

What is Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)?

According to CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning)
(<http://casel.org/why-it-matters/what-is-sel/>)

- SEL is a process for helping children and even adults develop the fundamental skills for life effectiveness. SEL teaches the skills we all need to handle ourselves, our relationships, and our work, effectively and ethically.
- These skills include recognizing and managing our emotions, developing caring and concern for others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, and handling challenging situations constructively and ethically. They are the skills that allow children to calm themselves when angry, make friends, resolve conflicts respectfully, and make ethical and safe choices.

CASEL has identified five core groups of social and emotional competencies:
(<http://casel.org/why-it-matters/what-is-sel/skills-competencies/>)

- **Self-awareness**—accurately assessing one’s feelings, interests, values, and strengths; maintaining a well-grounded sense of self-confidence
- **Self-management**—regulating one’s emotions to handle stress, control impulses, and persevere in overcoming obstacles; setting and monitoring progress toward personal and academic goals; expressing emotions appropriately
- **Social awareness**—being able to take the perspective of and empathize with others; recognizing and appreciating individual and group similarities and differences; recognizing and using family, school, and community resources
- **Relationship skills**—establishing and maintaining healthy and rewarding relationships based on cooperation; resisting inappropriate social pressure; preventing, managing, and resolving interpersonal conflict; seeking help when needed
- **Responsible decision-making**—making decisions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, appropriate social norms, respect for others, and likely consequences of various actions; applying decision-making skills to academic and social situations; contributing to the well-being of one’s school and community

For Augustine:

Interiority – Self-awareness and Self-Management

Friendship – Social Awareness and Relationship Skills

Community/Solidarity – Responsible Decision Making

ACTIVE SOCIAL LEARNING:

The following 3 Augustine-based activities are provided to create dialogue to learn socially about Social and Emotional Learning. For each activity:

Step 1: Read the Thoughts from Saint Augustine

Step 2: Fill in the blocks you can

Step 3: Dialogue with a small group

After completing all 3 activities dialogue in the Large Group about what you have learned.

Interiority and Social and Emotional Learning Thoughts from Saint Augustine

“Let me know myself, Let me know You.” (Soliloquies, II, 1,1)

"Men go forth to marvel at the mountain heights, at huge waves in the sea, at the broad expanse of flowing rivers, at the wide reaches of the ocean, and at the circuits of the stars, but themselves they pass by" (Confessions 10, 8, 15).

“You must tell yourselves the truth. I have simply put a mirror in front of you for you to look at yourselves. I am the mirror’s reflective power showing those who look into the mirror their faces. Note that the faces I am talking about now are the ones that are inside of us. I can address these faces through your ears even though I cannot see them. Now that I am presenting you with a mirror, each of you should look at yourselves and tell yourselves what you see”. Sermon 306B, 4.

“Inwardly, where nobody can see us, we are all hearers” (Sermon 179, 7).

“Do not look outside. Return to yourself. Truth resides inside a person. When you discover that you can change, transcend yourself.... Go where the light of reason is illuminated.” True Religion, 39,72.

Interiority – Self-awareness and Self-Management Exercise

What keeps you from stopping and looking at your inner self?	What are the “mirrors” in your life that helps see clearly?
What do you need to increase your self-awareness?	How can you use what you “see” in a mirror to improve how you act?

Friendship and Social and Emotional Learning Thoughts from Saint Augustine

“My soul found all manner of joy when I was in their company — to talk and to laugh and to be kind to each other — to read engaging books together, to go from the lightest joking to talk of the deepest things and back again — to differ without discord, as I might differ with myself, and when on the rarest occasion disagreement arose, to find it highlights the sweetness of our normal agreement — to teach or to learn from each other — to be impatient for those absent and welcome them with joy when they return — these and similar things, emanating from our hearts as we gave and received affection, shown in our faces, our voices, our eyes, and a thousand other gratifying ways, ignited a flame which fused our very souls together and made the many of us one.” (Confessions, IV, 8, 13)

“Without a friend, nothing in the world seems friendly (Letter 130.2.4 to Proba).”

“Friendship should not be bounded by narrow limits.... There is no one in the human race to whom we do not owe love, even if not out of mutual love, at least on account of our sharing in a common nature (Letter 130.13).”

“I admit that I find it easy to abandon my whole self to the love of my friends, especially when I am wearied by the scandals of the world. I find rest in their love. I feel that God is in that person to whom I abandon myself with security, and in whom I find rest in security. And in that security I do not at all fear the incertitude of tomorrow stemming from human fragility.... (Letter 73.10)”

“Good human beings provide no small consolation in this life. For, if poverty pinches, if grief saddens, if bodily pain disturbs, if exile discourages, if any other disaster torments us, provided there are present good human beings who know not only how to rejoice with those in joy, but also to weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15), and can speak and converse in a helpful way, heavy burdens are lightened, and adversity is overcome (Letter 130.2.4 to Proba).”

"If poverty pinches, if grief saddens, if physical pain unnerves them, if exile darkens their life, if any other misfortune fills them with foreboding, let there be good men at hand who know how to rejoice with them that rejoice, as well as to weep with them that weep, who are skilled in helpful words and conversation, and in large measure those bitter trials are lessened, the heavy burdens are lightened, the obstacles are met and overcome On the other hand, if riches abound, if no bereavement befalls them, if they enjoy health of body and live securely in their own country, with evil men for their neighbors, men whom no one can trust, yet at whose hands trickery, cheating, anger, discord and treachery are to be met and feared, do not all those other goods become bitter and harsh, devoid of all joy and sweetness? Thus it is in almost all human affairs - they are not our friends if man is not our friend (Letter 130,2,4).

Friendship – Social Awareness and Relationship Skills Exercise

What do you learn from being with your friends?	What are the difficulties that you find in working with others?
What hinders you from being with friends to learn from them?	What do those difficulties tell you about yourself?

Community/Solidarity and Social and Emotional Learning Thoughts from Saint Augustine

“Christ receives what you have given to others; it has been received by the one who gave you the means to give it; it has been received by the one who at the end will give you himself (Sermon 389.4).”

“The first step in the search for truth is humility. The second, humility. The third, humility. And the last one, humility. Naturally, that doesn’t mean that humility is the only virtue necessary for the discovery and enjoyment of truth. But if the other virtues aren’t preceded, accompanied and followed by humility, pride will find an opening and infiltrate them and, sooner or later, finish up destroying good intentions. All other vices are recognized when we are doing wrong; but pride is to be feared even when we do right. Test those things which are done in a praiseworthy manner lest they be spoiled by the desire for praise itself.” (Letter 118, 3, 22).

“It is the daily work of Christians to make progress toward God, and to rejoice in God or his gifts always. The time of our pilgrimage, our wandering in exile, is very short, while in our home country time does not exist. After all, between eternity and time there is a considerable difference. Here you are required to show devotion; there you take rest. Thus, like good traders, let us note every day how well we have done, what profit we have made. Not only must we be attentive in listening, but also vigilant in action. This is a school in which God is the only teacher. It demands good students, those who are enthusiastic in attendance, not those who play hooky.”
Sermon 16A, 1.

If the truth is the object of the aspirations of all human beings, it cannot be the exclusive personal property of any person. The truth cannot be exclusively mine or yours precisely because it has to be both yours and mine. (Commentary on the Psalms, 103, 2, 11 see also Free Will 2, 12, 33).

“Love empowers us to support one another in carrying our burdens. When deer need to cross a river, each one carries on its rear the head of the one behind it while it rests its head on the rear of the one in front of it. Supporting and helping each other, they are thus able to cross wide rivers safely, until they reach the firmness of the land together.” (Eighty-three Diverse Questions, 71, 1)

“I don’t speak as a school master or teacher, but as a servant or minister. I don’t speak to pupils, but to fellow students; not to servants, but to fellow servants. There is but a single Teacher whose school is on earth and who teaches us from on high.” (*Sermon 292, 1, 1*).

“You all say, ‘The times are troubled, the times are hard, the times are wretched.’ Live good lives and you will change the times. By living good lives you will change the times and have nothing to grumble about.” (Sermon 311, 8)

Community/Solidarity – Responsible Decision Making Exercise

How does a lack of humility hinder your personal progress?	How good of a deer are you in carrying burdens?
How would greater humility improve the decisions you make?	How does your lack of connection to others increase bad times?