



Provide Opportunities for Success

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is challenging to integrate in a way that is meaningful, sustained, and embedded into daily practice (Jones, 2012). Research suggests that, “students were more likely to benefit when programs were intense, embedded in everyday interactions and school culture...and [educators] were intentional about continuously monitoring student behavior, inclusive of parental involvement (Ttofi & Farrington, 2009).” The table below outlines a combination of the *Social Policy Report* and *The Connection between Academic and Social Emotional Learning* to aid in setting a consistent, cross-curricular tone for Social Emotional Learning that is weaved into the fabric of daily instruction. Before considering implementation of any combination of factors, it is important to reflect on the purpose, goal, available materials, receptiveness of teachers and parents, participation of other students, and any other potential relevant contributing issues. Remember that when discussing SEL instruction, we are looking at elements of: **self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, social awareness, and responsible decision making.**

Factor of Implementation	Description
Build social-emotional skills gradually and systematically	Sequenced activities should connect in a coordinated way to specific skills being taught. It is important to remember that students require explicit instruction and that practice and modeling are crucial for students to internalize them. SEL development will be an ongoing process with skills building on each other. Goleman notes how important it is that the timing of lessons correspond to the appropriate critical development stage (Kagan, 2001). Also, structures should be carefully crafted with specific step-by-step directions that are easily repeatable and focus on blending SEL instruction with academics.
Ensure continuity and consistency for Social Emotional Learning skill development	Instruction should span grades and contents. It should emanate in the hallways, playgrounds, gyms, and buses. Students should receive similar instruction, messages, and feedback no matter where they are. Furthermore, there should be consistent use of routines throughout the school day and building. These routines can involve problem solving, conflict resolution, and attention skills. It is also important to have familial support so these skills can be supported and addressed at home.
Develop active forms of learning	It is important to incorporate differentiated and multi-modal activities during instruction. Teachers may consider following the Universal Design for Learning principles as a way to vary expectations and formats of instruction. Open-ended discussions and opportunities for reflection that build in consistent and constructive feedback are also valuable for student learning.

Landmark Teaching Strategies



Landmark Teaching Principle™ #1

Be explicit about targeting specific skills	Use goal setting to focus instruction. Setting specific student-driven goals that are attainable and measurable is a proven method of grounding student focus in meaningful achievement. According to Elias, “when their learning is presented in terms of understandable goals, children become more engaged and focused and less likely to exhibit behavior problems (2006 p.9).”
Remember that social, emotional, and academic skills are interdependent	It is essential that SEL skills are connected and integrated across aspects of students’ lives. The increased practice and exposure in multiple contexts improves their abilities to problem solve and make decisions. This correlation can also help to build students’ abilities to self-regulate and engage appropriately with a wide variety of people and in differing circumstances. It is even possible to connect SEL skills to work since employees must be able to listen to and follow directions, participate in groups, and work independently (Center on the Developing Child, 2011).
Promote community service to build empathy	According to Elias, “community service...provides an opportunity for children to learn life skills, integrate them, apply them, reflect on them, and then demonstrate them (2006, p. 10).” It is possible to even build community service into classrooms by assigning jobs or roles to students, such as cleaning desks or boards, putting chairs away, sweeping floors, or watering plants. This ownership supports the development of SEL skills (Berman, 1997).
Prepare and support staff well	While much of the focus of SEL is on peer-relationships, the relationship of the student to teacher is of equal importance. Positive or negative relationships between teachers and students can be a predictor of student behavior and success in the classroom. Therefore, it is important that teachers be trained in how to react effectively, communicate appropriately, and interact responsibly with both students and other adults. One of the fundamental building blocks of SEL instruction is appropriate modeling; thus, teachers must demonstrate a strong handle on these skills before asking them to model and provide feedback to students.

HOW DOES THIS CONNECT TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUCCESS?

Structuring classrooms and instruction in a way that incorporates Social Emotional Learning through explicit teaching, modeling, practice, and feedback is the best way to help student find success with these skills. With this type of instruction and structure, teachers can provide students with opportunities to be successful as they develop and implement these skills in their daily lives.