



Piecing the Puzzle Together

The Integration of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Restorative Practices (RP) in Schools

There is a lot of buzz these days about SEL and RP. Many schools have received training in and are striving to implement both successfully. However, often different staff members are assigned responsibility and the efforts end up not being connected. So how can schools integrate SEL and RP? Below are some fundamentals.

Q: What is the difference between Social and Emotional Learning and Restorative Practices?

A: SEL works to develop the fundamental social and emotional skills all people need to be successful in life. Restorative Practices are an inclusive process to build community and provide relationship-repairing responses to conflict.

SEL Specific Concepts/Applications	RP Specific Concepts/Applications
5 Competencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Awareness • Self-Management • Social Awareness • Responsible Decision-Making • Relationship Skills 	Restorative Mindset <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restorative vs. Punitive • Doing things “with” (rather than “to”, “for”, or “not”) • Investing in and centering relationships • Circular Worldview and power sharing • Valuing multiple perspectives
5 Ways to Implement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit Instruction (eg., SEL programs) • Classroom Practices (eg., creating shared agreements with students, greeting kids daily) • Infusion into core content • School-wide Practices (eg., buddy classrooms) • Policies and Procedures 	Intentional/Sequential Way to Implement (formal and informal practices) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin with school-wide proactive practices, building relationships: student to student, student/adult, adult/adult through community building activities and restorative language • Once established, implement responsive practices to repair harm, restore relationships

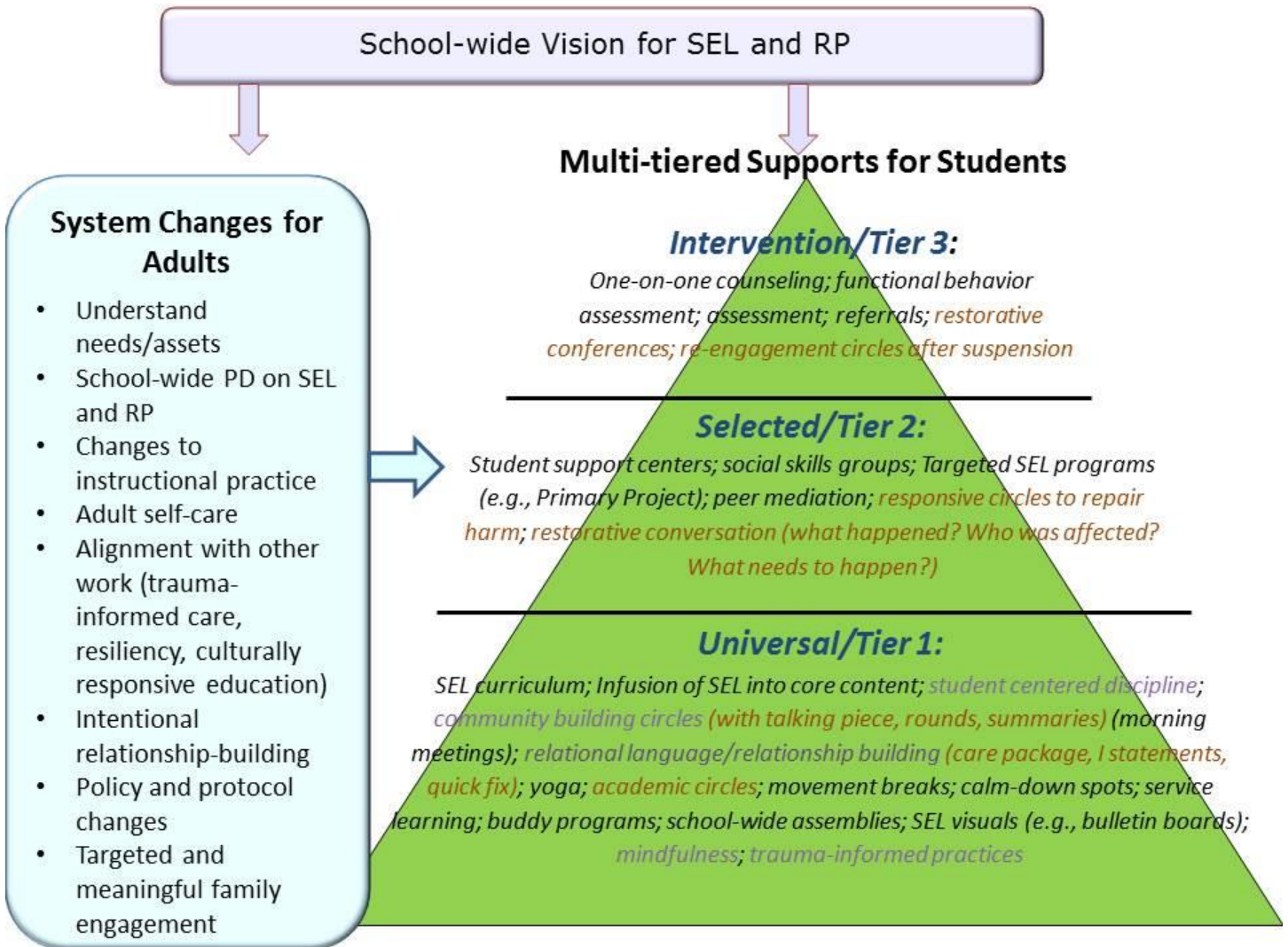
Q: How are these two concepts related?

A: Both are very focused on developing transferable skills. When supported consistently and with fidelity, SEL and RP lead to an array of positive outcomes and linked principles for youth and adults.

Common Principles	Common Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal and applicable to everyone in the school community: staff, students, families, and community • Ongoing process for adults and children to develop key skills needed for success in school, work, and life • Embraces authentic student choice and voice • Focuses on systemic change in culture/climate • Focuses on building trusting relationships • Focuses on warm and supportive language • Focuses on the whole person • Requires self-reflection before implementing or teaching to others • Focusing on where people are, and what they need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased engagement, support, and connection among all constituent groups • Investment and ownership of academic success by students, staff, and caregivers • Increased interpersonal skills that embrace courageous conversations and social change • Improved relationships, classroom environments and school culture • Improved job satisfaction and decreased turnover • Decreased disciplinary incidents and disproportionality • Decreased need for restrictive placements • Decreased stress and fatigue among staff and students • A shared sense of community and belonging

Q: Where should I focus my SEL and RP efforts? What type of student needs these things?

A: Both SEL and RP should be thought of as universal. All students can benefit from frequent attention to their social and emotional development, as well as guided restorative responses following a challenge. There may be situations or certain students where more targeted strategies are necessary. Examples of such strategies are represented by the following graphic.



* Purple indicates practices that support SEL and RP; Black indicates SEL practices; Red indicates RP practices



Q: If SEL and RP are universal supports for students, what kinds of things should we work on implementing?

A: You are very likely already supporting components of SEL and RP, but it is important to do so with intent and to make sure your entire staff is tuned in. There is an array of strategies you can use to get started, but the most important thing is to focus in on how your efforts support the long-term development and learning of your young people.

Strategies for Integrating SEL and RP in your School or District

- Plan your vision for your school or district and identify how RP and SEL help you achieve that vision
- Engage stakeholders in discussions to determine readiness
- Establish a school or district-wide team to work on both SEL and RP rather than assigning it to different individuals or groups
- Focus on what you're already doing well (e.g., strengths, assets, human and community resources)
- Develop a visual organizing framework so adults and children can see how SEL and RP work together, and not as separate "programs" (e.g., umbrella, spokes on a wheel, food on the plate)
- Provide administrative support for supporting implementation (e.g., build a team of champions, hold monthly implementation meetings, communicate with all stakeholders on a regular basis)
- Provide ongoing training and coaching
- Model the practices in staff meetings by intentionally integrating RP and SEL. For example, have an opening circle that models a peace circle but where the reflection question is SEL related.
- Model and encourage self-care and self-reflection
- Reflect on your growth and celebrate successes
- SEL skills can be taught using some restorative practices strategies, such as community circles, to work on specific competencies, learn community norms, and strengthen relationships.

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