

AASL Standards-Based Learning

# Social and Emotional Learning for Picture Book Readers

Maureen Schlosser

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TRANSFORMING LEARNING

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# INTRODUCTION

**Y**ou are a busy school librarian. Social and emotional learning (SEL) is on your radar. Your school adopted a popular SEL framework, and you want to teach the skills in the school library. But how can you integrate SEL in school library lessons? Shouldn't you focus on the Competencies in the *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries* (AASL 2018)?

The good news is that the *National School Library Standards* integrate social-emotional skills in the AASL Standards frameworks. You can find them peppered throughout the Key Commitments and Competencies within the *AASL Standards Framework for Learners* (AASL 2018, 34–39). Compare the AASL Standards with any SEL framework, and you'll find many similarities. This correspondence makes it easy to align library lessons with your school's SEL framework.

Now, how do you find the time to develop lessons? Well, this book has you covered. *Social and Emotional Learning for Picture Book Readers* delivers twenty-four ready-made, Standards-aligned lesson plans. Each lesson focuses on one SEL theme and an AASL Standards Shared Foundation. The lessons guide learners to notice and practice prosocial skills and self-regulation.

The lessons center on compelling picture books. The stories model social-emotional themes such as problem solving, fostering friendships, and finding purpose. They illustrate how to recognize and manage feelings. The lessons in these stories help learners work with others and make responsible decisions.

Most lessons will take forty minutes. Others will take two class sessions to complete. Some class discussions might drive you to spend more time with a story. If that's the case, revel in the dialogue. The activity can wait for the next class meeting. You can also work with classroom educators and collaborate on the activities.

The lessons include anchor charts (ACs), discussion questions, and worksheets (WSs). These resources will save you planning time. Adapt them to work with your school library classes.

## SEL AND THE SCHOOL LIBRARY

*SEL* is a broad term and has many definitions. At the heart of *SEL* is the practice of noticing and working with feelings and emotions. *SEL* helps learners pursue interests, work with others, and persist through challenges. These are the skills that learners exercise when working in the school library.

We recognize the challenges learners face during a lesson. Some worry about trying something new. Others have a hard time working on collaborative projects. We've also noticed learners who struggle with finding answers to their questions. Taking the time to teach learners how to work through these scenarios will help them accomplish learning goals.

The *AASL Standards Framework for Learners* provides opportunities to teach social-emotional skills through the Competencies, which guide learners to solve problems, share ideas, and work together (AASL 2018, 34–39). Scaffolding lessons with modeling and opportunities to practice will support learners as they explore meaningful topics.

## WHO AM I TO TALK ABOUT THIS?

I am obsessed with compelling picture books. The lessons they teach and ideas they inspire captivate me. When I open a picture book, I feel like I'm walking into a world-class museum. There is so much to explore and learn.

The lessons I find in picture books are too important to keep to myself. I want everyone to think, create, share, and grow with literature. That is why I write lesson plans based on picture books.

I found my love for picture books when my children were young. I noticed how a compelling book could lead to different paths of discovery. We would spend days exploring the questions we had about the ideas presented in a story.

Then, as a fifth-grade language arts educator, I centered all my lessons on picture books. We read stories that compelled learners to ask deep questions and dig for answers. Learners often left the classroom to go find answers in the school library. Joan Peeples, the librarian at Brookwood Elementary School, loved their curiosity. She worked with learners to find resources to answer their questions. The school library experience made them grow as learners and transformed their work.

A move to Connecticut gave me the opportunity to change my career. I went back to school and got certified as a school librarian. The library program at Brookwood Elementary School inspired me to make the change.

I found a wonderful job as a school librarian in a PK–2 school in Colchester, Connecticut. This job gave me another opportunity to share lessons based on picture books. All my lessons started with a book. We took a message from each story and applied it to a learning activity.

While teaching, I noticed that some learners struggled during the lessons. Transitions were tough. Some learners had difficulty following directions. Others took over conversations and activities. Learners who didn't know how to manage their feelings fell apart. I realized that young learners needed opportunities to practice the social-emotional skills needed for lessons.

I made note of the trouble spots we ran into during lessons. Then I met with classroom educators to help me integrate SEL in my lessons. They introduced me to Responsive Classroom, a “student-centered, social and emotional learning approach to teaching and discipline” (Responsive Classroom 2021).

After learning about the Responsive Classroom practice, I identified social-emotional skills to develop in the school library. I scaffolded the skills for learners to help them feel supported while working. I modeled the skills and gave learners time to practice. We created anchor charts with strategies to promote prosocial behavior and emotional regulation.

This practice changed the energy in the school library. Stress levels went down. Learners practiced taking care of themselves and each other while they worked. At the end of each lesson, learners reflected on the hardest parts of the activity. They considered how they managed through the difficult spots. Then learners planned for next steps.

Now that more school districts are adopting and creating SEL frameworks, I want to share what I learned while working as a school librarian. Integrating SEL through the school library will help learners feel successful. They will build the skills necessary to help them grow as enthusiastic learners and sharers of information.

I created these ready-to-go lessons to help integrate SEL in the school library. My hope is that learners will appreciate exploring the picture books. I'm excited about the social-emotional lessons learners will draw from the stories. Enjoy the gifts these picture books offer and celebrate your good fortune to share the books with your learners.

## WHAT THIS BOOK COVERS

Here is what the lessons provide:

**Objectives:** Each lesson begins by stating an objective. This objective gives learners a clear picture about the goal for the lesson and why it matters.

**Discussion Questions:** Compelling picture books that showcase SEL foster discussions. Thoughtful questions help learners contemplate their own experiences. They'll learn more from their classmates as they share and explore different ideas.

**Anchor Charts:** As the discussions unfold, anchor charts lay out important points. They help learners synthesize information as they read and discuss stories. Anchor

charts support learners during independent practice. Learners can refer to the notes for guidance.

**Activities and Worksheets:** The activities give learners time to explore social-emotional skills. The worksheets guide learners in the activities. Questions prompt learners to reflect on the learning process.

**Picture Book Resource List:** Appendix A includes a list of popular picture books that demonstrate SEL themes. This list provides more opportunities to work with a specific skill.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

The work you do in the school library is important. You are teaching learners the skills they need to be successful in school and the workplace. Building social-emotional skills will help learners problem solve, persevere, and build relationships.

I hope you'll enjoy the picture books chosen for these lessons. They are beautiful works of art that offer life lessons worth exploring. Their messages will speak to readers and spark conversations. I imagine the lessons will stick with learners as they move through the school day.

Be sure to align these lessons with the classroom experience. This connection provides more opportunities to practice and apply social-emotional skills throughout the day. The more learners practice a skill, the better they will get at applying it to everyday learning.

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# Problem Solving



## INQUIRE: KEY COMMITMENT

Build new knowledge by inquiring, thinking critically, identifying problems, and developing strategies for solving problems.

## WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO SOLVE PROBLEMS?

People face problems every day. Sometimes, they persevere to find solutions. Other times, they quit.

The Competencies in the Inquire Shared Foundation provide learners with problem-solving opportunities (AASL 2018, 34). Learners approach obstacles with a sense of curiosity. They ask questions, search for answers, and reflect on new learning. These experiences help learners grow into skilled problem solvers who appreciate challenges.

Problem solving is an important social and emotional skill to practice. When learners view problems with a curious mind, they accept and respect hurdles. Appreciating the inquiry process helps learners welcome challenges.

This practice also builds background knowledge. When a learner successfully solves a problem, those practiced skills get deposited in that learner's memory bank. The next time the learner faces a similar challenge, background knowledge reminds them what to do.

The lessons in this chapter give learners opportunities to plan for and solve problems. Learners will set goals, plan for obstacles, and recall background knowledge. They will also foster friendships along the way.

## HOW CAN I WORK THROUGH PROBLEMS TO REACH MY GOALS?

**Shared Foundation:** Inquire

**Featured Book:** *The Magical Yet* by Angela DiTerlizzi and Lorena Alvarez



### Summary

The magic begins on the jacket cover of *The Magical Yet*.

Textured letters full of sparkle set the stage for a captivating story. A happy child and a delightful creature look at the reader with big smiles. They seem happy to welcome readers to the story.

The front flap sets the intention for the book. Spot illustrations show a child playing the clarinet. At first, the sound is unpleasant. Later, the music improves. We can imagine that practice and patience shaped the player's abilities.

The front endpapers give more hints about the theme of the story. Windows fill the double-page spread. Inside each window is a child creating something or solving problems. Some of the children are happy, whereas others appear to be struggling.

The story begins with an unhappy child standing next to a broken bike. The following pages reveal that the main character is new to bike riding. The child broke the bike after running into a pothole.

When the protagonist declares they will never ride a bike again, a magical Yet explodes out of a glowing orb. The Yet, a small, whimsical creature, encourages the child to keep trying. The two characters observe other children at work. They notice that every child is patient with the learning process. The surprise ending illustrates what happens when we keep trying and persevering.



## INQUIRE/CREATE LESSON

### Objective

Learners will set a personal goal and write a plan that considers potential problems.

**AASL Standards Framework for Learners I.B.2.** Learners engage with new knowledge by following a process that includes devising and implementing a plan to fill knowledge gaps.

### Lesson Duration

40 minutes

## Materials

- Copy of *The Magical Yet* by Angela DiTerlizzi and Lorena Alvarez
- “How Can I Persevere” anchor chart (AC 1.1)
- Markers
- “My Goal Plan” worksheet (WS 1.1)
- Pencils

## Lesson

1. State the objective and explain why the lesson matters. Say, “Today you are going to write about a personal goal. You’ll plan for problems that might get in your way. This lesson will help you work toward something that you want to achieve.”
2. Invite learners to think of a time when they tried something new and failed. Ask learners what they did after they failed. Say, “Today we are going to read a book that may help you work through failure.”
3. Show learners the cover of *The Magical Yet*. Ask the following questions as you read the story.
  - a. “Let’s explore the front book jacket. What do you notice? How do you suppose the child is feeling? What makes you think so?” (front book jacket)
  - b. “What do you notice on the front flap of the book jacket? What story do these two spot illustrations tell us about the child with the clarinet?” (front flap)
  - c. “Let’s look at the front endpapers. What does the illustrator want us to notice?” (front endpapers)
  - d. “What can we expect from the story after reading the title and looking at the illustration on the title page?” (title page)
  - e. “How is the child feeling on this page? Can you think of a time when you had the same feelings?” (p. 6)

### ANCHOR CHART 1.1



#### How Can I Persevere?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| » Visualize yourself reaching your goal. | » Learn from mistakes and failures.           |
| » Imagine how success feels.             | » Keep learning.                              |
| » Keep trying.                           | » Stay focused.                               |
| » Practice.                              | » Make a plan to reach goals.                 |
| » Have patience with yourself.           | » Develop strategies to work around problems. |

- f. “What do you notice about the children and the Yets on this page? Why do you suppose the Yets are with the children?” (pp. 13–14)
  - g. “What is the child looking at on this page? How do you think the bicyclist on the calendar feels? What makes you think so? Why do you suppose the image of the bicyclist motivates the child to fix their bike?” (pp. 15–16)
  - h. “How do the children feel about trying and practicing? How do you know this?” (pp. 17–20)
  - i. “What does the illustrator want us to understand about the protagonist’s journey?” (pp. 31–32)
  - j. “What lesson can we learn by comparing the front and back endpapers?” (front and back endpapers)
  - k. “Let’s take the book jacket off and explore the cover. Imagine what your Yet might look like.” (front and back covers)
4. Encourage learners to think about why the author wrote the book. Inquire about the lessons they learned from the story. Ask learners what it takes to persevere. Use markers to write their responses on the “How Can I Persevere?” anchor chart (AC 1.1).
  5. Explain that when people set goals, they create a plan. The plan includes strategies to help them navigate problems. Say, “This plan will help you overcome obstacles and reach your goal.”
  6. Model how to write a goal plan by filling out the “My Goal Plan” worksheet (WS 1.1) with a personal goal. If you can’t think of one, here’s one you can use:
    - a. Say, “I want to set a goal to drink more water. I’ll write my goal on the worksheet” (WS 1.1).
    - b. “This goal matters to me because my doctor said I’ll feel better if I drink twelve cups of water a day. I’ll write this reasoning below my goal.”
    - c. “I imagine I’ll have a problem with remembering to drink twelve cups of water. That’s a lot! Water might not be near me during the day. I’ll write these problems down.”
    - d. “I have some ideas to help me work through the problems. I could try setting an alarm at the top of every hour. This could help me remember to drink. I like this idea. I can also bring gallons of water to school so I’ll always have it available. I’ll write these ideas down.”
  7. Invite learners to think about a goal they want to achieve. Explain that they will write a plan like you did to reach their personal goals. They will consider obstacles that might hinder their progress. Learners will write a strategy to help them work around problems.
  8. Pass out the worksheets and pencils. Encourage learners to share their goals when their work is complete.

WORKSHEET 1.1

MY GOAL PLAN



**Directions:** Think about a goal you want to achieve. Write a plan to reach your goal by answering the following questions.

What goal do I want to achieve?

---

---

---

Why does this goal matter to me?

---

---

---

How can I set myself up for success?

---

---

---

What problem could I face?

---

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(cont'd on next page)

WORKSHEET 1.1

**MY GOAL PLAN** (*cont'd*)



How can I minimize or avoid the problem?

---

---

---

In the frame, draw a picture of yourself achieving your goal.

A large rectangular frame with a wavy, scalloped border. A diagonal watermark across the frame reads "FOR REVIEW ONLY NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION".

**Reflection:** Why does a goal plan matter?

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