Social and Emotional Learning and the Shared Inquiry Method

The Great Books Foundation uses the Shared Inquiry™ method to develop critical thinking skills and social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies in grades K–12. Our work is built upon the practice of civil discourse and used to build authentic learning opportunities through dialogue and active listening, therefore promoting the SEL skills needed to create a strong learning environment. Our approach aligns with the social and emotional learning standards that are being adopted by states and districts nationwide. These standards are research based and reflect the work done by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). The standards address the following SEL competencies:

- Self-awareness and self-management
- Social awareness and relationship skills
- Responsible decision-making

Great Books programs and CASEL share similar goals for schools and their communities: to think critically, appreciate diverse perspectives, communicate effectively, solve problems flexibly, and collaborate with others through discussion, writing, and reflection.

The chart below details how Shared Inquiry activities reinforce the SEL skills identified by CASEL. For more information, see **greatbooks.org** and **casel.org**.

Shared Inquiry Sequence of Activities	Primary Social and Emotional Learning Competencies Addressed
Prereading: Students share responses to a question about the text's topic.	**Self-Awareness and Social Awareness**: Students share personal connections to the text and listen to the perspectives of others.
First Reading: Students listen to or read a text and mark places where they are confused or curious.	**Self-Awareness and Self-Management**: Students build cognitive control by tracking and recording their responses.
Sharing Questions: Students share their questions about the text and explore answers with the teacher's help.	**Social Awareness and Relationship Skills**: Students take turns sharing questions and listening to those of others. All questions are regarded as valuable, and students respond to and help answer others' questions.
Second Reading: Students read or listen to the text again, engaging in close-reading activities.	**Social Awareness and Relationship Skills**: Students take turns sharing their own perspectives and listening to others, with an emphasis on comparing and explaining reactions.

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Shared Inquiry Sequence of Activities	Primary Social and Emotional Learning Competencies Addressed
Shared Inquiry Discussion: Students collaboratively explore a central problem of meaning in the text. Guided by the teacher's questioning, students develop ideas, find and explain evidence, and respond to their peers' answers.	**Responsible Decision-Making, Self-Awareness, Self-Management, and Relationship Skills**: This cornerstone activity addresses many SEL competencies. Developing and explaining a personally satisfying answer to the discussion question prepares students to make responsible choices in other complex situations.
Writing Activities: Students further develop their response to a text in a persuasive essay.	**Responsible Decision-Making**: Students synthesize their own thinking about a topic while drawing on the perspectives they heard in Shared Inquiry discussion.

In addition, our K–5 curriculum is built to directly expand on social and emotional learning themes such as honesty and courage, and asks teachers and students to explore and expand their understanding of those themes through individual reflection and collaboration. The texts themselves, the students' Reader's Journals, and the Teacher's Editions provide guidance on ways to bring these SEL concepts explicitly into the classroom.

To learn more about incorporating SEL into your classroom, contact us at 800.222.5870 or gbfconsultant@greatbooks.org.