



SEL Research

What are some tools to assess SEL?

Assessing Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in schools involves a variety of methods designed to measure the development and impact of SEL competencies among students. Here are some widely recognized methods:

- **Self-Reports and Surveys:** One of the most common methods to assess SEL is self-reporting questionnaires and surveys. These tools ask students to reflect on their feelings, attitudes, behaviors, and interactions with others. Surveys like the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) or the Social-Emotional Assets and Resilience Scales (SEARS) provide insights into students' self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.
- **Teacher and Parent Reports:** Through structured assessments, teachers and parents can offer valuable perspectives on a student's social and emotional competencies. These reports complement self-assessments by observing students' interactions, behaviors, and emotional responses in different settings.
- **Performance Tasks:** Performance-based assessments involve students engaging in tasks that require using SEL skills. These can include role-playing scenarios, group projects, or problem-solving tasks that mimic real-life situations. The assessment then focuses on observing and evaluating how students apply their SEL skills to navigate these tasks.
- **Direct Observation:** Observing students in naturalistic settings such as classrooms, playgrounds, or group activities allows for assessing SEL skills as they naturally occur. This method often involves using rating scales or checklists to document observed behaviors and interactions systematically.
- **Portfolios:** Student portfolios can include a work collection demonstrating learning and growth in SEL areas over time. These might contain reflective essays, journal entries, art projects, or recorded presentations that provide evidence of students' self-reflection, goal-setting, empathy, teamwork, and decision-making skills.

- **Interviews:** Conducting structured interviews with students allows one to explore their understanding and application of SEL competencies deeply. Interviews can reveal how students perceive their own and others' emotions, resolve conflicts, and make decisions.
- **Digital Tools and Platforms:** With the advancement of technology, digital tools and platforms have become increasingly popular for SEL assessment. These tools can offer interactive assessments through games or simulations, analyze language use in digital communications, or track progress in digital portfolios.
- **Sociometric Techniques:** Sociometric assessments are used to understand social dynamics and relationships within a group. Educators can gain insights into social awareness and relationship skills by mapping out students' social connections, preferences, and perceived social status.

Assessing SEL requires a multifaceted approach combining multiple methods to understand students' social and emotional development comprehensively. By regularly assessing SEL, educators can tailor instruction to meet students' needs, monitor progress, and identify areas for further support or intervention.