

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

ESSENTIAL FOR LEARNING, ESSENTIAL FOR LIFE

SUGGESTED SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND TEACHING PRACTICES

SOCIAL STUDIES GRADES 9-12

Social Emotional Learning Competency

Self-awareness: The ability to accurately recognize one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one’s strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a “growth mindset.”¹

Fostering Self-awareness may integrate with the following Social Studies Standards:

This is not an exhaustive list. Opportunities for alignment with other Social Studies standards may exist, and many standards may align with multiple SEL competencies.

NYS Social Studies Learning Standards

[Standards 1,2,3; Themes: ID, MOV, TCC, SOC](#)

(<http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/curriculum-instruction/ss-framework-9-12.pdf>)

SAMPLE SEL ACTIVITIES

- Provide and display within the classroom, vocabulary words for feelings. (e.g., elated, blue/down, rejected/disappointed, angry/enraged)
- Have students generate additional vocabulary words that extend their personal emotions and perspectives to historical perspectives.
- Have students discuss or do reports on different cultures represented in their community and similarities across groups.
- Use historical events to have students identify with a time they may have had similar feelings as a historical figure and have them discuss in small group, in journals, or in an essay and discuss how they handled those situations.
- Use historical events to discuss the feelings of historical figures and how these feelings affected others and ultimately the outcome of history.
- Have students complete a project to describe their cultural background and larger community.
- Lead class activity that asks student to identify feelings they might have in different situations using vocabulary if they were in a similar situation of a historical figure.
- Use a document-based question or DBQ materials to have students identify with a time they may have had the same feelings as a historical figure and ask them to discuss in small groups as preparation for an activity (e.g., debate, pros & cons activity, DBQ)
- Ask students to identifying their own personal strengths and weaknesses in comparison to a historical figure’s strengths and weaknesses

¹ Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2017

- Have students reflect on how a historical event in world history may have affected their family or cultural group.
- Have students assume the identity or role of a historical figure and engage in a debate with the historical figure of the opposing side in a historical conflict.

GENERAL TEACHING PRACTICES

- Have students assess their levels of understanding of the lesson objective using a scaled rubric.
- Routinely provide authentic PBIS feedback and establish common language throughout the lesson to provide individualized behavioral feedback to students.
- Routinely provide authentic feedback and ask dialoging questions that help students reflect on their own strengths and interests.
- Ask, “Can you tell me what about this you’re most proud of?”
- Routinely give students the opportunity to reflect on what they like to study or read about in history or government, what types of periods they would like to learn about and why- on essay questions, journal questions, or in student pair shares.
- Tell students routinely authentic reasons why you, as their teacher, feel happy/optimistic for them and their future.
- Create class roles and responsibilities that emphasize individual strengths, areas to improve, and personal and group goals. For example, students might be assigned the roles of taking attendance, arranging chairs, displaying student work. These roles and responsibilities might also be tied to community events. For example, if freshman coming into the school are having trouble adjusting or experiencing bullying, a buddy system with students in the class might be organized.
- Establish clear norms and expectations so that students can see the impact of their own actions and behaviors on outcomes (e.g., create group academic projects – such as book reports -- and help students develop appropriate strategies for providing feedback to each other if someone is not pulling their weight on the team).
- Have students routinely engage in perspective taking activities when discussing historical events, time periods, and/or figures

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Social Emotional Learning Competency

Self-management: The ability to successfully regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.²

Fostering Self-management may integrate with the following Social Studies Standards:

This is not an exhaustive list. Opportunities for alignment with other Social Studies standards may exist, and many standards may align with multiple SEL competencies.

NYS Social Studies Learning Standards

N/A

SAMPLE SEL ACTIVITIES

- Teach self-management techniques such as belly breathing, yoga positions, counting to ten, self-talk, relaxation exercises, mindfulness techniques, or mental rehearsal, to help students develop concrete techniques for managing stress or anxiety, including for testing or public speaking situations.
- Have student brainstorm ways to motivate themselves.
- Lead students in a discussion of how to use their awareness of emotions as a guide to decision making. For example, lead a discussion that encourages students to “press pause” when making a decision, when they are feeling angry or hurt. Help students understand that it is always better to make important decisions when we are feeling calm.
- Lead discussions about positive ways that historical figures expressed their feelings of oppression, anger, or disappointment. Lead a discussion about how students can effectively express their feelings in positive ways.
- Teach a lesson on the THINK process to help students recognize responsible use of social media before posting an unkind or untrue remark about a person because you are upset. T is it true, H is it helpful, I is it inspiring, N is it necessary and K is it kind.
- Teach students a lesson on procedures for class transitions and/or create class goals for improving the time it takes for completing them.
- Teach students a lesson how to use certain equipment (such as computers or iPads) and other resources appropriately.
- Use a lesson to establish rules for how equipment (e.g., printers or iPads) should be put away

² Ibid.

- Over the course of several weeks, have students work on individual academic, behavioral, and/or personal goal projects using goals they identify for themselves. Have the students monitor and document their progress for several weeks.
- During a lesson, talk about how you motivate yourself when you need to.
- Teach students to identify what is known about a lesson topic or objective and to identify what they need to know to understand the lesson objective, then how to set a goal to achieve that learning.
- Lead a discussion that encourages students to reflect on barriers they may encounter when completing an assignment (e.g., finding a computer or color printer they want to use) and that also help them think about ways they can overcome them, including how to approach others for help – (e.g., asking a media director for permission to use equipment).
- Lead a discussion (ask questions) about who might be able to help, or what other resources might be available, to complete an assignment.
- Create class projects that require effort (e.g., complete a class writing project to develop a cookbook on favorite family recipes in the class, and have a celebration at the end – (e.g., invite family to come to a celebration of the cookbook, bringing recipes), and encourage students through to their completion.
- Use historical events to discuss how historical figure persevered through hard times to turn their lives around or reach a goal.

GENERAL TEACHING PRACTICES

- Routinely begin class with a review of PBIS expectations followed by a community meeting for a check in of feelings.
- Routinely practice self-management techniques as a regular part of the school day (e.g., start class with a deep breathing exercise).
- Consistently reframe language in the format of affective statements when applicable (praise or redirection)
- As a teacher, consistently model effective self-management in an age-appropriate way for students (“I’m feeling a little frustrated, so I’m going to stop and take a breath, before I decide what to do next.”)
- Give students authentic feedback for self-management (e.g., “I saw the way you got ready to give your book report just now. I know you were a little nervous, but I saw you take a breath. I’m proud of you, and you should be proud of yourself.”)
- Give students support and/or authentic feedback for expressing emotions appropriately (e.g., “I know you’re angry at her, right now (e.g., for interrupting you). What are some calm ways you could tell her what you’re upset about?” or “I know you were feeling sad about what happened recently. I was proud of you for writing about how you were feeling, and what you were doing to feel more peaceful. I’m here if you ever want to talk to me about it.” (refer to PBIS matrices, daily point sheets, & encourage students to practice coping skills when frustrated)
- Establish a separate space in the classroom for individual self-management
- Routinely encourage students to save a desired activity or experience (e.g., getting a shake or fries, going out with a friend) until they have completed tasks or duties (e.g., until they have finished their homework).
- Routinely develop and complete short-term classroom goals (e.g., getting settled after the bell rings)
- Routinely work with the class to establish and complete class projects (e.g., a group project that explores a period in history)
- Routinely teach students how to use resources appropriately (e.g., how to use reference resources).

- Routinely model and talk about your own goals,
- Routinely provide authentic feedback to students when you observe them managing themselves well (e.g., regulating their emotions by taking a breath, taking a break to think about a decision, etc.)
- Students can also be taught to self-assess progress toward their learning goals which is a powerful strategy that promotes academic growth and should be an instructional routine in classroom from grade 4-12.
- Routinely notice and discuss with students when they are being perseverant.
- Routinely ask questions that encourage students to reflect on barriers they may encounter and that also help them think about ways they can overcome them, in any difficult situation they are facing.
- Routinely ask student who might be able to help them in various situations, or what other resources might be available.
- Help students think through and suggest alternatives when students encounter challenges.
- Offer to help when needed.
- Give authentic feedback when students persevere (e.g., “I know how hard that was, but you never gave up. You kept on going. I’m very proud of you, and you should be proud of yourself.”)
- Routinely encourage students to write in journals or share with partner in pair shares to reflect on why their efforts in certain situations succeeded or failed, and what they might do differently in the future.

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SOCIAL STUDIES GRADES 9-12

Social Emotional Learning Competency

Social awareness: The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.³

Fostering Social awareness may integrate with the following Social Studies Standards:

This is not an exhaustive list. Opportunities for alignment with other Social Studies standards may exist, and many standards may align with multiple SEL competencies.

NYS Social Studies Learning Standards

[Standards 1 2,5; Themes ID, MOV, SOC, CIV](#)

(<http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/curriculum-instruction/ss-framework-9-12.pdf>)

SAMPLE SEL ACTIVITIES

- Teach an age appropriate lesson on how to communicate effectively during public speaking, including a discussion of why it is important to identify how others feel and what to look for (facial cues, body language).
- Conduct a service learning project to help students become more aware of needs in their community.
- Provide opportunities for community service
- Discuss the expectations and demands of different settings for public speaking ... how we dress and behave for school, places of worship, formal ceremonies, hanging out with friends.
- Discuss subtle cues in the environment, such as the presence of people of different ages, when people are quiet, etc., in determining what kinds of behaviors are appropriate during public speaking.
- Examine historical events. Discuss the different historical figures, identifying their feelings and thought.
- Organize and encourage student projects as part of learning about history that explore different cultures and celebrate diversity.
- Celebrate historical figures and characters from literature who resisted stereotypes or worked to promote justice and equality for all individuals.
- Ask students to reflect (including in journals) on questions about the negative effects of stereotyping. Give them opportunities to discuss in pair shares.
- Lead class project connected to history to promote awareness of the rights of others.
- Discuss and analyze the origins and negative effects of stereotyping and prejudice, as reflected in history.

³ Ibid.

- Study historical figures who showed respect for others, served others, and discuss their example.
- Ask students to write in their journals, or discuss in pair shares, how they try to be helpful in their families or with their peers.
- Work with students to organize a community service project.

GENERAL TEACHING PRACTICES

- Routinely discuss figures in history, in terms of how they felt and why they took certain actions or behaved the way they did.
- Create reading groups (small groups) that allow students a chance to talk about the kinds of things they like to study in history, so that students can begin to see the ways in which other students have similar or different preferences, and learn from each other about why studying history may be fun.
- Routinely examine history and biographies in terms of the perspective of characters or identifying feelings and thoughts
- Routinely talk about how others feel in different situations and perspective-taking activities when applicable
- Provide students with opportunities to share in small groups how they feel in different situations.
- In teaching allow students to dress up as figures from history, and act out how those individuals were feeling, and how it affected their behavior.
- When there is a difference of opinion among students, allow them to reflect on how they are feeling (writing an essay or in a journal) and then share with a partner or in a small group, to be heard but also to listen to how others feel differently and why, in the same situation.
- Build respect for diversity in the classroom by having students share their different cultural perspectives on situations.
- Model respect and enthusiasm for learning about diversity – show enthusiasm for literature by authors from many different cultures, show enthusiasm for learning about their histories.
- At holiday time, create classroom celebrations that allow students to share and explain traditions from their own family holidays. Give everyone an opportunity to participate. Involve older family members, asking them to share their traditions with students.
- Model acceptance of others who have different attitudes and values.
- Model respectful behavior and active listening skills
- Use cooperative learning and project based learning strategically (reflecting thoughtfully and intentionally on the composition of groups) to build diverse working groups.
- Class meetings are designed to involve students in sharing and recognizing others have different experiences which develops empathy and appreciation for differences and similarities
- Routinely ask questions in different situations that make the point that we all are similar and we all are different
- Model respectful behavior.
- Model concern for the well-being of others.
- Model service to others.
- Identify and celebrate figures in history who contributed to their communities. List their contributions and ways that they contributed to the common good.

- Give feedback to students in authentic ways when they are respectful toward others encourage students to identify how they feel when they were respectful or supportive of another person
- Ask routine questions throughout the day to draw attention to how students' behavior is affecting those around them.
- Routinely give specific and timely feedback to students for accepting direction well from authority figures.
- Develop and revise classroom rules and norms with students to work together to promote understanding and respect.
- Routinely discuss why we have classroom or school rules in the context of current experiences in the school or classroom.
- Routinely discuss implicit rules and how they are affecting students' current behavior.
- Model and routinely promote a school norm of treating others the way you would want to be treated, in conversations.
- Routinely remind students, in developmentally appropriate ways, anytime they need help, to think about the resources (formal and informal) that are available to them.
- Work with other teachers and administrators to create a sense of responsibility among adults in the school to be available to help students.

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Social Emotional Learning Competency

Relationship skills: The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.⁴

Fostering Relationship skills may integrate with the following Social Studies Standards:

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NYS Social Studies Learning Standards

[Standard 1,2,5; ID, MOV, CIV](http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/curriculum-instruction/ss-framework-9-12.pdf) (<http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/curriculum-instruction/ss-framework-9-12.pdf>)

SAMPLE SEL ACTIVITIES

- Lead a community service project so students can practice communication, assertiveness, problem solving, and helping others; at the same time, they are learning about the needs of their community.
- In preparation for presentations, teach lessons to develop speaking and listening skills (e.g., how to identify and prepare one's message, how to introduce oneself and be sure others are listening, how to speak loudly and clearly so that others can hear, etc.)
- Teach lessons to develop listening, including nonverbal behavioral to show you are listening.
- Teach students how to give feedback in specific situations that will help students improve their communication skills.
- Teach lessons on how to receive constructive feedback.
- Teach lessons on how to give constructive feedback.
- Read literature and discuss characters who learned to forgive others.
- Teach lessons on how to offer help in a sensitive and appropriate way.
- Teach lessons on how to say thank you and receive help well.
- Use history and the experiences of historical figures as an opportunity to teach students a lesson or lessons on how to resolve conflicts peacefully.

GENERAL TEACHING PRACTICES

- Use service learning to develop and routinely practice communication, social and assertiveness skills.

⁴ Ibid.

- Use team-based, collaborative teaching practices such as cooperative learning and project-based learning to provide students with opportunities to develop and routinely practice communication, social and assertiveness skills. Be very intentional when creating groups to balance students, so that there is a natural leader who can inspire the others they are working with, and to avoid placing overly dominant or more intimidating students with shy, more passive students.
- Give students opportunities to practice social skills in small groups and project-based learning activities.
- Give students positive, authentic feedback anytime they work well with others.
- Thank students whenever they listen well and tell them specifically what they did well.
- Use interactive teaching strategies such as cooperative learning and project-based learning to provide students with opportunities to develop and practice positive communication skills.
- Establish class meetings to give students the opportunity to take turns interacting with each other and practicing speaking and listening skills.
- Model and reinforce effective communication and relationship skills.
- Establish a conflict resolution process that is used any time there is a conflict.
- Model good conflict resolution skills.
- Give students support as needed when they are working out a conflict.
- Give students authentic feedback for resolving conflicts peacefully.
- Use collaborative work groups (e.g., cooperative learning projects or project-based learning) to reinforces the importance of working together to solve problems and achieve goal.

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Social Emotional Learning Competency

Responsible decision-making: The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.⁵

Fostering Responsible decision-making may integrate with the following Social Studies Standards:

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NYS Social Studies Learning Standards

(Common Core Through August 2019)

[Standards 1,2,4,5; Themes CIV, SOC, TCC, ECO](#)

(<http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/curriculum-instruction/ss-framework-9-12.pdf>)

SAMPLE SEL ACTIVITIES

- Teach lessons that explore the way successful historical figures made decisions.
- Teach students a formula for making good decisions (e.g., stop, calm down, identify the problem, consider the alternatives, make a choice, try it out, re-evaluate).
- Apply group decision making to choosing a community service project.
- Ask students to apply the decision-making formula to problems historical figures faced.
- Define responsibility and related terms (ethical, safe, values, honesty). Ask students to write essays about these words.
- Discuss higher order values demonstrated by historical figures –being a good citizen, ways to help the community or country
- Walk through the steps of problem-solving in response to situations in history.
- Discuss situations in history in terms of whether decisions made by historical figures are ethical. Evaluate against a clearly defined ethical criteria.

GENERAL TEACHING PRACTICES

- Routinely model good decision making.
- Use dialoging techniques that encourage students to think through a systematic process for decision making (e.g. What's the problem you're facing? What are your options? What are you going to try, and why? How will you assess whether your option is a good one? What will you do if it doesn't work?)
- Support students through the steps of making a decision anytime they face a choice or decision.

⁵ Ibid.

- Give students authentic feedback for making good decisions.
- Examine problem- or moral-situations from literature and examine other alternatives and impacts
- Develop and enforce class rules and shared norms, discussing them routinely
- Create, agree to, and help students understand logical consequences, discussing them frequently and whenever appropriate.

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The activities and teaching practices included in these resources are those of the authoring school districts and do not necessarily reflect the recommendations or position of the New York State Education Department. Resources provided within this page are examples for voluntary use by schools and districts in the development of curriculum-aligned SEL resources.