



Include Student in Learning Process

Self-Awareness is defined as the ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values, and understand how these factors influence behavior. This ability is an important component of [Social Emotional Learning](#) because it helps students develop a realistic perception of their abilities as they work to regulate themselves. Below are suggestions of ways to incorporate self-awareness practice and instruction into the classroom.



Identifying Emotions

For students to be self-aware, it is important for them to first understand the concept of self-awareness and why it is a skill that should be developed. A good starting point for developing this skill is appropriately labeling emotions and feelings. Awareness of how they are feeling can help students to determine what their next action should be to address those feelings. Any type of activity that requires students to identify, label, or match facial expressions and feelings is appropriate. Teachers can also consider having students categorize feeling words by the type of feeling.

What Zone Are You In?			
Blue	Green	Yellow	Red
Sick Sad Tired Bored Moving Slowly	Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn	Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control	Mad/Angry Mean Yelling/Hitting Disgusted Out of Control

Zones of Regulation

The concept of Zones of Regulation can be helpful for students when learning how to identify their feelings on a given day or at a certain time. If students can understand how they are feeling, they can learn to adjust their behavior to fit their mood.

Student-Based Activities

Once students understand the importance of self-awareness, activities that ask them to discuss themselves can be used to encourage the development of related skills. These types of activities can be particularly helpful at the start of a school year as students and teachers are getting to know each other. Sample activities include, but are not limited to:

- **Get to Know You/Introductions:** There are a variety of activities that encourage the sharing of personal information, interests, opinions, and values. Teachers can ask students to share information about themselves to better understand and connect with each other.
 - Lawrence Shapiro's [101 Ways to Teach Children Social Skills](#) includes activities such as "My Interests" and "My Values," which are structured worksheets that ask students to reflect on and identify these topics in their own lives. This exercise not only promotes self-awareness, but also allows them to see how their individual interests and values may compare with those of their classmates. These activities could be adapted to reflect the age/level of students.



- Along the lines of introductions, students can participate in **Agree-Disagree Line-Up** activities throughout the course of the school year. The basic premise behind this [Kagan Structure](#) is that a teacher makes a statement ranging from simple to controversial and students line themselves up depending on whether they agree with the statement or not. This activity allows students to reflect on their own beliefs, as well as view and discuss how they may differ from someone else's. Statements can range from: "I enjoy eating fruits and vegetables" to "gun control needs to be more strongly enforced."
- **Learning Styles:** As students continue in their educational careers, teachers may encourage them to explore their learning styles. This practice will help students to have a better understanding of themselves as learners and can help them advocate for what they need to be successful in the classroom.

Journal Reflections

According to Stephanie Knight, "if students do not engage in the process of thinking back on their experiences, they cannot truly gain deeper understandings of themselves. Reflection creates accountability so students can stay focused on goals." Journal reflections are one option for encouraging students to take the time to think and write about their experiences throughout a day or class period. This activity can become an interactive tool through which students begin to look for patterns, as well as create and manage goals. Journal reflections can follow a template, too, which may encourage students to focus on a specific aspect of their day, behavior, or goal.

Size of Problem/Size of Reaction

Students should learn to determine the appropriateness of their reaction based on a given situation. In order to do this, they must be able to differentiate between a large problem and a small problem. They then need to be able to measure their reaction against the level of the problem. This process should allow students to judge whether or not their reaction is appropriate for the severity of the problem, and, if it isn't, work with their teacher to develop strategies to more appropriately match their reaction to the situation.

HOW DOES THIS CONNECT TO INCLUDE STUDENTS IN THE LEARNING PROCESS?

Self-awareness is a skill that each student needs to develop. Each of the suggested activities includes students in the process of discovering themselves. In order for students to create an accurate self-image, it is crucial that their awareness stems from their reflection of their values, emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. Teachers can support this development by providing feedback when a student has demonstrated a skill they are working to develop. This keeps the ownership on the student but allows them to have guidance in their growth.