



RULER AND TRANSFORMATIVE SEL

INTRODUCTION

Transformative SEL is anchored in the notion of justice-oriented citizenship, with issues of culture, identity, agency, belonging, and engagement explored as relevant expressions of the five core SEL competencies. Dr. Robert Jagers of CASEL outlined Transformative SEL as “a process whereby students and teachers build strong, respectful relationships founded on an appreciation of similarities and differences, learn to critically examine root causes of inequity, and develop collaborative solutions to community and societal problems.” Viewing [SEL as a lever for equity](#) requires that students are given the opportunity to develop their core competencies within the context of their lived experiences and the realities of the society in which we live. In RULER, the five RULER skills and four RULER Tools are used as both scaffold and instruments with which to develop these competencies in context.

CASEL has developed “[Equity Elaborations](#)” that examine and discuss each competency through the lens of equity, including the necessary conditions for building the skills inherent to each one. Please see the following pages for further elaboration on how RULER encompasses the components of transformative SEL.

Each “Equity Elaboration” has been pulled directly from “Equity & Social and Emotional Learning: A Cultural Analysis” by Jagers et al., 2018.



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CASEL Competency	CASEL Equity Elaboration	RULER
<p>Self-Awareness: The abilities to understand one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts.</p>	<p><i>Involves understanding one’s emotions, personal identity, goals, and values. This includes accurately assessing one’s strengths and limitations, having positive mindsets, possessing a well-grounded sense of self-efficacy and optimism. High levels of self-awareness require the ability to understand the links between one’s personal and sociocultural identities and to recognize one’s own biases and how thoughts, feelings, and actions are interconnected.</i></p>	<p>RULER asks students to explicitly examine their own emotional experiences in the context of identity, goals, and values. Students learn how building an awareness of these feelings can strengthen an understanding of themselves as people and allow them to co-create safe spaces for all students across differences.</p> <p>In RULER for Early Childhood, young learners build upon their sense of identity and awareness of the identities of others through a range of diverse storybooks, hearing personal stories from trusted adults, and the space to share their voices and authentic selves. Students are encouraged to recognize how they are feeling by checking in on the Mood Meter and have an opportunity to reflect upon the causes and consequences of their emotions. They are supported and encouraged in multiple modalities to express themselves and to recognize how others express themselves differently. Through storybook read-alouds and other learning experiences, students learn about the causes and consequences of others’ emotions, which is transferred to their own emotions and the emotions of people in their lives.</p> <p>In RULER for Elementary School, students continue to explore identity and stories through books and conversations with trusted adults. Units 2 and 8, Community, Safety, and Climate, ask students to understand their identities to assess how differing identities work together within a safe emotional climate.</p> <p>In RULER for Middle School, seventh grade emphasizes across all units how emotional experiences compose parts of our identity, as well as how</p>



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		<p>parts of our identity influence our emotional experiences. The fourth unit of the MS curriculum focuses on how personal values influence our emotional experiences, actions, and how we approach conflict resolution.</p> <p>RULER for High School incorporates self-reflections and assessments of students’ personalities, motivational styles, and personal values. In grades 10 through 12, these are used to help students set a vision for HS and beyond, select goals and strategies for themselves while also considering group dynamics and their role in creating positive classroom and school climates.</p> <p>Student-led Family Connections activities about each RULER tool reinforce self-awareness about how students’ and their family members are feeling and want to feel. Student-led School-Home Partnership Worksheets help students and their families connect and build a shared emotion vocabulary at home. Students and families consider their strengths and triggers within the context of their best selves as child and parent or caregiver. This creates the opportunity to explore the Influence of family and cultural values.</p>
<p>Self-Management: The abilities to manage one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations.</p>	<p><i>Requires skills and attitudes that facilitate the ability to regulate emotions and behaviors. This includes the ability to delay gratification, manage stress, control impulses, and persevere through</i></p>	<p>Across nearly every unit and every grade level, students are asked to identify and analyze the ways that they regulate their emotions. Students learn how to differentiate and generate their strategies based on personal values, context, and goals.</p> <p>Specifically, students learn how to differentiate between strategies that help them cope versus those that resolve conflict. They also examine the</p>



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	<p><i>personal and group-level challenges in order to achieve personal and educational goals.</i></p>	<p>efficacy of strategies individually, in relationship with another person, and in large group settings.</p> <p>In RULER for Early Childhood, educators model, discuss, and practice effective regulation strategies that they use and that are used by storybook characters. Students are encouraged to compare and contrast these strategies to those that they use and to develop a list of possible strategies that can support each student based on their individual needs and situation. Supported by curricular materials, students are also exposed to personal stories from teachers and other trusted adults, providing numerous examples for how to regulate emotion.</p> <p>Following students’ developmental trajectories and personal preferences, the RULER content advances students from the support and co-regulation of their teachers and peers (as preschoolers and elementary school students), to increasing levels of autonomy and independence through middle and high school.</p> <p>RULER Overviews and handouts give practical tips and strategies to help families reinforce all emotion skills including emotion expression and regulation at home. Skillful expression and regulation includes choosing the best responses to situations given the individual and context. Take 10 resources aim to build caregivers’ ability to co-regulate and develop underlying skills that reinforce emotions skills at home within the family context.</p>



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<p>Responsible Decision Making: The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations.</p>	<p><i>Requires the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to make caring, constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse settings. It requires the ability to critically examine ethical standards, safety concerns, and behavioral norms for risky behavior; to make realistic evaluations of consequences of various interpersonal and institutional actions; and to take the health and well-being of self and others into consideration.</i></p>	<p>RULER focuses on the emotional factors that influence, and the potential outcomes of, student decision making. Students analyze the role of decision making in creating and sustaining healthy relationships, building community, communicating with others, engaging in and managing conflict, as well as the school and community-wide factors that influence the types of decisions that they make.</p> <p>Students learn that their decisions are always embedded in context, and that communicating honestly and kindly is a choice. Further, students are given the opportunity to examine the individual and societal barriers that may sometimes make healthy and productive decision making more difficult.</p> <p>In RULER from early childhood through high school, students are given opportunities to reflect on how to express themselves based on various situations, to identify emotion regulation goals, and then to choose strategies that they believe will help them to reach each goal. Students reflect upon the behaviors and strategies that work best for them based on the situation.</p> <p>The examples in the RULER for Families resources are relatable to different kinds of families and encourage families to share stories about their own lives and experiences. Students and adult caregivers consider choices, expectations and consequences within their lived experience and the relationships within their families.</p>



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<p>Relationship Skills: The abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups.</p>	<p><i>Includes the tools needed to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships, and to effectively navigate settings with differing social norms and demands. It involves communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking help when it is needed.</i></p>	<p>The entire RULER curriculum embeds analysis and discussion of relationships throughout. Students are given opportunities to analyze what makes relationships healthy versus unhealthy, how emotion expression and social display rules may influence their relationships with others, and how analyzing their best self can promote healthy conflict resolution or coping.</p> <p>In RULER for early childhood through middle school, students and educators are encouraged to build community through routine opportunities for sharing, called Community Circles. In these and other opportunities, students may be asked to identify a strategy that assists someone else (another student or adult) to reach their emotion regulation goal (i.e., co-regulation). In these instances, students are practicing taking the perspective of another person and taking action to be supportive of another person’s needs.</p> <p>While the elementary and middle school curricula embed analysis and discussion of relationships throughout, relationships are the explicit focus of the sixth-grade curriculum.</p> <p>School-Home Partnership Worksheets and SEL Conversation starters support reciprocal conversations about emotions and foster closer connections within families.</p> <p>Take 10s and tipsheets break down RULER into underlying skills and mindsets and put these practices into the context of relationships and interactions. Specifically, resources consider what RULER could look and sound like at home.</p>



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<p>Social Awareness: The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, & contexts.</p>	<p><i>Involves the ability to take the perspective of those with the same and different backgrounds and cultures and to empathize and feel compassion. It also involves understanding social norms for behavior in diverse settings and recognizing family, school, and community resources and supports.</i></p>	<p>One of the hallmark practices of the RULER curriculum is learning to take the emotional perspective of others.</p> <p>In RULER for Early Childhood, students are supported in perspective taking through exposure to the personal stories of trusted, diverse storybooks, and listening to peers in a shared space. Educators support students in learning how people express themselves differently and in different settings or situations.</p> <p>In unit 14 across all elementary grades, students learn what empathy is, how to practice it, and its imperfections. the only way we can know what others are feeling, with certainty, is by asking.</p> <p>The Middle School curriculum teaches students to anticipate how their actions influence the emotional experiences of others and reinforces that the only way we can know what others are feeling with certainty, is by asking.</p> <p>The High School curriculum asks students to examine group dynamics, and their personal role in creating a positive climate for all, being a good friend or partner, and advocate.</p> <p>The School Home Partnership Worksheets provide opportunities to gain rich perspectives of family members through storytelling about feelings and experiences. This-deepens knowledge of cultural backgrounds and family values.</p>



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		RULER for Families believes that we need to cast a wide net and use multiple ways to connect with and engage all families. Materials are written in language that is accessible and translated into other languages. We advocate for a more reciprocal and collaborative model of family engagement. Parent leadership in RULER is a way to integrate voices and input of a range of families and connect with the broader community.