



# SEL Lessons Learned during Spring 2020 #COVID19 School Closures

*The Social Express Remote Learning Study*

## GOAL OF THE STUDY

During unprecedented school closures spring 2020, nearly a quarter of a million new users were enrolled online in **The Social Express**. This presented a perfect opportunity to learn more about how educators addressed social emotional learning (SEL) in remote learning environments. Specifically, we examined how SEL services were being delivered. We were looking for best practices that we could share, as the likelihood is high that there will be further interruptions to traditional formal education moving forward, at least for the foreseeable future.

Education leaders nationwide are calling for increased deliberate planning for the integration of social and emotional learning. Concerns around shuttering of schools and drastically limiting social interactions may include: explaining the complexity of the situation to young children or students who have special needs, identifying students who may be in abusive situations, reaching students who are missing formative milestones in their school careers and need to lament and express their feelings of loss. These are not trivial issues to students, and if adults minimize these issues, we may also make matters worse.

---

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Teachers found creative ways of addressing SEL. See our Top 10 Tips For Using **The Social Express** during Remote or Hybrid learning.
- 78% of the educators surveyed overwhelmingly reported that **The Social Express** provided them with insight to address the SEL needs of their students. (Figure 1)
- Over 75% of surveyed educators reported that students were highly engaged (Figure 2)

---

## METHOD

We obtained results by surveying and interviewing educators who signed up for **The Social Express** during the initial peak of the Covid-19 pandemic. This group included teachers, administrators, service providers and parents. We surveyed both public and private schools serving students ranging from grades PreK-12. The data below represents responses from over 200 educators.

## FINDINGS

### TEACHERS FOUND CREATIVE WAYS OF ADDRESSING SEL

- Teachers used highly engaging animations and music to open up dialog about uncomfortable social situations in a safe environment.
- Teachers helped students build and transfer coping skills learned in a fun environment to feelings in stressful situations (like unexpectedly being quarantined at home).
- Teachers utilized simulated situations to allow students to explore consequences of their actions.
- Teachers used data from quizzes and performance reports to make ongoing instructional decisions about SEL.



***“We provided students with independent logins for The Social Express and did the webisodes together via Zoom as a group during synchronous class meeting time. We sent home flyers/packets so parents could address SEL needs with their student(s)”***

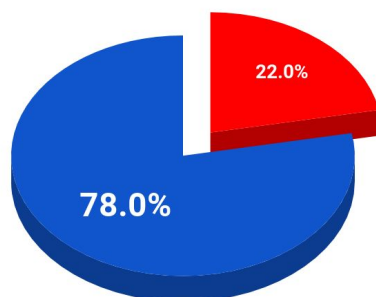
**- Jacklyn L., SLP, Columbus, Ohio**

SCHEDULE A GUIDED TOUR OF THE SOCIAL EXPRESS

### EDUCATORS OVERWHELMINGLY REPORT THAT *THE SOCIAL EXPRESS* PROVIDED THEM WITH INSIGHT TO ADDRESS THE SEL NEEDS OF THEIR STUDENTS

We have a better understanding of where students are in respect to SEL because of The Social Express.

78% Gave a score of 7+



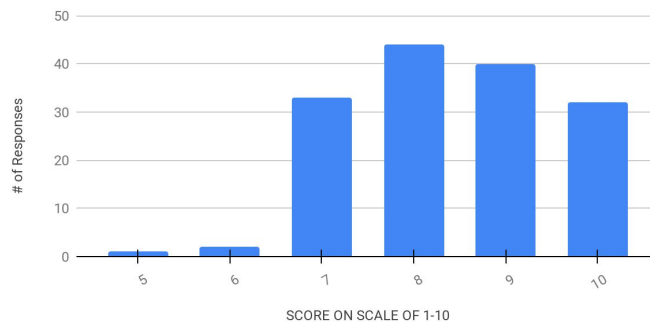
The data validated that we can connect with students on a personal level even under the worst possible situation - like a global pandemic. Here is why - first ***The Social Express*** offers students a simulated environment where they make choices and then observe the outcomes of those actions. Students can explore potential negative and positive outcomes, while in a safe environment.

The program takes it another step further with a unique feature that opens up a dialog box with a suggested discussion topic. We call them “Teaching Tips” and this optional feature prompts the adult in charge (teachers, paraprofessionals, guardians, parents, etc.) to stop and discuss the situation and possible outcomes. Student voice is an integral part to active learning, especially in social emotional topic areas. Although teachers like the animations, music and simulation aspects, they absolutely love these reflective points inserted at teachable moments.



Students were highly engaged while on The Social Express:

(Figure 2)



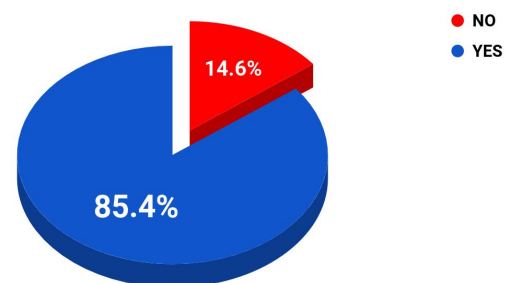
Furthermore one of the most important things educators reported was that students were engaged... Highly Engaged. Several of the anecdotal comments indicated that parents remarked how their child had requested more time on ***The Social Express*** ...

... always a good sign!

SCHEDULE A GUIDED TOUR OF THE SOCIAL EXPRESS

*Perhaps the biggest telltale is that over 85% of the educators surveyed indicated they intend to use The Social Express to support SEL needs in their school next year.*

(Figure 3)



In an article published June 25, 2020 by ***District Administrator*** magazine, Superintendent Scott Muri, of Ector County ISD in Texas summed it all up so very well, ***“On the first day of school when classes reopen in Texas’ Ector County ISD, teachers are more likely to cover Social-Emotional Learning than math or English. Previously, day one would be learning from minute one. This year minute one may be more about ‘How are you doing?’ as opposed to ‘Open your math books’.”*** We concur. This fall, back to school should be about connecting students, teachers and all stakeholders in the education ecosystem.

To sum it up - both the survey responses and the conversations that we had with educators over the past six months have been illuminating. It is clear that teachers have been creative in finding ways to address the social emotional needs of their students. More importantly, these teachers have also been models for their students, demonstrating that learning continues even in the face of an overwhelming situation like a global pandemic. We were thrilled that teachers tapped into the power of technology and tools like **The Social Express**, to provide structure for both teaching and learning in this emerging education environment which is so new to so many teachers and students. Some of those best practices are listed below. As education evolves, **The Social Express** will continue to partner with educators to meet the growing needs of teaching for social and emotional learning.

---

## Top 10 Tips For Using *The Social Express* during Remote or Hybrid learning

### 1. Get remote learning started on the right foot - set expectations with learners

*Online meetings are a great way to work 1:1 or with small groups. Take the time before sharing the screen to discuss goals and set expectations with learner(s). See what they know about the target skill.*

### 2. Pausing the action

*When playing a webisode use the pause feature on the top right of the screen. This is a useful tool to stop the action and work on "WH" questions with the user.*

### 3. Repeat a section

*If something is missed during a webisode that you would like to go over, use the repeat scene function at the end which is located on the top of the page.*

### 4. Use reproducibles for asynchronous remote learning support

*Use the "Worksheet Button" to access over 30 activities to reinforce and extend the learning.*

### 5. Use the turn-key lesson plans

*Open the "Curriculum Ticket" and select "Program Materials" to find: weekly plans, unit plans, and annual plans. Unit plans are a great way to focus on specific target skills.*

### 6. Pre-Post assessments

*Use pre-post assessments to establish baseline skill levels and measure progress. You'll be able to celebrate those gains on a per student basis!*

### 7. Monitor progress remotely

*Use the progress reporting engine to see usage, frequency, quiz results and progress on target skills. Export results to a spreadsheet and have important data accessible anytime it is needed.*

### 8. Build reading skills using eBooks

*Most webisodes have an eBook. Open "Curriculum" then "Program Materials" to see fluency charts for all skill levels.*

### 9. Engage students with music

*Open the "Curriculum Ticket" and select "Music & Lyrics" to access 12 fun songs to listen and learn. Extend the learning using the corresponding activities located in "Program Materials" called "Music Smart."*

### 10. Keep teaching tips on

*The "Teaching Tips" were strategically placed in each webisode to provide hints for 'teachable moments'. They are especially helpful during remote learning, to assist parents or caregivers with appropriate discussion points.*

**About The Language Express, Inc.:** The Language Express, founded by parents of autistic twins in 2010, is a privately held company based in Encinitas, California. The company develops **The Social Express**® and other interactive social learning software. The company's mission is to help children with all kinds of special needs including: Language & Communication Disorders, Self-regulation disorders, and even neurotypical students PK-3. Learn more at <http://socialexpress.com>

SCHEDULE A GUIDED TOUR OF THE SOCIAL EXPRESS