

## The Landscape of Social and Emotional Learning

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**Social and Emotional Learning:** Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. (*See the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, CASEL*).

Social and emotional skills are critical to being a good student, citizen, and worker. Many risky behaviors (e.g., drug use, violence, bullying, and dropping out) can be prevented or reduced when multiyear, integrated efforts are used to develop students' social and emotional skills. This is best done through effective classroom instruction, student engagement in positive activities in and out of the classroom, and broad parent and community involvement in program planning, implementation, and evaluation. Effective SEL programming begins in preschool and continues through high school.

### 5 Core SEL Competencies or Outcomes (See CASEL):

- **Self-awareness:** The ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. This includes accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.
- **Self-management:** The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward achieving personal and academic goals.
- **Social awareness:** The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.
- **Relationship skills:** The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed.
- **Responsible decision making:** The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others

## SEL Processes (Emphasis on GMRSD Programs):

- **Tools of the Mind:** Pre-school and kindergarten curriculum an model of teaching intended to develop students' cognitive, social-emotional, self-regulatory, and foundational academic by emphasizing play planning, scaffolded writing and other methodologies.
- **Responsive Classroom:** An approach to elementary teaching that emphasizes academic, social, and emotional growth in a strong school community. The program's four key domains are engaging academics, positive community, effective management, and developmental awareness.
- **Developmental Designs:** A middle school approach to teaching designed to integrate social and academic learning and foster good relationships, social skills, and engagement with learning. Structures of the program include:
  - Students practice seven key social-emotional skills every day: Cooperation, Communication, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, Engagement, and Self-control.
  - Rigorously response to rule-breaking.
  - Motivate students to achieve academically. Students have choices, their learning is scaffolded and varied, and they see the point. Student reflection to involve students in assessment for learning.
  - Intervene with struggling students.
  - Create inclusive learning communities.
  - Balanced participation by all students is encouraged.
  - Builds a strong, healthy adult community.
- **Advisory Programs:** A high school program that aims to nurture the whole individual, operating on the premise that students are more likely to succeed with a strong network of support and a committed adult advocate within the school. At the heart of the program is the student's relationship with the advisor and his or her advisory group, cultivated throughout the student's four years of high school. Advisory supports the personal and academic progress of each student while also fostering a sense of community within the advisory group and beyond.
- **Peer Mediation:** A form of conflict resolution in which trained student leaders help their peers work together to resolve everyday disputes. Participation in peer mediation is voluntary, and with the exception of information that is illegal or life-threatening, all matters discussed in mediation sessions remain confidential. Student mediators do not make judgments or offer advice, and they have no power to force decisions upon their peers.
- **Restorative Justice Practices:** A framework for for responding to offending or challenging behavior which puts repairing harm done to relationships and people over and above the need for assigning blame and dispensing punishment. Processes are used where all those affected by an "offense" or incident are involved in finding a mutually acceptable way forward.

- **Other structures and approaches:** Student Councils, Yoga, Mindfulness/Meditation, *Calm Classroom*, *Brain Gym*, Brain brakes.
- **Culturally Responsive Teaching:** A pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning. Some of the characteristics of culturally responsive teaching are:
  - Positive perspectives on parents and families
  - Changing aspects of the school and curriculum to empower diverse learners
  - Instruction incorporates and integrates diverse ways of knowing
  - Gain knowledge of the cultures represented in one's classrooms and adapt lessons so that they reflect ways of communicating and learning that are familiar to the students.
  - Communication of high expectations
  - Student-centered instruction
  - Teacher as facilitator
- **Trauma Informed Teaching:** Trainings aim to provide teachers with the science and skills to better manage traumatized students in the classroom. Schools are responding to an enormous body of research about how children's brains adapt to complex trauma, defined as multiple traumas including physical or sexual abuse, abandonment, and domestic and neighborhood violence. In the brains of traumatized youth, neural pathways associated with fear and survival responses are strongly developed, leaving some children in a state of hyperarousal that causes them to overreact to incidents other children would find nonthreatening, the research shows. Consumed by fear, they find it difficult to achieve a state of calmness that would allow them to process verbal instructions and learn. Classroom strategies for managing traumatized students align with the evidence-based social and emotional programs that are part of a system known as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Those interventions, which include curricula such as Best Behavior and Time to Teach, involve teaching students how to self-regulate and calm down by taking a break, taking a deep breath and becoming aware of their surroundings. The programs, and others like them, also instruct teachers to build rapport with students by praising progress and speaking kindly. All of the interventions, including trauma-informed teaching, are meant to improve school culture and provide a new approach to school discipline.

### Content Specializations:

- **Health Education:** Learning healthy behaviors, preventing self-harming behaviors, bullying/harassment reduction.
- **Citizenship Education:** Building students' social and political participatory motivation and competence. It may include the following: Character education; Values clarification; Community service learning projects; Taking a stand research papers, letters, presentations, debates.

- **Multicultural Education:** Teaching and learning that will result in students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social class groups experiencing educational equality. The field has five dimensions according to James Banks, in *Cultural diversity and education: Foundations, curriculum, and teaching* (2006):
  - Knowledge construction Process: Teaching students to critically examine the biases of subject area experts, to develop higher-level thinking skills and empathy, and to make their own meaning of what they learn.
  - Content integration: the infusion of ethnic and cultural content into subject areas.
  - Equity pedagogy: Modifying instruction to draw upon students' cultural and language strengths.
  - Prejudice reduction: Curriculum interventions intended to help students develop positive racial and ethical attitudes
  - Empowering school culture and social structures: Attentiveness to the latent and manifest social and cultural systems of school, including grouping practices, gifted programs, teacher attitudes, sports participation, and ethnic self-segregation in social settings.
- **Diversity/Equity/Inclusion Education:** Understanding prejudice, stereotypes, discrimination, oppression. Teaching to see the power and value of an inclusive society and to develop the skills for seeing and valuing multiple perspectives.
- **Social Justice Education:** Teaching that there is injustice in our world caused by oppression and teaching in a manner that attempts to break its cycle. Two key concepts are at its core. First, some groups of people are consistently privileged; while others are consistently disadvantaged. The privileging and disadvantaging becomes unjust when it is unearned or undeserved. Often such injustice is perpetuated around race, class, gender, ability, or sexuality groups that people are identified with. Understanding how privilege operates, how disadvantage (or marginalization) occurs, how advantage or disadvantage is cyclical in nature, and how people tend to deny that such injustice is occurring is half of the work of social justice education. Second, what does it mean to teach for social justice? It means recognizing oppression in its multiple forms, and then taking action in the classroom to interrupt the cycles of oppression. When teachers teach for social justice they are working to end the cycle of oppression.
- **Media Literacy:** Learning that provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate, create and participate with messages in a variety of forms — from print to video to the Internet. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy. Teaches students to understand the difference between fact/opinion/assumptions, and to identify bias and propaganda.