



Indicator: All teachers and teacher teams plan instruction with a curriculum guide that includes objectives for social/emotional competency. (F3)

Explanation: The evidence suggests that teachers have the power to help students become socially and emotionally healthy, even when they may not naturally be, by modeling positive relationships, care and empathy for others, and self-management. When teachers purposefully incorporate objectives for enhancing the Social/Emotional Competency into their lessons and curriculum guides, these positive social and emotional behaviors become learning habits that foster students' ability to focus on learning and an overall healthier classroom environment.

Questions: What methods are teachers using to model and teach the Social/Emotional competency for their students? How are teachers embedding these practices into their curricular documents and lesson plans? How are teachers collaborating across the school to incorporate the Social/Emotional Competency into instructional plans? What supports are needed to help teachers better understand and use the Social/Emotional Competency when planning?

What is the Social/Emotional Competency?

The Social/Emotional Competency fosters a level of concern and respect for oneself and others strengthening skills of self-management and productive decision-making (Carreker & Boulware-Gooden, 2015; Educator Competencies, 2015; Redding, 2016). Specifically, social-emotional learning (SEL) helps students use their "sense of self-worth, regard for others, and emotional understanding and management to set positive goals and make responsible decisions" (Carreker & Boulware-Gooden, 2015, p. 2). The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (2012) identifies five primary skills in the Social/Emotional domain:

- Self-awareness: Being able to identify and understand one's own emotions, thoughts, behaviors, and abilities;
- Self-management: Being able to regulate these emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in the pursuit of positive and healthy goals;
- Social awareness: Being able to understand and relate to others, identify social supports and resources, and understand social norms for how to act;
- Relationship skills: Being able to communicate and work well with others and develop positive and meaningful relationships; and
- Responsible decision-making: Being able to make productive decisions about how to behave and interact with others, based on an understanding of norms, consequences, and others' needs.

Weissberg and Cascarino (2013) write that, "SEL programming is based on the understanding that the best learning emerges in the context of supportive relationships that make learning challenging, engaging, and meaningful" (p.

10). Yet many of these skills need to be explicitly taught to children and adolescents, especially as they pertain to the learning process. School staff and volunteers should not only teach these concepts but should also model and provide opportunities for their application throughout the school day, in the context of a safe environment for socializing and learning (Wiessberg & Cascarino, 2013; Carreker & Boulware-Gooden, 2015).

How Can Teachers Incorporate the Social/Emotional Competency into the Curriculum?

Redding (2014b) writes that, “Learning, especially school learning, is both a personal and social activity,” acknowledging that students with social or emotional challenges often struggle with learning tasks as well. As students must be taught and shown how to have positive and caring relationships with others while taking care of their own emotional health, much of this instruction occurs in the classroom. Certainly, some of this modeling and teaching can occur naturally through the teacher’s personality, his or her instructional practices, and the way he or she speaks to and treats others. However, some of a teacher’s modeling and instruction of health social and emotional behaviors must be planned.

Redding (2014a) writes that the curriculum provides “the scope and sequence of knowledge and skills to be mastered by students,” and therefore creates a framework for the teacher of what must be taught (p. 23). However, it is important to recognize that the curriculum is not the limit of what can be taught – healthy behaviors and habits for non-academic success are part of the comprehensive and effective education that only a teacher, not a set of standards, can provide (Redding, 2006).

To best enhance the Social/Emotional Competency, Redding (2014a) recommends that all teachers and instructional teams plan their instruction using a curriculum guide, a document that aligns instructional methods with the content and academic standards to be taught. This is likely a practice that teachers already do, but Redding encourages schools to incorporate objectives for healthy social and emotional behaviors into the curriculum guide itself. By purposefully planning out ways to help students manage their emotions, build relationships with others, set goals for themselves, and make responsible decisions, these behaviors will become more embedded into the instruction and culture of the school. Consequently,

these behaviors will foster habits of care and concern for themselves and others as they continue to learn independently and collectively (Redding, 2014a; Redding, 2014b).

References and resources

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