

Classroom Practices to Foster the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Needs of Students



The Connecting Link

Relationship Skills

Greet students by name at the door or assign a different student to greet peers daily.

Assign students to connect with and check-in with each other on a regular basis.

Facilitate regular class meetings to allow students to voice their concerns, opinions, and ideas in class.

Have a discussion with students about how it feels to ask for help, and how it feels to help others. Talk about how accepting help and offering to help others will positively impact their futures.

Organize a new friend scavenger hunt to foster connections and binds among students.

Responsible Decision-Making

Explicitly teach students about the potential consequences of their actions with the SODAS decision-making model. SODAS is an acronym that stands for situation, options, disadvantages, advantages, solution.

Have students reflect on the roles they played in past or current experiences involving conflict and decision-making by asking questions such as: What happened? Describe the facts using all 5 senses. What was your internal response to the situation? What is significant about what happened? How was this important to you? What are the implications for the future? What are your next steps?

Examine the roles of historical figures and characters from novels, as well as people involved with current events to challenge students to think critically about their own morals and ethics.

Link students' choices and actions with their future goals. Discuss how the choices they make today will impact their future goals (both positively and negatively).

Self-Awareness

Use picture books for teaching students how to identify, understand, and manage their emotions.

Facilitate class discussions about current events as an opportunity for students to consider how the events are impacting them emotionally.

Nurture a growth mindset among students with phrases such as: "Mistakes are part of learning." "Thinking is like giving your brain a workout." "I like a good challenge!" "Learning takes time."

Provide students with writing prompts to reflect upon their values. For example: What three qualities do you admire in a friend? If we lived in a perfect world, how would people behave differently than they do now?

Provide learning menus to give students ownership of their learning.

Give students opportunities for self-reflection. For example, after an exam have students reflect on how they prepared and what they will do differently next time.

Self-Management

Designate a specific place in your classroom for students to take a break and recharge.

Begin or end the class period with deep breathing exercises or other mindfulness practices.

Encourage goal setting with the acronym WOOP: Wish – Students state challenging, yet achievable goals. Outcome – Students visualize how they will feel once they accomplish their goals. Obstacle(s) – Students identify possible barriers that could hinder success. Plan – Students devise a specific plan of action to work toward their goals

Have students self-monitor their behaviors with simple and relevant reflection questions. For example: Was I on time for class today? Was I prepared for class? Was I attentive in class?

Social Awareness

Teach students how to work in groups and provide them with opportunities to collaborate and work together on common goals.

Give students time to reflect by journaling about the process involved with working with peers. Examples of writing prompts might include: How did you feel about working with your peers on this project? What were the advantages of working with your group on this project? What challenges did your group experience while working on this project and how were those challenges overcome? How do you think your group viewed your efforts as a member of the team? What might you do differently the next time you work on a project with your peers?

Conduct a "gallery walk" featuring students' individual exhibits and presentations on topics of their choice.