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Abstract
Research has shown that social and emotional competence can be integrated using various classroom-based approaches. The integration of SEL into the ESL writing classroom will be an innovative way to teach pupils creative writing and enhance their writing skills. As a framework, SEL contextualizes the individual being within his or her social setting, which includes critical operating systems for academic and professional success, such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, social management, and responsible decision-making. Nonetheless, most of the studies on SEL done in Malaysia are focused on work performance and cultural adjustment for adults. Thus, this paper aims to explore the integration of SEL into the ESL classroom to improve creative writing. This approach aspires to develop a fuller understanding of SEL in promoting creative writing among the Year 6 pupils. It emphasises the need for social and emotional competency to adhere to the demands of 21st century learning skills. The participants of this study will be from a private school in Cyberjaya, Selangor. There will be 25 Year 6 pupils with intermediate proficiency involved in this study. The researchers will apply qualitative analysis to explore the benefits and limitations of SEL in the ESL classroom to improve creative writing skills. A questionnaire, a semi-structured interview, and observation notes will be used as data collection tools to confirm the qualitative findings. This study is hoped to be beneficial to ESL teachers and educators as it could be an innovative approach to assist them in teaching creative writing. It is suggested that future research should include the perceptions of English language teachers and educators from all levels of education as well.
Keywords: Creative Writing, ESL Learners, Innovative Pedagogy, Primary School, Social and Emotional Learning.

Introduction
Schools play an important role in developing the necessary skills and abilities for 21st century learning, specifically emphasising the importance of social and emotional competence. It comes at a pivotal juncture for Malaysia's school systems, which are grappling with a variety of pressures and behavioural difficulties. Social and emotional learning (SEL) is a crucial

element that, once implemented properly in schools, will serve as a foundation for producing a positive return on investment. With the Malaysian Mental Health Association raising concerns about the surge of children and teenagers experiencing emotional stress, the proper implementation of SEL in schools gives a lifeline to a system in desperate need of transformation.

For a principal reason, the Covid-19 pandemic has placed children under stress and resulted in some type of trauma for many children and teenagers. Pupils in Malaysia's ESL classes face a crisis of falling motivation as a result of academic loss and restricted exposure to a suitable English environment during lockdowns (Mahiswaran et al., 2021). They add that these factors have led to frustration and a significant uptick in anxiety, thus steering pupils to mismanage their social and emotional well-being. According to De Rosier (2004), SEL refers to the processes by which pupils acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills required to understand and manage their emotions, feel and show empathy for others, set and achieve positive goals, develop and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Consequently, teachers should integrate SEL into the ESL writing classroom by first addressing pupils' social and emotional wellbeing. In order to support pupils to acknowledge their emotions and feelings, teachers need to initiate healthy communication and utilise pupils' emotions as a source of creative and intellectual expression. Additionally, the learning culture 'becomes lighter, gentler, and more compassionate' (Ali & Nilufer, 2020). As a consequence, pupils will discover how social and emotional development aids in the improvement of their creative writing abilities.

McGee (2019) claims that writing is a recursive process that involves both cognitive and metacognitive processes. The task, the surroundings, the pupils' cognition and emotional processes, all affect the production of written text. She adds that creative writing contributes immensely to the improvement of other talents and also serves as a conduit for expressing one's emotions, ideas, and knowledge. Writing should be perceived and assessed as a competence that encompasses comprehension, thinking, developing, and creating abilities. In this regard, a process-oriented approach to writing skill development should be established. Creativity is defined as "the capacity to generate novel ideas that are startling but comprehensible, and also useful in some manner" (Boden, 2001). The creative features of pupils in the classroom are most evident in the texts they write, utilizing their writing ability. Closely associated with writing, it is also perceived as the act of expressing one's thoughts and emotions about a certain subject on paper via the use of one's imagination (Oral, 2012). As a result, creativity and writing ability are inextricably linked and identical.

Despite growing recognition of SEL competencies in academic achievements, there has been a lack of studies that examine the role of SEL in ESL teaching and learning (Bai et al., 2021). In Malaysia, most SEL studies are focused on the university and professional levels for cultural adjustment and job performance, respectively. In contemplation to bridge the research gap and seek an effective approach to address this subject, this paper aims to explore the integration of SEL in the ESL writing classroom to promote creative writing among Year 6 pupils. The integration of SEL into creative writing in this paper, is hoped to be an innovative way to teach the pupils creative writing and enhance their writing skills. The research question for this study is:

- How to integrate Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in ESL classroom to improve creative writing among Year 6 pupils?

Literature Review
SEL Framework: Four Competence Clusters and their Interrelationship
As a framework, SEL contextualizes the individual being within his or her social setting, which includes critical operating systems for academic and professional success, such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, social management, and responsible decision-making. It is essential to foster SEL in teaching and learning to develop pupils' social-emotional competencies. The implementation of SEL programmes resulted in significant beneficial outcomes in terms of social-emotional abilities, attitudes, behaviour, and academic achievement, as students' learning capacities were strengthened when they were provided with the opportunity to actively participate in their learning experiences (Durlak et al., 2011).

SEL competency is defined as the ability to recognise and control emotions, express care for others, build meaningful connections, make responsible choices, and deal successfully with difficult circumstances (CASEL 2020). In order to initiate a safe learning environment, SEL has been included in the general education curriculum across the United States of America, Europe and Scandinavian countries. In general, SEL helps to promote a healthy school environment, peer relationships, reduce emotional distress and thus improve academic performance.

A prevalent framework for SEL consists of four critical dimensions: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social management (Cefai & Cavioni, 2014). Self-awareness is a term that refers to the ability to perceive emotions, articulate one's interests and values, and appropriately appraise one's talents. Students should be able to recognise their emotions, comprehend their strengths and limitations, be aware of their objectives and strategies for achieving them using their strengths, have a sense of agency, and have a positive attitude toward learning after acquiring these abilities in learning (CASEL, 2020). Self-management refers to the ability to regulate one's thoughts, emotions, stress, and actions, control one's impulses, and persevere in the face of obstacles. More precisely, these abilities help pupils to self-regulate their emotions, including appreciating happy and negative emotions, planning, monitoring, and accomplishing objectives, solving issues, persisting in the face of hurdles, and participating in positive thinking. Social awareness is defined as the ability to understand and sympathise with others, as well as to notice and appreciate similarities and differences. This SEL component encompasses the capacity to express a feeling of community belonging, to exhibit prosocial attitudes and actions, to volunteer in the community, and to be aware of available social support and resources from family, school, and classroom (MindMatters, 2012). Social management entails both interpersonal skills and the ability to build and sustain healthy and productive collaborative partnerships. Students that possess these abilities can communicate effectively and have pleasant interactions with others, collaborate with others, seek and offer assistance and support, and sustain harmonious relationships with people and groups (Cefai & Cavioni, 2014).
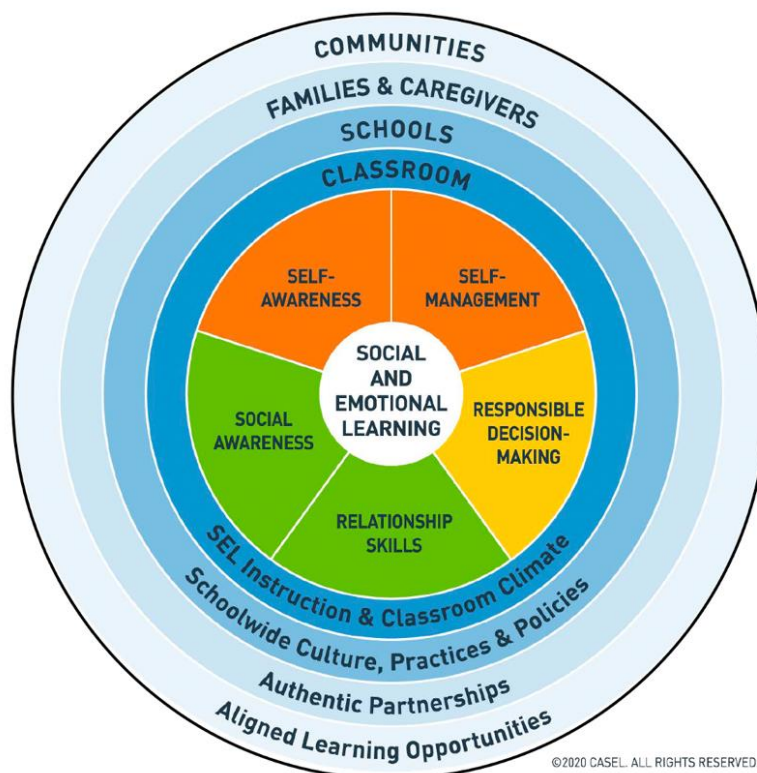
Figure 1: SEL Framework based on CASEL (2020)

It is important to note that current frameworks consider SEL competency as a combination of the different underlying skills that function to affect behaviours and learning. However, these frameworks omit explicit explanations of the internal relationships between different competence clusters, resulting in a lack of empirical studies to examine how the four current SEL competence clusters interact to influence especially primary school pupils' social and emotional behaviours as well as academic learning. The advantages of SEL extend beyond creative writing lessons, it has potential in the social and emotional development of pupils, making it one of the most promising techniques for teachers and educators to utilise in the teaching and learning process, particularly in primary ESL classrooms.

SEL in Creative Writing
Creative writing, as described by the National Association of Writers in Education (UK), is the study of writing, including poetry, fiction, theatre, and creative non-fiction, and its settings involve creative work and reflection on the process. Creative writing benefits all aspects of language development: grammar, vocabulary, phonology, and discourse. It pushes pupils to use the language in unique and rigorous ways to communicate their feelings and emotions. By doing so, pupils are compelled to interact with the language at a more sophisticated level of processing than is typical with explanatory writing (Bai et al., 2020).

One strategy for increasing students' motivation and engagement with creative writing is to provide opportunities for them to engage with the language on a more meaningful level. This can be accomplished by refocusing writing classes to make them more relevant to their social and emotional contexts and by designing writing tasks that are meaningful and interesting to them, as well as opportunities for social interaction and self-expression (Tracy & Melor, 2016).

Literary genres such as personal narrative and fiction writing could assist teachers in integrating SEL into the ESL writing classroom.

Creative writing may be a very effective way to increase one's emotional intelligence and resilience. Pupils who can access their ideas, feelings, and self-stories and then write them down physically and metaphorically give their selves a voice (McGee, 2021). They eventually grow to depend on writing to communicate, explore, and endure the challenges of life. Even pupils from the most chaotic circumstances benefit from writing because it enables them to impose some level of control and arrange their experiences.

It has been shown that when pupils use the social-emotional skills taught overtly and implicitly by their ESL teachers, the quality of their writing increases. Self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, relational skills, and responsible decision-making resulted in improved writing (McGee 2021). After all, writing, regardless of its formal or informal nature, originates from the emotions and feelings inside. As a result, the more emotionally intelligent the writer is, the more effective the writing is.

Integrating Social and Self-management into Fiction Writing

Integrating social and self-management into fiction may be incredibly beneficial as pupils learn to negotiate unpleasant emotions, particularly in difficult circumstances. According to Herrera and Alba (2021), ESL teachers should motivate pupils to channel their feelings into fictional writing to alleviate their emotional turmoil. Some of the greatest truths are revealed through works of fiction. According to them, when students develop fictional characters, they often learn more about emotions as well as how to manage their coping mechanisms.

Integrating Social and Self-awareness into Personal Narratives

Frequently, addressing emotions and feelings while writing about moments when those feelings are strong is the best method to develop social and self-awareness. Thus, it is pivotal for ESL teachers to encourage pupils to develop personal narratives. One of the most critical components of developing emotional intelligence is learning to identify feelings at a detailed level. Pupils often identify just a few common categories of emotions, such as anger, worry, or overwhelm. Pupils develop the ability to control their moods and build resilience when they can drill down and describe more precise emotions and then explore instances when they felt that way. This, nonetheless, proves that the purpose of SEL is resilience.

The Proposed Study

Most of the studies available explore more on the SEL competencies in job performance and cultural adjustment for professional and tertiary level, respectively. There is no integration of SEL studies in the Malaysian education context related to primary and secondary students. Thus, after reviewing and analysing the past studies, the researchers would like to propose this study to integrate SEL in ESL classroom in improving primary school pupils' creative writing.

This research will use a qualitative approach. However, researchers will utilise questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and observation notes to ascertain the advantages and drawbacks of incorporating SEL into creative writing for Year 6 pupils. This method is deemed appropriate as the researchers' purpose is to investigate the integration of SEL into an ESL

writing classroom in order to improve students' creative writing abilities. Additionally, the data will be gathered from these methods which serve the purpose of fulfilling the research objective below:

- To study the integration of SEL into ESL classroom to improve creative writing among Year 6 pupils.

Participants and Settings

The participants in this research will be 25 Year 6 pupils who have been chosen based on the study's criteria. Due to the fact that it is a newly established private school in Cyberjaya, the Year 6 class has a modest number of pupils. The competence level of the pupils' ranges from intermediate to advanced, since English is their main language of communication with teachers and classmates. Purposive sampling is used to identify participants for this article. Participants must be at least 12 years old and have a near-identical level of English writing proficiency. Additionally, they must possess fundamental writing abilities that enable them to finish the assignment on their own. These criteria will aid researchers in selecting participants since they should specify the purpose of the study, the population to be studied, and the sort of data to be gathered. To adhere to ethical standards in the study, only volunteers have considered research subjects. The consent of parents and the voluntariness of participants will be the most critical factors in the selection process. Following that, consent letters will be sent to parents informing them of their children's involvement in the research.

Discussion

Numerous studies have shown that social and emotional competence can be incorporated through the use of a range of classroom-based techniques. This study focuses to examine Year 6 students' overall creative writing abilities after integrating SEL into their writing lesson. The current study will be able to educate ESL teachers and others working in similar settings from a pedagogical approach. The first criteria to initiate this integration, pupils must acquire a solid understanding of the critical role of SEL development in their creative writing abilities and the linkages between their self-awareness and emotional control. ESL teachers can support pupils in recognizing the significance of such connections in order to accomplish desired creative writing outcomes.

Given the predictive significance of SEL competence on English learning performance, efforts should be made to nurture pupils' SEL competence through the encouragement of positive emotions in creative writing. Enhancing pupils' SEL competence is a positive step to cultivate their successful creative writing abilities. Teachers will begin the integration in increasing pupils' awareness by having discourse about self-awareness, positive emotions, persistence, and motivation in expressive writing. Additionally, they will guide pupils with successful techniques to enhance their positive emotions. Teachers will be encouraged should take a keen interest in their pupils' emotional well-being. Also, since self-management abilities have a high mediating influence, additional emphasis should be directed to building students' self-management skills throughout English learning. As to be more precise, English language teachers may be encouraged to support pupils in acquiring abilities for constructively managing their emotions and actions. Pupils should be taught how to persevere through difficult activities, concentrate their attention, create objectives, and solve learning difficulties.

Past SEL research has provided some practical recommendations to promote SEL competence that could also shed light on English teaching. English teachers' instructions should include coaching, discussion, modeling, feedback, processing and reflecting, peer mentoring and collaborative learning (Cefai & Cavioni, 2014). More importantly, research has shown that teachers' emotional abilities were positively linked with creativity, classroom management, pedagogical skills and positive attitudes towards pupils (Dewaele & Mercer, 2017) In this regard, socially and emotionally competent English teachers are needed because they are more likely to be effective in implementing SEL in the classroom by creating a positive and well-nurtured classroom culture through explicit teaching, positive reinforcement, role modeling and showing confidence (Jenning & Greenberg, 2009).

Limitation

The current research also had limitation that should be acknowledged. First, the study only involved Year 6 pupils from a private school in Cyberjaya. This may underrepresent the entire Malaysia primary pupil population. Further studies should expand the sample by including more grade levels and schools to enhance realizability of the findings. Despite rising acknowledgement of the importance of social and emotional skills in academic accomplishment, there has been a dearth of research on the function of social and emotional skills in ESL teaching and learning. In Malaysia, the majority of SEL studies focus on the university and professional levels, respectively, for cultural adjustment and work success. Hence, future researchers can consider the integration of SEL in pedagogical methods for teachers and/or educators to incorporate the skills in all levels of education.

Conclusion

The outcomes of this research are hoped to be useful and focus attention on the need of integrating SEL into ESL writing classes in order to develop creative writing skills, particularly among elementary school pupils. It is intended that this research would serve as a catapult for teachers and educators to embrace SEL to help students articulate themselves more successfully through the use of creative writing.

In conclusion, it is envisioned that this research will provide results that will act as a framework to increase public awareness of the value of incorporating SEL into ESL classrooms. Lastly, it is intended that the outcomes of this study would provide value as a pioneering research in Malaysia on the integration and use of SEL in Malaysian education system.

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