



*Developed in collaboration with*



**COLLABORATIVE FOR  
ACADEMIC, SOCIAL, AND  
EMOTIONAL LEARNING**

# Self-Awareness

## Competency

The educator will explore their understanding of their identity, thoughts, and feelings through personal reflection and self-assessment, and will reflect on how these factors influence their daily behaviors.

## Key Method

The educator will develop and strengthen self-awareness and create a self-awareness action plan that will include self-reflection, self-assessment, goal setting, and small action steps.

## 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-awareness**, reflect on how this competency is relevant to your work and personal life, and develop a plan for personal growth.

### What is Self-Awareness?

Self-Awareness is how we think about ourselves and who we are. It includes understanding our culture, our thoughts and feelings, and what we believe we're capable of. It's also about understanding how these things can influence our behaviors and beliefs ([CASEL, 2023](#)).

For a more in-depth look at what self-awareness is and how it impacts you personally and professionally, consider three major ways you likely rely on this competency: emotional self-awareness; identity and self-knowledge; and a growth mindset and self-efficacy.

### Emotional Self-Awareness

Emotional self-awareness refers to your ability to identify and name your emotions as they arise, reflect on the factors that contribute to your emotions and how they impact you, and understand how your thoughts and emotions influence your behavior.

Emotions come and go for various periods of time and range anywhere between mild and intense. There are no “good” or “bad” emotions; both positive and negative emotions are completely normal. Your reactions to your emotions are what determine the nature of the consequences to yourself and/or others.

Expanding your emotional vocabulary will help you make sense of what you are feeling and communicate about your feelings with others. Naming your emotion with precision and reflecting on its root cause can help to release stress and resentment that may be building up. There are various tools to help you develop an emotional vocabulary in the resource section of this micro-credential. After you identify your emotions:

- Accept them without judgment.



- Think about the factors that contribute to your emotions, and what this tells you.
  - Are you nervous because of how much you care?
  - Are you frustrated because it is time to back out?
- Recognize ways that your emotions show up in the way you behave, the things you say, and the thoughts you think. How does this impact you and those around you?
  - Did you respond to someone with irritation because you were feeling anxious?
  - Did you say yes to a big new responsibility because you were feeling enthusiastic?

The more you practice recognizing and thinking through your emotions, the better you will get at managing them and making responsible decisions.

Consider which activities help you process your emotions. Here are some ideas:

- Make art.
- Take a walk.
- Write in a journal.
- Use positive self-talk – talk to yourself the way a trusted friend would.

Another way to develop awareness of your emotions is to practice mindfulness. Mindfulness is defined as purposeful awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment in the present moment. It is important to practice mindful awareness in a non-judgmental way. Mindfulness requires us to shut out distractions and judgmental thoughts. This can feel challenging at first but with practice, you will get better at it.

Before you try a mindfulness exercise, understand:

- It isn't realistic to expect to completely clear your mind -- your mind will wander, and your judge-y brain may try to take over.
- When your mind wanders, simply acknowledge your thought and return your attention to the present moment.

Here is an exercise you can try to get started:

1. Find a quiet and comfortable place to sit or lay down.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Put your hands on your belly.
4. Inhale through your nose and feel your belly expand.



5. Exhale through your nose and feel your belly contract.
6. Focus on making your inhale and exhale slow and smooth.
7. Focus on the sensation of your hand as your belly rises and lowers.
8. Repeat 3-6 times then return to normal breathing.

## Identity and Self-Knowledge

In Beverly Daniel Tatum's book, *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria*, she writes: "the concept of identity is a complex one, shaped by individual characteristics, family dynamics, historical factors, and social and political contexts. All of which leads to the evolving question: Who am I?"

The awareness of personal identity (values, beliefs, cultural norms, implicit biases, etc.) and a commitment to recognizing and addressing bias and injustice is foundational to an environment which is culturally responsive and restorative. Identity and self-knowledge refer to knowing who you are and how you came to be that way, understanding your strengths and your limitations, and recognizing ways in which your views and beliefs are shaped by your identity and lived experiences.

Strengthening your self-awareness may include examining your own sociocultural identities and biases, empathizing with and taking on perspectives of those who are different from you, seeking feedback from students and colleagues to understand how your self-perception compares to their perceptions, and assessing how your actions impact equitable outcomes.

## Growth Mindset and Self-efficacy

Another important piece of self-awareness is your ability to recognize your strengths and areas for growth. A growth mindset refers to the understanding that abilities can be developed through effort (Dweck, 2013), and can be a helpful frame for young people and adults as they work through challenges and respond to setbacks. Self-efficacy refers to confidence in one's own ability to successfully meet challenges and complete tasks successfully. Self-efficacy can greatly impact how people feel, think, behave, and motivate themselves. People who have a heightened sense of self-efficacy:

- See challenging problems as tasks to be mastered, rather than threats to be avoided.
- Develop greater intrinsic interest and focus on their activities.
- Set challenging goals and demonstrate a stronger sense of commitment to them.



- Quickly recover their self-efficacy following setbacks and disappointments (Bandura, 1994).

Here are some simple strategies for developing self-efficacy:

- Set aside time in your routine to reflect on your “wins” from the day and celebrate them.
- When gathering with friends or colleagues, take turns sharing and talking through a challenge, and what you’ve tried so far to overcome it.
- Write down your goals, both big and small, and revisit them. Recognize how you are making progress and accomplishing them, or how your goals shift over time.

## Self-Reflection

At all stages of life, we benefit from self-reflection on our SEL competencies. As part of this module, you'll create several artifacts to reflect on your own self-awareness. Self-reflection is a process that starts with observing and analyzing yourself to deepen your understanding of why you think, feel, and act in certain ways. Reflective practices are part of social-emotional learning and growth. There are many tools and approaches to self-reflection and the more you practice it the better you will get.

Self-reflection may have some of the following benefits.

- Better relationships
- Deeper self-awareness
- Stronger decision-making skills
- Self-acceptance and compassion

One of the best ways to practice consistent self-reflection is to keep a journal. You can keep a journal digitally, on paper, use an art journal, or use audio/visual tools to record your thoughts. Find one that fits your routine and works well for you. Below are some tips to get you started:

- Set aside a specific, consistent time to journal. If you find it difficult to make this part of your routine, start by committing to just a sentence or two per day.
- Find a quiet, peaceful spot.
- Set aside your phone or other distractions.
- Try stream-of-consciousness journaling *and* try using journal prompts to find the journaling style you like best.
- Let go of perfection, expectations, and judgment.



# Supporting Rationale and Research

## Social Emotional Learning

Bratton, V.K., Dodd, N.G. and Brown, F.W. (2011), "The impact of emotional intelligence on the accuracy of self-awareness and leadership performance", [Leadership & Organization Development Journal](#), Vol. 32 No. 2, pp. 127-149.  
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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.  
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CASTEK, J., & RYOO, J. (2021). Mindfulness and Compassion in Teacher Education. What Teacher Educators Should Have Learned from 2020, 53.  
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Gimbert, B. G., Miller, D., Herman, E., Breedlove, M., & Molina, C. E. (2021). Social-Emotional Learning in Schools: The Importance of Educator Competence. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, 19427751211014920.  
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/19427751211014920>

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<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>

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Yang, C. (2021). Online teaching self-efficacy, social-emotional learning (SEL) competencies, and compassion fatigue among educators during the COVID-19 pandemic. *School Psychology Review*, 50(4), 505-518.  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/2372966X.2021.1903815>



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Bakker, A. B., & van Wingerden, J. (2021). Do personal resources and strengths use increase work engagement? The effects of a training intervention. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 26(1), 20–30.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000266>

Caldwell, C., & Hayes, L. A. (2016). Self-efficacy and self-awareness: moral insights to increased leader effectiveness. *Journal of Management Development*.

<https://scholar.valpo.edu/jvbl/vol14/iss2/4/>

Steffens, N. K., Wolyniec, N., Okimoto, T. G., Mols, F., Haslam, S. A., & Kay, A. A. (2021). Knowing me, knowing us: Personal and collective self-awareness enhances authentic leadership and leader endorsement. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 32(6), 101498.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1048984321000047>

## Resources

### General SEL Resources

[Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning](#)

- [What is the CASEL Framework? | CASEL](#)

[Leadership Competencies | NEA](#)

[Emotional Intelligence in Leadership: Why It's Important | HBS Online](#)

### Self-Awareness

[Self-Awareness | video from CASEL, Montgomery County ESC, and ThinkTVPBS](#)

[Brief Body Scan | Greater Good in Education](#)

[How Self-Awareness Enhances Teaching | Dr. Robin LaBarbera | medium.com](#)

[How SEL helps you as a teacher | Dr. Shivohn N. García | understood.org](#)

[64 Journaling Prompts for Self-Discovery | Psych Central](#)



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## Emotions

[17 Free Mood Tracker Printables to Understand Yourself Better | Happier Human](#)

[Printable Feelings Wheel | Dr. Gloria Wilcox](#)

[How We Feel | App from The How We Feel Project, Inc.](#)

[How to Express Your Feelings: 30+ Emotional Expression Tips | positivepsychology.com](#)

[How to Express Feelings... and How Not To | Psychology Today](#)

## Identity

[JOHARI Window | video from HR Squared](#)

[JOHARI Window Worksheet | Professional Communications OER](#)

[Radical Cultural Self-Awareness | Denise Soler Cox | TEDx Talks](#)

[Promote Equity Using SEL in Your School | CASEL](#)

[SEL for Educators: Examine Identity | Transforming Education](#)

[Self-Assessment Checklist – Cultural Competence | National Association of School Psychologists](#)

## Mindset

[The Art of SEL Cards | Sacramento City USD](#)

[Developing a Growth Mindset in Teachers and Staff | Edutopia](#)

[Building a Growth Mindset for Teachers | Resilient Educator](#)

[Mindfulness in Education, Learning from the Inside Out | Amy Burke | TEDx Talks](#)

[30 Seconds to Mindfulness | Phil Boissiere | TEDx Talks](#)

[Feeling Overwhelmed? Try the RAIN Meditation | Tara Brach | mindful.org](#)





# Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

*To earn this micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3 and receive 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 assessor understand your current situation. Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.*

1. How are you currently practicing self-awareness and what does that look like in your daily life?
2. How do you think increased self-awareness will enhance your personal and professional life?
3. In what ways does your identity (race/ethnicity, social class status, gender, language, learning abilities, strengths, interests, etc.) inform who you are as an educator?

**Passing:** All questions are answered completely. Responses provide reasonable and accurate information that justifies the reason for choosing this micro-credential in order to address a specific need and explains current thoughts around mindfulness, reflection and mindset. Personal examples are included in the responses.



Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this micro-credential please submit the following three artifacts as evidence of 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-Awareness**

Think about each statement and consider how easy or difficult each item is for you personally. **Do not turn this in.**

Self-Awareness		Very difficult	Difficult	Easy	Very easy
<b>EMOTIONAL SELF-AWARENESS</b>	I can identify and name my emotions in the moment.				
	I use self-reflection to understand the factors that contribute to my emotions and how my emotions impact me.				
	I recognize when my emotions, thoughts, and biases influence my behavior and my reactions to people and situations, both negatively and positively.				
<b>IDENTITY AND SELF KNOWLEDGE</b>	I know and am realistic about my strengths and limitations.				
	I recognize and reflect on ways in which my identity is shaped by other people and my race, culture, experiences, and environments.				
	I recognize and reflect on ways in which my identity shapes my views, biases, and prejudices.				
<b>GROWTH MINDSET AND PURPOSE</b>	I believe I will continue to learn and develop skills to better support all young people to succeed.				
	I believe I can influence my own future and achieve my ambitions.				
	I can see how I have a valuable role in my work, my family, and my community.				

Reproduced from CASEL’s [Personal SEL Reflection](#) (2021), with permission.

(400-800 words)

Your responses to the items above are for you alone, but take some time to journal as you reflect on your responses.

1. Review the statements you marked as “easy” or “very easy.” How do these areas of strength affect your interactions with young people and peers?
2. Review the statements you marked as “difficult” or very difficult.” How might enhancing these areas of challenge benefit your interactions with young people and peers?
3. When looking at your responses, were there things that surprised you? Were there things that confirmed what you already know about yourself?
4. Provide 2 examples from your life that illustrate how self-awareness helped you manage a difficult situation and achieve a positive outcome for yourself and/or others.
5. Provide 1 example of how a lack of self-awareness has caused harm to yourself and/or others.



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Upload your journal entry. This can be a photo of your written journal, a voice recording, or a digital document.

## Artifact 2: Explore an Area of Personal Growth

Choose **one** of the following areas that you wish to focus on.

### OPTION 1 - Recognizing, Identifying, and Expressing Your Emotions

Please note that this option has 3 parts and requires you to upload an emotions tracker and a journal entry. You will need to complete all 3 parts if you choose this option.

1. Meditation
2. Emotions Tracking
3. Journal Entry

#### Part 1-(Meditation)

1. Find a quiet and comfortable place to sit.
2. Take a long slow deep breath, inhaling and exhaling through your nose.
3. Keep breathing slowly- inhaling and exhaling through your nose.
4. Pay attention to any sensations you feel in your body. Just notice, without judgment.
5. Now begin to pay attention to your emotions. Find the emotion you are feeling right now or recall an emotion you felt recently.
6. Notice if the emotion felt pleasant or unpleasant.
7. Look for words that describe this emotion.
8. Keep watching and describing this emotion. If other thoughts wander in your mind gently refocus and continue to watch and describe this emotion.
9. Notice any changes you feel with this emotion, is it getting stronger or lighter? Describe what that is like.
10. If your emotion changes just keep watching and describing it.
11. Stay with it until you notice your emotions change or diminish.
12. Repeat at least one time per day for one week.

#### Part 2 - (Emotions Tracking Tool)

- Choose one of the [emotions tracking tools](#) from the resources section in this micro-credential.
- Use this [feelings wheel](#) (or another collection of specific emotion words) to help you name your emotions.
- Track your emotions 3-4 times a day for 1 week.

**Upload your completed emotions tracker.**



### Part 3 - (Journal Entry or Art)

(100-200 words)

Take a moment to journal about your experience in a non-judgmental way.

- What emotion did you express?
- How did you express it?
- How was it received by others?
- How did it make you feel?

### **OR**

Use your creative muscles to express your emotions. Below are a few ideas.

- Write a poem.
- Write a song.
- Create a collage.
- Draw a cartoon.
- Paint/Draw a picture.
- Complete a photo collage.

Help your reviewer understand the emotion you are expressing with captions, titles, or labels.

**Upload your journal entry, poem, song, collage, or drawing.**

### **OPTION 2 - Reflecting on Identity with the JOHARI Window**

Use the directions on [this worksheet](#) to complete the JOHARI window exercise.

**Upload your completed worksheet.**

### **OPTION 3 - Reflecting on Identity with a Social Identity Word Cloud**

Use an online word cloud generator, such as [worditout.com](#), or draw a self-identity word cloud. Include at least 10 words that describe your identity. Make the words different sizes based on what is most important to you.

Reference a social identity wheel, [such as this one](#), to decide what you will include, and reflect on how your social identity impacts the way you feel and think in different settings.

**Upload your word cloud.**

**\*Tip-** If you take a screenshot you do not have to provide an email or create an account on [Worditout.com](#)



## Artifact 3: Self-awareness Growth Plan

(200-400 words)

You can write in your journal or use a digital format to create a self-awareness growth plan. In your journal, please:

1. Include one SMART Goal (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound).
2. Describe any anticipated challenges to reaching your goal.
3. Describe any supportive people you can rely on, or routines and structures you can put in place to help you achieve your goal.
4. List at least specific 3 steps you will take to get started.
5. Thoughtfully explain you will move forward and track your progress.

*\*SMART Goal example:*

*I will practice mindful moments for 3-5 minutes every day, for the next 30 days, to recognize and identify my emotions so that I can express them in a healthy and productive way.*

## Part 2. Rubric

	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Developing</b>
<b>Artifact 1: Reflecting on your Self- awareness</b>	All questions are answered completely with a full explanation and examples  Introspection is evident  Journal is legible and/or understandable	All questions are answered but examples are missing  and/or  Introspection was not evident	Not all questions are answered  and/or  Details are missing  and/or  Introspection was not evident  and/or  Journal is not viewable or legible
<b>Artifact 2: Explore an Area of</b>	All parts of the activity are completed with	Most parts of the activity are completed	Very few parts of the activity are complete



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<p><b>Personal Growth</b></p>	<p>important details.</p> <p>Information is authentic and thoughtful.</p> <p>Directions are followed and completed.</p>	<p>and/or</p> <p>Details are missing</p> <p>Information may lack authenticity or depth.</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>Some directions were not followed</p>	<p>and/or</p> <p>Details are missing</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>Directions were not followed</p>
<p><b>Artifact 3: Self-awareness Growth Plan</b></p>	<p>Plan includes: -SMART Goal -A plan or tool to track progress -Answers to all questions</p> <p>Answers illustrate a clear plan to accomplish the goal</p> <p>Introspection is evident</p>	<p>The plan is missing parts</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>Answers lack details</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>No introspection is evident</p>	<p>Most parts of the plan are missing</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>Answers are incomplete</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>No introspection is evident</p>



## Part 3 Reflection

(200-400 words)

Write a personal reflection about your work on this micro-credential. A strong reflection describes your personal experience working toward the micro-credential, specific moments that supported your learning, and examples of how you will apply what you have learned to your unique context. For tips on writing a good reflection, review the following resource:

[How Do I Write a Good Personal Reflection?](#)

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

1. How did implementing your growth plan strengthen your self-awareness?
2. What are your next steps in strengthening your self-awareness?
3. What will you do differently, or what is working really well for you?

**Passing:** Reflection provides evidence that this activity has had a positive impact on self-awareness. 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.

