

# Unmask Social Emotional Learning (SEL)



What it really is  
and why it's bad  
for your children.

# UNMASKING SEL

## Why worry about something that sounds so good?

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is the hottest trend in U.S. K-12 education today and it's being implemented rapidly across public, private and charter schools. SEL is defined by its creators as an educational framework or process through which all young people acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to healthy, fulfilling lives. What's more, the proponents of SEL tout it as the model for preparing children with the "soft skills" and "emotional intelligence" required for the "jobs of the future."

The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), which created the SEL framework describes its approach in attractive terms. What parent wouldn't want their children to develop "healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions?"

We suggest that any parent that wants their children to be well-educated, independent thinkers who are self-assured, opposed to socialism and grounded in their own family's values should learn the real origins and the true intent behind the SEL framework. SEL is not a process to teach healthy life skills and habits, it's an all-encompassing worldview that uses psychological techniques to instill a specific set of beliefs and values that are designed to drive behavior.

It's impossible to limit SEL's place in school curriculum. Once adopted, SEL's psychological and social work-based interventions are woven into every aspect of education, including academics, school clubs, sports, activities and assemblies, and all interactions between teachers and students and students and their peers.

Picture your child heading to school wearing a virtual reality (VR) headset. The VR headset runs on the SEL framework, so everything they see, everyone around them and every academic lesson they are taught is viewed through the lens of Social-Emotional Learning. Something so pervasive will deeply impact children and shape their entire worldview.

In reality, SEL is a trojan horse. To defeat it, parents must understand who built it and why? Once parents learn the goals of the framework, they can see how SEL is actually harmful to children from an emotional, spiritual, and academic standpoint. To do so requires a skilled translator. The creators and proponents of SEL have encoded their program in a subtle, persuasive, and ultimately deceptive doublespeak—this is the intentional standard operating procedure for its founders. It's time to learn how SEL came to be and why...



# THE TRUE ORIGINS OF SEL

## Where does this supposedly vital approach to learning come from?

To understand where SEL comes from, we must revisit the work of influential Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire. In 1968, Freire published his seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which leans heavily on Marxist philosophy and argues that traditional education systems perpetuate oppression. Freire believed that education should not be a tool for maintaining the status quo, but rather a means for social transformation.

Freire proposed a model of education based on dialogue, reflection and action and his work was quickly praised and adopted by educators worldwide. His approach encourages individuals to critically examine their own experiences and the social, economic, and political structures that shape them. Three key components to Freire's model link directly to the five core components of the SEL framework:



### Dialog

Individuals engage in mutual learning and a process of exchange between individuals, where both parties (teachers and students) are seen as equal partners in the learning process. They are encouraged to reflect on their own place in the social order and to always consider this in their speech and interaction with others, to question authority, and to work towards social change.

### Reflection

Individuals are taught awareness of their own experiences and the social, economic, and political structures that shape them. The goal is to raise critical consciousness, which is the ability to reflect on one's experiences and to identify one's place and influence within broader social structures.

### Action

In Freire's Conscientization model, individuals learn by doing and reflecting on their experiences. This approach emphasizes the importance of action and transformation, rather than simply acquiring knowledge.

### CASEL 5 for SEL

- Self Awareness - the ability to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts. For example, learning to integrate personal and social identities and examine prejudices and biases.
- Social Awareness - The ability to empathize and understand the perspectives of others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures and contexts. This includes the capacity to feel compassion for others, understand broader historical and social norms for behavior in different settings, and recognize family, school and community resources and supports.
- Self Management - The ability to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations. This includes the capacity to delay gratification, manage stress, and feel motivation and agency to accomplish personal and collective goals.
- Relationship Skills - The ability to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups. This includes the capacity to communicate clearly, listen actively, cooperate, work collaboratively to problem solve and negotiate conflict constructively, navigate settings with differing social and cultural demands and opportunities, provide leadership, and seek or offer help when needed.
- Responsible Decision-Making - The ability to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations. This includes the capacity to consider ethical standards and safety concerns, and to evaluate the benefits and consequences of various actions for personal, social and collective well-being.

How much does Freire's work influence modern American education? *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is required reading in America's teacher-training programs. Consider this quote from Peter McLaren, distinguished former education professor at Miami (of Ohio) University and UCLA,

***"Every critically minded educator has at some point used Freire in their teaching – either to gain some insight into the upside-down world of the oppressed or as the inspiration that led them to view teaching as a way to overturn society's asymmetries of power and privilege."*** – *Jacobin Magazine*, Sept. 9, 2021

# FROM FREIRE TO FRAMEWORK

## How SEL works and what it really aims to accomplish

When you visit the CASEL website, you won't find any reference to Paulo Freire or his work. But his legacy and approach to education has influenced the practice for the past 30 years. Whenever you see project-based learning, culturally relevant teaching and transformative SEL, rest assured these approaches are steeped in Freirean methodology that aims to achieve social justice and to overturn what he believed were society's systems of power of privilege.

### The SEL framework affects every aspect of a child's education. According to CASEL:

A systemic approach ensures that SEL is woven into all students' educational experiences. More than a single lesson or activity, SEL is integrated across key settings where students live and learn: classrooms, schools, homes, and communities .

Let's return to the VR headset...with the lens of SEL firmly in place, every educational experience your child encounters will be perceived through the five-part SEL framework. When we translate the positive, promotional and reassuring language espoused by SEL's creators, we can understand the real meaning and intent of the SEL framework:

- **Self Awareness** – children learn to classify themselves according to identity markers and to recognize their own implicit biases.

*Implications in the classroom...Self Awareness affects which books are assigned, how they are interpreted and discussed; it impacts how students are recognized for achievement and accolades; it shapes how they view their place in history; it affects how they interact during group projects.*

- **Social Awareness** – children learn to categorize and compare their identity with others and the social construct in which some identities are more privileged.

*Implications in the classroom...Some teachers are using Social Awareness to teach math problems that focus on group identities and disparate outcomes. Counseling lessons use Social Awareness to emphasize equity, the idea that any disparate outcomes are evidence of injustice and oppression. Empathizing and feeling compassion for underprivileged groups is reinforced.*

- **Self Management** – children are equipped to work through the negative emotions that accompany embracing aspects of their identity that are uncomfortable; they are taught to be proper

perseverant agents of change.

*Implications in the classroom... Teachers and counselors teach mindfulness techniques like breathing and meditation exercises designed to calm students when they encounter a frustrating math problem or assignment, or during a difficult conversation highlighting their identity in an oppressor or oppressed group. They learn to delay their gratification and to suppress their impulses.*

- **Relationship Skills** – children are taught to interact and speak with identity top of mind.

*Implications in the classroom...Cloaked in the language of empathy and caring, children are trained to carefully police their speech and behavior with others according to Self Awareness and Social Awareness of which identity group everyone belongs to and the associated power dynamics.*

- **Responsible Decision Making** – children are trained to act in ways that dismantle supposed power hierarchies.

*Implications in the classroom...Children learn that responsible decisions can only be in favor of the collective good, social justice, ESG and globalism. Decisions based on personal morality, religion, family bonds or rational self interest are discouraged.*

Ultimately, the proponents of SEL want every child to apply these principles at all times and into adulthood. Educators who promote SEL may not even know about its origins or intent. They support the push to create healthy identities, to foster empathy and caring, and the achievement of personal and collective goals. But who defines empathy? What constitutes a healthy identity? And who sets collective goals?

Transformative SEL trains children to have “correct” social awareness, attitudes, emotional responses and speech—not according to parents and families' personal value systems and beliefs, but according to a collective worldview steeped in social justice and Marxism.

As a parent, are you comfortable allowing teachers and counselors who lack psychological training and may not hold the same moral beliefs to implement highly personal and impactful strategies to shape your children's self awareness, awareness of others and views on what constitutes ethical behavior? The virtual reality SEL headset is designed to never come off. Once the SEL indoctrination is completed in K-12 education, your child will be steeped in a collectivist worldview that determines their adult behavior.



## THE SEL CYCLE

### A self-perpetuating model that thrives on children's personal data

Proponents say the five areas of SEL are vital to developing the soft skills and emotional intelligence required for jobs of the future. According to them, the future workforce will rely less on academic achievement or knowledge attainment and more on the ability to form relationships, collaborate and show empathy. The research to support the actual success of their claims and SEL's measurable positive impact in the world is thin and disingenuous. SEL relies on a self-perpetuating model whereby it collects children's data that then reinforces the need for more SEL investment, adoption and instruction.

The data collection required for the SEL cycle is pervasive and follows the child throughout K-12 schooling and beyond. Nearly every school, both public and private, uses a student data portal or platform that creates a student dashboard. The schools give children evaluations that measure mental health based on highly personal questions about sexuality, depression and anxiety, family life, risky behaviors, and attitudes and beliefs about divisive issues like race and gender. The results are stored in the child's dashboard, creating a permanent psychological profile that follows them as they change grades or even schools through statewide longitudinal data systems.

Ultimately, the data mining of children is used to create targeted SEL programming depending on the levels of bias, empathy and inclination to collectivist action—a direct implementation of Paulo Freire's

techniques to determine which teaching themes will be most effective with students to produce the desired worldview and behavior. Think of the VR headset as delivering the child's reactions and responses to the SEL information being presented in realtime as the game designers adjust the programming accordingly.

Mental health data is collected and interpreted through an equity lens. Schools receive a grade and thereby justification for further SEL investment. But children also receive a score based on conformity to the collective standards of social justice. Much like a social credit system, these scores may later be used to evaluate a student's suitability for college acceptance and entry into the workforce.





## SUMMARIZING SEL

### Pervasive, Invasive, Persuasive, Deceptive and Adaptive

#### **PERVASIVE**

Social-Emotional Learning is now pervasive across American schools. Regardless of the political leanings of the local school board, or private or charter school status, SEL curriculum is already in place, and may even be used in many Christian-based schools. Any schools with guidance counselors, administrators or teachers educated at U.S. colleges of education have been steeped in SEL practices. The entire education technology sector is geared for the data mining so critical to SEL, and educational testing providers are equally bought in to the tenets of SEL.

#### **INVASIVE**

SEL's implementation depends on data mining children about their personal beliefs, attitudes and behaviors, since that is what SEL proposes to develop. Schools now regularly administer deeply personal student surveys, creating a permanent psychological record that is used to justify further SEL training and to potentially create a social credit scoring system under the guise of individualized learning plans.

#### **PERSUASIVE**

As described, SEL sounds beneficial for every child, and especially for underprivileged children who lack stable homes. The purposeful language used to describe the five aspects of the SEL framework is a bait and switch. Parents and educators are drawn to the idea of fostering empathetic children who care about others and make responsible decisions. Upon

closer examination of SEL's origins—the Freirean model and culturally responsive teaching—the critical social justice roots of the program become apparent. The sense of empathy, responsibility and identity SEL instills should only be viewed through a Marxist agenda.

#### **DECEPTIVE**

The brilliant and insidious nature of SEL is to persuade parents, corporations and society to willingly adopt SEL and want every child to embrace its worldview to create a utopian future. SEL says it instills beneficial attitudes and behaviors, but in reality it is training children in a socialist worldview in which their immutable identity markers such as race and sex become the defining lines by which they view themselves and others and interact with society. In addition, the automatic opt-in nature of SEL programming makes it easy for parents and their children to agree to the mining of their private data.

#### **ADAPTIVE**

SEL is an extremely adaptive delivery system for a range of critical theory-based instruction. Picture the VR headset running a variety of simulations or programs designed to impact a child's worldview. For example, Critical Race Theory (CRT) fits perfectly within the framework of SEL. So do Queer Theory, Comprehensive Sex Education (CSE) and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) investing.

# Wake up to the Truth Behind SEL and its Agenda for Your Children

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is a framework designed to instill a specific system of beliefs, values, and behaviors in children, all based on Marxist critical theory. The way SEL is described and explained makes it sound beneficial to every child hoping to succeed in a global economy, and as a result, parents either support this educational framework wholeheartedly, submit to it meekly, or ignore it altogether.

**Now that you are aware of the dangers of SEL, take steps to protect your children:**

- 1. OPT OUT of public, private or charter school** and homeschool your children—the safest and best option.
- 2. OPT OUT of all school surveys and data mining:** all Comprehensive Sex Education, and where possible discreet SEL curriculum.
- 3. OPT OUT of any interaction with school guidance counselors,** who are steeped in the ideology of SEL.
- 4. OPT IN to constant discussions with your children** about the tenets of the SEL curriculum and its dangers—help your children identify SEL-based lessons so they can become impervious to them.
- 5. OPT IN to discussing your family’s personal beliefs and values** at home with your children—give your children a firm, loving foundation in your moral beliefs and traditions.

## SEL is the intentional effort to change the attitudes, values, and beliefs of your child; It is anti-God and family.

SEL proponents admit that their goal is to teach, train, and shape the “whole child,” a concept that originated with Josef Stalin:

“The production of souls is more important than the production of tanks,” Stalin said to a group of artists assembled at the home of Maxim Gorky in 1932, explaining that the communist desired not only to remake the world of politics and economics but to reshape human nature according to the dictates of left-wing ideology.”

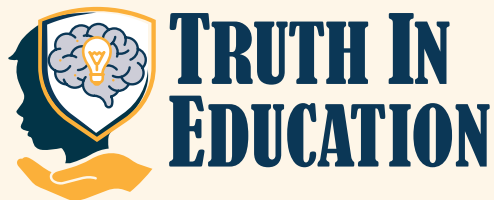
Christopher Rufo, *America’s Cultural Revolution  
How the Radical Left Conquered Everything*

We encourage you to learn more.

<https://casel.org>

<https://thefederalist.com/2022/08/23/un-program-teaching-kids-social-and-emotional-learning-actually-seeks-to-kill-their-individualism/>

<https://www.aei.org/research-products/report/the-unexamined-rise-of-therapeutic-education-how-social-emotional-learning-extends-k-12-educations-reach-into-students-lives-and-expands-teachers-roles/>



**About Truth in Education** — Truth in Education teaches parents and the community about the harmful indoctrination occurring in our schools under the guise of innocuously named programs like Social Emotional Learning, Comprehensive Sex Education, Whole Child/Whole Community, and Diversity, Equity/Belonging and Inclusion. Grounded in critical theory, these educational frameworks are designed to erode the family, faith, liberty, and love of country. Truth in Education helps parents understand the real roots of modern school curricula, identify sexualization and indoctrination in their children’s school experience, and find ways to opt out. We believe in parents’ God-given responsibility for their children’s education and that no government nor any person can supersede the right of parents to “train up a child in the way he should go.”

[TruthInEducation.org](https://TruthInEducation.org)