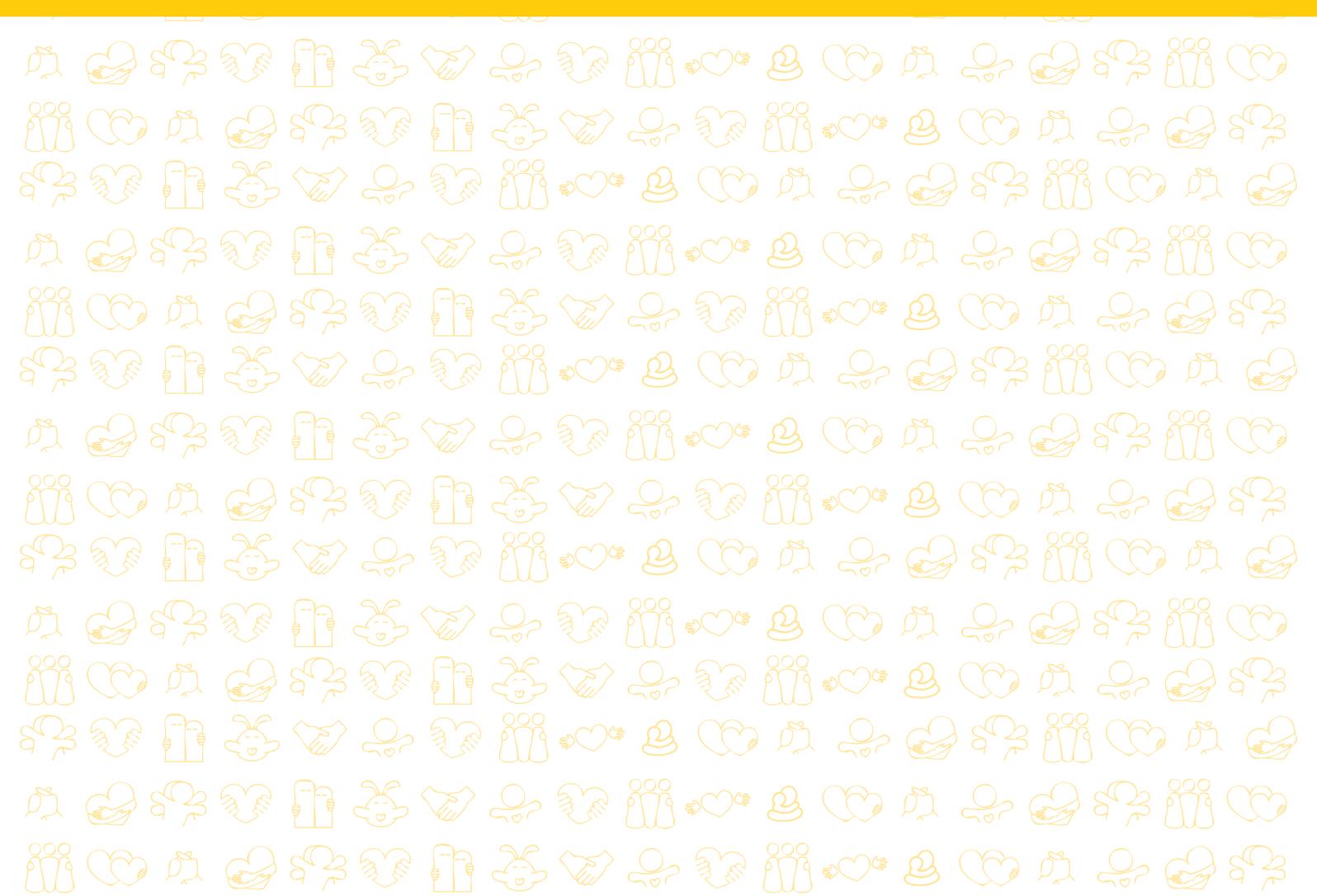




# SEL Activities for Richmond Readers





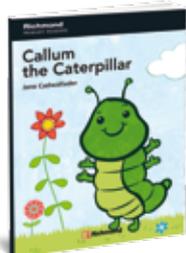
Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2017). This type of environment is vital to negotiate, accommodate and construct meaning.

In concert with this proof, this booklet aims to equip teachers and learners with the social-emotional tools to interact effectively with one another and with their readers not only in the classroom and at school but also at home and in the school district. The possibility that readers offer to understand emotions and to learn how to deal with them through the texts will favour learners' developmental processes of change, self-generation and construction. When we tap on our emotions and positive social relationships, the material at hand will always be more memorable. "We are neurobiologically wired, and to learn anything, our minds must be focused and our emotions need to "feel" in balance" (Desautels, 2016).

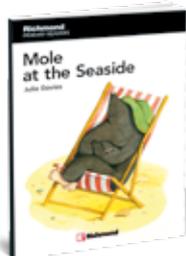
## 2 Readers for younger learners (suggested ages 6-8)

### 1.1 Introduction

The following readers have been chosen to explore and work with the concepts of *friendship, collaboration and heightened emotions*.



- **Callum the Caterpillar** (Jane Cadwallader) is a clever pick for beginner readers. Through playful and dynamic artwork, this story explores Callum's umbrella of heightened emotions on his way to becoming a beautiful butterfly with the help of a fairy.



- **Mole at the Seaside** (Julie Davies) introduces young learners to reading in italics through a story with delicious artwork. This reader is rich in folding themes of generosity, cooperation, friendship and different emotions by the hand of a Mole who is presented with a pair of glasses which help him open his eyes to the world.



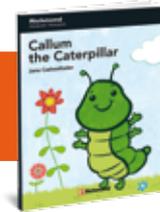
- **Home** (DreamWorks) is a classic which children love while engaging in Oh's big-hearted life. This hip, colourful story introduces concepts such as cooperation, friendship and varied feelings. Oh is a Boov which makes friends with a girl called Tip



when the Boov come to Earth. Oh and Tip tackle challenging obstacles together thanks to their love for each other, their compassion and their sensitivity.

Before embarking on SEL activities with any of the readers, it is recommended to pre-teach the words which depict emotions accurately. The reason for managing a large bank of words to describe emotions is that it makes it easier for learners to talk about their feelings, their needs and their mood (Brackett, 2017)

## 1.2 Callum the Caterpillar



### 1.2.1 Pre-reading activities

#### 1. Name that emotion!

Pre-teach feelings vocabulary by using pictures, gesture and miming. For this story, consider the following words: *Calm, worried, happy, sad, tired, surprised*

#### 2. Listen, run and fill up your heart

Stick pictures depicting the emotions you have pre-taught on one or all of the walls in your class. Several pictures show the same emotion (for example four different happy faces, four different worried faces, etc.)

Divide your class into several teams and hand out a big paper/cardboard heart to each team

Call out the emotions one at a time. The kids listen and run to the wall to gather the face corresponding to the emotion you mentioned. They should take it to their team's heart. When all the faces are gone from the wall, each team sees how full of different feelings their heart is. Try to elicit the emotion words as learners share what they have.

#### 3. Callum feels...

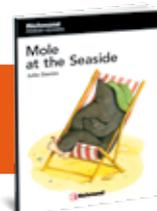
Introduce the character by showing the cover and elicit how he feels. Then open the story on pages 2, 4, 8, 9, 17 and elicit how he feels one more time (2 sad, 4 happy, 8 worried/surprised, 9 happy/calm, 17 tired) You may also choose other pages of your liking, the idea is to elicit the feelings.

Matching emotions (optional): If you are art / drawing savvy, you may want to hand out pictures showing Callum experiencing different emotions. Students match the correct pictures with the emotions words you write on the board.



you breath out. You might want to play some peaceful music and ask your learners to say "I'm calm" several times at the end until you feel the feeling of being calm has really sunk in.

## 1.3 Mole at the seaside



### 1.3.1 Pre-reading activities

#### 1. Name that emotion!

Pre-teach feelings vocabulary by using pictures, gesture and miming. For this story, consider the following words: *happy, sad, grateful, surprised, excited, worried, calm*

#### 2. Matching emotions

Show students different pictures depicting the emotions you taught. Write the emotions names in different columns on the board. Divide the class in teams and ask one team at a time to organize the pictures in the correct column.

#### 3. Emotions Bingo

The teams in 2 have Bingo sheets with words/pictures depicting the emotions in 1. The teacher hides the pictures from the previous exercise around the classroom. When the learners find the picture that is on their sheet, they cross it out with an "X". The first team to get three in a row should say Bingo!

#### 4. Arousing curiosity

Mole feels... Introduce the character by showing the cover and elicit how he feels. Then open the story on pages 2, 5, 7, 11, 17, 18 and elicit how he feels (you may want to use other pages)

#### 5. Read and check

Invite your learners to read Mole at the Seaside to find out. You may choose to ask them to read the story at home, in silence in class (moreover, every student might have their "reading cushion" and choose their favourite classroom corner to read quietly) or you might read aloud while they follow the story with their eyes. You can pause at different stages to create suspense and ask what will happen next. In addition, it is advisable to vary tones of voice to express feelings and represent different characters.

### 1.3.2 Post-reading activities

#### 1. Mole's glasses

Make different cardboard glasses (or use toy/real glasses) and assign them an emotion: These are "happy glasses", these are "sad glasses", etc. Remind learners of different parts of the story and ask them to wear the appropriate emotion glasses for Mole. "Mole can't see! He feels...", repeat for the different scenarios in the story. Tell learners it is okay to feel worried or sad at different times just the same as Mole. Feelings come and go. It is important to remain calm and to relax. We will be happy and ok again.

#### 2. Seeing through different eyes

Divide the class into teams. Make the glasses in 1 available to the class and ask the different teams what they may wear. "It's your holiday. What glasses have you got?" / "Look at the sunset, what glasses have you got?" Take advantage of the different scenarios in the story. This is a nice opportunity to introduce more difficult situations to help learners to handle challenges. "It's rainy, what glasses..? What can you do?""Your food is not nice, what glasses..? What can you do?""It's bed time but you want to play, ...". Instead of asking your learners "what can you do?" they may high five or make a heart with their fingers when they experience a positive emotion and when they have a difficult emotion they may give themselves a hug and rock their bodies a little or stroke the back of their hands or their shoulders.

#### 3. Relaxing your body

Let's relax like Mole at his holiday hotel. Your learners sit in a circle. They breathe in and out several times. They roll their necks slowly a couple of times. They roll their shoulders back and forth. They stretch their arms. They have a bear hug (Students stand with their feet hip-width apart and arms open wide. They cross one arm over the other at the elbows, reaching hands over opposite shoulders as if giving themselves a hug)

## 1.4 Home



### 1.4.1 Pre-reading activities

#### 1. Elicit feelings vocabulary

Ask students to be as accurate as possible. Distinguish between adjectives



f. Oh was frightened when he jumped into the Gorg spaceship but...

g. Oh was sad when he finally had the rock, he looked down at Earth and ...

h. The Gorg Commander was very angry when he came out of the spaceship, so Oh...

## 2. Finding the silver linings in our lives

Teacher hands out copies about everyday challenging situations, students find the silver lining and write it down. Example: I was angry when I missed the bus but..., I was angry when I was late but..., I was frustrated when I had a low grade but ..., I was embarrassed when I talked in front of the class but..., I felt sad when my classmate treated me badly but..., I was angry when I heard a rumour about my friend but..., I was frightened when I spoke up in class but..., I was confused with a new topic at school but...(etc)

## 3. Common Ground

Ask learners to hand in the silver linings sheet, tell them they will remain anonymous. Bring the students together in a circle. Choose hand-outs at random and read responses aloud. When the prompt applies to a student, he/she moves to the "common ground" in the middle of the circle. Conclude by acknowledging the feelings in common/similarities and highlight the sense of belonging and community.

## 4. Self-compassion hug

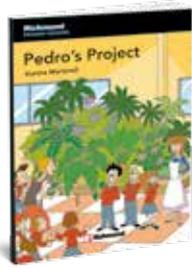
Students cross one arm over the other at the elbows, reaching hands over opposite shoulders as if giving themselves a hug. They repeat after you: "I know sometimes life is difficult, I know sometimes I am afraid, I know sometimes I am angry, it's ok, suffering is part of life, I can take care of my feelings, I can give my heart what it needs" (adapted from Dr Kristen Neff's mantra <http://self-compassion.org/>)

# 3 Readers for young learners and pre adolescents (suggested ages 9-14)

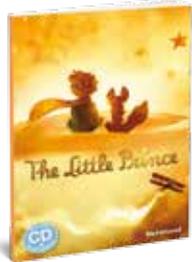
## 1.4.3 Introduction

The following readers have been chosen to explore and work with the concepts of *empathy, respecting differences and having a sense of belonging to a safe place.*

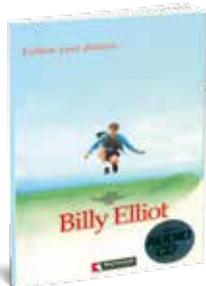




- **Pedro's Project** (by Aurora Martorell). This child-friendly and easy to read story introduces learners to Pedro's life and the challenges he faces when he moves from Brazil to England. Pedro makes new friends but Luke and his clique get in the way of Pedro's new school life.



- **The Little Prince** (adapted by Jane Rollason) This retelling of the classic by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry is ideal for beginner readers of all ages. Written in simple language and accompanied by exquisite art, the story invites us to read with our hearts. The Little Prince lives on a very small planet with his rose but one day he flies away and discovers other planets with very peculiar people. How does the Little Prince feel?



- **Billy Elliot** (adapted by Jaquie Bloese) This powerful adaptation of Mervin Bugess's novel is ideal for pre-adolescents and adolescents. With photographs from the original movie, the story delves into Billy Elliot's life, a 11 year-old who wants to pursue his dream as a ballet dancer. His father and older brother are now on a strike, the money is little and his mother has died. Will Billy make it?

## 1.5 Pedro's Project



### 1.5.1 Pre-reading activities

#### 1. Act out your emotion

It may be a good idea to pre teach some feelings like joyful, excited, anxious, worried, shy, frustrated, nervous, relieved. The teacher hands out faces showing different emotions (especially the ones the learners will find in the story). There will be several faces with the same feelings. Learners find the classmates with the same faces. They agree on how they would act if they felt the way their faces show. They act out their actions and the rest of the



class guesses what they mean and what feeling the action is related to as a result.

2. Exploit cover and different pages to elicit the feelings you have been working with. "Look at our story, can you guess who Pedro is? Where is he from? Look at page 2, what's going on? How does Pedro feel? (Do the same for pages 3, 4, 5, 7, 13, 19 and elicit how Pedro and his friends feel)
3. Read and check  
Invite your learners to read the story and check their predictions.

### 1.5.2 Post-reading activities

1. Drop that bullying act!

Students classify different actions from the story into Physical-Emotional-Social. The teacher may choose to use the whiteboard or to hand out worksheets.

List of actions: Pushing Pedro at the football match / Kicking Pedro at the match / Calling Pedro's idea silly / Talking on Pedro's back / Not sharing information / Embarrassing and teasing Pedro / Giving Pedro a dirty look / Trying to destroy Pedro's work / Slamming a door.

The class sits in a circle and discusses effective ways to deal with a bully (Example: refuse to fight and walk away. Stand up to the bully. Show the bully his/her words don't hurt you. Use authority, etc.)

2. Cross the line

The aim of this activity is to allow students to identify times when they have felt certain emotions and to see that their peers have also felt the same. The activity should be quiet and respectful. Draw a line on the floor or use a place to mark the threshold. Then, have all students line up 2-3 steps behind the line. Read one of several statements (below). If the statement applies to the student, they should quickly and quietly step over the line and turn toward the class.

Possible statements: I *always* feel respected at school/ I *usually* feel respected at school/ I can *always* say what I think and feel at school/ I can *sometimes* say what I think and feel at school/I know *all of my* classmates well/I know *some of my* classmates well....

Follow up discussion: ask students whether they are surprised, how they feel and how they can generate an atmosphere of trust and respect.

### 3. Circle of respect and trust

The class stands up in a circle with arms entwined. Together they say “I respect you, You’re safe, I feel good” This mantra should be repeated several times making a pause in between statements. Make sure you repeat it several times until the feelings sink in.

## 1.6 The Little Prince



### 1.6.1 Pre-reading activities

#### 1. Feelings memotest

You may want to pre-teach feelings that will be useful to work with the story: worried, delighted, dissatisfied, angry, mad, absent, relaxed, disappointed, happy, sad. Have different teams play memotest. They have to match feeling words with the corresponding feeling picture.

#### 2. Exploit cover and pages

Ask students if they read *The Little Prince*. If so, ask them to describe him. Elicit how the Little Prince feels on the different pages as the story unfolds.

#### 3. Read and check

Invite your learners to read the story and check their predictions

### 1.6.2 Post-reading activities

#### 1. The Little Prince’s puzzle

Draw the Little Prince’s face experiencing different emotions or google images from the story. Stick the images together on cardboard and then cut it out with different puzzle shapes. Alternatively, take a piece of cardboard, draw puzzle pieces and write sentences about the Little Prince’s feeling on every puzzle piece. Finally cut it out with the puzzle shapes. Each learner will have a piece of the puzzle to make the Little Prince or sentence complete. Elicit how the Little Prince feels as they place their piece of the puzzle: “In this part of the story, the Little Prince is disappointed” etc. When the puzzle is finished, tell your learners it’s ok to have different feelings. Feelings come and go. We will always feel happy again. “The biggest obstacle taking

a bigger perspective on life is that our emotions capture and blind us” (Chodron, 2010). Recognizing our emotions with kind acceptance is key to be at peace with them.

## 2. Follow up

Hand out copies (or use the board) with different household chores. Ask learners to write how they feel when they do them. Share. Explain that every household chore they do is like a piece of the puzzle. They will experience different emotions, each of which is necessary to make up the whole and contribute to their families’ life. In addition, the class can watch the short film “The Notebook” (VelocityFilms, 2015). The video is an excellent opportunity to work on emotional intelligence. You could ask learners what they do at home and if they think they should do more and why. Students watch the film and the teacher invites the class to discuss why the boy wrote notes on his notebook, why he helped around the house and how the boy and mother feel at different points in the video. Learners may also share how they felt while watching.

## 3. Body scan

Students sit quietly on their chairs or on the floor. They close their eyes and take three deep cleansing breaths. The teacher says “I’m going to mention different parts of your body. With eyes closed, notice how those body parts feel” (move from the top of students head to their toes, mentioning the parts of the body they know. You may like to pre teach some words like chest, abdomen, etc.)

## 1.7 Billy Elliot



### 1.7.1 Pre-reading activities

#### 1. Go for it!

Ask your learners if they ever felt they really wanted to do something (hobby, task, talking to someone special, acting at a school play, going to a disco, expressing their feelings, cooking something special, etc.) but they didn’t do it because they felt they couldn’t. Ask “What did you feel?” You may want to pre-teach the words “inadequate, not enough, insecure, anxious, nervous, shy, inhibited, not confident, ridiculous”, etc. If you feel your learners will feel shy about sharing don’t ask them to mention what they wanted to do but

just to visualize it and tell the class what feelings stopped them “I couldn’t do what I wanted because I felt silly”. Alternatively, you may want to bring different scenarios which pave the way for a similar discussion:

*A boy wants to take ballet lessons/you want to tell a classmate you’d like to be their friend/you want to tell a friend you felt excluded when .../the drama teacher didn’t choose you to take part in the school’s play but you really want to do it/you want to make your parents a special meal but you never cooked/ a friend is organizing a party with music and dancing but you feel shy. etc.*

## 2. Reframing

Ask your learners to write down but not necessarily to share the situation they visualized. If you decided on the scenarios version, ask your learners to write down one which resonated with them. Then say “Let’s look at what you have another way. Let’s change the sentence into something we can do” Example “I really want to make a delicious meal, I will ask ...for help”, “My drama teacher may discover I can do my part well if I ask her to give me a chance. Plus, I will feel brave!” etc.

## 3. Sort out titles in the correct order

Ask your learners to put the following five titles from the story in order (you may pre-cut and hand out strips of paper with each title or you may simply use the board mixing up the titles as you write them on the board): Boys don’t do ballet / You’re in trouble now / A stupid dream / The letter / Our Billy. Encourage learners to predict what the story is about and what Billy feels.

## 4. Read and check

Invite your learners to read the story and check their predictions.

### 1.7.2 Post-reading activities

#### 1. Billy’s head

Divide the class into different teams and ask them to become artsy by drawing Billy’s face on cardboard, learners stick Billy’s faces on the board. Explain that many of Billy’s fears are real but many are imaginary, they are on Billy’s head. Ask different teams to write sentences explaining how Billy feels and why as the story unfolds. Then, draw arrows coming out from Billy’s head and ask students to share what they have written taking one arrow at a time.

#### 2. A kind word

Distribute hearts made of cardboard and ask learners to write a few kind

words for Billy on them. You can ask the same teams as before to work together. Stick the hearts on the board around Billy. Alternatively, you may draw Billy's torso and fill it up with the hearts with the kind words. Reflect on the power of kind words or actions to encourage someone and to help them feel happy, safe, seen and valued.

### 3. Kind Words Ball Toss<sup>2</sup>

Have a ball ready. Recycle some of the vocabulary that you have worked with "You're enough / You're great / Be calm / Be confident / Go for it/I'm with you / Be brave". Students stand up in a circle. They toss the ball to a classmate in the circle. The one who gets it says a kind phrase to the one who tossed the ball and then throws the ball to another classmate. Every time a person gets a kind phrase, they sit down. After the game, ask your learners how they feel and what effect the kind words have had.

### 4. Self-compassion break<sup>3</sup>

Ask your learners to think of a situation in their lives that is difficult, that is causing them stress. Now, say these words and ask students to repeat them to themselves:

- This is a moment of suffering. This is stress.
- Suffering is a part of life. Other people feel this way.

Now, ask your learners to put their hands over their hearts and say (students repeat to themselves):

- May I be kind to myself.
- May I be strong.
- May I accept myself just as I am.

## 4 Conclusion

This booklet uses Social Emotional Learning (SEL) as the theoretical underpinning for the step-by-step design of its activities. These pages have been inspired by the belief that learners are not dissociated beings who can leave their interpersonal and emotional concerns outside the classroom. Our students bring all of themselves to the system where they develop and what they feel and how they respond to that as well as the bonds they create with

2 Adapted from Inspired <https://inspired.fb.com/activities/>

3 Kristen Neff's mantra <http://self-compassion.org/>

the rest of the system are key to their personal, interpersonal and academic success.

Teachers may use this toolkit in exactly the way that it has been crafted or they may choose to adapt it to fit the needs of their particular learners and academic settings. The activities designed for the selected readers tap on multiple modalities: linguistic, kinaesthetic, visual, logical, intrapersonal, interpersonal, musical. The instructions are very detailed and teacher-friendly and they are very simple and fast to implement.

The desire is that the use of these readers with their appropriate SEL tasks makes room for the development of “supportive relationships that make learning challenging, engaging and meaningful.” (CASEL) Respect, empathy, intentional listening, kindness, compassion, emotional self-regulation, mindful behaviour and other social and emotional competencies can be overtly taught and integrated into the curriculum in a way which is fun and facilitates learning, self-confidence and a more tolerant behaviour.

Personally, I would like to briefly mention that this booklet was written with a heart full of love and a mind full of ideas which support SEL as the way to go in order to honour our learners, ourselves as educators, and the learning process. I hope this inspires many teachers and that we start a learning revolution one soul at a time.

### **Suggested sites for further reading:**

<http://www.casel.org/>

<https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/education>

<https://www.edutopia.org/social-emotional-learning>

<http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/432/character-education>

[http://surveydata.wested.org/resources/  
ClimateConnectionToolkit\\_2ndedition.pdf](http://surveydata.wested.org/resources/ClimateConnectionToolkit_2ndedition.pdf)

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