Social Emotional Learning for English Learners

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What is Social Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning (SEL), as defined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is “the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.”¹

“SEL is even more important for ELs as they are thought to be at a higher risk than their general education peers for social-emotional and behavior problems. “
(Hanes, 2015)

QSSA

**Question:** Why do you think English learners are at a higher risk for social-emotional and behavior problems?

**Signal:** Put your hand on your shoulder

**Share:** Talk about your answer with a neighbor

**Assess:** Share with the whole group
Social Emotional Challenges for English Learners

- Lack of English language and vocabulary skills to express their concerns and problems.
- No language to initiate social interactions with peers and teachers.
- Sometimes feel like they must choose between their home culture and their new culture.
Social Emotional Challenges for English Learners

- Stress from cultural changes
- Feel that their classmates don’t understand them and fail to bond, making it difficult to become part of the school community.
- Inability to participate in classroom learning contributes to low self-esteem.
- Trauma (cultural, socio-economic, political, etc.)
### Core Stressors for Newcomers

This graphic organizer and chart on the following page can inform teaching practices, school routines, parent engagement efforts, and program planning.

### Definitions and Causes of Core Stressors for Newcomers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stressor</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Possible Cause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trauma</strong></td>
<td>Child experiences an intense event that threatens or causes harm and trauma to his or her emotional and physical well-being.</td>
<td>War and persecution, Displacement from home, Flight and migration, Poverty, Family and Community Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acculturation</strong></td>
<td>Children and families experience acculturation as they try to navigate between their new culture and their culture of origin.</td>
<td>Conflicts between children and parents over new and old cultural values, Conflicts with peers related to cultural misunderstandings, The necessity to translate for family members who are not fluent in English, Problems trying to fit in at school, Struggle to form an integrated identity including elements of their new culture and their culture of origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resettlement</strong></td>
<td>Children and families who have relocated try to make a new life for themselves.</td>
<td>Financial stressors, Difficulties finding adequate housing, Difficulties finding employment, Loss of community support, Lack of access to resources, Transportation difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Isolation</strong></td>
<td>Children and families experience isolation as new immigrants in a new country.</td>
<td>Discrimination, Experiences of harassment from peers, adults, or law enforcement, Experiences of mistrust with host population, Feelings of not &quot;fitting in&quot; with others, Loss of social status</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social and Emotional Learning Strategies for the ELL Teacher

Adapting from Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs (Maslow, 1968), two basic needs you will want to consider are (1) safety and security and (2) a sense of belonging. By paying close attention to these basic needs, you lay the foundation for meeting your students’ self-esteem needs and for their growth in language and academic abilities. (Perregoy & Boyle, 2013)
Social and Emotional Learning Strategies for the ELL Teacher

- Create a safe and secure classroom
  - Buddy
  - Predictable routines
- Create a sense of belonging
  - Assign to a home group
  - Cooperative groups
  - Seat in the middle or front
Social and Emotional Learning Strategies for the ELL Teacher

- Build Relationships
  - Ask them appropriate personal questions
  - Greet them
  - Find time to play a quick game
  - Listen to them - empathy
  - Leave a note

“The teacher-student relationship addresses two of the most primary fears that every human on this planet has (1) I’m not enough (2) I won’t be loved. Children, however, are developmentally programmed to need relationship in order to curb these fears, more than adults.” (Forbes, 2013)
Social and Emotional Learning Strategies for the ELL teacher

- Direct teaching of Social and emotional skills
  - How to manage stressful situations
  - Provide practice opportunities using real-life scenarios such as the cafeteria, playground, hallway, or bus.
  - Use teachable moments when a skill deficit is observed. Allow students to role-play and practice the new skill.
  - Positive self-talk
Social and Emotional Learning Strategies for the ELL teacher

- Use children’s literature to teach various social and emotional skills.

- These books often present typical problems faced by EL students, and also include solutions.
Examples of Culturally Relevant Literature for SEL

1. Friends from the Other Side by Gloria Anzaldúa
   - Political and cultural trauma

2. Marianthe’s Story: Painted Words and Spoken Memories by Aliki
   - Lack of English language to express concerns or to make friends
Examples of Culturally Relevant Literature for SEL

3. The Name Jar by Yangsook Choi
   - Choosing between cultures and not feeling understood by peers

4. Sitti’s Secrets by Naomi Shihab Nye
   - Separated from extended family and not being able to communicate with them
Social and Emotional Learning Strategies for the ELL teacher

- Provide encouraging, personalized messages on a regular basis.
  - Body language can also help to support these messages. Use smiles, thumbs up, high five or pat on the shoulder to provide positive feedback.

“I see that you are really trying to…”

“I like the way that you…. “
Social and Emotional Learning Strategies for the ELL teacher

- Involve parents in teaching social and emotional skills. *Involve parental support, not parental fear.*
  - Send home the skills being taught in the parents’ preferred language
  - Call parents to explain (using an interpretation service if needed) successes or areas where their child may need additional support or explanation.
  - Allowing the student to self-regulate by calling home.
Social and Emotional Learning Strategies for the ELL teacher

- Help ELs develop pride in their culture and family by telling their story and teaching their peers.
  - Multicultural books
  - Presentations
  - Kahoot- Cultural
  - Seesaw Penpals
  - Multicultural Family Nights
- Build Strong, Positive Relationships
- Create a safe and secure environment
- Create a sense of belonging
- Direct teaching of social and emotional skills
- Provide a peer buddy
- Have students practice phrases
- Use children’s literature
- Provide encouraging, personalized messages
- Involve parents in teaching social emotional skills
- Help them develop pride in their culture and family
**Scenario #1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sai moved to the United States from India 2 years ago. He lived in Alaska for a year and then relocated to Nebraska. His English proficiency is a level 3 and is in first grade. His teacher reported that he has been fighting with Glenn everyday at recess. Sai won’t let Glenn join him and his friend Frank. Sai reports that he won’t let Glenn play because he doesn’t know the rules. Sai only wants to play with Frank.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What strategies would you try?</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Scenario #2

| Eddie emigrated from Mexico 8 months ago. His family has moved frequently since being here. He is angry about moving to the United States and misses Mexico. His English proficiency is a level 1 and is in Kindergarten. He is shutting down in class and refuses to do any work that the teacher asks him to do. He won’t even do things like write his name on his paper or copy a word from the board. | What strategies would you try? |
Scenario #3

| Jose has been in the ELL program since Kindergarten. His English proficiency is a level 4 and he is in 3rd grade. His mother is single and works many hours. He has always been a hard worker in class with no problems. This year his teacher reported a big change in his attitude. He is no longer getting his work done and he is failing his classes. | What strategies would you try? |
**Scenario #4**

<p>| <strong>Ameena immigrated to the United States from Iraq 6 months ago. She is at an English proficiency level 1 and is in 3rd grade. She can read and write in Arabic. Ameena is the only student that speaks Arabic in the school. She doesn’t have anyone to play with at recess or to talk to at lunch. She often disrupts the class by acting silly to get other kids to laugh.</strong> | <strong>What strategies would you try?</strong> |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario #5</th>
<th>What strategies would you try?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rosa just arrived in the United States from Peru. She is at an English</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>language proficiency level 3 and is in 2nd grade. She lives with her</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother and baby brother. Mom came here to help her sister who is sick</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with cancer. Rosa is very angry because she didn’t want to leave Peru.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She misses her old school and her friends. Although she learned English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in Peru, she refuses to speak English and she won’t go into the classroom.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She sits outside the classroom with her arms crossed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thank you!

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Resources


