

# Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in *Open Court Reading*

Research has shown that instruction in social and emotional learning is critical to student success and development. Students who receive social and emotional instruction and support attain more academic success, exhibit better social and behavioral skills and attitudes than those who do not receive this support. Because this support is so crucial, McGraw-Hill Education has instituted five guiding principles to help students master the core social and emotional learning competencies. These five principles are demonstrated in a variety of ways in the *Open Court Reading* classroom.



McGraw-Hill Education Social and Emotional Learning Principle	<i>Open Court Reading</i> Classroom
<p><b>CREATE</b> Consciously create a nurturing, caring, and safe environment for students.</p>	<p>Greet each student by name every day. In grades K–1, have students wear the name necklaces they made in class so you can quickly learn their names.</p> <p>Collaboratively develop classroom rules and expectations with students during the Getting Started portion of <i>Open Court Reading</i> (OCR). Post these in the classroom for all students to see.</p> <p>Reward positive behaviors such as demonstrating respect with extra reading time or time on the computer with eGames or eActivities.</p> <p>As kindergartners and first graders become familiar with OCR management routines such as Coming to Circle, have them practice relationship skills by treating each other with respect and helping each other. In kindergarten, students sing songs such as “Hello,” “We’re So Glad You’re Here,” and “Where Is Charlotte?” to include everyone.</p>
<p><b>INTEGRATE</b> Whenever possible, incorporate SEL skill-building into academic instruction.</p> 	<p>Point out SEL-related topics in the Decodables or other reading, and discuss these topics in class.</p> <p>Discuss how academic skills, such as listening, can also promote positive and constructive social interactions. In grades K–1, reiterate this as you go through the Listening Routine.</p> <p>Use the Concept/Question board as an integral part of the classroom environment where students can share their growing knowledge, identify common interests, and form collaborative groups for further inquiry. The C/Q board also encourages students to ask questions as a way of learning and problem solving.</p> <p>Metacognition (thinking about one’s own thinking) is an important part of SEL. Give students an opportunity for self-reflection on their own reading comprehension or problem-solving thought processes.</p> <p>The ELD board games for all grades encourage students to practice using their language and knowledge while interacting with their peers. The board games integrate what students are learning in an interactive manner.</p>

**McGraw-Hill Education Social and Emotional Learning Principle**

***Open Court Reading Classroom***

**COMMUNICATE**

Make sure to communicate early and often about SEL with all stakeholders.

Provide families with the same general SEL concepts you are presenting to students so that these can also be modeled at home. The Parent Letter for the Decodables is sent home at the beginning of the year to inform parents how students will build their fluency skills.

Demonstrate and model the same empathy skills you are helping your students develop, such as kindness or helpfulness.

Send home short notes to families when a student has successfully demonstrated an SEL skill (e.g. “When another student fell on the playground, Jess came right over to make sure she was okay!”).

**INSTRUCT**

Provide explicit guidance and instruction in SEL skills.



As with all other skills in *Open Court Reading*, ensure that students understand the SEL skill by defining it with straightforward, objective language, and then model how to use the skill before having students applying it. Revisit the skill throughout the year.

Engaging unit themes are developed within and across grade levels. Unit themes connect to six overarching topics that also span across grade levels, and include important SEL subjects such as Character, Communities, and Creativity.

Use Workshop or small group instruction time to extend any SEL taught. Based on the individual and group needs of students, be sure to include multiple methods and modalities for each SEL skill, such as writing activities, discussion, and so on.

Whenever an example of a social and emotional skill presents itself, take a moment to describe and discuss that skill with students. This can be done even with a simple activity as reviewing OCR high-frequency words, such as see, please, sorry, friend, talk, and so on.

The Teacher Tips at the bottom of the page help teachers to monitor students who are learning to apply new skills.

**EMPOWER**

Encourage students by empowering them to take charge of their own social and emotional learning.

Set the stage for positive social and emotional development by encouraging students in all facets of OCR—when they blend words on word lines, read their Decodables, learn the alphabet, and so on.

Use instructional routines consistently and predictably so students can quickly learn patterns of behavior and expectations that lead to increased autonomy and ownership of their learning and self-management.

Just as you do with OCR fluency or lesson assessments, provide data and feedback that students can use to modify and extend their own application of SEL strategies learned in the classroom.

Offer choices throughout the reading period to encourage a sense of autonomy and promote decision-making skills. For example, list activities on the board or chart paper that students may choose to work on during Workshop or small group instruction. Students can make responsible choices about which activities to practice in pairs or independently. Demonstrate aloud the thought process behind making a careful and thoughtful choice.