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# *Specialist*

MASTER CLASS

## **Social-Emotional Learning & Trauma-Sensitive Practices in English Language Teaching**

- with Janine Darragh and Luis Javier Pentón Herrera -

### **Session 1 Supplementary Guide**

Introduction to Social-Emotional Learning  
and Trauma-Sensitive Practices



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## Summary

This session introduces the need for social-emotional learning (SEL) and trauma-sensitive practices in English Language Teaching (ELT). Though the two fields overlap, SEL and trauma-sensitive teaching practices differ in that SEL focuses on the development of self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills that are vital for school, work, and life success, while trauma-sensitive practices specifically address the cognitive and emotional needs of learners who have experienced trauma.

Beyond these definitions, the presenters, Janine Darragh and Luis Javier Pentón Herrera, provide an overview of common SEL competencies and the science behind trauma.

## Session Takeaways

1. Social-emotional learning supports learners' emotional development and intelligence.
2. Trauma-sensitive practices address cognitive and emotional needs of learners with trauma.



## Glossary

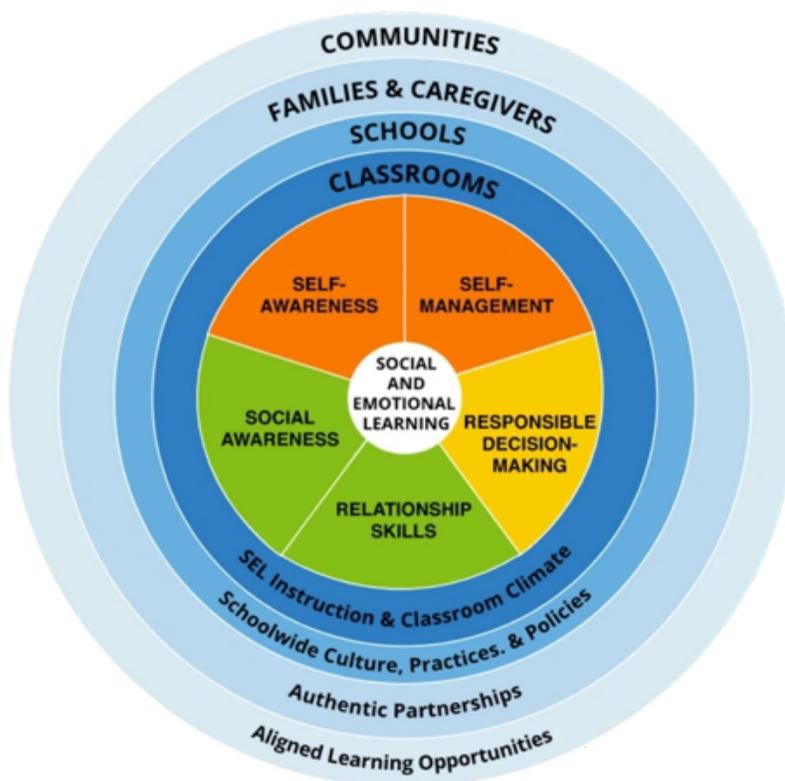
<b>affective filter</b>	A metaphor for the psychological barriers to language learning caused by learners' emotions and attitudes, as defined in Stephen Krashen's Second Language Acquisition Theory.
<b>Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)</b>	A nonprofit organization formed in 1994 that coined the term "social and emotional learning" and supports SEL research and the implementation of SEL practices in the U.S.
<b>retraumatization</b>	Reliving stress reactions experienced as a result of a traumatic event when faced with a new, similar incident or <i>trigger</i> .
<b>trauma</b>	"[A]ny disturbing experience that results in significant fear, helplessness, dissociation, confusion, or other disruptive feelings intense enough to have a long-lasting negative effect on a person's attitudes, behavior, and other aspects of functioning." <sup>1</sup>
<b>trauma-informed</b>	Behavioral health services that directly address the impact of trauma on individuals and communities.
<b>trauma-sensitive</b>	Addressing trauma's impact on learning in the classroom so that all students feel safe and supported.
<b>trigger</b>	Something that reminds a person of a previous traumatic event, leading to <i>retraumatization</i> .

<sup>1</sup> "Trauma." APA Dictionary of Psychology. American Psychological Association. Accessed September 19, 2023. <https://dictionary.apa.org/trauma>



## CASEL's SEL Wheel<sup>®</sup>

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, known as CASEL, offers one of the most well-known and utilized SEL frameworks in education. CASEL's definition of SEL is guided by its five competencies, which are known as the CASEL Five. [Learn more on the CASEL website.](#)



## An Overview of SEL Competencies

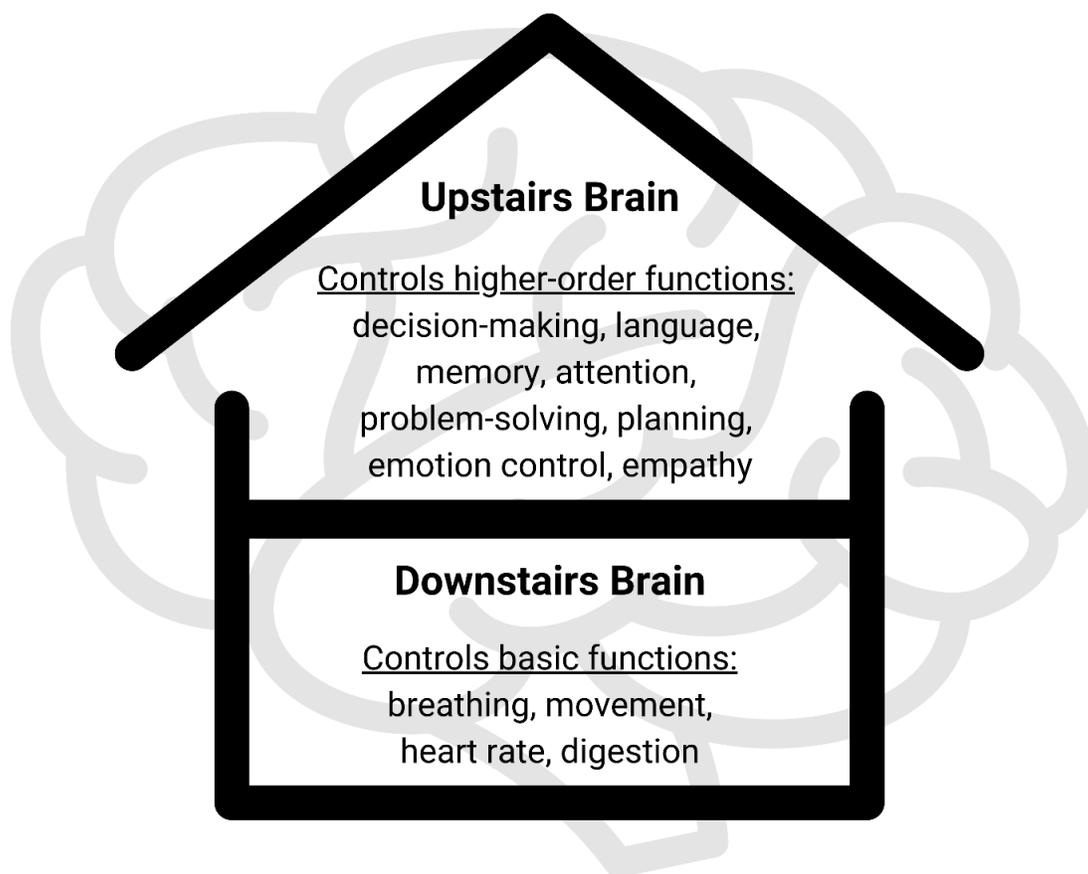
Like CASEL, most frameworks refer to competencies that fall under two broad categories: relationship with self and relationship with others. Click below to access the full framework and list of competencies Luis refers to in this session.

List of common SEL competencies



## Upstairs Brain & Downstairs Brain

In their book, [\*The Whole Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind, Survive Everyday Parenting Struggles, and Help Your Family Thrive\*](#), neuropsychiatrist Dr. Dan Siegel and psychotherapist Dr. Tina Payne Bryson distinguish between 'the downstairs brain' and 'the upstairs brain.' Individuals experiencing the effects of trauma are often unable to access their upstairs brain. In other words, they snap into "fight, flight, or freeze" mode.



Learn more about the upstairs and downstairs brain in these two videos:

[Video 1](#) | [Video 2](#)



## For Further Reading

Osher, David, Kathleen Guarino, Wehmah Jones, and Mara Schanfield.

“Trauma-Sensitive Schools and Social and Emotional Learning: An Integration.”

American Institutes for Research, June 23, 2021.

<https://www.air.org/resource/brief/trauma-sensitive-schools-and-social-and-emotional-learning-integration>

Portell, Matthew. “Harnessing the Synergy Between Trauma-Informed Teaching and SEL.” Edutopia. George Lucas Educational Foundation, October 13, 2021.

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/harnessing-synergy-between-trauma-informed-teaching-and-sel/>

“National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative (NCTSI).” Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, last modified June 10, 2022. <https://www.samhsa.gov/child-trauma>

See [Course Bibliography](#) for additional sources related to this session.