

The Main Idea's PD Suggestions to Integrate Social-Emotional Learning into the Classroom

I. What is Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)?

A. To introduce the five components of SEL—self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and social awareness—show teachers the definitions and the graphic below. In groups, ask them to come up with a list of 3 behaviors that students might display for each component if they were skilled in this area.

1. Self-Awareness: The ability to recognize one's own emotions and thoughts and how they influence behavior.
2. Self-Management: The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behavior in different situations to manage stress and impulses and motivate oneself.
3. Social Awareness: The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds.
4. Relationship Management: The ability to establish and maintain healthy relationships with diverse individuals and groups.
5. Responsible Decision-Making: The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethics, safety, and social norms.



Next, share the list of behaviors below with teachers and discuss how this list compares with what they came up with:

SEL Component	Specific Behaviors		
Self-Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be self-confident Recognize my strengths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a difference (self-efficacy) Accurately understand my reasons for doing things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify my emotions, needs and values
Self-Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Display grit and persevere Manage my stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek help (self-advocacy) Exhibit hope, optimism, and motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize my day Motivate myself Control behavior and impulses Set, monitor & work toward goals
Social Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feel empathy for others Respect others' feelings and reactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize social cues from others Look at things from others' viewpoints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen closely and accurately Appreciate diversity and difference
Relationship Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build relationships Work toward group goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show leadership skills Communicate effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with a team cooperatively Engage with people, make friends, help others
Responsible Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify problems Evaluate ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be ethical and fair Solve problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze situations Reflect on my actions & thinking

B. What's the rationale for regular classroom teachers to infuse their teaching with techniques to boost SEL?

Share with teachers that SEL used to be the responsibility of guidance counselors and social workers. Why do they think teachers have now taken on the responsibility for teaching and reinforcing these skills? Discuss. Then share the following: Research shows that when students improve their social-emotional skills, it impacts their: 1) attitudes (motivation, commitment); 2) behaviors (participation, study skills); and 3) performance (grades, subject matter). Perhaps share this research from CASEL overhead that shows the outcomes of well-designed SEL programs:

- ⇒ 9% decrease in conduct problems, such as classroom misbehavior and aggression
- ⇒ 10% decrease in emotional distress, such as anxiety and depression
- ⇒ 9% improvement in attitudes about self, others, and school
- ⇒ 23% improvement in social and emotional skills
- ⇒ 9% improvement in classroom behavior
- ⇒ 11% improvement in achievement test scores

II. A look at our own SEL as educators

A. Discuss: Why do you think as a staff it's important to look at our own social-emotional skills as well as those of our students?

B. Share these findings:

- Adults who have the ability to recognize, understand, label, express, and regulate emotions are more likely to demonstrate patience and empathy, encourage healthy communication, and create safe learning environments. (*Brackett, Katella, Kremenitzer, Alster, and Caruso, 2008*)
- Teachers skilled at regulating their emotions report less burnout and more positive affect while teaching. (*Brackett, Mojsa, Palomera, Reyes, & Salovey, 2008*)
- School leaders with strong SEL competencies build and maintain positive and trusting relationships among members of the school community. (*Patti and Tobin, 2006*)

C. Have teachers privately, on their own, circle the specific behaviors in the chart above where they feel they have the greatest strengths. Then have them choose one of the others behaviors to focus on improving for the semester and set a goal.

III. How do we develop our students’ social-emotional skills within the regular academic setting?

A. Even without being aware of it, teachers probably already incorporate a number of social-emotional skills into their teaching. Before having teachers dive into learning *new* ways to integrate SEL into their teaching, ask them to look at the chart below and discuss this question: What are ways you think you *already* help students develop their social and emotional well-being?

Social-Emotional Component	Classroom Practices That Support This SEL Component
Self-Awareness Behaviors • Identifying emotions • Recognizing strengths • Accurate self-perception • Self-efficacy	• Goal setting • Socratic Seminars • Reflecting/Journaling • Group/partner work • Accountable Talk • Metacognition
Self-Management Behaviors • Impulse control • Stress management • Self-motivation • Goal setting	• Goal setting • Restorative justice discussions • Self-assessment • Conflict resolution facilitation • Maintaining attention • Inhibiting inappropriate impulses
Social Awareness Behaviors • Perspective taking • Empathy • Appreciating diversity • Respect for others	• Service learning • Accountable Talk • Role playing • Conflict resolution facilitation • Socratic Seminars • Group/partner work
Relationship Management Behaviors • Communication • Social Engagement • Teamwork • Relationship-building	• Questioning • Classroom meeting • Service learning • Role playing • Socratic Seminars • Group/partner work • Accountable talk • Conflict resolution facilitation
Responsible Decision-Making Behaviors • Evaluating • Ethical responsibility • Reflecting • Identifying and solving problems	• Debating an issue • Problem solving with case studies • Classroom meeting • Conflict resolution facilitation • Socratic Seminars • Accountable talk

B. Below are a few brief professional learning suggestions for teachers to find additional ways to strengthen students’ SEL

1. **Teacher Beliefs:** We want all teachers in a school respond to student behavior in the most consistent and SEL-aligned manner possible. To do this, we need to surface teacher beliefs about student behavior and then come to consensus. Discuss:

1. What causes students to behave (and misbehave) in school the way they do?
2. What ideas about student behavior can we come to consensus about in our school/team/department?

2. **Relationships:** Think of a time when you had a teacher you respected and who genuinely connected with you. Have each teacher intentionally connect with one struggling student and try the following idea from the book:

1. Choose one low-motivation and/or deficit-perspective student and work to build a relationship with this one student.
2. Acknowledge your negative feels and commit to using positive words, facial expressions, and tone of voice with this student.
3. Look for opportunities to privately speak to the student about a topic of interest and find ways to praise the student.
4. Don’t expect rapid change as this student may have had years of negative feelings about school. Look for small wins.

3. **Physical Space:** Before a staff meeting, ask two to three teachers who have thought about SEL in designing the layout of their classrooms to showcase their rooms to the rest of the staff. Do a walkthrough and have those teaching share their thinking. Next, give teachers time to sketch ideas for new ways to set up their own rooms in a way that better supports SEL.

4. **Classroom Routines:** This topic is key for SEL. Look at other summaries by The Main Idea to help your teachers develop effective routines (books by Wong and Wong, Harlacher, Lemov, and Jones). However, one important area for teachers to work on now is their routines for **group work**. Teachers often *avoid* group work due to classroom management issues when group work is one of the greatest sources of SEL. Have teachers discuss: What’s hardest about group work for you? What routines do you use (getting into groups, getting students’ attention, group roles, distributing materials, etc.)? Have teachers choose one group work routine they struggle most with, script it out (in the most detail possible like on the bottom of p.4 of the summary), get feedback on it, and revise it.

5. **Self-Assessment:** Have teachers revise the *Weekly Reflection on Goals* sheet on p.7 of the summary to use with the students in their own classes. Then have them give students the self-assessment with the “I Can” statements on p.7 of the summary and fill out the newly designed *Weekly Reflection*. At the next staff meeting have teachers share how this went and suggest ways to improve it.

6. **Teacher Language:** The way teachers praise students has a large impact on reinforcing SEL. Have teachers look at the examples below of using specific praise and then have them come up with more effective praise for the final two:

Generic Praise	More Specific Praise to Reinforce SEL
Good job in resolving disagreements!	Your group resolved the disagreement about the correct answer by having everyone give their reason for their answer before deciding the best answer.
You worked hard!	I can see that you continued to work on this problem using different strategies until you were satisfied with this clearly-developed sketch for your project.
That was nice of you!	
Nice group work!	

7. **Student Engagement:** Help teachers address lack of student engagement by choosing three students and making a hypothesis about what level of engagement they are experiencing in the classroom (see descriptions on p.9 of the summary): Authentic Engagement, Strategic Compliance, Ritual Compliance, Retreatism, or Rebellion. Ask the teacher to sit down with these students over the next week and together “diagnose” the causes of each student’s (dis)engagement and come up with a plan to address it in coming weeks.