

The Power of Academic-Social Emotional Learning (A-SEL)

If SEL is a process for healthy development for all, it is patently clear that the integration of the academic with social-emotional learning is essential. When content learning and the skills and behaviors of SEL are combined, the resultant growth transcends the immediate for life-long learning. While there has been a timely call for creating positive school climate and culture, it would be wrong-headed to do so without examining how this may work in conjunction with academic learning.

Educators continue to implement new national and state learning standards, whether they fall under the designation of Common Core or Next Generation. Standards will and should inform curriculum development, teaching, and assessment practices. In addition, the selection of content to be taught is extremely important with a major concern for rich and rigorous content. This is especially true for ELA and social studies, as well as other academic disciplines. An appropriate selection supports both SEL and the academics growth.

Let's see what happens when SEL skills and behaviors are placed in a CONTENT relationship with. ELA learning standards. Such a framework will result in a powerful unit-based curriculum.

SEL Skills

Assertiveness				
Calming down	C			
Communication		RL 1 Refer to details when drawing inferences from the text.		Units
Cooperation	O			Activities
Emotion regulation		RL 2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details		Performances
Emotion recognition	N			
Empathy		RL 3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story		_Team
Impulse control	T			_Role play
Problem solving		RL 4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases		_Interpret
Social initiation	E			_Portray
		RL 5 Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose		_Debate
	N			_Defend
		RL 6 Compare and contrast the point of view		_Judge
	T			_Demonstrate
		RL 7 Make connections between the text and a visual		

SEL Behaviors

Self-awareness
 Self-management
 Social awareness
 Relationship skills
 Responsible decision making

It would be fair to say that the rich selection of content for any grade would lend itself to integrating SEL and State learning standards. The most apparent content to use would be fables where lessons may be learned and learning situations readily embrace SEL skills and behaviors when discussing themes, character actions and motivations and conflicts. From classics to modern literary works, human struggles and challenges abound. Rather than an added-on mental health curriculum which may go the way of similar attempts, we can realize the efficacy of merging SEL with the academics for designing powerful units of learning to support SEL and academic growth mindset.

References

Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). 2017
 Navigating SEL from the Inside Out, Wallace Foundation. March 2017

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