

Social-Emotional Learning – A Lens On Kids, Classrooms, & Climate

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The Advisory Guide

Turn & Talk

Meet your turn & talk partner

1. Each share your

- Name
- School or district
- Role, years in the role

2. Leave behind / look ahead



Key Understandings

- **SEL is absolutely for everyone**
- **Therefore SEL is a lens on kids, classrooms, and climate**
- **Tier 1 needs to be a rich, strong, multi-faceted platform**
- **A frame for you as an SEL advocate**

What Is SEL?

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.

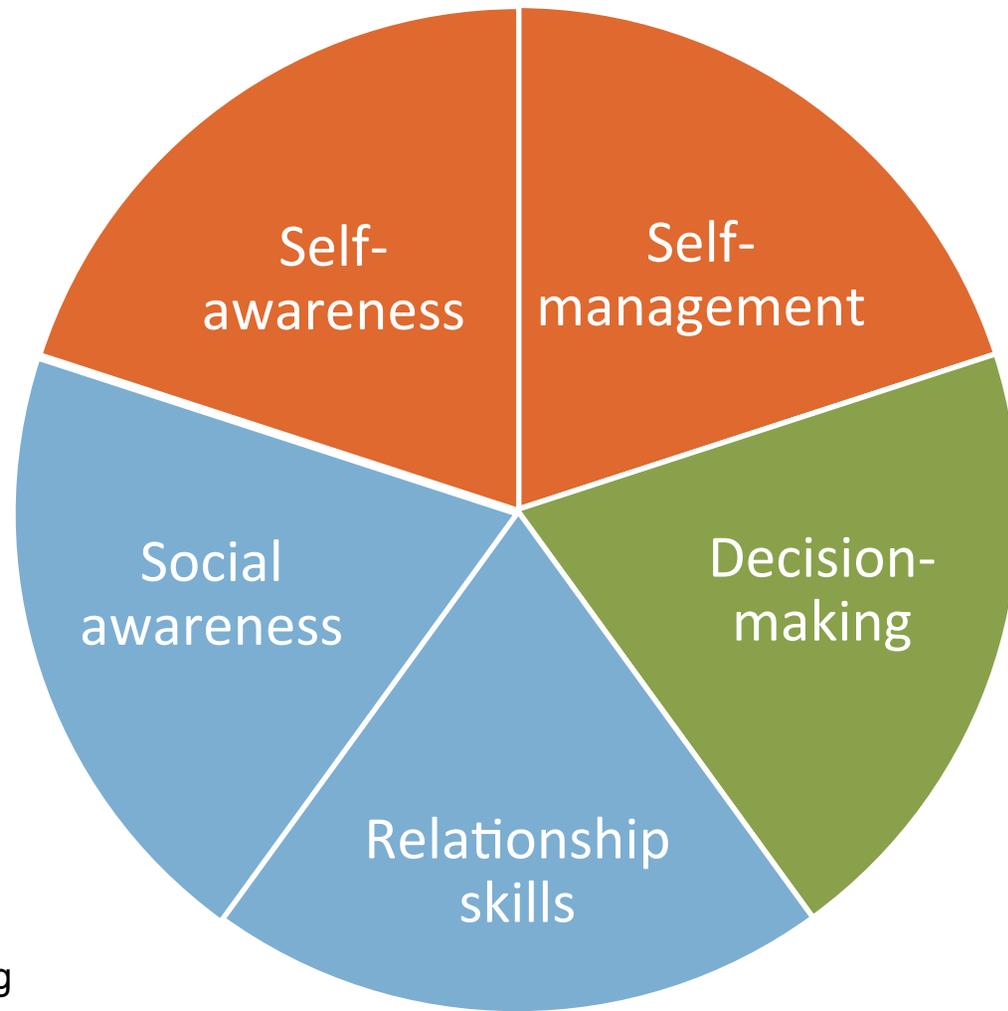
(Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning)

SEL Research Findings

- Better academic performance: achievement scores an average of 11 percentile points higher than students who did not receive SEL instruction
- Improved attitudes and behaviors: greater motivation to learn, deeper commitment to school, increased time devoted to schoolwork, and better classroom behavior
- Fewer negative behaviors: decreased disruptive class behavior, noncompliance, aggression, delinquent acts, and disciplinary referrals
- Reduced emotional distress: fewer reports of student depression, anxiety, stress, and social withdrawal

Source: Durlak, J.A., Weissberg, R.P., Dymnicki, A.B., Taylor, R.D., & Schellinger, K. (2011) The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*: 82 (1), 405-432.

SEL Core Competencies



Collaborative for Academic,
Social, and Emotional Learning



Have a few people in mind

People who demonstrate strong SEL skills	People who demonstrate SEL challenges

SEL Competencies

Imagine them in action

- **Self-awareness** – reflecting about emotions, perspectives, strengths/weaknesses, mindset
- **Self-management** – calming, motivating, coping, enhancing strengths/weaknesses
- **Social awareness** – notice others, seek to understand their perspectives, check assumptions
- **Relationship skills** – communicating, collaborating, inspiring, resolving conflicts, forgiving
- **Decision-making** – ethical & constructive choices

Process – Process – Process

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.**

Think Time, then Turn & Talk



Think of any complex skill that you learned.

What was the process that helped you learn that skill?



Process Matters

“When you learn something, the wiring in your brain changes....The brain is constantly learning things, so the brain is constantly rewiring itself.”

(John Medina, *Brain Rules*, 2014)

Our brains are constantly changing.

Process Matters

“Because humans have so much uncommitted brain tissue at birth...our brains have an extraordinary opportunity to become customized by life experiences....These undeveloped brain areas are waiting for signals from the environment...**whatever is first, whatever activities are more frequent, and whatever actions are more coherent** will ‘win’ the competition for network wiring and signal the brain to allocate space and resources to that set of behaviors.”

(Eric Jensen, *Teaching With the Brain in Mind*, 2005)

Process Matters

“Musicians know that if they practice a piece of music they will get better at it. They no longer need to read every individual note; unusual combinations of notes become familiar; different segments become a whole. They may or may not know that their brains have grown new synapses, connections that did not exist until their effort made them grow. Athletes practice certain movements that might initially feel awkward and challenging, until they become natural and skillful. In the process, their brains grow the synapses to coordinate their limbs, eyesight, and breathing.”

(Rachel Poliner & Jeffrey Benson, *Teaching the Whole Teen*, 2016)

Relationships & Climate Matter

The **reticular activating system** is “a critical brain feature that’s responsible for alertness and attention. Using the RAS, the brain scans our surroundings 24/7 for...any relevant event or information connected to one’s social status, physical survival, or strong emotions that might signal a potential threat or reward.”

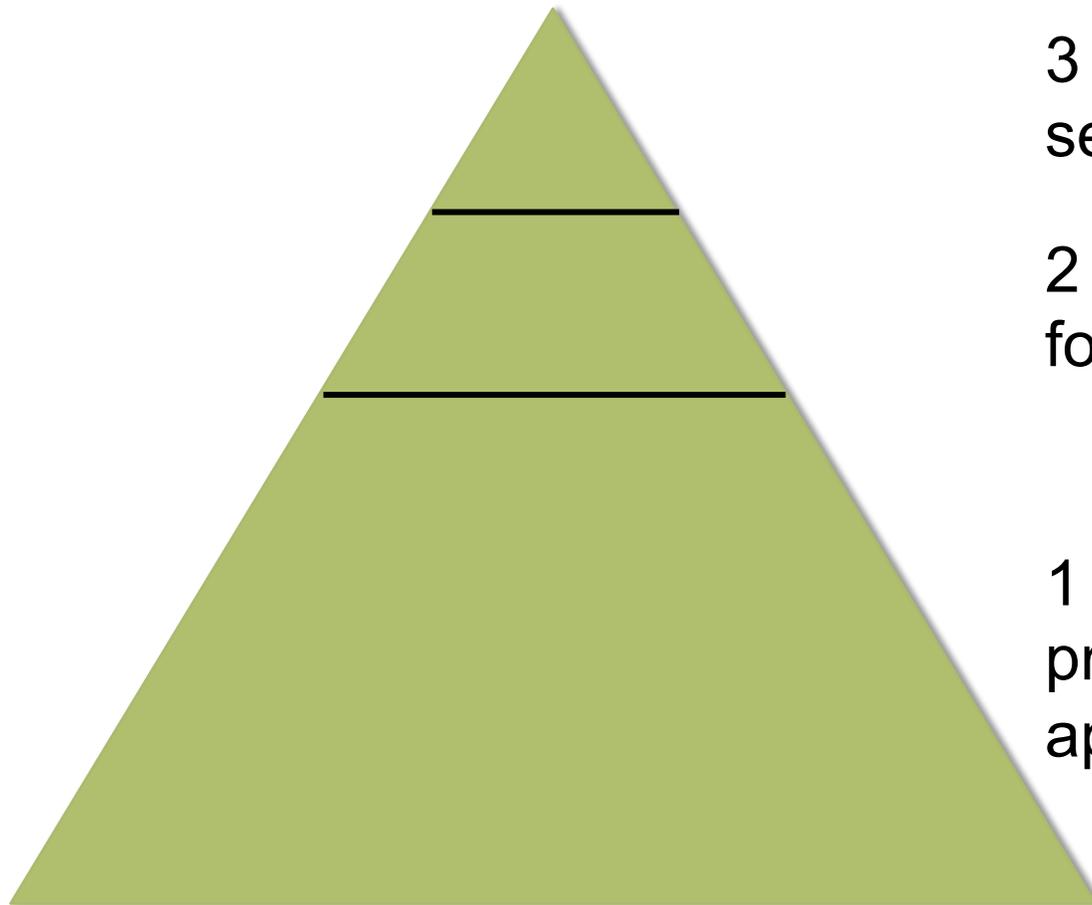
(Zaretta Hammond, *Culturally Responsive Teaching & the Brain*, 2015)

Relationships & Climate Matter

“The brain is a social organ...the modern brain’s primary environment is our matrix of social relationships. As a result, close supportive relationships stimulate positive emotions, neuroplasticity, and learning.”

(Louis Cozolino, “Nine Things Educators Need To Know About The Brain,” 2013)

Tiers



3 – Intensive services for a few

2 – Interventions for some

1 – Preventive, proactive approaches for all



Implementation modes

- **Direct instruction**
- **Infusion into the academic curriculum**
- **Classroom practices**
- **School-wide practices & structures**
- **Family engagement**

What's In Place?

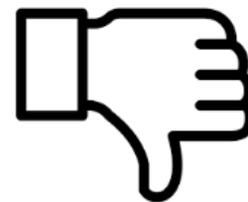
**Strong effort
in place – Clap
loudly 3 times!**



**Our program is inconsistent
or partial – Clap once**



Program? What program?!



Climate Is Not Just For Kids!

“One incontrovertible finding emerges from my career spent working in schools: The nature of relationships among the adults within a school has a greater influence on the character and quality of that school and on student accomplishment than anything else. If the relationships between administrators and teachers are trusting, generous, helpful, and cooperative, then the relationships between teachers and students, between students and students, and between teachers and parents are likely to be trusting, generous, helpful, and cooperative. If, on the other hand, relationships between administrators and teachers are fearful, competitive, suspicious, and corrosive, then *these* qualities will disseminate themselves throughout the school community.”

(Roland Barth, “Improving Relationships Within the Schoolhouse,” 2006)

Turn & Talk

Consider your faculty culture



Our whole faculty is friendly; we chat; we have some fun rituals.



Lots of us don't know each other; familiarity is limited to just a few colleagues.

We support each other's professional improvement.



We don't get or give support; we sink or swim on our own.

When issues arise, we meet, problem solve, and jointly uphold our decisions and plans.



When problems arise, we complain in the parking lot or via text, blame someone, or keep our heads down.

(Rachel Poliner & Jeffrey Benson, *Teaching the Whole Teen*, 2016)

SEL definition - Process Expansion

Effective SEL processes necessarily involve aligning relationships, instruction, structures, and systems in ways that are culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate, coherent, and beneficial for all. Effective SEL unfolds through explicit learning and when woven throughout everyday practices. SEL competencies used by individuals, between individuals, and within and between groups are necessary for thriving, just, diverse, democratic societies.

(Social-Emotional Learning Alliance for Massachusetts)