SEL Solutions
at American Institutes for Research ■

Social and Emotional Learning
COACHING TOOLKIT

Keeping SEL at the Center

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Introduction

Teachers recognize the importance of student social and emotional skill development; however, they often feel as though they do not have the time to support social and emotional learning (SEL). One approach teachers can use to support student social, emotional, and academic skills is through general teaching practices. To support teacher implementation of practices that support the whole child, coaches and administrators can observe teacher practice and provide feedback. The purpose of this toolkit is to support coaches and administrators as they observe practices that support the development of social and emotional skills in classrooms, and hold critical conversations that include SEL.

Although coaching practices—with a specific focus on classroom observations and feedback—are the primary focus of the toolkit, it is important to use the toolkit in combination with other system-level processes that support teachers in developing student social, emotional, and academic skills (e.g., school discipline, curriculum and instruction, and school climate efforts). It is possible to improve the system and improve support for these practices by noting barriers to effective implementation of SEL practices rooted in other levels of the system.

SEL Practices

Researchers from American Institutes for Research (AIR) reviewed existing literature on evidence-based SEL programs that focus on the relationship between specific instructional practices, positive learning environments, and student social and emotional competencies, identifying 10 teaching practices most frequently referenced across the SEL programs (Yoder, 2014; see Figure 1). Although not an exhaustive list, these 10 practices represent important teaching strategies to use in classrooms to support a positive, engaging, and inclusive classroom experience for students and teachers. This toolkit uses these practices to focus observations and coaching conversations.

Who Should Use This Toolkit

This toolkit is for instructional coaches, administrators, and district leaders who support teachers and other instructional staff in integrating SEL into their daily instructional practices.

How This Toolkit Should Be Used

This toolkit can support instructional staff in implementing SEL practices through planning, observations, feedback, and action planning. This toolkit is only for formative purposes—not for evaluating or rating teachers.

This toolkit is most useful when it aligns with SEL professional development, including opportunities for teachers to share their work with each other—for example, in a professional learning community.
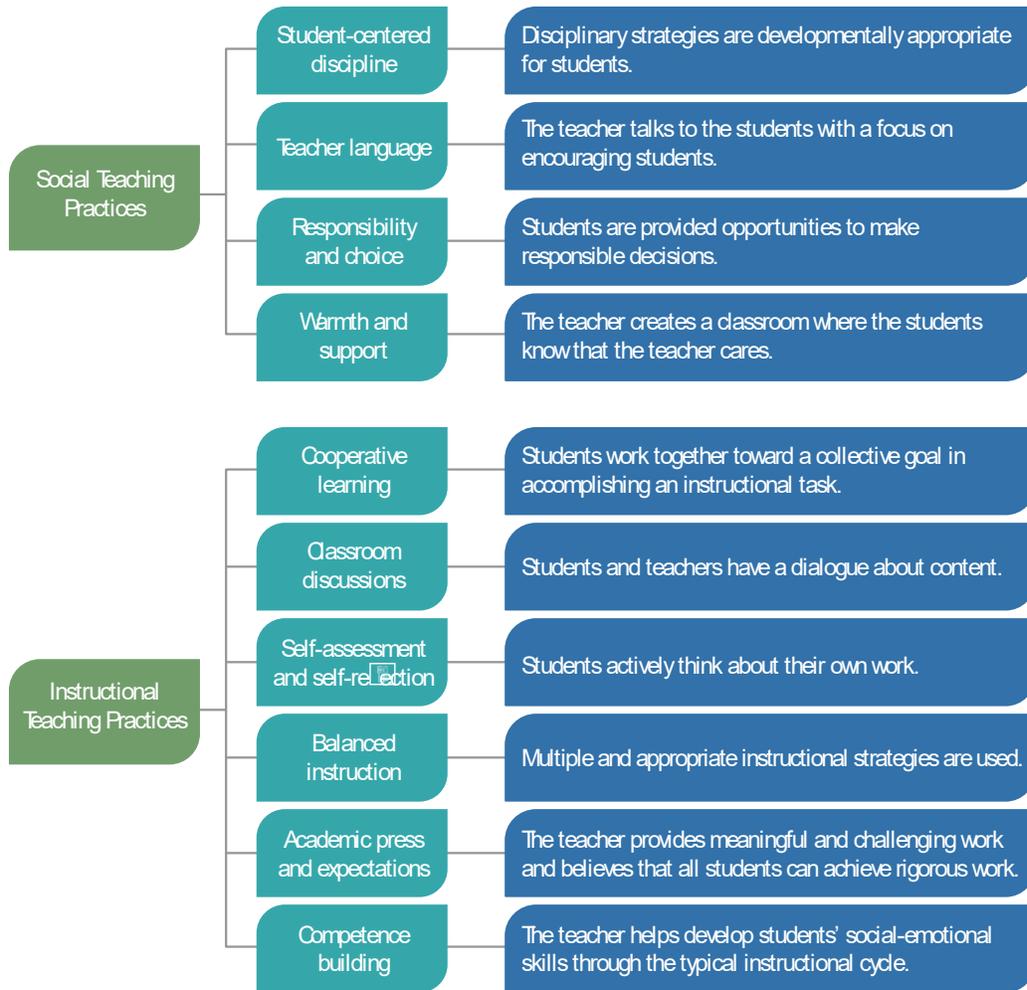
Knowledge of SEL

This coaching toolkit assumes some level of knowledge of SEL. If you are not familiar with SEL, visit the following websites for information:

y <u>SEL Solutions</u>

y <u>Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL Center) SEL School</u>

y <u>Collaborative for Academic Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)</u>

Figure 1. 10 Teaching Practices That Support SEL[1]

Social Teaching Practices		
	Student-centered discipline	Disciplinary strategies are developmentally appropriate for students.
	Teacher language	The teacher talks to the students with a focus on encouraging students.
	Responsibility and choice	Students are provided opportunities to make responsible decisions.
	Warmth and support	The teacher creates a classroom where the students know that the teacher cares.

Instructional Teaching Practices		
	Cooperative learning	Students work together toward a collective goal in accomplishing an instructional task.
	Classroom discussions	Students and teachers have a dialogue about content.
	Self-assessment and self-reflection	Students actively think about their own work.
	Balanced instruction	Multiple and appropriate instructional strategies are used.
	Academic press and expectations	The teacher provides meaningful and challenging work and believes that all students can achieve rigorous work.
	Competence building	The teacher helps develop students' social-emotional skills through the typical instructional cycle.

Changing Behavior

In the past two decades, much of education policy has narrowed its focus to standardized tests and accountability metrics, often leaving out the social and emotional development of students. Today, policymakers and educators are beginning to understand the value of supporting the whole child, preparing students to be productive and happy citizens. To support teachers in this work, it is important to provide feedback and coaching. However, to ensure that SEL does not become a one-off initiative that fails to become engrained in day-to-day teaching and learning, it is important

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[1] This figure comes from the teacher SEL self-assessment from the GTL Center (http://www.gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/SelfAssessmentSEL.pdf).