

How to Develop Life and Social Skills for Adult Success

Definition

- **What:** There are multiple types of learning beyond the academic content taught in class, yet essential for students to become responsible, well-rounded adults. These include elements of personal social and emotional well-being (such as identity, agency, perseverance, and self-regulation); social skills such as empathy and effective communication; and skills and strategies for ongoing deeper learning.
- **Why:** Many of these skills have not traditionally been schools' primary focus, as they are acquired through life experiences in every setting, including family, school, neighborhood, and society. However, relying on other settings to develop such skills fosters inequitable outcomes as the level of social and familial support available to young people varies widely. Schools and systems that intentionally create opportunities for students to develop these skills, mindsets, and behaviors have identified a number of effective practices to better prepare students for success in postsecondary learning, workplace effectiveness, and adult social responsibilities.
- **How:**
 - Explore current research and effective practices
 - Establish a state- or district-level department focused on social-emotional learning or non-cognitive skills; determine focus areas, goals, standards, and indicators (see exemplars below)
 - Work with stakeholders (including teachers and students) to develop action plans; encourage student agency and input
 - Develop intentional strategies for a positive school climate and culture
 - Support positive behavior and develop targeted interventions (e.g., mentoring) to support struggling students
 - Offer elective courses, clubs, and/or after-school programs that capitalize on students' interests and encourage positive social interactions
 - Implement curricula and instructional practices that explicitly incorporate and develop social skills, self-reflection, effective communication, and collaboration
 - Engage all adults in the school (including non-instructional staff) to foster positive school climate and student support
 - Support adults' social-emotional learning, e.g. growth mindset, trauma-informed practices, etc.
 - Use data (student and adult school climate surveys, behavior and attendance data, etc.) to monitor and assess progress, and course-correct as necessary

Training Materials:

- **Social and Emotional Learning: Definition**, California Dept of Education.
Links to a number of training resources.
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/socialemotionalllearning.asp>
- **Infographic from Foundations for Young Adult Success: A Developmental Framework**
<https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Foundations-for-Young-Adult-Success-Infographic.pdf>
- **2016-2017 Data from CORE Districts about SEL: Infographic**, CORE Districts, Oct 2016
Shows six key components of schools with effective SEL focus.
http://www.edpolicyinca.org/sites/default/files/SEL_Practices_Infographic.pdf
- **Noncognitive Factors**, University of Chicago Urban Education Institute, February 2017
Role of non-cognitive factors (mindsets, perseverance, behavior, learning strategies) and social skills) in academic success.
https://vimeo.com/201720747?mc_cid=76029fb8e5&mc_eid=d1a65dcb91
- **EdCast: Social and Emotional Learning #1 - A Head and Heart Issue**, AIR, July 2015
Basic introduction podcast.
<http://www.air.org/resource/edcast-social-and-emotional-learning-1-head-and-heart-issue>
- **The College and Career Readiness and Success Organizer, College and Career Readiness and Success Center (at AIR)**
This website offers links to define and elucidate various factors and may be useful in facilitating conversations among stakeholders; it is, however, a little overwhelming.
<http://www.ccrscenter.org/ccrs-landscape/ccrs-organizer>

Exemplars in Practice:

- **Illinois State Board of Education SEL standards, ISBE**
Helpful exemplar of state-level standards and descriptors for social-emotional learning.
<https://www.isbe.net/pages/social-emotional-learning-standards.aspx>
- **2016-2017 Data from CORE Districts about SEL: Practice Brief**, CORE Districts, October 2016
Brief overview that identifies six common factors among “outlier schools,” i.e., those most effective at improving social-emotional learning outcomes, in California’s “CORE” districts. Includes case studies; very helpful.
http://www.edpolicyinca.org/sites/default/files/Brief_SEL_Practices.pdf
- **Putting It All Together**, Aspen Institute, August 2017
Report on the use of curriculum and teaching practices to integrates life and social skills; case studies and examples from several schools. Helpful.
<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/putting-it-all-together/>
- **Social & Emotional Learning in Washoe County School District**
This district website is particularly interesting for its focus on SEL from the student perspective. <http://www.wcsddata.net/data-topics/sel/>

- **The Science of Summit**, Summit Public Schools, 2017
Report on the intentional development of four key components (including “habits of success” and “sense of purpose”) within a network of public charter schools. Helpful. https://cdn.summitlearning.org/assets/marketing/The-Science-of-Summit-by-Summit-Public-Schools_08072017.pdf
- **What happens when a regular high school decides no student is a lost cause?**, Hechinger Report, August 2017
Describes practices at HOPE Academy, an alternative program for students who have experienced trauma within a larger comprehensive high school. <http://hechingerreport.org/what-happens-when-a-regular-high-school-decides-no-student-is-a-lost-cause/>

Research Foundations:

- **Foundations for Young Adult Success: A Developmental Framework**, The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research, June 2015
This report identifies three factors for adult success (agency, integrated identity, and competencies) and four foundational components (self-regulation, knowledge and skills, mindsets, and values), and provides a framework identifying appropriate developmental stages for nurturing various elements. <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Pages/Foundations-for-Young-Adult-Success.aspx>
- **Teaching Adolescents To Become Learners**, UChicago Consortium on Chicago School Research, June 2012
Establishes the role of non-cognitive factors (mindsets, perseverance, behavior, learning strategies) and social skills) in long-term academic success. <https://consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Noncognitive%20Report.pdf>
- **What is SEL?**, Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
Links to research related to importance of social-emotional learning. <https://casel.org/research/>
- **Building Competencies for Careers**, Center on Education Policy, May 2017
Uses data from Department of Labor’s Occupational Information Network to identify key “deeper learning components” (content mastery, critical thinking/problem-solving, collaboration, effective communication, learning to learn, and academic mindsets) needed for success in “bright outlook” careers. <https://www.cep-dc.org/displayDocument.cfm?DocumentID=1478>
- **2016-2017 Data from CORE Districts about SEL**, CORE Districts, Oct 2016
Full report on six common factors of “outlier” (= most effective) schools. http://www.edpolicyinca.org/sites/default/files/Report_SEL%20Practices.pdf

- **Development and implementation of student social-emotional surveys in the CORE Districts**, Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, July 2017
Explores validity of student self-reports of social-emotional well-being in school settings.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0193397316301290>
- **Should non-cognitive skills be included in school accountability systems? Preliminary evidence from California's CORE districts**, Brookings, March 2016
More on validity of student self-reports.
<https://www.brookings.edu/research/should-non-cognitive-skills-be-included-in-school-accountability-systems-preliminary-evidence-from-californias-core-districts/>