

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING INTEGRATION INTO LANGUAGE ARTS  
CLASSROOMS

by

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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Growing up is hard. I doubt there are many people who would be interested in traveling back in time to relive their adolescent years. It is a constant tangle of emotions and friendships and decision-making. When reflected upon, those early teen years can incite anxiousness in even the most successful post-middle-schoolers. Growing up seems increasingly challenging as our youth navigate it all with the heavy backdrop of social media and lack of competence and accountability for safety from large institutions (Brooks, 2018, para. 2).

In schools, social workers, counselors, and teachers have begun to teach and practice the development of the whole child— the idea that kids have social and emotional needs that must be met in order to be successful humans. School professionals are constantly researching and developing ways to teach social-emotional learning to support students. This can be a challenging task, on top of many other duties that these employees work through and deal with on a daily basis. Because of this, it is important to reflect on the research question— *How can social-emotional learning be authentically integrated into the middle school language arts classroom?*

Considering the research question, the needs of students, and the number of responsibilities that school professionals are tasked with, I have created introductory social-emotional activities and lessons that can be integrated into the language arts curriculum. These activities can be dispersed throughout the first two months of school and are designed to be successful in a sixth-grade language arts classroom. Each lesson plan can be used by language arts teachers to guide social-emotional learning. The themes and lessons may be substituted or altered depending on curriculum changes, student needs, or learning models set forth by the

district. Additionally, each lesson can be adapted to fit the needs of other disciplines within a school setting.

Each lesson focuses primarily on pairing and practicing social-emotional learning lessons into the standard curriculum. These lessons support the five pillars of social-emotional learning; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. On a more specific level, it concentrates especially on areas similar, but not limited to, group work, communicating self-understanding, compromising, and organizational practices.

All lessons follow McTighe and Wiggins' framework (2012), *Understanding by Design*, and includes a learning objective, alignment to the state standards, instruction for leading the activity, and a reflection assessment. Several of the lessons can be used in cohesion with each other, though most could work at any point throughout the year as a support to other learning. As a way to easily view and work with this precursory curriculum, I have developed a central electronic location for each lesson plan and the accompanying digital materials. On the homepage of this website, I have provided a suggested timeline and for each lesson that can guide learning.

Within the curriculum website, there is convenient access to each lesson plan in both chronological orders and also separated by the social-emotional learning pillar. The top of each page provides a brief description explaining the purpose of the lesson. Following are the specific lesson details and any necessary digital resources. In some activities, further physical materials are needed, such as markers and tinfoil. Those additional materials are listed in each lesson plan to ensure implementation success.

Besides the lesson plans and materials, the site section "Parent Communication" provides tools to connect parents to the social-emotional learning taking place within the classroom. Here,

a user will find access to a parent introductory letter, which can be used to briefly explain how and why a teacher may use social-emotional learning in the classroom. There is also a basic classroom newsletter template to supply parents with recurring information about the social-emotional learning events within the class.

ACCESS to the entire curriculum unit can be found at the following website.

<https://sites.google.com/view/sellanguageartscurriculum/home>

## References

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