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Social-Emotional and Ethical Learning of Younger Schoolchildren in the Formation of Civil and Historical Competence

Introduction

We are all connected to one another in the modern world. The challenges we face and will face future generations require cooperation between countries, races, and religions.

We must see each other not enemies or competitors for limited resources, but brothers and sisters in a common home – our planet. And this requires new thinking that recognizes the interdependence between people and the need to solve problems and stimulate change through dialogue and collaboration. We cannot empathize only with those who are similar to us in nationality or religion; we must be sensitive to everyone, because we are all people first.

Compassion is taught by every religion, but in order to engage all of humanity, a universal ethical approach is required: a secular ethic that

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upholds basic human values – empathy, tolerance, forgiveness and love. Recent research has shown that these values can be nurtured if the learning process is based on sound judgment, experience and scientific data. They sprout in the hearts and minds, not through the imposition of rules but through curiosity and logical thinking.

In the mid-1990s, Daniel Goleman published a book *Emotional Intelligence* to argue for so-called “emotional literacy” – when children learn to distinguish their own emotions, give themselves advice, and empathize with others. The book also talked about how to use this skill to develop harmonious relationships and make mature social decisions.

Since then, this teaching has become widespread: today, schools around the world are realizing that education is not just formal knowledge. This movement was called social-emotional learning, or SEE Learning. The best training programs are based on advanced scientific data and research findings on the brain and emotions.

Learning the heart is a key part of his vision for a better future for humanity. In order to move in the right direction, we must help students and students build an internal “ethical compass”, the core of which is empathy and which would be a lifelong benchmark for them. According to the Dalai Lama, the “people of the 20th century” have caused global problems – deepening economic inequality, increasing confrontation “we against them”, a general rise in temperature on the planet – which will have to solve “people of the 21st century”.

SEE Learning is also based on the principles outlined in Daniel Goleman’s and Peter Sange’s book *The Triple Focus: A New Approach to Education*. The authors advocate an educational process that would instill the ability to empathize, teach keen attention, and give students an understanding of the global systems that shape our lives – from economics to Earth science.

Throughout the world, civic education for the young generation is a matter of interest for government, public figures, national and international organizations, and education professionals.

Ideas of civic education and upbringing have always been relevant in national pedagogical thought. Significant contribution to substantiation

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of urgent problems of civic education of young people, formation of national identity in it, coverage of the essence of citizenship, disclosure of psychological and pedagogical and ethnographic bases, importance of forming value orientations of personality, as the basis of its civic competence. S. Rusova, G. Vashchenko, O. Vyshnevsky, V. Sukhomlinsky, V. Andrushchenko, R. Artsyshevsky, I. Bekh, M. Boryshevsky, I. Ziazun, P. Ignatenko, O. Kirichuk, V. Kremen, L. Kritskaya, V. Orzechkovskaya, O. Sukhomlinskaya, G. Filipchuk, K. Chorna and others.

The result of civic education is civic competence. Contemporary domestic researchers understand, under civic competence, the ability of an individual to actively, responsibly and effectively exercise civil rights and responsibilities for the development of a democratic society.

An important structural element of historical consciousness that influences the formation of patriotic feelings is historical knowledge. Only knowledge that fosters a person’s worldview culture becomes an integral part of historical competence. By historical competence, we understand the integrative moral and ethical quality of a person’s self-definition of personality, which characterizes the ability of the individual to consciously treat the historical heritage as part of the cultural capital of man and nation, to form a socio-moral position, which is objectified in patriotism, civic activism, civic activism meaningful, and therefore responsible decision about the future of the nation, state and humanity as a whole.

The importance of socio-emotional and ethical learning to shape the civic and historical competence of younger students in lessons I explore the world is difficult to overestimate. It is this that lays the groundwork for grounded knowledge and will ensure the formation of 21st century skills, which is one of the goals of the New Ukrainian School reform concept.

The purpose of the research is to analyze modern theoretical and organizational-procedural approaches to social-emotional and ethical learning of junior schoolchildren in the implementation of civic and historical education.

Objectives of the research. To reveal the essence of socio-emotional and ethical learning, to identify and characterize its three dimensions, to
analyze the levels of SEE Learning, to substantiate the key learning trajectories.

**Research methods.** Methods of theoretical analysis have been developed: analysis and systematization of psychological-pedagogical and scientific-methodical literature, method of terminological analysis.

**Presentation of the main theses**

SEE Learning is built on three dimensions that correspond to the types of knowledge and competencies that SEE Learning seeks to impart to students:

− awareness;
− empathy;
− involvement.

Each of these dimensions can be considered at three levels:

− personal;
− social;
− systemic.

This structure is based on the evidentiary results of CES (social-emotional learning) and is in line with the model proposed by authors D. Goleman and P. Senge in the book *The Triple Focus*: attention to self, attention to others, and attention to interdependence and systems.

The three dimensions of SEE Learning – awareness, empathy and engagement – are very closely linked and therefore overlap. Each contains a set of competencies that can be taught individually but best viewed in a shared context.

To act constructively (as an individual or as a team), you must first understand the problem. The second step is to engage in it emotionally: it is motivating to act (empathy). And the third step is to act skillfully (involvement). It is a triad of awareness, empathy and skillful engagement that can bring the best results for the person and their environment. It resonates with another: head – heart – hands. The SEE Learning breaks it down into three dimensions to make it easier for students to master each of them individually and then understand together.


Empathy

The structure of social-emotional and ethical learning is based on the principle of empathy. It builds all three dimensions of SEE Learning. Compassion is an attitude towards oneself, others and humanity as a whole through the lens of goodness, empathy and attention to positive emotions and suffering. Because the values taught by SEE Learning are based not on orders but on personal understanding, it is impossible to cultivate kindness and empathy through instruction to be kind and compassionate. Critical thinking is very important for empathy, but not just any, but a specific type aimed at understanding one's personal needs, desires and values and the environment. It also includes the ability to recognize what factors lead to lasting well-being, both one's own and others.

Those who are able to practice such an outlook not only for themselves but also for others, are also able to understand their needs – and therefore take into account humanity as a whole.

The other two dimensions are largely supportive of measuring empathy. Awareness of one's own emotional and other people's states, especially when they are experiencing happiness or suffering, is very important for building empathy for themselves and others. Awareness of interdependence and the systems within which we co-exist with others is critical to our effective engagement as empathy-driven citizens of the world. Involvement and skills that build empathy for themselves, the environment and the wider community need to be learned; only when they are mastered do they become expressions of empathy and concern.

Dr. Tupthen Jinpa, a prominent empathy researcher and author of Stanford University's Compassion Education Program, gives the following definition of empathy: “the feeling of anxiety that arises when we face another person's suffering and the motivation to ease that suffering”. Dr. Jinpa explains further: “Empathy enables one to respond to the suffering of understanding, patience, and kindness – not, say, fear or rejection... Empathy is the bridge between feelings of empathy and acts of kindness, generosity, and other manifestations of altruism”.

2 T. Jinpa, A Fearless Heart: How the courage to be compassionate can transform our lives, New York 2016.
Accordingly, the whole SEE Learning system is based on understanding what empathy is, and communicating this understanding to students, teachers, and all participants in the educational process.

Ideally empathy should emerge at every stage of social, emotional and ethical learning. It creates the context for the implementation of SEE Learning in schools and for the teaching of each individual competence; it is also a desirable result of the introduction of social, emotional and ethical learning – for the whole school community to practice empathy on a daily basis, thereby contributing to the personal well-being of each and everyone, the well-being of the community and the development of the world at large.

For apprenticeships to acquire SEE Learning competences in the learning environment, empathy must become the conscious position of schools that introduce social, emotional and ethical learning. When teachers and parents, mothers, and other participants in school life are empathized with everyday behaviors, with regard to discipleship and with each other, this position is intertwined with the school environment. When empathy is a common value of the school community, it helps teachers nurture this quality among students.

That is why SEE Learning recommends that teachers and school administrations learn the concepts and methods of this program personally. This will help them to establish positive relationships with each other and with their own example to demonstrate the values of SEE Learning to their students and students. If a school joins the SEE Learning program, but poorly demonstrates its values, competencies and principles through the conduct of teaching and leadership, as well as through the organization of school structures, students and students will notice this discrepancy. It can complicate the perception and learning of the learning material by the students. Recently, an article about the school atmosphere stated that a positive atmosphere at school contributes to reducing violence and harassment, and to improving learning conditions. There are such words: “The learning process is essentially related to the relationships within the team. The norms, goals, values and mechanisms of interaction on which school relationships are based also shape the atmosphere at school. One of the most important aspects of a school relationship is the way their participants feel so connected. In
terms of psychology, relationships are not just about interacting with others, but also with oneself; about how we feel and how we care about ourselves”.

It has been proved that socially vulnerable children in more unfavorable environments show more negative developmental outcomes, and in favorable ones more positive ones. More and more scientific studies confirm the positive effects of kindness and anxiety on the level of the hormone stress and the immune system in children and even animals. Compassion and good attitude in the school environment have a huge impact on the academic success and physical health of the student body.

**Awareness**

Mindfulness is the cultivation of a deep personal understanding of thoughts, feelings and emotions.

Mindfulness refers to the ability to very subtly and deeply perceive internal and external phenomena, including our own inner life, the presence and needs of others, and interdependence as a feature of our own lives and the systems in which we are. Practice and keen attention are needed to cultivate this awareness – and the SEE Learning program just considers attention to be a skill that, unlike many others, can be honed. By learning to listen to one's own inner states, the presence of others, as well as the broader systems, one can develop what D. Goleman calls “a focus on oneself, others and beyond.”

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6 D. Goleman, P. Senge, op. cit.
Engagement

Sometimes, a person is aware of a need or opportunity and feels anxious or attentive to it, but lacks the ability to act skillfully and effectively. That is why engagement is the third dimension of social-emotional and ethical learning. Involvement is a method by which a person realizes in practice what he or she has realized through awareness and empathy. This dimension is about assimilating behaviors and habits of reactions, attitudes and skills that contribute to personal, social and public well-being. These include: at the personal level – managing one’s behavior, at the social level – the skills of socialization and the ability to understand others, at the systemic level – the involvement of the citizen of the world, the conscious presence of large systems and able to act within them in good faith and compassion.

Three levels of SEE Learning

When empathy becomes the foundation of social-emotional and ethical learning, it opens opportunities for students to become more aware of their own actions and words, as well as to abandon actions that harm them and others. This is the first level of SEE Learning, a personal one, that takes care of itself. The second level, social, extends this concern to others as well – it stimulates the development of empathy and empathy, as well as effective interpersonal and communication skills. And the third level is systematic, focused on helping students develop awareness, values and skills that are directed at the wider community, so that they grow up to be responsible and effective citizens of the world.

Personal level

The SEE Learning aims to help students and students on a personal level, interact with one another with their relatives, as well as with citizens and citizens of the world who make responsible decisions for the benefit of themselves and others. And although all three levels can be considered individually in any order, the personal level is to a large extent the basis for the social and systemic levels. In order to learn to take into account the interests of others and make complex ethical decisions, discipleship must be able to take care of itself. In order to learn to hear the needs of other people and large communities, including the entire
world, they must be able to listen to their own needs and inner life. In the context of social-emotional and ethical learning, this means the development of “emotional literacy” and the skills that are part of it, such as attention. Emotional literacy has many aspects. These include the ability to recognize emotions, to relate them to a broader context, including their own needs, to be able to understand the effects of particular emotions, and to be successful in dealing with them. Emotional literacy enables students and students to move away from reactive and impulsive behavior that can harm both themselves and others, and empowers them with a calm mind to make adequate decisions for the benefit of their long-term interests. In short, it is an extremely important skill for the well-being and success of the apprenticeship.

**Social level**

Emotional literacy and the ability to manage your behavior are invaluable skills for students not only during their school years, but throughout life. But people are social beings, so being able to interact with others is equally important. Although this skill was previously thought to be innate and unchanged, scientific research has shown that socialization skills can be nurtured through learning, reflection and conscious practices. Thanks to such education, the brain, body and behavior are changed in humans, and thus physical, mental and social well-being are improved. More and more data show that education aimed at educating happy children should give them not only the skills to manage their own behavior, but also social skills. The word “social” here refers to the immediate circle of communication of the child.

**System level**

But we are not only one-on-one interacting. The world is becoming increasingly complex, and empathy alone is not enough to reach the ultimate goal of effective ethical engagement at the planet level. It also requires responsible decision-making based on an understanding of the great systems in which we live. Without the ability to gauge the situation from different positions or the consequences of actions over time, even actions caused by good thoughts can lead to negative (albeit unintended) consequences. Today's discipleship is growing in an incredibly complex,
global and interdependent world. Current and future generations face complex and far-reaching challenges, and finding solutions will require new thinking and a problem-solving approach – one based on collaboration, interdisciplinary and a system-oriented approach

**Key learning trajectories**

To facilitate the acquisition and internalization of knowledge and skills, there are four key learning trajectories at each of the three levels of understanding at SEE Learning. Learning trajectories are pedagogical components that broadly outline ways of studying, critically evaluating, and internalizing diverse topics and skills in social, emotional, and ethical learning. These are called learning trajectories, because they must be clearly visible and therefore “laid out” throughout the program in order to allow students to gradually lower their knowledge and understanding on a sustainable basis.

The first key learning trajectory is critical thinking, which is an important part of the SEE Learning at all stages. In the structure of social-emotional and ethical learning, critical thinking is the exploration and study of topics and processes through logical reasoning, multiple perspectives, dialogues, discussions, and other similar activities designed to give students a deeper and more thorough understanding of the material. Critical thinking is of great importance in SEE Learning, since the emotional and ethical literacy that this program fosters cannot be planted from the outside or from above – they sprout from a steady inner understanding that is consistent personal experience and realities of the outside world. This is why critical thinking in the SEE Learning program is also about encouraging children to come up with compelling arguments, to participate in sound reasoning, and to study the process through the search for the right questions, not the willingness to answer the right questions. One aspect of critical thinking is also the cultivation of “epistemological humility”: openness to possible mistakes, the realization that knowledge is always partial and limited, and can be supplemented by additional information and other views, as well as the recognition that over time human views develop and are changing. All this helps to engage in dialogues, discussions and debates without excessive emotionality, which can be damaging when their participants are too
attached to their own views or miss the opportunity to gain new knowledge in the discussion process.

The second key learning trajectory is reflective practices. These are activities in which the apprenticeship is structured and consistently focuses on its internal experiences in order to gain a deeper personal understanding and to learn the skills and topics discussed in the classroom. These are first-person exercises in the sense that students and students try to pass the learning material through themselves – through attention, contemplation, and reflective observations. These include a variety of practices: listening to the senses of the body, paying attention to breathing, noticing the short duration of thoughts and emotions, and the impact of some of them on the body and mind. Mindfulness – as well as analysis and critical thinking – is based on the second category of reflective practices, to which, for example, discussing a topic with long-term fixed attention and considering the topic from different angles.

Reflective practices are the basic tools for gaining rich knowledge and deepening them to a level of critical reflection, and therefore an incarnate understanding. Some schools find it comfortable to consider reflective practices as secular meditation, while to others, this approach may seem undesirable because meditation practices are sometimes associated with religion. In some schools, these practices take the form of mindfulness exercises that promote cognitive learning and are based on the latest teachings of neuroscience and brain development science.

The third key learning trajectory is the scientific perspective. As SEE Learning looks at ethical development largely through the cultivation of emotional literacy, it is important that the teaching and discipleship gradually receive a basic scientific basis for understanding emotions and other topics of the program. In this context, “scientific perspective” means a way of knowing that is related to the generally accepted scientific understanding of ourselves and the world in which we live. In other words, some topics in the fields of biology, psychology and neurobiology may be useful in the study of CESE materials. Teachers do not have to be experts in these fields – the SEE Learning program has added background explanatory materials. Apprenticeships will have a better understanding of the program, and (along with the teachers) will be more motivated to work with it if they understand the scientific background of
the curriculum. Science, like common sense and experience, helps to form a foundation for ethics unrelated to specific cultures or religions. Since science is based on empirical evidence and the theory and practice of cause and effect relationships, the educational trajectory of the scientific perspective also contributes to the development of critical thinking. In addition, it complements the personal approach of the learning trajectory of reflective practices, giving a sideways perspective – thereby helping to formulate a holistic and complete approach to the study of SEE Learning topics.

The fourth and final key learning trajectory of the SEE Learning is active learning. This term refers to educational strategies and methods that involve the active participation of students in the process of assimilation of the material, rather than its passive and static consumption. Active learning has the following components:

− collective learning (group projects, discussions initiated by pupils and students, joint games);
− creative expression (art, music, writing, public activities);
− public engagement projects (service projects);
− eco-learning (for example, direct interaction with the natural world.

Active learning complements the rest of the learning trajectories and gives students the opportunity to directly and directly practice what they are learning at the concept level, as well as to participate in hands-on exercises that are then Like other key learning trajectories, active learning makes it easier for students to transition from level to level: from acquired knowledge to critical reflection and incarnation.

Conclusions

During the study of each SEE Learning component, teachers and teachers will strive to facilitate the learning process at all three levels of understanding – the levels of knowledge gained, critical reflection and embodied understanding. They will provide materials, help students better understand them to reach critical thinking levels, and reinforce knowledge and understanding through hands-on activities and re-
acquaintance, which in our view will contribute to the formation of civic and historical competency for younger students.

The SEE Learning curriculum is designed to impart to the students the skills and values associated with the goals of specific dimensions, while enhancing competences from different dimensions. That is, teachers can relate topics from different dimensions. In other words, the advantage of social-emotional and ethical learning is that it offers specific strategies for developing key skills in each of the three dimensions so that these skills reinforce each other.

Bibliography


Abstract

The essence of the concepts “historical competence”, “civic competence”, “emotional literacy” is highlighted. It is substantiated that socio-emotional and ethical learning (SEE Learning) is based on three dimensions that correspond to the types of knowledge and competencies that SEE Learning seeks to transfer to students: awareness, empathy, involvement. Three levels of SEE Learning are characterized: personal, social, systemic.

Four key learning trajectories have been identified and analyzed to facilitate the acquisition and internalization of knowledge and skills at each of the three levels of understanding at SEE Learning. It is established that educational trajectories are pedagogical components that broadly outline the ways of studying, critically evaluating and internalizing various topics and skills of socio-emotional and ethical learning.

keywords: socio-emotional and ethical learning, civic and historical education, historical competence, civic competence, emotional literacy

słowa kluczowe: uczenie się społeczno-emocjonalne i etyczne, edukacja obywatelska i historyczna, kompetencje historyczne, kompetencje obywatelskie, umiejętności emocjonalne