

OECD's Conceptual Framework for the Study on Social and Emotional Skills

Overview

OECD's conceptual framework on social and emotional skills draws on the well-known Big Five model to organize skills. The social and emotional skills in this framework are arranged hierarchically, with six broad skill categories that include narrower skills:

Task Performance (Conscientiousness)

- **Achievement Motivation:** setting high standards for oneself and working hard to meet them.
- **Responsibility:** able to honor commitments and be punctual and reliable.
- **Self-Control:** able to avoid distractions and focus attention on the current task in order to achieve personal goals.
- **Persistence:** persevering in tasks and activities until they get done.

Emotional Regulation (Emotional Stability)

- **Stress Resistance:** effectiveness in modulating anxiety and ability to calmly solve problems (is relaxed, handles stress well).
- **Optimism:** positive and optimistic expectations for self and life in general.
- **Emotional Control:** effective strategies for regulating temper, anger, and irritation in the face of frustrations.

Collaboration (Agreeableness)

- **Empathy:** kindness and caring for others and their well-being that leads to valuing and investing in close relationships.
- **Trust:** assuming others generally have good intentions and forgiving those who have done wrong.
- **Cooperation:** living in harmony with others and valuing interconnectedness among all people.

OECD Framework for the Study on Social and Emotional Skills

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

"In an increasingly fast-changing, complex, and diverse world, social and emotional skills are becoming ever more important. Educators and policy makers around the world should broaden their focus from traditional academic domains and cognitive skills to a more holistic approach that would also nurture students' social and emotional capacities."

– Miloš Kankaraš

The briefs in this 10-part series each describe an individual framework currently in use. They are intended to illustrate how frameworks can be analyzed and help practitioners learn to evaluate frameworks on the types of criteria that matter most in their settings. The briefs are not an endorsement of these frameworks.

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Open-Mindedness (Openness to experience)

- **Curiosity:** interest in ideas and love of learning, understanding, and intellectual exploration; an inquisitive mindset.
- **Tolerance:** is open to different points of view, values diversity, is appreciative of foreign people and cultures.
- **Creativity:** generating novel ways to do or think about things through exploring, learning from failure, insight, and vision.

Engaging with Others (Extraversion)

- **Sociability:** able to approach others, both friends and strangers, initiating and maintaining social connections.
- **Assertiveness:** able to confidently voice opinions, needs, and feelings, and exert social influence.
- **Energy:** approaching life with energy, excitement, and spontaneity.

Additionally, the framework includes “compound” skills that represent combinations of two or more individual skills. These skills are useful for describing and understanding certain aspects of behavior and in many cases affect important life outcomes.

Compound Skills (represent combinations of multiple domains)

- **Self-efficacy:** the strength of individuals’ beliefs in their ability to execute tasks and achieve goals.
- **Critical thinking/independence:** the ability to evaluate information and interpret it through independent and unconstrained analysis.
- **Self-reflection/metacognition:** awareness of inner processes and subjective experiences, such as thoughts and feelings, and the ability to reflect on and articulate such experiences.

History of the Framework

Large-scale international efforts to assess and promote the development of students’ social and emotional skills are scarce. OECD studies cover a growing range of social and emotional skills and have shown not only that these skills are related to important life outcomes, but also that they can be assessed meaningfully within and across cultural and linguistic boundaries. The OECD is now taking this work further with a comprehensive international assessment of the social and emotional skills of school-age children through the Study on Social and Emotional Skills (SSES). The conceptual framework was developed for this Study on Social and Emotional Skills, building on previous work by Kautz and Heckman (2014) and John and De Fruyt (2015), which showed a great deal of conceptual and empirical overlap between the Big Five and 21st Century Skills. The updated conceptual framework (Chernyshenko, Kankaraš, and Drasgow, 2018) includes the merged and integrated skills from other applied/practitioner frameworks, focusing on underlying skills within and outside the Big Five model that are predictive of positive life outcomes and are policy-relevant. The 15 skills were included because they provide a broad and balanced coverage of the entire domain of social and emotional skills, are predictive of success in a wide range of important

COMPETENCIES NAMED IN THIS FRAMEWORK*

Collaboration

✓ Empathy

✓ Trust

✓ Cooperation

*Note that the competencies are organized into six broad skill categories, one of which is collaboration.

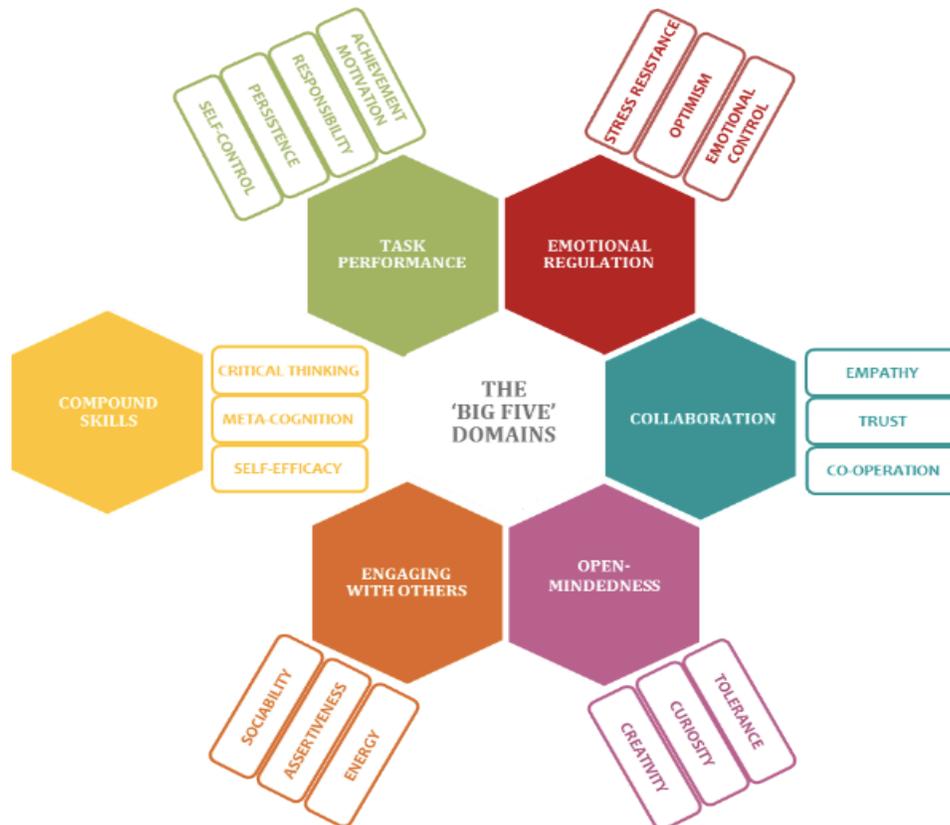
life outcomes and events, are malleable and susceptible to possible policy interventions, and are comparable and relevant across different cultures, languages, social, and school contexts.

Purpose and Intended Audience

The purpose was to provide a conceptual framework for the Study on Social and Emotional Skills, which aims to provide insights on individual, family, and school determinants that foster or hinder development of these skills across diverse student populations and settings. The framework is being used with children, parents, teachers, and principals within the study as well as by various stakeholders such as participating cities and countries, national and international institutions, policymakers, researchers, experts, and administrators.

Settings

The framework is used in OECD’s Study on Social and Emotional Skills, an international survey that assesses the social and emotional skills of 10- and 15-year old students in a number of cities and countries around the world, identifying the conditions and practices that foster or hinder the development of these critical skills. Apart from the study, the framework is used by government bodies, research institutes, and NGO’s.



Criteria Ratings: Conceptual Clarity

FIVE CONCEPTUAL CLARITY CRITERIA			
CRITERIA	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
Specificity	For each skill, a conceptual definition and behavioral examples are provided. Additionally, verbal labels (other words used to refer to the skill across different countries) and predicted external criteria (predicted outcomes if one is high or low on a skill) are also listed.		
Balance	A broad set of social and emotional domains, including interpersonal, intrapersonal, and cognitive, is included in the conceptual framework in order to ensure breadth and comprehensiveness. Additionally, during development the team collected information from different perspectives (students, teachers, and parents).		
Developmental	While it acknowledges the effects of early development on later development of skills, the framework does not provide developmental benchmarks or explicit examples. The framework will also use data from longitudinal analyses to acknowledge and address how different skills are important at different stages of development. The Study on Social and Emotional Skills using the framework will examine skills in two ages groups (10- and 15-year-olds) in order to compare students across developmental stages.		
Culturally Sensitive	Because the framework is used in a study that aims to compare the effects of social and emotional skills across 11 participating cities and countries, it takes a societal, international view. In fact, one of the reasons the team chose to start with the Big 5 was because of its relevance and applicability in different countries: it has great evidence for being relevant across the globe. Final selection of skills was meant to be as relevant to as many countries and contexts as possible and utilized the collective input of representatives from four continents. While the framework pays a great deal of attention to differences between countries, it does not address issues around the cultural, racial/ethnic, and socioeconomic differences and diversity within a country.		
Empirically Grounded	The empirical evidence presented in OECD studies and reviews of empirical literature on social and emotional skills (Chernyshenko, Kankaraš, and Drasgow, 2018; John and De Fruyt, 2015; OECD, 2015; Kankaraš, 2017) were used to make an informed decision about which social and emotional skills to include in the conceptual framework. The focus is on how cognitive, social, and emotional skills influence a broad range of social progress indicators and long-term outcomes, such as tertiary education attendance and completion, labor market outcomes, health and personal well-being.		

These ratings are intended to help illustrate the strengths and limits of some popular frameworks. They are neither designed to formally compare frameworks nor endorse any framework. The ratings are based on criteria defined more fully in [this brief](#) and the process of rating and appropriate uses are discussed in the [introductory brief](#) to this series. We urge practitioners to review these and prioritize which criteria are most important for use in their particular context.

Criteria Ratings: Implementation Support

FIVE IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT CRITERIA			
CRITERIA	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
Intended for Practice	Although the primary explicit audience is policymakers, government bodies, and research institutes, the framework is published and accessible to the general public to be able to use and provide feedback. Further, SEL practitioners from cities and countries participating in the Study on Social and Emotional Skills use the framework, and they have initiated and largely shaped the design and topics of the study in line with their practical needs.		
Resources for Practitioners	OECD provides a few resources such as blog posts and a speech on their website in addition to the working papers describing the conceptual framework. Once the Study on Social and Emotional Skills finishes (September 2020), the conceptual framework will be accompanied by a wealth of resources for practitioners, including assessment instruments, contextual questionnaires, empirical findings, graphical summaries of findings, policy take-aways, etc. All of this will be freely available on the OECD website to the general public.		
Resources for Use with Children/Youth	N/A		
Resources for Measurement and Data Use	OECD uses measures that capture multiple perspectives: self-report, teacher-report, parental-report, peer-report, and individual task performance. Additionally, they provide anchoring vignettes, behavioral indicators, and comprehensive questionnaire for students, teachers, school principals, and parents. All the OECD measures, including 15 assessment scales developed for use by 10- and 15-year-olds, their parents, and their teachers will be made publicly available once the study is complete. Additionally, all four comprehensive contextual questionnaires for collection of information on relevant characteristics of students' life at home, school, peers, and community environment will be made available.		
Empirically Tested	The study using this framework is the most comprehensive international study in the area of SEL to date. OECD is assessing 15 important social and emotional skills (chosen because they were connected to key outcomes, which are also being collected) at two age levels, as well as collecting more than 500 additional variables about different contextual factors in student life. The study is initiated by SEL practitioners and its main aim is to serve practitioners by providing them empirical evidence on the value of different social and emotional skills as well as on drivers and barriers to the development of these skills in children's home and school environments. Evidence from this study will be used to inform policy and educational practice.		
<p><i>These ratings are intended to help illustrate the strengths and limits of some popular frameworks. They are neither designed to formally compare frameworks nor endorse any framework. The ratings are based on criteria defined more fully in this brief and the process of rating and appropriate uses are discussed in the introductory brief to this series. We urge practitioners to review these and prioritize which criteria are most important for use in their particular context.</i></p>			

Summary of the Framework

OECD's Conceptual Framework for the Study on Social and Emotional Skills focuses on the underlying skills within and outside of the widely researched Big Five Model that were found to be particularly predictive and policy-relevant. Current work is examining the nature and structure of the 15 named social and emotional skills; their development, malleability, cross-cultural comparability; and their relevance for a wide range of school, work, and life outcomes. While currently only available to participating cities and countries, once the study concludes in September 2020, several resources for practitioners will be released, including assessment instruments, contextual questionnaires, graphical summaries of empirical findings, and policy take-aways.

About the Developer



The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an intergovernmental organization established in 1961 with a membership of 36 countries. OECD uses its wealth of information on a broad range of topics to help governments foster prosperity and fight poverty through economic growth and financial stability. They help ensure the environmental implications of economic and social development are taken into account.

About the Author



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Teresa Borowski is a graduate student in the Community and Prevention Research PhD program in Psychology at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), where her research focuses on social-emotional competence development, particularly through dance and other arts. She works as a research specialist with CASEL's research team and the Frameworks subgroup of the Assessment Work Group. She is also the co-editor of Measuring SEL's blog. Prior to UIC, Teresa worked as a research assistant in the Infant Cognition Lab and the Cultural Studio at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and for the Learning and Memory Lab at the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology.

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The Measuring SEL Series of Frameworks Briefs

The Establishing Practical Social-Emotional Competence Assessments of Preschool to High School Students project as guided by the Assessment Work Group (AWG) is dedicated to helping advance the effective use of data to inspire practice in SEL. In deciding how the AWG could best contribute to advancing the field and complement rather than compete with other efforts underway to address the challenges of multiple frameworks and inconsistent use of language, the AWG Frameworks Subgroup, led by Stephanie Jones and Roger Weissberg, developed four series of briefs designed for practitioners. Each series and each brief in the series is designed to help advance how people think about the issues and make reasonable choices that work best for them and their context. We hope they provide a set of “building blocks” that systems and practitioners can use to advance and improve their SEL efforts. Learn more at <https://measuringSEL.casel.org>

Introductory Series

These briefs are about what frameworks are, how they are useful, the challenges and opportunities they present in practice, and defining criteria that are helpful when considering what frameworks to use.

Comparative Series

These briefs explore efforts underway to categorize and align ways of thinking about comparing unique frameworks. The briefs also describe tools available to aid systems and practitioners in their selection and use of a framework.

Special Issues Series

These briefs identify critical issues that frameworks must address or that influence how they are used that are important to consider when selecting and using frameworks, such as equity and SEL, and developmental considerations.

Descriptive Series

These briefs each describe an individual framework currently in use. They are intended to illustrate how frameworks can be analyzed and help practitioners learn to evaluate frameworks on the types of criteria that matter most in their settings. *(The briefs are not an endorsement of these frameworks.)*

The Assessment Work Group is committed to advancing dialogue on key issues in the field and stating a perspective when appropriate. The views and opinions expressed in these briefs reflect the general position of the Assessment Work Group. They do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of CASEL or any of the individual organizations involved with the work group.