

## Appendix C: Bi-directional Relationship Between the IL SEL Standards and the Common Core

On the most basic level, all learning that involves interacting with others or another's conveyed thoughts is social and emotional in nature and requires a level of aptitude in that regard. Reciprocally, the self-awareness, social skills, and decision-making competencies called for in the Illinois Social and Emotional Learning Standards depend in part on engagement and increased competence in the learning process.

The adoption of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in Mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) represents an enriched cycle of opportunity to even more cohesively integrate social, emotional and academic learning. While social, emotional and behavioral competencies are fundamentally required to successfully address these and any learning standards, the Common Core State Standards are, to varying extents, intentionally designed to enhance and further develop such competencies in relation to subject area content.

The CCSS content standards in ELA and Math trace developmentally appropriate learning progressions, while reflecting research-based recognition of the inseparable nature of academic and social emotional learning.

Additionally, the CCSS explicitly call for student "capacities" in ELA and "practices" in Math that require personal awareness, collaboration with others, socially informed decision-making, and sensitivity to human diversity.

Review of the CCSS in both ELA and Math reveal these and other general themes in relation to the reciprocal relationship between academic and social emotional learning:

- The CCSS require students to acknowledge that learning occurs within the context of one's and others' frameworks of perceptions, beliefs, and experiences and recognize these personal precursors to learning in their ongoing pursuits of academic goals.
- The CCSS require students to recognize the individual perspectives of others in learning processes that utilize cooperation, collaboration, and critique with both adult educators and student peers.
- The CCSS require students to adapt to context when making academic decisions based on criteria that parallel social decision-making in a broader life context, and apply what they have learned to real life social issues.

These themes correlate closely with the Illinois Social Emotional Learning Goals:

- Goal 1 - Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success.
- Goal 2 - Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.
- Goal 3 - Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.

By reflecting on the skills required for College and Career Readiness in the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the standards intentionally address not only academic achievement, but also a broader construct of life skills that allows for fulfillment and contribution in academic, professional, and societal roles.

### **A Broadened Definition of Literacy**

*“As a natural outgrowth of meeting the charge to define college and career readiness, the Standards also lay out a vision of what it means to be a literate person in the twenty-first century. Indeed, the skills and understandings students are expected to demonstrate have wide applicability outside the classroom or workplace. Students who meet the Standards... reflexively demonstrate the cogent reasoning and use of evidence that is essential to both private deliberation and responsible citizenship in a democratic republic.”*

#### ***Introduction, Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts***

The Common Core State Standards in ELA support a broad approach to literacy, including learner attributes necessary for student success, by prescribing necessary “capacities of a literate individual.” These capacities, not standards themselves but a collective profile of students who have mastered them, apply across the ELA content standards and highlight the individual and social awareness and skills incorporated in the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts.

Full descriptions of seven capacities of a literate individual can be found in the [Common Core State Standards in ELA](#) document. The following are excerpted examples illustrating social emotional skills necessary to fulfill a broadened definition of literacy:

**They demonstrate independence.** Students “build on others’ ideas, articulate their own ideas, and confirm they have been understood... (T)hey become self-directed learners, effectively seeking out and using resources to assist them, including teachers, peers, and print and digital reference materials.”

**They build strong content knowledge.** “They read purposefully and listen attentively... They refine and share their knowledge through writing and speaking.”

**They respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline.** “Students adapt their communication... They appreciate nuances, such as how the composition of an audience should affect tone when speaking and how the connotations of words affect meaning.”

**They comprehend as well as critique.** “Students are engaged and open-minded—but discerning... They work diligently to understand precisely what an author or speaker is saying, but they also question an author’s or speaker’s assumptions and premises...”

**They value evidence.** “They use relevant evidence when supporting their own points in writing and speaking, making their reasoning clear to the reader or listener, and they constructively evaluate others’ use of evidence.”

**They use technology and digital media strategically and capably.** “Students employ technology thoughtfully... They are familiar with the strengths and limitations of various technological tools and mediums and can select and use those best suited to their communication goals.”

**They come to understand other perspectives and cultures.** “Students appreciate that the twenty-first-century classroom and workplace are settings in which people from often widely divergent cultures and who represent diverse experiences and perspectives must learn and work together. Students actively seek to understand other perspectives and cultures through reading and listening, and they are able to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds.”

**“Capacities of a Literate Individual,” Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts**

Additionally, the *content standards* in ELA, considered here on the level of College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards, also reflect correlations with social/emotional learning both implicitly and explicitly to varying degrees.

These “anchor standards” are the exit-level learning standards reflecting skills deemed necessary for successful entry into college and career. The ELA anchor standards represent a culmination of learning achieved via corresponding grade-by-grade content standards that progress in developmentally-appropriate increments.

This structural organization of the ELA Standards into linear *learning progressions* represents intentional sensitivity to child development in regard to social and emotional, as well as intellectual, growth. Likewise, this linear tracing of increasingly sophisticated skills offers great potential in regard to differentiated instruction and the provision of instructional supports based on individual students’ progress.

Together, the anchor standards and grade-level specific standards define the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate within four major strands of English Language Arts instruction: reading (both literature and informational texts), writing, speaking and listening, and language.

**Instructional Considerations**

Major instructional emphases within these four strands underscore the necessity of accompanying social and emotional instruction.

**Reading**

The CCSS emphasis on *close reading* skills, those that enable students to extract rich meaning and supporting evidence from written text, requires thoughtful teacher reflection regarding the selection of reading materials, as well as sensitivity to various interpretations of materials by students stemming from personal experience and circumstance as well as cultural diversity. Individual student interests should also be considered as teachers strive to encourage deepened student engagement with text. Engagement is a necessary precursor to the ability to attend to text to the extent required by close reading and a contributing factor to students’ motivation to persevere when experiencing frustration as a result of extended interaction with challenging text.

The Common Core model for gauging appropriate *text complexity*, another major tenet of the CCSS in ELA, includes *reader and task considerations* as one of three components. In addition to qualitative and quantitative elements of the model that focus on the inherent complexity of the text, “variables specific to particular readers (such as motivation, knowledge, and experiences) and to particular tasks... must also be considered when determining whether a text is appropriate for a given student. Such assessments are best made by teachers employing their professional judgment, experience, and knowledge of their students and the subject” ([CCSS in ELA, Appendix A](#)).

Additionally, a shift in the balance of instructional attention to include more informational text in relation to literature requires instruction that assists students in employing the individual and social awareness necessary to actively ascertain and consider an author’s purpose, intent, and potential biases.

### Writing

Likewise, SEL instruction is needed to assist students in ascertaining their own purpose, intent, and potential biases when creating written work. The CCSS approach to writing also prescribes a new instructional balance, distributing academic attention among narrative, explanatory, and argument writing. Specific to argument writing, the standards emphasize the building of a coherent *argument* based upon contextual evidence, versus “persuasive” writing based upon an appeal to the reader’s emotions. To distinguish between the two, students must possess a keen understanding of fact versus their and other’s opinions and resulting emotions, as well as the literary strategies applied to various styles and purposes of writing meant to impact diverse audiences.

### Speaking and Listening

Increased attention to speaking and listening skills in the Common Core State Standards presents unique opportunity, and need, for the integration of social and emotional and academic learning. Speaking and listening skills are emphasized in the early grades as a vehicle of early comprehension that developmentally precedes reading and writing. Additionally and throughout all grades, the Common Core State Standards pay increased attention to speaking and listening skills as critical modes of communication and collaboration.

As such, specific speaking and listening standards outline goals for the manner in which students can positively interact with both peers and adults in communicative exchange. Thus, layers of academic and social skill-building explicit in the speaking and learning standards contribute to learning environments that facilitate collaboration and respectful critique to move learning forward.

### Language

The language standards within the Common Core State Standards for ELA focus on the progression of skills related to conventions of the English language as well as the effective use of language to convey meaning. A tiered approach to vocabulary acquisition that focuses on everyday language, general academic words, and domain specific words requires students to consider the nuances of word meaning, including nonliteral meaning, and the importance of word choice in relation to social context. Again, teachers should be conscientious of students’

diverse cultural and experiential frames of reference as it affects language acquisition and word choice.

### Shared approach to Literacy

Importantly, the Common Core State Standards initiative calls for a shared approach to literacy that requires all educators across subject areas to share responsibility for reinforcing the major tenets of the ELA standards. To be clear, that does not mean that instructors of other content areas must shift their focus to fill the specific roles of English teachers. It does, however, assert an acknowledgement that the major goals of student literacy, which serve as the vehicle for instruction and assessment of understanding in all content areas, are too large and interconnected to be addressed in isolation in English courses only.

Therefore, the CCSS requires building-wide cohesion in the teaching of literacy goals in relation to subject areas. In fact, reading and writing standards for literacy to be applied in the content areas in grades 6-12 are included in the Common Core State Standards in ELA document and divided into two sections: Literacy in History/Social Studies and Literacy in Science and Technical Subjects. These subject-area literacy standards offer parallel progressions toward the same anchor standards as ELA and reflect content-specific applications of the same broad skills.

It follows, then, that all teachers, regardless of content area, must acquire awareness and skills related to the social and emotional aspects of literacy (as outlined in the CCSS standards in ELA).

### A Mindful Approach to Numeracy

As correlations involving academic and social emotional learning are highlighted via a broadened definition of literacy, not to be forgotten are the social and emotional connections to the evolved approach to numeracy laid forth in the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics.

The CCSS reflect not only content, but an awareness of how students best learn math. Writers of the Math standards attest that to the greatest extent supported by current research, the standards were developed with sensitivity to learners' development:

*"...(T)he 'sequence of topics and performances' that is outlined in a body of mathematics standards must also respect what is known about how children learn... In recognition of this, the development of these Standards began with research-based learning progressions detailing what is known today about how students' mathematical knowledge, skill, and understanding develop over time."*

### **Common Core State Standards in Mathematics, Introduction**

Significantly, the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics includes practice standards as well as content standards, with the former describing the "varieties of expertise that mathematics educators at all levels should seek to develop in their students." The Practice Standards in Mathematics reflect the balanced emphases on procedure and understanding that characterize the CCSS in Math. In addition to practice standards directly related to one's academic approach to mathematics, the practice standards also include descriptors of communication and application processes stemming from mathematical learning. For instance,

among expectations laid forth in the [Math Practice Standards](#), is a “productive disposition (habitual inclination to see mathematics as sensible, useful, and worthwhile, coupled with a belief in diligence and one’s own efficacy.”

This and other habits of mind culminating in the practice standards, to varying extents, correlate with and benefit from a social-emotional emphasis on learners’ self-awareness and social skills applied to the learning process. Full descriptions of the eight Mathematical Practice Standards can be found in the [Common Core State Standards in Mathematics](#) document, yet the following are excerpted examples of select Math Practice Standards that explicitly illustrate such connections.

**1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.**

“Mathematically proficient students... continually ask themselves, “Does this make sense?” They can understand the approaches of others to solving complex problems and identify correspondences between different approaches.”

**3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.**

“Mathematically proficient students...justify their conclusions, communicate them to others, and respond to the arguments of others... Students at all grades can listen or read the arguments of others, decide whether they make sense, and ask useful questions to clarify or improve the arguments.”

**4. Model with mathematics.**

“Mathematically proficient students can apply the mathematics they know to solve problems arising in everyday life, society, and the workplace... (A) student might apply proportional reasoning to plan a school event or analyze a problem in the community.”

**Instructional Considerations in Math**

Writers of the CCSS acknowledge that the increased rigor represented in the standards require even more explicit attention to students’ abilities to successfully approach and persevere in the pursuit of mathematical understanding and procedural fluency. This perseverance requires the ability to sustain engagement and overcome obstacles with a mindset that anticipates challenges as external and surmountable, versus surrendering effort when challenges are encountered. Socially and emotionally, self-awareness and self-monitoring skills prove essential to this goal, as does the ability to validate and compare alternative approaches pursued by others in relation to one’s own work.

The CCSS require an approach to math instruction that is highly collaborative and dependent upon rich discourse among students about math content. The standards require that students not only solve math problems, but be able to explain their reasoning to others comprehensively and coherently. When approaches and/or results differ, students are expected to converse about these results in a respectful manner while maintaining focus on the seeking of mathematical truth, versus conflict that is personalized. Preemptive social and emotional skill-building is crucial to creating a climate and promote the individual capacities necessary to pursue this discourse-centered approach.

Finally, the CCSS in Mathematics focus on the goal of applying skills and knowledge gained to real-life problem-solving. Students are asked to transfer learning from the math classroom to the resolution of scenarios that impact others and are social in nature. This broadened application of math requires social and emotional awareness in ascertaining problems to be

solved and empathically assessing the impact of problems and solutions on individuals and communities.

### **Going beyond the Standards**

While the CCSS address a baseline of content and practice standards for student success, they do not prescribe precise instructional strategies for teachers. The standards also do not address intervention methods or materials necessary to support students who are well below or well above grade-level expectations, English language learners, or students with other special needs. (The Illinois State Board of Education has released “Guidance on Documenting Common Core State Standards on the Individualized Education Program” which can be found at <http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/guidance.htm>.)

In addition, the writers of the Common Core State Standards in both Mathematics and ELA recognize that academic standards are best supplemented by additional layers of instructional focus in order to achieve true student readiness, in all aspects, for college and career. Social and emotional learning, integrated through academic learning goals, can facilitate the pursuit of true college and career readiness.

*“No set of grade-specific standards can fully reflect the great variety in abilities, needs, learning rates, and achievement levels of students in any given classroom. However, the Standards do provide clear signposts along the way to the goal of college and career readiness for all students.”*

#### **Common Core State Standards in Mathematics**

*“While the ELA and content area literacy components described herein are critical to college and career readiness, they do not define the whole of such readiness. Students require a wide ranging, rigorous academic preparation and... attention to such matters as social, emotional, and physical development and approaches to learning.”*

#### **Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts**