



Self-Assessing Educator Social and Emotional Competencies and Instruction (Refreshed)



Center on Great Teachers
and Leaders



Self-Assessing Educator Social and Emotional Competencies and Instruction (Refreshed)

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Introduction

With recent advancements in the science of learning and development, health concerns related to global pandemic, and social unrest due to continued racial discrimination, the educational community has increasingly focused on the holistic development of students, including the inextricable link between social and emotional learning (SEL) and academic learning (Cantor et al., 2018; Immordino-Yang, 2018; SoLD Alliance, 2020). SEL is a core piece of human development and is an intentional teaching and learning process in which all individuals nurture and apply a set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes to recognize and direct emotions; build and maintain relationships with diverse others; identify and solve personal, interpersonal, and community problems; and make effective and ethical decisions (CASEL, 2021). SEL is an essential part of how students learn and develop within classrooms and the multiple spaces students engage with that enhances their social, emotional, and academic development. SEL approaches continue to evolve as it relates to equity-focused SEL, SEL-academic integration, and educator SEL (Yoder et al., 2021).

Educator SEL encompasses an educator's own social and emotional competencies, as well as their capacities to implement practices and to create the conditions that support student social, emotional, and academic development (Yoder et al., 2020).

Objectives

This self-assessment tool is designed to help educators (teachers, school staff, and out-of-school time professionals) reflect upon (a) their own social and emotional competencies (SEC) and (b) their capacities to implement current practices that influence student SEL or the conditions they create to support student social and emotional development. Specifically individual educators can use the tool to understand their own SEL, or a group of educators can complete it together to understand the collective ability of educators to create conditions for social, emotional, and academic learning. The aims of this tool are as follows:

- ◆ To provide a mechanism for an educator or group of educators to reflect on their own SEC.
- ◆ To enable an educator or group of educators to reflect and self-assess on SEL as an integral part of high-quality teaching and learning.
- ◆ To provide a tool to understand the educator's or group of educators' ability to promote student SEL through instructional practices.
- ◆ To guide an educator or a group of educators towards more personalized professional learning.
- ◆ To provide educators or group of educators with self-reflective feedback that can be used as part of their professional development plans and their own professional growth.

Background

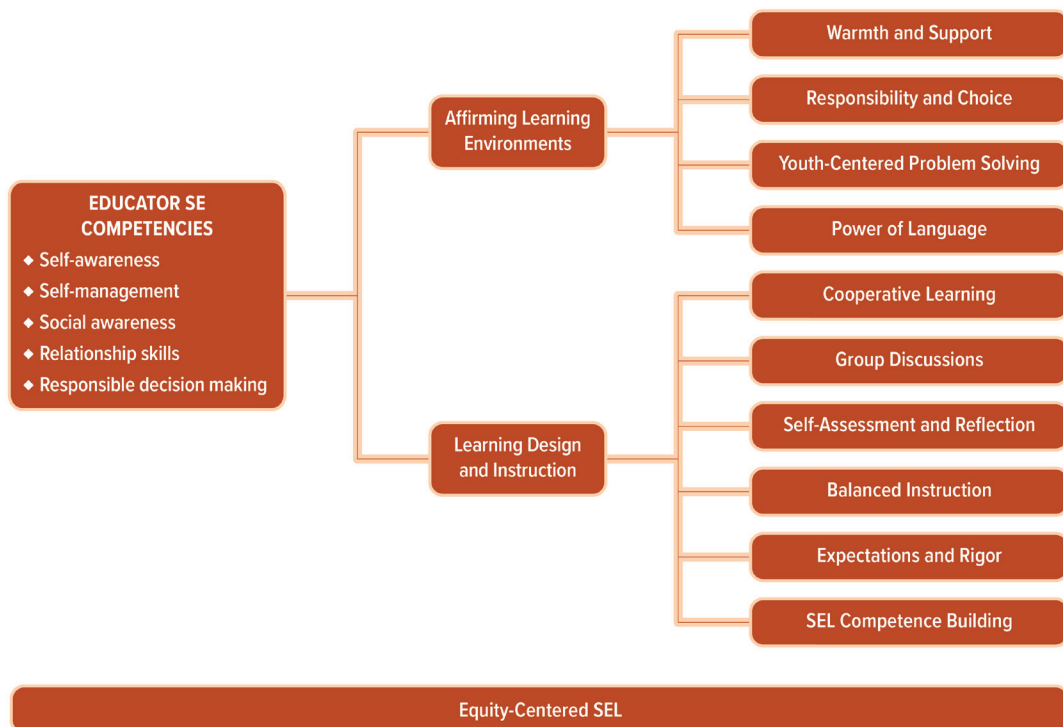
Educators have a role in creating the conditions for learning, and leaders have a role in creating the working conditions educators need to support student and educator social and emotional development (Yoder et al., 2018). To successfully support students, particularly those who have been most marginalized, it is critical to start with the adults, to provide them time to understand their own competencies, beliefs, and mindsets; and to support them in understanding their role in nurturing students' social, emotional, and academic development (Gregory and Fergus,

2017). This tool is meant to do just that—for educators to reflect on their own competencies and practices and for leaders to help create the conditions that educators need to encourage each student and the lived experiences they bring with them.

The development of *Self-Assessing Educator Social and Emotional Competencies and Instruction* began in 2011 with the goal of characterizing and operationalizing educator social and emotional competencies (SECs). Staff at American Institutes for Research (AIR) conducted an extensive literature review of educator SECs, interviewed leading experts, and partnered with educators to develop a broad definition of the five educator SEC and produced the original tool in 2014. In 2022, the original author— in partnership with leading SEL experts, educator SEL experts, and practitioners—sought to revise the tool to reflect the latest evidence in the SEL literature, specifically educator SEL and culturally responsive SEL, with updated definitions of educator SEL (see Appendix A) and equity-focused, embedded SEL practices (Yoder et al., 2021, see Appendix B).

Overview of the Tool

Multiple approaches exist that educators can take to promote social and emotional development, explicit skill instruction, integration with academic content, and general pedagogy. This tool focuses on integration with academic content and general pedagogy. Specifically, Yoder (2014) identified 10 educator practices that promote social, emotional, and academic learning that, when implemented well, can align with culturally-responsive sustaining practices (Yoder et al., 2021). Four of the practices explicitly focus on creating climates that afford young people the opportunity to nurture and apply their competencies (see Figure 1). These practices align with research that demonstrates that to successfully integrate SEL and promote SEC development, young people and educators must co-construct *affirming learning environments* (Berg et al., 2017). The other six educator practices relate to practices that align with the science of learning and development (SoLD), particularly around *classroom design and instruction* (Boyd et al., 2022; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Osher et al., 2020). These practices invite students and adults to use and apply their SEC strengths and gifts to successfully engage within classroom instruction. (see Appendix B for a description of each of the practices).



To implement the 10 educator practices successfully in partnership with students, adults must strengthen their own SEC. To model and encourage positive student interactions, educators themselves need competencies (skills, knowledge, and mindsets) to uplift students from diverse backgrounds, to communicate effectively, and to handle stressful situations that can occur in learning environments (Brackett et al., 2009; Jennings et al., 2019; Osher et al., 2020). Educators who are socially and emotionally competent develop supportive relationships with students, create activities that build on the strengths of students, and help students develop the basic SECs necessary to fully participate in classrooms and other spaces (Jagers et al., 2019; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Jennings et al., 2019; Jones et al., 2013). This tool focuses on five educator SECs: self-awareness, self-management/emotion regulation, social awareness, relationship/social skills, and responsible decision making (see Appendix A for definitions of the teacher SECs).

A crucial piece as educators self-reflect on their own social and emotional competencies and SEL capacities for integrative instructional practices is to center SEL from an equity lens. Equity-centered SEL must address disparities and disproportionality head on, as well as provide adults strategies to consider culture and context in understanding how they navigate their own SECs and SEL supports for students (Yoder et al., 2021). Equity-focused SEL further recognizes the multiple spaces and contexts in which students learn and develop (Jagers et al., 2019; Mahoney et al., 2020) and affords students opportunities to realize there are multiple ways to be human (Howard, 2019). Educators can do this, for example, by co-developing expectations and behaviors that reflect student cultures, families, and identities (Jagers et al., 2018) or incorporating students' cultural resources and funds of knowledge in how and when they use their competencies and content knowledge (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Hammond, 2019). Educators also recognize and model that their ways of interacting may be different than their students'—and grounded in the educator's culture and lived experiences—demonstrating respect for and learning about the assets and gifts students bring with them from their homes, cultures, and peers, ultimately feeling that they are valued and belong (Duchesneau, 2020; Great Lakes Equity Center, 2020; Osher et al., 2018; Scharf, 2016).

Next Steps after Using the Tool

The goal of the tool's current version is to help educators self-reflect on their social and emotional competencies and SEL-integrative instructional practices that will guide professional learning decisions. Although the tool has been vetted by experts, the tool has not been empirically tested, so we caution your use of this tool for any high-stakes decision. We highly recommend that you pilot-test it within your state or in collaboration with or consultation with AIR staff.

To guide professional learning, educators can, for example, use results from their self-assessment to determine which professional learning offerings that they need and to identify local or national providers that support adult SEL and integrative SEL. They could also engage in the asynchronous learning opportunities from [Inspire Leading in Learning](#). Inspire currently offers over 70 on-demand, no cost modules focused on some of the following topics:

- ◆ Educator SEL (intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive competencies)
- ◆ Learning environments (helping students believe they *can* achieve, building relationships with students)
- ◆ Classroom design and instruction (design a problem-based learning experience, structuring academic conversations)
- ◆ Cultural competence (linking identity and achievement, using critical consciousness)

Educator SEL Self-Reflection Tool

This tool is divided into the following three sections corresponding to Figure 1. Through each section, and corresponding reflection questions, culturally responsive and sustaining practices are embedded within the items to ensure that SEL practices are used to uplift all students' personal and cultural assets and promote the conditions needed for growth.

SECTION 1

Self-Assess Educator's Own Social and Emotional Competencies

Educators, you will consider your own social and emotional competencies (SECs) and their influence on your interactions with the youth you engage. You will rate your five SECs outlined in Figure 1 on a four-point scale, where 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *agree*, and 4 = *strongly agree*.

SECTION 2, PARTS A & B

Educator Practice Assessment

Educators, you will self-assess on the educator practices outlined in Figure 1 above. Part A focuses on the affirming learning environments, and Part B focuses on the learning design and instruction. Ratings are based on the degree to which you agree with each statement about your implementation of each practice, where 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *agree*, and 4 = *strongly agree*.

SECTION 3

Culminating Activities and Action Planning

Total scores are computed, and you can reflect on your self-ratings with guidance from questions and points provided for further consideration.

Section 1. Educator Social and Emotional Competencies

Think about your own social and emotional competencies and how those competencies influence your interactions with the youth you engage. Consider each statement and score yourself according to the degree to which you agree that each statement holds true for you, using a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *agree*, and 4 = *strongly agree*.

1. Self-Awareness

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I understand how my background (e.g., gender, race, religion, family) and personal experiences are similar to and different from my students' backgrounds and experiences.	1	2	3	4
2. I take time to reflect on my own biases, assumptions, and knowledge and how they influence my expectations and interactions with students.	1	2	3	4
3. I reflect on how my interests and values influence my interactions with my students.	1	2	3	4
4. I reflect on how my emotions influence my interactions with students.	1	2	3	4
5. I recognize that mishaps and mistakes when teaching are opportunities for my continued growth as an educator.	1	2	3	4
6. I reflect on how I create meaningful learning experiences for every student.	1	2	3	4
7. I am aware of how my perceptions of student behaviors and my responses (positive and negative) affect my interactions with my students.	1	2	3	4

2. Self-Management

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I am able to get calm (e.g., stop, think, act) or stay calm when I have a strong emotional reaction in the classroom (e.g., stress, anger).	1	2	3	4
2. I effectively use stress reduction strategies (e.g., breathing techniques, mindfulness) to remain calm when I have a strong emotional reaction in the classroom (e.g., stress, anger).	1	2	3	4
3. I organize materials and interactions with students to create a learning environment that is welcoming and inclusive of all students.	1	2	3	4
4. I set, monitor, and evaluate my professional goals, and I develop clear steps to reach them.	1	2	3	4
5. I modify lesson plans and ways I organize interactions based on new information (e.g., how students experience content, student engagement and interests, peer dynamics).	1	2	3	4
6. I persist when challenges arise in the classroom.	1	2	3	4
7. I regularly engage in self-care.	1	2	3	4

3. Social Awareness

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I care about and demonstrate concern for the feelings my students experience.	1	2	3	4
2. I use the perspectives and experiences that my students bring with them during learning.	1	2	3	4
3. I am concerned about and pay attention to how my words, actions, and behaviors influence my students.	1	2	3	4
4. I understand that each student brings their unique experiences (based on gender, race, religion, family, etc.) to social interactions in the learning environment.	1	2	3	4
5. I work with my students individually and collectively to ensure that each student feels included in the learning environment.	1	2	3	4
6. I build upon the strengths and assets that my students bring from their home and community that support the learning environment.	1	2	3	4
7. I investigate the underlying perspectives that may be driving a student's behavior.	1	2	3	4

4. Relationship Skills

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I try to create supportive relationships with all my students, even when students are challenging, or relationships appear difficult.	1	2	3	4
2. I effectively communicate my thoughts, opinions, and instruction and actively listen to my students' perspectives and experiences.	1	2	3	4
3. I use what I know about students (e.g., who they are and what their needs are) to form meaningful relationships with them.	1	2	3	4
4. I acknowledge to my students when I make mistakes.	1	2	3	4
5. I use collaborative problem solving with my students when issues arise in the learning environment.	1	2	3	4
6. I make an effort to showcase the unique contributions of each student.	1	2	3	4
7. I build and leverage relationships with families of all my students to get to know my students better.	1	2	3	4
8. I seek support from colleagues when I have issues or concerns.	1	2	3	4

5. Responsible Decision Making

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I take into account student strengths and developmental needs and build upon youth and family assets when making decisions.	1	2	3	4
2. I reflect on my own assumptions/biases as well as external factors when making decisions that affect my students.	1	2	3	4
3. I collaborate with my students and adult colleagues when making decisions that may affect them.	1	2	3	4
4. I find practical solutions to problems that arise, including how I balance and address individual and whole group needs.	1	2	3	4
5. I reflect on the decisions that my colleagues and I have made, including intended and unintended consequences for myself, my students, and the school community.	1	2	3	4
6. I consider multiple forms of evidence when making a decision.	1	2	3	4
7. I find ways to address both the academic and social and emotional needs of my students when making decisions.	1	2	3	4

Section 2: Educator Practice Assessment

Part A. Affirming Learning Environments

Think about how you implement a variety of practices that nurture students’ social, emotional, and academic competencies. Using a scale of 1 to 4, rate the degree to which you agree with each statement about your implementation, where 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *agree*, and 4 = *strongly agree*.

1. Warmth and Support (Educator and Peer)

Social and Emotional Learning Instructional Practices	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I let my students know that I care about them as individuals.	1	2	3	4
b. I let my students know that I enjoy being around them.	1	2	3	4
c. I am a source of support academically, socially, and emotionally for my students when they encounter difficulties.	1	2	3	4
d. I share my interests and background with students as appropriate.	1	2	3	4
e. I provide opportunities for students to build meaningful relationships with each other (e.g., learning about backgrounds, interests, and cultures).	1	2	3	4
f. I create an environment that is both culturally affirming and inclusive for all students, regardless of their background, experiences, or academic needs.	1	2	3	4
g. I help students learn how to advocate for themselves and their peers.	1	2	3	4
h. When students have concerns—academic, emotional, or social—I follow up with them.	1	2	3	4

Social and Emotional Learning Instructional Practices	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
i. I let my students know that it is okay to make mistakes, get answers wrong, or think outside of the box (e.g., modeling, praising attempts with “effort or good thinking”).	1	2	3	4
j. I create routines in the classroom where my students feel included and appreciated (e.g., morning meetings, small moments, whole-class share-outs).	1	2	3	4
k. I provide opportunities for students to learn about their different perspectives on issues and give each other timely and constructive feedback.	1	2	3	4

2. Responsibility and Choice

Social and Emotional Learning Instructional Practices	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I ask students for input about what is most helpful for them and use their feedback to inform how I provide support and the assignments that will best help them learn.	1	2	3	4
b. I ask for student input when making decisions about how the classroom will operate.	1	2	3	4
c. I provide choices in assignments that take into account my students' prior knowledge, goals, experiences, interests, and strengths.	1	2	3	4
d. I provide students opportunities to give me feedback about their learning experiences, and I act on it.	1	2	3	4
e. I help students connect their choices and related consequences (positive and negative).	1	2	3	4
f. I provide choices to students that are culturally relevant and meaningful (e.g., based on students' prior knowledge, goals, experiences, interests, and strengths).	1	2	3	4
g. I encourage students to reflect on their mistakes and setbacks as opportunities for them to grow.	1	2	3	4
h. I empower students to ask questions and make suggestions about the procedures and processes in the learning environment.	1	2	3	4
i. I create opportunities for student leadership (e.g., classroom aides or jobs, peer tutoring, specific roles in group work).	1	2	3	4

3. Youth-Centered Problem Solving

Social and Emotional Learning Instructional Practices	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I co-construct group norms with students and check in with students about the use of group norms.	1	2	3	4
b. I encourage students to build upon their personal and cultural knowledge and other strengths when solving problems.	1	2	3	4
c. I support students in directing their own actions in ways that are meaningful to them.	1	2	3	4
d. I provide opportunities for students to reflect, correct, and learn from their mistakes in upholding group norms.	1	2	3	4
e. I engage students in problem-solving strategies when mistakes are made in upholding group norms.	1	2	3	4
f. I consistently hold students and myself accountable for following group norms.	1	2	3	4
g. I bring students together to solve problems as a group in upholding group norms (e.g., through community meetings).	1	2	3	4
h. I provide regular opportunities for students to be celebrated and to honor their personal and cultural strengths.	1	2	3	4

4. Power of Language

Social and Emotional Learning Instructional Practices	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I adapt my communication (verbal and/or nonverbal) so that each student knows I believe they can achieve.	1	2	3	4
b. I communicate to students in ways that show we are a learning community (e.g., use of class name and motto and referencing how we work together).	1	2	3	4
c. I ask students to reflect on their strengths (academic, personal, group, and cultural) during learning activities.	1	2	3	4
d. I help students see how their effort leads to achievement.	1	2	3	4
e. I ask students reflective questions to help them direct and guide their thoughts, emotions, and actions.	1	2	3	4
f. When there are miscommunications between students and me, I let students know that I, too, can be responsible for the miscommunication.	1	2	3	4
g. I model for my students ways to communicate that are meaningful and most likely to be effective.	1	2	3	4

Part B. Learning Design and Instruction

Think about how you implement a variety of practices that allow students to apply their social, emotional, and academic competencies. Using a scale of 1 to 4, rate the degree to which you agree with each statement about your implementation, where 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *agree*, and 4 = *strongly agree*.

5. Cooperative Learning

Social and Emotional Learning Instructional Practices	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I intentionally have students collaborate with others who they can learn from (e.g., differing skills, interests, or backgrounds).	1	2	3	4
b. When I create groups for cooperative learning, I make an effort to assign roles and responsibilities that break down barriers of social interaction (based on race, gender, interests, etc.).	1	2	3	4
c. I engage my students in learning activities where they work together toward group goals.	1	2	3	4
d. I encourage students to encourage each other as they work together to accomplish group goals.	1	2	3	4
e. I let students know that they are each accountable for accomplishing group goals.	1	2	3	4
f. I provide cooperative activities that require students to depend on each other to accomplish group goals.	1	2	3	4
g. I expect students to hold each other accountable during cooperative tasks.	1	2	3	4
h. I create cooperative learning experiences in which my students apply their social and emotional competencies (e.g., communication, collaboration, problem solving, and perspective taking).	1	2	3	4
i. After a cooperative task, I have my students reflect on how well they worked together to accomplish group goals.	1	2	3	4

6. Group Discussions

Social and Emotional Learning Instructional Practices	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I provide opportunities for students to engage in group discussions.	1	2	3	4
b. I encourage students to express their opinions or perspectives respectfully during group discussions.	1	2	3	4
c. I encourage students to build on each other's thoughts during group discussions.	1	2	3	4
d. I make sure there is more student talk than teacher talk during group discussions.	1	2	3	4
e. I help students learn how to actively listen to their peers during group discussions.	1	2	3	4
f. I ensure students feel safe to share their perspectives during group discussions.	1	2	3	4
g. I pay attention to who is and is not speaking in group discussions.	1	2	3	4
h. I help students learn how to ask each other questions during group discussions.	1	2	3	4
i. I provide opportunities for students to connect group discussions to their own lives and lived experiences.	1	2	3	4
j. I ask students to pay attention to who is and is not speaking during group discussions as a way to ensure all voices are heard.	1	2	3	4

7. Self-Reflection and Self-Assessment

Social and Emotional Learning Instructional Practices	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I provide multiple opportunities and approaches for students to reflect on their progress.	1	2	3	4
b. I make sure my students have clear performance criteria so that they know what success looks like.	1	2	3	4
c. I help my students develop strategies and identify resources to make sure they meet their learning goals.	1	2	3	4
d. I regularly help students monitor or check progress on their work.	1	2	3	4
e. I provide my students with strategies to analyze their work (e.g., using performance rubrics, peer reviews).	1	2	3	4
f. I help students learn how to enhance work based on supportive and formative feedback.	1	2	3	4
g. I allow students to revise or improve upon their work.	1	2	3	4
h. I help students reflect on how current learning strategies (e.g., using graphic organizers, journals, or tutors) can help them in the future.	1	2	3	4
i. I prompt my students to think about how contextual factors (e.g., space, resources, support, safety) affect their learning.	1	2	3	4

8. Balanced Instruction

Social and Emotional Learning Instructional Practices	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I regularly use both active forms of instruction (e.g., inquiry-based learning) <i>and</i> direct instruction (e.g., to reduce cognitive load or provide common ground knowledge) based on the learning strengths, needs, interests, and backgrounds of my students.	1	2	3	4
b. I present material in a relevant and meaningful way to help students self-direct their attention and engagement. ¹	1	2	3	4
c. I incorporate opportunities for students to explore the world around them, allowing them to access their creativity, innovation, joy, and wonder.	1	2	3	4
d. I help students emotionally engage in the learning environment by providing interesting and active forms of instruction (e.g., inquiry-based learning).	1	2	3	4
e. I provide students with opportunities to engage socially to deepen connections with peers and with content.	1	2	3	4
f. I prompt my students to use multiple strategies to solve problems with materials and peers.	1	2	3	4

9. Expectations and Rigor

Social and Emotional Learning Instructional Practices	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I believe and communicate to all students that they can achieve and thrive.	1	2	3	4
b. I provide students with work that is meaningful and challenging to them.	1	2	3	4
c. I ensure that all students have the supports (social, emotional, and academic) they need to meet expectations.	1	2	3	4
d. I provide instruction that is challenging yet attainable (with support) for each student (i.e., at their zone of proximal development at a given point of their learning).	1	2	3	4
e. I reflect on the conscious and unconscious ways that my students may perceive the expectations I have for them.	1	2	3	4
f. I adjust my tone of voice, wait time, and type of feedback according to the needs of my students.	1	2	3	4
g. I support my students socially and emotionally while challenging them with new or higher levels of learning.	1	2	3	4
h. I get to know my students to identify work that is meaningful and challenging for them.	1	2	3	4

10. SEL Competence Building—Modeling, Practicing, Feedback, Coaching

Social and Emotional Learning Instructional Practices	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I support student social and emotional development throughout the instructional cycle.	1	2	3	4
b. I identify social and emotional objectives, as well as academic objectives, during instruction.	1	2	3	4
c. I model social and emotional skills with my students during instruction.	1	2	3	4
d. I provide students with feedback and coaching support on their use of social and emotional skills.	1	2	3	4
e. I let students know that there is more than one right way to apply their social and emotional skills across social and cultural contexts.	1	2	3	4
f. I encourage my students to understand how their families and communities express themselves socially and emotionally.	1	2	3	4
g. I help students use their social and emotional skills across contexts in ways that are meaningful to them.	1	2	3	4
h. I refer to students' cultural references and assets as I nurture their social and emotional development.	1	2	3	4

Section 3. Scoring, Reflection, and Action Planning

Use the following tables and reflective questions to process your self-assessment. Remember to check-out the [Inspire Leading in Learning](#) asynchronous modules as a source for continued professional learning and growth in your social and emotional competencies (SECs) and SEL practices.

1. In the box below, indicate the score you received for each of the educator social and emotional competencies. To create a final score, take the average of each competency.

Social and Emotional Competency	Your Score/Total Possible Points	Average Score
1. Self-Awareness	_____/28	
2. Self-Management/Emotion Regulation	_____/28	
3. Social Awareness	_____/28	
4. Relationship Skills	_____/32	
5. Responsible Decision Making	_____/28	

2. Reflect on your scores.

1. On which SEC did you score the highest?
2. On which SEC did you score the lowest?
3. What evidence do you have to support the self-rating for your highest-scoring SEC? Your lowest-scoring SEC?
4. What professional learning experiences could facilitate improvement in areas in which you scored lowest?

3. In the box below, indicate the score you received for each of the 10 instructional practices. In order to create a final score for each practice, take the average of the scores under each practice.

Social and Emotional Competency	Your Score/Total Possible Points	Average Score
1. Warmth and Support	_____/44	
2. Responsibility and Choice	_____/36	
3. Youth-Centered Problem Solving	_____/32	
4. Power of Language	_____/24	
5. Cooperative Learning	_____/36	
6. Group Discussions	_____/40	
7. Self-Reflection and Self-Assessment	_____/36	
8. Balanced Instruction	_____/24	
9. Academic Press and Expectations	_____/32	
10. Competence Building	_____/32	

4. Reflect on your scores.

1. On which SEL practices did you score the highest? Why?
2. On which SEL practice did you score the lowest? Why?
3. What evidence do you have to support the self-rating for your highest-scoring SEL practice? Your lowest-scoring SEL practice?
4. How do these behaviors and practices look in your learning environment?
5. How do you think your students would rate you?
6. How do the conditions in your environment affect your self-rating?
7. What professional learning experiences could facilitate improvement in your lowest-scoring SEL practices?
8. What can you do to ensure that you are implementing these practices fully?

References

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Appendix A. Educator Social and Emotional Competencies

Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, and Cognitive Competencies

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness refers to the ability to accurately assess one’s feelings, interests, values, and strengths and to maintain a well-grounded sense of self and self-efficacy (Payton et al., 2008). Educators are better equipped to teach and interact with students when they are aware of their own beliefs, values and motivations, emotions, stressors, strengths, and weaknesses (Jennings, 2021). Further, when educators have a deep understanding of their own backgrounds (including their cultural, religious, gender, and racial backgrounds and identities) and better understand their identities as an educator, they can reflect on how their own biases and assumptions may influence students (Jagers et al., 2018; Saavedra & Nolan, 2018). Likewise, educators’ self-awareness helps them understand how their backgrounds, values, and experiences are similar or dissimilar to those of their students and how these can influence the educators’ expectations and assumptions about their students (Jagers et al., 2018; Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2010).

Educators with a high degree of self-awareness also recognize their emotional states (including how their emotions feel within their bodies) and how strong emotions can influence their own perceptions of students, particularly when they do not process the emotions (Jennings, 2019). For example, educators high in self-awareness recognize when they become triggered or experience strong emotional reactions (for example, from students or an event that occurs), and they acknowledge how those strong emotional reactions may influence interactions with their students (Jennings et al., 2019). In addition, educators high in self-awareness have self-compassion, confidence, and a growth mindset, while acknowledging that they will make mistakes. Due to this self-awareness, they are able to repair any potential harm, and they continue to develop new skills to support young people (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2021; Jennings, 2019; Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2010). Therefore, to become fully self-aware, educators must engage in self-reflection to best make sense of their experiences as an educator and how they create inclusive learning experiences for all students (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2010).

Self-Management

Self-management encompasses both emotional and behavioral self-regulation (Jennings, 2021). Self-management includes the ability to both successfully manage emotional arousal and change emotions—for example, the valence, intensity, or time course of the emotions (Gross, 1998). Further, self-management includes the ability to set and achieve goals, develop agency in one’s context, and use planning and organizational skills (CASEL, 2021). To best regulate emotions, educators can use calming strategies rather than rely on impulsive strategies, which can provide an authentic model for students (Jennings, 2021; Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2010). More specifically, educators may experience strong emotions that could trigger fear or uncertainty in their students, which could lead to power struggles (Jennings et al., 2019). In addition, educators pay attention to what may trigger an emotional response in order to avoid those situations, have calming strategies prepared, or cognitively reframe the situation

(Jennings, 2021; Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2010). Having strategies prepared to mitigate the emotional response when triggering moments occur is particularly important, given that biases and assumptions are more likely when educators experience a stressful situation (Santiago-Rosario & McIntosh, 2021). Identifying strategies to manage stressful situations affords educators opportunities to reflect on and adjust their responses to reduce biases in their interactions with students, particularly with students who are historically marginalized (Legette et al., 2021).

Moreover, self-management includes educators' ability to direct their own actions, motivations, and goals. For example, self-management includes ways that educators organize materials and resources for themselves and their students (Jennings, 2021), allowing students, for example, to assert themselves and engage as their full selves (Jagers et al., 2018; Saavedra & Nolan, 2018). For example, the educator may modify plans based on new information, competing priorities, or how students are engaging in the learning environment (CASEL, 2021; Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2010). Further, goal setting includes identifying challenging and attainable goals for oneself—for example, creating and implementing self-care goals and strategies (CASEL, 2021; Jennings, 2021). Goal setting also can include collaborating with students to set collective goals that will have an impact on the learning community as well as the broader community (CASEL, 2021; Legette et al., 2021). Finally, educators who understand their motivations for being in the profession stay true to those motivations and persevere when they experience challenges (CASEL, 2021; Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2010).

Social Awareness

Social awareness is the ability to empathize with and take the perspective of others, including those who have different backgrounds, cultures, identities, and experiences (CASEL, 2021; Jennings, 2021). Further, social awareness involves being compassionate and empathetic (Jennings, 2021) as well as interpreting social information accurately to understand another person's or group's feelings, thoughts, and motivations (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2010; Selman, 1971). Educators with high social awareness attempt to understand how their behavior influences the thoughts and feelings of others and how the social and historical context influences others (CASEL, 2021; Jagers et al., 2018; Saavedra & Nolan, 2018). For instance, educators who are socially aware understand that systems (including schools) have intentionally favored some groups and implemented practices that perpetuate disparities, thus influencing how students build relationships and engage in learning (Legette et al., 2021). In addition, socially aware educators understand that these systemic inequities can consciously or unconsciously influence interpersonal interactions through biases and microaggressions (Jagers et al., 2018; Jennings, 2021).

Socially aware educators understand how socially supportive groups function (Jennings, 2021), are attuned to the social dynamics of their students (Audley-Piotrowski et al., 2015), and facilitate the co-construction of inclusive social dynamics and norms in the learning environment (Jennings et al., 2019). For instance, they help students express their perspectives and understand their peers' perspectives by reinforcing mutual respect and empathy with their students. Socially aware educators can show students that they care for them and take interest in their lives by asking them questions, demonstrating humility, and allowing diverse perspectives to be expressed during learning (Legette et al., 2021). In doing so, socially aware educators demonstrate that they view diversity as an asset that each individual and culture brings to the learning environment, rather than as a deficit (Jagers et al., 2018; Saavedra & Nolan, 2018).

Relationship Skills

Relationship skills refer to educators' ability to develop positive and affirming relationships with diverse students and their families, as well as with their colleagues and administrators (Jennings, 2021). Forming meaningful relationships requires strong social skills upon which an individual draws to complete social tasks successfully (Gresham & Elliott, 2008). These skills include communication, active listening, cooperation, empathy, perspective taking, teamwork, and conflict resolution (CASEL, 2021; Cooper & Farran, 1991; Jennings, 2021). Educators with strong relationship skills stay focused when communicating, articulate their ideas, connect meaningfully with others, work well with others, talk out problems with others, and can admit their own mistakes (CASEL, 2021). Further, educators with strong relationship skills prioritize building trust between students, such as by helping them manage conflict, holding high expectations for everyone, and demonstrating respect for all students (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2010).

To facilitate getting to know their students, educators can learn about and value student's home communities (Legette et al., 2021). These skills help students feel valued and heard by the educator. Educators who form positive relationships recognize that minor shifts in attitude, behavior, and emotions can greatly influence relationships (Jennings, 2021; Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2010). They reflect on the role of socio-historical processes and their influence to build responsive relationships with their students, particularly when the educators have a different culture than their students (Legette et al., 2021; Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2010). For example, when educators shift their thinking from a deficit to an asset model, they can adapt their interactions based on their students' needs and interests. This deliberate shift enables educators to develop closer bonds and deepen their relationships with students (Jennings, 2021). Further, educators with strong relationship skills provide opportunities to get to know their students and their families (Moll, 2019), as well as opportunities for students to get to know them (Jagers et al., 2018; Saavedra & Nolan, 2018). In turn, this reciprocity enables educators to build relational trust (understanding respective roles and responsibilities) with their students, families, and colleagues (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2010).

Responsible Decision Making

Responsible decision making is a process in which an individual scans an array of options and attempts to decide which option is the best one for producing a desired outcome, while also taking into account students' developmental needs and their home contexts (Jennings et al., 2019). Educators make thousands of split-second, in-the-moment decisions that govern their interactions with students and their reactions to other factors inside and outside of the classroom (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Educators use their other social and emotional competencies (e.g., awareness of biases and assumptions, building positive relationships; Jennings, 2021) when making important decisions that affect student outcomes (e.g., use of proactive and inclusionary rather than exclusionary disciplinary practices; Legette et al., 2021). As educators make these decisions, they identify the problems, create multiple solutions, and solve problems; analyze and prioritize situations; and reflect on their decisions, including how those decisions affect themselves, their students, and their community (CASEL, 2021; Jennings, 2021).

Decision making is often done in the moment as educators consider and process clues, draw information from long-term memory, and make a decision that is enacted through words and behavior. Educators consider multiple forms of evidence to make decisions about instruction, classroom management, and interactions with students and their families and with their colleagues. They consider the academic goals and social and emotional growth of individual students and their class as a whole, while simultaneously considering both long-term plans and in-the-moment decisions (CASEL, 2021; Jennings, 2021). They further consider the historical contexts, power dynamics, and systems in which students live and operate to make decisions in the learning environment (Jagers et al., 2018; Saavedra & Nolan, 2018), recognizing that they influence the ways that students interact with their peers and other adults and navigate their experiences in the learning environment.

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Appendix B. 10 Educator Practices That Promote SEL

Practices that Promote Affirming Learning Environments

1. Warmth and Support (Educator and Peer)

Warmth and support practices refer to the academic, social, and emotional support that students receive from educators and their peers, cultivating positive relationships in the learning environment (Christenson & Havy, 2004; Hammond, 2015; Hawkins et al., 2004; Love, 2019; McCombs, 2004; Muhammad, 2020). Educators' use of warmth and support strategies creates learning experiences and interactions in which students demonstrate their value and importance to the learning community, develop positive peer and educator relationships, feel a sense of comfort and security, and advocate for themselves. Warmth and support practices also include asking students formal and informal questions, following up with students on issues or concerns, and providing opportunities for students to offer feedback and encouragement to each other. Example warmth and support practices include educator modeling desired behaviors, acknowledgement of each student by the adults and peers, and students feeling safe to ask questions and make mistakes (Hattie & Clark, 2019). As educators enact practices and model behavior, they should also reflect on how they exhibit their competencies and behaviors. The behaviors educators model are informed by their own cultures, which may be different from ways of interacting in their students' cultures (Great Lakes Equity Center, 2020).

It is also important for educators to reflect on student needs as they exhibit warmth and support practices. Students are likely to need differential support from educators to form meaningful relationships. For example, an educator may need to make an extra effort to develop a positive relationship with a shy student. Similarly, students will have differing opinions, values, and interests, making it necessary for educators to be strategic in helping each student to have a voice and feel seen and heard in a way that is meaningful to them (Pianta et al., 2012; Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2018). Educators must also demonstrate respect for and learn about what the students bring to their learning environments from their home, cultures, and peers, resulting in students' perceptions that they are valued and that their cultural identities are affirmed (Duchesneau, 2020; Scharf, 2016).

2. Responsibility and Choice

Responsibility and choice refer to a series of educator practices that provide opportunities for students to make their own decisions and take accountability for their interactions—social, emotional, and academic. The educator nurtures a learning environment in which students provide meaningful input into the development of the practices and procedures of the group, as well as the what or how content is learned (Hawkins et al., 2004). Providing meaningful input does not mean that everything the students say gets done (or that choices are a free-for-all), but the educator provides structures so that the students have a voice in the learning environment. Responsibility and choice is more than having a classroom job or having an option or two, as choices are only motivational when they are meaningful; culturally relevant; age-appropriate; and personalized to students' interests, goals, and lives (Evans & Boucher, 2015; Katz & Assor, 2007). Educators should not impose responsibility on students but rather help

students realize they have influence on their learning environment (e.g., helping them process their choices and related outcomes from their choices) (Fishman, 2014; Johnston, 2004).

Students also need opportunities to identify topics that are important to them, co-construct solutions, and analyze ways in which they can enact agency within their learning environment (i.e., enhancing student voice) (Scharf, 2016). SEL should not be about getting students to comply with behavioral expectations but rather empowering students to question the places and spaces in which they live and make decisions for themselves that will allow them to live to their full potential (Great Lakes Equity Center, 2020). As educators engage in responsibility and choice practices, it will be important for them to reflect on the types of choices they provide, ensuring that they are authentic for all of the students they serve (Jagers et al., 2018).

3. Youth-Centered Problem-Solving

Youth-centered problem-solving practices refer to the practices that educators implement to nurture student agency and ownership that allows students to manage or direct their actions and feel as though they have a say in what occurs within affirming learning environments (Christenson & Havy, 2004; Hawkins et al., 2004; Johnson & Johnson, 2004; McCombs, 2004). Youth-centered problem-solving practices are built on the idea that students can regulate their own behavior when adults take more responsibility in the discipline process to engage students within the process rather than it being done to them (Bear, 2010; McCold & Wachtel, 2003). For example, educators and students co-define behaviors that are reflective of their cultures, families, and identities (Jagers et al., 2018) and provide sufficient support and guidance (McCold & Wachtel, 2003). These practices focus on ways in which adults facilitate interactions rather than student behavior or the belief that educators need to fix students (Duchesneau, 2020).

To successfully implement youth-centered problem-solving practices, educators can implement practices that encourage the co-creation of ways of interacting in learning environments, provide opportunities for students to correct their mistakes and manage themselves, and incorporate self-reflection. The aim is to see students as partners in the learning process, rather than using exclusionary disciplinary practices that remove students from the learning environment. As such, youth-centered problem solving suggests that disciplinary practices are part of a restorative process (a learning and healing process) rather than a punitive process (Caverly et al., 2021; Osher et al., 2010), in which students problem-solve issues (e.g., individual, interpersonal, and collective) that arise in their learning environments. They nurture prosocial behaviors, building on student cultural and personal assets and strengths. Educators can further promote youth-centered problem-solving through an equity lens by, for example, setting personal and collective anti-bias goals and providing spaces for classroom meetings that honor and celebrate students' identities in the learning environments (Jagers et al., 2018; Muhammad, 2020). As educators use youth-centered problem solving, they can continue to reflect on their own assumptions about student behavior and ensure that they encourage all students to solve and direct their behavior in affirming and equitable ways (Safir, 2016).

4. Power of Language

Power of language refers to how educators talk with students. Educators' communication patterns signal their beliefs about students, how warm and secure the educator is, and how emotionally and intellectually safe the student can be with the educator (Howard, 2019). Effective power of language promotes student identity, encourages student agency, and ensures that students feel like they belong in their learning environment (Johnston, 2004). For example, language creates meaning about "what I do" or "people like me do" through

thinking about their own assets and who they are as learners. Further, language can encourage youth to feel like they have ownership over their interactions. Language can also help students feel as though they belong by asking “how do we interact as a community?” (Johnston, 2004). Furthermore, educators acknowledge and accept students’ home language and lived experiences, as language directly connects with student culture and identity and helps students feel valued and heard (Howard, 2019).

Effective power of language encourages student effort and reinforces positive student behaviors, helping students to direct their own learning (Denton, 2008; Elias, 2004). When educators ask the reflective questions and reinforce specific interactions, they discover where students are coming from, help students connect academics through their social and emotional skills, and build vocabulary for students to identify and express emotions and thoughts. Educators can also demonstrate humility in their communications with students, particularly with students who have cultural and linguistic identities that differ from those of the educator. In this context, educators make the effort to actively listen and understand the students and affirm the shared responsibility of adults and youth if miscommunication occurs and potentially leads to misunderstanding (Duchesneau, 2020). Effective power of language *avoids* language that is humiliating or sarcastic as well as discipline by fear, intimidation, and indifference to students.

Classroom Design and Instruction Practices

5. Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning refers to instructional tasks for which educators have students work together in diverse groups (e.g., related to skill, interest, race, gender, among others) toward a collective goal (Elias et al., 1997; Hawkins et al., 2004; Johnson & Johnson, 2004; Zins et al., 2004). Educators can use cooperative learning for a variety of purposes, including facilitating students’ ability to learn specific knowledge, cognitively process what and how they learn, engage in inquiry-based or problem-solving projects, engage in higher-order thinking, and develop a group product or performance (Gillies & Boyle, 2010). To implement cooperative learning effectively, educators incorporate five basic elements: (1) encouraging positive interdependence, (2) implementing individual accountability, (3) promoting one another’s successes, (4) applying interpersonal and social skills, and (5) processing group strategies toward achieving a goal (Johnson & Johnson, 2004). Educators encourage diversity as an asset during cooperative groups and assign roles and responsibilities that help break down gender, class, racial, and other stereotypes, encouraging collective ownership (Scharf, 2016).

In cooperative learning, students co-create learning experiences that encourage them to learn to work together to share resources, assume complementary roles, and interact effectively to reach group academic and social and emotional goals (Baloche & Brody, 2017). As educators engage students in cooperative learning, educators provide opportunities for students to take into account multiple ways of interacting and multiple viewpoints and perspectives, deepening students’ knowledge that they themselves, their peers, their communities, and their cultures are assets that propel their learning and interactions with others (Great Lakes Equity Center, 2020; Jagers et al., 2018). As educators create cooperative learning experiences, they must pay attention to how the co-created environments, as well as students’ race, ethnicity, language, religion, location, abilities, and culture, influence how students respond, make decisions, and perceive themselves and others (Jagers et al., 2019). For example, a student’s past life experiences will influence how they receive feedback from their peers or communicate their own expectations and needs within group settings.

6. Group Discussions

Group discussions provide students with opportunities to communicate their ideas and learn from their peers and educators (Elias, 2004; Elias et al., 1997). Multiple factors influence the effectiveness of discussions, including educator expectations and planning; student personalities, skills and background knowledge; and the overall environment in which the conversation occurs (Howard, 2019). When group discussions happen in a supportive environment, students and educators are constantly building upon each other's thoughts, elaborating on their own thoughts, explaining their perspectives, and listening to others. When implementing inclusive group discussions, educators thoughtfully plan them in advance, intentionally and purposefully lead the discussion, implement them with student learning in mind, balance the talk between themselves and students, and prompt students to engage in more conversations (Center for Instructional Development and Research, 1999). To engage as co-learners in discussions, the educator and students affirm each other's identities and allow everyone to bring in their personal and cultural assets. Group discussions—regardless of the focus of discussion—can help students process their own positions in relation to others and allow students to deepen how they make meaning of the world around them in a more intentional and nuanced way (Jagers et al., 2018).

Educators facilitate rigorous group discussions when they ask critical questions and support students in crafting their own critical questions, as well as providing students prompts that help them reflect upon and take their peers' perspectives (Fisher & Frey, 2013; Rothstein & Santana, 2011). Educators support students to develop an awareness that they are the experts of their own lives, while also acknowledging the importance of understanding the perspectives and lived experiences of others (Scharf, 2016). When engaging in group discussions, students hear other perspectives that allow them to grapple with issues and ideas that are meaningful and relevant to them. Students further consider their own and others' background experiences and knowledge as they solve problems or make sound arguments about content during discussions. As students engage in discussions, it is critical for educators to examine the social dynamics within learning environments to understand the peer relationships, for example, by examining, who is and who is not speaking, and use this data to frame how they help students understand their own positionality within the learning environment (Great Lakes Equity Center, 2020).

7. Self-Reflection and Self-Assessment

Self-assessment and self-reflection are two distinct but interrelated educator practices that guide students towards identifying where gaps in knowledge and skills exist and enacting strategies to meet desired results. Self-assessment strategies allow students to evaluate their own work and identify any discrepancies between their current and desired knowledge or performance. Self-reflection occurs when students reflect on their learning progress, the strategies used to achieve results, and how they can incorporate those strategies to improve work in the future (Costa & Kallick, 2008), including identification of the resources (including people) needed to reach goals. When educators provide opportunities for students to authentically self-assess and self-reflect, they nurture students' skills to critically examine who they are, improve their metacognitive skills, as well as understand how their context influences and shapes their progress towards their goals in the learning environments (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Schlund et al., 2020). Because SEL is socially and culturally influenced, to implement self-assessment and self-reflection well—with the goal of empowering students and promoting student agency—these practices should help students reflect on their own histories, interests, and assets; and to understand the contextual variables that influenced their success or had the potential to hinder success if the students did not have the necessary resources or supports (Great Lakes Equity Center, 2020).

Educators can engage in the following four self-assessment and self-reflection practices with their students (Brooke & Andrade, 2013; Costa & Kallick, 2008): (1) create or co-create well-defined performance standards that students can accurately assess against; (2) monitor progress throughout the process; (3) offer students options to revise and improve upon their work based on self-assessment; (4) help students reflect on how current learning (content and strategy) connects to previous learning and strategies to learn in the future. Through this process, educators help students answer three questions, “Where am I going, where am I now, and where to next?” (Zubrzycki, 2015). When educators provide timely feedback as a part of self-assessment, students begin to understand that learning is a cyclical process that they can revise and enhance their work throughout the learning process.

8. Balanced Instruction

Balanced instruction encourages a deep conceptual understanding of content through a combination of problem-based tasks with explicit instruction that addresses the multidimensional needs and experiences of learners in an enriched environment (Christenson & Havsy, 2004; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Hawkins et al., 2004). Through direct instruction, students benefit from educator expertise by introducing, clarifying, and extending their knowledge (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Active learning calls for learners to explore conditions, circumstances, and possibilities; create questions; and identify evidence to answer those questions (Durlak et al., 2011; Larmer & Mergendoller, 2010). When educators create balanced instruction, they nurture emotional support for active participation and risk taking, exploration, inquiry, and choice, and rigorous and differentiated learning opportunities that appropriately challenge students individually and through social interactions that help them best engage with the content (not just because something is fun).

Balanced instruction includes student participation in multiple instructional strategies that are based on their needs, interests, and background and focused on authentic learning experiences that involve individual and collaborative work, social interactions, and appropriate integration of technology (Aspy et al., 2014). Because students need multiple opportunities to learn content and develop their competencies, balanced instruction incorporates differentiated instruction, ensuring that educators use multiple modalities and activities so that all students can be successful and engage in curricula in ways that are meaningful to them (Scharf, 2016). For example, educators can provide inquiries where students analyze a problem through a multicultural lens or engage in a project for which they examine inequities within their classrooms, school, or broader community (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Throughout balanced instruction, students plan, monitor, and reflect on their progress toward completion.

9. Expectations and Rigor

Expectations and rigor are two distinct but highly interrelated practices. *Expectations* are the beliefs that educators hold about students, specific to content, behavior, and skills. *Expectations* manifest in conscious and unconscious ways that influence educator behavior, including their instructional methods and general interactions with students (Rubie-Davies et al., 2006). *Rigor*, sometimes called academic press, refers to how educators implement meaningful and challenging course work, including the way educators encourage and support students in accomplishing tasks. Expectations influence educator actions, speech, and non-verbal cues, and inform student perceptions of those behaviors. In other words, students need to sense that their educator wants them to succeed, that educators provide them challenging work, and they feel supported to be able to accomplish their goals (Christenson & Havsy, 2004; Hammond, 2015; McCombs, 2004; Muhammad, 2020; Zins et al., 2004).

Educator expectations are influenced by multiple factors, including the race, gender, socioeconomic status, behavior, ethnicity, and past performance of their students (Cherng, 2017). While all educators want all students to succeed, educator behaviors may communicate varied expectations unconsciously through such things as wait time, tone of voice, or type of feedback. For example, two students may have a delayed response in answering a question. For one student, the educator may perceive the delay as contemplation. For another student, the educator may perceive the delay as disengagement in the activities (Education Commission of States, 2012; Love, 2019). To successfully hold high expectations, educators ensure that all students feel valued and heard (Bondy & Ross, 2008; Hammond, 2015), ensuring that students have the necessary scaffolded support to meet those expectations (Cannata et al., 2017). Further, educators build relationships with their students to better understand what they are capable of doing academically and how they respond to challenging work. As educators hold high expectations and provide challenging work, they reflect on both their behaviors and how students perceive their expectations and actions (Muhammad, 2020; Spiegel, 2012).

10. SEL Competence Building—Modeling, Practicing, Feedback, Coaching

SEL competence-building instruction consists of practices that strategically support the development of student social and emotional competencies through the instructional cycle that aligns with students' cultures and affirms their identities (Christenson & Havsby, 2004; Elias et al., 1997; McCombs, 2004; Muhammad, 2020; Zins et al., 2004). The instructional cycle includes establishment of goals/objectives of the lesson, introduction to new material/modeling, provision of group and individual practice, and incorporation of conclusion and reflection. Each part of the instructional cycle can promote targeted social and emotional competencies as long as the educator purposefully integrates them into the lesson—either as stand-alone lessons, mini-lessons, or integration with academic content. For example, when students participate in group work, the educator may conduct a mini-lesson on problem solving prior to the collaborative project to ensure students understand the competencies they need to engage in the lesson. Similarly, the educator may provide feedback on how students are using the targeted competency in the hallway, or may even identify an authentic issue that arises in the learning community as a teachable moment for social and emotional competencies.

As educators purposefully implement SEL competency building, it is critical for them to remember that social and emotional competencies are developed and expressed through socially and culturally mediated ways (Great Lakes Equity Center, 2020). Individuals develop competencies in the historically grounded systems and structures that oftentimes provided inequitable opportunities and inequitable acknowledgement of the cultural assets of all individuals (Jagers et al., 2018). As such, educators should promote social and emotional competencies through referencing student cultures and cultural references in how and when they use their skills and content (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Further, educators can help students understand how the competencies used in academic settings may apply or look in other learning environments and contexts in which youth find themselves (Great Lakes Equity Center, 2020).

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