



TEACHING THE WHOLE CHILD

Instructional Practices That Integrate Equity-Centered Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning



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Updated: Research-to-Practice Brief

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Introduction

Educators consistently see the ways in which students’ social and emotional development shows up in their learning environments—when a student gets overjoyed for solving a math problem that challenged them or was able to use a mistake to propel learning; or when students dig into conversations with each other on the influence of media on their lives, identify solutions to pressing community problems, or lend another student a helping hand when they are down. While educators see social and emotional learning (SEL) play out in these contexts, they also have the opportunity to shape their students’ social and emotional development. Research confirms that educators not only have a significant impact on student academic learning (Chetty et al., 2011; Nye et al., 2004), but they also influence student social and emotional development. When students engage in SEL, they develop the social and emotional competencies (i.e., skills, attitudes, and knowledge) needed to be ready for and successful in college, careers, and life. Such competencies include understanding oneself, collaborating with others, reflecting on personal and collective actions, and making responsible decisions (Durlak et al., 2011; Mahoney et al., 2018; Taylor et al., 2017). Educators can support and facilitate the development of these social and emotional competencies through modeling and meeting students where they are, ensuring that students are able to use these competencies as tools for personal and group self-reflection and knowledge acquisition.

Social and emotional competencies are more important now than ever. After major disruptions to learning, particularly for those who are most marginalized, SEL will be even more critical to facilitate student healing, connection, and learning (Hamilton & Gross, 2021). When educators implement SEL with intent and within affirming learning environments, they set students up for success as they meet the demands of engaging in deeper learning and rigorous instruction (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010a, 2010b). Providing opportunities for students to build their capacities and use their competencies is central to the co-construction of identity-affirming learning spaces for all youth (Jennings & Frank, 2015; Jones et al., 2013; Yoder, 2014b).

To ensure student success, educators often engage in SEL work during regular instruction; however, it may not always be explicit or intentional (Yoder, 2013). To elevate ways in which SEL is embedded in the work that educators are already doing, educators need culturally and linguistically sustaining scaffolds through protocols and processes to integrate SEL into existing instructional practices and educator professional learning systems. To maximize explicit SEL instruction, integration of SEL allows educators and students to move away from the traditional compartmentalized “SEL time” to an understanding that SEL is a core ingredient to teaching and learning in identity-affirming spaces. Researchers and practitioners have already made promising progress in understanding and supporting SEL and academic integration, including work from, for example, the National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development

Important Note

- In addition to this brief, updated versions of the aligned educator self-assessment tool, [*Self-Assessing Social and Emotional Instruction and Competencies*](#), as well as the [*Social and Emotional Learning Coaching Toolkit*](#) are in development.
- The original brief aligned the 10 educator practices to teacher evaluation frameworks. The current brief does not provide or update the alignment. For more information about the alignment, please see the initial brief, [*Teaching the Whole Child: Instructional Practices That Promote Social-Emotional Learning in Three Teacher Evaluation Frameworks*](#).

Identity-affirming learning spaces are welcoming and encourage appreciation and celebration of who students are. They allow students to find joy in who they are, humanizing and centering their lived experiences and ways of being in the world (Hammond, 2015; Love, 2019; Muhammad, 2020).

(NC-SEAD) (2019), the Science of Learning and Development (SoLD) Alliance (2020), Transforming Education (2020), Urban Assembly, and a host of other SEL programs (Jones et al., 2021).

This brief refines pioneering work on the integration of SEL with academics and specifically addresses 10 educator practices that promote social, emotional, and academic development (Yoder, 2014a). Given the advancements in the field, particularly on culturally responsive sustaining practices (Jagers et al., 2019), SoLD principles (SoLD Alliance, 2020), trauma-informed instruction (Guarino & Chagnon, 2018), healing-centered engagement (Ginwright, 2015) and adult SEL (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009), we have updated the practices to reflect these principles and be more inclusive of the multiple spaces in which students learn and develop. Further, in our review of literature on SEL integration, we noticed substantive lists of alignments, example practices, and broad approaches. To help clarify what integration means, we provide a taxonomy of SEL-academic integration that includes four categories. Prior to digging into the integrative taxonomy and the 10 educator practices (inclusive of explicit examples), we first provide a high-level overview of SEL and the interconnectedness of social, emotional, and academic learning.

Understanding Social and Emotional Learning

Defining Social and Emotional Learning

Multiple definitions of SEL exist, each suggesting that SEL is an intentional process. In this brief, we use the definition from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). CASEL defines SEL as “an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions” (CASEL, 2021b, p. 1).

Historically, SEL models centered on the student as the unit of change and not the adults who engage with them (Gregory & Fergus, 2017). The introduction of SEL within schools and districts often occurred without a critical analysis of the role the adult plays to shape the learning environment. Without analyzing the role of the adult, SEL could take and maintain a deficit lens, through which educators may assume that students lack skills rather than considering the implications of their own social and emotional development in supporting students’ growth. As educators, we know that students come to school with established skills, and we are tasked with leveraging those assets to enhance their social, emotional, academic, and behavioral development. As educators implement SEL in a student-centered way, they acknowledge and support emotions and reactions, work to set and achieve goals, facilitate interactions with others in culturally responsive ways, and cultivate each student’s identity and agency (Weissberg et al., 2015).

Equity and SEL

A crucial consideration for centering students in SEL implementation is to approach SEL from an equity lens. Equity-centered SEL provides a strong foundation for adults to frame student support services in schools and addresses disparities and disproportionality head on. For instance, schools and districts may use a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) to align all supports and resources for student success. Educators in a successful MTSS study students’ needs and strengths and make decisions to intervene when students face barriers to academic, behavioral, social, and emotional success (Jackson & Wolfarth, 2021). When educators approach SEL with a strong equity lens, they set a strong foundation for student support services implemented through MTSS like restorative and trauma-responsive practices. Equity-focused student support services address the socio-historical and socio-political realities of students who are pushed to the margins of the

“*Educational equity means that each child receives what they need to develop to their full academic and social potential.*”

—[National Equity Project](#)

traditional school system. An MTSS with a strong equity-centered SEL foundation breaks down barriers to student success and opens doors to trusting relationships, student agency, self-efficacy, and overall sense of belonging and identity safety. When students experience agency through the integration of equity-centered social and emotional competencies, they are more capable of seeking help when needed, managing their own emotions, and problem-solving through difficult situations (Romasz et al., 2004).

To continue to promote SEL as a lever of equity and excellence, CASEL updated its SEL definition, competencies, and subcompetencies in 2020. Within the updated framework, CASEL (2020) not only identifies the underlying skills, attitudes, and knowledge that students and adults need to develop a sense of agency, belonging, and identity within their learning environments but also emphasizes that school-family-community connections must exist for students to flourish and thrive in the pursuit of their self-determined goals and aspirations. At the core of this work is an understanding of how students develop their skills across their lifespan, in culturally affirming spaces, and the ability to determine the social and emotional skills that serve as building blocks for others (Jones & Khan, 2017). Further, because multiple SEL frameworks exist (Berg et al., 2017), it is important to define the core competencies and subcompetencies and have a common language within a localized context. The CASEL 5 framework is among the most widely available frameworks, and it consists of five core competencies with underlying subcompetencies, as shown in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1. The CASEL 5 Framework: Core Competencies and Subcompetencies*

CASEL Core Competency	Subcompetencies
<p>SELF-AWARENESS The abilities to understand one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts. This includes capacities to recognize one’s strengths and limitations with a well-grounded sense of confidence and purpose.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Integrating personal and social identities ◆ Identifying personal, cultural, and linguistic assets ◆ Identifying one’s emotions ◆ Demonstrating honesty and integrity ◆ Linking feelings, values, and thoughts ◆ Examining prejudices and biases ◆ Experiencing self-efficacy ◆ Having a growth mindset ◆ Developing interests and a sense of purpose
<p>SELF-MANAGEMENT The abilities to manage one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations. This includes the capacities to delay gratification, manage stress, and feel motivation and agency to accomplish personal/collective goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Managing one’s emotions ◆ Identifying and using stress-management strategies ◆ Exhibiting self-discipline and self-motivation ◆ Setting personal and collective goals ◆ Using planning and organizational skills ◆ Showing the courage to take initiative ◆ Demonstrating personal and collective agency

SOCIAL AWARENESS | The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts. This includes the capacities to feel compassion for others, understand broader historical and social norms for behavior in different settings, and recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

- ◆ Taking others' perspectives
- ◆ Recognizing strengths in others
- ◆ Demonstrating empathy and compassion
- ◆ Showing concern for the feelings of others
- ◆ Understanding and expressing gratitude
- ◆ Identifying diverse social norms, including unjust ones
- ◆ Recognizing situational demands and opportunities
- ◆ Understanding the influences of organizations/ systems on behavior

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS | The abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups. This includes the capacities to communicate clearly, listen actively, cooperate, work collaboratively to problem solve and negotiate conflict constructively, navigate settings with differing social and cultural demands and opportunities, provide leadership, and seek or offer help when needed.

- ◆ Communicating effectively
- ◆ Developing positive relationships
- ◆ Demonstrating cultural competency
- ◆ Practicing teamwork and collaborative problem-solving
- ◆ Resolving conflicts constructively
- ◆ Resisting negative social pressure
- ◆ Showing leadership in groups
- ◆ Seeking or offering support and help when needed
- ◆ Standing up for the rights of others

RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKING | The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations. This includes the capacities to consider ethical standards and safety concerns, and to evaluate the benefits and consequences of various actions for personal, social, and collective well-being.

- ◆ Demonstrating curiosity and open-mindedness
- ◆ Identifying solutions for personal and social problems
- ◆ Learning to make a reasoned judgment after analyzing information, data, facts
- ◆ Anticipating and evaluating the consequences of one's actions
- ◆ Recognizing how critical thinking skills are useful both inside and outside of school
- ◆ Reflecting on one's role to promote personal, family, and community well-being
- ◆ Evaluating personal, interpersonal, community, and institutional impacts

* ©2020 CASEL. Social and Emotional Learning Framework. All rights reserved. Adapted with permission.

Importance of Social and Emotional Learning Integration

SEL is associated with positive academic and life outcomes (Durlak et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2017). In many schools, SEL efforts are confined to a specific instructional period during which educators support students in developing social and emotional competencies through a focused SEL curriculum. Education leaders and practitioners can maximize the benefits of SEL and work toward more equitable outcomes through a systemic SEL approach (school- or classroom-wide), in which SEL practices are embedded throughout learning contexts and across all levels of the education system (Mahoney et al., 2020). As we think about a systemic approach to SEL, it is also critical to begin redefining the role of the adults in SEL. SEL work must start with the adults, as they create the conditions and spaces in learning environments that allow students to thrive. Adults need opportunities to engage in critically self-reflective dialogue to shift their thinking and reflect on their biases and assumptions to ensure that all students receive empathy and have the ability to unleash their fullest potential. In the following subsections, we highlight the importance of integrating SEL within academics and through a systemic approach toward SEL implementation, as well as provide a taxonomy on how SEL and academics are linked within the learning environment.



The Interconnectedness of Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning

Science has demonstrated the inextricable link between academic and social and emotional development, suggesting that SEL development is critical to a student's ability to learn (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019). For example, students' emotions, self-regulated learning, and motivation interact to direct their energy toward (or away from) engagement in learning (Mega et al., 2014). Further, students retain more information from learning experiences when their cognitive challenges in classrooms are connected to social interactions (Jones & Khan, 2017). Indeed, activities that build relationships prepare the brain for more complex learning and experiences that allow students to develop, explore, and discover (Immordino-Yang et al., 2018).



A Systemic Approach to SEL

Schools that take a systemic approach to SEL extend student-focused SEL programs to support adults in cultivating their own social and emotional competencies; integrating SEL throughout their instructional practices; and creating affirming, supportive, and inclusive learning environments. A systemic approach to SEL deepens understanding of multiple spaces and contexts in which students learn and develop, recognizing that the whole school community—inclusive of all adults, families, and community members—is needed to promote the continued growth and development of all youth (Mahoney et al., 2020). See the “Systemic SEL and the Science of Learning and Development” sidebar for more information about how these hallmarks of systemic SEL align with research on SoLD.



Aligned Academic and SEL Outcomes

Despite this robust body of research, many educators are limited in the extent to which they can integrate SEL in the instructional day. Many report they lack capacity, resources, and time to implement SEL programs given the pressure and focus on students' mastery of academic skills (EdWeek, 2019), suggesting more work needs to occur to fully integrate SEL (NC-SEAD, 2019). Educators already

engage in multiple practices that promote holistic development. Many policymakers and researchers have attempted to align academic and SEL outcomes, as well as strategies to reach aligned outcomes (e.g., Johnson & Wiener, 2017; Minnesota Department of Education, 2021a; Transforming Education, 2020); however, educators have not received a taxonomy to help build their own capacity and reduce the burden of combing through multiple alignment documents. As such, we created a taxonomy of SEL-academic integration to demonstrate four concrete ways that SEL “shows up” in learning environments. The taxonomy provides a framework for ways that social and emotional skills and content standards are inextricably linked and helps answer the following question: “How do I integrate SEL into my content-specific instruction?” (For more information about the taxonomy, see Exhibit 2 and the “Creating Your Own Academic Integration Examples” sidebar in the Conclusion of this brief.)

Exhibit 2. SEL-Academic Integration Taxonomy

TAXONOMY



Explicit Skill Alignment

Description

A direct link exists between the academic standards and the SEL skills. Specific SEL skills are found within academic standards.¹

Examples

- ◆ Science and SEL both include evaluating biases and how biases may influence decisions and evaluating facts.
- ◆ Social studies and SEL both include understanding how behaviors and socio-historical factors influence the environment and others.



Explicit Strategy Alignment

Description

A direct link exists between the practices required to engage in the content and the SEL skills required to engage in the content practice.²

Examples

- ◆ Mathematics practices require students to construct and share arguments and use perspective-taking and communication skills.
- ◆ English language arts (ELA) practices require identification of emotions and connecting emotions and situations.

¹ Johnson and Wiener (2017); Minnesota Department of Education (2021a); Weissberg and Cascarion (2013)

² Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin and CASEL (2016); Johnson and Weiner (2017); Massachusetts Department of Education (2017a, 2017b)



Ways of Interacting

Description

SEL skills mediate success in academics. Students use SEL skills to interact with content and to interact with others to master academics.³

Examples

- ◆ In physical education, students engage in a mini-lesson on conflict resolution prior to engaging in activity.
- ◆ Prior to engaging in a complex mathematics problem, students engage in a mindful minute to center their emotions.



Ways of Being

Description

Based on the content domain, individuals use SEL skills in specific ways. Individuals across content domains use similar SEL skills, but the ways in which they use the skills vary.⁴

Examples

- ◆ Mathematicians and authors both use goal-setting processes, but how they set goals, plan, and enact goals are subject specific.
- ◆ Scientists and explorers both have to predict consequences of their actions, but the ways in which they set up experiments, make assumptions, and test models vary by content.

³ Anderson (2015); CASEL (2021a); Elias (2004); Minnesota Department of Education (2021a)

⁴ Anderson (2015); Minnesota Department of Education (2021a); Yoder et al. (2020)

Systemic SEL and the Science of Learning and Development

Recent interdisciplinary research on the science of learning and development (SoLD) spanning education to sociology to neuroscience resulted in a set of findings on what it takes for all individuals to learn, develop, and thrive (Cantor et al., 2018; Osher et al., 2018). Drawing from the practice implications of these findings identified by Darling-Hammond and colleagues (2019), the SoLD Alliance partners have articulated five interrelated equitable whole-child design principles for education systems that must be implemented in a manner that is personalized, transformative, empowering, and culturally affirming (Learning Policy Institute & Turnaround for Children, 2021).

- ◆ Learning environments should support “positive developmental relationships.”
- ◆ These relationships help to cultivate “environments filled with safety and belonging.”
- ◆ Such environments are necessary for students to be able to engage in “rich learning experiences.”
- ◆ Learning experiences integrate the development of “skills, habits, and mindsets.”
- ◆ And “integrated support systems” should be used to ensure that all students are given the opportunities and supports that they need to thrive.

Equity-focused, systemic SEL cuts across these design principles. For example, school climate and SEL are related and intertwined approaches that promote positive developmental relationships and learning environments that are perceived to be safe, supportive, inclusive, challenging, and caring (Osher & Berg, 2017).

Instructional Practices That Promote Students’ Academic, Social, and Emotional Competencies

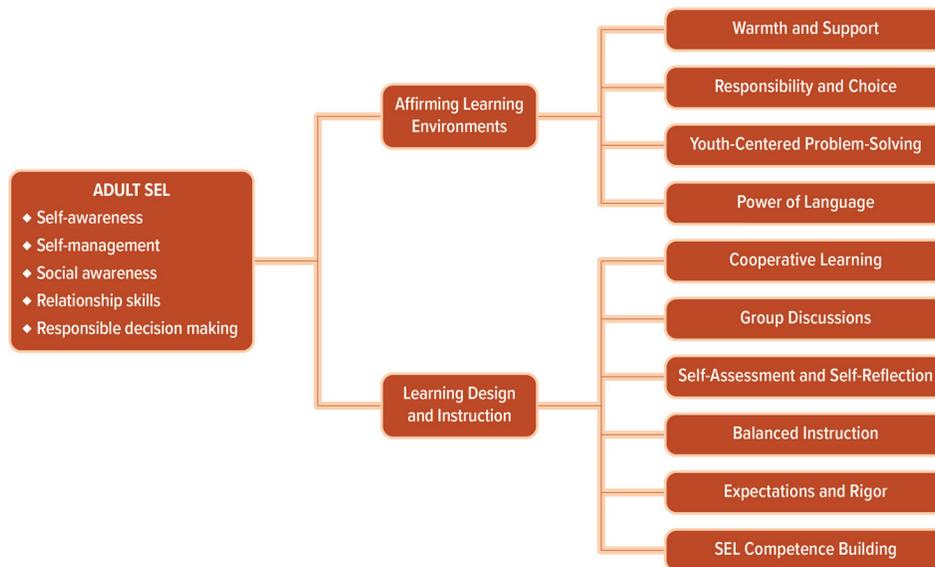
Research demonstrates that there are three general approaches that educators can take to implement SEL: (1) explicit skill instruction; (2) integration with academic subjects; and (3) general practices that promote a positive learning environment (Dusenbury et al., 2015; NC-SEAD, 2019). These strategies are not exclusive, as science demonstrates that all learning is social and emotional—supporting integration and general pedagogy while recognizing that social and emotional skills are malleable—which suggests that students require explicit SEL instruction that builds upon their assets (SoLD Alliance, 2020). Combining methods allows educators to maximize student learning and engagement, paying attention to and promoting authentic experiences that support the ways in which students engage emotionally and socially within the academic context.

Methods

In the original brief, [Teaching the Whole Child: Instructional Practices That Support Social-Emotional Learning in Three Teacher Evaluation Frameworks](#), Yoder (2014a) identified 10 common instructional practices that promote students’ academic, social, and emotional competencies. To determine which practices to include, he reviewed programs from the [2013 CASEL Guide](#) on research-based SEL programs. (For more information about how CASEL selects SEL programs to include, see CASEL’s recently updated [Program Guide](#)). Specifically, Yoder reviewed programs that focused on general pedagogical interactions as core to the program. In addition, he reviewed eight SEL scholars (individual authors and groups of coauthors) who focused on approaches that promoted embedded SEL (see original brief for the analysis by the original programs and authors reviewed). We have updated the 10 educator practices to represent advancements in SEL, culturally responsive sustaining practices, SoLD principles, trauma-informed instruction, healing-centered engagement, and adult SEL. Because the 10 educator practices are still well-represented within the literature (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019), we did not review additional programs to identify any new practices. Rather, we updated the descriptions and examples to better represent the current field and build on recent advancements to connect the 10 educator practices to equity principles and culturally responsive practices (Minnesota Department of Education, 2021b; Yoder et al., 2021).

The updated 10 educator practices outlined in this brief focus on the third approach (see Exhibit 3), which is a general approach to creating authentic learning experiences. These practices are not exhaustive, but they are representative of general educator practices that can be used in classrooms and out-of-school time settings to support identity-affirming learning environments, social and emotional competencies, and academic learning (see the “Methods” sidebar for more information about how they were identified). In other words, these practices are not necessarily new to educators, but the intentionality to support social and emotional development in this way may be. Further, in this updated brief, we not only align the social and emotional skills the practices promote, but we also provide explicit examples of how they support academic integration and align the 10 educator practices with the SEL-academic integration taxonomy (see Exhibit 2)—a strategy to support the second approach to SEL instruction. When reviewing the practices and examples, educators should also reflect on how they show up to the learning environment and engage in critical self-reflection so they develop a personal understanding of the social impacts of who they are and potential barriers to student learning when left at a dysconscious level (see “Adult SEL” sidebar).

Exhibit 3. 10 Educator Practices That Promote Academic, Social and Emotional Learning



Adult SEL

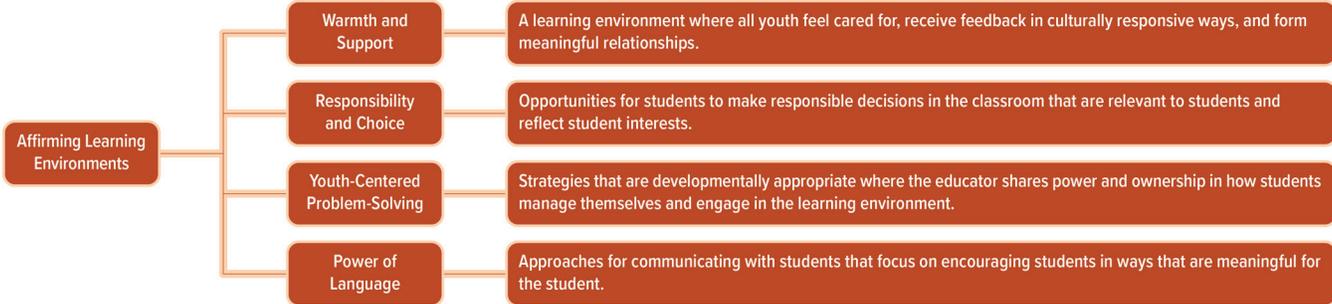
Recent research on SEL focuses on the roles of adults in SEL (competencies and capacities), including their own social, emotional, cognitive, and cultural *competencies*, as well as their *capacities* to co-create learning experiences that translate SEL to effective implementation equitably for all students (Yoder et al., 2020). In order to model and encourage positive student interactions, educators need to attend to their own social and emotional skills, which are required to communicate effectively with students and to handle stressful situations that can occur in classrooms (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Jennings et al., 2020). For example, highly self-aware educators recognize their own emotions and emotional reactions, and highly socially aware educators understand how their emotions influence others. They also build strong, supportive relationships by co-creating a nurturing learning environment with students (Jennings & Frank, 2015; Jones et al., 2013; Yoder, 2014b). Further, educators must consider their own social and emotional competencies through an equity lens, reflecting on how their own biases, assumptions, and worldviews influence the ways they perceive their students and build authentic relationships that honor students’ histories, identities, and lived experiences (Jagers et al., 2018). Thus, it is critical that educators consciously, deliberately, and consistently continue to refine their own social and emotional skills in service of their students and their own overall well-being, particularly as they continue to develop their integrated practices.

Practices That Promote Affirming Learning Environments

Educators create an affirming learning environment that is inclusive (all are welcomed and seen) and caring when they allow students to deepen connections with each other and between course material and their lived experiences. Such environments support and enhance student learning and academic and social development (Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2018). As students experience a warm and supportive environment with a student-centered curriculum, they feel a sense of safety and comfort, receive necessary scaffolds that allow them to thrive, learn how to apply knowledge to real-life situations, and acquire competencies they need to be successful in

school and life (Hattie & Clark, 2019). As educators create affirming learning environments, they should recognize that students from marginalized backgrounds may feel skeptical about school being a safe space for them to share their own realities, as they may see school as a space to combat stereotypes rather than a place that includes them (Howard, 2019). To begin to create environments in which all students feel comfortable sharing their perspectives, backgrounds, and cultures, ensure that students have opportunities to reflect on the multiple “ways of being human” (Howard, 2019). Further, educators might become aware that emotional expression and perceptions of what constitutes responsible decisions can vary by cultural group. For example, expressions of happiness or anger can vary by culture, which makes it incredibly important for all adults to get to know the communities, families, and students in the schools they serve (Duchesneau, 2020). The following subsections describe four practices to promote affirming learning environments that support student growth in social, emotional, and academic learning (see Exhibit 4).

Exhibit 4. Four Practices That Promote SEL in Affirming Learning Environments



1. Warmth and Support (Educator and Peer)

Warmth and support practices refer to the academic, social, and emotional support that students receive from educators and their peers, cultivating positive relationships in the learning environment (Christenson & Havy, 2004; Hammond, 2015; Hawkins et al., 2004; Love, 2019; McCombs, 2004; Muhammad, 2020). Educators’ use of warmth and support strategies creates learning experiences and interactions in which students demonstrate their value and importance to the learning community, develop positive peer and educator relationships, feel a sense of comfort and security, and advocate for themselves. Warmth and support practices also include asking students formal and informal questions, following up with students on issues or concerns, and providing opportunities for students to offer feedback and encouragement to each other. Example warmth and support practices include educators modeling desired behaviors, acknowledgment of each student by the adults and peers, and students feeling safe to ask questions and make mistakes (Hattie & Clark, 2019). As educators enact practices and model behavior, they should also reflect on how they exhibit their competencies and behaviors. The behaviors educators model are informed by their own cultures, which may be different from ways of interacting in their students’ cultures (Great Lakes Equity Center, 2020).

It is also important for educators to reflect on student needs as they exhibit warmth and support practices. Students are likely to need differential support from educators to form meaningful relationships. For example, an educator may need to make an extra effort to develop a positive relationship with a shy student. Similarly, students will have differing opinions, values, and interests, making it necessary for educators to be strategic in helping each student to have a voice and feel seen and heard in a way that is meaningful to them (Pianta et al., 2012; Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2018). Educators must also demonstrate respect for and learn about what the students bring to their

learning environments from their home, cultures, and peers, resulting in students' perceptions that they are valued and that their cultural identities are affirmed (Duchesneau, 2020; Scharf, 2016).

Connections to Social and Emotional Competencies

Warm and supportive practices also facilitate increased application of a variety of social and emotional competencies. For example, when students feel valued and seen, they will have the ability to communicate more effectively, engage in meaningful interactions with their peers, and provide feedback and support to others. Furthermore, educators provide more opportunities for students to hear each other's perspectives and understand ways of interacting that are most beneficial for each student. Students are also more likely to take risks when they feel supported and negotiate use of resources when they know that all the educators and peers in the learning environment want them to succeed.

Example Academic Integration Strategies

ELEMENTARY PHYSICAL EDUCATION EXAMPLE: Inclusive and Encouraging Language During Team Sports

SEL Skill: Recognize strengths in others.

Content Skill: Accept differences among classmates in physical development, maturation, and varying skill levels by providing encouragement and constructive feedback.

Taxonomy: Ways of Interacting



Description:

- ◆ Co-establish and model use of specific, positive language to encourage teammates during group sports (e.g., praising effort with “good try with passing the ball,” praising support of teammates with “nice assist,” or praising improvement with “your toss is getting more consistent”).
- ◆ Facilitate the whole class in generating a list of words and phrases that could be used to praise, support, and provide constructive feedback to teammates.
- ◆ Have teams co-create a special team cheer.
- ◆ Establish a closing routine for the end of each competitive game in which students congratulate all members of their own team and the opposing team.

SECONDARY VISUAL ART EXAMPLE: Artist Critiques

SEL Skill: Show concern for the feelings of others; take others' perspectives into consideration.

Content Skill: Critique and interpret meaning in artistic work.

Taxonomy: Ways of Interacting



Description:

- ◆ Using the format of a traditional artist critique (used in art schools), guide students in staging a critique in which each student is assigned the role of a well-known artist from history and the class imagines what it would be like if all of the artists were assembled together for a critique of one another's art.

- ◆ First, ask students to re-create a famous work from the artist (or provide recreated versions to the student) and research the artist and the work to prepare for the mock critique.
- ◆ Share typical agreements of interaction during the artist critique to guide students in inclusive and engaging dialogue. Discuss how to provide feedback while showing concern for others.
- ◆ After the mock critique, debrief on what worked well and what could be improved for a future critique session and agree on revisions to the agreements that the class can then use when engaging in an actual critique session using student-created works.

2. Responsibility and Choice

Responsibility and choice refer to a series of educator practices that provide opportunities for students to make their own decisions and take accountability for their interactions—social, emotional, and academic. The educator nurtures a learning environment in which students provide meaningful input into the development of the practices and procedures of the group, as well as the what or how content is learned (Hawkins et al., 2004). Providing meaningful input does not mean that everything the students say gets done (or that choices are a free-for-all), but the educator provides structures so that the students have a voice in the learning environment. Responsibility and choice is more than having a classroom job or having an option or two, as choices are only motivational when they are meaningful; culturally relevant; age-appropriate; and personalized to students' interests, goals, and lives (Evans & Boucher, 2015; Katz & Assor, 2007). Educators should not impose responsibility on students but rather help students realize they have influence on their learning environment (e.g., helping them process their choices and related outcomes from their choices) (Fishman, 2014; Johnston, 2004).

Students also need opportunities to identify topics that are important to them, co-construct solutions, and analyze ways in which they can enact agency within their learning environment (i.e., enhancing student voice) (Scharf, 2016). SEL should not be about getting students to comply with behavioral expectations but rather empowering students to question the places and spaces in which they live and make decisions for themselves that will allow them to live to their full potential (Great Lakes Equity Center, 2020). As educators engage in responsibility and choice practices, it will be important for them to reflect on the types of choices they provide, ensuring that they are authentic for all of the students they serve (Jagers et al., 2018).

Connection to Social and Emotional Competencies

Students enhance multiple social and emotional competencies when educators engage students in inclusive practices. For example, students have to set and monitor their own goals if they are provided specific choices to ensure that they are meeting expectations co-constructed in the learning environments. Students also develop problem-solving skills, like the capacity to define problems, generate and reflect on solutions, and consider the implications on others for potential solutions (Bierman et al., 2008). Similarly, students learn to accept responsibility for the materials and resources they use for learning. For example, students become more aware of the resources they have to help them accomplish their goals.

Example Academic Integration Strategies

ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES EXAMPLE: Creating a Mock Community

SEL Skill: Exhibit self-discipline and self-management (or self-directed learning).

Content Skill: Compare how different people adapt to their environments and cultures in the community based on their role.

Taxonomy: Explicit Strategy Alignment



Description:

- ◆ Let students know they will be creating a mock community. When creating a mock community, students learn to define the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders within the community, including banker, grocer, police officer, and others.
- ◆ Allow for authentic and meaningful choices, having students reflect on why they decided on their stakeholder of choice, as well as their secondary stakeholder selection.
- ◆ Scaffold students as they manage their emotions. For example, if students did not receive their first choice, provide criteria for how the first choice was selected (in this case, they are randomly selected) and provide space and time for students to reflect on the process.
- ◆ Continue to engage students in their mock community.

SECONDARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS EXAMPLE: Authors' Choices

SEL Skill: Anticipate and evaluate the consequences of one's actions.

Content Skill: Analyze how authors' choices concerning structure, order of events, or word choice affect the meaning they are trying to convey.

Taxonomy: Ways of Being



Description:

- ◆ Provide students opportunities to identify songs, movies, or literature they enjoy.
- ◆ Ask students to identify within those media powerful quotes or passages.
- ◆ Ask students to identify the words the author uses that moves them or speaks to them.
- ◆ Ask students to identify other ways to say the same thing the author did. Is their revision more or less powerful? Why is that?
- ◆ Ask students to reflect on the importance of being thoughtful when they communicate what they want to convey and the potential consequences. How can this skill author's use show up in other aspects of their life?

3. Youth-Centered Problem Solving

Youth-centered problem-solving practices refer to the practices that educators implement to nurture student agency and ownership that allows students to manage or direct their actions and feel as though they have a say in what occurs within affirming learning environments (Christenson & Havs, 2004; Hawkins et al., 2004; Johnson & Johnson, 2004; McCombs, 2004). Youth-centered problem-solving practices are built on the idea that students can regulate their own behavior when adults take more responsibility in the discipline process to engage students within the process rather than it being done to them (Bear, 2010; McCold & Wachtel, 2003). For example, educators and students co-define behaviors that are reflective of their cultures, families, and identities (Jagers et al., 2018) and provide sufficient support and guidance (McCold & Wachtel, 2003). These practices focus on ways in which adults facilitate interactions rather than student behavior or the belief that educators need to fix students (Duchesneau, 2020).

To successfully implement youth-centered problem-solving practices, educators can implement practices that encourage the co-creation of ways of interacting in learning environments, provide opportunities for students to correct their mistakes and manage themselves, and incorporate self-reflection. The aim is to see students as partners in the learning process, rather than using exclusionary disciplinary practices that remove students from the learning environment. As such, youth-centered problem solving suggests that disciplinary practices are part of a restorative process (a learning and healing process) rather than a punitive process (Caverly et al., 2021; Osher et al., 2010), in which students problem-solve issues (e.g., individual, interpersonal, and collective) that arise in their learning environments. They nurture prosocial behaviors, building on student cultural and personal assets and strengths. Educators can further promote youth-centered problem-solving through an equity lens by, for example, setting personal and collective anti-bias goals and providing spaces for classroom meetings that honor and celebrate students' identities in the learning environments (Jagers et al., 2018; Muhammad, 2020). As educators use youth-centered problem solving, they can continue to reflect on their own assumptions about student behavior and ensure that they encourage all students to solve and direct their behavior in affirming and equitable ways (Safir, 2016).

Connections to Social and Emotional Competencies

Students learn and apply their social and emotional skills when educators facilitate youth-centered problem-solving practices. For example, when youth reflect on how well they follow the co-created community agreements, students are able to reflect on their own actions to meet co-constructed ways of interacting and community agreements and identify the strategies that best help them direct their emotions, thoughts, and actions. Similarly, students become aware of others and how they direct actions in the learning environment to meet co-constructed agreements and build relationships with their peers and educators as they use their problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.

Example Academic Integration Strategies

ELEMENTARY MATHEMATICS EXAMPLE: Place Value Mat

SEL Skill: Identify solutions for personal and social problems.

Content Skill: Understand place value.

Taxonomy: Ways of Interacting



Description:

- ◆ Have students use a Place Value Mat to determine hundreds, tens, and ones, in which students in table groups share the manipulatives. Students first create their own solutions and then compare and contrast their approach with that of a partner.
- ◆ Note that there may not be enough of each type of manipulative as students engage in the task, or students may have different solutions to the problem.
- ◆ Engage students in a problem-solving task prior to starting the partner work with the Place Value Mat, in which students have to decide how they will share manipulatives if there is not enough around or how they will discuss differences in solving the problem.

SECONDARY SCIENCE EXAMPLE: Most Average Person

SEL Skill: Learn how to make a reasoned judgment after analyzing information, data, and facts.

Content Skill: Analyze and interpret data to derive meaning.

Taxonomy: Explicit Skill Alignment, Ways of Being



Description:

- ◆ Let students know they are going to learn about how to find the average today, and discuss the types of reasoned assumptions we can make when we get the average.
- ◆ Explain to students that you are going to measure students on a variety of characteristics (e.g., head circumference, arm length, height, stride length).
- ◆ Have students measure each other, recording answers on the identified characteristics.
- ◆ Let students calculate the average of the class on these characteristics.
- ◆ Have students identify who was the closest to average on each characteristic.
- ◆ Ask students whether there is a student whose measurements are average. Ask students whether more people's measurements are average or deviate from the average. Would another class have the same average? Why is it important to look at the average? Why is it important to look at variation?
- ◆ Ask students whether they think there is a student who might have average measurements in other domains (e.g., sports, games, and music) based on their current findings.
- ◆ Discuss the potential implications of making a reasoned judgment about someone by only looking at averages.



4. Power of Language

Power of language refers to how educators talk with students. Educators' communication patterns signal their beliefs about students, how warm and secure the educator is, and how emotionally and intellectually safe the student can be with the educator (Howard, 2019). Effective power of language promotes student identity, encourages student agency,

and ensures that students feel like they belong in their learning environment (Johnston, 2004). For example, language creates meaning about “what I do” or “people like me do” through thinking about their own assets and who they are as learners. Further, language can encourage youth to feel like they have ownership over their interactions. Language can also help students feel as though they belong by asking “how do we interact as a community?” (Johnston, 2004). Furthermore, educators acknowledge and accept students’ home language and lived experiences, as language directly connects with student culture and identity and helps students feel valued and heard (Howard, 2019).

Effective power of language encourages student effort and reinforces positive student behaviors, helping students to direct their own learning (Denton, 2008; Elias, 2004). When educators ask the reflective questions and reinforce specific interactions, they discover where students are coming from, help students connect academics through their social and emotional skills, and build vocabulary for students to identify and express emotions and thoughts. Educators can also demonstrate humility in their communications with students, particularly with students who have cultural and linguistic identities that differ from those of the educator. In this context, educators make the effort to actively listen and understand the students and affirm the shared responsibility of adults and youth if miscommunication occurs and potentially leads to misunderstanding (Duchesneau, 2020). Effective power of language *avoids* language that is humiliating or sarcastic as well as discipline by fear, intimidation, and indifference to students.

Connections to Social and Emotional Competencies

The language and communication educators use influences the degree to which students learn and are capable of transferring new knowledge (Chase et al., 2019), in part by nurturing student social and emotional skills. For example, by asking key questions and listening to students, educators can support students as they develop an awareness of their strengths and areas to improve. Students can also reflect on their own thoughts and behaviors when educators model their own self-talk, including making helpful choices in learning environments when educators model effective decision making. In addition, students develop self-management, including thinking about and reflecting upon their actions based on the language educators use with them, as well as making decisions that help students reach their self-determined goals within their learning environment.

Example Academic Integration Strategies

ELEMENTARY ELA EXAMPLE: Meaning-Finder Bookmark

SEL Skill: Exhibit self-discipline and self-motivation, and use planning and organizational skills.

Content Skill: Ask and answer questions to help determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases in a text.

Taxonomy: Explicit Strategy Alignment



Description:

- ◆ Model a set of key questions during educator and student read-alouds to ask when trying to determine or clarify the meaning of unfamiliar words in a text (e.g., “What do the words around the new word tell us about the meaning?” and “Are there pictures that provide a clue?”)
- ◆ Ask students to create bookmarks that list out and illustrate with pictures these key questions.
- ◆ Scaffold support when students encounter a new word in a text by first repeating the key questions and later by encouraging students to refer to their bookmark to guide them

(e.g., “You have a tool to help you figure out the meaning—try asking the questions to see what you can figure out about the word.”).

- ◆ Encourage students to use their bookmark as a tool to help them develop strategies to use a resource and to self-motivate looking up new words.

SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES EXAMPLE: Primary Source Review

SEL Skill: Demonstrate curiosity and open mindedness.

Content Skill: Integrate information from diverse sources into a coherent understanding of an idea or event.

Taxonomy: Ways of Being



Description:

- ◆ Have students review two primary sources providing differing perspectives on a historical event.
- ◆ In small groups, have students generate a list of questions using the [Question Formulation Technique](#) where they are instructed to openly brainstorm as many questions as possible, to write the questions down exactly as stated, and not to answer or judge this initial list of questions.
- ◆ Review, as a class, the lists of questions generated by the small groups using a set of prompts to help them prioritize which questions the class should work to address together.
- ◆ Encourage student discussion on the importance of historians asking inquisitive questions about the ways in which they (the historians) and others perceive historical events.
- ◆ Discuss with students how they are inquisitive and curious, like a historian, when they are attempting to engage their friends.

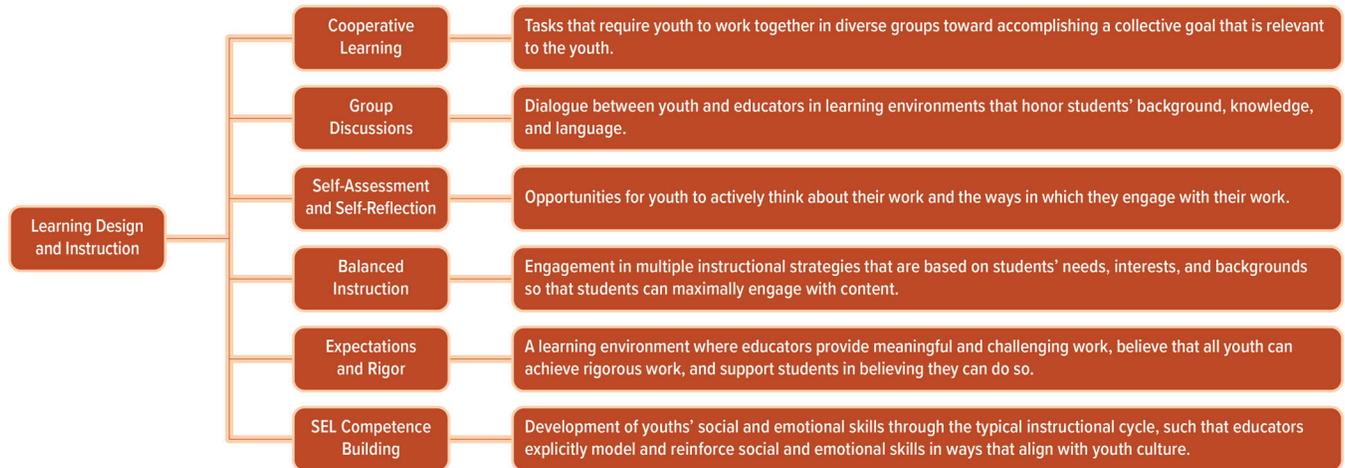
Practices That Promote Learning Design and Instruction

Science has evolved to demonstrate that SEL and academics are not polarized endeavors but rather both are core to learning and development. For example, in their guiding principles to teaching and learning, Darling-Hammond and colleagues (2019) note the importance of SEL integration: students learn best when they make meaning of content that is connected to their prior learning and knowledge; use their social and emotional competencies to direct their own learning (e.g., awareness of current understanding, collaboration, communication, and help-seeking); and co-construct agreements of interactions with their peers. By engaging students in authentic practices, educators create opportunities that promote maximal development. Immordino-Yang and her colleagues (2018) illustrate this point by saying, “[Providing] purposeful learning opportunities for young people—and strategic opportunities for brain development—requires educators to attend to the development of the whole child in context and to the need for aligned partnerships throughout the community that can support children’s and their families’ health and well-being” (p. 16).

When educators implement learning design and instructional practices, they create positive emotional support for active participation and risk taking, exploration, inquiry, and choice, as well as rigorous and differentiated learning opportunities that accurately challenge students individually and through social interactions. In other words, educators create spaces where students refine their critical thinking through their communication skills;

acquire new knowledge as they attend to perspectives different from their own; and plan, monitor, and reflect on their own progression (Condliffe et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2019). As educators apply these integrated practices, they must use them in the context of warm, caring relationships, in which they develop emotionally and physically safe environments in which students feel safe to take risks (Osher et al., 2018). In the following sections, we provide six practices that will help promote learning design and instructional practices that further student growth in social, emotional, and academic learning (see Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5. Six Practices That Promote SEL in Learning Design and Instruction



5. Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning refers to instructional tasks for which educators have students work together in diverse groups (e.g., related to skill, interest, race, gender, among others) toward a collective goal (Elias et al., 1997; Hawkins et al., 2004; Johnson & Johnson, 2004; Zins et al., 2004). Educators can use cooperative learning for a variety of purposes, including facilitating students' ability to learn specific knowledge, cognitively process what and how they learn, engage in inquiry-based or problem-solving projects, engage in higher-order thinking, and develop a group product or performance (Gillies & Boyle, 2010). To implement cooperative learning effectively, educators incorporate five basic elements: (1) encouraging positive interdependence, (2) implementing individual accountability, (3) promoting one another's successes, (4) applying interpersonal and social skills, and (5) processing group strategies toward achieving a goal (Johnson & Johnson, 2004). Educators encourage diversity as an asset during cooperative groups and assign roles and responsibilities that help break down gender, class, racial, and other stereotypes, encouraging collective ownership (Scharf, 2016).

In cooperative learning, students co-create learning experiences that encourage them to learn to work together to share resources, assume complementary roles, and interact effectively to reach group academic and social and emotional goals (Baloche & Brody, 2017). As educators engage students in cooperative learning, educators provide opportunities for students to take into account multiple ways of interacting and multiple viewpoints and perspectives, deepening students' knowledge that they themselves, their peers, their communities, and their cultures are assets that propel their learning and interactions with others (Great Lakes Equity Center, 2020; Jagers et al., 2018). As educators create cooperative learning experiences, they must pay attention to how the co-created environments, as well as students' race, ethnicity, language, religion, location, abilities, and culture, influence how students respond, make decisions, and perceive themselves and others (Jagers et al., 2019). For example,

a student's past life experiences will influence how they receive feedback from their peers or communicate their own expectations and needs within group settings.

Connections to Social and Emotional Competencies

Cooperative learning improves student outcomes, including the development of students' social and emotional competencies, particularly when done in identity-affirming spaces. Students receive opportunities to work with peers in meaningful ways, building relationship skills such as empathy, perspective-taking, and conflict resolution. They also provide opportunities to communicate more effectively in multiple settings, negotiate the sharing of resources and tasks, and seek out help when needed.

Example Academic Integration Strategies

ELEMENTARY MATHEMATICS EXAMPLE: Calculating Perimeter and Area of a Classroom

SEL Skill: Engage in teamwork and collaborative problem solving.

Content Skill: Calculate perimeter and area of a polygon.

Taxonomy: Ways of Interacting



Description:

- ◆ Group students in teams of four, and assign one student on each team to be the team leader.
- ◆ Provide each team with measuring tape, and ask that they use it to determine the perimeter and area of a classroom in the school building.
- ◆ Before students begin, provide a mini-lesson on strategies for working effectively as a team. Ask students to brainstorm strategies that a team exhibits to be successful, and then have each team commit to at least one teamwork strategy they will use during the cooperative learning group.
- ◆ Debrief with students on their cooperative learning experience and reflect on the degree to which they used their identified strategy.

SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES EXAMPLE: History of Conflict and Cooperation

SEL Skill: Resolve conflict constructively; and practice teamwork and collaboration.

Content Skill: Analyze the various factors that have led to conflict and cooperation in history.

Taxonomy: Ways of Interacting



Description:

- ◆ Group students into teams of four that will work together over the course of a week to review the group dynamics of a historical event and produce a mock news segment that discusses the factors that influenced conflict and cooperation between and among groups.
- ◆ Before students begin working, have teams establish team agreements for working productively.
- ◆ Each day when teams meet together during class, have teams assign team members specific roles depending on the goals for the work time (e.g., notetaker, timekeeper).

- ◆ Facilitate students in a “plus delta” activity at the end of each class period (e.g., what went well, what could be improved) to inform the next team meeting.
- ◆ After the assignment has been completed, facilitate a whole-class debrief of what students learned about conflict and cooperation from the assignment (making connections between the historical event and the students’ experiences as part of a student team).

6. Group Discussions

Group discussions provide students with opportunities to communicate their ideas and learn from their peers and educators (Elias, 2004; Elias et al., 1997). Multiple factors influence the effectiveness of discussions, including educator expectations and planning; student personalities, skills and background knowledge; and the overall environment in which the conversation occurs (Howard, 2019). When group discussions happen in a supportive environment, students and educators are constantly building upon each other’s thoughts, elaborating on their own thoughts, explaining their perspectives, and listening to others. When implementing inclusive group discussions, educators thoughtfully plan them in advance, intentionally and purposefully lead the discussion, implement them with student learning in mind, balance the talk between themselves and students, and prompt students to engage in more conversations (Center for Instructional Development and Research, 1999). To engage as co-learners in discussions, the educator and students affirm each other’s identities and allow everyone to bring in their personal and cultural assets. Group discussions—regardless of the focus of discussion—can help students process their own positions in relation to others and allow students to deepen how they make meaning of the world around them in a more intentional and nuanced way (Jagers et al., 2018).

Educators facilitate rigorous group discussions when they ask critical questions and support students in crafting their own critical questions, as well as providing students prompts that help them reflect upon and take their peers’ perspectives (Fisher & Frey, 2013; Rothstein & Santana, 2011). Educators support students to develop an awareness that they are the experts of their own lives, while also acknowledging the importance of understanding the perspectives and lived experiences of others (Scharf, 2016). When engaging in group discussions, students hear other perspectives that allow them to grapple with issues and ideas that are meaningful and relevant to them. Students further consider their own and others’ background experiences and knowledge as they solve problems or make sound arguments about content during discussions. As students engage in discussions, it is critical for educators to examine the social dynamics within learning environments to understand the peer relationships, for example, by examining, who is and who is not speaking, and use this data to frame how they help students understand their own positionality within the learning environment (Great Lakes Equity Center, 2020).

Connections to Social and Emotional Competencies

Through group discussions, educators nurture multiple student social and emotional competencies. To explain their own point of view, students have to reflect on who they are and their own positions as they wrestle with complex issues. Further, they self-direct their energy and engagement in the learning experience when discussions are meaningful to them and when they get to develop authentic interactions with their peers. Students also consider their own and others’ background experiences and knowledge as they engage with others to solve problems or make sound arguments about content. They also develop communication skills to create meaningful relationships with their peers, negotiate conflicts, and perspective take. Students also increase their confidence as they engage with others about their own ideas and think more deeply about the content.

Example Academic Integration Strategies

ELEMENTARY MATH EXAMPLE: Percentages, Fractions, and Decimals

SEL Skill: Communicate effectively.

Content Skill: Develop an understanding of fractions as numbers and use them to solve problems.

Taxonomy: Explicit Strategy Alignment



Description:

- ◆ Ask students to list all the things they know about how people use fractions, decimals, and percentages.
- ◆ Introduce percentages with fractions and decimals to explain how they are parts of a whole.
- ◆ Invite students go on a scavenger hunt through newspapers and magazines to locate examples in context.
- ◆ Create a class display or small-group displays with students showing all the numbers found in magazines.
- ◆ Use the classroom or small-group displays to engage the group in a discussion about what the numbers mean to them and why they are important in our world. For example, maybe students want to discuss what percentage of candy they would need to buy based on everyone's favorite preferences or what sport they should play based on interests.

SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES EXAMPLE: Article/Artifact Review

SEL Skill: Take others' perspectives.

Content Skill: Develop inquiry skills related to social issues and multiple perspectives in history.

Taxonomy: Explicit Skill Alignment



Description:

- ◆ Search and review articles independently to find three to five primary source documents to gain a personal perspective of history, specifically on Rosa Parks.
- ◆ Compare and contrast what they know about Rosa Parks and what they learn as they search. Students identify what they noticed about the perspective of the author in each article.
- ◆ Participate in small groups to review articles, and then discuss the following questions: When did you first learn the Rosa Parks story? What were you told? How does your knowledge of her story compare with what you learned in your independent research? How does your knowledge of her story compare with what you shared and learned in your small group?
- ◆ Engage in a discussion using the following questions: How old was Rosa Parks when she sat on the bus? What motivated her to stay in her seat?
- ◆ Continue the discussion about the multiple perspectives found within articles.

7. Self-Reflection and Self-Assessment

Self-assessment and self-reflection are two distinct but interrelated educator practices that guide students towards identifying where gaps in knowledge and skills exist and enacting strategies to meet desired results. Self-assessment strategies allow students to evaluate their own work and identify any discrepancies between their current and desired knowledge or performance. Self-reflection occurs when students reflect on their learning progress, the strategies used to achieve results, and how they can incorporate those strategies to improve work in the future (Costa & Kallick, 2008), including identification of the resources (including people) needed to reach goals. When educators provide opportunities for students to authentically self-assess and self-reflect, they nurture students' skills to critically examine who they are, improve their metacognitive skills, as well as understand how their context influences and shapes their progress towards their goals in the learning environments (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Schlund et al., 2020). Because SEL is socially and culturally influenced, to implement self-assessment and self-reflection well—with the goal of empowering students and promoting student agency—these practices should help students reflect on their own histories, interests, and assets; and to understand the contextual variables that influenced their success or had the potential to hinder success if the students did not have the necessary resources or supports (Great Lakes Equity Center, 2020).

Educators can engage in the following four self-assessment and self-reflection practices with their students (Brooke & Andrade, 2013; Costa & Kallick, 2008): (1) create or co-create well-defined performance standards that students can accurately assess against; (2) monitor progress throughout the process; (3) offer students options to revise and improve upon their work based on self-assessment; (4) help students reflect on how current learning (content and strategy) connects to previous learning and strategies to learn in the future. Through this process, educators help students answer three questions, “Where am I going, where am I now, and where to next?” (Zubrzycki, 2015). When educators provide timely feedback as a part of self-assessment, students begin to understand that learning is a cyclical process that they can revise and enhance their work throughout the learning process.

Connections to Social and Emotional Competencies

Self-assessment and self-reflection practices enhance student social and emotional competencies. For example, self-assessment facilitates self-awareness as it increases understanding of what a student does and does not know, internalizing standards of performance that allow them to understand their strengths and their areas of improvement more accurately. Further, students learn skills to self-direct their actions or identify engagement strategies that work best to reach their goals, building their agency in the learning environment. In addition, students build social awareness, including understanding strategies that work best for their peers, and identifying who and where they can go to find additional resources to help achieve their goal. These strategies help students, when implemented in affirming and supportive environments, promote student responsibility and ownership over their own learning.

Example Academic Integration Strategies

ELEMENTARY ELA EXAMPLE: The Writing Process: How Am I Doing?

SEL Skill: Set personal and collective goals and evaluate personal and interpersonal impacts.

Content Skill: Use clearly defined criteria to self-assess progress toward a finished writing piece.

Taxonomy: Explicit Skill Alignment



Description:

- ◆ Begin with the end in mind, and create a criteria chart with students for all the components needed in their writing piece to persuade the principal to host a science fun day for the school.
- ◆ Brainstorm all the impacts of learning about science as a school, and research fun science activities based on the topic most students in the school should learn and with which they might need extra support.
- ◆ Identify key points for individual papers, and determine how to approach their topic.
- ◆ Use a class writing board to list all topics and visually track personal progress through the writing process updating student progress on the board.
- ◆ Use the criteria chart for independently assessing individual writing pieces; peer review in small groups prior to final product; and teacher review for feedback, progress monitoring, and final grade.

SECONDARY ELA EXAMPLE: Writing Topic Selection

SEL Skill: Demonstrate curiosity and open-mindedness.

Content Skill: Follow a planning and brainstorming process to self-reflect and choose a topic to take through the full writing process.

Taxonomy: Explicit Skill Alignment



Description:

- ◆ Select a partner and co-write about a topic classmates find interesting, but do not know much about.
- ◆ Brainstorm a list of all the things they like to do when they are not at school.
- ◆ Using think-aloud, make personal connections to model personal perspective and experiences with the things students like to do when they are not at school. The educator has to demonstrate curiosity with the activities they are less familiar with, demonstrating willingness to learn something new and why they might select a topic they are unfamiliar with.
- ◆ Create a process map for student pairs to follow through the decision-making process about which topic to select.
- ◆ Choose topics from the student created list or other topics that come to mind, choosing between two to three topics that they may want to write about and why (using the educator created process map).
- ◆ Share with a partner the two to three topics they might want to write about and why. Together, partners narrow to one topic to write about that they are unfamiliar with.

8. Balanced Instruction

Balanced instruction encourages a deep conceptual understanding of content through a combination of problem-based tasks with explicit instruction that addresses the multidimensional needs and experiences of learners in an enriched environment (Christenson & Havsy, 2004; Darling-Hammond et al., 2019; Hawkins et al., 2004). Through direct instruction, students benefit from educator expertise by introducing, clarifying, and extending their knowledge (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019). Active learning calls for learners to explore conditions, circumstances, and possibilities; create questions; and identify evidence to answer those questions (Durlak et al., 2011; Larmer & Mergendoller, 2010). When educators create balanced instruction, they nurture emotional support for active participation and risk taking, exploration, inquiry, and choice, and rigorous and differentiated learning opportunities that appropriately challenge students individually and through social interactions that help them best engage with the content (not just because something is fun).

Balanced instruction includes student participation in multiple instructional strategies that are based on their needs, interests, and background and focused on authentic learning experiences that involve individual and collaborative work, social interactions, and appropriate integration of technology (Aspy et al., 2014). Because students need multiple opportunities to learn content and develop their competencies, balanced instruction incorporates differentiated instruction, ensuring that educators use multiple modalities and activities so that all students can be successful and engage in curricula in ways that are meaningful to them (Scharf, 2016). For example, educators can provide inquiries where students analyze a problem through a multicultural lens or engage in a project for which they examine inequities within their classrooms, school, or broader community (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Throughout balanced instruction, students plan, monitor, and reflect on their progress toward completion.

Connections to Social and Emotional Competencies

Students apply multiple social and emotional competencies when engaged in multidimensional learning experiences. For instance, when students participate in direct instruction, they direct their energy and motivation towards content that is relevant and engaging. Further, during group projects, students develop, monitor, and evaluate their goals during individual and collective action, asking for help when needed across tasks. They also use their relationship skills as they engage in project-based learning, such as collaborating with others, communicating sensibly and sensitively; and demonstrating empathy in their problem solving and responsible action.

Example Academic Integration Strategies

ELEMENTARY SCIENCE EXAMPLE: Combine Ice, Salt, and Water

SEL Skill: Anticipate and evaluate the consequences of one's actions.

Content Skill: Analyze data from testing different combinations of materials to determine outcome best suited for intended purpose.

Taxonomy: Ways of Being



Description:

- ◆ Let students know that in their daily life, it is often helpful to think about their actions, predict what might happen, and then evaluate those predictions after they act; for example, think of times when they decide to share, meet new friends, or try something new.

- ◆ Ask students when they have anticipated something and what was the result?
- ◆ Explain that similarly, scientists use these skills when they make predictions with their experiments.
- ◆ Encourage students to anticipate or predict what will happen when they combine ice, salt, and water using multiple combinations of the elements and using their knowledge of the properties of each.
- ◆ After they create their hypotheses, they will have to test their various combinations.
- ◆ Then they evaluate whether or not their hypotheses worked out.
- ◆ Have students reflect on skill: Similar to how you behaved as a scientist, anticipating and predicting what will happen when you combine elements, and evaluating those predictions, you can approach other areas of your life in the same way. Have students reflect on other areas in which they use these skills.

SECONDARY WRITING EXAMPLE: Explain Your Game

SEL Skill: Engage a growth mindset.

Content Skill: Develop and strengthen writing through planning, revising, editing, and redoing.

Taxonomy: Explicit Skill Alignment



Description:

- ◆ Provide students the prompt the prompt, “Write about your favorite game.”
- ◆ Tell students they have to write two versions of the essay, one explaining it to their friend that they play with, and the other to their grandparent about how to play the game.
- ◆ Have students read their essays to a partner or a small group.
- ◆ Provide partners a rubric or criterion for success and how well the student considered the intended audience in the material.
- ◆ Encourage group members to provide feedback to students using the rubric.
- ◆ Allow students to revise and edit their paper based on the feedback.
- ◆ Reinforce the importance of effort, revision, and productive struggle to achieve results as students engage in writing.
- ◆ Have students reflect on the process of revising their work.

9. Expectations and Rigor

Expectations and rigor are two distinct but highly interrelated practices. *Expectations* are the beliefs that educators hold about students, specific to content, behavior, and skills. *Expectations* manifest in conscious and unconscious ways that influence educator behavior, including their instructional methods and general interactions with students (Rubie-Davies et al., 2006). *Rigor*, sometimes called academic press, refers to how educators implement meaningful

and challenging course work, including the way educators encourage and support students in accomplishing tasks. Expectations influence educator actions, speech, and non-verbal cues, and inform student perceptions of those behaviors. In other words, students need to sense that their educator wants them to succeed, that educators provide them challenging work, and they feel supported to be able to accomplish their goals (Christenson & Hvasy, 2004; Hammond, 2015; McCombs, 2004; Muhammad, 2020; Zins et al., 2004).

Educator expectations are influenced by multiple factors, including the race, gender, socioeconomic status, behavior, ethnicity, and past performance of their students (Cherng, 2017). While all educators want all students to succeed, educator behaviors may communicate varied expectations unconsciously through such things as wait time, tone of voice, or type of feedback. For example, two students may have a delayed response in answering a question. For one student, the educator may perceive the delay as contemplation. For another student, the educator may perceive the delay as disengagement in the activities (Education Commission of the States, 2012; Love, 2019). To successfully hold high expectations, educators ensure that all students feel valued and heard (Bondy & Ross, 2008; Hammond, 2015), ensuring that students have the necessary scaffolded support to meet those expectations (Cannata et al., 2017). Further, educators build relationships with their students to better understand what they are capable of doing academically and how they respond to challenging work. As educators hold high expectations and provide challenging work, they reflect on both their behaviors and how students perceive their expectations and actions (Muhammad, 2020; Spiegel, 2012).

Connections to Social and Emotional Competencies

When educators establish and communicate high expectations and engage students in rigorous curriculum, they nurture multiple social and emotional competencies. For example, when educators learn about students, they help students become more aware of their interests and their personal and cultural assets. They further help students develop a growth mindset, recognizing that effort will facilitate their achievement, and promote agency over their own learning. Educators also help students apply their self-management skills when they have to manage or direct emotions when they engage in more rigorous coursework. When educators implement high expectations and challenging work in affirming and supportive environments, students also develop capacity to seek help and resources when needed.

Example Academic Integration Strategies

ELEMENTARY SCIENCE EXAMPLE: Class Science Questions

SEL Skill: Demonstrate personal and collective agency.

Content Skill: Plan and carry out investigations to answer questions or test solutions to problems.

Taxonomy: Explicit Strategy Alignment



Description:

- ◆ Introduce the collective process to gather questions from students to keep a “Class Questions” journal for interesting science topics.
- ◆ Explain that as the group learns together there will be many questions that come to mind that they can answer quickly. They will also come up with questions that will require brain power from the learning community. Everyone has questions they find interesting and can add these questions to the Class Questions Journal.

- ◆ Explain to students that there is a place (journal/notebook, questions parking lot, or wall display) where students will list all the questions that come to them. Share with students that they will have a choice in selecting the science questions that they can collect data on or attempt to solve. Invite students to self-select, encouraging agency, to attempt to find the solution on their own, or in small groups during learning time.
- ◆ Periodically choose a random question or questions to study and address as a class.
- ◆ Provide support to students to use the method—primary or secondary data collection—to help answer the question.
- ◆ Share with students “we might not be able to solve all the questions, but through the class journal and solving select questions, we are learning strategies that we can take to continue to solve our own questions.”

SECONDARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS EXAMPLE: Our Narratives

SEL Skill: Take others’ perspectives into consideration.

Content Skill: View a sample narrative, then write a collective essay to counter narratives created through assumptions, stereotypes, and generalizations about people in society.

Taxonomy: Explicit Skill Alignment



Description:

- ◆ Share with students the importance of taking multiple perspectives and how each person experiences the same situation differently. For example, the educator shares how they experience the learning community differently than the students.
- ◆ Present these reflective questions to prepare students to listen to and hear the stories shared in the video: “What connections do you make to the stories Chimamanda Adichie tells?” “What danger does she warn of in her talk?”
- ◆ Watch video [The Danger of a Single Story](#). The video provides an analysis of how our lives and our cultures are composed of many overlapping stories. Novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice—and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding.
- ◆ Invite students (in small groups) to share their responses to the reflection questions as well as their experiences in which single stories (e.g., assumptions, generalizations, or stereotypes) were made about them.
- ◆ Write a group narrative (small groups), collective essay about the danger of the story told about them, expecting that all students provide insight and their perspective about the story.
- ◆ Frame the collective essay by asking students the following questions: Will your story be written as fiction or nonfiction? Decide which would be most appropriate given the content of your essay.

- ◆ Have students prepare an outline and determine how you will write the collective essay. Consider: What is the danger in the story? Who does the danger impact, how, why? What is the counter or flip side to the narrative? What was unknown culturally about the person impacted in the story? What do you want the reader to take away?

10. SEL Competence-Building Modeling, Practicing, Feedback, and Coaching

SEL competence-building instruction consists of practices that strategically support the development of student social and emotional competencies through the instructional cycle that aligns with students' cultures and affirms their identities (Christenson & Havsy, 2004; Elias et al., 1997, McCombs, 2004, Muhammad, 2020; Zins et al., 2004). The instructional cycle includes establishment of goals/objectives of the lesson, introduction to new material/modeling, provision of group and individual practice, and incorporation of conclusion and reflection. Each part of the instructional cycle can promote targeted social and emotional competencies as long as the educator purposefully integrates them into the lesson—either as stand-alone lessons, mini-lessons, or integration with academic content. For example, when students participate in group work, the educator may conduct a mini-lesson on problem solving prior to the collaborative project to ensure students understand the competencies they need to engage in the lesson. Similarly, the educator may provide feedback on how students are using the targeted competency in the hallway, or may even identify an authentic issue that arises in the learning community as a teachable moment for social and emotional competencies.

As educators purposefully implement SEL competency building, it is critical for them to remember that social and emotional competencies are developed and expressed through socially and culturally mediated ways (Great Lakes Equity Center, 2020). Individuals develop competencies in the historically grounded systems and structures that oftentimes provided inequitable opportunities and inequitable acknowledgment of the cultural assets of all individuals (Jagers et al., 2018). As such, educators should promote social and emotional competencies through referencing student cultures and cultural references in how and when they use their skills and content (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Further, educators can help students understand how the competencies used in academic settings may apply or look in other learning environments and contexts in which youth find themselves (Great Lakes Equity Center, 2020).

Connections to Social and Emotional Competencies

When all students develop and refine their social and emotional competencies that allow them to engage more deeply in learning, such as help-seeking behaviors, perseverance, perspective-taking, and awareness of what one does and does not know, they are able to engage more deeply in the content, creating a more equitable learning environment. When educators implement SEL with intent and quality, students begin to see that the competencies they need to be successful in school also are the competencies they will need to navigate their lives after school, even if those competencies look different depending on the context in which students find themselves. Providing students a language of social and emotional skills promotes students' agency to reach their self-determined goals.

Example Academic Integration Strategies

ELEMENTARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS EXAMPLE: Present the Feedback

SEL Skill: Seek or offer support and help when needed.

Content Skill: Ask questions of others to ensure that their presentation or their presented work stays on topic.

Taxonomy: Explicit Skill Alignment, Ways of Interacting



Description:

- ◆ Let students choose a historical figure about whom they want to learn more as the subject of a verbal or written presentation. Depending on age level, their presentations should include what makes the historical figure significant to them and other people. Thus, they present or write in a way that is exciting to others.



- ◆ Ask students to develop their presentation or their writing sample.
- ◆ Ask students to craft two questions to get feedback from their peers. In other words, they have to decide the type of support they want to accomplish the task's objectives.
- ◆ Place students in groups of three to provide each other feedback based on questions they developed to ask for help.
- ◆ Have students reflect on the importance of seeking help and getting feedback from others.

SECONDARY SCIENCE EXAMPLE: Think You Aren't Biased?⁵

SEL Skill: Examine prejudices and biases.

Content Skill: Understand potential biases of sources based on their methods used or interpretations made.

Taxonomy: Explicit Skill Alignment, Ways of Being



Description:

- ◆ Ask students to read the article titled [Awareness of Our Biases Is Essential to Good Science](#).
- ◆ Discuss with students the types of biases that can exist in scientific research and implications for understanding nuances that may exist in findings.



- ◆ Provide articles from [Science News for Students](#) to discuss potential bias in the reporting of various articles. Let students know that many scientists attempt to limit or mitigate effects of bias in scientific studies (so it is not always present), but it is important to look out for it.
- ◆ Discuss how having biases influences interpretation of findings and the implications that they draw from them. Discuss how that influences decisions that should be made from science.

⁵ For more information, see the [How Bias Affects Scientific Research](#) lesson.

Conclusion and Action Steps

Nurturing social and emotional competencies provides a foundation for lifelong learning and facilitates student participation in the learning activities needed to master academic skill. Educators can use the 10 educator practices to promote safe, supportive, and affirming environments and to incorporate effective learning design and instruction, improving multiple student and adult social, emotional, and academic outcomes. These practices, when implemented with an equitable and inclusive lens, have the potential to enhance SEL as a beneficial process for all students (Osher et al., 2018). When combined with the academic-SEL integrative taxonomy, educators can leverage the power of SEL to create experiences that promote the holistic development of youth. Educators already implement many of these practices, however, they are rarely implemented through an SEL and equity lens. For example, an educator may implement cooperative learning groups but may not focus on ensuring that students are working together using positive relationship skills that honor the assets that all students bring. Educators know that SEL is important for student success (Bridgeland et al., 2013), and through these 10 practices, they can connect and enhance what they are already doing to promote student social and emotional competencies. Further, educators should enact these practices through a culturally responsive lens to avoid “blaming” students or assuming students do not have current social and emotional assets that they bring with them to the learning environments. When educators implement practices through an equity lens, they also honor student and family histories and excellence (Simmons, 2021).

Although this brief discusses one approach to embed SEL within the learning environment, multiple approaches exist to integrate SEL, including the following options:

- ◆ Provide explicit SEL instruction to students through evidence-based programs and practices.
- ◆ Incorporate SEL assessment tools (implementation and strengths-based measures of student social and emotional competencies).
- ◆ Implement SEL programs and practices to enhance adult SEL, including self-care strategies.
- ◆ Embed a focus on SEL in other education initiatives (e.g., MTSS, school climate, restorative practices, and anti-bullying).
- ◆ Provide opportunities to highlight effective SEL practices and student SEL outcomes, encouraging educators and students to celebrate each other’s successes and demonstrate gratitude for success.
- ◆ Engage in professional learning opportunities that build educators’ knowledge of and skills in personal and student social and emotional development.

For additional information about the integration of SEL into the teaching and learning experience, see the “Selected Resources” section.

Creating Your Own Academic Integration Examples

To create your own academic integration examples, you can engage in the following steps (recognizing that there are other strategies to implement as well):

1. Gain a personal understanding of who your students are as unique individuals. Understand where their interests lie, what assets and gifts they bring to the classroom community, and what they need to be successful in your content area.
2. Identify the academic standard that you want to focus on with your students.
3. Determine the lesson that you would like to enact for students to master the academic outcome, and reflect on which of the 10 educator practices you will use during the lesson.
4. Identify the ways in which equity-centered SEL fits within the lesson, reflecting on the following questions:
 - a. Is the academic outcome also a social and emotional competency (see your state's SEL standards for example)? *[Explicit Skill Alignment]*
 - b. What social and emotional skills are needed for students to engage in the actual lesson? Of those, what social and emotional competencies are strengths? Need additional support? *[Explicit Strategy Alignment]*
 - c. Do you need to teach a mini-lesson on a social and emotional competency prior to engaging in the academic lesson to promote positive interactions? *[Ways of Interacting]*
 - d. Is the social and emotional competency specific to the content domain? Does the social emotional skill enhance the gifts students bring to the classroom through their everyday lived experiences? *[Ways of Being]*
5. Based on the answers to the previous questions, modify the lesson to ensure that you are nurturing the identified social and emotional competency and approach. For example, if it is an explicit alignment, little will need to be modified, whereas ways of interacting may require more substantive modification to ensure that students understand the needed social and emotional skills to accomplish tasks successfully with you and their peers.
 - a. As the lesson is modified, ensure that it focuses on the personal and cultural assets of students and ways of interacting and that all students' lived experiences are included.
6. Prior to and after the lesson, make time for you! Think about how your own social and emotional competencies can help you to facilitate the lesson; and once completed, think about how the activity went and what additional SEL support you and your students need.

Selected Resources

This brief references multiple centers and documents, many of which include resources that support this work. These resources, along with others, are summarized as follows:

- ◆ **National University (NU)**, founded in 1971, is the second largest private, nonprofit institution of higher education in California. With 30,000 students and more than 140,000 alumni, NU is the flagship institution of National University System (NUS). NUS is dedicated to making lifelong learning opportunities accessible, challenging,

and relevant to a diverse population of students, which reflects its mission of serving the public good. NUS offers programs both online and at campuses. NUS also includes the Sanford College of Education, accredited by the National Council of Accreditation for Teacher Education, which provides teacher preparation training in SEL. NUS offers the following programs and professional learning experiences on SEL:

- [Harmony SEL](#) is an SEL program for students in prekindergarten through Grade 6 designed to foster communication, connection, and community both in and outside the classroom. Harmony provides educators, students, and families with no-cost SEL support to help children grow up to be compassionate and caring adults. As a CASElect program, Harmony promotes equity and academic excellence and grows with the evolving needs of today’s learning communities.
- [Inspire Teaching & Learning](#) celebrates and supports inspirational educators with professional development in culturally responsive teaching practices and SEL. Through no-cost teacher development resources, schools, districts, universities, and organizations can equip preservice and inservice educators to build strong relationships and inspire academic excellence and social and emotional development in prekindergarten through Grade 12 learning environments.
- Through National University’s Sanford College of Education and Northcentral University, NUS offers a variety of [SEL-Focused Graduate Degree Programs](#) designed to help educators make a difference, including a master of arts degree in SEL, a master of education degree with an emphasis in SEL, a master of arts degree in education with an emphasis in SEL, and a doctor of education degree with a specialization in SEL.
- ◆ **The Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety at WestEd ([CISELSS](#))** provides knowledge and capacity-building technical assistance to support states and districts in the implementation of evidence-based SEL, school safety, and other whole-person programs and practices. Recent resources from the center to support the integration of evidence-based approaches to SEL, school safety, and other whole-person initiatives include the following:
 - [Reimagining Excellence: A Blueprint for Integrating Social and Emotional Well-Being and Academic Excellence in Schools](#). This blueprint—designed with input from in-person and remote educators, leaders, researchers, professional learning providers, and technical assistance providers—strives to detail the indicators of learning programs that successfully integrate equity, well-being, and academics.
 - [Connecting Teacher Practice With Social and Emotional Learning](#). This interview with Ellen Moir from the New Teacher Center describes the way adult SEL promotes teacher effectiveness, helps make educator practice more sustainable, supports student well-being and academic achievement, promotes a healthy school climate and culture, and benefits the entire school community.
 - [Evidence-Based Practices for Equity in Social and Emotional Learning](#). This webinar builds from the Center’s Compendium of evidence-based resources and data-driven practices. District leader panelists shared their insights and expertise about what implementation looked like in their own districts, including effective practices for using data to advance equitable outcomes.
- ◆ **The American Institutes for Research ([AIR](#))** is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that conducts behavioral and social science research and delivers technical assistance to solve some of the most urgent challenges in the United States and around the world. AIR’s mission is to generate and use rigorous evidence that contributes to a better, more equitable world. AIR’s whole child learning and development work draws

upon the [science of learning and development](#) and includes technical assistance, research, evaluation, and measurement activities regarding whole-child approaches—including [SEL](#) in K–12 education and other youth-serving settings. Recent resources from AIR to support SEL implementation include the following:

- [Integrating Social and Emotional Learning Within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports to Advance Equity: SEL MTSS Toolkit for State and District Leaders](#) is a toolkit developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), CASEL, and AIR to support state and district leaders who are interested in engaging in the work of integrating equity-focused SEL into an MTSS.
- [Trauma-Sensitive Schools and Social and Emotional Learning: An Integration](#) examines how trauma-sensitive schools and SEL can be integrated and expanded to create safe, supportive, and culturally responsive schools that prevent school-related trauma and foster thriving, robust equity, and transformative learning with an enhanced equity lens.
- [Planning Integrated Whole Child Supports: Key Questions for Collaborative Discussions](#), developed in partnership with Policy Analysis for California Education, is intended to help schools and expanded learning providers create a comprehensive plan for designing and implementing integrated services for students and families.

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