Implementation, Sustainability, and Scaling Up of Social-Emotional and Academic Innovations in Public Schools

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Abstract. Many attempts at bringing successful educational programs and products "to scale" as part of school reform, particularly in urban districts, have been disappointing. Based on the experiences of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and reviews of literature addressing implementation failures, observations about failures to "scale up" are presented. These include persistent structural features in educational settings that are too often unrecognized, the perpetuation of a narrow and decontextualized "programs and packages" perspective, poor management of time and other resources, and inadequate attention to characteristics of the adults who must carry out planned reforms. Several assumptions essential for success are identified, including the need to incorporate social and emotional learning as an integral part of academics and the ways in which diversity provides an ever-changing context for implementation. Concluding thoughts center around three points: the need to prepare professionals with the array of skills needed to lead efforts at scaling up school reform, the importance of an action-research perspective, and the need to better document the stories of educational innovation and scaling up efforts so that contextual details can enrich an understanding of what is required for success.

Rather than being seen as exceptions to the rule that schools cannot change, the development of a small number of innovative practices and schools may instead reflect the rule that schools can only change through the monumental effort, unusual resourcefulness, and strong leadership of key individuals or groups. (Hatch, 2000, p. 581)

The impetus for this article is the continuing discussion, in both the educational literature (e.g., Adelman & Taylor, 1997; Apacki, 2003; Cuban, 1998; Elmore, 1996; Lantieri, 2003; Odden, 2000) and mass media (e.g., *New York Times* stories about New York Mayor Bloomberg's attempt at system-wide reform), of the daunting challenge of expanding successful examples of school innovation and reform into widely replicated procedures. It is our view that bringing pilot programs, dem-

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onstration projects, or promising school reform practices to scale (i.e., "scaling up") requires special considerations too rarely discussed, including recognition that academic success rests on a foundation of social-emotional competencies that must be nurtured as part of mainstream education.

Use of analogies such as "scaling up," which conjure images of mass production of a tangible product so one can go from a local to a regional or a national market, create illusions about the nature of the processes necessary. Psychoeducational innovations are predominantly dependent on human operators, rather than technologies, for their implementation. Hence, analogies such as preparation for a sailing voyage (Elias, Bruene-Butler, Blum, & Schuyler, 2000) and that of orchestral or jazz composition and conducting (Elias, 1994; Kelly, 1979) may be more useful than those based on factory production (Elias, 1997).

In a similar way, the focus on standardized test scores in reading and math has clouded an understanding of the interrelationship between academic and social-emotional learning. Zins, Weissberg, Wang, and Walberg (2004) have gathered impressive evidence that school reform efforts dedicated to improving test scores at the expense of social-emotional development opportunities do little to serve children. A report commissioned by the U. S. Department of Education over a decade ago indicated that narrow approaches to academic instruction could lead to improved test performance among economically disadvantaged elementary school-aged youth, but did so at the expense of skills that are generalizable (Knapp, Shields, & Turnbull, 1992). That is, these children did not show corresponding gains in the practical, everyday, and higher order use of their test-linked skills in such areas as mathematical reasoning, reading with true comprehension, and writing text that clearly communicated their ideas. Evidence is mounting from the field of brain-based research that the process of learning, and especially retention with the flexibility needed for application in new contexts, is linked to social and emotional factors in students and in the teaching-learning environment (Brandt, 2003). There is grow-

ing international recognition that education must include all of the elements needed for success in school and must refocus to prepare children for the tests of life, not for a life of tests (Elias, 2003).

There are other important and converging reasons to look seriously at how schools have an effect on children's social-emotional well-being. Children who are hurting cannot learn effectively, and their presence in schools without getting needed attention drains energy, focus, and potential from the learning environment (Adelman & Taylor, 1997; Comer, Ben-Avie, Haynes, & Joyner, 1999). Further, the *NIMH Blueprint for Change: Research on Child and Adolescent Mental Health* (The National Advisory Mental Health Council Workgroup on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Intervention Development and Deployment, 2001) and the recent report on mental health released by the Surgeon General's office (U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999) raised important concerns about children's mental health and the prevention of problem behaviors. Among the needs identified were to improve access to care; promote greater interdisciplinary collaboration in developing intervention and prevention strategies; expand the array, reach, and quantity of mental health services provided to children; ensure that services are provided in a manner that is culturally sensitive; and bridge the research-practice gap.

Clearly, the front line for efforts to address children's social-emotional needs systematically is public education. Bacchetti (1999), writing in *Education Week*, expressed it well: "The school is an academic encounter with the great ideals that give skills meaning and the skills that give those ideas life. It is also an extended practicum in living and working together. When it succeeds, personal, economic, civic, and social capacities are established. When it falls short, it establishes instead, chronic, generation-long deficits and may even imperil social coherence and political stability" (p. 42). Well-functioning schools are indeed culturally responsive, provide services to all without stigma and with equal access, and build children's mental health normatively, as

well as through intervention and prevention programs. Further, schools must be concerned with effective practice and empirically supported interventions, which implies that efforts toward minimizing the gap between research and practice must be ongoing.

What happens when schools are incubators of anxiety, insecurity, and maltreatment? The social contract changes. Our relationships with one another change. School psychologists and other student support personnel are asked to fix individuals who are removed from the system, but the system continues to churn out social casualties. Therefore, successful, sustained, high-quality implementation of innovations related to social-emotional development of children is a high priority for education and those who work in schools. Such activities are a central way to operationalize the Blueprints and Surgeon General's goals (McLaughlin & Leone, 1997).

The intention in this article is to look at the literature on educational innovation with an eye toward feasibility and practicality, not possibility and exceptionality. The opening quote makes it clear that widespread implementation of effective educational innovations requires thoughtful realism about how it is simultaneously important, difficult, and possible.

Those who have written about elements important to successful diffusion of innovation (e.g., Comer et al., 1999; Cuban, 1998; Donahoe, 1993; Durlak, 1997; Fullan, undated; Small & Bumbarger, 2003) recognize that urban districts pose particular challenges to those seeking to scale up interventions in a sustained way. Yet, many share a moral responsibility to bring children in these districts forward, rather than simply to not leave them behind. Thus, although the focus here is general, special attention is paid to urban contexts, to ensure applicability to these settings. This is reflected in the set of assumptions that follows next. The most vexing, elusive, and largely unaddressed issues encountered related to implementation, sustainability, and scaling up are then raised. Finally, three structural, long-term recommendations to guide the emerging field of sustainability research and practice are presented.

Some Assumptions

Use a Strengths-Based Approach to Promote Competence in Naturally Occurring Contexts

There is no good alternative to a strengths-based approach to working with children. It involves (a) establishing positive relationships with children based on their assets and their potential contributions as resources to their schools, and (b) finding naturally occurring contexts in which they can enact positive roles for which they must learn skills to be successful. After a number of years working with anger management and social skills groups in public schools, one author (MJE) and his colleagues, fed up with children's resistance to being cast into a context focused on deficit and remediation, opted to operationalize our rhetoric. This team created a Newspaper Club in the middle school as one of various "Club" period offerings, with a small wrinkle: Into it went all the students who were previously in an anger control group. The students were told that they were going to do a school newspaper, reporting on different things happening in the school so that people in the community, as well as the school, would know more about what school was really like. They were divided into two teams and started to outline the task ahead. An initial conversation addressed the skills that newspaper people needed to do their jobs well. What did they think some of these skills were? Interviewing... listening... knowing how to talk to other people... scheduling... keeping calm if someone says something upsetting... conflict resolution. Virtually the same activities that were resisted in the context of remediation were grasped with enthusiasm in the context of relating to the children as resources with strengths who could contribute positively to the school.

A converging message from many areas, including emotional intelligence, positive psychology, and the multiple intelligences, is the benefit of promoting competence through natural contexts and relationships. Starkman, Scales, and Roberts (1999) provide a well-articulated set of tools to assist schools interested in discovering and building upon existing de-

velopmental assets. Relationships, environments, programs, and practices in the schools are examined and arrayed according to how they build various asset categories: support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competence, and positive identity. Student outcomes are viewed as emergent from creating a positive, asset-building culture in the schools.

Brendtro, Brokenleg, and Van Bockern (1990) extend the focus to youth at greatest risk. Brendtro et al. believe that too often, we aspire to "fix" our youth or make them "OK." But simply remediating them is not sufficient to give them a maximum chance to strive and thrive in the society in which they will grow up. They urge that child-serving professionals have an unwavering belief that greatness resides in each child in some way, and then commit to help the child uncover it by finding situations that will nurture it. Levi (1999) refers to the "hidden intelligence" as that part of each child that is waiting and willing to respond to opportunity, encouragement, and nurturing. Once strengthened in this way, children are better able to deal with areas of functioning that are not as strong but can be developed through the child's strengths. In schools under Levi's supervision, contexts are created so that every child has a regular opportunity to exercise his or her hidden intelligence.

Creating those contexts is especially challenging amidst diversity, which is on the rise in many schools, especially in urban districts. Our view of diversity includes socioeconomic and cultural-ethnic factors, as well as individual differences in temperament, learning preferences, and abilities across the multiple intelligences, in both children and educators. Diversity represents the nonreplicable context in which the implementation of school reform takes place. Successful educational innovation and reform are dynamic because the configurations of diversity in schools are ever-shifting. The strongest schools appear to be those that are most able to build upon and utilize all of their diverse elements with greatest synergy (Nelson, Amio, Prilleltensky, & Nickels, 2000).

Social-Emotional Learning Plays an Essential Role in Academic Success

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, an interdisciplinary group of scientists, practitioners, and policy makers devoted to enhancing children's social-emotional and academic development (see www.CASEL.org), has undertaken a leadership role in examining the interplay of so-called academic and social-emotional intelligence. It is well established that social and emotional competencies, such as the ability to manage one's emotions, solve problems effectively, and work cooperatively with others, are an integral part of academic success. Conceptually, this relationship is depicted in Figure 1 (CASEL, 2003). Evidence-based SEL interventions and skill development should occur within a supportive learning environment, as well as help to produce such a climate. As a result, opportunities for reward are created and SEL competencies are developed and reinforced. These factors, in turn, lead to more risk reduction, asset building, and greater attachment and engagement in school. The final outcome is improved performance in school and life. This model is most applicable when learning is defined as children gaining knowledge to put to use in the real world. Embarrassingly little is known about the relationship between high stakes test score performance and knowledge-for-everyday-use, even while the proliferation of various "proficiency" tests continues. However, the empirical evidence supporting the basic SEL-academics relationship is growing.

Wilson, Gottfredson, and Najaka (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of 165 published studies of school-based prevention programs and found that those focusing on SEL resulted in improved outcomes related to dropout and non-attendance, important factors in school success. Caprara, Barbanelli, Pastorelli, Bandura, and Zimbardo (2000) found that changes in achievement around Grade 8 could be better predicted from knowing children's social competence 5 years earlier than from knowing their third grade academic achievement. Mitchell and Elias (2003) had similar results, predicting third grade achievement most strongly from social competence in second grade in an urban sample.
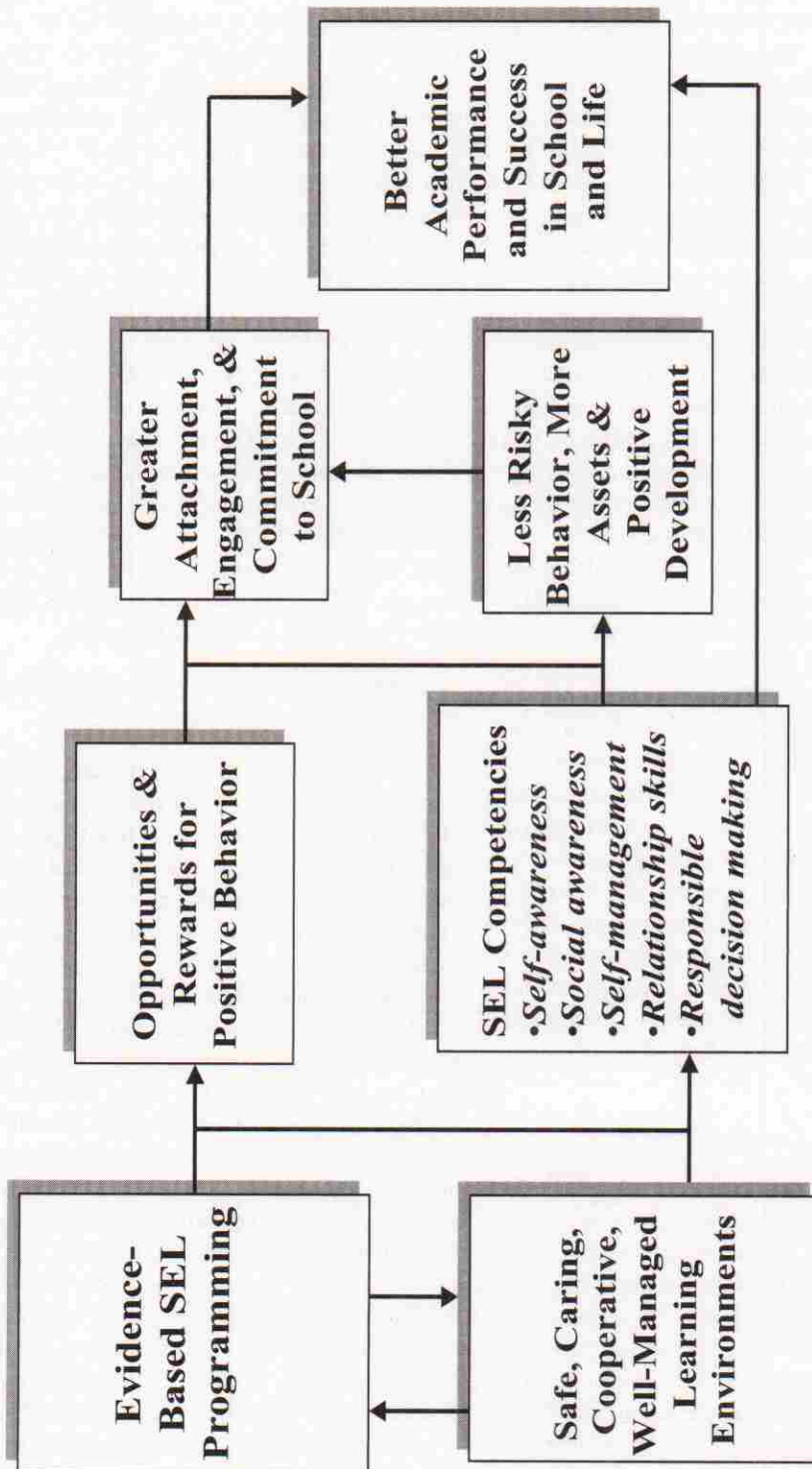
Figure 1. The relationship between social-emotional skills and academic outcomes.

CASEL's position is that all children have the developmental right to grow up knowledgeable, responsible, nonviolent, drug-free, and caring; to acquire the inclination and skills to be productive contributors to their schools, families, workplaces, and communities; and to take on the responsibilities of being participatory citizens of a democracy. The issue should not be framed as a choice between intellectual and social-emotional development, IQ and EQ, or academic and inter- and intrapersonal skills. Sound education requires an equivalent focus on EQ *and* IQ, and all schools must deal with this reality. Experienced administrators recognize that retreating to the seemingly easier, safer, and more straightforward task of focusing on academics may seem like a pragmatic necessity, but it will not yield life-long success (Elias, Arnold, & Hussey, 2003).

In CASEL's work with schools across the United States that have implemented SEL innovations, there have been improvements in their climate and no apparent declines in their academic standing. Comer's School Development Project stands out as an effort to integrate not only academic and social-emotional concerns but the larger structure of school mental health and community support systems into the basic package of education, particularly in urban schools (Comer, Haynes, Joyner, & Ben-Avie, 1996). In reading accounts of this project over many years, one cannot help but see the powerful role of other social-emotional factors as integral to educators' attempts to equip all students with their developmental rights.

The Effect of Poverty Must Be Considered Seriously and Realistically

The effect of poverty on children's learning and mental health is pervasive (e.g., Halpern, 1990). Why is it not more widely and explicitly recognized? Perhaps it is the subtle, corrosive nature of poverty, the hopelessness, the cumulative impact of inadequate schools and school leadership and constant staff turnover and administrative and policy changes, all of which virtually consign a cohort of children to failure. Poverty is not an acute condition, but a seemingly endless series of hurdles.

These hurdles can and have been overcome, but many students also grow weary of leaping through these hurdles and drop out of the race before the end. The energy spent on leaping prevents many students from getting as far as those who need only run. Poverty also involves a lack of resources at the personal, familial, and community-wide levels. It is reflected in older textbooks and closed libraries; few safe, decent play areas; and an insufficient number of conversations linked to school work and the state of the world, now and tomorrow (Comer et al., 1999). Miron, St. John, and Davidson (1998), in a case study of the implementation of the Accelerated Schools model in two urban districts in New Orleans, found that change did not take place unless issues related to poverty, racism, and single-parent families were addressed clearly and strongly. They identify these issues as essential to long-term sustainability, as distinct from more surface issues such as curriculum and staffing.

Elusive Elements in Implementation, Sustainability, and Scaling Up

As noted earlier, there is a large literature addressing the components of successful efforts at implementing school innovation and reform, building social and emotional learning, and preventing problem behaviors (e.g., Durlak, 1998; Payton et al., 2000). However, these components must be viewed at best as necessary but not sufficient conditions for successful system-wide implementation. What are the essential elements in school innovations that we can "scale up"? Even widely acclaimed, evidence-based approaches to classroom organization and instruction that integrate both academics and SEL are dependent for their success on the delivery systems into which they are embedded (cf. CASEL, 2003). Further, their operation within those delivery systems occurs through a dynamic process of ongoing social-ecological adjustment and adaptation (CASEL, 2003; Cohen, 1999; Gager & Elias, 1997; Weissberg & Greenberg, 1998).

Diebold, Miller, Gensheimer, Mondshein, and Ohmart (2000) and Adelman and Taylor (2000) describe structural issues and management procedures essential for creating inte-

grated, working systems that can deliver educational innovation and the associated services needed by children. Yet, as they most likely would be the first to admit, effecting widespread implementation of their approaches has been fraught with difficulty. A useful analogy can be made to various nefarious elements that can threaten even the best-planned sailing voyage. Masses of seaweed, whirlpools, backtides, typhoons, hidden shoals, sandbars, and dead air are not inherently fatal but can only be overcome with maximum coordinated and sustained effort. But negotiating such difficulties taxes the skills of the crew. Many rough voyages—whether at sea or school—take a cumulative toll that cannot be ignored as subsequent innovations are being planned. Akin to the influence of nefarious sea elements are realistic field-based and literature-supported conundra, which are given too little consideration in discussions of efforts at dissemination and scaling up. Although they are next discussed separately, their operation and influence are clearly interdependent.

Problematic Structural Features in School Settings Are Not Recognized

Turnover and the innovation knowledge base. Hatch (2000) has reconceptualized the issue of turnover, which the literature on change has long identified as a problem. Based on a study of implementation of designs for the New American Schools Development competition, he suggests that organizations differ in their ability to absorb knowledge, which involves collecting, sharing, and elaborating the knowledge needed to pursue an innovation and explore new ideas effectively and efficiently. The more unfamiliar aspects of an innovation are, the harder it is to share information about it. This lack of clarity, in turn, reduces motivation to carry it out. Frequent turnover among project staff impairs the ability of organizations to develop the necessary knowledge base (though the latter can fail to develop in a stable staff, and still develop despite a certain amount of turnover). Hatch's (2000) study of the ATLAS project chronicled a loss of 20 of 25 staff the first year, half of the staff the second, and the director in the third. All of the

partner organizations had changes, including pending or actual leadership changes. This situation is replicated in many schools, especially those in urban environments. Rates of attrition in teachers have been estimated as being as high as 50% among new teachers within their first 3 years, and superintendents of schools stay an average of 2 years. In addition, there is a core of people who remain in the schools who are disengaged and undermotivated, but are unwilling or unable to leave their current positions (Cherniss & Adler, 2000). Hatch concludes that we underestimate the investments needed to get new ideas explored and established and to work through turnover problems until a critical mass of adherents to an innovation is in place. Further, turnover may be symptomatic of other problems to address before undertaking change.

Reinforcement systems favor short-term limited gains. Simple programs are easier to explain, easier to sell, and easier to manage. The politics of school board elections and tax levies, along with superintendent turnover, create pressure to show quickly that one's work is good. Long-term dangers accrue when one bypasses the front-end time needed to build constituencies committed to the goals and the process of change; to look honestly at the current state of conditions, services, and resources; and to establish management capacities that will allow change efforts to persist over time and through changes in leadership (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1995).

Narrow Programs-and-Packages Perspectives Perpetuate Problems in Scaling Up

Interventions are rarely delivered as planned. Chen (1998) and others discuss the importance of differentiating the intervention as planned, the actual system set up to implement the intervention, and the intervention as delivered. But there is another facet that should be added: the intervention as received (cf. Greenberg, Domitrovich, Graczyk, & Zins, in press). To put it most simply, if children are inattentive, a classroom is chaotic, or the material is not at the right developmental level,

"delivery" by instructors may not strongly predict children's skill acquisition and use. In essence, any theory and causal factors that are incorporated into the planning process exist only in the form and to the extent to which they are both delivered and received. Outcome measurement, however precise or imprecise, reflects the passage of theoretically salient components (i.e., active ingredients or key elements) as they funnel through the implementation system. Thus, even under the relative rigor of randomized trials, it is still difficult to pinpoint exactly what is creating the effects that are observed. It is also difficult to pass firm judgment on a theory's effectiveness, because so many factors intervene and interact with the key elements in unknown ways. Further, interventions' active ingredients often have not been identified by program developers. These are the kinds of issues that have not been fully considered in the rapidly emerging literature on evidence-based interventions.

These implementation issues have clear implications for research and important practical significance. Many schools already have mandates for violence prevention, bully prevention, drug prevention, character education, and the like, and existing program structures become intertwined with the delivery system of any innovation. Urban schools also find themselves under pressure to improve students' academic performance, often dramatically, as well as to deal with myriad complex social problems. With good intentions, schools often adopt "validated" academic programs. However, within a single school, these various programs may not share common theoretical and pedagogical approaches. Relatedly, when different elementary schools in a district use different approaches to instruction, whether for social-emotional competence or reading or math, educators must be concerned with how these come together in middle schools.

Gager and Elias (1997), in a study of 550 school districts in New Jersey, found that validated programs were sometimes successful and sometimes not. Sometimes, they were effective in places where implementation was not fraught with difficulty and sometimes they failed in those places; and sometimes they succeeded in difficult circumstances and sometimes they did not. The key variable was not the program per se, but the conditions of implementation, which included the broader context into which a program was entering. Table 1 summarizes the specific factors that led evidence-based programs to have successful implementation.

Clearly, there is no better alternative than starting from a foundation of evidence-based programming that has been developed over the past 20 years. However, these efforts are limited in that they need to be adapted to the circumstances in which they are currently being implemented. Too often, it is assumed that evidence-based programs can be "plugged in" and then work effectively. How academic and social-emotional development programs fit with one another and with the rest of the school day matters a great deal to learners. Creating this fit takes more time to work out than one might infer from written accounts or presentations. Children's and implementers' own histories of receiving and delivering interventions provide rich contextual background for how a delivery system will be shaped and how it will operate.

The operating theory of learning and action is rarely explicated. Every innovation contains an implicit theory of how people learn. This theory is embedded in the design of lessons, in their duration and structure, in their sequence over years, and in the way in which staff training and support are designed. Brandt (2003) made the compelling, though somewhat obvious, point that learners have one brain and it is that same brain that has to do academic work and life survival and advancement. Therefore, operating theories of learning and action need to take into account how and when people will learn about a program and then put its principles into practice. In urban settings, for example, survival questions are not trivial. What is more likely to occupy children's time, attention, and interest—the great books or the great quarrels going on in their homes and the great dangers of their neighborhoods? If we want the answer to be the great books, which it can be, we must ratchet up the instructional ante to make sure

Table 1
Factors Associated with Successful, Enduring Implementation of Evidence-Based Prevention/Social-Emotional Learning Programs

- Presence of a program coordinator or committee to oversee implementation and resolution of day-to-day problems

- Involvement of individuals with high shared morale, good communication, and a sense of ownership

- Ongoing processes of formal and informal training, including the involvement of acknowledged experts

- High inclusiveness of all school populations

- High visibility in the school and the community

- Components that explicitly foster mutual respect and support among students

- Varied and engaging instructional approaches

- Linkage to stated goals of schools or districts

- Consistent support from school principals

- Balance of support from both new and seasoned administrators

we can grab and keep children's attention and make schooling a genuine relief and distraction from the more pressing issues of their lives. This also means that the operating theories of different programs in schools must be coordinated.

The congruence of an operating theory with its ultimate goals is another matter too rarely examined. If part of the theory is that students will apply what they learn toward their roles as citizens and family members, then it is important to keep in mind that such learning may not be the same as that which yields high test scores. For example, in Hudson, Massachusetts, the superintendent, Dr. Sheldon Berman, has a theory of learning that involves preparing students for engagement in the world and for social responsibility. This approach balances academics and other skills. To achieve this balance, he has initiated dialogue and procedures in his schools and community for improving students' test performance and social engagement such that neither suffers. Over time, he is conducting ongoing assessment to

monitor progress and make changes as needed, operating in what is referred to as the "spirit of continuous improvement" (Elias et al., 1997). Clearly, innovations in education should contain explications of their assumptions about the processes by which learning gets translated into desired behaviors.

Management, Resource, and Organization Requirements Are Consistently Underestimated

Studies that have addressed complex school-based, system-level innovations indicate that management issues are seriously underestimated as sources of implementation impasses. In *The Path of Most Resistance: Reflections on Lessons Learned From New Futures*, staff of the Annie E. Casey Foundation (1995) described a program, costing in excess of $100 million over 5 years, to help 10 mid-sized cities develop and implement plans to prevent problem behaviors in at-risk youth. The cities first used planning grants to ensure that their plans reflected the best supported

work in the literature. All plans received extensive review and comment. The key observation was that, "By challenging communities to design comprehensive systems reforms rather than to add programs, New Futures had embarked on the path of most resistance...Some parts of the reform agenda threatened the stability of the current system, and others seemed to discount the importance of the good aspects of the system that already existed" (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1995, pp. 1-2). The Casey experience highlighted the need to attend to existing organizational factors when embarking on significant reform.

Readiness for change and planning. Front-end time is needed to build constituencies committed to the goals and process of change. The current state of conditions, services, and resources must be examined honestly; and management capacities needed to sustain change efforts over time and through changes in leadership must be set in place (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1995; Diebold et al., 2000). Not every site is ready for change just because a starting date is reached or resources are in place. Implementers must be prepared to act with knowledge, conviction, and coordination. Hence, readiness is a key concept that dictates, to a large degree, the parameters within which change can take place (Illback & Zins, 1995). Two arenas for establishing readiness are collaboration and local ownership. Change efforts take place in a context of rivalry and turfism and staff uncertainty about operating at the new levels of work required. Sarason (1982) has noted that genuine collaboration is a form of collective ownership and it takes time to develop, as outside resources and experts must engage in a transitional process of genuine sharing of expertise. Thus, when an initiative begins it may signal not the beginning of change, but, at best, the beginning of readiness for change. When outside resources and funding become available, a context for genuine collaboration still must be created (Nelson et al., 2000). This perspective has implications for efforts to scale up, especially in the presence of initiatives that are mandated to start at a certain time and with large numbers of settings and individuals involved and vast resources available, as with the high-stakes testing movement.

The Casey Foundation report echoes the findings of other sources and most implementers' experience: Detailed planning is essential; vague or tentative plans never eventuate in success. But detailed plans are almost never implemented as envisioned; rather, they are temporary, flexible, and represent guideposts. Consequently, plans must delineate processes for dialogue, project management, setting benchmarks for progress, gathering and communicating feedback, and making decisions about significant changes. Still, difficulties occur because people are reluctant to give up plans they have worked on, especially if those plans give them significant roles that otherwise might be compromised. And flexible, responsive planning seems incompatible with current notions of controlled research trials; the latter often involve random assignment and strict adherence to detailed intervention manuals and protocols.

CASEL has identified 10 guidelines used by schools to attain social, emotional, and academic excellence. Planning must be multiyear and multilevel, articulating policies and providing organizational supports (e.g., staff development) that foster success. Both within and between SEL and academic domains, there must be explicit linkages of approaches, pedagogy, skills, instruction, timing, and sequence, incorporating academic and "specials" curricula and special education (CASEL, 2003). All learners' sensibilities must be addressed; the more "at risk" the learner, the more coherent and cohesive the instructional day, week, year, and sequence of years must be to reduce the risk that attention, motivation, and engagement will drift.

Often neglected, financial and resource management issues ought to be considered early in the planning process. Both the Casey study and McMahon, Ward, Kline-Pruett, Davidson, and Griffith (2000), who studied the implementation of full service schools, found that the effective use of economic and social capital often underlies the ultimate success of real change. Resources need to be sufficient not only to get the job done, but to shift stan-

dard practices (Hatch, 2000). Most challenging is to create new social capital from existing resources, because it is both impossible and inappropriate to bring in all new resources. During secondary waves in the life of an innovation, new sources of economic and social capital are needed but are harder to create because the context of excitement, attention, resources, and professional reward is often now quite different.

Strategy development. Bauman, Stein, and Ireys (1991) revisited the fidelity versus reinvention (adoption vs. adaptation) debate following its prominence in the late 1970s and early 1980s. From case studies of prevention programs for adolescents in a low-income urban area, they concluded that "stellar programs often are developed under unusual conditions (e.g., good funding, excellent and skillful staff, high motivation)" (p. 621). Successfully bringing in an enduring program required as close an initial match to existing contexts as possible.

For these reasons, large, expensive demonstration projects pose challenges for generalization. As conditions in demonstration projects diverge from conditions of real-life implementation, transfer of models is less likely. The same is true of many projects using a clinical trials methodology, with random assignment of classrooms or schools to conditions, and interventions that rarely last more than a year or 2. Such projects are often attractive to funders, as they can generate great publicity and, at times, show success. However, evidence suggests that the track record of such demonstration efforts as a precursor to scaling up is not outstanding (McLaughlin, 1990; Sarason, 1982). Yet, where demonstration conditions are designed as closely as possible to reflect the conditions of ultimate use, generalization is more likely (Elias & Clabby, 1992; Elias, 1997).

Conceptually, the boundary between fidelity and reinvention is highly relevant. Hall and Loucks (1978) suggested that fidelity is maintained as long as changes do not cross over the "zone of drastic mutation" that dilutes program integrity and effectiveness. This zone may be thought of as a confidence interval surrounding program procedures within which

changes can be presumed to not threaten program effects. McLaughlin (1990) concluded that replication must be redefined as "adaptive implementation that remained true to the project's core philosophy and central strategy" (p. 14). Diebold et al. (2000) suggest that innovation must reflect what they call "assimmodation," a balance of assimilation of innovations to existing structures and accommodation of those structures to incorporate key elements. Of course, precise delineation of the boundaries implied above is difficult and ultimately resides in the judgment of those participating in a given project at a given time, under specific historical, socioeconomic, and contextual conditions.

Recent work does provide some helpful guidance, however. Hatch (2000) found that the fastest improvements came in schools that did not break the mold but rather developed new continuities within their existing frameworks, especially concerning academics. He concluded that the key is a balanced expansion of practices judged to have been successful in the past and an exploration of practices that could be successful in the future. Factors influencing this balance were in the realm of management concerns: the nature of feedback, degree of competition, extent of turnover, and turbulence of the implementation environment. As noted, organizations can only achieve a balanced expansion successfully if they can free up resources to learn from their own practice and "collect and distribute the knowledge and expertise needed to develop and sustain innovations" (Hatch, 2000, p. 566). Thus, innovation and scaling up involve configural and contextual management tasks. What is in place must be balanced with progress that can be made in one's context at a given time, fueled by a commitment to continuously improve and maximize what can be accomplished in the interests of children in that setting as efficiently as possible.

Relevant Characteristics of Adults Involved in School Innovations Are Overlooked

Characteristics of adult learners deserve far more discussion than can be provided here,

but their importance must be emphasized. School innovations are fully dependent on human operators for their design, implementation, and continuation. Some well-known features of human operators will affect the innovation process; we list below those we have seen to be most powerful in our work in the schools. We will not comment extensively but rather allow readers to reflect on how our observations fit with personal experiences (cf. Greenberg et al., in press).

Not all roles in an innovation process are equally satisfying. Simply put, it is not the same to create, to deliver, to administer, and to continue. How one feels about the mixture of excitement, uncertainty, extra work, stress, ambiguity, and creativity that accompany the start of innovation or how one feels entering after the innovation is in place varies. Often, in secondary phases of innovation, much important tacit knowledge is not transmitted and new staff are left to flounder or make their own adaptations. Likewise, levels of commitment vary depending on the time when one becomes involved. These role differences are also at the heart of why demonstration projects often are not sustainable. Success seems to accompany a spirit of continuous improvement and reinvention without excessive divergence from what exists.

Following the courage of one's convictions is difficult. If one scratches only a little below the surface, one finds that educators strongly recognize the need for social and emotional learning as an integral part of schooling. But they do not feel as if there is a way to enact those beliefs. They feel no visible supports, nor do they have the time needed to cultivate them. This feeling of dissonance is also true of school administrators, who feel that choosing anything other than the vigorous pursuit of academic excellence puts their jobs at risk.

There are difficulties in creating true partnerships with a broad representation of parents. The complexities of education reform and initiatives make it difficult for parents to have input on every facet of education. This reality is not necessarily a problem, if it would not be expected for parents to have input on every aspect of medical innovation or the running of a hospital system. But in education, the language of partnership is often very strong (e.g., local control, site-based management). Indeed, parents may try to direct teachers on the minutia of how to instruct children in the classroom. Rarely, however, are most parents able to take on the immense work and responsibility required for deep school involvement, particularly in urban districts. Even when parents do step forward, who they represent in the community may not be clear.

Educators need proper preparation. Those expected to deliver new programs receive insufficient preservice or subsequent preparation and ongoing support to help them develop the necessary attitudes and skills to carry out their responsibilities successfully. This is as true with new approaches to literacy and school climate and character as it is to the emerging area of SEL.

Some Recommendations

A Pragmatic, Theoretically Informed, Action Research Perspective is Essential

Local ecologies will not support an infinite variety of possibilities. What has a chance to work is what fits. Communities and schools are dynamic and will remain so while the readiness and planning process unfolds. Hence, there must be a theory of innovation, a commitment to detailed planning with flexibility, and action research in the spirit of continuous improvement to maximize the gains that can be made in a given ecological context.

Wandersman, Imm, Chinman, and Kaftarian (2000) have been developing an approach to accountability called "Getting to Outcomes" (GTO) that can be a basis from which to undertake innovation. It is a blend of action-research, continuous quality improvement, empowerment evaluation, and results-based accountability approaches. Among its important features is that the GTO model focuses on needs and resource conditions being addressed at the outset; that is, GTO is oriented toward structural, rather than program-focused,

solutions to social issues. It requires clear specification of goals and the shaping of an action plan in light of existing best-practice and evidence-based models filtered through the lens of local culture and context. A clear longitudinal/developmental theory of implementation is required so that the organization hosting an innovation can plan to increase organizational capacities essential to initiate and sustain implementation. Action research cycles are used to ensure that implementation is monitored, that outcomes for particular goals and subpopulations are examined, and that feedback is used for continuous program improvement. The GTO approach employs a logic model but is not sequential; backward planning is often employed at different points.

Current Training and Professional Incentives Must Emphasize the Implementation Process

Dane and Schneider (1998) examined 162 outcome studies of school-based primary and early secondary prevention. Only 39 had procedures for documenting fidelity and of these, 13 looked at how variations in integrity related to outcomes. Durlak (1997) found that fewer than 5% of 1,200 prevention studies reviewed provided any data on program implementation. Further, most studies that assess implementation involve relatively simple and contained interventions, not the kind that ultimately will find their place in school practice. Diebold et al. (2000), McLaughlin (1990), and others report inadequate documentation of the details of even well-funded demonstration projects. Much information has been lost to date and continues to elude capture.

Indeed, every setting already contains roadmaps of how innovations have successfully scaled up, or failed to do so. The quality of implementation needs to be monitored and described, including the planned and actual intervention, and the planned and actual implementation support systems (Greenberg et al., in press). Skills need to be honed to capture exactly what implementers are doing and how they are doing it, including personal, interpersonal, and technical dimensions. Yet, documenting such efforts is rarely recognized as an important professional role. For that reason, Elias (1994) has called for the role of school-based professionals and innovation implementation consultants to include intensive and extensive recording of effective, context-sensitive practice and helping to elaborate implementers' implicit theories of how they go about their work. Such work emphasizes capturing and explicating how programs operate under real-world conditions. The resulting rich, practitioner-based descriptions give significant guidance to all those who are trying to navigate their way through the swirling currents and undertows of innovation waters (Fishman, 2001).

Theory, research, and practice thus are merged in particular contexts of inquiry, in specific phenomena and settings being studied. With such documentation, those working in similar settings and/or on similar problems are most likely to derive ecologically sensitive learning from the work being done elsewhere. Such work also helps to guide evaluation efforts by specifying, and at times uncovering, more ecologically embedded and complex units of "active ingredients" or "key elements" that can be monitored to ensure that adaptation does not preclude fidelity. These ideas recall those put forward many years ago by Weick (1984) and Cowen (1980): It is nice to think big but in reality, small wins and baby steps provide the essential foundation on which later, larger, and enduring successes can rest. The smaller steps must be studied in detail and the learnings of these studies widely shared and built upon.

A Professional With Appropriate Preparation is Needed to do the Work Required

In 1997, a conference on Bringing to Scale Educational Innovations and School Reform was convened by the American Psychological Association and the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Despite a conclusion that psychology must get a prominent place at the table and be a voice in what happens, it was also realized that "Psychologists themselves are concerned that they lack the training in education and evaluation skills they need to truly help schools" (Rosenfield & Keita,

1997, p. 11). Indeed, these training requirements are understated. A professional with a new kind of preparation will be needed to foster implementation and scaling up of sustainable innovations to promote academic and social-emotional learning. This person would have expertise coordinating programs relating to prevention, health, social competence promotion, and character, and integrating these areas with the academic mission of schools.

Current roles do not lend themselves easily to this kind of work. Teachers skilled in SEL have classroom responsibilities that limit their ability to train and support others in their buildings. Counselors and school psychologists, although well-positioned, often lack training in prevention and program development and implementation; the latter rely as a field on special education funding and therefore find their roles revolve around assessment for special education eligibility (Hosp & Reschly, 2002).

The New Haven public schools defined the Social Development Coordinator as a new role in school mental health (Comer et al., 1999). Among the requirements were skills in orchestration and conducting; collaboration and coalition building; management, negotiation, social-emotional problem solving, and conflict resolution; detailed documentation and explication of system-level functioning and individual practice; and a willingness to be underpaid relative to this impressive array of skills. Comer and others have found that where individuals with these skills are lacking, efforts to integrate IQ and EQ school or district-wide in a strengths-oriented, diversity-respecting manner were less likely to endure with high quality.

Genuine progress in disseminating successful educational innovations, particularly in urban settings, requires attention to both social-emotional and academic development of students. Accomplishing this will require a reconfiguration of roles for school mental health in a way that involves greater balance between containment/restoration, early identification/selected intervention, and primary prevention/wellness enhancement (Cowen, 1997). Although school psychology may be

linked to the first two areas, there is no inherent restriction in also preparing professionals for the latter area. Indeed, prevention and wellness promotion is one of the 10 major domains for practice highlighted in the *Blueprint for School Psychology Training and Practice* (Ysseldyke et al., 1997). It remains an open question as to how different child-serving professions will step up to the challenge and prepare a core of their professionals to take leadership roles in bringing children's social and emotional well-being into the forefront of public education, especially urban education.

Moving all children forward is a challenge to the nation that also challenges school psychology and other child mental health professions to participate and lead in that effort. Without taking on school-wide social-emotional learning innovations and implementing them with quality and sustainability, educators are unlikely to achieve the goal of leading students to success in school and life, particularly in the difficult contexts of poverty and urban schools.

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