

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING CURRICULUM  
FOR THE SECONDARY CHORAL CLASSROOM

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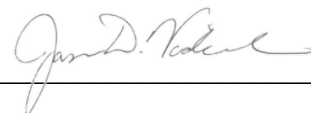
A Capstone Project  
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in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Music Education

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by  
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## **Dedication**

This project is dedicated to my family for their endless support in all of my endeavors, academic and otherwise.

### **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank my capstone advisor Dr. Jason Vodicka for all that he did to help this project come to life, as well as all he has done as a professor to prepare me for my future classroom. I would also like to thank the rest of the music education faculty and Dr. James Jordan at Westminster Choir College for their incredible guidance over the past five years.

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**Abstract**

A Social-Emotional Learning Curriculum for the Secondary Choral Classroom

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The purpose of this project was to create a partial-year social-emotional learning curriculum for secondary choral ensembles. The literature on social-emotional learning in and outside of the music classroom was reviewed and analyzed through the framework proposed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. The information collected on the meaning and benefits of SEL aided in the development of the eight-week curriculum. In the process, the author accounted for teachers' role in implementing SEL in classrooms in order to make the curriculum timeline manageable.

## Section I

### Introduction

High school can be challenging for teenagers to navigate. Students go through many changes in their teenage years, dealing with intense emotions and increased social and academic pressure (Yeager, 2017). Students often find a sense of belonging in music classes and ensembles, which alleviates some of the pressure and provides students with an artistic outlet. Varner (2020) states that music is an emotional, aesthetic, and expressive experience and that the general music learning environment “lends itself naturally to align with and reinforce social and emotional competencies”(p. 74). Edgar (2020) defines SEL as “a skill-based approach” for developing students’ self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-making. These five categories are addressed frequently in music classrooms, whether intentionally or unintentionally. As SEL’s success grows, teachers believe it is worth implementing but require support to do so (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Using the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) model of SEL this project will explore the ways in which secondary choral educators might implement SEL in the classroom.

### Statement of the Problem

There is ample evidence in the literature of the implementation and benefits of SEL regardless of class subject, as well as SEL occurrences and benefits in the general music classroom. However, there is little presence in the literature of SEL specifically for the choral classroom. While the environment has similarities to the general music classroom, it may be concerning to choral music educators that there is a lack of guidance offered for implementing SEL more intentionally in the choral rehearsal. As SEL becomes more commonly implemented

in schools (McKown, 2017), it has been found that an overarching reason for schools' introduction of SEL regardless of class subject is the hope of higher rates of academic success since studies show SEL can improve academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011). SEL can also result in an increase of positive social behaviors and a supportive emotional climate for students (Jacobi, 2012; Yeager, 2017; Zinsler et al., 2018). Varner (2020) states that many general music activities already fit well with SEL, such as circle games which promote relationship skills and social awareness. Since the benefits of SEL and its ties to music are clear, it is worth expanding to fit the secondary choral rehearsal so that secondary teachers may begin to implement SEL in their classrooms.

### **Purpose of the Capstone**

Since the previously mentioned research shows that SEL benefits adolescents and has an unintentional presence in music classrooms, it seems that a step forward in incorporating SEL in music would be to suggest a possible curriculum for SEL in the secondary choral classroom. Kress et al. (2004) found that when incorporating SEL with an existing curriculum, teachers “view SEL and curriculum content as competing for space in a zero-sum game”(p. 71). By taking into consideration the current literature, some of the more traditional methods used in secondary choral rehearsals, and teachers' uncertainty about combining SEL and existing curricula, I aim to develop curricular suggestions for weaving SEL into the secondary choral classroom. This would be a way for uncertain music educators to become more comfortable and intentional with the ways SEL can aid rehearsal and ultimately help students grow their social and emotional skills in a musical environment.

### **Theoretical Framework**

*CASEL*



The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is a nonprofit formed in 1994 based on the idea that education should fully support the social, emotional, and academic development of all children (CASEL, 2022). Social-emotional learning (SEL), which is not specific to music learning environments, is defined by CASEL as “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”(2022). The definition goes on to include that SEL is “the process of helping children and even adults develop the fundamental skills for life effectiveness.”

The CASEL framework focuses on five main competencies known as the CASEL 5: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Each of the CASEL 5 correlates with values that SEL aims to help students develop inside and outside of the classroom. Self-awareness is about identifying and understanding one’s own emotions, strengths, and limitations, whereas self-management involves setting personal goals, self-discipline and motivation, stress management, and personal agency (CASEL, 2022). Social awareness focuses on empathy, gratitude, and understanding social norms. Relationship skills entail effective communication, team problem-solving, and conflict resolution. Responsible decision-making involves making “caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations”(CASEL, 2022).

The second part of the framework is what CASEL refers to as key settings. There are four in total: classrooms (SEL instruction & classroom climate), families and caregivers (schoolwide culture, practices, and policies), schools (authentic partnerships), and communities (aligned

learning opportunities) (CASEL, 2022). The key settings are where SEL can and should take place. In the classroom specifically, since the secondary classroom is the focus of this project, CASEL proposes that SEL instruction should include all elements of the acronym SAFE: sequenced, active, focused, and explicit. Sequenced means that the SEL instruction follows “a coordinated set of training approaches” (CASEL, 2022). Active refers to active learning in the classroom. Focused implies that the curriculum should be intentional about how it develops SEL competencies.

### **Methodology**

This project proposes an eight-week curriculum split into two-week segments for secondary choral ensembles. The curriculum and four sample units will focus on developing students’ social and emotional skills without eradicating the traditional components of a secondary choral rehearsal. In order to create a well-rounded curriculum, the project will examine the literature on SEL (both general and music-specific), its benefits for secondary students, and common choral rehearsal techniques. The information on SEL will be analyzed using the CASEL framework.

The curriculum uses the National Core Arts Standards for Traditional and Emerging Ensembles. Each two-week segment prioritizes one to two of the five CASEL competencies. The competencies are scaffolded beginning with those that are self-related and eventually adding in social awareness toward the end. Each segment also includes the main ideas for the timeframe, an overview of the content to be covered, student objectives, and formative assessments.

## **Review of Literature**

### **Introduction**

This project focuses on the implementation of SEL in secondary choral classrooms. In order to aid curriculum development, this section will focus on literature about the meaning of SEL, the benefits SEL provides for students, the role of teachers in implementing SEL, the presence of SEL in music classrooms, and common practice in secondary choral classrooms. The literature surrounding SEL will be examined in combination with CASEL as the theoretical framework in order to develop a more thorough understanding of how SEL works and why it should be incorporated in music classrooms.

### **Review of Literature**

#### *About SEL*

Besides the previously mentioned definition of SEL as given by CASEL, Edgar (2017) condenses the five competencies into the three goals of self, others, and decisions. SEL aims to foster positive skill sets and mindsets that will set students up for long-term success. This success ranges from very young students being able to identify and manage emotions to secondary students graduating high school and continuing their education (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). The value of SEL is recognized by educators today, and SEL is being included in the educational standards of more and more states (McKown, 2017).

#### *Benefits of SEL for students*

Educators seem to favor SEL for elementary-aged students. This is not surprising since the first few years of school are when young children begin developing skills for befriending peers (relationship skills and social awareness), managing negative emotions away from parents (self-management), identifying what they can do independently (self-awareness), and deciding

between right and wrong (responsible decision-making). This does not mean SEL should stop after elementary school. SEL thinking skills change with age (McKown, 2017) which supports the implementation of SEL not only at the elementary level, but at the secondary level as well. As students make the transition into high school, they bring with them the social and emotional skill sets developed in elementary and middle school.

However, the new challenges that come with high school along with adolescent hormone activity that amplifies difficult emotions (Yeager, 2017) add a layer of complexity to students' social and emotional wellbeing. SEL has resulted in lower stress levels, increased positive social behaviors, and a decrease in absenteeism at the secondary level (Durlak, 2011; Jacobi, 2012; Yeager, 2017). Durlak et al. (2011) also found that student academic performance significantly improved after SEL was introduced in classes. In a social context, SEL has been helpful in bullying prevention (Edgar, 2017). Because SEL helps develop positive self-management, students are able to respect themselves, classmates, and the classroom (Edgar, 2017). All of the possible benefits of SEL for secondary school students can make for a less intimidating classroom environment, clearing the way for teachers and students to focus on meaningful learning.

#### *Teachers' Role in SEL*

A majority of educators know the importance of preparing their students for the future, but when it comes to SEL many teachers are concerned that the time and effort required for incorporating SEL might take away from teaching focused on academic development (Kress et al. 2004). At the same time, teachers agree that SEL should be a part of education because they believe that "SEL skills are teachable, that promoting SEL will benefit students from both rich and poor backgrounds, and that SEL has many positive effects..."(Schonert-Reichl, 140, 2017).

Educators also cannot focus all of their energy on SEL for elementary students because elementary programs redesigned for secondary students are not as successful for the older group (Yeager, 2017).

What can educators do about these conflicts? Perhaps the most important step toward incorporating SEL is that teachers need to take on a positive and willing attitude toward SEL implementation. When the teacher is enthusiastic about trying something new and makes an effort to maintain a warm and positive classroom environment, SEL will be easier to incorporate into the classroom (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Schonert-Reichl (2017) also states that teachers' stress can be contagious for their students, so it would be best for the overall classroom environment for teachers implementing SEL to have confidence in their ability so that SEL is a positive instead of uncertain experience for students.

#### *SEL in music classrooms*

Varner (2020) proposes that music education unintentionally lends itself to SEL due to the nature of common musical activities. This is evident in the general music classroom with the use of activities such as circle games or partner/group music making which promote relationship skills, self-management, and responsible decision-making. Discussion and performance of folk songs encourage social awareness (Varner, 2020). Ros-Morente et al. (2019) found that group music-making "strengthens abilities in areas such as effort, optimism, self-confidence, self-management and self-perception." Students may be asked to keep a journal for reflection and goal-setting based on musical projects or rehearsals (Abrahams, 2017). Journals and discussion responses are opportunities for developing self-awareness, such as identifying one's musical strengths and weaknesses. Any musical activity which involves creating relates to self-awareness as it helps students develop autonomy (Edgar, 2020). Many ensembles make use

of sectional rehearsals, where students are required to use relationship management skills and responsible decision-making in order to have a successful rehearsal. When discussing the history and culture of different musical styles, students have the opportunity to develop self- and social-awareness as they build understanding of their own culture and others.

#### *Common practice in secondary choral classrooms*

Gumm (2016) conducted a survey to examine the rehearsal elements of the average choral rehearsal. Results showed that one of the most common strategies used by directors was positive affirmation of learning, specifically through nonverbal motivation. Nonverbal motivation includes elements such as eye contact with students/singers and pacing to prevent the rehearsal from becoming stagnant. Another widely used form of nonverbal communication in the choral rehearsal are the Kodály method hand signs for solfege syllables (Gumm, 2016).

These rehearsal techniques may be useful for performance activities as opposed to nonperformance activities. Garrett (2013) studied time spent in the choral classroom on performance versus non-performance activities. More specifically, the non-performance time is broken down into three categories: lower-order thinking, critical thinking, and non-specific activity. Results showed that almost half of rehearsal time was spent on non-performance activities, and of that only an average of 6.36% of time could be considered critical thinking (Garrett, 2013). Simple recall questions are an example of lower-order thinking, while critical thinking consists of more reflective questions, perhaps about musical style or personal performance reflection.

It is interesting that rehearsal time is split almost in half between performance and non-performance activity considering that music educators are often torn between focusing on pedagogy or performance (Freer, 2011). Freer (2011) states, “This paradox is experienced when

choral music teachers seek to balance the competing goals of performance and pedagogy. Instead of balance and harmony, the paradox creates tensions affecting curriculum, instructional techniques, repertoire selection, assessment techniques, classroom environment, and performance expectations” (p. 170). When faced with a paradox such as this, music educators may sacrifice valuable time for critical thinking in favor of perfecting repertoire for performance purposes. This could be detrimental to incorporating SEL in the music classroom as critical thinking is a necessary part of fostering the five SEL components proposed by CASEL.

Although it can be a tough decision for music educators, Gumm (2016) compared the 2015 survey results to those from 1990 and found that music teachers now run less of a performance-aimed rehearsal and instead incorporate more social, peer-centered learning than before. Peer-centered learning is a good opportunity for a non-performance activity (Garrett, 2013) that encourages critical thinking and agency (Abrahams, 2017). Overall, research shows that choral rehearsals still consider performance quality to be of great importance but are incorporating more social learning than in years past. This aligns with statements from Varner (2020) that music class lends itself to SEL since there is already effort being made to make rehearsal more social and interactive as opposed to the often hegemonic teacher-student relationship (Abrahams, 2017) that occurs when rehearsal consists almost entirely of the teacher directly instructing the students.

## Curriculum and Supplemental Teaching Materials

### Curriculum Map

National Standards	CASEL 5 competence (priority in bold)	Time-frame	Big Idea(s)	Content	Objectives and corresponding CASEL competence where applicable	Assessments
<p>MU:Pr5.3.E.5a Use self-reflection and peer feedback to refine individual and ensemble performances of a varied repertoire of music.</p> <p>MU:Re8.1.E.5a Identify interpretations of the expressive intent and meaning of musical works, referring to the elements of music, contexts, and (when appropriate) the setting of the text.</p> <p>MU:Cn10.0.E.5a Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.</p>	<p><b>Self-awareness</b></p> <p><b>Self-management</b></p>	<p>Weeks 1-2</p>	<p>Consistent use of healthy vocal technique</p> <p>Setting personal musicianship goals</p> <p>Identifying and understanding one's emotions in relation to selected repertoire</p>	<p>Examine and review healthy vocal technique</p> <p>Use of solfege for sight-reading exercises</p> <p>Inclusion of meditative breathing exercises in warm-up sequence</p> <p>Understanding how reflective journal entries can help one become self-aware</p> <p>Learning, performing, and reflecting upon new repertoire centered on identity and emotions</p>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <p>Participate in warm-up exercises that foster awareness of the body and mind (<i>self-awareness</i>)</p> <p>Set and work toward personal musicianship goals (<i>self-management</i>)</p> <p>Identify emotions portrayed through music and text in selected repertoire</p> <p>Identify and understand personal emotions (<i>self-awareness</i>)</p> <p>Develop personal connection to selected repertoire (<i>self-awareness</i>)</p>	<p>Informal observation throughout rehearsals</p> <p>Self-assessment of personal goals</p>



<p>MU:Pr4.3.E.5a Identify expressive qualities in a varied repertoire of music that can be demonstrated through prepared and improvised performances.</p> <p>MU:Pr6.1.E.5a Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music.</p> <p>MU:Pr5.1.E.8a Develop strategies to address technical challenges in a varied repertoire of music and evaluate their success using feedback from ensemble peers and other sources to refine performances.</p>	<p>Self-awareness</p> <p>Self-management</p> <p><b>Responsible decision-making</b></p> <p><b>Relationship skills</b></p>	<p>Weeks 3-4</p>	<p>Working toward personal and ensemble goals</p> <p>Developing musical agency</p>	<p>Continued use of healthy vocal technique</p> <p>Use of solfege for more challenging sight-reading exercises</p> <p>Student-led small group rehearsals</p> <p>Work with repertoire from weeks 1-2 more closely, including identification and performance of expressive markings</p> <p>Development of musical agency via students assigning dynamics to repertoire and performing as such</p>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <p>Participate in warm-up exercises that foster awareness of the body and mind (<i>self-awareness</i>)</p> <p>Set and work toward personal musicianship goals (<i>self-management</i>)</p> <p>Identify and define expressive markings in music scores (dynamics, tempo, etc.)</p> <p>Set ensemble goals and assess whether or not they are met during rehearsals (<i>self-management, responsible decision-making</i>)</p> <p>Rehearse in sectionals to achieve group goals (<i>relationship skills</i>)</p> <p>Make musical performance decisions as individuals and groups (<i>responsible decision-making</i>)</p> <p>Perform in small groups accurately demonstrating musical decisions made in sectionals (<i>relationship skills, responsible decision-making</i>)</p>	<p>Informal observation throughout rehearsals</p> <p>Self-assessment of personal goals</p> <p>Group performances assessed using rubrics</p>
<p>MU:Re8.1.E.5a Identify interpretations of</p>	<p>Self-awareness</p>	<p>Weeks 5-6</p>	<p>Partner/group text analysis and reflection</p>	<p>Continued use of healthy vocal technique</p>	<p>Students will be able to:</p>	<p>Informal observation throughout</p>

<p>the expressive intent and meaning of musical works, referring to the elements of music, contexts, and (when appropriate) the setting of the text.</p> <p>MU:Cr1.1.E.8a Compose and improvise ideas for melodies and rhythmic passages based on characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.</p>	<p>Self-management</p> <p><b>Relationship skills</b></p> <p><b>Social awareness</b></p>		<p>Application of personal emotions and beliefs to selected repertoire</p>	<p>Use of solfege for more challenging sight-reading exercises</p> <p>Introduction to new repertoire centered on relationships with others</p> <p>Analysis of repertoire text</p> <p>Writing prompts for student journals based on repertoire text</p>	<p>Participate in warm-up exercises that foster awareness of the body and mind (<i>self-awareness</i>)</p> <p>Set and work toward personal musicianship goals (<i>self-management</i>)</p> <p>Create new lyrics for portions of selected repertoire focused on empathy (<i>social awareness</i>)</p> <p>Collaborate with a partner to share lyric ideas and understand another's point of view (<i>relationship skills, social awareness</i>)</p>	<p>rehearsals</p> <p>Self-assessment of personal goals</p>
<p>MU:Cn10.0.E.8a Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music.</p>	<p>Self-awareness</p> <p>Self-management</p> <p><b>Social awareness</b></p>	<p>Weeks 7-8</p>	<p>Understanding historical context of poetry/text</p> <p>Making connections between music and current events</p>	<p>Continued use of healthy vocal technique</p> <p>Use of solfege for more challenging sight-reading exercises</p> <p>Introduction to new repertoire centered on social justice</p> <p>Critical thinking and problem-solving in response to music</p>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <p>Participate in warm-up exercises that foster awareness of the body and mind (<i>self-awareness</i>)</p> <p>Set and work toward personal musicianship goals (<i>self-management</i>)</p> <p>Discuss historical events and their significance from the time period of the text (<i>social awareness</i>)</p> <p>Interpret how historical context can influence music</p>	<p>Informal observation throughout rehearsals</p> <p>Self-assessment of personal goals</p>

					<p>(<i>social awareness</i>)</p> <p>Discuss current events that may be related to historical context (<i>social awareness</i>)</p> <p>Identify as a class social justice issues posed in repertoire text (<i>social awareness</i>)</p> <p>Identify as a class possible solutions for social issues based on text (<i>social awareness</i>)</p> <p>Perform with the intent of conveying a message</p>	
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### Sample Unit Plans

<p><b>UNIT 1</b>  <b>Timeframe:</b> Weeks 1-2  <b>CASEL competencies:</b> self awareness, self-management  <b>Big Ideas:</b>  Consistent use of healthy vocal technique  Setting personal musicianship goals  Identifying and understanding one’s emotions in relation to selected repertoire  <b>Suggested Repertoire Options:</b>  “The Gift to Sing” (Marianne Forman)  “I Am Power” (Mark Burrows)</p>	<p><b>Unit Goals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students will understand and use healthy vocal technique during rehearsals, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Proper alignment, comfortable tone production, knowledge and use of head versus chest voice, participation in warm-up sequence</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Students will participate in warm-up sequence each rehearsal that includes grounding exercises</li> <li>● Students will develop musical literacy via solfege and sight-reading exercises</li> <li>● Students will complete journal entries in which they (1) reflect on their strengths and weaknesses during rehearsals and (2) set personal musical goals for future rehearsals</li> <li>● Text in repertoire will be read and discussed as a class, covering but not</li> </ul>
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	<p>limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ First impressions of meaning of the text</li> <li>○ Emotions the author of the text may have been trying to convey</li> <li>● Students will complete journal entries in which they reflect on the text and identify personal emotions that they feel in response</li> </ul>
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<p><b>UNIT 2</b>  <b>Timeframe:</b> Weeks 3-4  <b>CASEL competencies:</b> self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills</p> <p><b><u>Big Ideas:</u></b></p> <p>Working toward personal and ensemble goals</p> <p>Musical agency</p> <p><b><u>Suggested Repertoire Options:</u></b></p> <p>“The Gift to Sing” (Marianne Forman)</p> <p>“I Am Power” (Mark Burrows)</p> <p>“Will the Circle Be Unbroken” (arr. J. David Moore)</p>	<p><b><u>Unit Goals</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students will continue to use healthy vocal technique during rehearsals</li> <li>● Students will be introduced to more challenging sight-reading exercises and be asked to write solfege in their music individually</li> <li>● Students will continue to rehearse repertoire from previous unit, this time with an emphasis on expressive elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students will identify expressive markings in their scores</li> <li>○ The music will be performed in class following the expressive markings</li> <li>○ Students will assess as an ensemble whether or not they successfully performed with all of the accurate expressive elements</li> <li>○ Students will self-assess in their journals whether or not they personally met the goal of following expressive markings</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Students will be introduced to one new piece of music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students will discuss in partners or groups what the text means to them and share with the class.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students will rehearse the piece in student-led sectionals with a focus on accurate pitches and rhythms.</li> <li>○ Students will rehearse the piece in student-led quartets with a focus on expressive elements.</li> <li>○ Students will partake in a group project with their quartet in which they are asked to assign new dynamic markings to the piece.</li> <li>○ Quartets will perform for the class following the new dynamic markings.</li> <li>○ Quartets will switch scores and perform a different group's interpretation.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>UNIT 3</b>  <b>Timeframe:</b> Weeks 5-6  <b>CASEL competencies:</b> relationship skills, social awareness</p> <p><b><u>Big Idea(s):</u></b></p> <p>Partner/group text analysis and reflection</p> <p>Application of personal emotions and beliefs to selected repertoire</p> <p><b><u>Suggested Repertoire Options:</u></b></p> <p>“Reconcile” (Kyle Pederson)</p> <p>“You Have More Friends Than You Know” (Mervyn Warren/arr. Dave Volpe)</p>	<p><b><u>Unit Goals</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students will continue to use healthy vocal technique during rehearsals</li> <li>● Students will be introduced to more challenging sight-reading exercises</li> <li>● Students will be introduced to new repertoire focusing on relationships with others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students will rehearse as an ensemble and in sectionals</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Students will write in their journals about a time in their lives that relates to the text (i.e. resolving a conflict with someone)</li> <li>● Students will work with a partner to rewrite a portion of the text</li> <li>● Class discussion about how changing the text affects the message of the song and if and how it affects the way they perform</li> </ul>
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<p><b>UNIT 4</b>  <b>Timeframe:</b> Weeks 7-8  <b>CASEL competencies:</b> self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, social awareness</p> <p><b><u>Big Idea(s):</u></b></p> <p>Understanding historical context of poetry/text</p> <p>Making connections between music and current events</p> <p><b><u>Suggested Repertoire Options:</u></b></p> <p>“I Dream a World” (Connor J. Koppin)</p> <p>“Can We Sing the Darkness to Light?” (Kyle Pederson)</p> <p>“Be the Change” (Laura Farnell)</p>	<p><b><u>Unit Goals</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students will continue to use healthy vocal technique during rehearsals</li> <li>● Students will be introduced to more challenging sight-reading exercises</li> <li>● Students will be introduced to new repertoire focusing on social justice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students will rehearse as an ensemble and in sectionals</li> <li>○ Students will translate text and learn about cultural background where appropriate (example: if using “Be the Change” by Laura Farnell, the beginning text in Swahili should be translated and discussed)</li> <li>○ Students will identify social justice issues presented in the music</li> <li>○ Students will brainstorm ways to combat social injustice in ways that are manageable at their level</li> <li>○ Students will develop an understanding of conveying messages to an audience</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Students will identify their own emotions in response to the repertoire</li> <li>● Students will identify parts of their culture that they feel connect to the text</li> </ul>
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### **Discussion**

#### *Scaffolding the CASEL 5*

The CASEL framework itself does not propose a specific order in which the CASEL 5 should be addressed, but this project suggests that self-awareness and self-management must come first. I believe that in order for students to be successful in developing relationship skills

and social awareness, they must first have a solid understanding of their own identity. For this reason, the first two weeks of the curriculum focuses only on self-awareness and self-management. In those two weeks, students will become accustomed to journaling that will continuously help them keep track of their personal goals throughout the entire curriculum. The first segment also introduces a warm-up sequence that is self-management friendly in that it promotes awareness of one's mind and body, allowing a chance for students to check in with themselves and how they are feeling. This warm-up sequence is to continue throughout the entire curriculum. Self-awareness and self-management stay present throughout each two-week segment as that foundation of self-assuredness is always necessary so that students can build up the other competencies from there.

Once a sense of self has been established, I propose the logical next step is to add in relationship skills. Social awareness does not yet make an appearance in weeks three and four because I believe relationship skills are necessary for social awareness and therefore must be addressed first. By using this less overwhelming approach, students can ease into social awareness by first working in pairs or small groups. During weeks three and four, responsible decision-making is also a focus along with relationship skills as this is the segment in which students begin to develop greater musical agency. Students will be tasked with setting not only personal goals, but ensemble goals, requiring them as a group to decide which musical goals they would like to work toward. Social awareness is finally added in during weeks five through eight, as the objectives for students begin to require empathy and seeing others' point of view.

#### *Addressing the CASEL 5*

The objectives within each unit aim to meet the CASEL competence or competencies listed in the second column. The recurring objective related to self-awareness is about student

warm-ups. This meets self-awareness by allowing students to tune into their minds and bodies, becoming both mentally and physically aware. A main goal of self-awareness is to be able to identify one's own emotions, which can happen quietly during the warm-up sequence.

Self-awareness is also met mostly in the first unit through identifying personal emotions in relation to the repertoire, allowing students the chance to connect how they feel to the material at hand.

Self-management is met throughout all the units with the recurring objective of setting and working toward personal goals. This is met through students' journaling in each unit so that they have documentation of the goals they are choosing for themselves and whether or not they feel as though they meet those goals at the end of each unit. This objective encourages students to use planning skills, self-discipline, and self-motivation which are all components of self-management (CASEL, 2022).

Relationship skills and responsible decision-making are met most often through any partner or group work that occurs in the units. For example, in the second unit (weeks 3 to 4) an objective related to sectional rehearsals is included for the first time. This targets relationship skills as students are required to communicate well with each other, collaborate to work toward musical goals, use leadership skills, and help each other when necessary (CASEL, 2022). Partner and group work also addresses responsible decision-making as the students must decide individually and as a group their rehearsal sequence and the material they will cover within the time allotted.

Social awareness is not introduced until the third and fourth units and is addressed through objectives focused on seeing and understanding another person's point of view as well as working with repertoire centered on social justice. For example, the third unit contains an



objective for which students must work with a partner to share lyrics they wrote individually. Students are asked to share why they chose their lyrics and what the text means to them. Taking another's perspective is a main point of social awareness according to CASEL. Social awareness is also addressed in the last unit through "identifying diverse social norms, including unjust ones"(CASEL, 2022). The suggested repertoire focuses on social justice, and the accompanying objectives require students to use the repertoire as a starting point for discussions related to historical events, current events, social issues, and possible solutions.

### *Repertoire suggestions*

Each sample unit plan which corresponds with a two-week learning segment contains two to three suggested four-part (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) choral pieces. It is not necessary for each unit to use all of the pieces shown, but rather they are provided as optional works from which to use one or two. Since each unit has a theme centered around certain CASEL competencies, it is recommended that one chooses music that fits the theme if not using the suggested repertoire. For example, in Unit 1 "The Gift to Sing" by Marianne Forman and "I Am Power" by Mark Burrows both surround themes of personal identity. If it is not desired or feasible to use these pieces, one should choose pieces related to self-awareness.

### *Curriculum value*

This project was created with the busy schedules and pre-existing curricula of teachers in mind. The curriculum is eight weeks as opposed to a full school year in the hopes that it can be fit in where appropriate or taken apart and used one segment at a time. As mentioned previously, many teachers worry that implementing SEL into their curriculum will take away from the skills that they normally aim to teach (Kress, 2004). In an attempt to alleviate some of the stress for teachers trying SEL for the first time, this project proposes a manageable eight-week curriculum

split into two-week segments. With this flexible setup, it is possible to insert each individual two-week segment at various points throughout the school year in between typical secondary choral units. Since rehearsal time in secondary choral classrooms is typically split in half between performance and non-performance time (Garrett 2013), this curriculum is not performance-heavy to leave room for the concert preparation that is standard in most classrooms.

#### *Benefits for students*

By implementing SEL in the music classroom, educators can equip students with the tools necessary to develop a positive relationship with themselves and their peers (Edgar, 2017). This curriculum aims to reach this goal by including ample opportunities for self-reflection and musical agency (Abrahams, 2017), as well as peer-centered learning (Garrett, 2013) and group music-making activities that help strengthen optimism and confidence (Ros-Morente et al., 2019). The inclusion of a consistent warm-up sequence focused on allowing students to check in with themselves and their emotions can give students the necessary tools to deal with the difficulties of adolescents long-term (Yeager, 2017). Frequent class discussions provide chances for critical thinking versus lower-order thinking and non-specific activity (Garrett, 2013), helping students to be more engaged during class.

#### *Implications for the future*

This project was developed as a result of finding a lack of SEL for secondary music classrooms in the current literature. While this is a starting point, I suggest for the future that it be expanded to fit the length of a full school year. First, the current curriculum should be tested in a classroom setting. It is recommended that it is planned for a consecutive eight weeks. However, the units could be split up but kept in order if necessary. One change that might be beneficial if the curriculum is being tested at the beginning of a school year is to have more

literacy-focused content. When aiming for a full-year version, the curriculum could be expanded a week or two at a time as it is crucial to keep in mind that adding SEL into a curriculum in any capacity is a step forward.

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