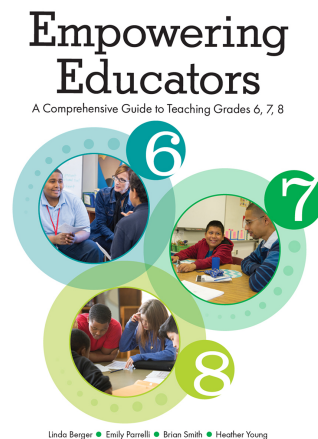
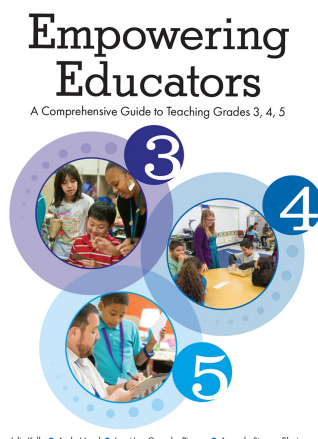
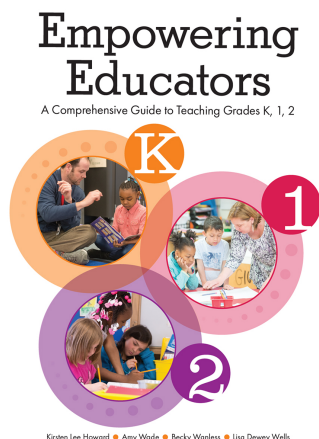


Excerpt from the *Empowering Educators* Series



Adult Social and Emotional Learning

In Chapter 1, we discussed developmentally responsive teaching and the four principles of adolescent development. Social and emotional development adheres to those same principles, following a reasonably predictable pattern that individuals progress through at their own pace and at a varying rate over the course of their lives. Social and emotional growth, like all human development, is uneven. There are periods of intense growth and change followed by relatively quiet periods, a spiraling pattern that continues throughout our lifetimes.

That last part is the key, and it's a fact that is often forgotten: human development continues throughout adulthood! Social and emotional growth, in particular, lasts for a lifetime, with readiness to demonstrate social and emotional skills influenced by a variety of circumstances, including socio-cultural and economic factors as well as individual personality and experiences.

Lifelong Social and Emotional Learning

These truths about social and emotional development mean that it's possible, and important, for adults to continue learning and demonstrating new social and emotional skills. How many times have you used the phrase "lifelong learner" as an educator? Effective teachers are often the most committed learners, deeply curious about the subjects they teach and the best ways to reach their students. You've probably been focused on your own social and emotional growth throughout your life without even realizing it. Have you ever intentionally focused on being effective while working with others, standing up for yourself, taking responsibility for something in your community, listening and caring for others, or persevering through a difficult time? You've been honing your social and emotional competence throughout all of those actions and more.

Everyone relies on social and emotional skills to be successful in life. Teaching is a deeply social and emotional profession, so it requires educators to call on those skills every minute of every day. The emphasis on these two types of skills is another reason why professions like teaching can be so exhausting and stressful at times; it takes a toll not only on your physical and cognitive energy but also on your social and emotional energy. When you understand more about your social and emotional strengths and tendencies, you are better able to develop the skills you need to be calm, focused, successful, and happy.

Social Competence and Emotional Competence

Social and emotional learning is often talked about as if it's one idea, but there are two crucial parts: social competence and emotional competence. *Social competence* is the ability to make positive contributions to the community and society and to cooperate well with others; it encompasses interpersonal skills like relating to others. *Emotional competence* is the ability to understand your emotions and how those emotions impact the way you feel, think, and act; it encompasses intrapersonal skills like managing your emotions.

Developing Social and Emotional Learning Skills

While that goal may sound lofty, it's possible for anyone to achieve. Like any skill, social and emotional skills can be explicitly taught and intentionally learned. It takes time, practice, and patience to improve your skills, but it makes a difference, not just in your own life, but in the lives of the people around you, from your family to your colleagues to your students. If we don't model, live by, and believe what we say, nothing will change for our students. We know that social and emotional skills are crucial for our students, and they are just as important for us.

Just as we would do with our students' learning, when we focus on our own learning, it's helpful to start with a sense of the skills and competencies we aim to develop. Over time, there have been many different definitions and terms applied to these skills and competencies. Two organizations that have been committed for decades to bringing social and emotional learning to the forefront of education are Center for Responsive Schools, founded in 1981, and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), founded in 1994. Both organizations have identified five core social and emotional learning competencies, and while the two organizations use different terms to describe these competencies, the terms correspond closely to each other.

The chart that follows provides definitions of each of the terms and shows how the Center for Responsive Schools competencies (in the left-hand column) and the CASEL competencies (in the right-hand column) connect to each other. In the center column are anchor standards that connect to each one of the Center for Responsive Schools competencies. These standards encompass the abilities an individual needs to exhibit to successfully demonstrate social and emotional competence. They provide a solid grounding for considering learning goals for your students as well as yourself.

C.A.R.E.S.

Competencies

Anchor Standards

Cooperation



The ability to establish new relationships, to maintain positive relationships and friendships, to avoid social isolation, to resolve conflicts, to accept differences, and to be a contributing member of the classroom and community in which one lives, works, learns, and plays

- Able to make and keep friends
- Works with others toward a common goal
- Resolves differences quickly
- Cooperates as a group leader or a member of the group
- Exhibits helpfulness

Assertiveness



The ability to take initiative, to stand up for one's ideas without hurting or negating others, to seek help, to persevere with a challenging task, and to recognize one's individual self as separate from the environment, circumstances, or conditions one is in

- Expresses strong emotions and opinions effectively
- Able to seek help
- Shows openness and honesty
- Persists through challenging events
- Takes the initiative to do what is right, fair, and just
- Makes choices one feels good about later

Responsibility



The ability to motivate oneself to act and follow through on expectations; to define a problem, consider the consequences, and choose a positive solution

- Selects the best option among choices for a suitable outcome
- Holds oneself accountable
- Demonstrates social, civic, and digital responsibility
- Takes care of property

Empathy



The ability to recognize, appreciate, or understand another's state of mind or emotions; to be receptive to new ideas and perspectives; and to see, appreciate, and value differences and diversity in others

- Recognizes and manages one's own emotions and recognizes the emotions of others
- Respects and values diversity in others
- Respects differing cultural norms
- Aware of the impact of one's actions on others

Self-Control



The ability to recognize and regulate one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in order to be successful in the moment and remain on a successful trajectory

- Adheres to social, behavioral, and moral standards
- Manages overwhelming thoughts or emotions
- Controls impulses and delays gratification
- Shows hope and perseverance

CASEL

Core Competencies

Relationship Skills

The abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups

Self-Awareness

The abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts

Responsible Decision-Making

The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations

Social Awareness

The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts

Self-Management

The abilities to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations

Demonstrating Readiness

As you read the anchor standards listed in the chart, you might have found yourself pausing on certain skills and thinking, “I do this most of the time, but not all the time.” For instance, you might usually work well with others toward a common goal, but if your strong feeling about how to achieve that goal clashes with someone else’s, you might choose to stand your ground. Maybe you make choices you feel good about most of the time, but every so often, there’s something you regret in hindsight. That just means you’re human! This back and forth is all part of social and emotional learning.

There is no such thing as complete mastery of social and emotional skills. No one can make the right choice all the time, or resolve every single difference quickly, or show hope and perseverance every minute of every day. But we can strive for readiness to demonstrate these skills most of the time, and we can learn more about ourselves and deepen our skills when we encounter moments that challenge us.

Learning About Yourself

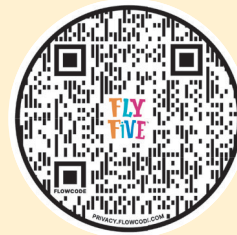
It’s also important to emphasize that developing social and emotional competence means coming to understand yourself and the ways you tend to feel, think, and behave. There is no one right way to demonstrate the core social and emotional competencies of cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, and self-control. There are many possible ways to be assertive, for instance; some ways work for certain people or in certain situations, but not in others. Understanding your social and emotional tendencies—the way you usually approach situations involving these competencies—can help you manage your emotions, thoughts, and behaviors.

One way to think about your tendencies is to consider your own range of possible reactions within the competencies. Each of the five social and emotional learning competencies encompasses a spectrum of behaviors. At the end of each spectrum are two dichotomous sets of behavioral tendencies for demonstrating social and emotional competence. Within each spectrum, there are many variations and possibilities. For example, under the social and emotional competency of cooperation, at one end of

the spectrum we have the Synergist, whose tendency is to be highly collaborative, and at the other end we have the Insulator, who will engage in group work if invited but whose tendency is to view people's roles separately rather than collectively. Each of the dichotomies, and the variations in between, can represent a meaningful and valid way to behave and to react in academic and social settings. The key for us as teachers is to understand where our tendencies lie within this spectrum.

Understanding Your Social and Emotional Type

The dichotomies for each of the five social and emotional learning competencies were developed through research done at Center for Responsive Schools as part of the development of Fly Five, a social and emotional learning curriculum for kindergarten through eighth grade. Part of the Fly Five program includes the Social and Emotional Type Inventory, a typological assessment for adults to help educators better understand their own social and emotional competence as they teach social and emotional learning skills to their students. Scan this QR code for more information about Fly Five.



As your social and emotional skills grow and change over the course of your life, where you fall along each continuum can and will shift. Take a look at the traits for each dichotomy in the five social and emotional learning competencies to get a sense of your tendencies.

C.A.R.E.S. Competency Traits

Cooperation	
<p>Synergists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are highly collaborative and want to hear all ideas and suggestions. • Are quick to help resolve conflicts. • Develop long and lasting friendships. • Are highly collaborative no matter the situation. 	<p>Insulators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage meaningfully in group work when there is a clear benefit to it. • Consider everyone’s role separately rather than collectively. • Are not interested in conflicts, either resolving them or starting them. • Develop shorter, intense friendships.
Assertiveness	
<p>Expectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express their ideas, feelings, and emotions clearly while acknowledging those of others. • Are usually open to receiving help or feedback. • Are confident in their ability to succeed at new or challenging tasks. 	<p>Hypothesizers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carefully analyze situations. • Can sometimes hesitate to express their own ideas, feelings, and emotions for fear of hurting others. • Are quick to think for others, but tend to doubt themselves. • Don’t always trust others to do things, so they take on extra responsibility themselves.
Responsibility	
<p>Navigators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are intrinsically motivated as they want to be seen as trustworthy and dependable. • Work hard to manage their emotions in order to modify their behavior and consider the consequences of their actions in order to best align with expectations. • Tend to be careful and consistent. 	<p>Traversers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rely on extrinsic cues, prompts, and reminders to help them make good choices. • Often make decisions by choosing a preferred option, which can sometimes lead to unforeseen consequences. • Tend to be spontaneous and impulsive.

Empathy	
Associates:	Limiters:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can read and understand the emotions and behaviors of others. • Value the diverse perspectives they gain from connecting with others. • Consistently act on their feelings of empathy to care for others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make decisions based on their own feelings and emotions. • Do not always consider the impact of their actions on others. • Show compassion and caring for those similar to themselves but do not always extend that empathy to those who are significantly different.
Self-Control	
Regulators:	Adventurers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like to be in control. • Hold themselves to high standards. • Are motivated to see their goals through to the end. • Use their willpower and confidence to stay hopeful and persevere through difficulties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do things differently and think outside the box. • Live in the moment without thinking about the consequences of their actions. • Seek strategies, resources, and help outside of themselves to solve problems.

Cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, and self-control are vital skills for everyone, especially those in professions like education that require strong social and emotional skills. As teachers, we connect with a wide range of colleagues, families, and students all day every day, and inevitably, we find ourselves in situations with people who react differently than we do. Recognizing our own social and emotional tendencies and those of the people around us can help us better understand ourselves and others.

Imagine, for instance, that you tend toward the Regulator end of the self-control spectrum and like to plan in advance and stay in control of a situation, and you work with a grade-level partner who tends to be more of an Adventurer, someone who spontaneously changes direction and is guided by what's happening in the moment. How would you approach that partnership compared to one with another Regulator? What challenges would that pairing present, and what strengths would it bring forward? Now imagine that you tend to be more of an Expecter in the realm of assertiveness; you are eager to try new approaches and thrive on immediate feedback. Your supervisor is more of a Hypothesizer, someone who meticulously reviews a situation before responding and is tentative about delegating. How would your awareness of your own approach and your supervisor's approach change how you might assert yourself in this situation?

Growing Pains

Linda Berger

Recently, I led a four-day workshop at a middle school with a primarily Black student population and a primarily white teaching staff. The workshop took place at the end of the school year, at a time when the educators were exhausted from a demanding year yet deeply committed to returning in the fall with a renewed passion for equity and relationships.

Our discussions often revolved around how to foster authentic connections with students who desperately need and want to be seen. How can we reach students with academic challenges that reflect not only the reality our students live in but also their aspirations for the future? Where can we find meaningful, culturally responsive materials to teach the required curriculum? Does our teaching truly come from a place of empathy and understanding?

As we questioned our beliefs, our practices, and our resources together, we recognized that we all have room to grow. That knowledge can be uncomfortable. But when growth comes from a place of true compassion, the results elevate us all and help create a better world for our students.



As you consider your own social and emotional competence and grow more aware of the skills and tendencies you recognize in the people around you, it's important to keep in mind that there are no right or wrong reactions to emotions. There is no one way that you, or the people you encounter, should feel. Developing your skills in and understanding of the C.A.R.E.S. competencies allows you to gain insight into how you feel, how others might be feeling, and how you can respond to those emotions so that you stay on a successful path.

Final Word

Awareness of your social and emotional strengths and areas for growth is the first step in developing skills in social and emotional competence. As you become more aware of your emotions, thoughts, and behaviors, you can embark on your own natural learning cycle and learn more, set goals, practice skills, and continue your social and emotional development.

