



# SEL Research Review

6th-12th Grade



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At ORI Learning, we believe in a future where students can confidently navigate all stages of life. That's why we pride ourselves on creating SEL lessons designed using the best instructional practices, research based strategies, and developmentally appropriate activities for all students.

## **CASEL Aligned and Research Based**

ORI SEL has dedicated each unit to one of the 5 CASEL competencies supported by research in the field of Social-Emotional Learning.

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### **Unit 1: Self-Awareness**

Research on self-determination theory shows that when students are given the opportunity to identify what they do well, name and share their strengths with others, and have choice in what and how they learn, intrinsic motivation and overall well-being improve (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

In Unit 1, students will gain the knowledge and skills needed to develop a deeper understanding of themselves, pairing self-determination theory with growth mindset, the belief that our abilities are not fixed, but instead malleable (Dweck et al., 2014), to set students up for academic and personal success. In this unit, students will also learn more about their own identities, outlooks, interests, and mindsets.

### **Unit 2: Self-Management**

Research in the field of psychology shows that emotion, an evolutionary function based to increase survival (Frijda, 1986; Ekman and Davidson, 1994; Oatley and Jenkins, 2003), must be regulated in order to support mental and physical well-being (Jarymowicz, 2008; Aldao et al., 2010). Emotions are important signals that give us information about our circumstances and internal states and should be seen as helpful rather than something that needs to be changed or ignored (Jarymowicz and Imbir, 2015).

In alignment with these research findings, Unit 2 focuses on emotion recognition and identifying needs. Students learn to see emotions as helpful indicators and learn to choose flexible emotion regulation strategies to meet their needs. They are also encouraged to seek support from others and learn strategies to relieve the uncomfortable physical effects of emotions. Students learn how to use stress to their advantage while also learning ways to manage their time, prioritize their schedules, and form habits that help prevent emotional dysregulation.



## Unit 3: Social Awareness

Recent research in the field of neuroscience has shown that humans are hardwired to feel empathy (Keysers, 2011). Keysers, together with Valeria Gazzola, found that when a person simply observes another person's action, pain, or response, the same neural networks responsible for executing those actions and experiencing those perceived feelings can be triggered. Furthermore, it's suggested that the ability to mentally experience the emotional state of others can lead people to take prosocial steps to reduce their pain.

Unit 3, teaches students what empathy is and how to access it through perspective-taking. Students then learn ways to show compassion towards others in ways that are helpful by anticipating the needs of others and asking when they aren't sure how to help. This unit also provides students with skills they can use when they are unable to connect with others through empathy, like seeking to understand and agreeing to disagree.

## Unit 4: Relationship Skills

Research shows that healthy relationships with adults, peers, and other community members have the potential to affirm and support a young person's sense of identity (Pianta, Hamre, & Stuhlman, 2003) as well as increase a sense of belonging and feeling of being valued (Noddings, 2003; Goodenow, 1992). When youth feel seen, safe, and supported by members of their communities, they are also more likely to succeed academically, and view learning as meaningful to their lives.

In support of this research, Unit 4 helps students identify and recognize the healthy and unhealthy relationships in their lives while providing tools to build new friendships and strengthen existing ones. Students also learn to have gratitude and consider the positive impact of relationships that have ended, as well as the impact they have on others.

## Unit 5: Responsible Decision-Making

Research suggests that at a time when adolescents spend the most time with their peers, peer-related stimuli may sensitize the reward system in the brain to respond to the reward value of risky behavior (Albert & Chein Et al 2013). However, research has also shown that adolescents have the same knowledge, values, and processing ability to evaluate risky decisions as competently as adults (Reyna & Farley, 2006).

In support of this research, Unit 5 provides students with tools to prevent and handle peer pressure as well as think through the possible outcomes of decisions before making them. Students learn to consider immediate as well as long-term outcomes of decisions as well as who could be impacted by them. Students learn to recognize the positive impacts of their peers

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and how they can position themselves as role models. In addition, students learn ways to make reparations after making mistakes and learn a step-by-step process to help solve problems.

### Instructional Strategies

#### SAFE

ORI SEL follows the effective SEL approaches outlined by SAFE. In addition, ORI has added Reflection as an important tool for helping students make sense of new learning as it relates to them.

- **SEQUENCED:** ORI offers connected lessons that build on each other to help foster SEL skills development
- **ACTIVE:** ORI SEL lessons are highly engaging and employ active forms of learning including project based learning and interactive activities
- **FOCUSED:** Each 20 minute lesson focuses on new SEL skills directly aligned to the CASEL Competencies followed by two additional related extension activities
- **EXPLICIT:** Each lesson targets specific social and emotional skills and include pre and post tests aligned to lesson objectives
- **Reflection:** Each lesson includes SEL journal reflection prompts to help students reflect and apply what they've learned to their own lives

#### 5 E's

ORI SEL uses the 5E learning model.

Research suggests that there is an order of events that facilitates learning, known as a learning cycle. Educators J. Myron Atkin and Robert Karplus argued in 1962 that effective learning cycles involve three key elements: exploration, term introduction, and concept application.

These findings informed the steps of the 5E model which include:

- Engage
- Explore
- Explain
- Elaborate
- Evaluate

The 5E model allows for students to engage and explore content helping learners to become interested in the subject, ask questions, and identify any misconceptions in their understanding. Followed by the Introduction of new ideas and vocabulary, with opportunity for students to share their ideas and experiences.

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Finally, students are given the opportunity to apply their new learning to novel contexts, and evaluate their understanding (Tanner, 2010).

Ori Learning takes the 5E learning cycle a step further with the addition of Extend, in which students are given additional opportunities to engage with their new learning. Each 20 minute core lesson has two additional extension activities to allow for further exploration of new SEL topics.



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