



# Three ways to build social-emotional learning into classroom culture

Social-emotional learning (SEL) has gained wide attention in today's classrooms, and several schools have devoted as much as 10% of their time toward teaching these skills. Fortunately, relationship building is a key component in SEL instruction—and there are certain things educators can do to maximize this advantage and use SEL time to get to know their learners.

Administrators can support their teachers by making sure they have access to appropriate resources (e.g., texts that are culturally relevant and include SEL themes) and training in student-centered SEL instruction. Even if you don't have access to Newsela's SEL Collection, your teachers can still use Newsela content to support social-emotional learning. Here's how:



## 1

### CHOOSE CULTURALLY COMPETENT SEL RESOURCES

Teachers who are pressed for time already know to integrate SEL content into academic instruction. For example, they might teach ELA texts that explore SEL themes or incorporate topics like conflict resolution into lessons about historical conflicts. The best educators take this one step further by choosing texts that engage with SEL concepts and are also culturally relevant to their students. Conversations about SEL are personal by nature, and when educators design a culturally competent SEL curriculum, they give students the opportunity to open up about their social and cultural backgrounds and how these impact their personal experiences.

#### NEWSELA TIP

*With over 10,000 texts, teachers can find engaging and age appropriate articles that combine their subject-specific lesson with SEL concepts illustrated in the real world*

## 2

### BUILD OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARING INTO SEL ACTIVITIES

SEL activities are perfect moments for students to share details about their lives that may not come up in academic discussions. With proper guidance, students can lead SEL activities like small group discussions and academic activities, such as writing workshops, that draw on SEL skills like self-awareness and relationship building. When students have opportunities to share their experiences and reflect on similar ones faced by others, SEL activities become more engaging and meaningful. Educators can also use this moment to take a step back from instruction and observe how students interact in groups. Which students gravitate toward each other? Who shines in group discussion, and who retreats? Using this strategy at the beginning of the school year can give educators a break from the stress of lecturing and a chance to quickly grasp the basics of how their students relate to each other.

#### NEWSELA TIP

*Teachers can assign a jigsaw activity to small groups using a Text Set with articles that have a common SEL-related theme.*

### 3 INTRODUCE STUDENTS TO ROLE MODELS THEY CAN RELATE TO

One of SEL's great strengths is that it lends itself to cross-curricular lessons--and these lessons are a great opportunity to introduce students to stories that inspire them to reflect on what kind of people they want to be. For instance, a lesson that connects the hero's journey with the lives of trailblazing individuals like, Malala Yousafzai, Martin Luther King Jr., Thomas Edison and Bessie Coleman, could become an opportunity for students to model and practice resilience in their own lives. Through these discussions, educators can learn about their students interests and passions as well as assess their growth mindsets.

#### NEWSELA TIP

*Teachers can use Newsela's biographies to support social-emotional learning in the context of core instruction. Students can annotate the text with reactions to the thoughts, words, and actions of the historical figure described in the text.*

#### FOUND ON NEWSELA

## Content that supports social-emotional learning



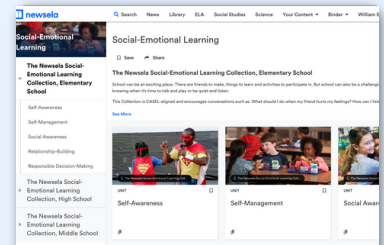
#### ARTS & CULTURE

Day of the Dead  
Sweets and Treats



#### SCIENCE & MATH

Dealing with stress and  
strong emotions



#### SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

The Newsela Social-Emotional  
Learning Collection, Elementary  
School