

## Impact of Student Teacher Time on Student Engagement

**Simran Ballani**

*Doctorate Student, European International University, Paris*

*Pedagogical Director & Workplace Happiness Coach, CCE Finland*

*Affiliation: CCE Finland; Platform 6, Åkerlundinkatu 8, 33100 Tampere, Finland*

*Corresponding author: simran.ballani@ccefinland.org*

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### ABSTRACT

There is so much innovation in pedagogy around us - but what is often overlooked is one major key element i.e. student's engagement. Lack of motivation where students often struggle with staying motivated and engaged in their studies. This coupled with the distractions of today's digital age, students are constantly bombarded with distractions from their phones, social media, and other technologies. This can make it difficult for them to focus on their studies and stay engaged in the classroom. What if there is a tool / model that engages students to be motivated and take ownership of their learning. This research is about one such tool/method i.e. STT - Student teacher time. This of course is part of the bigger area of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) which has gained considerable attention in recent years as a key aspect of a well-rounded education.

**Keywords:** Student Engagement, Social Emotional Learning, Student Teacher Time, Student Agency, Circle Time

UNESCO's report "Rethinking Education: Towards a global common good?" highlights the importance of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in education. The report emphasizes the importance of SEL in promoting the values of empathy, respect, and solidarity, and in building a more just and sustainable world. Importance of SEL in education and the need to integrate SEL into the curriculum in order to promote the development of social and emotional competencies. The report provides a comprehensive and forward-looking vision for the future of education that recognizes the importance of promoting a global common good through education<sup>[1]</sup>.

SEL models in schools aim to develop students' skills in managing their emotions, building positive relationships, and making responsible decisions. (Durlak, J.A., Weissberg, R.P., Dymnicki, A.B., Taylor, R.D. & Schellinger, K. (2011). Some of the key benefits of implementing such SEL models are Positive

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impacts on academic achievement, Improved social and emotional skills, Positive impacts on mental health and Positive impacts on behavior<sup>[2]</sup>.

For kindergarten (ages 3-8 years) Circle time as a SEL group activity is conducted that involves sitting in a circle and engaging in various activities and discussions. Some of the key benefits are Encouraging social interaction, Promoting communication, Enhancing emotional development, Improving attention and concentration and Fostering a sense of community<sup>[3]</sup>.

While, circle time is a valuable tool for promoting social, emotional, and cognitive development in children - it however withers out post kindergarten. It's important to divulge to next logical question i.e. Why does circle time stop after kindergarten? Some of the key reasons could be: Curriculum Demand, Change in Developmental needs of children, overall classroom management, perceptions of age - appropriateness<sup>[3]</sup>.

Another important arena for which such dedicated time is needed is to break the traditionally deep rooted methodology of chalk and talk method, more of teaching and less learning, which has its impression on the student engagement as which impacts students' involvement in their own learning degree of attention, curiosity, interest among students.

## Research Objective/Hypothesis

Several well-designed studies have documented the positive effects of SEL programming on students of diverse backgrounds, from preschool through high school, in urban, suburban, and rural settings. This research indicates that well-planned and well-implemented SEL programming can positively affect a broad range of outcomes.

**1. Improved academic outcomes:** A study published in the Journal of Educational Psychology found that group discussion activities, including circle time, were associated with improved academic outcomes in middle school students, including higher grades and test scores (John Dunlosky, Katherine A. Rawson)<sup>[4]</sup>.

**2. Positive social and emotional outcomes:** Another study published in the journal Social Development found that group discussion activities, including circle time, were associated with positive social and emotional outcomes in high school students, including increased empathy and reduced aggressive behavior (John Payton Roger P. Weissberg)<sup>[5]</sup>.

**3. Increased engagement:** A study published in the Journal of Educational Research found that group activities, including circle time, increased student engagement and motivation in high school science classes (Justin St. and Idaho Karla Onge- University of Idaho)<sup>[6]</sup>.

**4. Enhanced critical thinking skills:** A study published in the International Journal of Progressive Education found that group discussion activities, including circle time, were associated with enhanced critical thinking skills in high school students (Morgan K. Williams)<sup>[7]</sup>.

Despite limitations, some educators continue to use circle time in later grades or adapt the concept to fit the developmental needs of their students. Ultimately, the decision to use circle time or any other group activity will depend on the specific needs and goals of the school/institution/classroom and the students within it. While circle time is commonly used in early childhood education as a routine, there is limited research/evidence of having this as part of the curriculum and creative time table in later grades.



**Fig. 1:** This picture shows a circle time routine being conducted by the teacher with Nursery children of age group 3-4 years

There are some encouraging studies that do suggest potential benefits to using circle time or similar group activities as a routine with older students. Having this hypothesis in perspective -STT i.e. student-teacher time routine had been adopted in CCE Finland's School - for the year 2022-23.



**Fig. 2:** This picture shows a STT routine being conducted by the teacher with students from grade 11 age group 16-18 years old

Student teacher time is a part of the bigger area of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). With this scheduled time - teachers establish and consistently follow a daily routine or schedule that includes dedicated time for building relationships with students, providing individualized support, and engaging students in meaningful learning activities. Early results indicate higher levels of engagement, motivation, and academic achievement.

This hypothesis is based on the assumption that when teachers establish a predictable and supportive classroom environment through consistent routines and schedules, students are more likely to feel safe and comfortable in the classroom, leading to increased engagement and motivation. Furthermore, when teachers provide individualized support and engage students in meaningful learning activities, students are more likely to feel valued and have a sense of ownership over their learning, which can lead to improved academic achievement.

To test this hypothesis, a study was conducted to compare student outcomes (such as overall engagement, confidence, ease of expression and good thought learning) in classrooms with and without a consistent

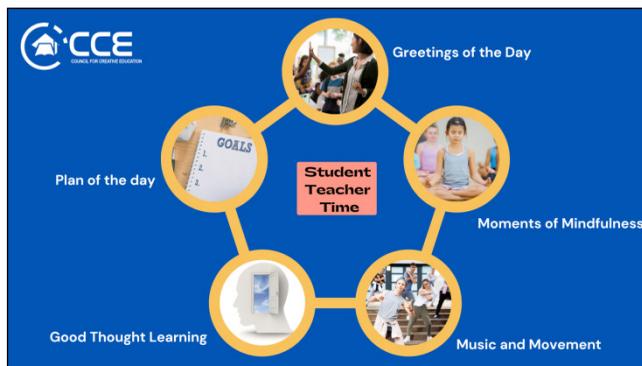
daily routine or schedule that includes dedicated time for building relationships with students, providing individualized support, and engaging students in meaningful learning activities. Here is the list of parameters that study was conducted on —

1. Ease of Expression Before and after *Stt*
2. Enthusiasm to Attend School before and *Stt*
3. Rate Confidence/Good Value Learning before and after *Stt*
4. Overall Engagement Level before and after *Stt*

This study included surveys or interviews with parents, teachers and students to gather their perspectives on the impact of the Student teacher time routine on the classroom environment.

## Methodology/Working Model

There are several different Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) models that schools and educators use to promote the social, emotional, and behavioral development of their students. These few models were taken as the basis of proving that such practices can be effective in promoting positive teacher-student relationships and supporting student learning. Some of the key areas have been taken into *STT - Student Teacher Time model* which establishes a daily routine or schedule can be an effective way to promote a positive teacher-student relationship and support student learning. Student Teacher Time is typically the school's first session every day, allowing children to participate in group activities. It aids in discussion and problem solving, sharing experiences and emotions, building social and emotional skills and developing a sense of community. Student-teacher time is introduced as a structured time during the school day where a teacher and one or more students meet to focus on individual needs, interests, and strengths. This is helping build skills linked to cognitive development, increases student focus and motivation, has greatly improved relationships between students and teachers which has helped foster students confidence and success<sup>[8][9]</sup>.



**Fig. 3:** This picture shows the timeline and key elements of Student Teacher Time

Here are key elements that are followed as routine of STT: —

1. Greetings: Practicing Greetings helps students in building relationships, showing respect and creating a positive impression. It also helps to establish a friendly and social atmosphere, break

the ice and start a conversation. All of these things are extremely important for them to be a part of the real world. Research has shown that morning meetings improve student attendance, behavior, and academic performance.

2. **Moments of Mindfulness:** Practicing mindfulness can help students in several ways: it can reduce stress and anxiety, improve focus and concentration, enhance emotional regulation, increase self-awareness, and promote overall well-being. By incorporating mindfulness into their morning routine, students have developed valuable skills to better manage the challenges and demands of academic and personal life.
3. **Music & Movement:** Having music and movement in the morning can help students in several ways: like Increases energy levels and wakes up the body, Enhances focus, attention and learning ability, Reduces stress and anxiety, Boosts mood and promotes overall well-being. Overall incorporating music and movement into the morning routine has helped students start the day with a positive attitude and set the tone for a productive day ahead.
4. **Good Thought Learning:** This element promotes positivity and a growth mindset. It encourages students to develop their own values and beliefs. Allows them to help build character and emotional intelligence. The implementation has enhanced overall well-being and happiness and has supported personal development and self-reflection.
5. **Session/Day Plan:** Discussing the session plan in the morning is important for students because it helps them be involved in setting the expectations and goal for the day. It also helps them improve time management and organization skills. Most importantly, by discussing the session plan, students gain a clear understanding of what they will be learning, what is expected of them, and how they can actively participate in the lesson. This can help create a more meaningful and productive learning experience.

STT typically involves about 15 to 20 minutes (mandatory time), although a relatively brief span of time, occurs nearly every day in most classrooms from grade 1-12; therefore, students will be ideally exposed to a total of 45 hours of student teacher time, as a low estimate, over a full, 180-day academic year. Consequently, this particular segment of the school day represents an important and little-understood lever for improving student's exposure to high-quality student engagement and involvement for the day.



**Fig. 4:** This picture showcases a teacher practicing greetings with students of Kindergarten



**Fig. 5:** This picture showcases students of grade 7 practicing moments of mindfulness



**Fig. 6:** This picture showcases teachers and students of grade 10 practicing music and movement



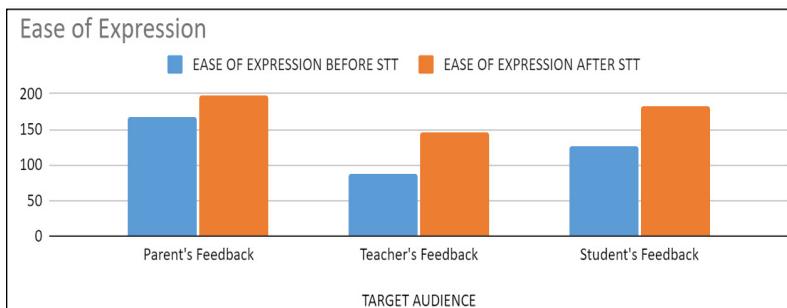
**Fig. 7:** This picture showcases students of grade 9 role playing good thought learning



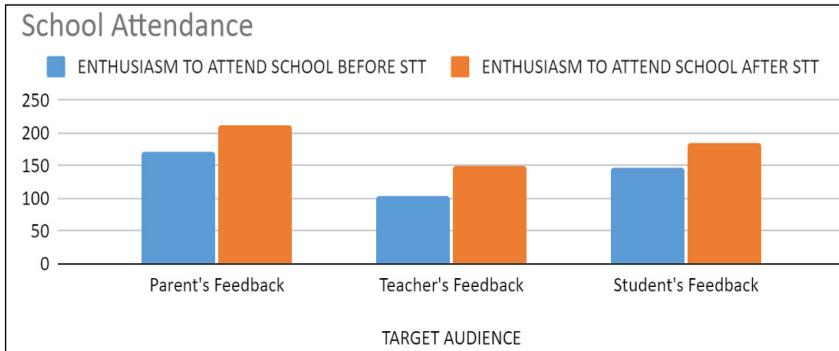
**Fig. 8:** This picture showcases students of grade 4 and 5 planning the goals of the day in collaborative manner

## Preliminary Results

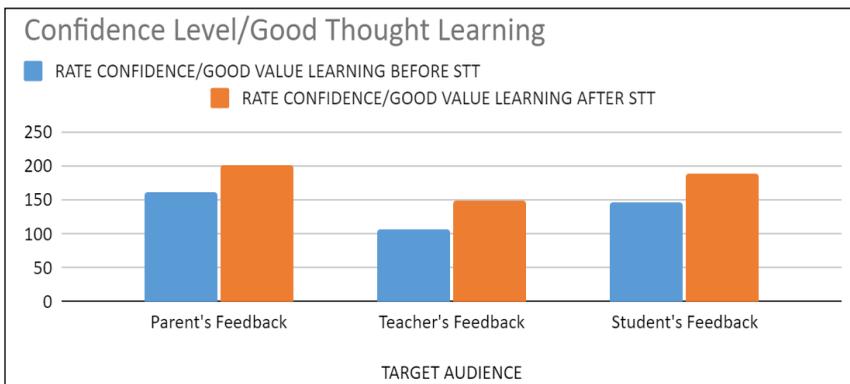
In this research, reader will be able to examine the early study and results of Implementation of STT (Student Teacher time) which aims to examine the influence of introducing student teacher time as a regular part of school day to grades 1-12 to see the difference in their attendance, engagement, participation, leadership and overall engagement via Student Teacher Time. The statistical data was collected by sending forms to a size of about 50 students, followed by their class teachers and parents. The data shows results on how STT has its impact on the child's overall development.



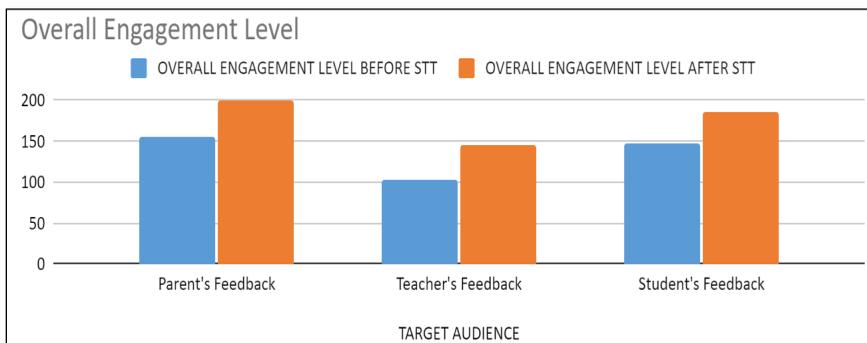
**Fig. 9:** Teachers, parents and students were asked to rate on a linear scale of 1-5; 5 being the highest on the difference they observed on the ease of expression before implementing the STT and after implementing the STT for 6 months



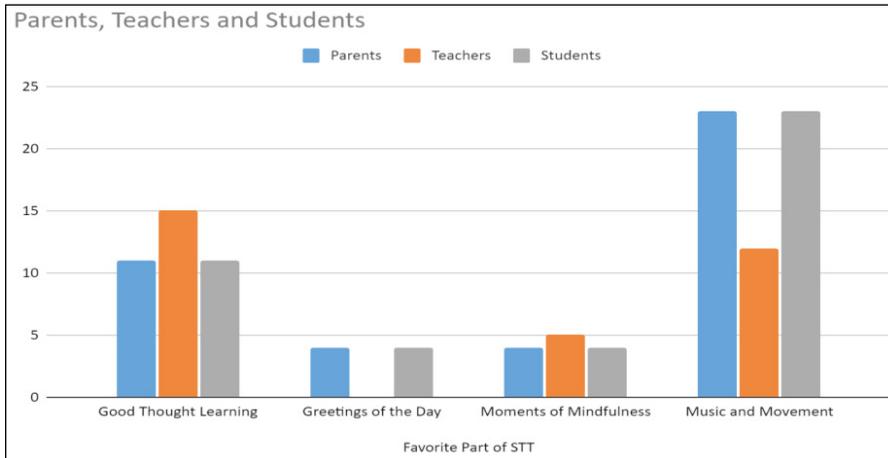
**Fig. 10:** Teachers, parents and students were asked to rate on a linear scale of 1-5; 5 being the highest on the difference they observed on school attendance before implementing the STT and after implementing the STT for 6 months



**Fig. 11:** Teachers, parents and students were asked to rate on a linear scale of 1-5; 5 being the highest on how the confidence level, expression and empathy changed before and after implementing the good thought learning for 6 months

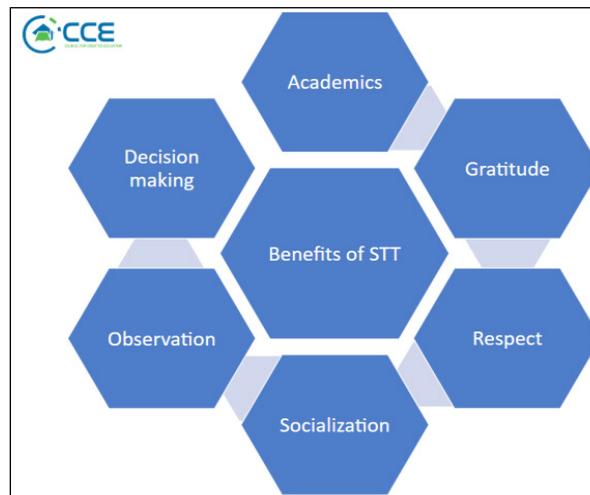


**Fig. 12:** Teachers, parents and students were asked to rate on a linear scale of 1-5; 5 being the highest on how the overall engagement has changed before and after implementing STT for 6 months



**Fig. 13:** Teachers, parents and students were asked to rate on a linear scale of 1-5; 5 being the highest - which is their favorite part of STT

## Significance



**Fig. 14:** This figure shows some of the benefits from implementing of STT

Establishing a routine for student-teacher time has had significant benefits for both teachers and students. Some of the key benefits that have been observed are —

1. **Positive classroom environment:** This consistent routine has helped establish a predictable and supportive classroom environment where students feel safe and comfortable.  
**Supporting student learning environment:** A routine that included dedicated time for individualized support and meaningful learning activities helped students stay engaged and motivated, leading to improved engagement.

2. Building relationships: Consistent time for building relationships with students and teachers has helped both get to know each other on a personal level, which has led to stronger teacher-student relationships.
3. Reduced disruptive behavior: A consistent routine helped reduce disruptive behavior in the classroom by establishing clear expectations and providing structure by mutual classroom agreements.
4. Improves time management: This routing helps teachers and students manage their time more effectively by ensuring that they have dedicated time for STT, individualized support, planning, and other important tasks.

Overall, establishing a routine such as STT has been a critical component of creating a positive and effective classroom environment. By providing dedicated time for building relationships, supporting student learning, and managing time effectively, teachers have helped students achieve their academic goals and develop the social and emotional skills they need to succeed<sup>[9]</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

While there are many benefits to establishing a routine for student-teacher time, there are also some limitations in implementing of this Student Teacher Time i.e. —

1. Time constraints: Teachers often have limited time available to dedicate to individualized support or building relationships with students. Establishing a routine for student-teacher time may require teachers to prioritize certain tasks over others, which could result in some students receiving less attention than others.
2. Lack of flexibility: A rigid routine may not allow for changes or adjustments to be made in response to unexpected events or changes in student needs.  
Student resistance: Some students may not respond well to a routine that feels overly structured or rigid, which could lead to disengagement or disruptive behavior.
3. Limited impact: Establishing a routine for student-teacher time may not have a significant impact on student outcomes if the routine is not consistently followed or does not align with the needs of the students.
4. One-size-fits-all approach: A routine may not be effective for all students, as different students may have different learning needs, preferences, and styles.

Overall, while establishing a routine for student-teacher time can be beneficial, however it is important to recognize the limitations and consider how to address them in order to maximize the benefits for all students. This may involve finding ways to be flexible, adapting the routine to meet the needs of individual students, and ensuring that the routine is consistently followed.

This research closely examines how teachers and students are making use of this prominent part of the day. Any innovation can only be fruitful if it's actually implemented in the classrooms and the real beneficiaries are seeing the impact in their learning process. Also while circle time presence & its importance in kindergarten undisputed - the routine & the component remains unclear. Whereas STT is an organized segment at the start of the day, which features activities such as Greetings, Moments of Mindfulness, Music & Movement and Good Thought of Learning<sup>[10]</sup>.

Evidence calls into question the richness and quality of student teacher time and early findings suggests that even modest improvements in quality and an increased focus on child participation/student leadership can ensure that facilitators are not squandering valuable learning time by chalk & talk method and depleting children's behavioral self-regulation during the first lesson of the day. Innovation in pedagogy is obtaining first the student engagement, students mental presence and nurturing the joy of learning and this can happen with well structured 'Student Teacher Time' .

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