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Empowerment Through Research: Bridging Academia and Society

Captains & Poets:

A pilot project to deliver and evaluate a specifically designed program to enhance children's emotional wellbeing and emotional regulation.



CAPTAINS & POETS

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Background:

Captains & Poets is a unique primary and secondary curriculum that bridges Social Emotional Learning (SEL) with Inclusion & Belonging Programming by fostering deeper connection to self and others. The premise of the program is that there is a unique Captain and Poet in each of us that, in partnership, enable us to be our best selves. Self-awareness becomes the foundation of self-leadership which becomes the foundation of effective leadership in the world. Captains & Poets is on a mission to empower as many young people as possible with an inner compass for navigating the world around them. By inspiring connection to self and others, it encourages a healthier sense of well-being and identity, more positive relationships, and greater sense of agency and purpose in the world.

Context of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is concerned with fostering children's social and emotional skills within educational settings, alongside their academic skills (Gedikoglu, 2021). This can include developing young people's relationships, communication, decision-making, self-esteem, and behaviour. It can play a central role in helping children to develop the skills for educational success and lifelong wellbeing (Durlak et al., 2011; Durlak, 2016).

Captains & Poets utilises the CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning) framework which fosters knowledge, skills and attitudes across 5 areas of social and emotional competence (casel.org).

Research structure:

The research design is the first phase of a small-scale action research project, training, delivery, and an evaluation of the pilot training program using a selection of materials.

The **aims of the research** are to:

- Establish if the Captains and Poets program is compatible with the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) element of the English National Curriculum.
- Evaluate the impact of the pilot program towards enhancing support for children's emotional wellbeing and emotional regulation through a specifically designed training program.

Impact on teaching:

- The first phase of this project has highlighted the value of developing competences rather than just cascading knowledge in a curriculum
- Reaffirmed the desire to educate students to be skillful professionals who are self-aware, able to build effective relationships, contribute to a more inclusive society
- Sustainable practice – highlighted the need to build SEL into our courses so we model healthy behaviours to our students who in turn model them to the children in their care

Initial results:

- Captains & Poets program shares **few similarities** with PSHE curriculum
- Captains & Poets program places emphasis on developing competences and cultivating attitudes particularly in the area of 'responsible decision-making' whereas the learning objectives of the PSHE curriculum often focus on knowledge of topics such as Healthy Lifestyles and Physical Wellbeing
- Next steps: explore how the program might fit into UK education provision

References:

CASEL (2024) What is the CASEL Framework?
<https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/>
Accessed 1 May 2024

Durlak, J. A. (2016). *Programme implementation in social and emotional learning: Basic issues and research findings*. Cambridge Journal of Education, 46(3), 333–345

Gedikoglu, M. (2021) *Social and emotional learning: an evidence review and synthesis of key issues*
Education Policy Institute: London