

## Potential Benefits of School Counselor Consultation to Enhance Student Social Emotional Learning

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### Abstract

Social and emotional learning has been given more attention with states seeking to construct intrapersonal and interpersonal objectives to couple with already established academic cognitive standards (CASEL, 2013). Potential for academic growth in all students is intrinsically linked with their social and emotional development (CASEL, 2013). Meeting today's students' social and emotional needs, however, is still not a focal point or an objective in our teacher preparation programming (Furney, Hazaki, Clark/Keefe, & Harnett, 2003). To best meet the needs of today's students, therefore, requires an open dialogue and partnership between school counselors and classroom teachers. This conceptual article describes effective utilization of the five modes of consultation through application to a school counselor/teacher consultative relationship case study, highlighting practices that teachers and school counselors can use to integrate social and emotional competency development into content area instruction. Keywords: Consultation, School Counseling, Social emotional learning, Teaching

## **Potential Benefits of School Counselor Consultation to Enhance Student Social Emotional Learning**

Educators, researchers, and policy-makers have begun to recognize the importance of focusing on social emotional development in the classroom (Banerjee, Weare, & Farr, 2014). This is extremely important because the potential for academic growth in all students is intrinsically linked with their social and emotional competencies. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 in 5 children ages 3-17 have a diagnosable mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder. These difficulties affect a student's ability to learn and master academic content (Association of Children's Mental Health, 2017). This often causes students to be disengaged from learning and this can in-turn lead to school failure or drop out. In fact, 37% of students with social and emotional struggles will drop out of school before graduation; this is the student group with the highest drop-out rate (NAMI, 2016).

Many students with social and emotional struggles can often have unstable home environments (Elias & Haynes, 2008). Students who are homeless, transient, exposed to substance-abuse or trauma, face abuse and neglect, and those living in poverty are found to need increased scaffolds for social and emotional development (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2010). Beyond these at-home risk factors, school risk factors also exist. These risk factors include: poor

academic performance, chronic absenteeism, harsh school discipline rules (such as suspension or expulsion), social-alienation, chronic retention, and students who learn at a slower pace than their peers (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2010).

Schools need to be aware of and ready to proactively develop students Social Emotional Learning (SEL) needs. SEL is defined as the “process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive friendships, and make responsible decisions” (CASEL, 2019). This definition can be broken down into the five main competencies of SEL: self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship-building, and responsible decision making skills (CASEL, 2013; Durlak, Domtrovisch, Weissberg, & Gullota, 2015; Maras, Thompson, Lewis, Thornburg, & Hawks, 2015). Table one shows each of these areas of development and the specific skills associated with them—all leading to holistic growth of an individual.

*Table 1 Core Competencies of Social Emotional Learning*

<b>Social Emotional Competency</b>	<b>Description of the Competency</b>
<b>Self-Awareness</b>	Being able to identify one’s emotions
	Having an accurate self-perception
	Recognizing strengths in one’s self
	Having self-confidence
	Having strong self-efficacy or belief in one’s self
<b>Self-Management</b>	Ability to self-regulate
	Controlling one’s impulses
	Using appropriate coping strategies to deal with stress
	Possessing self-discipline and self-motivation
	Setting goals and working to meet goals
<b>Social Awareness</b>	Organizational skills
	Having an awareness of others
	Taking other peoples’ perspectives
	Showing empathy for others
	Appreciating diversity
<b>Relationship Skills</b>	Showing respect for others
	Responding and actively listening in conversations
	Engaging socially
	Building relationships
	Negotiating with others
<b>Responsible Decision Making</b>	Working as a team member
	Managing conflict
	Seeking and providing help from/to others
	Identifying problems
	Analyzing situations to find solutions to problems
	Solving problems
	Evaluating outcomes of solutions
	Reflecting on experiences
	Demonstrating personal, social and ethical responsibility

*Note.* Adapted from “The 2013 CASEL guide: Effective social and emotional learning programs-preschool and elementary school edition,” by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2013.

Development of the five SEL competencies in schools has been a push by researchers, legislators, and national organizations. The National Research Council (2012) indicates that for 21<sup>st</sup> century success, schools must offer more than academic instruction alone; instruction needs to be coupled with developing social-emotional competencies for students to reach their academic potential (Benson, 2006).

This call for 21<sup>st</sup> century success has caused many states to construct intrapersonal and interpersonal objectives to couple with already established academic cognitive standards (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2013). The Common Core curriculum has begun to incorporate social and emotional skills in its learning objectives. These skills are seen in standards that mention problem solving, reflective thinking, the ability to communicate effectively with others, and working effectively in groups to solve problems (Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012). In addition to the Common Core, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2016) identify aspects of SEL that accomplished teachers must demonstrate in their practice. In their five key propositions for board certified educators they indicate that teachers must be able to “set appropriate norms for social interactions among students and between students and teachers” (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2016, p. 8). Professional teachers also need to “foster students’ self-esteem, motivation, character, perseverance, civic responsibility, intellectual risk taking, and respect for others.” (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2016, p. 8).

With the call for teachers to develop SEL skills in their students, also came specific legal actions concerning social awareness and relationship skill development related to school climate. These legal actions for school climate and anti-bullying campaigns have been taken in all fifty states (Cornell & Limber, 2015). In addition to this, the movement to increase social and emotional learning standards from preschool through grade twelve has been introduced to Congress through bipartisan legislation with the Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Act (Civic Impulse, 2016a). This act would support the Every Student Succeeds Act (Civic Impulse, 2016b), which now asks schools to evaluate at least one nonacademic indicator when assessing school quality and student success.

Despite this push for SEL to take place alongside academic content knowledge, the National Center for Safe and Supportive Learning Environments (2015) recognizes that teaching social and emotional competencies was not a focal point in most teachers’ pedagogical training. Teachers often recognize the importance of SEL for their students, but they lack the content knowledge, resources, and time to effectively incorporate SEL into their daily instruction (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2009). They lack this in-depth content knowledge because social and emotional pedagogy is not as developed and there is no universal curriculum to drive the teaching or learning of social-emotional competencies for students (Stoiber, 2011). Teachers and students, therefore, may only gain access to meaningful SEL if they can work with individuals (educational specialists and counseling staff) who have the needed resources and expertise in SEL.

As a teacher it is often difficult to be an expert in everything, thus it is important for educators to have the ability to consult with school based mental health providers. The lack of preparation to teach SEL in teacher preparation programming and how this is seen in today's classroom is illustrated below through one specific case study example. In the case, Rosie is currently struggling with many of SEL areas. Through the case study, consultation and collaboration between teachers and school counselors to better facilitate SEL learning in the classroom will be discussed. Teachers should feel empowered to work with all students and assist them with the daily demands of education and utilize SEL strategies to increase academic and personal success.

### **Case Study**

*Ms. Caldwell is a new teacher who is very excited about finally having her very own classroom! She feels confident about sharing her academic content knowledge, but in the first few weeks of school she notices her students are struggling to work together. Many students often proclaim, "This work is hard," before even trying it. There are several students, including one in particular, Rosie, that struggle with social and emotional development, specifically developing and maintaining positive peer relationships. Ms. Caldwell is at a loss for what to do. "I never had a course in how to help students make or develop friendships, and it's been decades since I was a fourth grader," she said when consulting with the school counselor, Mr. Greene, about the struggle she is facing in the classroom.*

*Rosie is a ten-year-old female in the fourth grade. She desperately wants to be friends with her classmates. Rosie invites her classmates to play with her at recess and work with her for partner and small group work during learning time. Problems arise, however, due to the demands Rosie makes of her classmates. When Rosie and her peers have differing ideas and opinions, she struggles to listen to her classmates and therefore does not have the skills to compromise. Rosie aggressively defends her own wants and needs, causing her peers to withdraw. She also struggles to read the verbal and non-verbal cues of her classmates during these altercations; this leaves her feeling confused and rejected. Ms. Caldwell realizes that Rosie's troubles with peer relationships have caused an alarming drop in her self-esteem and this has started to impact her academic performance. Rosie's positive feelings about her teacher, her class, her school, and learning in general are being threatened, but Ms. Caldwell is unsure of how to enact lasting change to support Rosie's social and emotional growth. Ms. Caldwell knows she currently does not have the skills to aide this social and emotional development on her own and frequently consults the school counselor, Mr. Greene, for advice.*

### **Discussion**

Students, like Rosie, are more and more common in our preschool through grade twelve classrooms. Rosie is unable to communicate effectively with her peers and this causes her peers to display emotions that Rosie is unable to pick up on. Then because of this disconnect with her peers, Rosie begins to aggressively defend her own needs in a way that shows she is not able to regulate her emotions. This further causes her to doubt herself and question her abilities with peers and in school. Until these social and emotional skills are explicitly taught, Rosie will

continue to have trouble with forming and maintaining peer relationships, and in turn Rosie's teacher (Ms. Caldwell) will continue to have trouble when asking students in her class to work in small groups and in developing each student's own self-esteem. Ms. Caldwell needs to rely on school professionals with in-depth SEL knowledge and programming so that her classroom runs effectively, and students learn to their potential.

To best meet the needs of students, like Rosie, most well-designed SEL programming combines instruction in content area subjects with social and emotional competency development (CASEL, 2013). This will require consultation with school-based professionals with in-depth SEL content knowledge. Such individuals include: school counselors, school psychologists, special educators, and behavior interventionists (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2009).

The SEL content knowledge specialist should work with general education classroom teachers as they teach SEL skills to students first through explicit instruction and then through gradual release and scripted role play. After explicitly teaching a skill, the next step is to embed the lessons throughout the school day as students apply their SEL knowledge while making decisions, evaluating themselves, reflecting on experiences, working in teams, and developing social relationships (CASEL, 2013; Friedlaender, Burns, Lewis-Charp, Cook-Havey, Zheng, & Darling Hammond, 2014).

This consultation of guided SEL instruction is often used by school counselors to empower teachers' sense of self efficacy in providing enhanced behavioral and academic interventions (Meyers, Tobin, Huber, Conway, & Shelvin, 2015; Perez-Diltz, Moe, & Mason, 2011; Warren & Baker, 2013). This is needed as teachers need to acquire new skills to effectively meet the social and emotional needs of all learners (Meyers, et al., 2015).

### **Consultation with School Counselors**

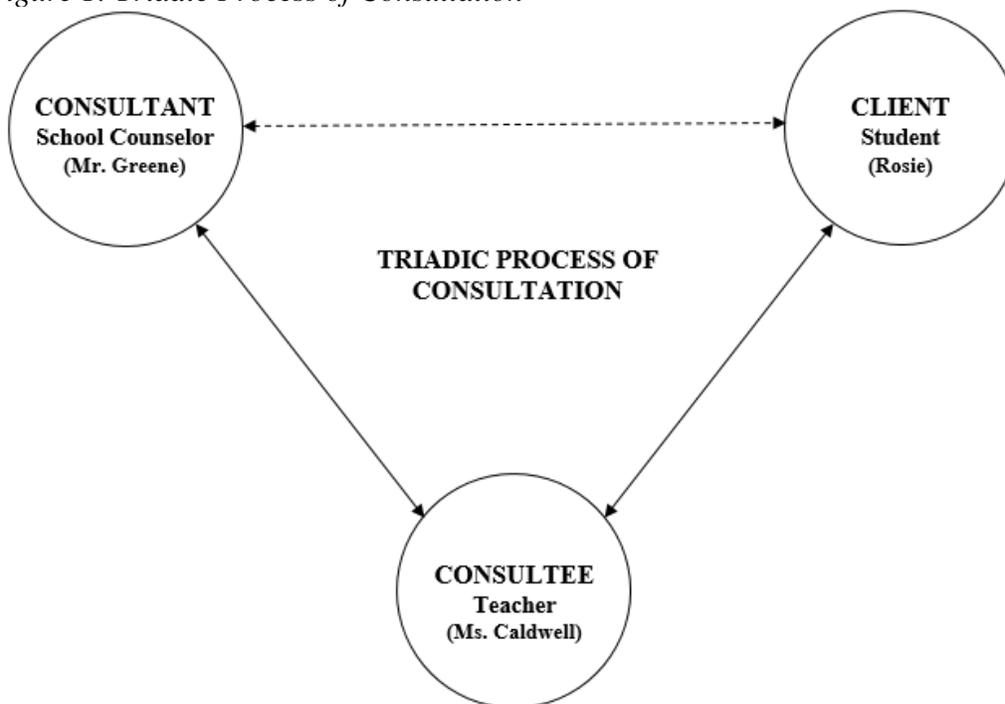
School counselors are trained masters-level professionals who are also certified, licensed educators. The qualifications of school counselors include working with students in a K-12 setting to provide and enhance career, academic, and personal/social competencies (ASCA, 2012). School counselors are expected to provide the foundational knowledge, attitudes, and skills to promote students' personal/social growth and development (ASCA, 2004). The American School Counselor Association (2012) identifies school counselor consultation and collaboration with parents, teachers, other educators and community organizations as an indirect service that school counselors should utilize to further support students' personal/social development. ASCA recommends that a school employ one school counselor for every 250 students, however the national student-to-school counselor ratio is 477:1 nearly double ASCA's recommendation. For school counselors to effectively ensure the success of each student, the strategy of consultation is often employed.

Consultation is a triadic process (see Figure 1) in which the consultant (school counselor) works with the consultee (teacher/Ms. Cadwell) with the goal of bringing about a positive change in the client (child/Rosie) (Kampwirth & Power, 2012; Kurpius, 1978; Parsons & Kahn, 2005; Schmidt, 2013). Consultation is generally considered a process of helping someone understand problems as part of larger systems. As Caplan (1963) described, consultation involves the "the process of interaction between two professional persons—the consultant, who is

the specialist, and the consultee, who invokes his help in regard to a current work problem in which the latter is having some difficulty, and which he has decided is within the former's area of specialized competence" (p. 470). Consultation has the twofold goals of enhancing services and improving functions, both for the consultee's current challenge and for future challenges (Caplan, 1963). By consulting with teachers, school counselors are positioned to enact the positive change necessary to foster student success, while efficiently responding to referrals and supporting classroom teachers like Ms. Caldwell.

Consultation is an integral part of the school counselor's job and is an indirect method for providing preventative and responsive services and advocating for students' specific needs (Schmidt, 2014). When school counselors consult with teachers, they provide both responsive services to help teachers respond more effectively to individual students and systemic services to promote system-wide learning and growth through the whole school environment (Ray, 2007). Caplan (1963) referred to these types of mental health consultation as client-centered case consultation and program-centered administrative consultation. "Offering to serve as a consultant to a teacher is one way that school counselors can reframe referral requests into an opportunity to intervene at the systems level and emphasize prevention" (Clemens, 2007, p. 352).

*Figure 1: Triadic Process of Consultation*



### **School Counselor and Teacher Partnerships**

School counselors can ensure their effectiveness as consultants when they assume responsibility for assisting teachers while demonstrating flexibility and leadership in advocating for their students' needs (Baker, Robichaud, Dietrich, Wells, & Schreck, 2009). In each school situation, the school counselor and teacher work together to establish goals based on the identified problem (Peterson, 2007). The intervention planning stage begins once data regarding

the problem has been gathered and analyzed. Specific strategies, the timing, and the duration of interventions are chosen based on this data analysis. Throughout the implementation phase, the school counselor and teacher monitor the effectiveness of the chosen interventions. Modifications are then made when necessary (Peterson, 2007). Ms. Caldwell began this consultation stage when she approached the school counselor with the dilemma she is currently facing in her classroom, students having difficulty working in groups and developing and maintaining positive peer relationships.

“Consultation is an integral activity for school counselors working in comprehensive, developmental programs” (Clemens, 2007, p. 352), therefore there are numerous models and definitions to school-based consultation. One common thread is that the school counselors are always providing an important service to the school system. (ASCA, 2012; Baker, et al., 2009). The consulting modalities first envisioned by Kurpius (1978) and then added onto by Baker (1981) can be useful to school counselors when assisting the consultee. These five modes of consultation behaviors that may occur between school counselor and consultee (Baker et al., 2009) are initiation, prescription, provision, collaboration, and mediation (Baker, 1981; Baker et al., 2009; Kurpius, 1978). Table 2 describes each mode of consultation and outlines how it could be applied to the proposed case.

*Table 2: Description and Application of Five Modes of Consultation*

Mode of Consultation	Description of Mode	SEL Implementation
Initiation	The consultant initiates the consultation relationship to address problems that have not yet been identified by the consultee, helping consultees gain access to skills, knowledge, and insight needed to enact positive change for clients. The consultant analyzes how consultees make meaning of interactions with clients and helps the consultee to view clients from different perspectives.	While completing informal observations of students in Ms. Caldwell’s class, Mr. Greene has noticed that many students, especially Rosie, have difficulty completing tasks when they are required to work with partners or groups. Ms. Caldwell gets visibly frustrated when her students struggle to work together cooperatively. Mr. Greene initiates a consulting relationship to help Ms. Caldwell identify the specific interpersonal skills her students have yet to develop. Ms. Caldwell gains new understanding of her students’ struggles through this exercise.
Prescription	The consultee presents the consultant with challenges he or she is trying to overcome. The consultant then prescribes possible solutions for these problems to the consultee. The consultee evaluates the possible interventions presented by the consultant and chooses which interventions he or she will	Ms. Caldwell asks Mr. Greene for ideas to help Rosie and other students work cooperatively in small groups. Mr. Greene recommends that Ms. Caldwell assign students to their groups strategically, taking into account the interpersonal strengths and weaknesses of each individual student. Mr. Greene

implement. Both the consultant and the consultee then monitor the effectiveness of the chosen interventions and make changes as needed.

also recommends that Ms. Caldwell give each student a specific job or role while working in a group and that Ms. Caldwell closely monitor how effectively each student is fulfilling his or her role in the group. Varying group size and explicitly modeling effective group work practices are also included in Mr. Greene's recommendations. Mr. Greene plans to observe Ms. Caldwell's class routinely to monitor the effectiveness of his recommended interventions.

Provision

When the consultee is unable or unwilling to provide the consultant's prescribed strategies and interventions, the consultant works with the clients directly to implement the recommended interventions.

If Ms. Caldwell felt unsure or ill-equipped to implement Mr. Greene's recommended interventions from the prescription mode of consultation, Mr. Greene could facilitate lessons involving small group work to model and implement the strategies himself. Mr. Greene can also utilize the provision mode of consultation during classroom guidance lessons. Mr. Greene can offer students explicit practice with the steps of social problem-solving. Students can practice identifying problems, brainstorming possible solutions, compromising to find solutions that work for everyone involved, and making the choice to implement agreed upon solutions. Mr. Greene can deliver a variety of SEL classroom guidance lessons as part of his developmental guidance program.

Collaboration

The consultant and the consultee work together to understand a presenting problem, discover potential solutions, and implement chosen solutions. Both the consultant and the consultee bring their personal areas of expertise to the consulting relationship. When the prescription and provision modes of consultation have already been employed, collaboration maintains the working relationship between the

Mr. Greene has been the school counselor for three years, while Ms. Caldwell is a first-year teacher. However, Ms. Caldwell works closely with her students daily, far more frequently than Mr. Greene. Mr. Greene can offer Ms. Caldwell helpful information regarding Rosie's family background and her academic and social/emotional progress in previous grades, but Ms. Caldwell has a developed knowledge of Rosie's

consultant and the consultee and promotes continued use of effective solutions to problems over time and in different situations.

current strengths, weaknesses, interests, and preferred learning modalities. Together, Mr. Greene and Ms. Caldwell have a comprehensive understanding of the variety of factors inhibiting Rosie's social/emotional development. Together, they can implement classroom-based interventions and individual or small group counseling interventions to support Rosie's social/emotional growth.

**Mediation** The consultant works with two or more individuals who need assistance with resolving a dispute. The consultee may refer clients in dispute to the consultant, or the consultee may be involved in the conflict he or she brings to the attention of the consultant. The consultant works as a mediator, keeping communication flowing between disputing individuals or groups in order to find a compromise that everyone can agree upon. The consultant may offer ideas for mutual consideration by all involved parties, but the consultant does not participate in choosing the agreed upon solutions. The consultees or clients in dispute are solely responsible for choosing how to resolve their conflicts.

If Ms. Caldwell alerts Mr. Greene to a conflict occurring between Rosie and another classmate, Mr. Greene can serve as the mediator for the students as they work to resolve their problem. Mr. Greene would facilitate a discussion in which Rosie and her classmate actively listen to each other while they share their feelings about the situation without placing blame or making accusations. Then, Mr. Greene would walk Rosie and her classmate through the steps of the problem-solving process, challenging the students to brainstorm possible solutions, identify which solutions would result in a mutually satisfying compromise, and agree on a chosen solution. Mr. Greene and Ms. Caldwell would then remind Rosie and her classmate to utilize the strategies practiced during this mediation in the future.

### **Applying the Modes of Consultation**

#### **Initiation**

School counselors enact the initiation mode of consultation to address problems that have not yet been identified by teachers. When school counselors feel that teachers would benefit from added SEL supports, they may initiate the consultation relationship themselves (Baker, et al., 2009). School counselors may initiate consultation relationships in order to enact preventative change at the school-wide level (Clemens, 2007). Initiation mode consultation allows school counselors to assess how teachers interpret and manage the social-emotional challenges of their students. Through analyzing the cognitive developmental modalities that teachers use to make meaning of their interactions with students, school counselors can help teachers understand their experiences with students from different perspectives (Clemens, 2007).

This consultative support may open teachers' minds to alternative, more effective problem-solving strategies to employ when supporting their students' social-emotional development.

### **Prescription**

School counselors employ the prescription mode of consultation when they share their expertise by presenting possible solutions to teachers based on the challenges and problems that teachers are trying to address with their students (Kurpius, 1978). School counselors can utilize the prescription mode to impart information to teachers about students' areas of need regarding social-emotional growth. When Ms. Caldwell approached Mr. Greene, she had a particular challenge in mind and she needed help. Using the prescription mode of consultation, Mr. Greene would then share possible solutions to help Ms. Caldwell to support Rosie and all of her other students during small group work. Ideas that the school counselor may provide include: giving each student a specific task to contribute to the group, purposefully grouping students so that students feel supported in their group, explicitly modeling how group work should be done in a small scenario, monitoring group work by circling the room and checking in with disengaged students and reconnecting them to their group, and changing group size so students can learn the basic reciprocity interactions needed for larger group work (Brookfield & Preskill, 1999; Slavin, 1995). Ms. Caldwell would evaluate each of these ideas and decide which ones to implement in her classroom. Ms. Caldwell and Mr. Greene would then monitor the effectiveness of the chosen intervention(s).

### **Provision**

The provision mode of consultation is utilized when the teacher lacks the time, interest, or competence to provide the school counselor's prescribed strategies and interventions. In provision mode, the school counselor works with the students directly to implement the agreed-upon interventions (Kurpius, 1978). School counselors can employ the provision mode of consultation through classroom guidance lessons (Espelage, et al., 2015). School counselors can use the provision mode of consultation to deliver classroom guidance activities to promote positive social problem-solving practices. Explicit practice with the basic steps of a social problem-solving model allows students to learn and rehearse how to identify conflicts, brainstorm possible solutions, identify mutually agreeable conditions, and make a solution choice. School counselors can teach strategies for stopping and preventing overly negative thought patterns by modeling and rehearsing optimistic and rational methods of solving social problems (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2009). The provision mode of consultation allows the school counselor/consultant to support the teacher/consultee through direct delivery of empirically supported SEL programs to the students/clients (Kurpius, 1978).

If Ms. Caldwell felt uncomfortable or unsure of how to implement the strategies suggested by Mr. Greene, the provision mode of consultation could be utilized. Mr. Greene and Ms. Caldwell would agree on a strategy to use during small group work and Mr. Greene would then come into Ms. Caldwell's class and lead a lesson using this agreed upon strategy. A gradual release of responsibility would be appropriate during subsequent teachings, with Mr. Greene eventually transferring the responsibility of teaching to Ms. Caldwell. Moving to the prescription mode of consultation from the provision mode allows Mr. Greene to continue advising Ms. Caldwell while holding her accountable in the consulting relationship.

### **Collaboration**

The collaboration mode is currently a very popular mode of consultation (Perera-Diltz, Moe, & Mason, 2011). Collaboration occurs when two or more equal parties interact directly with one another to reach a common goal through the process of shared decision making (Kampwirth & Powers, 2012). The collaborative consulting relationship is unique in that it “demonstrates equal power, authority, and status. Consultants are not better or more expert” (Kurpius, 1978, p.336). The consultant and the consultee both bring areas of expertise to the consulting relationship and agree to share responsibility for the implementation of their agreed upon interventions. Kampwirth and Powers (2012) define collaborative consultation as “a process in which a trained, school-based consultant, working in an egalitarian, nonhierarchical relationship with a consultee, assists that person in her efforts to make decisions and carry out plans that will be in the best educational interests of her students” (p. 2).

In the collaboration model, school counselors and teachers work together to gain understanding, explore possible solutions, and implement chosen solutions to problems (Baker, et al., 2009). Just as school counselors bring their expertise in SEL to the consulting relationship, teachers bring many areas of expertise to the consulting relationship as well. Teachers often have developed knowledge of students’ interests, strengths, weaknesses, and preferred learning modalities. When school counselors and teachers build upon each other’s strengths and resources, they can provide the most comprehensive supports for their students (Baker, et al., 2009). Collaboration also aids school counselors and teachers in their efforts to provide culturally responsive interventions to their students. School counselors and teachers can support one another to ensure that SEL initiatives are considered within the context of the cultures of the students and the surrounding community. Knowledge about students’ families and backgrounds is necessary to determine how cultural norms may impact their social and emotional practices, as “the manner in which individuals describe, interpret, and express emotions varies significantly across cultures” (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2009, p. 22).

Once SEL skills have been taught to students in an instructional setting through prescription mode or provision mode, collaboration mode allows school counselors and teachers to promote the continued rehearsal of these skills over time and across different settings and contexts (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2009). School counselors or teachers may also employ the use of booster lessons, which are quick reminder lessons used to review and practice previously learned SEL skills. Lastly, collaboration mode allows school counselors and teachers to inform support staff, administrators, and parents of their SEL initiatives, so that all adults can practice and reinforce SEL skills with students (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2009).

### **Mediation**

The final mode of consultation, mediation mode, involves working with two or more individuals who need help resolving a dispute. In this mode, school counselors serve as mediators, keeping lines of communication open between disputing parties in order to come to a mutually agreed upon compromise. School counselors facilitate mediation by offering suggestions for mutual consideration by all involved parties, but they are not involved or responsible for choosing resulting solutions (Baker, et al., 2009). Mediation could be used if Rosie and one of her peers were consistently at odds with one another. Mr. Greene would help Rosie and her classmate actively listen to one another. From here Mr. Greene may, with the help

of Rosie and her classmate, brainstorm possible solutions to their conflict, and then support the students as they agree on a potential solution.

Flexible movement between these five modes of consultation affords school counselors and teachers the time and support needed to positively impact students' social emotional development. School counselors' and teachers' unified efforts to collaborate with students' families on SEL initiatives through newsletters, meetings, phone calls, and parent workshops further reinforce the SEL skills taught in school. SEL initiatives have proven most effective when coordinated with other school-based and community programs, such as anti-bullying programs and substance abuse prevention programs (Feuerborn & Tyre 2009).

### **Application of Appropriate Strategies for the Case**

Effective consultation takes place when all parties can agree on case conceptualization and have formed appropriate interpersonal relationships. Rosie is having difficulty developing and maintaining positive peer relationships. Her struggles with her peers come in many forms, as she becomes defensive in arguing her point of view, appears not to reciprocate equally in relationships, and has difficulty listening to and effectively responding to peers. All of these deficits could stem from her inability to interpret the nonverbal communication her peers are showing her. Mr. Greene recognizes that Rosie would benefit from explicit instruction in reading non-verbal social cues. Mr. Greene shares these five strategies with Ms. Caldwell to help her begin to develop social and emotional growth for Rosie and her students.

1. Visually model how group work should be done before having students work in a group.
2. Explicitly and directly explain the rules and rationale of group work social interactions.
3. Create a visual support that goes over the rules and expectations for group work.
4. Teach listening skills in a structured peer format, where one person speaks at a time, and the partner listens and then paraphrases back what the partner shared.
5. Work with one group and use a think-a-loud strategy to explicitly describe the nonverbal communication that takes place between and among group members.

Mr. Greene also provides Ms. Caldwell with a sample consultation record and post meeting recommendations (see Appendices A and B) to ensure the transfer of skill and responsibility. This consultation record looks to build Ms. Caldwell's teacher self-efficacy in implementing SEL into her classroom through helping to plan, organize, and carry out activities to lead Rosie and her classmates towards improving their social skills and their emotional competencies (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015). Through collaboration and consultation with Mr. Greene, Ms. Caldwell is better able to support her own students, and is developing her own self-efficacy. Development of self-efficacy with SEL is important to Ms. Caldwell because it helps her own emotional well-being, ability to cope with stress, performance on cognitive tasks, and continual goal-setting to keep improving her teaching practice (Taylor, 2014). This allows for true school wide positive behavior supports for both students and all those employed in the school.

### **Implications and Recommendations for Practice**

In today's schools it is expected that teachers develop all students' SEL skills, as well as their academic knowledge. Due to nation-wide high-stakes academic testing, however, the

current focus for teacher preparation is the effective teaching of academic content knowledge and because of this, teachers are not being adequately trained to develop students' social and emotional competencies (Furney, Hazaki, Clark/Keefe, & Harnett, 2003). In fact, Schonert-Reichl, Kitil, and Hanson-Peterson (2017) found that the teacher training programs in 49 states were not addressing any of the five core social emotional dimensions in students, yet more than half of the state-level teacher certification requirements have a focal point on students' social emotional development.

Due to the lack of training in teacher preparation programming, effective implementation of SEL will require systemic change, including "buy-in among teachers and administrators regarding the role of schools in promoting children's social and emotional functioning" (Meyers, et al., 2015, p. 111). School counselors are positioned to effectively support the effective implementation of SEL curricula by fostering consultative relationships with teachers. School counselors are trained and prepared to support the ever-changing mental health needs of students through a combination of preventative, responsive, direct, and indirect services (ASCA, 2012; Warren & Baker, 2013). Therefore, consultation with teachers is vital for school counselors to indirectly support students' social-emotional growth and development (Clemens, 2007). Thoughtful development of consultative relationships that move fluidly through the initiation, provision, prescription, collaboration, and mediation modes as appropriate for each situation and relationship enable school counselors to effect lasting change and growth for students, teachers, schools, and systems (Baker, et al., 2009).

In addition to consultative relationships, teacher preparation routes should have some coursework associated with teaching SEL competencies. After all, the research shows that focusing on SEL facilitates the well-rounded development of children, allowing students to productively put their academic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge to use within and beyond the school setting (Espelage, Rose, & Polanin, 2015). It also translates into increased time on-task in the classroom, higher achievement scores on standardized testing, and higher grades in all academic content classes (Cunha & Heckman, 2008; Durlak et. al., 2011). SEL has been shown to correlate with increased student motivation to learn, a deeper commitment to school, improved behavior in the classroom, and increased attendance and graduation rates (Durlak et. al., 2011; Eisenberg, Fabes, Guthrie, & Reiser, 2000; Kautz, Heckman, Diris, Baster Weel, & Borghans, 2014). In addition to these increases, rates of depression, anxiety, stress, social withdrawal, and other antisocial behaviors (like substance-abuse) have decreased with the incorporation of SEL (Durlak et. al., 2011; Eisenberg, et al., 2000). Overall, students who experience positive growth through SEL report feeling safer and more connected to their learning environment, have higher academic achievement, and feel better prepared for lifelong success in the work place, community and in their own personal relationships (MA DESE, 2011; Espelage, Rose, & Polanin, 2015). Therefore, it is time to make teaching SEL needs a priority in our schools.

### **Conclusion**

Educators need to be aware of SEL competencies and how to embed them alongside academic learning. School counselors should collaborate with educators to help provide strategies for this incorporation. In doing so, school counselors should assess the comfort level of

teachers and help facilitate training when areas of discomfort arise. Whether through classroom visits, teacher professional development, or collaborative curriculum development, school counselors and teachers must collaborate to ensure the success of SEL in the school setting. The implementations of SEL competencies are more than just another checklist for educators; they are the keys to academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and post-graduate success.

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## Appendix A

### **SAMPLE Consultation Record**

*Provide agenda to all participants prior to meeting to establish agenda and document meeting.*

**Student:** Rosie L.

**Grade Level:** 4

**DOB:** 05/07/09

**Meeting Date:** 09/22/18

**Beginning Time:** 10:00 am

**Ending Time:** 11:00 am

**Participants:**

- Mr. Greene (school counselor)
- Ms. Caldwell (classroom teacher)

**Teacher Strengths Identified:**

- Demonstrates developed knowledge of academic content/curriculum
- Provides differentiated instruction in all academic content areas
- Allows students to demonstrate new learning through preferred modalities
- Encourages collaboration and cooperation between students
- Demonstrates openness, flexibility, and willingness to learn and incorporate new instructional strategies and methods for classroom management

**Student Strengths Identified:**

- Willingness to learn
- Potential leadership skills
- Creative problem solving
- Perseverance
- Commitment to producing exemplary work

**Student Data (*attached to consultation record*):**

- Discipline Reports
- Grades
- Benchmarks Assessments/Reading Level
- Attendance
- Cumulative file
- Parent Contact Information
- Teacher Observations
- IEP/Section 504 Information
- Health Records
- Previous Interventions

**Issue/Concern:**

- Trouble developing and maintaining positive peer relationships
- Struggles with working one-on-one and in groups
- Exhibits demanding, aggressive, and defensive behaviors while interacting with others Struggles with listening to and responding appropriately to her peers
- Reads classmates' verbal and nonverbal cues inaccurately
- When peers withdraw, she is left feeling confused and rejected
- Lowered self-esteem due to troubles with peer relationships
- Negative impact on academic progress

**Desired Outcome(s):**

- Develop skills to correctly interpret nonverbal cues demonstrated by peers
- Learn and practice strategies for active listening
- Develop understanding and willingness to compromise
- Demonstrate appropriate verbal and nonverbal responses when communicating with peers
- Improve self-esteem
- Rebuild positive feelings about school, teacher, and peers

**Outcome Measurements:**

- Instances of small group or one-on-one arguments with peers
- Instances of utilizing directly taught/agreed upon interpersonal communication strategies while interacting with peers

**Action Plan:**

<b>Post Meeting Responsibilities</b>		
<b><i>Follow-Up Strategies:</i></b>	<b><i>Person Responsible:</i></b>	<b><i>Date:</i></b>
1. Communicate action plan with parent/guardian	Ms. Caldwell	09/22/16
2. Group work strategies – direct instruction about the rules and expectations of groupwork with visual modeling provided through two classroom guidance lessons	Mr. Greene, assisted by Ms. Caldwell	Week of 09/26/16 and 10/03/16
3. Creation of visual prompts and reminders for the rules and expectations of groupwork	Ms. Caldwell, advised by Mr. Greene	Week of 09/26/16
4. Structured, small group, peer interactions for direct instruction and practice of active listening skills (one peer speaks at a time, other peers listen and paraphrase back what peer shared)	Mr. Greene – small group counseling sessions	Weekly sessions beginning week of 09/26/16 (8 x 30 min)
5. Structured, small group, peer interactions for direct instruction and practice of nonverbal communication skills (using think-a-loud strategies to describe nonverbal communication taking place between peers)	Mr. Greene – small group counseling sessions	Weekly sessions beginning week of 09/26/16 (8 x 30 min)
<b><i>Assess Progress Toward Student Outcomes:</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly progress monitoring (classroom)</li> <li>• Weekly progress monitoring (small group counseling)</li> <li>• Individual counseling check-ins with Mr. Greene (check-in at 2 weeks, 4 weeks, 6 weeks, and 8 weeks)</li> </ul>	Ms. Caldwell Mr. Greene	2 weeks: 10/03/16 4 weeks: 10/17/16 6 weeks: 10/31/16 8 weeks: 11/14/16

***Provide copies of completed record to participants.***

*Note.* Adapted from “Professional School Counselor Consultation Guide: A Professional School Counselor’s Guide to Consulting and Collaborating,” by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015.

Appendix B

**Consultation Record**

*Provide agenda to all participants prior to meeting to establish agenda and document meeting.*

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade Level:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DOB:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Meeting Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Beginning Time:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Ending Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participants:**

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**Teacher Strengths Identified:**

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**Student Strengths Identified:**

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**Student Data** (*attached to consultation record*):

- Discipline Reports
- Grades
- Benchmarks Assessments/Reading Level
- Attendance
- Cumulative file
- Parent Contact Information
- Teacher Observations
- IEP/Section 504 Information
- Health Records
- Previous Interventions

**Issue/Concern:**

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**Desired Outcome(s):**

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**Outcome Measurements:**

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**Action Plan:**

<b>Post Meeting Responsibilities</b>		
<i>Follow-Up Strategies:</i>	<i>Person Responsible:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
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<i>Assess Progress Toward Student Outcomes:</i> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/>

*Provide copies of completed record to participants.*

*Note.* Adapted from “Professional School Counselor Consultation Guide: A Professional School Counselor’s Guide to Consulting and Collaborating,” by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015.