PART I: ACCESS TO INFORMATION FROM WRITTEN TEXTS

(60 points)

Read the article below and then answer questions 1-6.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

A new subject has recently been added to the curriculum in thousands of schools across America. Called Social-Emotional Learning, or SEL, it aims to teach children how to manage their emotions in social situations, and help them show empathy and respect for others. SEL programs were developed in response to dozens of studies indicating that social-emotional skills contribute greatly to academic success. It has also been found that people with these skills enjoy greater job satisfaction and more stable relationships, as well as better health.

Research psychologist Marc Brackett, a pioneer of SEL, notes that the school environment is a source of constant emotional turmoil. The steady stream of academic and social challenges arouses intense feelings ranging from deep frustation to over-excitement, all of which can undermine the ability to learn. As Dr. Brackett points out, when emotions take over, attention and memory are impaired, making it very difficult for children to focus on what's being taught in class. "A teacher might say, 'Calm down'," he explains, "but how exactly do you calm down when you're feeling anxious? Where do you learn the skills to manage those feelings?"

A growing number of educators and psychologists believe that the answer to that question is, in school. It is during those years, they say, that children should learn not to be overwhelmed by their feelings. This is easier said than done. When we feel angry, we often lash out at others, which only makes matters worse. Advocates of SEL claim that by employing a range of activities such as role playing and group discussions of actual situations, children can be taught to cope with their emotions in more constructive ways.

/המשך בעמוד 3/

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Although increasingly popular, SEL has also generated heated debate. Some experts argue that the programs are being implemented prematurely, before it has been determined at which ages children can best learn techniques of self-control. In fact, few in-depth studies have examined this question. Moreover, no agreed-upon standards have been set for evaluating the success of SEL programs. This may explain why studies of current programs have produced conflicting results. Whereas some have reported an improvement in academic achievements and a decrease in aggressive behavior, others have found no changes in either area.

Until these fundamental problems and others like them are addressed, many educators will continue to dismiss SEL as a waste of valuable classroom time. But Dr. Brackett, who developed one of the first SEL programs, has no doubt that convincing evidence of the effectiveness of the method will eventually be found. What is more, he believes that a properly designed program implemented throughout the school years would have a far-reaching impact. "If you have that kind of instruction from kindergarten," he says, "I think that in 20 years the world will be a very different place."

QUESTIONS (60 points)

Answer questions **1-6** in English according to the article. In questions **1** and **6**, circle the number of the correct answer. In the other questions, follow the instructions.

1. What do we learn about in lines 1-8?
   - (i) Different ways of teaching SEL.
   - (ii) Studies done on SEL.
   - (iii) The benefits of social-emotional skills.
   - (iv) The importance of academic success.

(7 points)

/המשך בעמוד 4/

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2. What are we told in lines 9-17 about intense feelings?
PUT A √ BY THE TWO CORRECT ANSWERS.

..... i) What social effects they can have.
..... ii) How they affect learning.
..... iii) Why they are becoming more problematic.
..... iv) What skills are needed to control them.
..... v) How children are taught to deal with them.
..... vi) Why they are common among school children.

(2x8=16 points)

3. Give ONE benefit of having better control of your emotions. (lines 18-24)
COMPLETE THE SENTENCE.

It can prevent you from ..... .

(7 points)

4. COMPLETE THE SENTENCE.
Group discussions are mentioned in lines 18-24 as an example of.....

..... .

(7 points)

5. What needs to be done to solve TWO of the "fundamental problems' referred to in line 34? Base your answers on lines 25-33.
COMPLETE THE SENTENCES.

(1) Experts must .....

..... .

(2) Experts must .....

..... .

(2x8=16 points)

6. In lines 34-41, Dr. Brackett presents his view on (–).

(i) the popularity of SEL
(ii) the potential effect of SEL
(iii) the impact of SEL on education
(iv) the basic problems SEL should address

(7 points)

/המשך בעמוד 5/

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