



Social-Emotional Skills

Leaders of the CORE districts believe, based on compelling research and their own experience as educators, that social-emotional (SE) competencies like self-management and developing a positive/growth mindset are an important complement to academic preparation in helping our students succeed in college, career, and life. A national teacher survey conducted in 2013 shows that 93% of teachers think it is very or fairly important for schools to promote the development of social-emotional competencies. Furthermore, 95% of teachers believe that these skills are teachable, and 97% believe they will benefit students from all backgrounds.

In a review of the mindsets and competencies that promote long-term learning, Professor Carol Dweck and her colleagues report that social-emotional competencies “can matter even more than cognitive factors for students’ academic performance. These may include students’ beliefs about themselves, their feelings about school, or their habits of self-control. Indeed, there is a growing recognition in education, psychology, and economics of the importance of [social-emotional] factors in achievement both in school and in the labor market (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005; Dweck, 1999; Heckman, Stixrud, & Urzua, 2006; Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002). There has also been a recognition that these factors offer promising levers for raising the achievement of underprivileged children and, ultimately, closing achievement gaps based on race and income (Heckman et al., 2006). [This research] shows that educational interventions and initiatives that target these...factors can have transformative effects on students’ experience and achievement in school, improving core academic outcomes such as GPA and test scores months and even years later.”¹

The CORE districts have prioritized four competencies as an initial set to consider for inclusion in the SQII: growth mindset, self-efficacy, self-management, and social awareness. These four competencies were selected based on research about the importance, measurability, and actionability of each competency as well as the lived experience of educators within each district. We do not believe these four competencies represent a comprehensive list of the social-emotional factors that support students’ success in college, career, and life. As such, we encourage districts to continue exploring other constructs of interest, which CORE may consider for inclusion in the SQII or the CORE-wide formative data system in future years.

¹ Dweck, Walton, & Cohen (2011). *Academic Tenacity: Mindsets and Skills that Promote Long-Term Learning* (2011). Paper prepared for the Gates Foundation.



SE Competency	Definition
Growth Mindset	The belief that one's abilities can grow with effort. Students with a growth mindset see effort as necessary for success, embrace challenges, learn from criticism, and persist in the face of setbacks.
Self-Efficacy	The belief in one's own ability to succeed in achieving an outcome or reaching a goal. Self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior, and environment.
Self-Management	The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, delaying gratification, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward personal and academic goals.
Social Awareness	The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

Why wasn't grit included?

“Grit,” which refers to perseverance and sustained interest in long-term goals, comes from the same family of constructs as “self-management,” which refers to the ability to regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. In essence, grit is a longer-term measure of the same skills required for effective self-management. Self-management is both easier to measure and has a longer research base demonstrating its important in college, career, and life success. (See “What research shows that social-emotional competencies are important?”) In fact, Angela Duckworth and Stephanie Carlson describe in their 2013 publication that, of the various human traits that psychologists and economists study, self-management is the trait most reliably related to school success.²

Measurement Method

Students in grades five to twelve will be asked to self-report on a series of behaviors (e.g., coming to class prepared, following directions) and beliefs (e.g., whether it is more important to be talented or to put forth a lot of effort), that, taken together, have been validated as indicators of social-emotional skills.

These instruments were piloted in Spring 2014. Our plan is to conduct a CORE-wide field test of a refined set of items in Spring 2015, setting a baseline for inclusion in the Index starting with the measurement of these skills in Spring 2016. (Note that delaying inclusion of the Social Emotional Skills in the Index until the Spring 2016 administration will require an amendment to the CORE Waiver).

² Duckworth & Carlson (in press) Self-regulation and school success. In Sokol, Grouzet & Müller (Eds.) *Self-regulation and autonomy: Social and developmental dimensions of human conduct*, p. 208.



Student Assessment Items for the Spring 2015 Field Test

Social-Emotional: Self-Management³

First, we'd like to learn more about your behavior, experiences, and attitudes related to school.

Please answer how often you did the following during the past 30 days. During the past 30 days...

1. I came to class prepared.
2. I remembered and followed directions.
3. I got my work done right away instead of waiting until the last minute.
4. I paid attention and resisted distractions.
5. I worked independently with focus.
6. I remained calm even when criticized or otherwise provoked.
7. I allowed others to speak without interruption.
8. I was polite to adults and peers.
9. I kept my temper in check.

(Almost Never, Once in a While, Sometimes, Often, Almost All the Time)

Social-Emotional: Growth Mindset⁴

In this section, please think about your learning in general.

Please indicate how true each of the following statements is for you:

10. My intelligence is something that I can't change very much.
11. Challenging myself won't make me any smarter.
12. There are some things I am not capable of learning.
13. If I am not naturally smart in a subject, I will never do well in it.

(Not At All True, A Little True, Somewhat True, Mostly True, Completely True)

Social-Emotional: Self-Efficacy (Global)⁵

How confident are you about the following at school?

14. I can earn an A in my classes.
15. I can do well on all my tests, even when they're difficult.
16. I can master the hardest topics in my classes.
17. I can meet all the learning goals my teachers set.

(Not At All Confident, A Little Confident, Somewhat Confident, Mostly Confident, Completely Confident)

Social-Emotional: Self-Efficacy (Subject-Specific)⁶

In this section, we'd like you to focus specifically on your [math / ELA / science / social studies] class.

³ Adapted from Patrick & Duckworth (2013, May) *Empirical support for a tripartite taxonomy of character in adolescents.* Poster presented at the 25th annual convention of the Association for Psychological Science

⁴ Farrington et al. (2013) *Becoming Effective Learners Survey Development Project*, Chicago Consortium for School Research

⁵ Adapted from Farrington et al. (2014) *Becoming Effective Learners Survey Development Project*, Chicago Consortium for School Research

⁶ Farrington et al. (2014) *Becoming Effective Learners Survey Development Project*, Chicago Consortium for School Research



How confident are you about the following in your [math / ELA / science / social studies] class?

18. I can earn an A in this class.
19. I can do well on all my tests, even when they're difficult.
20. I can master the hardest topics in this class.
21. I can meet all the learning goals my teacher sets.

(Not At All Confident, A Little Confident, Somewhat Confident, Mostly Confident, Completely Confident)

Social-Emotional: Social Awareness⁷

In this section, please help us better understand your thoughts and actions when you are with other people.

Please answer how often you did the following during the past 30 days. During the past 30 days...

22. How carefully did you listen to other people's points of view?
(Not Carefully At All, Slightly Carefully, Somewhat Carefully, Quite Carefully, Extremely Carefully)
23. How much did you care about other people's feelings?
(Did Not Care At All, Cared A Little Bit, Cared Somewhat, Cared Quite A Bit, Cared A Tremendous Amount)
24. How often did you compliment others' accomplishments?
(Almost Never, Once in a while, Sometimes, Often, Almost all the time)
25. How well did you get along with students who are different from you?
(Did Not Get Along At All, Got Along A Little Bit, Got Along Somewhat, Got Along Pretty Well, Got Along Extremely Well)
26. How clearly were you able to describe your feelings?
(Not At All Clearly, Slightly Clearly, Somewhat Clearly, Quite Clearly, Extremely Clearly)
27. When others disagreed with you, how respectful were you of their views?
(Not At All Respectful, Slightly Respectful, Somewhat Respectful, Quite Respectful, Extremely Respectful)
28. To what extent were you able to stand up for yourself without putting others down?
(Not At All, A Little Bit, Somewhat, Quite A Bit, A Tremendous Amount)
29. To what extent were you able to disagree with others without starting an argument?
(Not At All, A Little Bit, Somewhat, Quite A Bit, A Tremendous Amount)

⁷ Adapted from AIR and CASEL (2013) Student self-report of social and emotional competencies