Table 1. Skills Related to Five Overarching Social-Emotional Competencies

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<tr>
<th>Social-Emotional Competency</th>
<th>Social-Emotional Learning Skills Related to Each Competency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-awareness</td>
<td>- Label and recognize own and others’ emotions&lt;br&gt;- Identify what triggers own emotions&lt;br&gt;- Analyze emotions and how they affect others&lt;br&gt;- Accurately recognize own strengths and limitations&lt;br&gt;- Identify own needs and values&lt;br&gt;- Possess self-efficacy and self-esteem</td>
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<td>Self-management</td>
<td>- Set plans and work toward goals&lt;br&gt;- Overcome obstacles and create strategies for more long-term goals&lt;br&gt;- Monitor progress toward personal and academic short- and long-term goals&lt;br&gt;- Regulate emotions such as impulses, aggression, and self-destructive behavior&lt;br&gt;- Manage personal and interpersonal stress&lt;br&gt;- Attention control (maintain optimal work performance)&lt;br&gt;- Use feedback constructively&lt;br&gt;- Exhibit positive motivation, hope, and optimism&lt;br&gt;- Seek help when needed&lt;br&gt;- Display grit, determination, or perseverance&lt;br&gt;- Advocate for oneself</td>
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<td>Social awareness</td>
<td>- Identify social cues (verbal, physical) to determine how others feel&lt;br&gt;- Predict others’ feelings and reactions&lt;br&gt;- Evaluate others’ emotional reactions&lt;br&gt;- Respect others (e.g., listen carefully and accurately)&lt;br&gt;- Understand other points of view and perspectives&lt;br&gt;- Appreciate diversity (recognize individual and group similarities and differences)&lt;br&gt;- Identify and use resources of family, school, and community</td>
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<td>Relationship management</td>
<td>- Demonstrate capacity to make friends&lt;br&gt;- Exhibit cooperative learning and working toward group goals&lt;br&gt;- Evaluate own skills to communicate with others&lt;br&gt;- Manage and express emotions in relationships, respecting diverse viewpoints&lt;br&gt;- Communicate effectively&lt;br&gt;- Cultivate relationships with those who can be resources when help is needed&lt;br&gt;- Provide help to those who need it&lt;br&gt;- Demonstrate leadership skills when necessary, being assertive and persuasive&lt;br&gt;- Prevent interpersonal conflict, but manage and resolve it when it does occur&lt;br&gt;- Resist inappropriate social pressures</td>
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### Social-Emotional Competency

**Responsible decision making**
- Identify decisions one makes at school
- Discuss strategies used to resist peer pressure
- Reflect on how current choices affect future
- Identify problems when making decisions, and generate alternatives
- Implement problem-solving skills when making decisions, when appropriate
- Become self-reflective and self-evaluative
- Make decisions based on moral, personal, and ethical standards
- Make responsible decisions that affect the individual, school, and community
- Negotiate fairly

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**Why Is Social-Emotional Learning Important?**

**Increase Students’ Capacity to Learn**

Social-emotional competencies not only prepare students to be able to participate in learning experiences, they also increase students’ capacity to learn (Durlak et al., 2011). Student learning is enhanced when teachers integrate social-emotional competencies with academic learning (Elias, 2004). For example, when students develop social-emotional competencies, they are more motivated to learn and committed to school (as seen through improved attendance and graduation rates), and they are less likely to act out in class, get suspended, or be held back (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). Students receive multiple benefits when teachers focus on SEL in their instruction. In a major review of SEL programs in schools, Durlak et al. (2011) found that students who participated in social-emotional programs (compared with students not in social-emotional programs) demonstrated the following:

- Increased academic achievement
- Increased social-emotional skills
- Improved attitudes toward self and others
- Improved positive social behaviors
- Decreased conduct problems and emotional distress

These results were consistent across grade level (elementary, middle, and high schools); location (urban, rural, and suburban); and school type (schools serving ethnically and racially diverse student populations).
In the same way that students need to learn academic content, they also need to learn social-emotional competencies. For example, students do not enter school knowing how to interact with teachers and peers around content, how to understand the ways that emotions influence their classroom interactions (e.g., feeling challenged by boredom or failure), or how to regulate stressful academic situations (Osher et al., 2008). In collaboration with families and the school community, teachers must explicitly teach students the SEL skills that are necessary for learning academic content (Jones & Bouffard, 2012).

Prepare to Meet College and Career Readiness Standards

Learning social-emotional competencies is particularly important with the introduction of college and career readiness standards such as the Common Core State Standards. To master the new academic standards, students will need to build the necessary SEL skills all students need to be successful (McTigue & Rimm-Kaufman, 2011; Osher et al., 2008). For example, the Common Core State Standards for mathematics entail a new level of focus, coherence, and rigor (Student Achievement Partners, 2012b). When students become frustrated or confused by the content, they must learn how to persevere in meeting the new standards. If they do not know how to manage or regulate the emotions they have during school (e.g., joy, jealousy, frustration, relief), their mental resources will not be used for academic learning (Brackett, Rivers, Reyes, & Salovey, 2012). Similarly, in the Common Core State Standards for English language arts, students must gather evidence from and interact with more complex texts (Student Achievement Partners, 2012a). Social-emotional competencies are critical to successfully navigate more complex texts. Students need to be aware of what they do and do not understand about the text (self-awareness) and be able to ask for help when they do not comprehend the text (self-management). In addition, classroom discussions about these texts require students to have good communication skills as they interact with their teachers and classmates.

Supporting Social-Emotional Learning: Action Steps for Policymakers and Educators

As with academic skills, students learn social-emotional competencies in the classroom when teachers provide them with opportunities to learn and apply such skills (Durlak et al., 2011). Teachers, however, need access to systematic supports in order to provide these opportunities to their students. State education agencies, districts, and school administrators each have a role to play in establishing these systematic supports. Specifically, there are action steps that states, districts, administrators, and teachers can take to promote students’ SEL, which include the following:
Teaching Practices That Promote Students’ Social-Emotional Competencies

After conducting an extensive review of existing research (see “Methods” below), the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders identified 10 teaching practices that occurred most frequently across the six SEL programs and eight SEL scholars. These 10 practices are not exhaustive, but they represent instructional strategies that can be used in classrooms to support positive learning environments, social-emotional competencies, and academic learning. For each teaching practice, we provide a clear example from either a SEL program or a SEL practice that aligns with the Common Core State Standards. These examples can be modified to fit other grade-level and content areas, and they can generally be applied to multiple contexts.

1. Student-Centered Discipline
2. Teacher Language
3. Responsibility and Choice
4. Warmth and Support
5. Cooperative Learning
6. Classroom Discussions
7. Self-Reflection and Self-Assessment
8. Balanced Instruction
9. Academic Press and Expectations

METHODS
In order to identify common teaching practices that promote students’ social-emotional competencies, we reviewed existing literature that focused on the relationship between specific instructional practices, positive learning environments, and student social-emotional competencies. In order to do this, we reviewed programs from the CASEL 2013 guide on research-based social-emotional programs. (For more information about how CASEL selected these programs, see 2013 CASEL Guide: Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs, Preschool and Elementary Version at www.casel.org/guide/.)

In addition, eight SEL scholars (individual authors and groups of coauthors) were identified through an extensive literature review on social-emotional learning. Of the articles reviewed, only these eight scholars focused on describing general instructional practices and SEL. (See Appendix A for a list of practices related to each SEL program or scholar; see Appendix B for the corresponding references.)
1. Student-Centered Discipline

Student-centered discipline refers to the types of classroom-management strategies teachers use in their classrooms. In order to be effective at student-centered discipline, teachers need to use disciplinary strategies that are developmentally appropriate for their students and that motivate students to want to behave in the classroom. This occurs when students have opportunities to be self-directive and have some say in what happens in the classroom. Teachers should not attempt to overmanage their students, nor should they use punitive measures to get students to behave. Furthermore, students and teachers should develop shared norms and values in the classroom. This strategy allows students to connect the rules to the overarching vision of how the classroom is run and increases student buy-in.

Similarly, teachers should enact proactive classroom-management strategies (compared with reactive strategies). This approach is evident when teachers use management strategies consistently and those strategies are related to the norms and visions of the classroom. If a student happens to break a rule, the consequences should be logical in relation to the rule that was broken. For example, if a student pushes another student in line, that student should have to line up last for the rest of the week—rather than lose gym or recess for the week, a consequence that is not related to the incident. Through the development of these consistent and logical rules and consequences, students begin to learn how to regulate their own behavior and problem-solve difficult situations that arise in the classroom. Programs and scholars that discussed student-centered discipline included Caring School Community; Raising Healthy Children; Responsive Classroom; Cristenson & Havsy (2004); Hawkins, Smith, & Catalano (2004); Johnson & Johnson (2004); and McCombs (2004).

**STUDENT-CENTERED DISCIPLINE EXAMPLE**

The RULER (Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing, Regulating) Approach, one of the SEL programs, provides an alternative strategy compared with the other SEL programs. This program’s primary disciplinary approach involves the development of emotional literacy in students. Students are taught how to identify their emotions, understand the precursors to an emotional reaction, and be able to express and regulate their own emotions. Using this approach, educators teach students how to effectively problem-solve potential conflicts or personal issues that may arise in the classroom.
2. Teacher Language

Teacher language refers to how the teachers talk to students. Teachers should encourage student effort and work, restating what the student did and what that student needs to do in order to improve. For example, teacher language should not be simply praise (e.g., “You did a great job”) but should encourage students (e.g., “I see you worked hard on your math paper. When you really think about your work, and when you explain your thinking, you get more correct answers”). In addition, teacher language should encourage students how to monitor and regulate their own behavior, not just tell students how to behave (e.g., “What strategies have we learned when we come across a problem that we are not sure how to do?”). Programs and scholars that discussed teacher language included Responsive Classroom and Elias (2004).

**TEACHER LANGUAGE EXAMPLE**

In a sixth-grade English language arts classroom, the teacher encourages students to use more formal academic language than informal academic language. Rather than allowing students to say, “The story is about ...”, the teacher encourages students to use formal academic language, “The main idea of the story is....”

3. Responsibility and Choice

Responsibility and choice refers to the degree to which teachers allow students to make responsible decisions about their work in their classroom. The teacher creates a classroom environment where democratic norms are put into place and where students provide meaningful input into the development of the norms and procedures of the classroom as well as the academic content or how the academic content is learned. Democratic norms do not mean that everything the students say gets done, but the teacher provides structures so that the students have a voice in the classroom. Teachers give students controlled and meaningful choices. In other words, teachers should not give students a “free for all” but provide specific choices students can select from during lessons and activities, in which students are held accountable for their decisions.

Other ways to get students to feel responsible in the classroom are peer tutoring, cross-age tutoring, or participating in a service learning or community service program. When students extend their learning to help others, they often feel more responsible in the classroom. Programs and scholars that discussed responsibility and choice included Caring School Community, Responsive Classroom, Tribes Learning Community, and Hawkins et al. (2004).
RESPONSIBILITY AND CHOICE EXAMPLE

Using op-ed sections of local or national newspapers, middle school teachers model how to evaluate, and then generate, substantive arguments/claims that are supported by clear and relevant evidence from accurate, credible sources. Teachers demonstrate rubrics for small-group evaluation of online and print editorials about current topics of student interest; explain and provide opportunities for small-group debate teams to develop arguments and supporting claims/evidence around topics of interest; and design specific feedback rubrics for culminating independent writing projects (e.g., editorials for the school newspaper about cell phone use, survey research projects for nutritional changes in school lunches).

4. Warmth and Support (Teacher and Peer)

Warmth and support refers to the academic and social support that students receive from their teacher and from their peers. The teacher creates a classroom where the students know that teachers care about them. Teachers can demonstrate that they care about their students by asking students questions (academic and nonacademic), following up with students when they have a problem or concern, providing the teacher’s own anecdotes or stories, and acting in ways in which students know that taking risks and asking questions are safe in the classroom. In addition, teachers need to create structures in the classroom where students feel included and appreciated by peers and teachers. Teachers can do this through morning meetings, small moments throughout the day or class, or projects in which students get a chance to share what they learn. Programs and scholars that discussed warmth and support included Caring School Community, Responsive Classrooms, Tribes Learning Community, Cristenson and Havsy (2004), Hawkins et al. (2004), and McCombs (2004).

WARMTH AND SUPPORT EXAMPLE

Rather than using exit tickets that test basic computation, the teacher uses exit tickets that require students to demonstrate in-depth understanding of the content, such as by explaining how they derived the answer to a mathematics problem, analyzing a given solution to a problem, or explaining why a mathematical statement is or is not accurate. After these have been collected, the teacher references and uses these exit slips the following day to support student strengths in their understanding, as well as to target instruction.
5. **Cooperative Learning**

*Cooperative learning* refers to a specific instructional task in which teachers have students work together toward a collective goal. Teachers ask students to do more than group work; students are actively working with their peers around content in a meaningful way. To implement cooperative learning effectively, teachers include five basic elements: (1) positive interdependence, (2) individual accountability, (3) promoting one another’s successes, (4) applying interpersonal and social skills, and (5) group processing (the group discusses progress toward achieving a goal). When implementing cooperative learning, teachers should have an element that requires collective accountability as well as individual accountability to ensure that everyone participates in the learning task. In order for this to have an impact on student learning, as well as social-emotional skills, students need to collaboratively process how they work together and monitor their progress toward their goal. Programs and scholars that discussed cooperative learning included Caring School Community; Raising Healthy Children; Steps to Respect; Tribes Learning Community; Elias et al. (1997); Hawkins et al. (2004); Johnson and Johnson (2004); and Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, and Walberg (2004).

**COOPERATIVE LEARNING EXAMPLE**

High school teachers provide examples and rubrics for evaluating online blogs and wiki sites, and multiple opportunities for a collaborative learning project in which groups of students work together to access, analyze, and compare ideas and information presented in different media and formats. Teachers promote student understanding that the 21st century classroom and workplace may often incorporate widely divergent perspectives and cultures, and teachers give guidance and modeling for students to evaluate other points of view critically and constructively in order to effectively participate in this cooperative learning task.

6. **Classroom Discussions**

*Classroom discussions* refers to conversations students and teachers have around content. During classroom discussions, teachers ask more open-ended questions and ask students to elaborate on their own thinking and on the thinking of their peers. When classroom discussions are done well, students and teachers are constantly building upon each other’s thoughts and most of the dialogue is student driven. In order to have effective classroom discussions, teachers should develop students’
communication skills. More specifically, teachers ensure that students learn how to extend their own thinking and expand on the thinking of their classmates. Students need to be able to listen attentively and pick out the main ideas of what classmates are saying. Teachers also must make sure that students have enough content knowledge in order to do this, in addition to having the skills necessary to hold a substantive discussion. Programs and scholars that discussed classroom discussions included Caring School Community, Raising Healthy Children, Tribes Learning Community, Elias (2004), and Elias et al. (1997).

**CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS EXAMPLE**

History teachers model close and critical reading, and they guide classwide discussion of a variety of accounts of slavery (such as slave narratives, John C. Calhoun’s speech in the U.S. Senate in response to abolition petitions, and writings by Frederick Douglas) to facilitate thoughtful analyses of slavery and the issues leading up to the Civil War. Teachers ask questions that require students to determine the meanings of words and phrases from a historical text, and questions that require students to analyze, for example, how a primary source is structured.

7. **Self-Reflection and Self-Assessment**

*Self-reflection and self-assessment* are instructional tasks whereby teachers ask students to actively think about their own work. In order for students to self-reflect on their work, teachers should ask them to assess their own work. This does not mean that teachers simply provide the answers and students look to see if they got the answer right or wrong. Students need to learn how to assess more rigorous work against performance standards that have been provided by the teacher or co-created in the classroom. The process should not stop there, however; students also need to think about how to improve their work on the basis of their self-assessment. In order to assist students with this process, teachers need to develop goals and priorities with students. If students do not know what they are working toward, how to accomplish those goals, or when those goals have been accomplished, students will be less invested in the classroom. Along with goal setting, students need to learn how to monitor the progress toward meeting their goals. In addition, when students self-reflect, they also need to learn when and how to seek help and where to search for resources. Programs and scholars that discussed self-reflection and self-assessment included Caring School Community, Steps to Respect, Tribes Learning Community, Elias (2004), and Elias et al. (1997).
SELF-REFLECTION EXAMPLE

When going over fractions in fourth-grade math class, the teacher asks students to share and come up with multiple ways to demonstrate their solution to adding fractions. The teacher then engages students in a discussion to connect the different approaches to determine how well their approaches worked in solving the problem.

8. Balanced Instruction

*Balanced instruction* refers to teachers using an appropriate balance between active instruction and direct instruction, as well as the appropriate balance between individual and collaborative learning. Through balanced instruction, teachers provide students with opportunities to directly learn about the material as well as engage with the material. Balance, however, does not mean an equal split between the types of instruction. Most programs and SEL scholars promote active forms of instruction in which students interact with the content in multiple ways, including games, play, projects, and other types. Although active forms of instruction are typically engaging for students, these activities should not just be for fun; teachers should use strategies that represent one of the best ways for students to learn and engage with the content.

An example of an active form of instruction is project-based learning. In project-based learning, students are actively involved in solving a problem, which could be completed collaboratively or independently. Even during independent projects, students typically have to rely on others to find information. During the project, students should plan, monitor, and reflect on their progress toward completion. Programs and scholars that discussed balanced instruction included Caring School Community; Cristenson and Havsy (2004); Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger (2004); Elias (2004); Elias et al. (1997); Hawkins et al. (2004); and Zins et al. (2004).

BALANCED INSTRUCTION EXAMPLE

The science teacher first provides direct instruction on the effects of pollution. Subsequently, the teacher models and then provides small-group practice to critique and evaluate visuals, supporting students to make conclusions and develop inferences about the effects of pollution on the environment based on geological charts, graphs, and photographs of Amazon rainforests over time.
9. Academic Press and Expectations

Academic press refers to a teacher's implementation of meaningful and challenging work, and academic expectations focus on the teacher's belief that all students can and will succeed. Students should sense that academics are extremely important, that the teacher wants them to succeed, and that they have to exert effort in challenging work in order to succeed. However, this academic rigor should not cause teachers to be too strict with their students. Teachers should ensure that students feel pressure to succeed as well as feel responsible for accomplishing or failing to accomplish their academic work. In order to be successful with this practice, teachers must know what their students are capable of doing academically and how they will emotionally respond to challenging work. Programs and scholars that discussed academic press and expectations included Caring School Community, Tribes Learning Community, Cristenson and Halsy (2004), McCombs (2004), and Zins et al. (2004).

ACADEMIC PRESS AND EXPECTATIONS EXAMPLE

In a second-grade math class, the teacher provides students with challenging problems, encourages them to struggle with the mathematics, and scaffolds the development of perseverance in solving problems. Some students are provided double-digit subtraction, and some students are provided single-digit subtraction until each student has mastered the material that is challenging for him or her.


Competence building occurs when teachers help develop social-emotional competencies systematically through the typical instructional cycle: goals/objectives of the lesson, introduction to new material/modeling, group and individual practice, and conclusion/reflection. Each part of the instructional cycle helps reinforce particular social-emotional competencies, as long as the teacher integrates them into the lesson. Throughout the lesson, the teacher should model prosocial behavior (i.e., positive relationship skills) to the students. When students are participating in group work, the teacher is encouraging positive social behaviors and coaching students on how to use positive social behavior when they practice their prosocial skills in a group setting. The teacher also provides feedback to students on how they are interacting with their peers and how they are learning content. If problems arise between students in guided practice or if problems arise with content, the teacher guides the students through problem-solving and conflict-resolution strategies. Programs and
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<th>Social-emotional competencies being developed</th>
<th>Teaching practices which promote students’ social-emotional competencies</th>
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