



Supporting PreK-12 Students' Social-Emotional Learning: Changing Perspectives 2020-2021 Evaluation

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Introduction

Changing Perspectives (www.ChangingPerspectivesNow.org) is a national nonprofit organization that promotes social-emotional learning (SEL) to cultivate inclusive and equitable learning communities. This is accomplished by engaging all members in a school community to advance their thinking and practice around SEL, disability awareness, equity, and inclusion.

Changing Perspectives offers an à la carte menu of options from which our partner schools choose the combination of services that best meet their learning communities' needs. This model allows each partner school to customize its Changing Perspectives programming to meet its goals for a given academic year. The menu comprises four key offerings:

- 1) PreK-High School Curricula:** Made available to educators 100% online through the Changing Perspectives Educator portal, curriculum resources (e.g., lesson plans, books and video discussions, reflection activities) are customizable and offer a variety of active learning opportunities. Resources are focused on social-emotional learning aligned to SEL competencies and disability awareness aligned to specific categories of disability under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act along with the Common Core State Standards.
- 2) Professional Development Training:** Changing Perspectives offers a variety of professional development (PD) training opportunities that may be delivered in-person or virtually. PD trainings range in topic to ensure the greatest amount of relevancy to each particular audience that participates. Trainings are conducted in a workshop model with opportunities for hands-on engagement and facilitated discussion.
- 3) Educator Coaching:** Hourly individual or small group support to educators is available to provide technical assistance around planning, implementation, and pedagogy.
- 4) Parent Programs:** Changing Perspectives supports schools through in-person or virtual parent workshops. Educating parents about the importance of social-emotional learning and providing them with strategies they can use at home are key to reinforcing student learning beyond the classroom.



The 2020-2021 school year was unprecedented in many ways, from COVID-19 to intense divisiveness around race, civil rights, politics, climate crises, and other issues. Schools are monitoring the impacts of the universal trauma related to these matters on students of all ages. COVID-19 disrupted the educational landscape in unprecedented ways, forcing learning communities worldwide to pivot between in-person and virtual learning. Each state, district, and school addressed physical safety measures in its own ways. Federal, state, and local mandates were constantly shifting and school administrators, teachers, and other school staff were pushed to their limits. Schools were forced to adapt their teaching practices from in-person to online throughout the entire school year, sometimes needing to change on a weekly, or even daily, basis. Many schools scrambled to ramp up their technology resources dramatically, while the majority of educators were navigating how to engage students virtually.

Amidst all this, educators remained steadfast in their commitment to supporting students not only academically, but also social and emotionally. The imperative to address students' SEL, trauma, and mental health was at an all-time high, which will likely continue into the next few years or longer. School leaders at the district, state, and federal levels have expressed concerns about this, and schools have devised plans to map actionable steps to meet these ongoing needs within their communities.

During the 2020-21 academic year, Changing Perspectives partnered with 97 schools across nine states; a full list of schools is available on the [Changing Perspectives website](#).

As part of Changing Perspectives's ongoing assessment of its work in schools each year, this report presents findings from our evaluation with partner schools from four states during this extraordinary year.

Program Evaluation

Purpose: To identify possible benefits to and impacts on schools and to inform program development, Changing Perspectives conducted an evaluation study during the 2020-2021 year. Mid-year (MY) and end-of-year (EOY) surveys were distributed to educators from selected service regions in partner schools in four states: Vermont, California, Maryland, and New Hampshire.

Dr. Cynthia Char of Char Associates, an independent evaluation firm based in Montpelier, Vermont, collaborated with Changing Perspectives Executive Director Sam Drazin on the study. The evaluation's primary objectives were two-fold: (1) to gather formative feedback about the program to inform and improve curriculum design and use, and (2) to evaluate the program's educational benefits and impacts upon student learning and educators' classroom practices.

Program Implementation and Survey Methodology: Given the program's highly customizable approach to design and classroom implementation, each educator's instructional choices and styles shape and influence student experiences and feedback about the program. Schools and educators were able to sign up to use Changing Perspectives throughout the 2020-2021 academic year.

Changing Perspectives administered educator surveys at partner schools to gather formative and impact data on the various program offerings, both mid-year and at the end of the school year. MY surveys were sent in January 2021 to 164 educators at 37 schools who gained access to Changing Perspectives resources and supports between September 2020 and January 2021, while EOY surveys were sent in May 2021 to 281 educators working at 42 schools who gained access to Changing Perspectives resources and supports between September 2020 and May 2021. For both surveys, respondents were asked to rate their experiences with the program, with the MY survey instrument comprising 13 items and the EOY survey comprising 12 items.

Given the volatility of the 2020-21 school year, many educators were not able to fully use the program as they had intended, leading to an expected lower response rate for completed surveys.

Sample: A total of 60 educators from 37 schools across four states responded to the MY survey (37% response rate), while a total of 75 educators from 42 schools participated in the EOY evaluation (27% response rate). Of the 75 educators who completed the EOY surveys, 29 (38%) had also completed the MY survey.

Table 1: Educator Samples for Mid-Year and End-of-Year Surveys

	Vermont	Marin (CA)	Sonoma (CA)	Maryland	New Hampshire
60 Educators (Mid-Year Surveys)	31 (52%)	8 (13%)	NA	16 (27%)	5 (8%)
75 Educators (End-of-Year Surveys)	30 (40%)	22 (29%)	4 (5%)	15 (20%)	4 (5%)

As illustrated in Table 2, for both educators who filled out the MY and EOY surveys, the most common roles were that of teacher (47% MY, 49% EOY) and school counselor (49% MY, 36% EOY).

Table 2: Educators' Role at School – Mid-Year and End-of-Year Surveys

Mid-Year	School Administrator	School Counselor	Teacher	Interventionist	Other
Vermont (n=29)	0 (0%)	13 (45%)	16 (55%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Marin (CA) (n=8)	0 (0%)	6 (75%)	2 (25%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Sonoma (CA) (n=0)	--	--	--	--	--
Maryland (n=13)	1 (8%)	5 (38%)	7 (54%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
New Hampshire (n=5)	1 (20%)	3 (60%)	1 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL (n = 55)	2 (4%)	27 (49%)	26 (47%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total n = 55 valid responses (# total responses minus # NA responses)					
End-of-Year	School Administrator	School Counselor	Teacher	Interventionist	Other
Vermont (n=34)	2 (6%)	14 (41%)	16 (47%)	0 (0%)	2 (6%)
Marin (CA) (n=19)	2 (11%)	5 (26%)	12 (63%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Sonoma (CA) (n=4)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Maryland (n=14)	2 (14%)	5 (36%)	5 (36%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)
New Hampshire (n=4)	1 (25%)	3 (75%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL (n = 75)	7 (9%)	27 (36%)	37 (49%)	1 (1%)	4 (5%)

Collectively, the educators worked with the full span of students from preK to grade 12, with the majority of responses indicating work with elementary students in grades K-5 (K-2 = 33% of responses; grades 3-5 = 35% of responses), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Grade Levels Respondents Teach or Work With (End-of-Year Survey*)

Region	PreK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
VT	14 (43%)	18 (60%)	18 (60%)	18 (60%)	17 (57%)	17 (57%)	18 (60%)	16 (53%)	5 (17%)	5 (17%)	2 (7%)	2 (7%)	2 (7%)	2 (7%)
Marin (CA)	3 (14%)	5 (23%)	6 (27%)	6 (27%)	8 (36%)	11 (50%)	10 (46%)	10 (46%)	8 (36%)	9 (41%)	2 (9%)	2 (9%)	2 (9%)	2 (9%)
Sonoma (CA)	0	0	0	2 (50%)	1 (25%)	1 (25%)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 (25%)	0
MD	9 (60%)	10 (67%)	10 (67%)	10 (67%)	8 (53%)	9 (60%)	9 (60%)	2 (13%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)
NH	0	4 (100%)	4 (100%)	4 (100%)	4 (100%)	4 (100%)	3 (75%)	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	26 (8%)	37 (11%)	38 (11%)	40 (12%)	38 (11%)	42 (12%)	40 (12%)	30 (9%)	16 (5%)	17 (5%)	5 (1%)	5 (1%)	6 (2%)	5 (1%)
Total grade span	26 (8%)	115 responses (33%)			120 responses (35%)			63 responses (18%)			21 responses (6%)			

n = 345 responses, from 75 respondents with ability to select multiple grade levels.

*Question not asked on mid-year survey.

Reflecting the grades participating educators taught, the majority of respondents indicated that they had used curriculum resources designed for grades K-2 (64 responses = 36.4%) or for grades 3-5 (70 responses = 39.8%), as shown in Table 4. Across the grade levels that offered curricula for both social-emotional learning and disability awareness, roughly double the number of teachers indicated use of curricula pertaining to social-emotional learning, compared with that of disability awareness.

Table 4: Curriculum Resources Used

	PreK	K-2 SEL	K-2 DA	3-5 SEL	3-5 DA	6-8 SEL	6-8 DA	High Sch.
Vermont	8 (29%)	18 (64%)	10 (36%)	19 (68%)	10 (36%)	10 (36%)	5 (18%)	0
Marin (CA)	1 (5%)	8 (40%)	3 (15%)	15 (75%)	2 (10%)	7 (35%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)
Sonoma (CA)	0	2 (50%)	1 (25%)	2 (50%)	1 (25%)	0	0	1 (25%)
Maryland	2 (13%)	11 (73%)	5 (33%)	10 (67%)	5 (33%)	1 (7%)	0	0
New Hampshire	0	3 (75%)	3 (75%)	3 (75%)	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	2 (50%)	0
TOTAL (n = 176)*	11 (6%)	42 (24%)	22 (12%)	49 (28%)	21 (12%)	19 (11%)	9 (5%)	3 (2%)

*Responses from 75 respondents with ability to select multiple grade levels.

SEL: social-emotional learning; DA: disability awareness

Student and Educator Response to Changing Perspectives (Mid-Year Surveys)

Educational Value and Student Engagement

In the mid-year surveys, 93% of educators rated the educational value of Changing Perspectives as Good (62%) or Excellent (31%).

Among responding educators, 57% indicated that they found Changing Perspectives to be a great help (41% Very Helpful; 16% Extremely Helpful) in supporting their students' social and emotional well-being during this especially challenging year. Educators shared:

- “[Changing Perspectives] has so much to offer and it is broken down simplistically. It is user-friendly and I’ve had a lot of success with getting students to open up, even if they wouldn’t have previously done so.” – School Counselor, California
- “[It encourages] a better understanding of what students are going through... [and] helping them with feelings that they may never have experienced before.” – Teacher, Maryland
- “I feel that the curriculum allowed for deep discussion after the lessons and has also helped me develop additional material to better support students’ social and emotional well-being.” – School Counselor, Vermont
- “I was able to use the lessons as my counseling lessons for students each week. Students were able to virtually learn social-emotional skills.” – School Counselor, Maryland

Among responding educators, 85% reported by mid-year that Changing Perspectives had helped them improve their knowledge, skills, and interventions to better support students’ well-being. Educators also shared:

- “I am able to better understand the emotional needs of each developmental stage in K-8 students.” – School Counselor, California
- “The program gives me new tools/language to teach SEL.” – School Counselor, Vermont
- “The program has given specific interventions for specific skills that are important for kids to have.” – School Counselor, Vermont
- “Changing Perspectives has provided me with new strategies to use with my students.” – Teacher, Maryland

Nine out of 10 educators (93%) reported that their students were at least moderately engaged during Changing Perspectives activities, with 41% indicating that they were highly engaged (39% Very Engaged; 2% Extremely Engaged). Respondents shared:

- “The lessons in the 6-8 social-emotional resources have been very helpful and the students have enjoyed them.” – School Counselor, Maryland
- “The materials tend to be engaging and easy to share in a remote setting where extended discussions are harder to facilitate.” – Teacher, New Hampshire
- “The resources are built around discussion and, at this grade level, it seems to be the most effective engagement, especially in a year where they are craving social interaction.” – Teacher, Vermont

Of 39 educators queried, 92% indicated that they would like to continue working with Changing Perspectives again next year. They also shared:

- “Changing Perspectives reaches a population there is not a lot of resources for – let alone resources that are easy, comprehensive, and accessible.” – School Counselor, Vermont
- “Great lessons to teach virtually.” – School Counselor, Maryland
- “The program has helped many people besides myself. Instead of me delivering the content, the lessons are selected and distributed to each teacher for them to present the information. More ground is covered this way because if I was presenting the information, it would be to each class, one day per week. This way students are getting SEL lessons several times per week.” – School Counselor, Vermont
- “I am so thankful for all that Changing Perspectives offers. As a first-year counselor, this was the most supportive resource.” – School Counselor, New Hampshire

Student and Educator Response to Changing Perspectives (End-of-Year Surveys)

Student Engagement and Impact

At the end of the school year, educators were asked four questions regarding their students’ engagement with the resources and the impacts the program had on students. Between 15-20 of the 75 educators (20%-27%) responded “NA” (not applicable), largely because they either had not used that particular curriculum resource with students and/or they were school administrators who had not worked with students directly. Analysis was conducted on all valid responses (i.e., total responses minus NA responses), which ranged from 54-60 responses per survey item.

As shown in Table 5, educators reported that students were highly engaged with, and enthusiastic about, the Changing Perspectives curricula. Of responding educators, 79% reported that students were highly engaged during Changing Perspectives activities (52% Very Much; 27% Extremely), while 68% indicated that students were very enthusiastic about the resources (41% Very Much; 27% Extremely).

Table 5: Student Engagement with Changing Perspectives

	Not at All	Slightly	Moderately	Very Much	Extremely
My students were engaged during Changing Perspectives lessons.					
TOTAL (n = 59)	0	2 (3%)	10 (17%)	31 (53%)	16 (27%)
My students were enthusiastic about the resources.					
TOTAL (n = 59)	0	3 (5%)	16 (27%)	24 (41%)	16 (27%)

n = 59 valid responses (# total responses minus # NA responses)

Educators shared these observations:

- “The resources are applicable to many settings and tailored to the needs of many levels of learners... Students find the lessons engaging and thought-provoking. – School Counselor, Vermont
- “I had a class that was not willing to engage with any of the other curricula I had at my disposal. When I started sharing the videos [from Changing Perspectives], the students became more motivated and more willing to give things a try.” – School Counselor, Vermont
- “I used the self-control lessons, which allowed my 2nd/3rd grade students to have a deep discussion about supporting others who struggle significantly with self-control.” – School Counselor, Vermont
- “My students request the emotion gallery, which is a lesson we did back in the fall, at least once a month. They love looking at emotions expressed on other kids’ faces. We used these in several lessons.” – School Counselor, Vermont
- “In general, the students really enjoyed the lessons and discussions. All of my Changing Perspectives lessons were conducted remotely. I thought the curriculum did a great job engaging all students, and I was surprised that even a few of the most reluctant sharers were offering their thoughts and ideas! It was a great tool to bring our distance a little closer.” – School Counselor, Vermont

Educators expressed that students connected strongly with Changing Perspectives and demonstrated behavioral shifts due to the curricula. Eight out of 10 respondents (80%) indicated that their students made strong connections between Changing Perspectives content and their own lives (47% Very Much; 33% Extremely), as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Student Connection and Impact from Changing Perspectives

	Not at All	Slightly	Moderately	Very Much	Extremely
My students made connections between Changing Perspectives and their own lives.					
TOTAL (n = 60)	0	2 (3%)	10 (17%)	28 (47%)	20 (33%)
My students demonstrated behavioral shifts as a result of Changing Perspectives.					
TOTAL (n = 54)	0	4 (7%)	20 (37%)	22 (41%)	8 (15%)

n = 54-60 valid responses (# total responses minus # NA responses), depending on item

Among their feedback, educators shared:

- “The lessons on empathy have had a very positive impact on students. After returning from the isolation of virtual learning, students were more equipped to understand the impact the experience had on each classmate.” – School Counselor, Maryland
- “Changing Perspectives approaches topics that are very much in tune with the challenges our youth face today.” – School Counselor, Maryland
- “[The curriculum] prompts them to consider other perspectives and to reflect on their own ways of thinking and on diversity.” – Teacher, California
- “[Changing Perspectives is] helping students deal with all the changes going on in the world.” – Teacher, Vermont
- “We read *We are all Wonders*, watched a book about a student in a wheelchair, and watched an ad. As we read other books with inclusion, students began to notice that we would need to build our community differently if we were going to be more inclusive. Students began to point out the needs and successes of students with physical disabilities or physical needs in books. We began to notice people who were once less visible to our mainstream culture. We noticed and talked about what that means to our community to be inclusive, for everyone.” – School Counselor, Vermont

Of responding educators, 56% (41% Very Much; 15% Extremely) reported that their students demonstrated clear behavioral shifts as a result of Changing Perspectives. They shared:

- “My students are learning to be kind and to have empathy for all.” – Teacher, California
- “I have a student who has emotional trauma and this is helpful to see him express his feelings.” – Teacher, Vermont
- “[Changing Perspectives is] helping to build relationships and strong conversations.” – School Administrator, Vermont
- “It gives students more direction and it has also helped some of them form nice relationships with each other.” – Teacher, Vermont
- “One of my students this year has made posters and put them up all over the school to support and boost the people in our school. – Teacher, Vermont
- “We were talking about disabilities and one student said they never understood what it meant to have Down syndrome. She said she’d talk to the student at school with Downs [now] because she wasn’t afraid anymore.” – Teacher, California
- “Multiple times this curriculum has fostered in-depth classroom conversations and overall it has helped my students build a cohesive community.” –Teacher, Maryland
- “[Changing Perspectives] brings students closer together as a community.” – Teacher, Vermont

Impact of Changing Perspectives of Educators’ Knowledge and Classroom Practice

Surveys posed five questions to educators regarding the degree to which Changing Perspectives had influenced their professional knowledge, skills, and classroom practice. Between 8-19 of the 75 educators (11%-26%) responded “NA” (not applicable), largely because they either had not used that particular curriculum resource and/or were school administrators who had not worked with students directly. Analysis was conducted on all valid responses (i.e., total responses minus NA responses), which ranged from 54-60 responses per survey item.

As shown in Table 7, educators reported that Changing Perspectives had helped them improve their teaching practice and increase their topical knowledge:

- 74% of educators indicated that Changing Perspectives had positively enhanced their teaching practice (51% Very Much, 23% Extremely).

- 61% reported that Changing Perspectives had greatly increased their knowledge of social-emotional learning (43% Very Much, 18% Extremely).
- 52% stated that Changing Perspectives had greatly increased their knowledge of disability awareness (35% Very Much, 17% Extremely).

Table 7: Impact of Changing Perspectives on Educators' Knowledge and Teaching

	Not at All	Slightly	Moderately	Very Much	Extremely
Changing Perspectives has increased my knowledge of social-emotional learning.					
TOTAL (n = 65)	3 (5%)	9 (14%)	13 (20%)	28 (43%)	12 (18%)
Changing Perspectives has increased my knowledge of disability awareness.					
TOTAL (n = 54)	4 (7%)	5 (9%)	17 (32%)	19 (35%)	9 (17%)
Changing Perspectives has positively enhanced my teaching practice.					
TOTAL (n = 65)	1 (2%)	6 (9%)	10 (15%)	33 (51%)	15 (23%)
Changing Perspectives has helped me integrate SEL/DA into daily learning.					
TOTAL (n = 63)	3 (5%)	7 (11%)	9 (14%)	24 (38%)	20 (32%)
Changing Perspectives has given me new tools and strategies to better support my students.					
TOTAL (n = 67)	0	4 (6%)	10 (15%)	26 (39%)	27 (40%)

(n = 54-67 valid responses (# total responses minus # NA responses)

Among other comments, respondents shared:

- “It has made me slow down, appreciate the emotional needs and struggles of my students, and to hopefully make them more aware and compassionate toward themselves and other people.”
– Teacher, California
- “By using Changing Perspectives, I have been able to engage students in difficult conversations and provide them with the opportunity to look at situations from a different perspective.”
– School Counselor, Vermont
- “I am more in tune with what and how the students are feeling and dealing with in their daily lives.” – Teacher, Maryland
- “The language of the lessons has become part of my language.” – School Counselor, Maryland
- “I appreciate working with students to help them understand and increase their awareness of their own learning strengths and differences so they can become curious and empowered with self-knowledge and skills.” – Educator, California

Table 7 also shows that 79% of educators reported that Changing Perspectives had given them new tools and strategies to better support their students and to integrate social-emotional learning and disability awareness into their classroom practice more regularly (39% Very Much; 40% Extremely). Of responding educators, 70% indicated that Changing Perspectives had helped them better integrate SEL and DA into their daily learning (38% Very Much; 32% Extremely). Educators wrote:

- “It has increased the frequency and ease with which I teach SEL.” – Teacher, Maryland
- “[It is an] excellent way to incorporate SEL into classrooms and with small groups. Relatable and easy to understand the material.” – Interventionist, Maryland
- “All of our [class] conversations were way deeper than I ever expected. I feel that I am closer with all of my students this year than in past years, even with distance learning.” – Teacher, Maryland
- “Changing Perspectives has prompted more in-depth conversations.” – Interventionist, Maryland
- “Having quality lessons, videos, and books to use in my classes with students has been life-changing.” – School Counselor, New Hampshire
- “It was meaningful, relevant, and easy to use.” – School Counselor, Vermont

Recommendation of Changing Perspectives to Others

The vast majority of educators (96%) indicated that they would recommend Changing Perspectives to another educator, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Recommend Changing Perspectives to Another Educator

	Yes	No
TOTAL (n = 75)	72 (96%)	3 (4%)

Educators shared:

- “I would recommend Changing Perspectives, as it’s a one-stop shop opportunity for crucial curriculum.” – Teacher, California
- “It’s great to have a scaffold for SEL and disability awareness, vetted to use in the classroom, especially when low on prep time.” – School Counselor, New Hampshire

- “I would recommend Changing Perspectives because it lays a solid foundation for teaching SEL skills and allows for flexibility.” – School Counselor, Vermont
- “I would recommend Changing Perspectives because it’s easy to implement, has engaging activities and virtual modifications.” – School Counselor, California
- “The lessons are simple, require little preparation, contain resources for further work, and are applicable to students’ daily lives.” – Teacher, California
- “[It puts] so many great resources right at my fingertips.” – School Counselor, Maryland
- “I have already recommended Changing Perspectives to a handful of school counselors! I think it is especially beneficial to counselors who are new to the field and need support for in-class instruction.” – School Counselor, New Hampshire

Concluding Remarks

In summary, educators across four states were resoundingly positive about Changing Perspectives’s offerings, both mid-year and at the end of the year during the 2020-2021 school year. Educators deemed Changing Perspectives as having high educational value and providing high-quality resources for supporting their students’ social and emotional well-being during a particularly challenging year.

Educators reported students being highly engaged with, and enthusiastic about, the Changing Perspectives curricula. They observed students strongly connecting with Changing Perspectives content and demonstrating behavioral shifts due to the curricula.

Regarding their own professional development, educators indicated that Changing Perspectives had improved their own teaching practice positively and had increased their knowledge of social-emotional learning and disability awareness. They stated that Changing Perspectives had given them new tools and strategies to better support their students and to more regularly integrate social-emotional learning and disability awareness into their classroom practice.

As a testament to their positive regard for Changing Perspectives, the vast majority of educators expressed that they would like to continue working with Changing Perspectives again next year and would recommend Changing Perspectives to colleagues in the field.



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