



Social Justice and Social and Emotional Learning in the Classroom

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This paper provides a summary of the presentation given at the 11th Annual Conference for Social Justice in Education on April 6, 2019 at California State University, Channel Islands.¹ In addition, it provides a rationale for teaching and integrating the Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards (SJS) with the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies outlined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). The SEL competencies and SJS are examined and an argument is made for lifelong engagement with both frameworks.

The presentation included a demonstration of how to use literature as a way to guide the process of examining underlying feelings and needs in order to make wise choices. The story, *After the Fall* by David Santat (2017), was read aloud, and paused, at points, just before the protagonist had to make choices. In this way, the story unfolded, and the conference attendees were able to discuss the feelings, needs, and choices of the protagonist, before the reading continued. The discussions were grounded in the Santat text.

The No-Fault Zone[®] game (Hart & Kindle Hodson, 2009) provided a structure for examining the protagonist's underlying feelings and needs and the range of choices within the story. This game asked participants to check in with the character, and, using evidence from the text, make claims about the character's feelings and needs and then predict what action would be most beneficial for the character. Then the reading continued, and the protagonist's choices were revealed. The iterative process of pausing the story, discussing the feelings, needs and choices available gave the attendees a glimpse of how this method could work in a classroom setting. It also served to reinforce or expand the participants' vocabulary around feelings and needs.

¹ The presentation slides are in Appendix A.

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There are two critical points to be made in identifying the choices available to fictional characters. First, feelings and needs identified by participants must be supported by evidence from the text. For example, if a participant says, “The character feels afraid because their need for safety is not met,” it is necessary for the teacher to ask something like, “What in the text makes you say that?” We are not able to truly put ourselves in the position of other people, even fictional ones. The danger here is in asking students to draw upon experiences of which they may not have knowledge. This is one of the problems with using simulations in the classroom. We are, however, able to identify what people are feeling by supporting our claims with evidence. Second, all choices have consequences that may impact others or society at large. If a protagonist feels angry because some need is not met, they have choices about what they can do to meet their needs. They could lash out at another character, but it is important to ask if this action will meet the need in the most beneficial and productive way. Understanding the impact of the choices we make to meet our needs is critical, and discussions of the consequences of decisions affords opportunities for growth, regardless of the age of the learner.

What are the Social Justice Standards?

In the presentation, the Social Justice Standards were introduced and integrated with the SEL competencies. The Social Justice Standards, developed by Teaching Tolerance,² were created in order to help teachers engage in anti-discrimination education and aim to provide K-12 students “age-appropriate learning outcomes divided into four domains: identity, diversity, justice and action (IDJA)” (Teaching Tolerance, 2016, p. 2). When engaged with the SJS domains of identity and diversity, students learn to acknowledge and celebrate the multiple identity groups that make up their own unique, developing identities, and they learn to acknowledge and be curious about people both similar and different from themselves. When engaging with the SJS domain of Justice, students learn to recognize stereotypes, unfairness, the harmful impact of injustice, and power and privilege within society. Students become aware of how group identities advantage or disadvantage individuals and communities. This awareness can shed light on the societal frameworks and institutions that privilege some individuals and groups over others. Ultimately, the Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards focus on prejudice reduction and collective action.

Teaching students about such injustices is a key aspect of social justice education. With a deep understanding of power, privilege and injustice, students are ready to engage with the fourth domain of the SJS, Action. The standards in the Action domain include students expressing empathy, recognizing their responsibility to stand up to prejudice, to speak out against bias, to make principled decisions, and to take collective action against injustice. As stated in the SJS, “Collective action challenges inequality directly by raising consciousness and focusing on improving conditions for under-represented groups” (Teaching Tolerance, 2016, p. 2).

² An overview of the anchor standards and domains of the Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards is in Appendix B.

What is Social and Emotional Learning?

Social and emotional learning (SEL)³ as described by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is comprised of five competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. These affective and interpersonal competencies can be cultivated and nurtured throughout a person's lifetime. SEL encompasses:

... 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, 2017, para. 1)

In the G-16+ environment⁴ developing the SEL competencies enhances academic achievement (Ashdown & Bernard, 2012; Schonfeld et al., 2015), encourages student engagement (Kwon et al., 2017), promotes responsible decision-making (Payton et al., 2000), and fosters healthy brain development (Immordino-Yang et al., 2019; Jones-Schenk, 2019). In addition, the SEL competencies can be integrated with a social justice mindset (Cohen, 2006) such that learners are prompted to act in support of their communities.

Developing a critical lens, and embracing the SJS and SEL, help foster civic-mindedness, and sustain democratic engagement. These tools will prove invaluable to social justice advocates of all ages. When young learners enter colleges, universities, and the workforce, issues will arise that require the SJS and SEL competencies. For example, advocating for quality and affordable childcare, struggling with food and housing insecurity, and retaining one's dignity as an undocumented person, are just a few such challenges. Any of these pressures serve as reminders that distressing circumstances are all too real. It is incumbent on all of us to use the SJS and SEL in ways that are critical to changing the civic and social landscape. Practicing the concepts of the SJS and SEL contributes to meaningful institutional and societal change and more inclusive learning environments.

Clearly, dismantling institutional and policy biases is lifelong work (Tatum, 1997; Yosso, 2006). that extends beyond the educational setting. Similarly, connecting with our social and emotional selves is a lifelong endeavor (CASEL, 2017). Therefore, the impact of both the SJS and SEL is the ongoing responsibility of learners at all stages of life.

³ For an overview of Social and Emotional Learning as outlined by CASEL see Appendix C.

⁴ The use of G-16+ reflects the understanding that learning begins from gestation through P-12, includes learning in college and university, and extends throughout a person's lifetime. References to learners and students in this paper are understood to apply to individuals of all ages, even though the presentation was geared to an audience working in the K-12 setting.

The No-Fault Zone®: Using a Practical, Literature-Based Approach to Teaching SEL

As stated earlier, SEL helps build competence in acquiring and applying the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Developing SEL skills in interpersonal relations can also prepare learners to apply those same skills in unpacking assigned texts, social media, and other visual and textual artifacts. There are several methods for introducing SEL concepts. The presentation used a learning experience called *The No-Fault Zone®* game (Hart & Kindle Hodson, 2009).

The No-Fault Zone® game is based on a nonviolent communication paradigm developed by Rosenberg (2003), to help identify feelings and needs on which decisions may be based. The assumption is that all feelings have underlying needs that are met or unmet. In this nonviolent communication paradigm, the assumption is that if a person has positive feelings then their needs have been met. Hopefully, their needs have been met in ways that are beneficial. Conversely, when a person experiences negative feelings, they have some need that has not been met. The object of the game is to think of ways in which one can have one's needs met in ways that are most beneficial.

In order to be able to identify feelings and needs, participants are given a red deck of Feeling cards, and a yellow deck of Needs cards. These cards are used to expand participants' understanding of, and vocabulary for, Feelings and Needs that comprise human experience. For example, if a character feels afraid, it may be that their need for safety is unmet. One of the goals of SEL is self-awareness, and teaching vocabulary around feelings and needs gives students words to more fully express their experiences. One can learn about nuances of feelings, and the needs behind them. In the same way that the Feeling cards are used, the Needs cards can teach participants about why they might be feeling as they do.

Unmet needs lead to choices one has to make in order to fulfil those needs. The cards are played against a game board that has areas of color matching the cards decks, and also two black and white corners that represent black and white thinking.

The 'game' progresses through an exploration of how we feel in our bodies in terms of Feelings, Needs and Choices (F/N/C). In order to make the experience suit the numbers of people in the audience, the exploration of F/N/C was applied to the main character of the children's book, *After the Fall* (Santat, 2017). The audience, working in pairs, was supplied with the game board, card sets and game pieces. The story was read, with four pauses in the story, to have the audience discuss their observations on the F/N/C of the main character.

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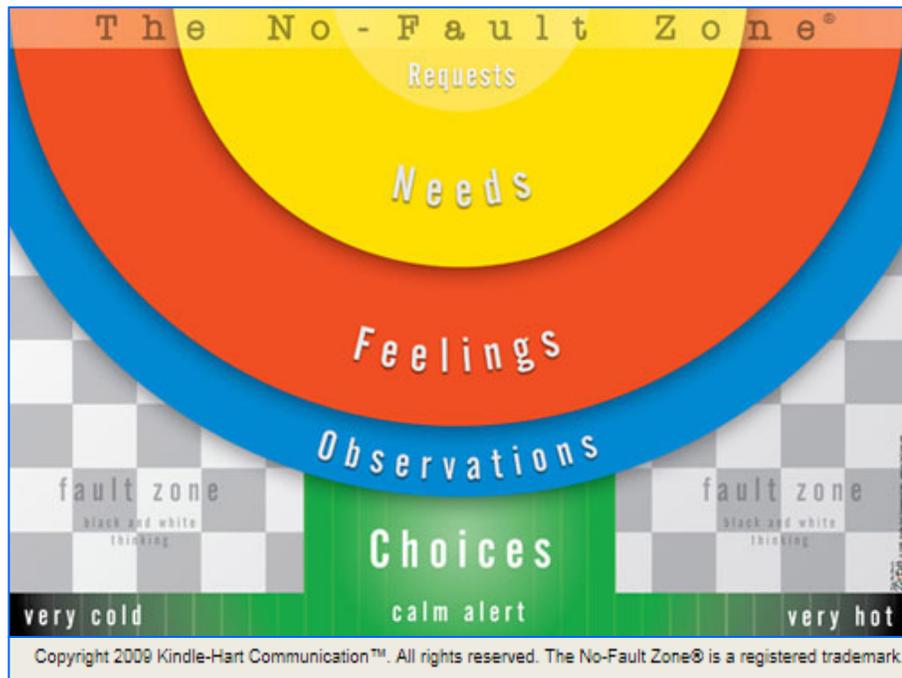


Figure 1: The No-Fault Zone® game board

Teachers often make the choice to model a teaching and learning strategy with texts that are easily accessible so that students can then transfer their skills to texts that are more complex. In this way, students are focused on learning the skill, rather than on learning the skill and focusing on academic content. The art, science, intuition and transformational aspects of teaching come into play here. Teachers must use their professional judgment and intuition in choosing texts to use with *The No Fault Zone*® game (Hart & Kindle Hodson, 2009). Cultural relevancy, cognitive and developmental readiness, primary language, levels of proficiency, and students' interests need to be considered when choosing a model text. To further connect SEL and SJS, Teaching Tolerance offers an extensive library of strong social justice literature and other resources for every age group.

As a note of caution, it must be emphasized that the purpose of this game method is not to *guess* how a character feels, or oversimplify her choices. Although we can imagine an experience, that imagined instance can never be understood to be the same as a person's lived experience. For example, a citizen might imagine what it feels like to live as an undocumented person, but can never truly experience the same suffering, stress and trauma of actually living as an undocumented person, with all the oppressions inherent in such a situation. As Drake (2008) points out, simulations can reduce vulnerabilities to mere intellectual exercises, and worse, can lead to retraumatizing learners who may identify with characters in a story. During the presentation, the objective was for the audience to read closely, and provide evidence from the text to support claims. Operative questions throughout the game included:

- What makes you say that?
- What evidence *from the text* do you have for that claim?
- How do you know?

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Probing for evidentiary details in the text is an essential part of this process. Personal feelings are not superimposed on a character, which might be the case if this were a simulation. The medium of 'text' might be extended to audiovisual artifacts, and observed words and behaviors. This process allows time to examine the reasoning that leads to conclusions (Ocasio & Marzano, 2015, p. 5).

The reader paused at key points to examine feelings, needs and choices of the protagonist in ways that did not judge subsequent actions. This was also a significant facet of the process because judgment of the protagonist's circumstances was not a part of the reasoning out of the evidence. Each pause in the story arc was selected to focus on the feelings of the protagonist, the needs underlying these feelings, and the choices available. In doing so, the audience, as player-pairs, examined the words and visuals in the story to find evidence for the feelings and needs of the protagonist. The audience, in learning about the protagonist's experiences and dilemmas, made predictions based on evidence in the story for subsequent actions. Then reading continued and the protagonist's actual choices in the story unfolded. In recognizing the feelings and needs of the character, audience members empathized by reflecting on what they might feel or need in similar circumstances, but the significant step was to look for direct evidence in the story.

The process of responding to a situation with empathy is a discrete event from the claims, evidence, and reasoning (CER) process described above. Empathy is a key part of both SEL and the SJS. Developing these competencies can help learners of all ages to engage in their various communities, be aware of their emotions, needs and choices, manage stress, and enhance social interactions. The SJS and SEL components complement and support each other (Pettitway & Phillips, 2018, p. 5). As the SEL competencies are built, the SJS bridge a learner's internal awareness and understanding of themselves, others, systems, and anti-racist action. Intellectualizing a problem can be as damaging as a solely emotional connection to others' circumstances. The delicate tension between understanding another's point of view must engage with one's own self-awareness.

The goal of integrating SEL with the SJS is action; knowing translates into behaviors and actions that fulfill needs. As self-awareness grows (SEL), the potential for self-management can increase (SEL), and knowing oneself is tantamount to knowing one's identity (SJS). Confidence in one's identity makes interacting with others less stressful. Social awareness (SEL) makes one aware that others may have different feelings and needs, and that there is diversity (SJS) in the range of feelings and needs to which one is exposed. Social awareness (SEL) also leads to acknowledgement of systems of oppression (patriarchy, heteronormativity, capitalism, colonialism, and white supremacy) and discussions about justice (SJS) in local communities, and in society at large. Communicating with others, and teamwork, are relationship skills (SEL), and becoming aware of stereotypes, bias, discrimination and injustice is inherent in the justice anchor standards (SJS). In taking action (SJS) on behalf of oneself and others in a responsible manner (SEL), one embodies the integration of SEL and the SJS. While this interlacing of standards appears simple on the surface, its execution requires a deep understanding of the SEL and SJS competencies and standards, the connections to curricula, one's own social and emotional development as a teacher, and each learner's capacity for growth.

The development of SEL and the SJS is an ongoing, lifelong endeavor that can teach learners successful coping and negotiation skills, and inculcate an orientation towards social justice activism. Through readings and selected media, learners can be exposed to elements of implicit bias and can actively

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interrogate systems that appear unjust. Opportunities can be designed across content areas for practicing the skills that enhance self-efficacy, promote active listening, foster critical thinking, require reflection, and deal with disagreement in civil and constructive ways. Such a process prepares learners for the relationship-oriented skills of cultural proficiency, equity work, social engagement, team-building and community activism. Ultimately, the goal for teaching both SEL and the SJS is its real-world application, and actionable outcomes. Our hope is that students, as a result of building SEL competencies and integrating the SJS, become more self-aware, self-managing, socially aware, and better able to make responsible decisions resulting in a safer, more just, democratic, and inclusive society.

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Appendix A

**SOCIAL JUSTICE AND
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL
LEARNING IN THE
CLASSROOM**

ACADEMIC
SOCIAL
EMOTIONAL
PHYSICAL

Danna Lomax, Monica Pereira, Brittnee Veldman
Educators Doing Justice, Professional Development Action Arm

11th Annual Conference for Social Justice in Education, CSU Channel Islands, April 6, 2019

Mindfulness

Mind Full, or Mindful?

What is the “whole child”?



What is Social and Emotional Learning? (SEL)

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.



CA State Initiative

- 5 Guiding Principles
- Proactive vs Reactive
- How do we spend our time?

California's Social and Emotional Learning Guiding Principles

- 1 Adopt Whole Child Development as the Goal of Education**
Take a systems approach to promoting student academic, social, and emotional learning, physical well-being, and college, career, and civic life readiness. Name SEL as not a "nice to have," but a "must have" to ensure student success in school, work, and community.
- 2 Commit to Equity**
All students must have opportunities to build SEL skills and receive an equity-based educational experience that is personalized, culturally relevant and responsive, and intentionally addresses racism and implicit bias. Use practices that build on the existing strengths of students, educators, families, and communities.
- 3 Build Capacity**
Build the capacity of both students and adults through an experiential focus on relationship-oriented learning environments and by offering research-based learning experiences that cultivate core social and emotional competencies.
- 4 Partner with Families and Community**
Maximize the resources of the entire school community, including expanded learning opportunities, early learning and care programs, and family and community partnerships, to advance SEL and student well-being.
- 5 Learn and Improve**
Adopt continuous improvement practices and use evidence to guide decision-making while aiming to enhance the quality of student social and emotional learning opportunities. Use data to inform improvement of instructional and school practices, not for accountability purposes.

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/socialandemotionallearning.asp>

The Value of EQ

THE ICEBERG OF SUCCESS & HAPPINESS

IQ

EQ

At best, IQ contributes about 20 percent to the factors that determine life success, which leaves 80 percent to other forces: forces grouped as emotional intelligence.

DANIEL GOLEMAN
Emotional Intelligence*

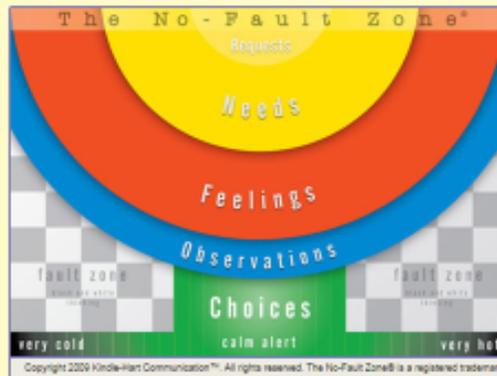
* Summarized on the cover of the book, published by Bantam, London.

Low Emotional Intelligence		High Emotional Intelligence
Aggressive Demanding Egotistical Bossy Confrontational		Assertive Ambitious Driving Strong-Willed Decisive
Easily Distracted Glib Selfish Poor Listener Impulsive		Warm Enthusiastic Sociable Charming Persuasive
Resistant to Change Passive Un-Responsive Slow Stubborn		Patient Stable Predictable Consistent Good Listener
Critical Picky Fussy Hard to Please Perfectionistic		Detailed Careful Meticulous Systematic Neat

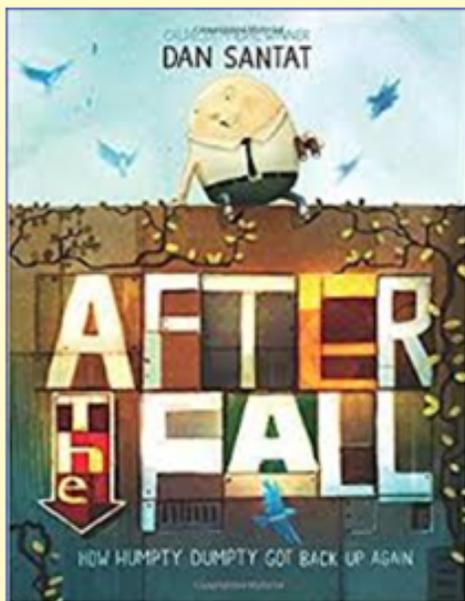
Integrating SEL into Curriculum

Using a Non-violent communication paradigm:

- The No-Fault Zone®
 - *All feelings have underlying needs that are met or unmet.*
 - *Process of exploring how we feel in our body in terms of Choices, Observations, Feelings, Needs, and Requests.*



Let's Try It...



How does Humpty Dumpty feel?

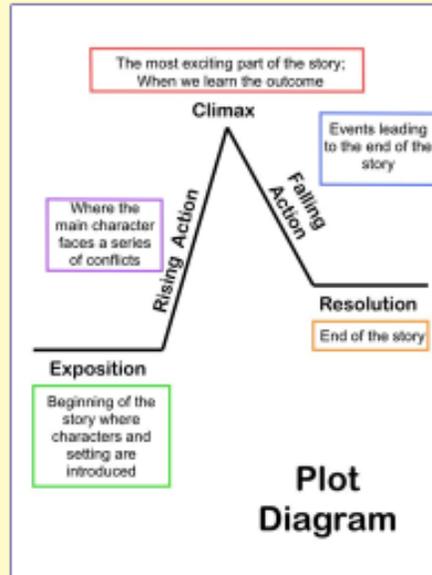
- At first ... [p. 10]
- And then ... [p. 18]
- Unfortunately ... [p. 22]
- In the end ... [p. 34]

Application in the Classroom of No Fault Zone

SEL Integrated into Curriculum

- Plot Diagram
- Transition Words
- C-E-R
- Theme

[Graphic Organizer](#)



How does SEL relate to Social Justice Standards?

Social Justice Standards include the 4 domains:

- Identity
- Diversity
- Justice
- Action



[Issue Overview: History of the Mexico Border](#)

[requires Newsela account]

SEL and Social Justice Must Lead to Actions



All feelings have underlying needs that are *met* or *unmet*. Ultimately, we must ACT to fulfill needs.

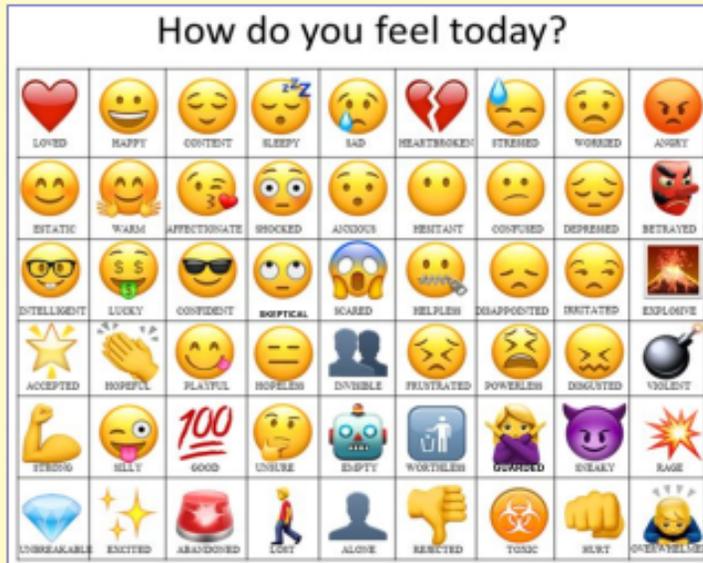
"I'm feeling really ____ right now. I think I need ____, so I am going to _____."

How could this understanding affect our students? Ourselves?

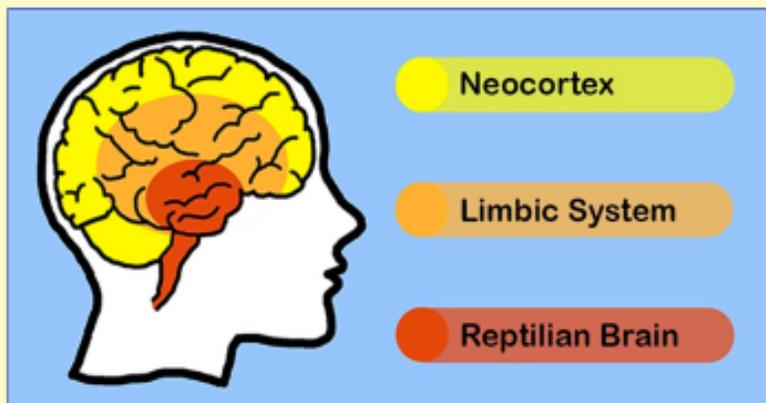
What are the components of SEL?



Competency #1 - Self-Awareness



Competency #2 - Self Management

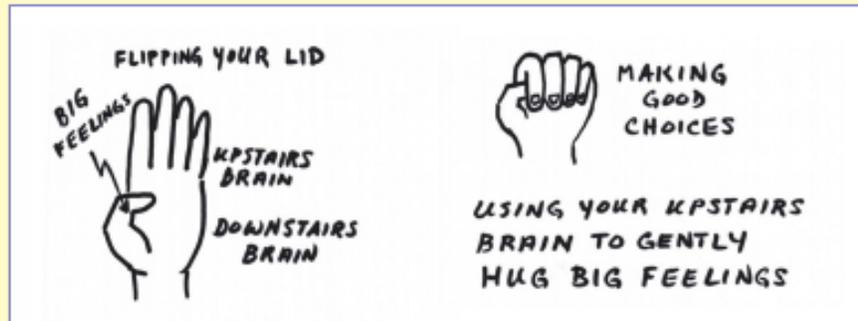


Neocortex: Information processing system

Limbic system: Visceral-emotional nervous system

Reptilian brain: Instinctual system

Parkepp, J. (2004)



Dr. Daniel Siegel presenting a hand model of the brain. (2012).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gw9CJ17402w>

Diffusing Strong Emotions

When someone has flipped their lid, we say, "Calm down!!!"
How effective is this?

We need to teach the strategy in advance of challenges:



- Time out.
- Name it to tame it.
- Flip the script.
- Problem solve only when calm.

Competency #3 - Social Awareness



Darnisa Amante

Disruptive Equity Education Project (DEEP).
[\[http://digdeepforequity.org/team/\]](http://digdeepforequity.org/team/)

SEL = Cultural Proficiency =
Equity work

How do we help build SEL
capacity in families, and in
ourselves?

Competency #4 - Relationship Skills

- Communication
- Social engagement
- Relationship-building
- Teamwork



Strategies for Building Relationships

- CHAMPs
 - *non-contingent interactions*
 - *meet at the door*
- Cooperative learning
- Project-based learning
- Social justice standards
- 2 by 10
- Class meetings
- Community circles



Competency #5 - Responsible Decision Making



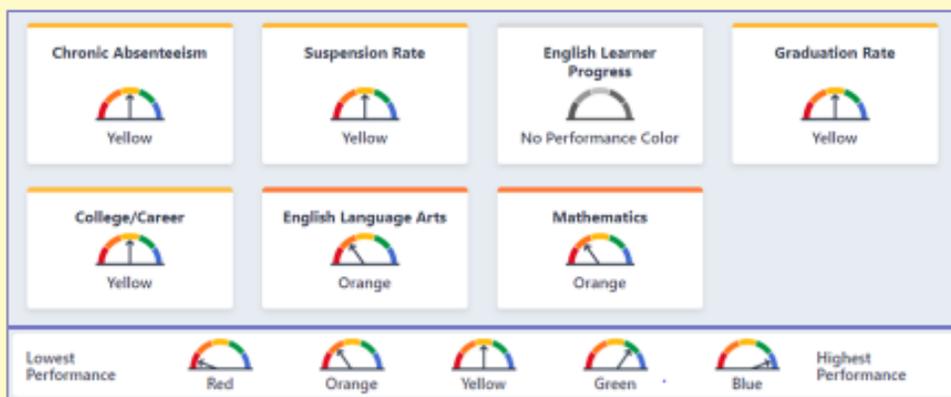
What are my choices?

Tying It All Together

- Our decisions can be based on critical frameworks:
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- Bechdel Test
- Isolating vs. Building Community
- Intersectionality



CA Dashboard - State Results



SEL Teaching Practices

How do we teach Social and Emotional Learning?

Weaving research-based practices into what we already do



10 Teaching Practices That Promote Students' Social-Emotional Competencies (Adapted from: Yoder, N. (2014).)
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/12eR5203v5GrD-sK7M3a21UB8EqaYtub3Pz2dhd0CVVXA/edit>

Yoder, N. (2014)

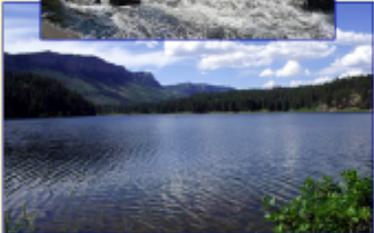
Proactive or Reactive?



Tier 3 - Crisis



Tier 2 - Struggling



Tier 1- Proactive Education



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11th Annual Conference for Social Justice in Education, CSU Channel Islands. April 6, 2019

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Glossary

- CER: Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning
- CHAMPs: Conversation, Help, Activity, Movement, Participation > Success
(Sprick, 2009)
- EDJ: Educators Doing Justice [<http://www.educatorsdoingjustice.org/>]
- Ekman's Atlas of emotions. [<http://atlasofemotions.org/>]
- EQ: Emotional Quotient
- Flip the script: Reversing the positionality of the individuals
- IQ: Intelligence Quotient
- MTSS: Multi-tiered system of support
- RTI: Response to intervention
- SEL: Social and Emotional Learning

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Appendix B

Anchor Standards and Domains

IDENTITY

1. Students will develop positive social identities based on their membership in multiple groups in society.
2. Students will develop language and historical and cultural knowledge that affirm and accurately describe their membership in multiple identity groups.
3. Students will recognize that people's multiple identities interact and create unique and complex individuals.
4. Students will express pride, confidence and healthy self-esteem without denying the value and dignity of other people.
5. Students will recognize traits of the dominant culture, their home culture and other cultures and understand how they negotiate their own identity in multiple spaces.

DIVERSITY

6. Students will express comfort with people who are both similar to and different from them and engage respectfully with all people.
7. Students will develop language and knowledge to accurately and respectfully describe how people (including themselves) are both similar to and different from each other and others in their identity groups.
8. Students will respectfully express curiosity about the history and lived experiences of others and will exchange ideas and beliefs in an open-minded way.
9. Students will respond to diversity by building empathy, respect, understanding and connection.
10. Students will examine diversity in social, cultural, political and historical contexts rather than in ways that are superficial or oversimplified.

JUSTICE

11. Students will recognize stereotypes and relate to people as individuals rather than representatives of groups.
12. Students will recognize unfairness on the individual level (e.g., biased speech) and injustice at the institutional or systemic level (e.g., discrimination).
13. Students will analyze the harmful impact of bias and injustice on the world, historically and today.
14. Students will recognize that power and privilege influence relationships on interpersonal, intergroup and institutional levels and consider how they have been affected by those dynamics.
15. Students will identify figures, groups, events and a variety of strategies and philosophies relevant to the history of social justice around the world.

ACTION

16. Students will express empathy when people are excluded or mistreated because of their identities and concern when they themselves experience bias.
17. Students will recognize their own responsibility to stand up to exclusion, prejudice and injustice.
18. Students will speak up with courage and respect when they or someone else has been hurt or wronged by bias.
19. Students will make principled decisions about when and how to take a stand against bias and injustice in their everyday lives and will do so despite negative peer or group pressure.
20. Students will plan and carry out collective action against bias and injustice in the world and will evaluate what strategies are most effective.

<http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/TT-Social-Justice-Standards-June-2019.pdf>

Appendix C

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) COMPETENCIES

SELF-AWARENESS

The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset."

- IDENTIFYING EMOTIONS
- ACCURATE SELF-PERCEPTION
- RECOGNIZING STRENGTHS
- SELF-CONFIDENCE
- SELF-EFFICACY

SOCIAL AWARENESS

The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

- PERSPECTIVE-TAKING
- EMPATHY
- APPRECIATING DIVERSITY
- RESPECT FOR OTHERS

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.

- IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS
- ANALYZING SITUATIONS
- SOLVING PROBLEMS
- EVALUATING
- REFLECTING
- ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY

SELF-MANAGEMENT

The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.

- IMPULSE CONTROL
- STRESS MANAGEMENT
- SELF-DISCIPLINE
- SELF-MOTIVATION
- GOAL SETTING
- ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.

- COMMUNICATION
- SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT
- RELATIONSHIP BUILDING
- TEAMWORK

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<http://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/CASEL-Competencies.pdf>

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<https://journals.library.csuci.edu/ojs/index.php/afe>