Developed in collaboration with

Self-Management

Competency

The educator will exercise agency to manage emotions, thoughts, and actions toward personal, professional, and collective goals.

Key Method

The educator will develop and strengthen self-management and create a self-management action plan including self-assessment, goal setting, small action steps, and self-reflection to build motivation and agency to accomplish personal or professional goals and aspirations.

Method Components

What is Social Emotional Learning (SEL)?

According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL):

"SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes 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." (CASEL, 2023)

CASEL's framework for SEL addresses five broad and interrelated areas of social and emotional competence:

- Self-awareness
- **Self-management**
- Social awareness
- Relationship skills
- Responsible decision-making

In this micro-credential, you will explore aspects of **self-management**, reflect on how this competency is relevant to your work and personal life, and develop a plan for personal growth.

What is Self-Management?

Self-management is about managing our emotions, thoughts, and actions as we work toward goals. This includes coping with stress and anxiety, persevering through challenges, and developing a sense of personal agency (a willingness and ability to take action to make a difference) (CASEL, 2023).

Focusing on self-management in your personal and professional life can help you with:

- Managing your emotions
- Using stress management strategies
- Overcoming challenges
- Exhibiting self-discipline
- Setting and meeting goals
- Staying motivated
- Taking the initiative and feeling a sense of agency

For a deeper look at self-management and its impact on you personally and professionally, consider three significant ways you likely rely on this competency: managing emotions; motivation, agency, goal setting; and planning and organization.

Managing Emotions

Emotion management is the ability to manage emotional arousal successfully and the skills to regulate emotions, including changing the intensity or time course of the emotions (Gross, 1998, as cited in Center on Great Leaders and Teachers, 2014). Educators, like other adults, do not all experience the same emotions under the same social situations and vary in their ability to regulate emotions. Because teachers are expected to regulate their emotions and emotional displays and respond to their students' feelings, educators who are highly skilled at managing their emotions are better equipped to handle the emotion-provoking demands of their profession.

Skills for managing emotional responses can be learned and developed. Emotional management skills improve academic achievement, physical health, personal

finances, substance dependence issues, life satisfaction, and parenting skills (Transforming Education, 2014).

Strategies for Managing Emotions

Practice these strategies to manage your emotions when challenging events occur:

- Remember that you can choose how you react, even if you do not have power over the situation.
- Anticipate likely scenarios that will be emotionally challenging, and prepare your response in advance so you can weigh the consequences.
- Notice when you are emotional, and let others know when you need a moment before you will be ready to respond.
- Incorporate a mindfulness activity into your daily routine.
- Take care of your body by eating healthy foods, drinking plenty of fluids, getting adequate sleep, and moving regularly.
- Build and maintain positive relationships.
- Schedule time to do things you enjoy.

Stress and the Teaching Profession

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) defines job-related stress as "the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the job requirements do not match the worker's capabilities, resources, or needs. Job stress can lead to poor health, including psychological and physiological symptoms (such as depression, anxiety, poor sleep patterns, etc.) and even injury." (Stress at Work, 1999)

Researchers from Penn State University (Greenberg et al., 2016) studied the causes and consequences of teacher stress. They found four main sources of stress:

- **School organizations**, such as
  - Lack of strong leadership and support
  - Unhealthy school climate
  - Unsatisfactory relationships with administrators, colleagues, or students
  - High turnover
- **Job demands**, such as
  - High-stakes tests
  - Unmanageable pace of work
  - Challenges with student behavior
  - Responding to parent concerns
- **Low support and autonomy**, such as
  - Lack of a voice in decision-making
  - Low collaboration among teachers
  - The sense that one's opinion does not matter to leadership
- **Social and emotional competence**, such as
  - Lack of training or support in managing stress and building supportive classroom relationships

Teachers' high stress levels lead to a range of negative consequences, including poor physical health; high attrition rates; lower student achievement, engagement, and social adjustment; more behavior problems; and greater inequity for students and families in low-income neighborhood schools.

School and district leaders can make institutional changes to reduce stress for educators using research-based strategies:

- Mindfulness programs can help educators reduce stress regardless of their role.
- Mentoring programs can help new educators reduce stress, increase retention, and positively impact classroom instruction.
- Workplace wellness programs can improve educator health, reduce absenteeism, and lower medical costs.
- Social and emotional learning (SEL) programs can reduce educators' feelings of burnout and increase job satisfaction.

If these strategies aren't available to you in your workplace, consider advocating for them. At the same time, learn about individual techniques that work for you, like connecting and collaborating regularly with a trusted group of colleagues, fitting a mindfulness practice into your routine, or learning more about how social and emotional competencies appear. Use the links in the resource section of this module to find additional stress reduction strategies that will work for you.

Motivation, Agency, and Goal Setting

Motivation, agency, and goal setting are closely connected. A sense of agency is central to self-management. Agency refers to your belief that you can have an impact and that you choose to act in a way that will positively impact your own life and those around you. As your sense of agency grows, you can more meaningfully set personal and collective goals and maintain the motivation to work toward them over time.

Key techniques for self-motivation

- Set feasible and measurable goals – such that you can measure and track small amounts of progress.
- Return to your "why" – reflect on the aspects of your task that are intrinsically motivating.
- Give yourself regular feedback. Make it a daily habit to notice your effort and reflect on how you handled challenging moments.
- Seek feedback from others – this can give you a more realistic understanding of how you're doing, and you may find that you are your own harshest critic!
- Celebrate progress with something personally rewarding, such as writing about your success or telling a friend or family member.

Planning and Organization

Planning and organization are other practical aspects of self-management. Strength in this area refers to a person's ability to develop realistic action steps to work toward a specific outcome over a reasonable amount of time. For your students, this may look like the planning they do at the outset of a major project to ensure they complete high-quality work by the due date. As a teacher, this could be evident in your unit and lesson planning, time management, and plan for assessing student growth leading up to targeted academic outcomes. It could be a wide range of things, like planning a family reunion or setting a personal budget.

You can achieve a well-organized plan, which may mean intentionally building in moments for a re-energizing break or saying "no" to additional demands. Just as you wouldn't want your students to pull an all-nighter to finish their project, it is not realistic to expect that you can do your best when you are exhausted or unable to focus. By scheduling action steps at reasonable intervals and mixing moments for personal renewal, you set yourself up for a less stressful process and a better outcome.

Even the best-laid plans do not always work out as we expect, so part of self-management competency includes being flexible and changing plans when necessary. Obstacles to success often lead to an emotional response, so take a moment to reflect on what you are feeling and how it impacts your thoughts and impulse to act. Managing your emotions, adjusting your plans in response to new realities, and maintaining your motivation to carry on are lifelong skills we all continue developing!

Supporting Rationale and Research

General SEL Resources

Althammer, S. E., Reis, D., van der Beek, S., Beck, L., & Michel, A. (2021). A mindfulness intervention promoting work-life balance: How segmentation preference affects detachment, well-being, and work-life balance changes. Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 94(2), 282-308. https://bpspsychub.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/joop.12346

Caldwell, Cam and Anderson, Verl (2021) "Moral Identity, Self-Improvement, and the Quest for Greatness: A Leadership Responsibility," The Journal of Values-Based Leadership: Vol. 14: Iss. 2, Article 4.
Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.22543/0733.142.1359

Duane, A. M., Hafen, Q., McVeagh-Lally. (2025). “It All Starts with Us”: Exploring teachers’ efforts to increase Adult SEL in practice. Social and Emotional Learning: Research, Practice, and Policy. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2773233925000099

Marie, K. S. T. S., & Cook-Cottone, C. (2022). MINDFUL SELF-CARE TO MANAGE THE EFFECTS OF TRAUMA, BURNOUT, AND COMPASSION FATIGUE IN EDUCATORS. Trauma in Adult and Higher Education: Conversations and Critical Reflections, 129. https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=rclfEAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA129&dq=mindfulness+and+quality+of+life+educators&ots=AQ6M-SQ5oM&sig=cq2umS-pWYllmtdYhZB--QFELhs

McLean, L., & Connor, C. M. (2015). Depressive symptoms in third-grade teachers: Relations to classroom quality and student achievement. Child development, 86(3), 945-954. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4428950/

Sahni PS, Singh K, Sharma N, Garg R (2021) Yoga an effective strategy for self-management of stress-related problems and wellbeing during COVID-19 lockdown: A cross-sectional study. PLoS ONE 16(2): e0245214. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0245214

Resources

General SEL Resources

CASEL

- What is the CASEL Framework? | CASEL

Leadership Competencies | NEA

Emotional Intelligence in Leadership: Why It's Important | HBS Online

Self-Management

Self-Management | video from CASEL, Montgomery County ESC, and ThinkTVPBS

Challenging Your Thoughts and Beliefs | Greater Good in Education

How SEL helps you as a teacher | Dr. Shivohn N. García | understood.org

Self-Management Skills: Definition and Examples | Indeed.com

Managing Emotions

Self-Compassion Break | Dr. Kristin Neff | Greater Good in Education

Managing Teacher Emotions and Stress | OSU Motivation in Classrooms Lab

A Simple Tool to Help Teachers Regulate Their Emotions | Jorge Valenzuela | Edutopia

A 5-Step Method for Addressing Negative Self-Talk | Amy Morin | Psychology Today

Goal Setting and Planning

Setting Goals that Matter | Samantha Kris | TEDx Talks

How Teachers Can Set Realistic Goals

Achieving Balance and Managing Stress

Podcast featuring Danna Thomas, founder of Happy Teacher Revolution | Trauma Informed Educators Network Podcast

Resilience Is About How You Recharge, Not How You Endure | Shawn Achor and Michelle Gielan | Harvard Business Review

Teacher Stress and Health: Effects on Teachers, Students, and Schools | video from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

STRESS...At Work | The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

Feeling Overwhelmed? Try the RAIN Meditation | Tara Brach | mindful.org

Yoga for Relaxation | video series from Yoga with Zelinda

16 Simple Ways to Relieve Stress and Anxiety | Healthline

Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

To earn this micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3 and a proficient rating for all components in Part 2.

Part 1. Overview Questions (Provides Context)

(200-300 words)
Please answer the following contextual questions to help our assessors understand your situation. Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.

1. Describe your current educational role and environment.
2. Why did you choose this micro-credential, and what do you hope to gain? Provide specific examples.
3. In what ways could improving your self-management skills positively influence BOTH your personal well-being and professional performance? Provide specific examples from both personal and professional areas to clarify your response.

Passing: All questions are answered thoroughly. The responses provide enough information to justify choosing this micro-credential to address a specific need. They explain current thoughts around managing emotions, motivation and goal setting, and organization. Specific examples are included in the responses.

Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this micro-credential, please submit the following three artifacts to demonstrate your learning. *Please do not include any information that will make you or your students identifiable to your reviewers.*

Artifact 1: Reflecting on Your Self-management

Consider each statement and consider how easy or difficult each item is for you.
You will not turn in this table.

Self-Management		Very difficult	Difficult	Easy	Very easy
MANAGING EMOTIONS	I find ways to manage strong emotions that don't negatively impact others.				
	I can get through something even when I feel frustrated.				
	I can calm myself when I feel stressed or nervous.				
MOTIVATION, AGENCY, and GOAL-SETTING	I hold high expectations that motivate me to seek self-improvement and encourage growth in those I lead.				
	I take action and impact change on issues important to me and the larger community.				
	I set measurable, challenging, and attainable goals and have clear steps to reach them.				
PLANNING and ORGANIZATION	I modify my plans in the face of new information and realities.				
	When juggling multiple demands, I use strategies to regain focus and energy.				
	I balance my work life with personal renewal time.				

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(400-800 words)
Your responses to the items above are for you alone, but take some time to reflect by responding to the following prompts.

1. **Strengths and Interactions:** How do the areas you marked as "easy" or "very easy" support your ability to manage emotions, maintain motivation, and stay organized? Provide specific examples from your life of how these strengths enhance your interactions with students, peers, and others personally or professionally.
2. **Challenges and Growth Opportunities:**: For areas marked as "difficult" or "very difficult," how could growth in these areas improve your self-management skills? What specific strategies or tools could help you develop in these areas? Provide specific examples.
3. **Surprises and Confirmations**: As you reflect on your responses, were there things that surprised you? Were there things that confirmed what you already know about yourself? Provide specific examples.
4. **Outcomes of Your Self-Management Skills:** Share a specific example from your life where strong self-management skills helped resolve a conflict or achieve a positive result. Share a different example from your life when a lack of strong self-management skills caused harm.
5. **Commitment to Growth:** Based on your reflections, what actions will you take to build on your strengths **and** address your challenges with self-management skills? Provide specific examples.

Turn in your responses to these 5 prompts. You may turn this in via the following formats:

*Photo of your handwritten response (must be legible)
*Voice recording
*Digital document

Artifact 2: S.W.O.T Analysis slides

Make a copy of and complete this S.W.O.T analysis template to analyze how self-management skills affect you and others around you. Include at least four items in each box. The SEL Competency is Self-Management.

Submit your completed slides as a Google Slides, PowerPoint, or PDF file. If submitting Slides or PowerPoint, please be sure your sharing settings allow anyone with a link to view.

Artifact 3: Self-management Growth Plan

(200-400 words)
Write in a journal or use a digital format to create a personal growth plan to improve **your** self-management skills. In your writing, please:

1. Include one goal, written in a SMART goal format (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound). Address each SMART element as you create your goal. See RESOURCES. Be sure to write a goal that addresses **your** self-management skills.
2. Describe any anticipated challenges to reaching your goal. How will you address those challenges?
3. Describe any supportive people you can rely on or routines and structures you can implement to help you achieve your goal.
4. List at least three specific steps you will take to get started.
5. Explain how you will track your progress. Start with the beginning status of your goal, then describe how you will track your progress as the plan is implemented. This may include a specific tracking tool, data that you keep, or journal entries that monitor your progress. What will you do if you discover something isn't working as planned?

Part 2. Rubric

	Proficient	**Basic**	**Developing**
Artifact 1: Reflecting on Your Self-Management	All questions are fully answered with complete explanations and specific examples. Introspection is evident. Responses are clear and well-organized, and the submission is clear and understandable.	All prompts are answered, but responses may lack specific examples or introspection. The writing may also lack clarity or depth in connecting self-management practices to personal or professional contexts.	Not all prompts are answered; responses lack detail, specific examples, or introspection. The writing may also be unclear, difficult to understand, or incomplete.
Artifact 2: Self-Management S.W.O.T. Analysis	The SWOT slide is completed with at least 4 items in each box.	The slide is completed but with fewer than 4 items in each box.	Slides are not completed and/or not all boxes have items listed.
Artifact 3: Self-Management Growth Plan	The plan includes a clear SMART goal that is specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. Each of these elements is explained. The goal focuses on improvement for the **educator's** self-management skills. Anticipated challenges are identified with thoughtful strategies to address them. Support systems and routines are described in detail, demonstrating alignment with the goal.	Growth plan includes most required elements, but responses lack depth, specific examples, or clear strategies. Introspection is minimal or inconsistent. Writing is understandable but may lack clarity in some areas.	Growth plan is missing multiple required elements, or responses are incomplete, vague, or lack introspection. Writing may be unclear or disorganized, making it difficult to follow the plan.

	At least three specific, actionable steps are provided with a clear timeline for tracking progress, and strategies for adjustments, as needed. The plan reflects introspection, intentionality, and alignment with responsible self-management principles.		

Part 3 Reflection

(200-400 words)
Write a personal reflection about your work on this micro-credential. A strong reflection describes:

- your personal experiences working toward understanding and application of the concepts in this micro-credential,
- specific moments that supported your learning,
- examples of how you will apply your learning to your unique context.

For tips on writing a good reflection, review the following resource:
How Do I Write a Good Personal Reflection?

Include your responses to the following questions in your submission:

1. How did implementing your growth plan strengthen your self-management skills?
2. What are your next steps in strengthening your self-management?
3. After working on your growth plan, what changes have you noticed in yourself and others? Provide specific examples.

Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.

Passing: Reflection provides evidence that this activity has positively impacted your self-management. Specific examples are cited directly from personal or work-related experiences to support claims. Also included are specific, actionable steps that demonstrate how new learning will be integrated into future practices.