LEARNING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS

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THE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL NATURE OF LEARNING
Learning is intrinsically social and emotional
Imitation is a very powerful learning mechanism, from infants…

Imitation is a very powerful learning mechanism, from infants... ...to adults
Human interaction – social and emotional – provides the basis for learning.
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Gaze and Language Learning: Gaze Following + Pointing Predicts Vocabulary Growth (SES controlled)

Words Produced

Age in Months

- High Social Gaze Following & Pointing
- Low Social Gaze Following & Pointing

Children Can Not Learn Language from a Television

Infants attend to the lights and colors on a television, but they do not learn language from the television presentation.

Kuhl et al., Proceedings of the National Academy of Science, 2003
Social interaction, socio-cultural identity, and emotion affect human learning
But, do we organise learning in such a way that it also fosters social and emotional learning?
But, do we organise learning in such a way that it also fosters social and emotional learning?
WHY WE NEED HIGHLY-DEVELOPED SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS
# 21st Century Skills

| **Ways of thinking** | • Creativity and innovation  
|                     | • Critical thinking, problem solving  
|                     | • Learning to learn, meta-cognition |
| **Ways of working** | • Communication  
|                    | • Collaboration (teamwork) |
| **Tools of working** | • Information literacy  
|                   | • ICT literacy |
| **Living in the world** | • Citizenship – local and global  
|                    | • Life and career  
|                    | • Personal, social responsibility |

Source: Microsoft-Intel-Cisco ATC21S project
Individual Skills for Innovation

Subject-based skills
(know-what and know-how)

Behavioural and social skills
(Self-confidence, energy, perseverance, passion, leadership, collaboration, communication)

Skills in thinking and creativity
(Critical thinking, ability to make connections, imagination, curiosity,...)
How to explain the impact of educational attainment on various social outcomes?

Adults with a tertiary education are half as likely to be obese as those with only a below upper secondary education.

Percentage of adults who are obese, by educational attainment (2011)
How to explain the impact of educational attainment on various social outcomes?

Proportion of adults reporting that they volunteer at least once a month, PIAAC literacy proficiency level (2012)

Certainly, foundation skills play an important role...
How to explain the impact of educational attainment on various social outcomes?

Proportion of adults reporting that they are in good health, by educational attainment and PIAAC literacy proficiency level (2012)

But foundation skills do not provide a full explanation…
How to explain the impact of educational attainment on various social outcomes?

• It is very difficult to understand and explain why education contributes to better social outcomes without adding social and emotional skills to the equation

• For some economists this is just another factor of ‘noise’, but individuals do not act as rational, profit-maximising beings, but also bring models, emotions, social connections, behavioural norms and values into their behaviour
Growing evidence that people need to mobilise a highly diversified set of mutually reinforcing skills to develop behaviour that allows them to cope with contemporary challenges and risks:

- Employment
- Health
- Political participation, civic engagement, social cohesion
- Violence, bullying
- Environmental behaviour
• Linking new insights from personality psychology and economics in addressing socio-economic challenges
• Novel empirical methodologies to come closer to demonstrating causal effects: taking into account measurement errors, endogeneity.
• Shedding light on interdependencies
What are social and emotional skills?

- Diverse labels used
  - non-cognitive skills, soft skills, character, personality, etc.

- Working definition
  - “individual capacities that can be (a) manifested in consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviours, (b) developed through formal and informal learning experiences, and (c) important drivers of socioeconomic outcomes throughout the individual’s life”
What are social and emotional skills?

**Social and Emotional**
- Relatively enduring patterns of thoughts, feelings & behaviours that reflect the tendency to respond in certain ways under certain contexts

**Achieving**
- Perseverance
- Self-control
- Passion for goals

**Working with others**
- Friendliness
- Respect
- Caring

**Managing emotions**
- Calm
- Optimism
- Confidence

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DO SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS REALLY \textit{MATTER}?
Do social and emotional skills matter?

• They can bring wider benefits to society
  – Literature reviews (Heckman, Kautz, Borghans and ter Weel)
  – Longitudinal analyses of 9 OECD countries

• Belgium (Flanders) Longitudinal Research in Secondary Education
• Canada Young in Transition Study
• Korea Korean Youth Panel Study
• New Zealand Competent Children
• Norway Young in Norway
• Sweden Evaluation Through Follow-up
• Switzerland Transition from Education to Employment
• United Kingdom British Cohort Studies
• United States Early Childhood Longitudinal Study
Do social and emotional skills matter?

Skills
  cognitive
  socio-emotional

Outcomes
  adolescence
  and adulthood

Tertiary education
  Employment
  Obesity
  Depression
  Violence
  Life satisfaction
Do social and emotional skills matter?

Panel D. United States

Probability of self-reported tertiary education completion by skill deciles

OECD (forthcoming)
Do social and emotional skills matter?

Panel A. Canada

Self-reported income at age 25 by skill deciles

OECD (forthcoming)
Do social and emotional skills matter?

Panel B. United Kingdom
Probability of being obese at age 16 by skill deciles

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Do social and emotional skills matter?

Panel C. Switzerland
Probability of self-reported depression at age 25 by skill deciles

OECD (forthcoming)
Do social and emotional skills matter?

OECD (forthcoming)
Do social and emotional skills matter?

Panel B. *New Zealand*

Probability of being happy at age 20, based on self-reports, by skill deciles

OECD (forthcoming)
Do social and emotional skills matter?

• They can bring wider benefits to society
  – Literature reviews (Heckman, Kautz, Borghans and ter Weel)
  – Longitudinal analyses of 9 OECD countries
• They can enhance the powers of cognitive skills
Do social and emotional skills matter?

Probability of self-reported depression at age 25 in Switzerland, by deciles of cognitive skills for those in the top and bottom quartiles of the self-esteem distribution

OECD (forthcoming)
Do social and emotional skills matter?

- They can bring wider benefits to society
  - Literature reviews (Heckman, Kautz, Borghans and ter Weel)
  - Longitudinal analyses of 9 OECD countries
- They can enhance the powers of cognitive skills
- They can enhance the socio-economic returns to education
Do social and emotional skills matter?

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The importance of the “whole child”
- There are no social and emotional skills that work for all outcomes
- Skill complementarities “translating intentions into actions”
- Not always show positive effects (e.g., extraversion in Norway)

Silver bullet?

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Silver bullet?

- Diminishing (and eventually negative) returns?
  - e.g. Extreme persistence and self-esteem
- Social and emotional skills can be valued differently across cultures
  - e.g. Modesty
- Social and emotional skills can be valued differently across contexts
  - e.g. Talent valued in Google
  - “Smart creatures are impatient, outspoken risk-takers who are easily bored and change jobs frequently” (Eric Schmidt, former CEO of Google).
What are the main messages from OECD’s longitudinal analyses?

• Both cognitive and social and emotional skills matter for individuals’ life success.

• Social and emotional skills are particularly effective in improving a wide variety of social outcomes. While, cognitive skills are particularly important drivers of tertiary education and labour market outcomes.

• Skills that matter for future outcomes: conscientiousness (responsibility and persistence), sociability and emotional stability (self-esteem).
ARE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS RELEVANT FOR POLICY?
Policy relevance

- Policy-makers, teachers and parents can shape them
  - Age differences in social and emotional skills
helpful, unselfish, considerate, kind, forgiving, not quarrel

• Consistent with results from longitudinal studies
• Evidence suggest high malleability until adolescence (Cunha and Heckman, 2008 and Heckman, Cunha and Schennach, 2012)

Soto, et al. (2008)
Policy relevance

- Policy-makers, teachers and parents can shape them
  - Age differences in social and emotional skills
  - Successful intervention programmes: causal impact
**Policy relevance**

### Key features of promising intervention programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Family Involvement</th>
<th>Parent-child Attachment</th>
<th>Mentoring</th>
<th>Programmes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood (0-4)</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Abecedarian (US), Jamaican Supplementation Study, Head Start (US), Perry Pre-school (US), Chicago Child Parent Center (US), Sure Start (US)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood (5-9)</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Project Start (US), Seattle Social Development (US), Montreal Longitudinal Experimental Study (Canada)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescence (10-18)</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>Big Brothers Big Sisters (US), Entrepreneurs for Social inclusion (US), Becoming a Man (US), Pathways to Education (Canada), National Guard Challenge (United States), Job Corps (US), Dominican Youth employment Program, Year-up (US), Joven (Chile)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Successful early childhood and childhood interventions emphasise **positive parent-child attachment**, and involve parents in **training** programmes.
- Successful adolescent intervention programmes emphasise **mentoring** through hands-on work experience.
Policy relevance

- Policy-makers, teachers and parents can shape them
  - Age differences in social and emotional skills
  - Successful intervention programmes: causal impact
- Those targeted to disadvantaged family can be a cost-effective means to address social challenges
  - Helps reduce education, labour market and social inequalities
  - High rates of returns: good investment from a purely economic standpoint
- They can promote a new approach to socio-economic challenges
  - Social and emotional skills as among the key education policies
  - Education policy as part of economic, social and health policies
WHAT CAN THE OECD DO?
The role of the OECD

- Enhancing the evidence-base
The role of the OECD

• Enhancing the evidence-base
• Improve measurement
  – PISA 2012 and 2015
  – OECD Longitudinal Study of Skills Development in Cities
Framework – dynamics of skills development

- Childhood
- Early Adolescence
- Mid Adolescence
- Late Adolescence
- Early Adulthood

Age:
- 6
- 10
- 15
- 20
- 23

Skill

Contexts
Cities interested in participating

- Canada (Ottawa)
- Korea* (Seoul and Daegu)
- Japan (Tokyo-Suginami)
- Russia (Moscow)
- Brazil* (tbd)
- Mexico* (tbd)
- Norway* (Oslo)
- Netherlands (tbd)
- Argentina* (Buenos Aires)
- Chile* (tbd)
- Colombia* (Bogota)
- Norway* (Oslo)

* confirmed participation in the feasibility study
The role of the OECD?

- Enhance the evidence-base
- Improve measurement
  - PISA 2012 and 2015
  - OECD Longitudinal Study of Skills Development in Cities
- Stimulate policy dialogue and communication
  - Informal Ministerial: “Skills for Social Progress” in Sao Paulo, Brazil
KEY MESSAGES
Key messages

• Social and emotional skills matter for lifetime success

• Social and emotional skills can be observed and measured – The OECD can help drive the process of improving the measurements and expanding the evidence-base

• Future work should better understand:
  – learning contexts that foster socio-emotional skills;
  – skills trajectories over the life-course; and,
  – skills that influence future socioeconomic outcomes

• Policies and interventions can foster the development of social and emotional skills through various settings of learning
Thank you

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