

Social-Emotional Learning Framework: Essential Actions to Achieve Equity for Multilingual Learners

Sense of Urgency: The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been researching and supporting Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in education for over 25 years. However, the CASEL framework does not take MLs’ unique contexts into consideration. We developed a framework that is aligned with [CASEL’s five core social and emotional competencies](#) that highlights how to specifically support MLs with SEL.

Framework Structure: We first list each of CASEL’s five SEL competencies and their definition. Next, we provide an ML consideration for the competency that identifies factors that may impact ML students’ access to or participation in this area. We then share four observable educator actions that will support MLs in each competency area with an opportunity for educators to note if the action is present or not in their context. We also provide a space for educators to note steps they can take to support the action in their own context. We allow room for educators to add in additional actions to support MLs with each competency.

Note: While each of CASEL’s SEL competencies has its own definition and related skills, we recognize that our ML considerations may overlap across competencies. In the same way, teacher actions in one competency can support or build on actions listed in another competency.

Competency 1: Self-Awareness			
CASEL definition: The abilities to understand one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts.			
 ML Consideration to Support Equity in Self-Awareness: MLs’ identities may be rooted in a collectivist culture which places more value on group interdependence rather than the individual. This sense of identity may result in MLs feeling uncomfortable or self-conscious in speaking about their strengths or using language of self-awareness.			
Educator Actions to Support Equity for MLs in Self-Awareness	Present	Not Present	Steps I can take to support this action in my context:
1a. Validate students’ cultures and linguistic assets.			
1b. Teach, support, and practice MLs’ use of language of self-awareness.			
1c. Model the language of positive self-talk and a growth mindset.			
1d. Create scaffolded lessons and/or learning opportunities throughout the school day that help students identify, build on, and demonstrate strengths.			
1e. <i>Additional action:</i>			
1f. <i>Additional action:</i>			

Competency 2: Self-Management			
CASEL definition: The abilities to manage one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations.			
 <p>ML Consideration to Support Equity in Self-Management: MLs may be unfamiliar with the dominant culture’s social norms, including self-management expectations, which may be different from social norms and self-management expectations MLs experience at home. Students’ potential disconnect between home and school expectations, as well as possible impacts from trauma, may manifest as an educator’s misinterpretation of students’ self-management skills at school. MLs may also experience conflicting messages around goals and aspirations from home and school.</p>			
Educator Actions to Support Equity for MLs in Self-Management	Present	Not Present	Steps I can take to support this action in my context:
2a. Directly teach expected social norms in a variety of situations while validating students’ social norms and possible experiences with trauma.			
2b. Teach students to name and identify emotions using appropriate scaffolding.			
2c. Use relevant examples, incorporating topics and people familiar to students, to teach a range of strategies for MLs to manage emotions and address challenges.			
2d. Schedule time to collaborate with ML students and families, in a space that feels safe and in their preferred language, to set and monitor goals.			
2e. <i>Additional action:</i>			
2f. <i>Additional action:</i>			

Competency 3: Social Awareness			
CASEL definition: The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those with diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts.			
 <p>ML Consideration to Support Equity in Social Awareness: ML students’ unique backgrounds and life experiences may position them to have significant strengths in understanding and empathizing with individuals from diverse backgrounds, as well as the capacity to navigate across cultures. MLs may need support in recognizing and developing these cross-cultural skills. MLs may also need support understanding perspectives of the dominant culture.</p>			
Educator Actions to Support Equity for MLs in Social Awareness	Present	Not Present	Steps I can take to support this action in my context:
3a. Create a safe, welcoming environment where all students feel comfortable sharing their perspectives.			
3b. Discuss the concept of empathy and model, with scaffolding, what empathy may look like in different contexts.			
3c. Incorporate a variety of texts and materials that include diverse cultures and perspectives (i.e., mirrors and windows).			
3d. Teach, model, and scaffold expectations for social and academic conversations, discussions, and debates while validating students’ culturally bound expectations.			
3e. <i>Additional action:</i>			
3f. <i>Additional action:</i>			

Competency 4: Relationship Skills			
CASEL definition: The abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups.			
 ML Consideration to Support Equity in Relationship Skills: MLs’ patterns of interaction and communication, including nonverbal communication, may be different than those of their peers and teachers. These differences can be extra challenging if students are learning English, leaving room for potential misunderstandings and misinterpretations of interactions and attempts at relationship building.			
Educator Actions to Support Equity for MLs in Relationship Skills	Present	Not Present	Steps I can take to support this action in my context:
4a. Identify one staff member for each ML who will actively build a relationship in which the student feels safe and supported, by showing vulnerability, sharing interests, and demonstrating concern for the student and their family.			
4b. Support, encourage, and affirm students’ ways of communicating, including use of home language.			
4c. Teach about nonverbal communication, including differences in the dominant setting and in MLs’ cultures, while validating MLs’ nonverbal communication patterns.			
4d. Model, practice, and scaffold self-advocacy skills while recognizing self-advocacy may not be expected in students’ cultures.			
4e. <i>Additional action:</i>			
4f. <i>Additional action:</i>			

Competency 5: Responsible Decision-Making			
CASEL definition: The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations.			
 ML Consideration to Support Equity in Responsible Decision-Making: MLs’ potential uncertainty about social norms, possible experiences with inequity and trauma, and stress of acculturation may challenge their sense of agency and impact their perception of what constitutes caring and constructive choices.			
Educator Actions to Support Equity for MLs in Responsible Decision-Making	Present	Not Present	Steps I can take to support this action in my context:
5a. Elicit and validate ML students’ views of constructive and caring choices.			
5b. Provide scaffolds, models of social scenarios, and intentional student grouping to foster social interactions among students.			
5c. Teach students the language for explaining their rationale for choices.			
5d. Model how to make informed decisions and provide practice using scaffolded, relevant scenarios for students with linguistic support as needed.			
5e. <i>Additional action:</i>			
5f. <i>Additional action:</i>			