

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN THE MATH RECOVERY PROJECT

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Abstract

The connections between the *Math Recovery Project* and social and emotional learning (SEL) are explored. Specific relationships between the project pedagogical approach used and SEL are described. A key emphasis is that all solution methods should be valued to address math recovery and SEL.

Project Description and SEL Connections

The *Math Recovery Project* for students in grades 2-6 consists of problem sets, whole-class activities, and professional development for teachers. It was developed in an effort to ameliorate the learning loss caused by the COVID pandemic with a focus on social and emotional learning (SEL). The whole-class activities were designed to provide opportunities for students to engage in problem solving, mathematical reasoning, and mathematical discussions. The problem sets consist of 12-20 mixed-review problems with a focus on preparing students to be successful on state accountability testing. The research-based pedagogical approach is modeled with teachers during a week-long professional development workshop. Teachers learn about student-centered strategies to develop mathematical practice skills and the five competencies of SEL (CASEL, 2020; NGACBP, & CCSSO, 2010).

The pedagogical approach in the *Math Recovery Project* supports small-group work and whole-class discussion in which teachers are encouraged to negotiate expectations with their students. SEL is enhanced through the establishment of these expectations and for conducting mathematical discussions which include: soliciting methods of solutions, not answers; encouraging students to work out disagreements; accepting all solution methods and answers; and valuing each child's thinking.

A focus on solution methods enhances the self-image of the child by valuing her or his thinking. Encouraging students to work out disagreements positions the agency of learning with students. In many cases, children think about the problem differently from others and they are genuinely excited to share their solution processes. They listen to the reasoning of others, trying to make sense of it and tie it to their own reasoning. By accepting all solution methods and valuing each child's thinking, a student's social and emotional wellbeing is enhanced when the focus is on their thinking and not just the result. Teachers should also use these expectations to help students recognize and value sophisticated mathematical thinking. Overall, the project specifically promotes restorative practices. Rather than doing things for students, the project advocates doing things with students so there are opportunities to make sense of mathematics while addressing the social and emotional wellbeing of each student.

References

- Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL] (2020). *What is SEL?* Chicago, IL: CASEL. <https://casel.org/what-is-sel/approaches/>.
- National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers [NGACBP & CCSSO]. (2010). *Common core state standards for mathematics*. NGACBP & CCSSO.