

Incorporating Tier 1 Social Skills into Academics

Practical Strategies and Resources

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*"Learning life skills isn't part of my students' day,
it IS their day!"*

-Anonymous Teacher

Today's Intended Outcomes:

01

Understand how and why the integration of social skill instruction can support academic goals and outcomes

02

Learn about the importance of using data to identify school and student-specific social skill needs and instructional practices

03

Receive practical information and strategies for integrating social skill and academic instruction

Who is here today?

**Did you receive pre-service training in SEL
or social skill instruction?**

If you did not receive pre-service training, how have you expanded your knowledge and ability to teach SEL content or social skills?



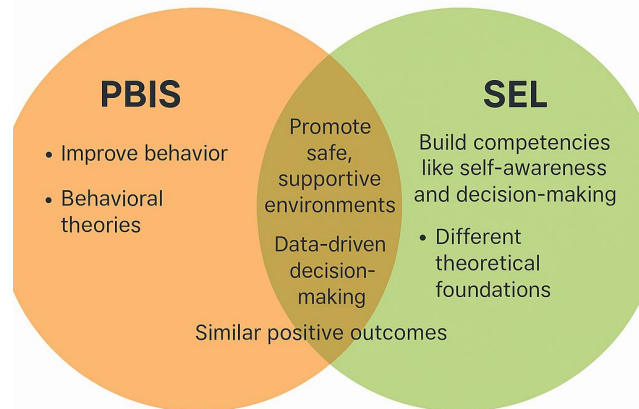


True or False?

Teaching social
skills/SEL is a
part of PBIS
Tier 1.

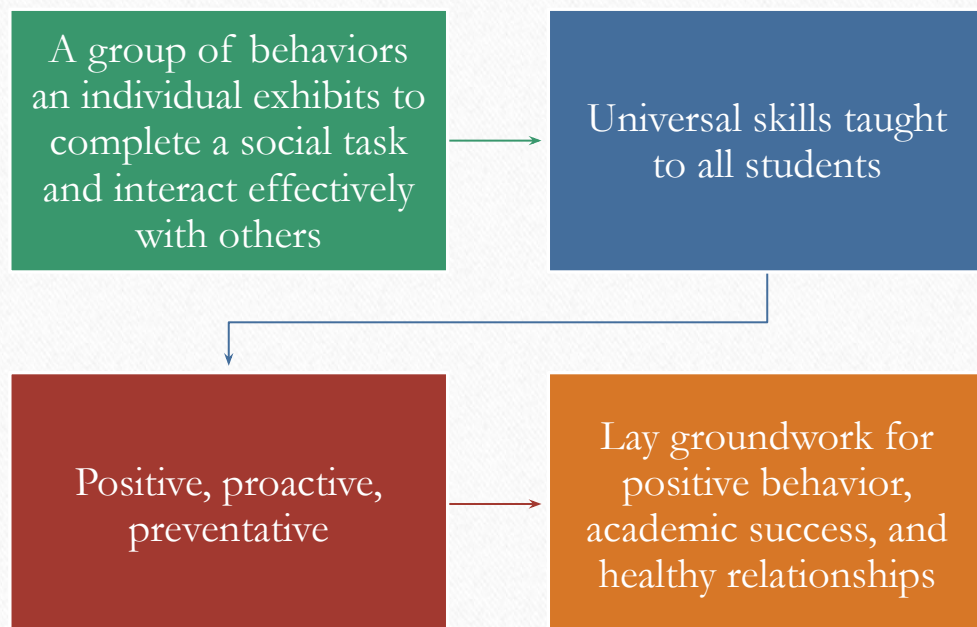


Teaching Social-Emotional Competencies within a PBIS Framework



PBIS and SEL share common goals like **promoting safe, supportive environments** and **data-driven decision-making**, but differ in focus. **PBIS aims to improve behavior**, while **SEL builds broader competencies** like self-awareness and decision-making, based on different theoretical foundations—yet **both can lead to similar positive outcomes**.

What Are Tier 1 Social Skills?



A range of learning related skills that allow students to **study independently**, **work in groups**, build and **maintain friendships** and **respond appropriately to adult feedback**.

Schoenfeld, et al., 2008

Core SEL Competencies



(CASEL Framework)

Self-Awareness

Self-Management

Social Awareness

Relationship Skills

Responsible Decision-Making

Why Teach Social-Emotional Skills?

- Meets multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) expectations



- Supports student engagement and behavior



- Builds classroom community



- Increases Academic Outcomes



What We Know About Social Skill Instruction

FIDELITY OF
IMPLEMENTATION
LEADS TO POSITIVE
OUTCOMES FOR
STUDENTS

SEL GOALS ARE MORE
LIKELY TO BE ACHIEVED
WHEN EVIDENCE-BASED
APPROACHES ARE USED TO
ENGAGE ALL STUDENTS



SUPPORTING AND RESPONDING TO STUDENTS' SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND BEHAVIORAL
NEEDS: Evidence-Based Practices for Educators (Center on PBIS, April 2025)

- **SEQUENCED:** Connected and coordinated activities to foster skills development
- **ACTIVE:** Employing active forms of learning to help students strengthen new skills
- **FOCUSED:** Dedicated time and attention to developing personal and social skills
- **EXPLICIT:** Targeting specific social and emotional skills

(Adapted from CASEL)



4 Recommendations

1. Implement through a
Single Team

2. Use Data to Identify Tier
1 Skills to Teach

Tier 1

3. Teach SEL/SS Using
PBIS Instructional Systems

4. Train & Support Staff to
Do the Work Well


Use your **Tier 1 Team** to audit and align programs and initiatives that support Social-Emotional-Behavioral & Academic development



Expand Data Team Use to Identify Which Skills to Teach

- Outcome Data (Majors/**Minors**, Attendance, Academic, Climate Surveys)
- Visits to/Caseloads of **specialists & interventionists**
- Proportion of **families** who experience substance abuse, incarceration, or domestic abuse
- Conduct **student surveys** or focus groups
- Universal **Screeners**
- **Observational** Data

Teach SEL/Social Skills Using PBIS Instructional Systems & Practices

- **Connect SEL/SS competencies to the Behavior Matrix**
- Use **common language** when teaching & reinforcing skills
- **ALL staff** should model, teach, re-teach, prompt & reinforce across settings
- Provide **explicit instruction** 
- **Integrate** into lessons & activities
- Provide **positive & corrective feedback** when students demonstrate a skill

Explicit v. Integrated

Clearly stated, clearly defined, or done in a direct and obvious way

- Separate and clearly visible or articulated
- Easy to identify or isolate.
- Often taught or shown directly

Blended or embedded into a whole; not separated or isolated.

- Combined with other elements.
- May not be directly pointed out.
- Often learned or experienced in context.

Explicit Instruction Rubric

All students have **dedicated time** during the school day to learn about, reflect on, and discuss SEL competencies through developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive instruction.



SEL instruction is **provided by teachers** to enable them to reinforce SEL learning across the day.



SEL instruction has a **sequence with connected and coordinated activities**; uses **active forms of learning** the skill and **explicitly target specific SEL goals**.



SEL instruction is **connected to other opportunities for practicing and reflecting** on SEL competencies throughout the day.

(Adapted from CASEL)

4 Steps to Teach a Skill

Explicitly teach
the steps to the
skill

Opportunities to
use/Prompt use of
the skill

Provide positive
feedback

Provide corrective
feedback

Example of Explicitly Teaching

Academics

Predicting is making an educated guess about what will happen next based on clues you see in the text. When I look at this book, and I see Susy standing next to a birthday cake with the candles lit, I can make a prediction that on the next page, Susy will make a wish and blow out the candles.

Behavior

Sometimes, when I am reading, it is hard for me to concentrate when other people are talking. Is anyone else like that? One of the ways we show respect to each other is to remain silent when others are reading. This is what it looks like and sounds like when I read silently. So, today during our independent reading time, we are going to show respect by reading silently.

Scripting helps build teacher confidence & fluency in teaching skills and supports common language if it's part of a building-wide curriculum or system for teaching social skills/SEL.

Example of Prompt

Academics

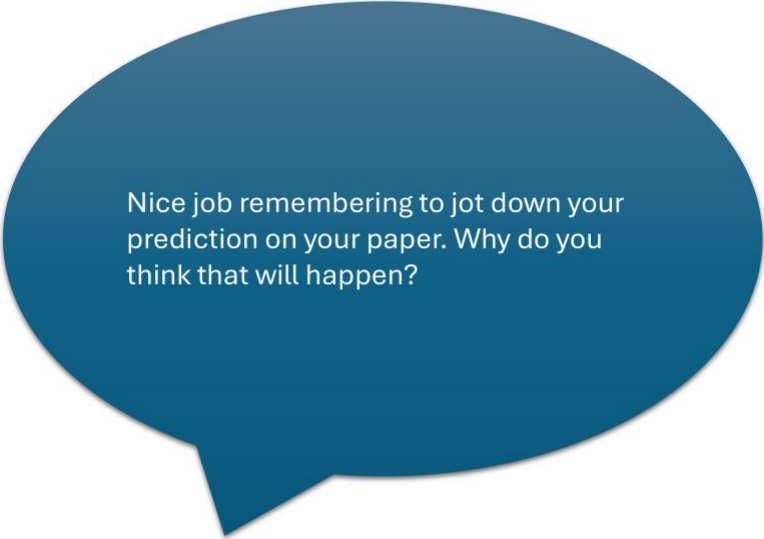
Remember, as we read today, we are going to make one prediction about what will happen next. Who can remind us what a prediction is?

Behavior

Remember, as you read, you will show respect by reading silently so as not to disturb the other readers.


Example of Positive Feedback

Academics



Nice job remembering to jot down your prediction on your paper. Why do you think that will happen?

Behavior



Great job staying so focused and reading silently. That is showing respect to your classmates!

Example of Corrective feedback

Academics

Remember, we are predicting what is going to happen next. Based on what you have just read, what do you think will happen next?

Behavior

The expectation is that we show respect for others by reading silently. Can you show me what silent reading looks like?

Integrated Instruction Rubric



Teachers draw on state standards or other guidance to align SEL objectives and standards with academic learning, while also providing SEL instruction that enables reinforcement of SEL throughout the day.



Teachers use intentional, student-centered strategies that incorporate students' perspectives and experiences to promote ownership of learning, while also connecting SEL instruction to ongoing opportunities for practice and reflection throughout the day.



Students regularly share their perspectives on how SEL competencies connect to what they're learning and have opportunities to apply and practice those skills in the context of academic learning



Teachers actively engage students in co-constructing knowledge and making meaning of content through classroom discussions and collaborative problem-solving?

(Adapted from CASEL)

Common Practical Integration Strategies



Morning or Classroom Meetings



Think-Pair-Share to practice communication and respect



Collaborative Learning with roles emphasizing cooperation



Literature Connections for empathy and social awareness



• Reflection Journals to build self-awareness and regulation

Work to find or create a system or program that aligns with the current initiatives, goals and needs of staff, students, and families, as well as school and district priorities.



EXPLICIT



INTEGRATED



Train & Support Staff to Do the Work Well

- Establish **district expectation** for an **instructional approach to behavior** support (Hiring practices)
- Consider **policy & funding** that align to an instructional approach to behavior support (CSIP/BSIP)
- Consider & support **shifts in job descriptions**
- **Acknowledge staff who feel unfamiliar** with teaching SS/SEL
- Training, TA, & Coaching is **ongoing**

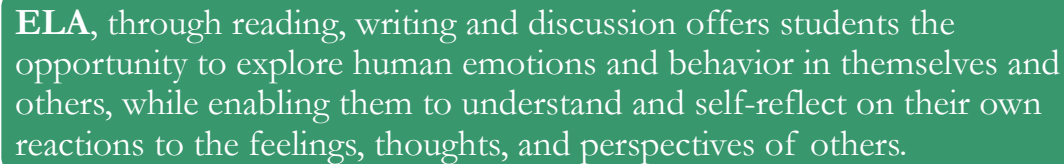
Considerations for Teacher Support & Choosing a Program

To determine the most **suitable program or approach for teachers**, we should align with **their specific needs**, **goals for students**, and **structural realities of the school day**.

- 1. PROGRAM TYPE**--Lesson-based with academic integration
- 2. TRAINING SUPPORTS & NEED**—Intensive training, ongoing PD, coaching & peer support with feedback
- 3. SCHOOL DAY STRUCTURE**—Flexible implementation with minimized planning burden
- 4. GOALS FOR STUDENTS**—Program should include academic related goals and social emotional related goals

Social Skills by Subject


ELA, through reading, writing and discussion offers students the opportunity to explore human emotions and behavior in themselves and others, while enabling them to understand and self-reflect on their own reactions to the feelings, thoughts, and perspectives of others.



Social Studies offers students opportunity to explore historical and current cultural and societal interactions or expectations of individuals within a community



Math & Science offer students the opportunity to authentically practice specific social and communication skills through group collaboration and project-based learning





Resources & Strategies



“Emotion Charades” during lessons build capacity to identify, understand, and connect with the continuum of human emotions



SEL Check-in questions tied to content (e.g., “How would this character feel?”)



Use anchor charts to reinforce social expectations (e.g., active listening in groups)



Sentence stems for collaboration: “I agree because...” / “Can you explain more?”

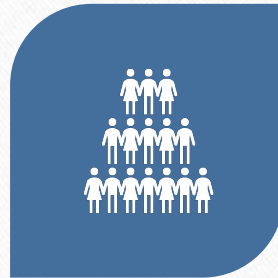
Pulling It All Together

- Use building or district **data** to identify the needs of your student population before creating or choosing a program or instructional practices
- Work smarter, not harder! How can you **align** the language and implementation of your **initiatives**?
- Consider the **needs of your staff**-what will they need to feel confident?
- Consider the daily building/classroom **schedule** to determine how to explicitly teach *and* integrate
- Be consistent with **language and expectations** across all settings
- Explicitly **teach and model** the skills daily or as needed by activity; provide **prompts** throughout the day/activity
- **Integrate** into class routines and instructional lessons/activities to offer opportunities for **practice and FEEDBACK (4/5:1 Ratio)**
- **Celebrate social skill growth like academic success**

Questions & Discussion



HOW ARE YOU
CURRENTLY
INTEGRATING OR
EXPLICITLY TEACHING
SOCIAL SKILLS/SEL INTO
YOUR BUILDING
SCHEDULE?



WHAT CHALLENGES DO
YOU FACE? HOW HAVE
YOU OVERCOME THEM
AS A BUILDING OR
INDIVIDUAL?



WHAT SUPPORT OR
RESOURCES WOULD BE
HELPFUL?