersonal communication, directly affect a student's capacity to remain focused on their education and maintain positive mental health and wellness. SEL programs greatly diminish social withdrawal and feelings of social anxiety, especially in students who view their relationship with their teacher positively (Sousa et al., 2023). By fostering strong social-emotional skills in the classroom, schools can cultivate an atmosphere in which students experience connection and support and are more prepared to thrive both personally and academically.

Studies have shown that certain SEL programs are effective at improving students' social-emotional skills. These improvements, in turn, lead to lasting positive outcomes, such as improved mental well-being and increased academic achievement and involvement (Cipriano, 2023). Social-emotional skills are important indicators of both school engagement and mental health, greatly influencing students' educational experiences and overall well-being. Focusing on the development of these skills allows educators to establish a more supportive learning environment that enhances students' engagement and encourages healthier emotional outcomes, preparing them for success both inside and outside the classroom.

### ***Social-Emotional Skills for Advocacy***

Self-advocacy serves as a protective factor for students as they progress through K-12 education. It entails recognizing one's own learning strengths and challenges, knowing rights and responsibilities, and being able to communicate learning needs and necessary supports clearly to

others (Mishna et al., 2011). Social-emotional skills are crucial for successful self-advocacy, enabling individuals to voice their needs, practice empathy, and foster strong interpersonal relationships.

Skills such as self-awareness, emotion regulation, and collaboration with others enable students to navigate challenges, interact with diverse viewpoints, and foster positive change in their school and communities. In their research assessing a school-based intervention aimed at enhancing the self-advocacy knowledge of middle school students diagnosed with a learning disorder, Mishna et al. (2011) found that students were able to substantially improve their self-advocacy skills (e.g., knowledge and understanding of their learning needs and capacity to ask for help) through a three-pronged ecologically informed approach: (1) implementing a standardized workshop on learning disorders for the participants' classmates, teachers, and parents; (2) establishing a structured group for participants focused on self-advocacy; and (3) providing targeted consultation with participants' teachers. By encouraging social-emotional skills, students are better prepared to advocate for themselves and others, contributing to more inclusive and supportive school and community environments.

### ***SEL in Canadian Curricula and Implementation***

SEL concepts have been incorporated into Canadian educational curricula for many years, though they are not treated as a distinct subject/content area or guided by any agreed upon model. Instead, outcomes related to SEL are integrated into multiple content areas particularly Health, Physical Education, English Language Arts, Social Studies, and Religious Education. While teachers can incorporate SEL instruction into any subject they choose, there has been no systematic analysis of its effectiveness in enhancing student outcomes, such as social skills development, emotion regulation, or academic achievement (Whitley & Gooderham, 2015).

Additionally, there has been no comprehensive synthesis of what Canadian provinces and territories aim to achieve through SEL implementation. While the Canadian curricula on SEL may be disjointed, they are still heavily incorporated into a wide range of subjects. SEL is embedded within Canadian provinces' and territories' curriculum documents, although it often appears as a supplementary addition or embedded across other content areas, piecing together elements from various SEL programs without a clear focus or consistent structure. As a result, the current approach to SEL within Canadian classrooms may lack the coordination and fidelity needed to be truly effective (Hall, 2024). Although clearly defined SEL programs have demonstrated effectiveness when implemented with fidelity, the current incorporation of SEL into Canadian curricula is fragmented (Hall, 2024). If a well-defined SEL curriculum could be effectively implemented across Canada, it could enhance the health and well-being of Canadians, easing the strain on the healthcare system and reducing the immediate demand for regular healthcare providers (Greenberg et al., 2017).

Embedding recommendations with the comprehensive Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework could help translate universal SEL goals into a range of evidence-based interventions. The MTSS framework provides targeted support for students' academic, behavioural, and social-emotional needs within schools. These interventions range from school-wide prevention efforts to more intensive individualized services to ensure, for example, that EAL learners receive culturally responsive targeted support matched to their social-emotional needs and cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Through data-driven decision making, culturally responsive practices, and the design of tiered strategies, school staff (i.e., teachers, counsellors, school psychologists, EAL instructors) can collaborate to ensure that SEL initiatives evolve from isolated classroom activities into an integrated, school-wide system that promotes sustained

academic engagement and fosters well-being of multilingual students. While the MTSS framework is currently only implemented in Ontario and Nova Scotia public school systems, the structure of school-wide, small group, and individual supports within the MTSS framework can be implemented with similar approaches in provinces that use other inclusion models.

### ***Cultural Responsiveness of SEL***

The Canadian population represents a multicultural mosaic, with the Canadian Census reporting over 450 ethnic or cultural origins, and 26.5% of the 2021 population identifying as a member of a racialized group (Statistics Canada, 2021). Research has shown that teachers' understanding and appreciation of students' heritage and life circumstances can improve educational outcomes (Anyichie & Butler, 2023). Teachers can cultivate a more inclusive and supportive learning environment that enhances engagement and academic achievement by strengthening relationships with students and valuing their diverse backgrounds.

As SEL emerges as a common topic in education, and many EAL students aim for success in their learning and well-being, it is important to map the degree of synergy within the literature between the fields of EAL and SEL, with each potentially offering benefits to the other. Studies have highlighted the need to consider racism and the broader social and cultural context when providing mental health interventions to marginalized populations (Adames et al., 2023), including supporting resilience from their trauma, fostering heritage culture and traditions, and building relationships and reciprocity among students and educators (Goforth et al., 2024). SEL programs have previously included dimensions of cultural competence through incorporation of cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills, and the concept of radical healing, including resisting the tendency to internalize blame for oppression (Adames et al., 2023; Goforth et al., 2024). Jagers et al. (2019) presented a reframed SEL outline to address colonialism, racism, and

oppression. The framework extends beyond the five traditional SEL competencies proposed by CASEL to incorporate emphasis on collective orientation, identity, cultural humility, belonging, and collaborative problem-solving. Jagers et al. (2019) emphasized the need to incorporate these elements in the SEL framework to challenge the underlying oppression and racism within the public education system. Additionally, Jagers et al. (2019) argued that professional development for educators is essential for effectively supporting students from racial and ethnic minorities and groups using culturally responsive methods.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) is an asset-oriented framework that positions students' cultures, languages, and lived experiences at the centre of instruction, using them as foundations for conscientious academic and social-emotional growth (Ladson-Billings, 2014). In the context of EAL learning, CRP requires teachers to (1) understand and view multilingualism as a resource rather than a deficit, (2) ensure learning experiences are designed and planned to reflect on and affirm students' cultural identities, and (3) combine scaffolded supports with high expectations that honour diverse backgrounds ways of knowing (Fenner & Snyder, 2017). When SEL instruction is delivered through this culturally responsive lens, the five core competencies, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, social skills, and responsible decision-making, are taught using methods that include students' home languages, validate students' identities, and highlight cultural norms of interpersonal interaction and emotional expression. Conversely, SEL programs that ignore students' cultural backgrounds risk simplifying behaviour norms and increasing inequities, while CRP initiatives that exclude explicit SEL skill-building instruction may overlook the social-emotional needs and scaffolds that multilingual learners require to succeed in unfamiliar social and linguistic environments. Thus, high-quality EAL instruction necessitates an integration of SEL and CRP in which teachers foster classroom

environments that celebrate linguistic diversity, teach culturally mediated emotional vocabularies, and support students through collaborative tasks in culturally appropriate ways, promoting both academic language development and overall well-being.

Culturally responsive approaches to SEL implementation can play a crucial role in building skills that foster well-being and protective factors in youth of all backgrounds (Goforth et al., 2024). While SEL is not a clinical approach, it can be informed by psychological principles, allowing educators to support healthy development of students in everyday contexts. Conducting a scoping review of the literature could provide valuable insights into this nuanced approach.

### **Students Learning a new Language of Instruction While Participating in Instruction**

As of 2021, roughly one in four Canadians (23.6% of the population) spoke a first language other than English or French, alone or with another language, a record high since the question was first added to the Census in 1901 (Stats Canada, 2022). The 2021 Census also reported that 4.6 million Canadians predominantly spoke a language other than English or French at home, representing 12.7% of the population. This proportion has been drastically increasing for the past 30 years, with the proportion of the population reporting speaking a language other than English or French at home being 7.7% in 1991, demonstrating the rise in immigration continuing to enrich Canada's linguistic diversity (Stats Canada, 2022). As a result of this increase in immigration and a non-English speaking population, the number of students learning the language of instruction has also significantly increased.

Previous studies have shown that a strong predictor of academic performance at the end of primary and secondary school is a student's proficiency level in the language of instruction (Demie & Strand, 2006; Prevoo et al., 2016). Therefore, it is important to understand the

evidence-based ways to ensure that these students successfully develop their language of instruction. With spoken and written language as the main methods of instruction from teachers and the primary form of communication with teachers, classmates, and peers, understanding what is being said and how to respond correctly is crucial to language learning, social integration, and student success in the ascribed curriculum for their grade. Addressing barriers to EAL could support elementary and high school students in fully participating in their education, building meaningful social connections, and achieving long-term academic and personal success.

As they adapt to the language of instruction and cultural norms of the new country and school system within which they are registered, adolescent immigrants often struggle to keep pace academically and socially with local students (Wong & Schweitzer, 2017). Language and culture are intertwined, and students' ability to maintain their home language(s) is crucial to preserving their cultural heritage and identity. Maintaining their cultural heritage and language(s) allows the passing of values, traditions, and knowledge across generations while fostering a stronger connection to one's heritage community and contributing to a sense of belonging and identity through connectedness with family and friends who also speak their home language. Cultural heritage preservation and connectedness to one's home language, inside and outside of school, has been linked to student psychological well-being (Kilpi-Jakonen & Kwon 2023), which in turn could help them feel comfortable with learning a new language of instruction in school.

Language is regarded as a critical factor shaping the acculturation and integration processes to achieve a sense of belonging for all students. Language plays a central role in facilitating communication, building social connections, and navigating cultural differences, ultimately influencing how individuals adapt to and engage with the school environment (Ahtif

& Gandhi, 2022; Wilczewski & Alon, 2023). Language learning has the power to immerse students in the worlds of others, foster empathy and promote understanding across social and political divides (Kim, 2020). When students can communicate effectively, they can showcase their language skills and subject knowledge while exploring their interests, abilities, and identities. This capacity enhances their self-expression, deepens their engagement with learning, and fosters a stronger sense of self-identity and awareness.

### ***Students who are Refugees or Children of Recent Refugees***

The challenges faced by newcomer youth to Canada are complex and diverse (Kaufmann, 2021; Nakeyar et al., 2018). Students who are refugees or children of recent refugees, defined as people forced to flee their country and unable to return due to persecution, armed conflict, violence, vulnerability to climate change, or severe public disorder (UNHCR, 2025), face unique challenges that impact both their social-emotional and language development. These students often arrive with diverse cultural backgrounds, past traumas, and limited proficiency in the host country's language, all of which influence their educational experiences and outcomes.

Language can also serve as a barrier that prevents newcomer youth from connecting with peers, securing meaningful employment, and effectively navigating healthcare systems and social services (Lindsay & Serebyńska-Abou-Eid, 2019). Learning an additional language, such as English, is essential for newcomers to Canada, significantly aiding their integration and community connection (Jowett et al., 2020; Stewart & El Chaar, 2020). Nakhaie's (2020) large-scale study found that language proficiency is a stronger predictor of sociocultural integration than either length of residency or cultural similarity.

Refugee youth have experienced significant social and emotional trauma during their time in transition from their home country to Canada (Crooks et al., 2020). These experiences

can be compounded by experiencing isolation, racism, and loneliness in their school and community (Barba et al., 2019). Traumatic experiences have significant impacts on refugee youths' mental health and academic success (Wong & Schweitzer, 2017). These experiences of social and emotional trauma may be intensified by the stress of starting new in an unknown community and school with a new language. In their 2018 study, Nakeyar et al. identified specific challenges refugees encounter in Canada, such as limited support from community, uncertainties over asylum status, and experiences of discrimination. Nakeyar et al. (2018) further underscored the complexities of cultural disparities and the obstacles refugees face in being properly understood within the Canadian educational system. Addressing the social-emotional needs is essential to help them feel safe, build resilience, and foster a sense of belonging in their new environments. Supporting their language acquisition is critical for the academic growth and social integration of refugee youth in their school and community.

Language and language learning are constantly evolving and changing; without positive social engagement, refugee and immigrant students will not have efficient language learning opportunities, but also if these students do not acquire strong language skills in the language of instruction, they will likely be excluded from some social spaces and opportunities. Acquiring the language of instruction is a crucial factor in facilitating the successful integration of refugees into Canadian society (Guo, 2021; Jowett et al., 2020). In turn, social engagement synergistically provides students with effective opportunities for language learning. Acquiring an additional language provides communication and opportunities for refugee students and students born into refugee families in Canada entering school. Including SEL in students' language learning is critical for the successful integration into the classroom, school community and society, particularly for refugee students (Crooks et al., 2020; Stewart & El Chaar, 2020). It is crucial for

educators to be particularly mindful of providing social and emotional support to refugee students, given the challenges these students face during premigration and resettlement (Sullivan & Simonson, 2016). The value of SEL for refugee youth is grounded in academic success and in helping support some of the unique factors they face (Castro-Olivo, 2014). Given the complex challenges they encounter through the language learning process, supporting refugee youth's social and emotional development is crucial.

### ***Barriers to Additional Language Learning***

In the pursuit of acculturation, specifically in learning a new language, students may face challenges and barriers that could hinder their ability to fully participate in language learning, the classroom, and school community. One such barrier could be limited and varying proficiencies in the language being learned, potentially leading to decreased self-confidence and motivation for students through the learning process. Considering the familial context, newcomer parents and caregivers may face challenges in meeting their children's educational and healthcare needs due to various factors, including language barriers, limited time, transportation issues, and unfamiliarity with the school system (Mendenhall et al., 2017). Parents may feel pressured that their children will not be successful in Canadian society unless they acquire a particular level of English, or that their home language will potentially interfere with their learning of English and overall learning in the school setting. Consequently, the monolingual education system pressures them to learn and speak the dominant language and only the dominant language.

During adolescence, peer interactions and relationship building are crucial to self-identity, social awareness, and socialization, making limits to communication more profound. It has been found that many adolescent immigrants face barriers from not being able to effectively communicate with peers beyond their own cultural and linguistic group (McBrien, 2005).

Further, limited proficiency in the language of instruction may cause some students to stay silent, isolated, and disengaged from classroom discussions, socialization with peers, and classroom activities. This disconnect can lead to feelings of marginalization and impede their overall participation and acculturation in the learning environment (Wilczewski & Alon, 2023). This can further hinder social interactions within the school community and may also prevent students from making significant academic progress.

Personal life circumstances can create significant barriers to school attendance, affecting students' ability to engage consistently in their education and learning. Factors such as family responsibilities, economic disadvantage, transportation challenges, and past traumas can lead to irregular attendance and participation in school (Turney & Kao, 2009; Want & Gulliford, 2024), hindering student potential for academic success and opportunities for social development (Finning et al., 2019). Combined, these social, contextual, and linguistic obstacles that newcomer students can face highlight the importance of implementing culturally responsive comprehensive supports to ensure they can fully access language learning and the wide-ranging benefits of public education in Canada.

Learning an additional language, social-emotional development, and positive mental health outcomes are intertwined as they play a crucial role in the educational, social, and emotional success of refugee students. This population of learners face a complex array of challenges including displacement, trauma, and disruptions in their education, which can negatively impact their academic engagement and success, and overall well-being. While learning the language of instruction can support children's and youth's communication, belonging, and connection in school, it must be paired with transformative SEL that is trauma-informed and culturally responsive to be effective for this population of students. Canadian

public K-12 schools need to intentionally use their methods of instruction and efforts to create environments that appropriately recognize and respond to refugee students' experiences through targeted professional development, informed planning, and inclusive policies.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### **Social-Emotional Learning: Where is the Evidence for English as an Additional Language Learners?**

The role of mental health in educational success is pivotal for students' emotional well-being, as it directly impacts their ability to focus, learn, and achieve academic success (Klapp et al., 2024). When unaddressed, mental health challenges have the potential to lead to difficulties in school, including low academic performance, a sense of disconnection from school, and poor attendance (Stewart et al., 2016). As they adapt to a new culture and language of instruction immigrant and refugee students may face difficulties settling in their new schools as their prior education may have been limited or severely disrupted, family networks may have been severed, they may face housing instability and economic disadvantage, and face discrimination from members of their new communities. A risk factor for adverse mental health outcomes among refugees is exposure to severe discrimination and violence, whereas access to social support in the host country has been shown to provide a protective factor (Gallagher, 2018).

Multilingualism offers well-documented cognitive, academic, and social-emotional gains such as enhanced executive functioning, metalinguistic awareness, empathy, and cross-cultural competence (Dewaele & van Oudenhoven, 2009; Dewaele, 2010), while English as an Additional Language (EAL) learning further builds communication skills and positive personality traits that ease newcomers' transition into English-instruction classrooms (Haim, 2015; Le Pichon Vorstman et al., 2009). Yet these benefits collide with a Canadian public school system that privileges monolingual English norms, leaving immigrant and especially refugee students often coping with interrupted schooling, trauma, racism, and unfamiliar procedures, vulnerable to isolation and diminished self-confidence (Mendenhall et al., 2017;

Nagasa, 2014). Evidence shows that trauma-sensitive, linguistically inclusive classrooms, supported by strong peer networks, caring teacher relationships, culturally responsive family partnerships, and targeted professional development, can counteract these barriers and foster resilience (Cho et al., 2019; Isik-Ercan, 2012; Matthiesen, 2016; Moore, 2010). Integrating Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) within EAL pedagogy is essential for nurturing and developing identity affirmation, emotional safety, and sustained academic success among multilingual learners.

SEL generally is the practice of developing students' emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and interpersonal skills. SEL aims to teach and encourage children and adolescents to become self-aware, empathetic, conscientious, and engaged lifelong learners who are open to collaboration to reach their objectives and contribute to a more inclusive, fair society (CASEL, 2025). The main objectives of SEL, according to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), focus on fostering positive learning environments that teach students to develop five essential skills: (1) Self-awareness (recognizing one's thoughts and emotions, strengths and weaknesses, cultivating gratitude and optimism, enhancing mindfulness, and promoting overall well-being); (2) Self-management (controlling one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviours, managing stress, controlling impulses, setting and achieving goals, and knowing when and how to seek help through self-advocacy); (3) Social awareness (understanding and respecting different perspectives from various social, religious, and cultural backgrounds, deepening a sense of empathy and compassion); (4) Relationship skills (building positive relationships with diverse groups of people, communicating and listening effectively, collaborating with others, resisting negative peer pressure, resolving conflicts, and forming healthy, confident connections); and (5) Responsible decision-making (making thoughtful,

informed choices by assessing outcomes and making decisions that promote safety and well-being, contributing to the greater good of society; CASEL 2025).

Several meta-analyses have highlighted the effectiveness of SEL interventions, when well implemented with consistency and fidelity, in promoting positive student development (Cipriano et al., 2023; Durlak et al., 2010; Durlak et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2017). The foundation of these SEL interventions focus on enhancing specific social and emotional skills, attitudes and behaviours, with the goal of enhancing students' peer relationships and school functioning. Durlak et al. (2011) found two specific factors that negatively influenced student outcomes in SEL interventions: inconsistency in SAFE (Sequenced, Active, Focused, and Explicit) practices and issues with implementation, suggesting that effective programs need to be both well-designed and properly executed to be effective for students. If the SEL programs could not (1) employ a connected and coordinated set of activities to meet skill development objectives (Sequenced); (2) utilize active learning methods to support skill acquisition in youth (Active); (3) include at least one component dedicated to developing personal or social skills (Focused); and (4) aim to develop specific SEL skills rather than promoting general skills or positive development (Explicit), then the programs could not effectively provide positive SEL outcomes for students (Durlak et al., 2011). If implemented appropriately, with well-designed and well-executed methods following the SAFE model, SEL program benefits could improve mental health, help students foster resilience, and prepare them with essential SEL skills for future academic and personal success. Jones et al. (2021) developed a framework for SEL that is broader than others. While their research did not seek to establish what should be taught in SEL or what is effective, it illustrated the knowledge, attitudes and skills included in SEL programs across the United States, It combined elements of SEL recognized in numerous frameworks and

interventions, highlighting how the concept of SEL over time has become extensive, with a taxonomy of 23 subdomains and objectives in programs that define themselves as SEL.

Ensuring youth feel a sense of belonging and have the opportunity to develop socially and emotionally is crucial in school, particularly when EAL is taking place, to successfully adapt in the language of instruction. Prior research has found that teachers' perceptions of refugee and multilingual students' social-emotional behaviours, or lack thereof, were often described as problem behaviours, describing the students as needing improvement in all areas of SEL skills (Bitew & Ferguson, 2012; Cho et al., 2019; Roy & Roxas, 2011; Thabet et al., 2004). These perceptions have been shown to cause teachers to undervalue refugee students' academic and social skills and ability to learn (Medford & McGeown, 2016), while refugee students report lack of ability to productively participate in classroom discussions due to lack of understanding of the language of instruction and cultural norms (Bitew & Ferguson, 2012). Additional language learning combined with consistent culturally responsive transformative SEL instruction could provide students with enhanced opportunities for effective communication with improved social-emotional skills, enriching their overall capabilities in school and community functioning. This overlap of language learning and SEL may have unique considerations for students who are refugees or are children of recent refugees.

While SEL concepts have been incorporated into Canadian public education curricula for many years, they are not treated as a distinct subject/content area or guided by an explicit curriculum. Instead, outcomes related to SEL are integrated into different subjects such as Health, Physical Education, English Language Arts, Social Studies, and Religious Education. Although educators can incorporate SEL instruction into any subject, there has been no systematic analysis of its effectiveness in enhancing student outcomes in the development of

social skills, emotion regulation, or academic achievement (Whitley & Gooderham, 2015). Additionally, there has yet to be a comprehensive synthesis of what Canadian provinces and territories aim to achieve through SEL implementation. While the Canadian curricula on SEL may be disjointed, it is still heavily incorporated into a wide range of subjects with differing terminology.

The current study aimed to explore the scope of literature on the implementation of evidence-based SEL practices and associated challenges and successes EAL learners may encounter in school, identifying successful strategies and scope of research evidence to support those strategies. While language learning and SEL may use different terms to address similar interpersonal skills, such as ‘help-seeking’ behaviours, both focus on developing essential learning competencies in support of student learning and development. This scoping review posed two research questions: (1) How does existing literature address the integration of SEL in EAL learning for K-12 students in Canadian public schools? (2) What practices have evidence of success for combining SEL and EAL? This study aimed to bridge the terminology gap between the fields of EAL and SEL, aiming to make SEL approaches that demonstrate effectiveness more culturally responsive and relevant to EAL learners.

## **Method**

### **Scoping Review**

This scoping review searched the literature on: (1) evidence-based practices for implementing Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in classrooms, and (2) effective instruction for and experiences of English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners in schools. These two searches were combined and resulting articles were examined with the aim of mapping evidence-based SEL instruction onto EAL learning practices within K–12 educational settings in Canada.

Guided by Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) seminal methodological framework for scoping reviews, this scoping review aimed to consolidate and disseminate existing research on SEL within the context of additional language learning. A mixed-method approach ensured that all subject-related research findings were explored within the inclusion criteria. Building upon Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) framework, a team-based approach was used to allow for diverse perspectives and ensure that all types of methodologies were considered (Westphaln et al., 2021).

### ***Inclusion Criteria***

Consistent with the goal of process integrity from the Arksey and O'Malley (2005) framework, the search strategy used was inclusive of academic peer-reviewed publications within the time frame applicable to the research question (2000 to 2025), language of publication (English), and relevant to the population of interest (Canadian elementary, middle, and high school students learning an additional language in the educational context). This study operationally defines 'EAL learners' as students learning the language needed to function and succeed in the school setting (language of instruction).

### ***Exclusion Criteria***

Consistent with the goal of comprehensiveness from the Arksey and O'Malley (2005) framework, the search strategy used was exclusive of non-peer-reviewed publications, grey literature, language learning groups in community settings, studies with a central focus on French immersion classrooms, and preschool or post-secondary settings.

### ***Search Strategy***

A literature search was conducted with the consultation of an MSVU research librarian who supported the initial search, explicitly advising on searching databases. Databases searched included ERIC (EBSCO), Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts (LLBA, ProQuest),

Education Research Complete (EBSCO), and PsycINFO (EBSCO). Search terminology for additional language learning can be found in Appendices B to I.

Given that SEL and language learning are broad and evolving umbrella terms, not all researchers or databases may use them consistently. In education, terminology can shift over time and newer conceptual frameworks may not be universally adopted or applied. Therefore, this comprehensive search strategy attempted to account for both general and specific terms related to SEL and language learning.

To ensure a thorough literature review, ‘SEL’ and more specific terms that fell under its conceptual umbrella were used. These more targeted terms include the categories outlined by Jones et al. (2021), which provide a useful framework for identifying the core components of SEL. This dual-pronged approach, searching for both the overarching term (‘Social-Emotional Learning’ or ‘SEL’) and its specific components, helped capture a broader and more accurate scope of relevant research. According to Jones et al. (2021), SEL can be broken down into several core domains: cognitive regulation (e.g., executive function, attention control), emotional processes (e.g., emotion recognition, empathy, emotion regulation), social/interpersonal skills (e.g., cooperation, communication, conflict resolution), values (e.g., respect for others, sense of fairness), and perspectives (e.g., identity development, cultural competence).

Within the field of language learning there has been considerable shift in terminology, and while there was an elaboration of search terms to include within this review it was not as extensive as the process used for SEL search terms. There is a distinct disconnect between multilingualism research and educational practice, with research moving along with updated vernacular to describe the population of multilingual learners, there has yet to be a shift in terminology used within practice and policy documents. Considering the 25-year period included

in the search it was necessary to have a broad range of search terms to reflect the evolutions in educational terminology for both language learning and SEL.

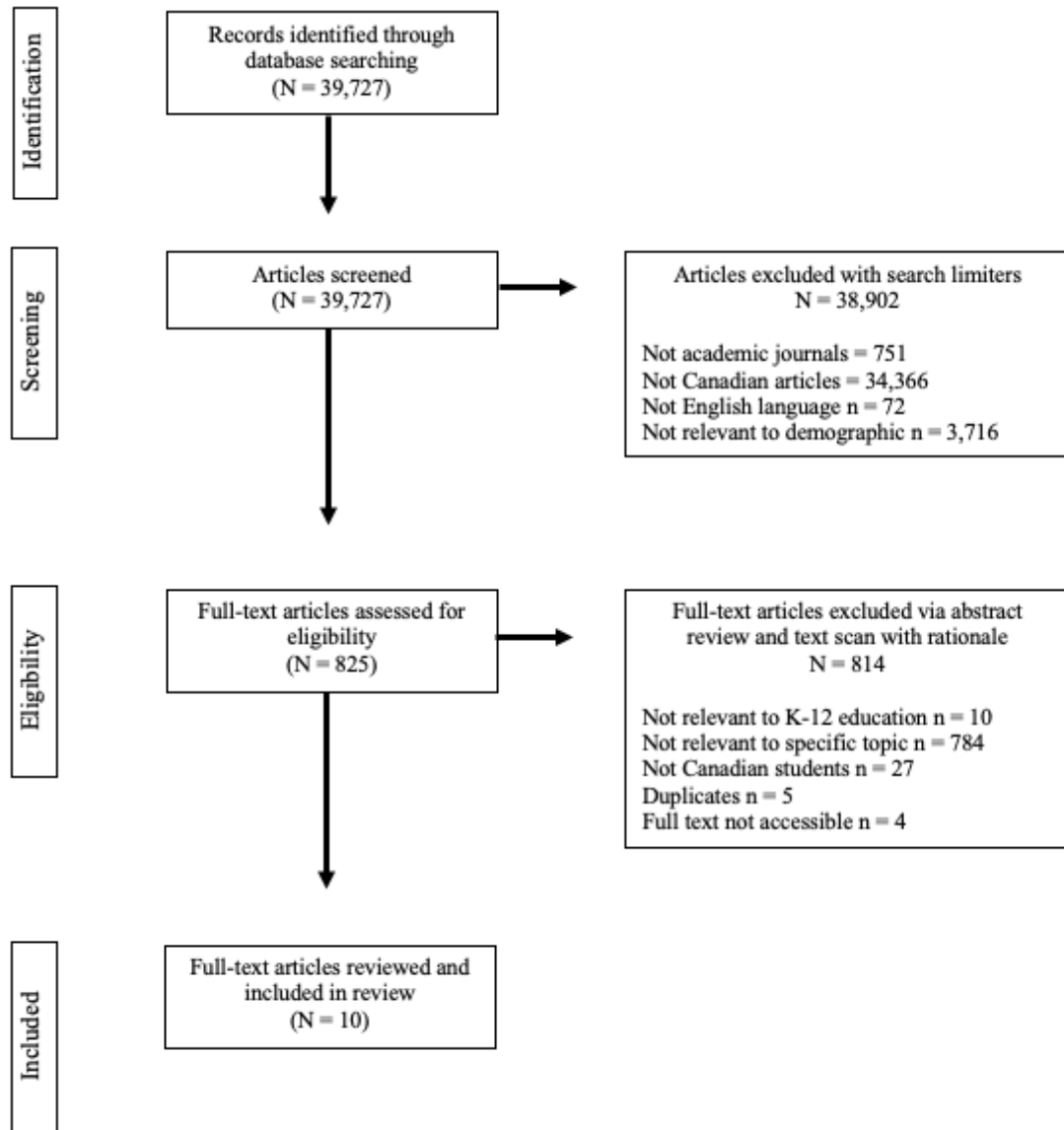
Including these terms in the search strategy were used for a more targeted exploration of studies that may focus on specific elements of SEL and language learning without explicitly using the term ‘Social-Emotional Learning’ or ‘Additional Language Learning’. Search strategy tables specific to each database including specific content, controlled vocabulary and keywords including terminology for the umbrella term of ‘Social-Emotional Learning’ and ‘Additional Language Learning’ can be found in Appendices B to I.

To maintain transparency of the vast database search, the scoping review chapter includes database search tables including each step of the search, the strategy by which the search was conducted (including controlled vocabulary specific to database by use of the thesaurus option within each database), keywords used consistently across each database search, and the number of studies that each step of the searches elicited (see Appendices B to I).

The systematic scoping review process diagram (Figure 1) provides transparency of the literature search, including identification of duplicate articles found in the search, articles included or excluded based on the criteria, and the number of resulting documents that were included in the scoping review.

**Figure 1**

*Systematic Scoping Review Process*



**Data Analysis**

Due to the methodological nature of articles retrieved (see Results below), inductive qualitative thematic coding was conducted to identify themes across articles. A team-based approach involved two investigators throughout the screening process and article review, with one reviewer focusing on an in-depth review of each article for the pertinent themes found. Each

article was reviewed to understand the scope of research on SEL and EAL for school engagement and success for elementary, middle, and high school (K–12) youth within Canadian public schools.

## **Results**

This scoping review cast a broad net in the search process with wide-ranging definitions and keywords used to define SEL and EAL. Despite the vast amount of international research on each SEL and EAL separately, minimal research was found that explicitly examined in what capacity SEL is being taught to EAL learners, specifically students learning English in Canadian public schools. After narrowing the articles to meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria, those that remained were broad in their concepts and study of SEL and EAL. While few of the articles found from the narrowed search explicitly followed a mixed-methods approach with focus on how and to what capacity SEL is being taught to EAL learners in Canadian public schools, many themes around the broad concept of SEL were found within the qualitative studies that focused on instructional approaches for teaching EAL learners in the content area of English, with one article focused on the content area of mathematics instruction.

The findings are presented by themes that were consistently present within the articles:

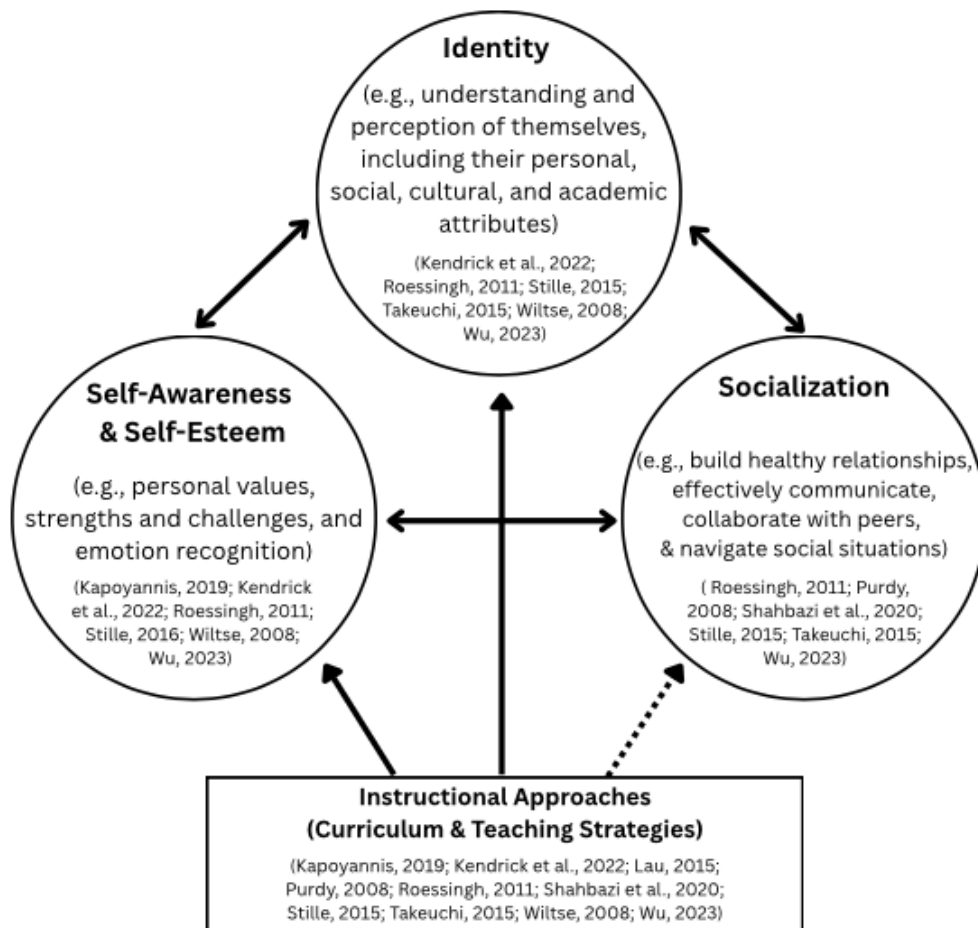
1. identity, specifically a focus on ensuring students were able to share their cultural identity while continuing to develop their identities in their new environments;
2. self-esteem and self-awareness of EAL learners within English Language Arts (ELA) classrooms during their pursuit of learning the English language;
3. socialization with school peers and teachers, specifically the need to learn the required vocabulary to effectively achieve positive social interactions with others and form relationships/friendships; and

4. instructional approaches that teachers can adopt to ensure EAL learners are well supported in the English (language of instruction) classroom, with some practices focused on aspects of SEL.

Figure 2 illustrates the interconnected relations among identity, self-awareness and self-esteem, socialization, and instructional approaches identified through the scoping review on social-emotional learning (SEL) in additional language learning contexts. A thread that connected these four themes was embracing a strengths based multilingual approach to classroom instruction.

**Figure 2**

*Interconnected relationships found among SEL concepts (Identity, Self-awareness & Self-esteem, Socialization) and instructional approaches within additional language learning contexts.*



## Identity

One of the most common themes found within the scoping review literature was the importance of teaching students that their home cultural identity should be celebrated, while encouraging them to maintain a strong self-identity during the development of their evolving identity in their new language and school environment. Many of the articles focused on empowering students and encouraging them to share their cultural backgrounds, multilingual identities, and experiences with classmates and teachers.

There was a common theme of enhancing language and literacy skills among EAL learners with emphasis on the importance of culturally relevant identity-affirming projects (Kapoyannis, 2019; Kendrick et al., 2022; Roessingh, 2011; Stille, 2015). Kapoyannis (2019) presented findings from their qualitative research study that focused on the implementation of a literacy intervention, the *Name Jar Project*, with an emphasis on pride of cultural identity. The focus of this study was to support the cultural and linguistic needs of EAL learners in English, with the aim to affirm 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade EAL learners' identities. While enhancing their vocabulary development, the intervention challenged monocultural and monolingual norms in literacy instruction for EAL learners and provided students with the descriptive vocabulary necessary through a flow of three tiers building upon each other (see Figure 3). Through the sharing of a cultural artifact from their home and the creation of identity texts reflecting their multicultural and multilingual experiences, specifically the story behind the meaning of their name, the students felt empowered and affirmed in their cultural identities (Kapoyannis, 2019). This literacy intervention demonstrated how culturally responsive interventions, grounded in the SEL facet of identity, can enhance engagement, additional language development, and cultural

identity affirmation to equip EAL learners with the appropriate vocabulary to share their feelings and cultural backgrounds while building confidence through a class-wide project.

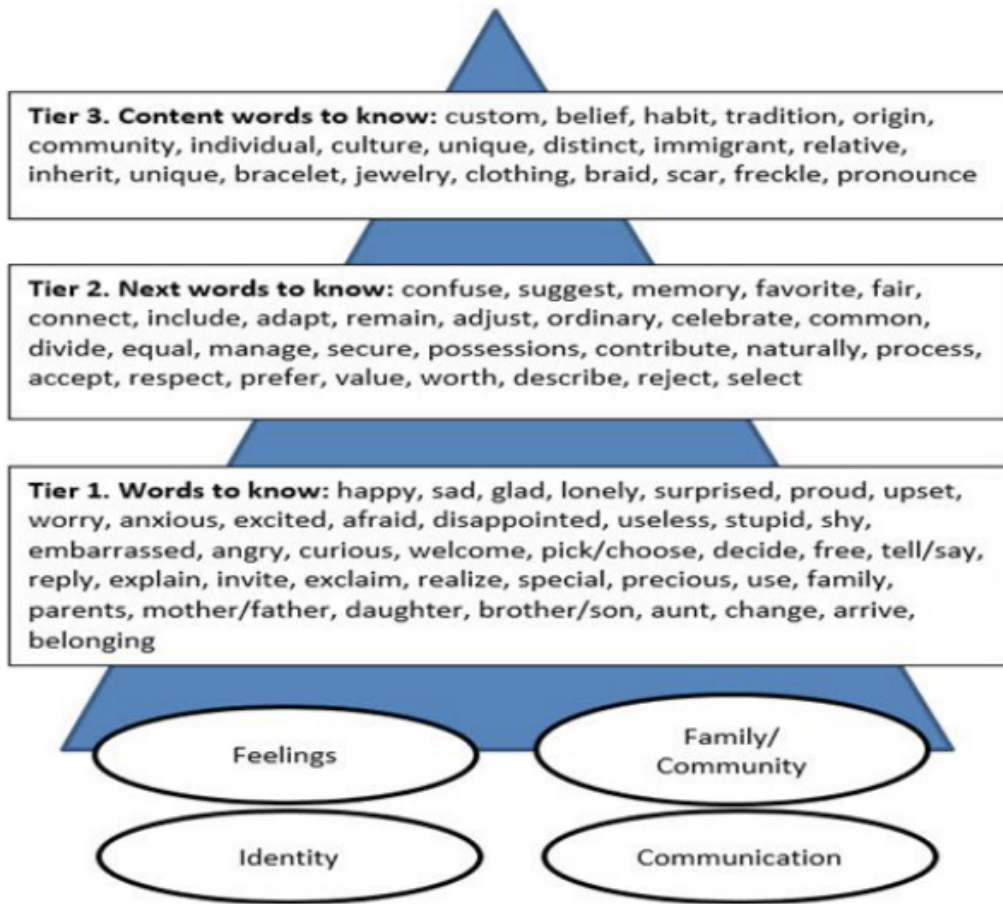


Figure 3. Example of the vocabulary pyramid used in the Name Jar literacy intervention by Kapoyannis (2019), grounded in identity and a culturally responsive approach to vocabulary building with a focus on meaning-making and identity sharing with descriptive words sharing feelings, identity, family/community, and communication.

In their article, Roessingh (2011) highlighted a dual-language book project titled *Family Treasures*, an initiative within an elementary school in Canada that focused on using family artifacts from EAL learners’ home cultures as anchors for their personal narratives. The book project allowed students to feel confident in their identity, and improved their literacy development and socialization, while embracing their multicultural and multilingual abilities (Roessingh, 2011). Teaching EAL learners to embrace and share their heritages allowed them to

strengthen their cultural and self-identities and validated their new dual identities as newcomers and emerging bilinguals, ultimately strengthening their cultural affirmation (Roessingh, 2011).

Identity affirmation was also found through the use of multimodal expression in digital storytelling with language learners from refugee backgrounds within a Canadian secondary school (Kendrick et al., 2022). Kendrick et al. (2022) found that approaching storytelling in a digital format empowered EAL learners to share and effectively articulate the multifaceted memoirs of their personal experiences and cultural identities using multiple modes of representation (e.g., music, writing, pictures). Allowing students to communicate through multimodal expressions led them to feel validated in their personal stories and strengthened their sense of self and cultural identity (Kendrick et al., 2022). Another article that highlighted the importance and effectiveness of storytelling activities in developing EAL learners' identities had students engage in creating personal stories (i.e., identity texts) that allowed them to explore and affirm their cultural identities and personal experiences (Stille, 2015). Many of the narratives found within the identity texts for EAL learners illustrated the pressures that the students felt between their personal cultural identities and expectations of the dominant culture of their Canadian classrooms. This led Stille (2015) to advocate for instructional approaches that recognize and validate students' diverse linguistic and cultural identities in learning environments that are diverse and multilingual.

Within the core SEL competency of self-awareness, identity (e.g., integrating personal and social identities, identifying personal, cultural, and linguistic assets, and identifying one's emotions) is central and consistent across SEL models (CASEL, 2025). As demonstrated within education and EAL literature, identity is important in childhood and adolescence as students navigate the development of their cultural and social-emotional identities (Kapoyannis, 2019;

Kendrick et al., 2022; Roessingh, 2011; Stille, 2015). Mapping the overlap of social-emotional identity and EAL identity is an important step in developing appropriate SEL instruction for EAL students. The focus on identity within the articles described above also highlighted the importance for EAL learners to sustain their home language, while learning English in school. Results from one study demonstrated the effectiveness of learning a new language while maintaining the students' home language, rather than shifting focus solely to the English language learning taking place at school, on students' identity affirmation (Shahbazi et al., 2020). In their qualitative study, Shahbazi et al. (2020) interviewed refugee students from Syria in classrooms at a school in Ontario, Canada to learn about their first-hand experiences in their new school. Students shared that when they were unable to communicate effectively with their teachers, their confidence and emotional stability were greatly impacted, ultimately affecting their ability to develop a stronger sense of self and academic identities in their new school environment (Shahbazi et al., 2020). The students expressed that maintaining their first language (Arabic) was fundamental for their identity and overall self-esteem, allowing them to feel more secure and validated within their new school environment (Shahbazi et al., 2020). Ensuring EAL learners maintain their home language while learning a new language can help children and adolescents feel confident in their identity as it continues to form through development and provide them with the opportunity to thrive in their academic environment.

Within linguistically and culturally diverse Canadian junior high classrooms the intersection of student language learning, identity, and academic performance was explored by Jia et al. (2014) and Wiltse (2008). Wiltse (2008) found contrasting representations of identity, specifically deficit-oriented perspectives from some teachers who described several of their EAL learners as the "in-between crowd", students who were not fluently proficient in English or their

home language. Conversely, the EAL learners in these classrooms had positive views of their bilingualism as multilingual learners, with abilities that made them valuable resources, enhancing their sense of personal pride and affirming their identities (Wiltse, 2008). Ultimately, Wiltse (2008) found that while these students were affirmed in their personal identities as multicultural and multilingual learners, their academic identities were shaped by their teachers' expectations and perceptions of them, demonstrating how negative perceptions from teachers can potentially limit EAL learners' growth of their academic identities, and perhaps eventually their personal identities. For many EAL learners, their identities as multicultural and multilingual students shape their learning experiences, leading to a sense of tension as they try to conserve their cultural identities while attempting to adapt to the academic identities of their new school (Wu, 2023). Chinese international students in a secondary school in Canada, specifically in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades, engaged in critical thinking in intercultural contexts, moving between their cultural backgrounds and the expectations of their new Western educational classrooms, frequently challenging the stereotypical views that portray Chinese students as submissive or uncritical of teachers through their learning process (Wu, 2023). Wu (2023) ultimately argued that the recognition of the cultural, linguistic, and social dimensions of learning for EAL learners are crucial to successfully foster positive identity development in these multilingual and intercultural learners. These articles emphasize the importance of including SEL themes in the classroom that include teaching students the importance of their unique cultural backgrounds and identities, along with the vocabulary necessary to express themselves and their identities. Being cognisant of the potentially detrimental effects that teachers' perceptions and expectations of EAL learners can ultimately have on their concept of personal and academic identity is a crucial

component of children's and adolescents' learning experiences, and social-emotional and identity development.

Acculturation is an important element that was found within the theme of identity. Acculturating to a new culture with a new language is important for students as it has been shown to positively influence students' general well-being, mental health and ability to meaningfully integrate into the school community, leading to a personal sense of belonging (Wilczewski & Alon, 2023). Jia et al. (2014) found in their research, by use of hierarchical regression analyses and controlling for length of residence in Canada, that the degree to which a student was acculturated to Canadian culture was positively associated with their skills and abilities in English literacy. It was found that acculturation explained unique variance which implied the independent and important contribution of sociocultural factors for EAL learners learning to read English (Jia et al., 2014). The sociocultural factors affecting students, in this case adolescent students, can have broad implications for their ability to succeed in reading and other areas of their education. Jia et al. (2014) found a strong relationship between acculturation to the dominant society, in this case Canadian society, and skills in English reading proficiency are related to their ability to immerse themselves into Canadian culture. These findings highlight the need and broad influence of not only identity in one's new culture but also one's success in language learning for academics, as sociocultural variables such as marginalization can inversely influence the acquisition of an additional language.

Results from these articles highlight the social-emotional and academic potential that EAL learners can achieve when they are well supported and encouraged to share their multilingual and multicultural experiences and identities, allowing them to continue to shape their identities in healthy ways in their new school environment.

## **Self-Awareness and Self-Esteem**

While no SEL self-awareness and self-esteem practices were found to be explicitly taught within EAL contexts in the articles found, the themes of self-awareness and self-esteem (recognizing and understanding one's thoughts and emotions, identifying personal values, accurately evaluating personal strengths and challenges, cultivating gratitude and optimism, enhancing mindfulness, and developing confidence and motivation to support overall personal well-being) was found in qualitative results across many of the studies. Additional language learners' self-awareness and self-esteem are partially developed through building confidence through the ability to converse confidently with classmates, teachers, and peers, and can also be taught through establishing a proud sense of self and identity through self and cultural exploration. Pride in oneself and one's cultural background helps students establish confidence and self-esteem to interact with classmates, teachers, and peers, regardless of their ability to speak English.

Several studies touched on the theme of self-awareness, and how self-awareness can develop a heightened level of self-esteem and pride in sharing their stories to become comfortable and confident in the social dynamics of classroom contexts and beyond (Kendrick et al., 2022; Roessingh, 2011; Stille, 2015; Takeuchi, 2015). Through the validation of their personal histories and the opportunity to have autonomy over their narratives and presentations through multimodal expression, secondary students in Kendrick et al.'s (2022) study were empowered through the choice of content and representation in their personal narrative projects. The opportunity to present their digital personal stories to their school and community allowed students to feel pride in affirming their identities, and positive acknowledgement from peers

significantly enhanced their sense of belonging, self-worth, and self-esteem (Kendrick et al., 2022).

Through multilingual activities in the classroom EAL learners can represent their experiences to their classmates and teachers, expressing themselves while feeling a sense of validation of their cultural and multilingual backgrounds (Stille, 2015; Takeuchi, 2015; Wiltse, 2008). Stille (2015) found that activities such as multilingual storytelling positively impacted EAL learners' self-esteem as they were provided with a platform to represent and share their cultural experiences with classmates and teachers. The complexities of self-esteem development were evident within this study, as elements of linguistic and cultural marginalization were present in some classroom exchanges among students, and power dynamics were explored through open discussions of societal issues and challenging topics, such as violence and war (Stille, 2015). Stille (2015)'s findings suggest that appropriate instructional approaches focused on recognizing and validating students' diversity in linguistic and cultural identities can enhance self-esteem in multilingual learning environments. In their research examining the intersection of additional language learning, academic performance, and student identity, Wiltse (2008) found that teacher perceptions of EAL learners' deficits limited students' potential and negatively impacted their self-esteem. Conversely, teachers who recognized and affirmed students' multilingual abilities positively impacted their sense of self-worth, self-esteem, and increased academic motivation (Wiltse, 2008). The relationship between teachers' validation of EAL learners and their multilingual abilities were found to improve students' confidence, self-esteem, and academic engagement was found across several articles in this scoping review (Stille, 2015; Takeuchi, 2015; Wiltse, 2008; Wu, 2023).

Employing an inclusive multilingual approach in elementary math classroom practices was found to improve participation from EAL learners, while supporting their self-esteem and enhancing socialization among students (Takeuchi, 2015). Often connected to higher engagement and participation, students feel frustrated when they know how to do it in their home language but are not yet able to express it in English. While conversely students feel a sense of pride when they can show a skill to their peers. The teacher's validation and appreciation of multilingual and non-verbal contributions from EAL learners during math lessons helped students feel capable and that their contributions were valued. This multilingual appreciation and approach to math lessons nurtured higher levels of self-esteem in EAL learners and helped foster their confidence, which further encouraged their active participation in math discussions (Takeuchi, 2015). Positive teacher praise and affirmation of EAL learners' linguistic and unique insights reinforced the students' self-esteem and sense of belonging in their classroom community (Takeuchi, 2015).

While these articles demonstrate how multilingual activities, and teachers' perceptions and support of multilingual students' abilities, can help to foster growth in EAL learners' self-esteem, no study retrieved demonstrated explicit instruction of SEL in the facet of self-esteem for these students who may struggle with self-worth and self-esteem as new members of a school community, and possibly country, while also learning the language of instruction.

### **Socialization**

Socialization in school is important for all students, but it is particularly important for students learning an additional language in a new school environment, as it helps in a smoother transition into the social setting and learning the language of instruction. For students to feel confident and accepted, they must have the knowledge and opportunity to successfully socialize

with their classmates and peers. Similar to the theme above of self-awareness and -esteem, while no explicit SEL socialization practices were taught in the context of additional language learning in this scoping review, the theme of socialization emerged from the discussion and conclusion sections of many of the studies.

Classroom activities focused on collaboration among students and teachers can help foster socialization for all students, particularly for those learning the language of instruction. Collaborative learning for EAL learners enables them to engage in cooperative classroom activities, such as structured games with a focus on vocabulary learning and semantic mapping, promoting social interactions within language practice (Roessingh, 2011). Roessingh's (2011) article focused on a dual-language book project, *Family Treasures*, and provided young EAL learners with enhanced language and literacy skills along with opportunities for socialization in several domains. *Family Treasures* actively involved families in the storytelling process, providing collaborative learning and socialization by fostering greater school-community engagement. With the inclusion of families in the collaborative learning process, a bridge was formed between home and school divides, facilitating socialization in both domains (Roessingh, 2011). Roessingh (2011) concluded their article by highlighting the power of instructional practices featured in *Family Treasures*, as the strategy effectively leveraged what was described as the 'third space', the intersection of EAL learners' home and school cultures, facilitating meaningful socialization and literacy development in young EAL learners.

To ensure that students can socialize with their peers, they must learn the language of their peers and be taught the vocabulary that can guide them on their journey to socialization to acquire friends and establish social peer groups. Purdy (2008) explored the practices of socialization in classrooms with EAL learners through meaningful conversations focused on

reading texts. This study highlighted Vygotsky's (1986) principle that language and literacy development flourish in social contexts, and with interactions set around texts during small reading groups, EAL learners were provided with social interaction and language development with the necessary social contexts and models (Purdy, 2008). Situated within a Vygotskian framework, Purdy (2008) emphasized social learning contexts and drew on instructional approaches that enhanced comprehension through guided reading sessions, ensuring active participation from EAL learners.

In contrast, social isolation and challenges with peer acceptance and socialization experienced by EAL learners are predominantly due to language barriers, cultural divides, racism, and barriers within the public education system that prevent them from interacting with classmates and peers, largely impacting their classroom and school experiences (Shahbazi et al., 2020; Stille, 2015). Shahbazi et al. (2020) found that the socialization and peer relationships with their Arabic-speaking peers provided the additional language learning students with a protective factor of emotional support and a sense of acceptance. Several studies in this scoping review found that when inclusive practices focused on respecting diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, through activities focused on structured group collaboration and group discussions, they encouraged mutual understanding and alliances among students from all backgrounds within the class, which fostered peer relationships and improved active classroom engagement and socialization (Stille, 2015; Takeuchi, 2015; Wu, 2023). The findings underscore the importance of integrating SEL instruction with EAL learning practices. This ensures learners receive support from both same-language peers and English-speaking classmates in navigating the vocabulary and social expectations within Canadian public schools. Facilitation of structured peer mentor opportunities and inclusive group activities, along with EAL in social settings, could

help with teaching EAL learners the skills needed to facilitate effective socialization in their new school environment.

Without the opportunity to learn how to socialize appropriately, EAL learners may be left to only interact with students and peers who speak the same languages or leave some EAL students to socialize with no classmates at all. The lack of opportunity to learn about and effectively socialize with others could lead to poor mental health and self-esteem challenges that could potentially lead to decreased opportunities for success in their new language and/or school community. These findings highlight the need for more explicit SEL instruction with a focus on teaching healthy communication and skills for improved socialization with classmates to ensure the success of EAL learners both socially and academically.

### **Instructional Approaches**

The final theme that was prevalent in several studies in this scoping review was the focus of ensuring current, new, and pre-service teachers had examples of appropriate and successful instructional approaches for teaching EAL learners. Many articles reviewed emphasized pedagogical approaches that affirmed students' identities and fostered meaningful engagement by allowing them to share their multilingual and multicultural backgrounds in educational and social settings. (Kapoyannis, 2019; Kendrick et al., 2022; Roessingh, 2011; Shahbazi et al., 2020; Stille, 2015).

Several of the instructional approaches focused on teaching EAL learners English, emphasizing that the students can and should continue to communicate in their home language(s) while learning their new language. Ensuring that the students had ample opportunities to share and communicate in their preferred language allowed them to flourish in their classrooms (Takeuchi, 2015; Wiltse, 2008). This approach to classroom instruction was highlighted in many

of the themes mentioned above, including a focus on pride of cultural identity, opportunity for acculturation while maintaining enculturation, and overall allowing the students to develop stronger self-esteem as they were able to feel successes in their EAL. Emphasis was placed on the ability of translanguaging to help students be better able to construct effective meaning from the content while building linguistic proficiencies and bridging their identities, knowledge, and practices from school and home (Kapoyannis, 2019; Kendrick et al., 2022; Roessingh, 2011; Shahbazi et al., 2020; Stille, 2015).

Instructional approaches that focused on conversations around relevant societal topics or specific texts chosen by the teacher were also found (Purdy, 2008; Stille, 2015; Wu, 2023). Student-centred instructional strategies were found to be effective through conversations specific to texts in a content classroom with EAL learners. Teacher-guided reading sessions followed consistent frameworks with focus on appropriate questioning strategies using both closed and open-ended questions to reinforce important vocabulary, understanding, and critical thinking to encourage discussion; explicit vocabulary instruction encouraging expressive discussions around unfamiliar words, expressions, and abstract language; and encouragement of student-driven collaborative discussions to actively participate with peers, fostering deeper engagement and language learning through social interaction with classmates (Purdy, 2008; Stille, 2015; Wu, 2023). Reflexive instructional approaches, in which teachers reflect on their teaching practice during instruction (Shambaugh, 2001), that recognize the cultural, linguistic, and social dimensions of learning, are fundamental to support EAL learners in promoting their critical thinking, and fostering social awareness, positive identity development, self-esteem, and social integration into Canadian classroom environments (Wu, 2023). The combination of structured discussions with explicit instruction in vocabulary and collective talk, with an emphasis on a

culturally sensitive instructional approach, proved to be an effective instructional approach in supporting EAL learners' English language learning and social assimilation into classroom learning communities (Kapoyannis, 2019; Kendrick et al., 2022; Roessingh, 2011; Shahbazi et al., 2020; Stille, 2015).

Utilizing a multimodal approach to literacy instruction, such as through activities focused on the creation of multilingual stories of students' experiences of migration to Canada, also elicited meaningful discussions that allowed students to share and critically engage with their social realities and personal and cultural identities, which in turn helped reinforce their participation and, ultimately, their sense of agency. Advocacy for instructional approaches that acknowledge and validate EAL learners' diverse cultural and linguistic identities and experiences, emphasizing the importance of multimodal classroom approaches that facilitate meaningful engagement with literacy, enhance student self-esteem, foster critical social awareness, and support effective socialization in diverse, multilingual learning environments (Kapoyannis, 2019; Kendrick et al., 2022; Roessingh, 2011; Shahbazi et al., 2020; Stille, 2015).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) aligned with an explicit SEL framework can effectively teach EAL learners the SEL skills and vocabulary necessary to foster the development of their self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal skills (Fenner & Snyder, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2014). This foundation in SEL can help to support their social, emotional, and academic success in classroom environments. Enhancing students' social-emotional skills can improve behaviours, attitudes, peer relationships, and school functioning for EAL learners that may otherwise be struggling to find their way in a new school language and environment (Fenner & Snyder, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 2014). It is clear from the scoping review that research on SEL in EAL learning in Canadian public schools is greatly lacking, and

explicit instructional practices on SEL for EAL learners in public schools within Canadian society are negligible.

## **Discussion**

### **Navigating the Complexities of SEL in Canadian School Curricula**

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) represents an extensive array of competencies encompassing how students feel, think, and interact with others. In educational research, however, definitions and terminology commonly change, causing it to be more challenging to accurately capture what SEL entails as enacted in public education. Concepts and key terms widely implemented today were likely framed differently in previous years. Additionally, educators and researchers might regularly teach or study core SEL components, such as empathy and emotion regulation, without explicitly classifying these as components of ‘SEL’. This inconsistency reflects the interdisciplinary roots of SEL and the often-fragmented ways in which educational practices evolve over time across provinces and territories (Hall, 2024). This lack of conceptual clarity creates notable challenges when reviewing the existing literature. From the evidence found in this scoping review, with many of the ten studies reviewed being from researchers in applied linguistics and no educational psychologists venturing into the area of language learning in a K-12 classroom, it is evident that there is a gap between SEL and EAL fields of study. There needs to be more communication and connection between the fields to ensure that students are supported in culturally responsive ways for their language learning success and overall social-emotional development.

These complexities become even more pronounced in classrooms that focus on EAL learning. Students learning a new language do not simply face linguistic challenges; they simultaneously navigate unfamiliar cultural and emotional environments. Explicitly teaching

SEL effectively in these contexts means instructing students how to interpret social signals and articulate emotions in the language of instruction, skills they might naturally grasp in their home language(s) but require scaffolded support when using the language of instruction. Additionally, cultural norms surrounding emotional expression often differ significantly, requiring educators to employ instructional strategies that are culturally responsive and meaningfully connect SEL content with EAL learners' unique linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Meland & Brion-Meisels, 2024).

Educators must scaffold necessary language (e.g., key phrases, vocabulary, and/or grammar structures) alongside the nuanced cultural aspects of social interactions (e.g., raising hands, apologizing, or politely disagreeing). This dual-layered instructional approach intensifies the cognitive demands of students, who must simultaneously decode new social-emotional concepts through a developing linguistic skill set. This process is closely related to Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), a theory proposed by Cummins (1979), that emphasizes how advanced thinking skills, including critical thinking or ethical reasoning, intertwine with language development. CALP is characterized by multifaceted vocabulary and sentence structures derived from Latin and Greek origins. In contrast, Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) mainly originate from Anglo-Saxon roots, containing irregular spellings and words typical of everyday spoken English. Unlike BICS, CALP requires explicit and systematic instruction; Canadian-born students typically gradually acquire CALP through scaffolded instruction across multiple grades. However, EAL learners must acquire these academic language skills at an accelerated pace to close the proficiency gap. While learners can typically develop BICS within one to three years, often appearing conversationally fluent, mastery of CALP usually requires five to nine years, with some students never achieving full

proficiency (Cummins, 1979). Thus, educators must weave culturally responsive SEL pedagogy into explicit academic language instruction to better equip EAL learners with the appropriate cognitive and linguistic skills needed to participate thoroughly and thoughtfully in all areas of the school environment.

Implementing SEL in EAL classrooms is a culturally embedded practice that requires thoughtfully tailored and explicit instruction. Embedding SEL within a culturally responsive framework transforms it from a broad skills program into a relational practice that honours students' cultural backgrounds and linguistic assets. When educators intentionally draw on language learners' home languages, cultural values and traditions as means for exploring self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, they foster learning spaces in which interpersonal norms and emotional expression are contextualized rather than standardized. These classroom environments invite students to articulate feelings in multiple languages and analyze conflicts through culturally grounded perspectives. Following a synthesis of CRP and SEL can help students develop their academic language learning while fostering identity affirmation and nurturing belonging. Educators need increased awareness of the SEL needs among language learners, improved explicit curriculum outcomes, and lessons that foster both social-emotional intelligence and language acquisition. Recognizing and adapting to the varied terminologies and conceptual frameworks across the broader SEL literature remains crucial to effectively support students at this intersection of cognitive, emotional, and linguistic growth.

### **Navigating Complexities in Reviewing SEL and EAL Literature**

This scoping review highlighted significant challenges in sorting through the extensive yet often fragmented research on SEL, especially as it intersects with EAL. Many articles

identified during the search process neither clearly fit within the strict inclusion criteria nor distinctly addressed the core objective, providing actionable insights for effectively implementing SEL in EAL contexts in Canadian public schools. The variance in terminology and keywords between the two domains of psychology and applied linguistics proved to be vaster and more distant than originally anticipated. Such challenges are typical in interdisciplinary research; it is essential to strike a balance between comprehensiveness and specificity without losing focus on clarity.

An example of how these two disciplines work in silos of domain-specific language and definitions is that of describing language learners. The terms used in the database searches to describe language learners included: ‘additional language learn\*’, ‘English (second language)’, ‘English as a foreign language’, ‘English as a second language’, ‘English as an additional language’ to name a few. As a trained teacher, the vocabulary used by the primary researcher in this scoping review to find language learning search terms were not up to date with current applied linguistics research. Rather, they followed closely with curriculum and policy documents used within current public school systems. Journal database thesauruses were used to narrow language learning terminology for this search. Research on plurilingualism and plurilingual learners seems to be years ahead of the curriculum and policy documents used in Canadian public school systems today, resulting in some limited terms used within this search. Consequently, articles may have been missing in the search. Within the last five years of research, since movements such as Black Lives Matter, there has been a divergence in how the target population of language learners are described with focus to highlight the diversity of equity-seeking populations that experience racism. Some potential terms used for language learning that were missed in the database searches include: ‘multilingual learner’,

‘multilingualism’, ‘multilingual’; ‘bilingual’ or ‘bilingualism’; ‘plurilingual’ or ‘plurilingualism’; ‘linguistically diverse’; or ‘newcomer’, ‘migrant’, ‘immigrant’, ‘refugee’ or ‘asylum seeker’. For instance, in their recent work Van Viegen and Zappa-Hollman (2019) and Van Viegen and Man Chu Lau (2020) used terms such as ‘plurilingual’, ‘plurilingualism’, and ‘linguistically diverse’ to describe this population of students. Despite the efforts to employ a comprehensive database-driven search strategy (utilizing database thesauruses for key search terms), three pertinent publications, Cummins et al. (2012), Geres (2019), and Lotherington and Eamer (2008), were not captured for two potential methodological reasons. First, the search sequences were anchored in explicit SEL terminology (e.g., ‘self-awareness’, ‘emotion regulation’, ‘SEL’) to maintain conceptual clarity, though scholars within the applied linguistics field frequently frame parallel constructs through critical or sociocultural lenses using descriptors such as ‘agency’, ‘identity’, ‘motivation’, or ‘socialization’. Because these alternative terms did not always co-occur with core SEL keywords in titles, abstracts, or subject headings, potentially relevant studies were inadvertently filtered out using the current review’s inclusion and exclusion criteria. Second, the current review excluded edited volumes and handbooks to focus on peer-reviewed journal articles, a decision that further limited the retrieval of work by authors such as Lotherington, whose identity-text research is often published in Routledge handbooks and similar compilations, not peer-reviewed journals. Together, these disciplinary terminology differences and publication-type exclusions may explain why these significant contributions to research in this field did not appear in the final searches of the scoping review.

As a field, SEL exemplifies these difficulties in terminology. Often treated as an umbrella term, writers of SEL programs and curricula seem to intend to group critical ideas from developmental psychology into practical strategies that educators can apply readily. While

bridging theory and classroom practice are beneficial, oversimplification is a risk. The broad set of skills often classified as SEL, ranging from cognitive aspects such as working memory and impulse control to emotional interpersonal competencies such as empathy and conflict management, does not always neatly fit within a single unified framework. Additionally, these skills are frequently taught without adequate attention to their cultural appropriateness or the specific needs of linguistically diverse learners, despite the highly context-sensitive nature of SEL.

Adding complexity to this issue, most educators lack formal training in CRP and developmental psychology, leaving them ill-equipped to critically evaluate whether SEL curricula are culturally responsive or developmentally suitable for their students. Consequently, SEL efforts often prioritize broad appeal and ease of adoption over precise definitions or deeper understanding. However, even within these frameworks, explicit consideration of EAL learners remains scarce and is often only briefly addressed or framed primarily in crisis-response situations (INEE, 2020).

Despite these challenges, it is important to not dismiss the existing literature simply because it does not align neatly with the goals of this scoping review. Within the broad SEL landscape, emerging niches are relevant to EAL learners. Rather than a definitive blueprint, this review presents a patchwork of overlapping ideas and goals, revealing scattered intersections where the SEL and language learning literature converge. Examples include studies that explore emotion regulation among immigrant youth or language learning research highlighting the significance of self-efficacy and feelings of belonging in the process of language development.

## **Implications**

The results of this scoping review are intended to guide the next steps in research on the topic of SEL in EAL. The diverse academic needs of EAL learners can be challenging and at times overwhelming for their classrooms and EAL teachers. Therefore, policies should focus on the following: (1) training for both pre-service and in-service teachers to support the social-emotional needs of EAL learners; (2) teams of teachers and school staff working together for student success; (3) ensuring that SEL frameworks have language built into them that values linguistic and cultural diversity; and (4) having research that explicitly links SEL to instruction supporting multilingual learners. This approach will better equip educational professionals to create a supportive and nurturing environment for the diverse needs of their students. Results of this scoping review intend to inform professionals in the education field of recommendations of SEL instructional best practices and approaches with a focus on specific themes of SEL when considering educational strategies in teaching EAL learners to ensure academic and social success for all students.

### **Implications for School Psychologists**

#### ***MTSS Tier 1 Support for Students***

Effective and explicit SEL is highly relevant to EAL learning in the context of school psychology. Supporting the development of emotion regulation, social awareness, and interpersonal communication for all students in ways that are inclusive of EAL learners can support language learning, identity formation, and positive social interactions within diverse classroom settings. For school psychologists, SEL curricula offer a framework to support the social-emotional needs of language learners who may face unique challenges such as cultural adaptation, identity development, and potential stressors related to navigating a new language

and social environment. School psychologists can help create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment promoting well-being, resilience, and a sense of belonging among EAL learners, providing them with opportunities to socialize and feel supported and integrated into Canadian public schools. As this scoping review demonstrated, there is a lack of opportunity for these students to explicitly learn necessary SEL skills and strategies to succeed. School psychologists can offer support to students, through operationally defined and evidence-based SEL curricula that is developmentally appropriate and feasible, and coaching/professional consultation to teachers to help support individual and class wide SEL.

Exploring the intersection of SEL and EAL learning in Canadian public schools reveals several important implications and shortcomings particularly relevant for school psychologists implementing universal or Tier 1 supports within the MTSS framework. Given Canada's increasingly multilingual and multicultural student population, school psychologists play an essential role in helping schools and educators implement SEL programs and curricula that meaningfully include all learners, especially those acquiring English as an additional language.

A main consideration at the universal Tier 1 level involves ensuring that SEL curricula reflect diverse cultural experiences and languages represented within multilingual and multicultural classrooms in Canada with appropriate cultural humility. When SEL programs overlook students' diverse backgrounds, there is a risk of potentially isolating multilingual students possibly limiting their engagement and sense of belonging in classrooms, schools, and communities. School psychologists can assist educators by critically examining existing SEL practices for EAL learners, or lack thereof, suggesting culturally responsive adaptations including the incorporation of diverse narratives, culturally familiar scenarios, or inclusive

multilingual approaches that could resonate more strongly with students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Further implications involve the active fostering of inclusive emotionally supportive school environments for all students, regardless of their English language ability or exposure. Students navigating the complex process of learning an additional language together with developing social relationships rely heavily on feeling accepted and safe within the broader school community. In collaboration with teachers and administrators, school psychologists can help to inform and support universal school-wide initiatives that foster positive social interactions, empathy development, and intercultural understanding for all students. Professional development sessions, led by school psychologists, on topics such as trauma-informed practice, culturally responsive teaching practices, and how to effectively support the needs of EAL learners, are crucial to ensuring that educators' capacities are enriched to meet the diverse social-emotional needs of EAL learners.

Language accessibility in SEL activities is a critical challenge for EAL learners in English classrooms. Traditional SEL methods frequently emphasize verbal communication through discussions or reflective journaling, potentially disadvantaging students in the process of learning important English vocabulary, communication, and fluency. Recognizing this challenge, school psychologists can help teachers adapt their instructional approaches by suggesting non-verbal, multimodal, or visually supported activities, such as role-playing exercises, reflective drawings or artwork, reading multilingual stories, or collaboration through group activities that require less language proficiency and focus more on experiential learning.

Engaging the families of multilingual students meaningfully in SEL initiatives is another fundamental role for school psychologists. Effective family engagement requires culturally

sensitive communication strategies that acknowledge and respect diverse perspectives on emotional development and interpersonal relationships. School psychologists can assist schools in this area by advocating for the use of multilingual communication materials or collaborating with community liaisons who are familiar with families' cultural values, languages, and practices.

By advocating for culturally relevant curricula, facilitating emotionally supportive learning environments, addressing language accessibility issues, and promoting meaningful family engagement, school psychologists can help ensure that SEL practices are inclusive and beneficial for multilingual learners across diverse Canadian public school contexts.

### ***MTSS Tier 2 and 3 Support for Students***

With the limited explicit instruction in SEL for students of all language levels and abilities, we must consider other options for EAL learning students to receive this instruction that could benefit them at social-emotional and academic levels with skills to manage their emotions, build healthy relationships, and make responsible decisions (Greenberg et al., 2017). SEL for EAL learners within the Canadian public school system must be considered at more targeted levels, specifically Tiers 2 and 3, where school psychologists address more specific and individualized needs that universal practices alone may not sufficiently provide and support.

At the Tier 2 level, the primary focus for school psychologists involves identifying EAL learners who display current or emerging social-emotional challenges. Students who are new to the Canadian public school system may be particularly vulnerable to mental health challenges such as social withdrawal, anxiety, or frustration with academics, potential limitations in peer connections and socialization, and linguistic barriers (Barba et al., 2019). Refugee youth are likely to have experienced significant social and emotional trauma during their transition from

their home country to Canada (Crooks et al., 2020), which could have significant impacts on refugee youths' mental health and academic success (Wong & Schweitzer, 2017). School psychologists can contribute to helping these students by facilitating small-group interventions designed to support them. Small-group interventions should focus on building social skills, developing coping strategies, and enhancing emotional literacy while ensuring sensitivity to EAL learners' cultural backgrounds and language proficiency levels. Small-group interventions around SEL should also include instruction focused explicitly on emotion recognition and regulation through non-verbal or minimally verbal approaches to ensure accessibility and inclusion of students of all ages and language proficiency levels.

Additionally, school psychologists working with EAL learners at the Tier 2 level should work in collaboration with teachers and school staff to ensure ongoing progress monitoring of the effectiveness of the targeted interventions. By assisting educators in using culturally responsive observational methods, school psychologists can help ensure the accurate assessment of EAL learners' progress with SEL interventions. Early and consistent progress monitoring at the Tier 2 level of MTSS ensures that any adjustments needed for the intervention can be made in a timely manner, preventing students from requiring more intensive supports later. A data driven approach to the groups, with the collection of quality data for progress monitoring, can ensure that the students who need more targeted instruction in specific areas will be able to receive that explicit instruction at the Tier 3 level.

As this scoping review has shown, there is limited research on SEL opportunities for EAL learners in the Canadian public school system; therefore, when considering interventions at the Tier 3 level, they need to be more individualized to the student with consideration of what they have already learned. At this tier, school psychologists must focus on assessment and

intervention with students whose social-emotional challenges significantly interfere with their academic or social integration in their school environment. EAL learners, namely refugees or asylum seekers, may have factors such as chronic stress due to migration-related trauma, language isolation, or educational disruptions may underlie more intense social-emotional and behavioural needs (Crooks et al., 2020). Taking this into consideration is important for school psychologists to ensure they approach assessment and interventions with cultural and trauma-informed sensitivity, with evidence-informed practices specific to the individual needs of the student.

The role of school psychologists at the Tier 2 and 3 levels in supporting EAL learners within SEL frameworks involves targeted identification of needs, culturally responsive assessment practices, and thoughtfully designed small-group and individual interventions. Through intentional intervention practices addressing students' complex social-emotional needs during their additional language learning and cultural adjustment to their schools and communities, school psychologists can help enhance both the emotional well-being and academic success of EAL learners in Canadian public schools.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

These findings should be considered in the context of the study's limitations. First, this scoping review had inclusion criteria specific to EAL and SEL within English schools in Canada, with a focus on grades K–12. A further limitation of this study is the methodology of a scoping review, as scoping reviews do not involve assessing the quality of evidence in the identified studies; rather, the primary purpose of this study was to outline and describe the existing research within Canada on this specific topic (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). As was evident in the systematic scoping review process diagram (see Figure 1), limiting the inclusion criteria in the

search led to the exclusion of many articles to meet the specific research questions posed in this scoping review. While this approach made sense for this study based on the focus of the research questions, broadening the inclusion criteria could provide more articles specific to the topic of SEL in EAL in education (i.e., inclusion of articles from the United States, inclusion of university student populations, Non-Government Organizations). A second limitation was the exclusion of studies focused on French as an Additional Language (FAL) learning. Many studies focused on FAL learning were programs offered as an opportunity for Canadian-born English-speaking students to pursue a second language to enhance their educational opportunities, rather than by necessity, as many immigrant and refugee students in EAL are learning English to acculturate and succeed in their new school and community environments.

Limitations and insights from the current study demonstrate that there is a clear divide in language barriers within research, with differing vocabulary between articles focused on the psychological domain of SEL and those following the educational domain of EAL touching on elements of SEL. It is important for future research to narrow the SEL framework language, focusing on translational work, choosing the most useful and culturally relevant SEL terms, and diminishing SEL terminology with a focus on enhancing EAL terms used in current and past research. The findings and insights from the current study will shape and inform the next steps of this research on SEL within EAL learning in the Canadian public school landscape.

Future directions should include increased Canadian research into how SEL is being implemented in schools for EAL learners, with a focus on mixed-method studies that provide qualitative and quantitative research results demonstrating both SEL implementation and associated effects on students' learning, belongingness, well-being and other developmentally and culturally relevant outcomes. Including research on language learning groups in community

settings could also be a beneficial consideration for future research as many multilingual learners who fall through the cracks of public education spend time within these settings. Many community service groups provide learning programs that meet the acculturation and language learning needs foundational to succeeding in the public education system. A promising approach for future research is to carefully map the lived experiences and specific needs identified in the literature on EAL learners onto the most clearly defined and teachable SEL competencies. Instead of attempting to integrate entire SEL frameworks into language learning classrooms indiscriminately, educators can strategically select aspects of SEL that resonate closely with the developmental, linguistic, and cultural contexts of students. Selective integration could focus on practical areas, such as enhancing students' emotional vocabulary, strengthening self-awareness, fostering perspective-taking, and supporting collaborative peer interactions, which are particularly crucial for learners to adjust to new languages and cultural environments.

Although SEL as a broad discipline currently lacks unified cohesion, it possesses momentum and valuable potential. Increasingly, researchers and educators have acknowledged the necessity of adapting SEL strategies to better serve diverse student populations. A critical task for future research is to translate this awareness into meaningful practices grounded in students' cultural and contextual realities. This scoping review contributes to this goal by identifying both the existing gaps and promising themes at the intersection of SEL and EAL in Canadian public education.

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## Appendix B: ERIC (EBSCO) Database Search Strategy

Concept	Controlled Vocab	Keywords
<b>Additional Language Learners (ALL)</b>	language minorities English language learners English (second language) second language instruction second languages second language learning second language programs limited English speaking	“additional language learn*” “English (second language)” “English as a foreign language” “English as a second language” “English as a second language instruction” “English as an additional language” “English language education” “English language education for foreign speakers in elementary school*” “English language education for foreign speakers in middle school*” “English language education for foreign speakers in high school*” “English language education for foreign speakers in secondary school*” “English language learn*” “foreign language education” “foreign language education in elementary schools” “foreign language education in middle schools” “foreign language education in high schools” “foreign language education in secondary schools” “foreign language learn*” “second language*” “second language acquisition” “second language instruction” “second language learn*” “second language program*” “language minorities” “limited English speaking”
<b>Social Emotional Learning (SEL)</b>	social-emotional learning socialization content and language integrated learning	“attention* control” “behav* regulation” “civic value*” “cognitive flexibility” “conflict resolution” “content and language”

		<p> “cooperative behav*”  “critical thinking”  “emotion* development”  “emotion* expression”  “emotion* knowledge”  “emotion* regulation”  empathy  enthusiasm  “ethical values”  gratitude  “growth mindset”  identity  “inhibitory control”  “integrated learning”  “intellectual values”  optimism  openness  “performance values”  “perspective taking”  “planning skills”  “problem solving”  “prosocial behav*”  purpose  “relationship skills”  “responsible decision making”  “self-awareness”  “self-efficacy”  “self-esteem”  “self-knowledge”  “self-management”  “social and emotional learning”  “social awareness”  “social emotional learning”  “social emotional development”  “social functions of language”  “social learning”  “social problem solving”  socialization  “understanding social cues”  “working memory” </p>
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### Appendix C: ERIC (EBSCO) Database Search Results

Search	Strategy	Results
S1	(DE “English (Second Language)” OR DE “Second Languages” OR DE “English Language Learners” OR DE “Second Language Instruction” OR DE “Second Language Learning” OR DE “Second Language Programs” OR DE “Limited English Speaking” OR DE “Language Minorities”)	64,381
S2	(TI “additional language learn*” OR “English (second language)” OR “English as a foreign language” OR “English as a second language” OR “English as a second language instruction” OR “English as an additional language” OR “English language education” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in elementary school*” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in middle school*” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in high school*” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in secondary school*” OR “English language learn*” OR “foreign language education” OR “foreign language education in elementary schools” OR “foreign language education in middle schools” OR “foreign language education in high schools” OR “foreign language education in secondary schools” OR “foreign language learn*” OR “second language*” OR “second language acquisition” OR “second language instruction” OR “second language learn*” OR “second language program*” OR “language minorities” OR “limited English speaking”)	6,388
S3	(AB “additional language learn*” OR “English (second language)” OR “English as a foreign language” OR “English as a second language” OR “English as a second language instruction” OR “English as an additional language” OR “English language education” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in elementary school*” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in middle school*” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in high school*” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in secondary school*” OR “English language learn*” OR “foreign language education” OR “foreign language education in elementary schools” OR “foreign language education in middle schools” OR “foreign language education in high schools” OR “foreign language education in secondary schools” OR “foreign language learn*” OR “second language*” OR “second language acquisition” OR “second language instruction” OR “second language learn*” OR “second language program*” OR “language minorities” OR “limited English speaking”)	21,834
S4	S1 OR S2 OR S3 = concept Additional Language Learners (ALL)	65,255
S5	(DE “Social Emotional Learning” OR DE “Socialization” OR DE “Content and Language Integrated Learning”)	7,526
S6	(TI “attention* control” OR “behav* regulation” OR “civic value*” OR “cognitive flexibility” OR “conflict resolution” OR “content and language” OR “cooperative behav*” OR “critical thinking” OR	32,624

	“emotion* development” OR “emotion* expression” OR “emotion* knowledge” OR “emotion* regulation” OR empathy OR enthusiasm OR “ethical values” OR gratitude OR “growth mindset” OR identity OR “inhibitory control” OR “integrated learning” OR “intellectual values” OR optimism OR openness OR “performance values” OR “perspective taking” OR “planning skills” OR “problem solving” OR “prosocial behav*” OR purpose OR “relationship skills” OR “responsible decision making” OR “self-awareness” OR “self-efficacy” OR “self-esteem” OR “self-knowledge” OR “self-management” OR “social and emotional learning” OR “social awareness” OR “social emotional learning” OR “social emotional development” OR “social functions of language” OR “social learning” OR “social problem solving” OR socialization OR “understanding social cues” OR “working memory”)	
S7	(AB “attention* control” OR “behav* regulation” OR “civic value*” OR “cognitive flexibility” OR “conflict resolution” OR “content and language” OR “cooperative behav*” OR “critical thinking” OR “emotion* development” OR “emotion* expression” OR “emotion* knowledge” OR “emotion* regulation” OR empathy OR enthusiasm OR “ethical values” OR gratitude OR “growth mindset” OR identity OR “inhibitory control” OR “integrated learning” OR “intellectual values” OR optimism OR openness OR “performance values” OR “perspective taking” OR “planning skills” OR “problem solving” OR “prosocial behav*” OR purpose OR “relationship skills” OR “responsible decision making” OR “self-awareness” OR “self-efficacy” OR “self-esteem” OR “self-knowledge” OR “self-management” OR “social and emotional learning” OR “social awareness” OR “social emotional learning” OR “social emotional development” OR “social functions of language” OR “social learning” OR “social problem solving” OR socialization OR “understanding social cues” OR “working memory”)	181,411
S8	S5 OR S6 OR S7 = concept Social Emotional Learning (SEL)	185,948
S9	S4 AND S8 = concept ALL AND SEL	15,733
S10	Search to include only Academic Journals	15,049
S11	Search to include only Canadian text	410
S12	Search to include only text written in English	409

## Appendix D: Education Research Complete (EBSCO) Database Search Strategy

Concept	Controlled Vocab	Keywords
<b>Additional Language Learners (ALL)</b>	ENGLISH as a foreign language FOREIGN language education FOREIGN language education In elementary schools SECOND language acquisition ENGLISH language education for foreign speakers in elementary schools ENGLISH language education for foreign speakers in middle schools ENGLISH language education	“additional language learn*” “English (second language)” “English as a foreign language” “English as a second language” “English as a second language instruction” “English as an additional language” “English language education” “English language education for foreign speakers in elementary school*” “English language education for foreign speakers in middle school*” “English language education for foreign speakers in high school*” “English language education for foreign speakers in secondary school*” “English language learn*” “foreign language education” “foreign language education in elementary schools” “foreign language education in middle schools” “foreign language education in high schools” “foreign language education in secondary schools” “foreign language learn*” “second language*” “second language acquisition” “second language instruction” “second language learn*” “second language program*” “language minorities” “limited English speaking”
<b>Social Emotional Learning (SEL)</b>	SOCIAL learning	“attention* control” “behav* regulation” “civic value*” “cognitive flexibility”

		<p> “conflict resolution”  “content and language”  “cooperative behav*”  “critical thinking”  “emotion* development”  “emotion* expression”  “emotion* knowledge”  “emotion* regulation”  empathy  enthusiasm  “ethical values”  gratitude  “growth mindset”  identity  “inhibitory control”  “integrated learning”  “intellectual values”  optimism  openness  “performance values”  “perspective taking”  “planning skills”  “problem solving”  “prosocial behav*”  purpose  “relationship skills”  “responsible decision making”  “self-awareness”  “self-efficacy”  “self-esteem”  “self-knowledge”  “self-management”  “social and emotional learning”  “social awareness”  “social emotional learning”  “social emotional development”  “social functions of language”  “social learning”  “social problem solving”  socialization  “understanding social cues”  “working memory” </p>
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**Appendix E: Education Research Complete (EBSCO) Database Search Results**

<b>Search</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Results</b>
S1	((DE “ENGLISH as a foreign language”) OR (DE “FOREIGN language education” OR DE “FOREIGN language education in elementary schools”)) OR (DE “SECOND language acquisition”)) OR (DE “ENGLISH language education for foreign speakers in elementary schools”)	36,670
S2	(TI “additional language learn*” OR “English (second language)” OR “English as a foreign language” OR “English as a second language” OR “English as a second language instruction” OR “English as an additional language” OR “English language education” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in elementary school*” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in middle school*” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in high school*” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in secondary school*” OR “English language learn*” OR “foreign language education” OR “foreign language education in elementary schools” OR “foreign language education in middle schools” OR “foreign language education in high schools” OR “foreign language education in secondary schools” OR “foreign language learn*” OR “second language*” OR “second language acquisition” OR “second language instruction” OR “second language learn*” OR “second language program*” OR “language minorities” OR “limited English speaking”)	8,102
S3	(AB “additional language learn*” OR “English (second language)” OR “English as a foreign language” OR “English as a second language” OR “English as a second language instruction” OR “English as an additional language” OR “English language education” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in elementary school*” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in middle school*” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in high school*” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in secondary school*” OR “English language learn*” OR “foreign language education” OR “foreign language education in elementary schools” OR “foreign language education in middle schools” OR “foreign language education in high schools” OR “foreign language education in secondary schools” OR “foreign language learn*” OR “second language*” OR “second language acquisition” OR “second language instruction” OR “second language learn*” OR “second language program*” OR “language minorities” OR “limited English speaking”)	26,479
S4	(searches 1, 2, + 3 together with OR) S1 OR S2 OR S3 = concept Additional Language Learners (ALL)	47,300
S5	(DE “SOCIAL learning”)	3,497
S6	(TI “attention* control” OR “behav* regulation” OR “civic value*” OR “cognitive flexibility” OR “conflict resolution” OR “content and language” OR “cooperative behav*” OR “critical thinking” OR	55,203

	“emotion* development” OR “emotion* expression” OR “emotion* knowledge” OR “emotion* regulation” OR empathy OR enthusiasm OR “ethical values” OR gratitude OR “growth mindset” OR identity OR “inhibitory control” OR “integrated learning” OR “intellectual values” OR optimism OR openness OR “performance values” OR “perspective taking” OR “planning skills” OR “problem solving” OR “prosocial behav*” OR purpose OR “relationship skills” OR “responsible decision making” OR “self-awareness” OR “self-efficacy” OR “self-esteem” OR “self-knowledge” OR “self-management” OR “social and emotional learning” OR “social awareness” OR “social emotional learning” OR “social emotional development” OR “social functions of language” OR “social learning” OR “social problem solving” OR socialization OR “understanding social cues” OR “working memory”)	
S7	(AB “attention* control” OR “behav* regulation” OR “civic value*” OR “cognitive flexibility” OR “conflict resolution” OR “content and language” OR “cooperative behav*” OR “critical thinking” OR “emotion* development” OR “emotion* expression” OR “emotion* knowledge” OR “emotion* regulation” OR empathy OR enthusiasm OR “ethical values” OR gratitude OR “growth mindset” OR identity OR “inhibitory control” OR “integrated learning” OR “intellectual values” OR optimism OR openness OR “performance values” OR “perspective taking” OR “planning skills” OR “problem solving” OR “prosocial behav*” OR purpose OR “relationship skills” OR “responsible decision making” OR “self-awareness” OR “self-efficacy” OR “self-esteem” OR “self-knowledge” OR “self-management” OR “social and emotional learning” OR “social awareness” OR “social emotional learning” OR “social emotional development” OR “social functions of language” OR “social learning” OR “social problem solving” OR socialization OR “understanding social cues” OR “working memory”)	309,137
S8	S5 OR S6 OR S7 = concept Social Emotional Learning (SEL)	317,091
S9	S4 AND S8 = concept ALL AND SEL	9,720
S10	Search to include only Academic Journals	9,672
S11	Search to include only Canadian text	75
S12	Search to include only text written in English	74
S13	After review of abstract & keywords relevant to topic	30

**Appendix F: LLBA (ProQuest) Database Search Strategy**

<b>Concept</b>	<b>Controlled Vocab</b>	<b>Keywords</b>
<b>Additional Language Learners (ALL)</b>	English as a second language English language learners Second language learning English as a second language instruction	“additional language learn*” “English (second language)” “English as a foreign language” “English as a second language” “English as a second language instruction” “English as an additional language” “English language education” “English language education for foreign speakers in elementary school*” “English language education for foreign speakers in middle school*” “English language education for foreign speakers in high school*” “English language education for foreign speakers in secondary school*” “English language learn*” “foreign language education” “foreign language education in elementary schools” “foreign language education in middle schools” “foreign language education in high schools” “foreign language education in secondary schools” “foreign language learn*” “second language*” “second language acquisition” “second language instruction” “second language learn*” “second language program*” “language minorities” “limited English speaking”
<b>Social Emotional Learning (SEL)</b>	Social functions of language Socialization	“attention* control” “behav* regulation” “civic value*” “cognitive flexibility” “conflict resolution”

		<p> “content and language”  “cooperative behav*”  “critical thinking”  “emotion* development”  “emotion* expression”  “emotion* knowledge”  “emotion* regulation”  empathy  enthusiasm  “ethical values”  gratitude  “growth mindset”  identity  “inhibitory control”  “integrated learning”  “intellectual values”  optimism  openness  “performance values”  “perspective taking”  “planning skills”  “problem solving”  “prosocial behav*”  purpose  “relationship skills”  “responsible decision making”  “self-awareness”  “self-efficacy”  “self-esteem”  “self-knowledge”  “self-management”  “social and emotional learning”  “social awareness”  “social emotional learning”  “social emotional development”  “social functions of language”  “social learning”  “social problem solving”  socialization  “understanding social cues”  “working memory” </p>
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**Appendix G: LLBA (ProQuest) Database Search Results**

<b>Search</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Results</b>
S1	MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("English as a second language") OR MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("English language learners") OR MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Second language learning") OR MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("English as a second language instruction")	41,565
S2	Title(("additional language learn*" OR "English (second language)" OR "English as a foreign language" OR "English as a second language" OR "English as a second language instruction" OR "English as an additional language" OR "English language education" OR "English language education for foreign speakers in elementary school*" OR "English language education for foreign speakers in middle school*" OR "English language education for foreign speakers in high school*" OR "English language education for foreign speakers in secondary school*" OR "English language learn*" OR "foreign language education" OR "foreign language education in elementary schools" OR "foreign language education in middle schools" OR "foreign language education in high schools" OR "foreign language education in secondary schools" OR "foreign language learn*" OR "second language*" OR "second language acquisition" OR "second language instruction" OR "second language learn*" OR "second language program*" OR "language minorities" OR "limited English speaking"))	10,525
S3	Abstract(("additional language learn*" OR "English (second language)" OR "English as a foreign language" OR "English as a second language" OR "English as a second language instruction" OR "English as an additional language" OR "English language education" OR "English language education for foreign speakers in elementary school*" OR "English language education for foreign speakers in middle school*" OR "English language education for foreign speakers in high school*" OR "English language education for foreign speakers in secondary school*" OR "English language learn*" OR "foreign language education" OR "foreign language education in elementary schools" OR "foreign language education in middle schools" OR "foreign language education in high schools" OR "foreign language education in secondary schools" OR "foreign language learn*" OR "second language*" OR "second language acquisition" OR "second language instruction" OR "second language learn*" OR "second language program*" OR "language minorities" OR "limited English speaking"))	27,314
S4	S1 OR S2 OR S3 = concept Additional Language Learners (ALL)	52,570
S5	MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Social functions of language") OR MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("Socialization")	3,019
S6	title("attention* control" OR "behav* regulation" OR "civic value*" OR "cognitive flexibility" OR "conflict resolution" OR "content and language" OR "cooperative behav*" OR "critical thinking" OR "emotion* development" OR "emotion* expression" OR "emotion*	10,569

	knowledge” OR “emotion* regulation” OR empathy OR enthusiasm OR “ethical values” OR gratitude OR “growth mindset” OR identity OR “inhibitory control” OR “integrated learning” OR “intellectual values” OR optimism OR openness OR “performance values” OR “perspective taking” OR “planning skills” OR “problem solving” OR “prosocial behav*” OR purpose OR “relationship skills” OR “responsible decision making” OR “self-awareness” OR “self-efficacy” OR “self-esteem” OR “self-knowledge” OR “self-management” OR “social and emotional learning” OR “social awareness” OR “social emotional learning” OR “social emotional development” OR “social functions of language” OR “social learning” OR “social problem solving” OR socialization OR “understanding social cues” OR “working memory”)	
S7	abstract(“attention* control” OR “behav* regulation” OR “civic value*” OR “cognitive flexibility” OR “conflict resolution” OR “content and language” OR “cooperative behav*” OR “critical thinking” OR “emotion* development” OR “emotion* expression” OR “emotion* knowledge” OR “emotion* regulation” OR empathy OR enthusiasm OR “ethical values” OR gratitude OR “growth mindset” OR identity OR “inhibitory control” OR “integrated learning” OR “intellectual values” OR optimism OR openness OR “performance values” OR “perspective taking” OR “planning skills” OR “problem solving” OR “prosocial behav*” OR purpose OR “relationship skills” OR “responsible decision making” OR “self-awareness” OR “self-efficacy” OR “self-esteem” OR “self-knowledge” OR “self-management” OR “social and emotional learning” OR “social awareness” OR “social emotional learning” OR “social emotional development” OR “social functions of language” OR “social learning” OR “social problem solving” OR socialization OR “understanding social cues” OR “working memory”)	49,608
S8	S5 OR S6 OR S7 = concept Social Emotional Learning (SEL)	53,279
S9	S4 AND S8 = concept ALL AND SEL	10,298
S10	Search to include only Scholarly Journals	10,279
S11	Search to include only Canadian text	152
S12	Search to include only text written in English	148

**Appendix H: APA PsycINFO Database Search Strategy**

<b>Concept</b>	<b>Controlled Vocab</b>	<b>Keywords</b>
<b>Additional Language Learners (ALL)</b>	Foreign Language Education English as Second Language Foreign Language Learning	“additional language learn*” “English (second language)” “English as a foreign language” “English as a second language” “English as a second language instruction” “English as an additional language” “English language education” “English language education for foreign speakers in elementary school*” “English language education for foreign speakers in middle school*” “English language education for foreign speakers in high school*” “English language education for foreign speakers in secondary school*” “English language learn*” “foreign language education” “foreign language education in elementary schools” “foreign language education in middle schools” “foreign language education in high schools” “foreign language education in secondary schools” “foreign language learn*” “second language*” “second language acquisition” “second language instruction” “second language learn*” “second language program*” “language minorities” “limited English speaking”
<b>Social Emotional Learning (SEL)</b>	Social Emotional Learning Emotional Development Social Emotional Development	“attention* control” “behav* regulation” “civic value*” “cognitive flexibility”

		<p> “conflict resolution”  “content and language”  “cooperative behav*”  “critical thinking”  “emotion* development”  “emotion* expression”  “emotion* knowledge”  “emotion* regulation”  empathy  enthusiasm  “ethical values”  gratitude  “growth mindset”  identity  “inhibitory control”  “integrated learning”  “intellectual values”  optimism  openness  “performance values”  “perspective taking”  “planning skills”  “problem solving”  “prosocial behav*”  purpose  “relationship skills”  “responsible decision making”  “self-awareness”  “self-efficacy”  “self-esteem”  “self-knowledge”  “self-management”  “social and emotional learning”  “social awareness”  “social emotional learning”  “social emotional development”  “social functions of language”  “social learning”  “social problem solving”  socialization  “understanding social cues”  “working memory” </p>
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## Appendix I: APA PsycINFO Database Search Results

Search	Strategy	Results
S1	(DE “Foreign Language Education” OR DE “English as Second Language” OR DE “Foreign Language Learning”)	14,070
S2	(TI “additional language learn*” OR “English (second language)” OR “English as a foreign language” OR “English as a second language” OR “English as a second language instruction” OR “English as an additional language” OR “English language education” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in elementary school*” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in middle school*” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in high school*” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in secondary school*” OR “English language learn*” OR “foreign language education” OR “foreign language education in elementary schools” OR “foreign language education in middle schools” OR “foreign language education in high schools” OR “foreign language education in secondary schools” OR “foreign language learn*” OR “second language*” OR “second language acquisition” OR “second language instruction” OR “second language learn*” OR “second language program*” OR “language minorities” OR “limited English speaking”)	4,207
S3	(AB “additional language learn*” OR “English (second language)” OR “English as a foreign language” OR “English as a second language” OR “English as a second language instruction” OR “English as an additional language” OR “English language education” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in elementary school*” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in middle school*” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in high school*” OR “English language education for foreign speakers in secondary school*” OR “English language learn*” OR “foreign language education” OR “foreign language education in elementary schools” OR “foreign language education in middle schools” OR “foreign language education in high schools” OR “foreign language education in secondary schools” OR “foreign language learn*” OR “second language*” OR “second language acquisition” OR “second language instruction” OR “second language learn*” OR “second language program*” OR “language minorities” OR “limited English speaking”)	11,643
S4	(searches 1, 2, + 3 together with OR) S1 OR S2 OR S3 = concept Additional Language Learners (ALL)	18,535
S5	(DE “Social Emotional Learning” OR DE “Emotional Development” OR DE “Social Emotional Development”)	4,699
S6	(TI “attention* control” OR “behav* regulation” OR “civic value*” OR “cognitive flexibility” OR “conflict resolution” OR “content and language” OR “cooperative behav*” OR “critical thinking” OR “emotion* development” OR “emotion* expression” OR “emotion* knowledge” OR “emotion* regulation” OR empathy OR enthusiasm OR	98,228

	“ethical values” OR gratitude OR “growth mindset” OR identity OR “inhibitory control” OR “integrated learning” OR “intellectual values” OR optimism OR openness OR “performance values” OR “perspective taking” OR “planning skills” OR “problem solving” OR “prosocial behav*” OR purpose OR “relationship skills” OR “responsible decision making” OR “self-awareness” OR “self-efficacy” OR “self-esteem” OR “self-knowledge” OR “self-management” OR “social and emotional learning” OR “social awareness” OR “social emotional learning” OR “social emotional development” OR “social functions of language” OR “social learning” OR “social problem solving” OR socialization OR “understanding social cues” OR “working memory”)	
S7	(AB “attention* control” OR “behav* regulation” OR “civic value*” OR “cognitive flexibility” OR “conflict resolution” OR “content and language” OR “cooperative behav*” OR “critical thinking” OR “emotion* development” OR “emotion* expression” OR “emotion* knowledge” OR “emotion* regulation” OR empathy OR enthusiasm OR “ethical values” OR gratitude OR “growth mindset” OR identity OR “inhibitory control” OR “integrated learning” OR “intellectual values” OR optimism OR openness OR “performance values” OR “perspective taking” OR “planning skills” OR “problem solving” OR “prosocial behav*” OR purpose OR “relationship skills” OR “responsible decision making” OR “self-awareness” OR “self-efficacy” OR “self-esteem” OR “self-knowledge” OR “self-management” OR “social and emotional learning” OR “social awareness” OR “social emotional learning” OR “social emotional development” OR “social functions of language” OR “social learning” OR “social problem solving” OR socialization OR “understanding social cues” OR “working memory”)	544,891
S8	S5 OR S6 OR S7 = concept Social Emotional Learning (SEL)	553,358
S9	S4 AND S8 = concept ALL AND SEL	3,976
S10	Search to include only text written in English	3,910
S11	Search to include age parameters: “School age (6-12 yrs)” and “Adolescence (13-17 yrs)”	194
S12	After review of abstract & keywords relevant to topic	32

## Appendix J: Scoping Review Protocol

**Title:** Social emotional learning in additional language learning: a scoping review protocol

**Protocol Authors:** Emma Becker, Krista Ritchie, Christine Doe

**Start Date:** November 2024

**Anticipated Completion Date:** August 2025

**Expected Review Contributors and Affiliations:** Emma Becker, Mount Saint Vincent University; Krista Ritchie, Mount Saint Vincent University; Christine Doe, Mount Saint Vincent University.

**Language and Country:** English, Canada

**Conflicts of Interest:** No conflicts of interest

### Context

The key purpose of this project is to undertake one of the first efforts to systematically examine the literature on English as an Additional Language (EAL) learning, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), and how/if they intersect for the success of students.

### Review Questions

The scoping review seeks to answer the following questions, or to identify a lack of information on these topics in the academic literature:

- (1) How does existing literature address the integration of SEL in EAL learning for K-12 students in Canadian public schools?
- (2) What practices have evidence of success for combining SEL and EAL?

### Search Strategy

The scoping review is being completed in accordance with the systematic scoping review process strategy. The search strategy for this review was developed by Graduate student Emma Becker with consultation from MSVU librarian Nicole Slipp.

The search strategy identifies three core concepts to the research questions: additional language learning, SEL teaching strategies, and SEL in additional language learning. The synonyms applied for each concept are listed in Table 1.

**Table 1**

Concept	Synonyms
English as an Additional Language (EAL)	“additional language learn*” “English (second language)” “English as a foreign language” “English as a second language” “English as a second language instruction” “English as an additional language”

	<p> “English language education”  “English language education for foreign speakers in elementary school*”  “English language education for foreign speakers in middle school*”  “English language education for foreign speakers in high school*”  “English language education for foreign speakers in secondary school*”  “English language learn*”  “foreign language education”  “foreign language education in elementary schools”  “foreign language education in middle schools”  “foreign language education in high schools”  “foreign language education in secondary schools”  “foreign language learn*”  “second language*”  “second language acquisition”  “second language instruction”  “second language learn*”  “second language program*”  “language minorities”  “limited English speaking” </p>
<p>Social emotional learning (SEL)</p>	<p> “attention* control”  “behav* regulation”  “civic value*”  “cognitive flexibility”  “conflict resolution”  “content and language”  “cooperative behav*”  “critical thinking”  “emotion* development”  “emotion* expression”  “emotion* knowledge”  “emotion* regulation”  empathy  enthusiasm  “ethical values”  gratitude  “growth mindset”  identity  “inhibitory control” </p>

	<p> “integrated learning”  “intellectual values”  optimism  openness  “performance values”  “perspective taking”  “planning skills”  “problem solving”  “prosocial behav*”  purpose  “relationship skills”  “responsible decision making”  “self-awareness”  “self-efficacy”  “self-esteem”  “self-knowledge”  “self-management”  “social and emotional learning”  “social awareness”  “social emotional learning”  “social emotional development”  “social functions of language”  “social learning”  “social problem solving”  socialization  “understanding social cues”  “working memory” </p>
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