



## SOCIAL AWARENESS

### Sample Strategies

**Social Awareness** is the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.<sup>i</sup> Students with strong social awareness can more easily adapt to their environment, empathize with the perspectives of others, engage in fewer disruptive classroom behaviors, and are able to engage in constructive communication with their peers and resolve conflicts when they arise.<sup>ii,iii</sup> For a more detailed description of this competency, please click [here](#).

Transforming Education has developed a **toolkit** to help educators learn more about social awareness. The toolkit includes a more detailed explanation of the competency, video interviews of students' relaying their own experiences related to social awareness, as well as a variety of strategies that teachers can use in their classrooms. To download the Social Awareness Toolkit, [click here](#).<sup>iv</sup>

#### STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS' SOCIAL AWARENESS

Below is a list of strategies that can be integrated into various curricula and adapted for different grade levels. These strategies are useful for setting the tone at the beginning of a new unit, semester, school year, or for re-emphasizing the importance of social awareness among students and/or the larger school community.

**Shared Norms.** Create shared norms on how members of your class will interact with one another that become part of the classroom culture. This shared language and agreement contains familiar, understandable ways to communicate with others, including how to listen, show gratitude, or apologize.<sup>v</sup> Read a how-to guide on facilitating classroom norming by using a T-chart [here](#).<sup>vi</sup>

**What's Your Portrait?** Before norming day, have students take a personality assessment (for example, the [Kiersey Temperament Sorter](#) or the [True Colors Personality Test](#)), and ask them to form groups with peers who have similar scores. Ask the groups to a) identify what their teammates have in common and b) decide what outside groups should know about them. Then, ask the groups to report on their discussions.<sup>vii</sup>

**Participatory Classroom.** Make your classroom more participatory by giving your students more say in what happens in the classroom. Consider letting students determine classroom guidelines and consequences, offering students the opportunity to share their ideas about assignments and areas of study, making certain decisions by consensus, and offering opportunities for students to teach the class.<sup>viii</sup>

**Foster Civil Discourse.** Create a safe and reflective classroom open for exchanging ideas and listening respectfully by using strategies that help students practice constructive civil discourse. Find a strategies guide from Facing History [here](#).<sup>ix</sup>

**Family Engagement.** Engage families in their children's education. Enhance family involvement by offering opportunities to be involved that are accessible to families who work multiple jobs, reaching out early and often, and facilitating ongoing communication, rather than waiting until something's wrong.<sup>x</sup>

**Active & Constructive Responding.** Encourage students to practice active, constructive responding by regularly sharing positive news with one another in a large group setting (e.g., during morning meeting). When students share something positive, have everyone practice using active and constructive responses, including: enthusiastic responses; eye contact; celebrating good news together; asking open-ended questions; nodding head with a smile<sup>xi</sup>



**Post-group Reflection.** Have student collaborate on projects. Read more about fostering an ideal cooperative learning environment [here](#).<sup>xii</sup> Provide an opportunity for reflection after group projects through journal writing by using the following prompts:<sup>xiii</sup>

- How do you feel about the group’s effort toward finishing the assignment?
- List some actions you took to help the group finish the assignment.
- How did participants treat one another throughout the project?
- How did it feel to work in this particular group? What made it feel that way?

**The Jigsaw Classroom.** Encourage students to work together to build knowledge on a topic with The Jigsaw Classroom. Find the steps for implementation [here](#).<sup>xiv</sup>

**Mood Meter.** Help students build self-awareness and emotional literacy by using the Mood Meter to help them understand and label their feels and those of others. Watch Yale’s Center for Emotional Intelligence introductory [video](#) to learn more.<sup>xv</sup> See a sample mood meter and find more ideas about how to use it [here](#).<sup>xvi</sup>

## GRADE-SPECIFIC STANDALONE LESSONS & ACTIVITIES

Below is a list of standalone lessons about social awareness, categorized by grade level. However, keep in mind that all the lessons are adaptable for students in different grade levels than those indicated.

### Elementary School

- **Explore the topic of empathy** as a single classroom or in mixed-age buddy pairs with an [interactive comic](#) based on the PBS children’s series ARTHUR. Access the Educator’s Guide for this complete lesson plan and others [here](#).<sup>xvii</sup>
- **Foster an opportunity for students to become immersed in another’s perspective and experience** by having students create text and visuals about the experiences of a historical figure and then conduct a “gallery walk” to learn and ask about each other’s work. In preparing to present their work and answer questions, students will learn about the historical figure’s perspective and circumstances. Find more information about gallery walks [here](#).<sup>xviii</sup> (Also appropriate for high school aged students.)

### Middle School

- **Build in a cooperative learning technique into a debate or group discussion on a variety of topics** by implementing the Constructive Controversy technique. Find the steps for implementation in our [Social Awareness Toolkit](#).<sup>xix</sup> (Also appropriate for high school-aged students.)
- **Facilitate an activity in which students can recognize the similarities and differences between one another and develop a working definition of diversity.** Find the instructions for this lesson (Lesson 2) and others [here](#).<sup>xx</sup>

### High School

- **Explore central conflicts in a novel/story by applying collaborative approaches to resolving it.** Have students imagine how characters could solve the conflict in a more collaborative way using [this lesson](#) as a guide.<sup>xxi</sup>
- **Explore the use of emotions in the media** by reviewing commercials and social media ads to help students develop their ability to recognize and label emotions. Have students analyze political commercials or social media ads. (Elementary school students might select pictures about products or services and identify the emotions they are intended to elicit.)<sup>xxii</sup>



## Social Awareness: Additional Readings & Resources

Readings	Videos	Websites & Other Learning Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">5 Strategies to Teach Social Responsibility</a><sup>xxiii</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">Building a Pedagogy of Engagement for Students in Poverty</a><sup>xxiv</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">Building Community and Combating Hate: Lessons for the Middle School Classroom</a><sup>xxv</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">The New Science of Wise Psychological Interventions</a><sup>xxvi</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Dr. Marc Brackett on Emotional Intelligence</a><sup>xxvii</sup> <a href="#">How Emotions Differ Across Cultures</a><sup>xxviii</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Transforming Education's Social Awareness Toolkit</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Morningside Center for Social Responsibility - Teachable Moment Classroom Activities</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The Information Library at Responsive classroom</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Educator Resources from Facing History and Ourselves</a></li> </ul>

Find an online board with these social awareness strategies and other resources online at:  
[http://bit.ly/TE\\_SAstrategies](http://bit.ly/TE_SAstrategies)

## SOURCES

- <sup>i</sup> CASEL.org (<http://www.casel.org/social-and-emotional-learning/core-competencies/>)
- <sup>ii</sup> Greenberg, M. T., Weissberg, R. P., O'Brien, M. U., Zins, J. E., Fredericks, L., Resnik, H., & Elias, M. J. (2003). Enhancing school-based prevention and youth development through coordinated social, emotional, and academic learning. *American Psychologist*, 58(6-7), 466.
- <sup>iii</sup> Gehlbach, H., Young, L. V., & Roan, L. K. (2012). Teaching social perspective taking: how educators might learn from the Army. *Educational Psychology*, 32(3), 295-309.
- <sup>iv</sup> Transforming Education (2017). [Social Awareness Toolkit](#).
- <sup>v</sup> Price-Mitchell, M. (2015). [3 Strategies to foster sociability](#). *Edutopia*.
- <sup>vi</sup> Finley, T. (2014). [The Science Behind Classroom Norming](#). *Edutopia*.
- <sup>vii</sup> Finley, T. (2014). [The Science Behind Classroom Norming](#). *Edutopia*.
- <sup>viii</sup> Spiegler, J. (n.d.) [5 Strategies to teach social responsibility](#). *TeachHub.com*
- <sup>ix</sup> Facing History and Ourselves. (n.d.). [Fostering Civil Discourse: A Guide for Classroom Conversations](#).
- <sup>x</sup> Gorski, P. (2013). [Building a pedagogy of engagement for students in poverty](#).
- <sup>xi</sup> Positive Psychology Program. (2016). [Active Constructive Communication: Say "Yes!" to Positive Relationships](#).
- <sup>xii</sup> Price-Mitchell, M. (2015). [3 Strategies to foster sociability](#). *Edutopia*.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Transforming Education (2017). [Social Awareness Toolkit](#).
- <sup>xiv</sup> The Jigsaw Classroom. (n.d.) [Overview and 10 Easy Steps](#).
- <sup>xv</sup> Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. (2013). [The Mood Meter: An Introduction](#).
- <sup>xvi</sup> Boys & Girls Club of America. (n.d.). [The Mood Meter](#). *Club Experience Blog*.
- <sup>xvii</sup> PBS Learning Media. (2017). [Educator's Guide: The AIM Buddy Project](#). An ARTHUR Social, Emotional, and Character Development Curriculum.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Facing History and Ourselves. (n.d.). [Gallery Walk](#).
- <sup>xix</sup> Transforming Education (2017). [Social Awareness Toolkit](#).
- <sup>xx</sup> Partners Against Hate. (2013). Who Am I? Introduction to Diversity. [Building Community and Combating Hate](#).
- <sup>xxi</sup> Massachusetts General Hospital. (n.d.) [Student Activity: The Best Route is a Shared One](#).
- <sup>xxii</sup> Transforming Education (2017). [Social Awareness Toolkit](#).
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Spiegler, J. (n.d.) [5 Strategies to teach social responsibility](#). *TeachHub.com*
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Gorski, P. (2013). [Building a pedagogy of engagement for students in poverty](#).
- <sup>xxv</sup> Partners Against Hate. (2013). Who Am I? Introduction to Diversity. [Building Community and Combating Hate](#).
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Walton, G. M. (2014). The new science of wise psychological interventions. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 23(1), 73-82.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Character Lab. (2015). [Dr. Marc Brackett on Emotional Intelligence](#).
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Wengryzn, R. (2015). [How Emotions Differ Across Cultures](#).