

## Guide to Reviewing and Rating SEL Frameworks: An Introduction to the Descriptive Series

The social and emotional learning (SEL) field has many different approaches, recommendations, and resources to assist in the adoption and implementation of SEL. District and school leaders, educators, researchers, and practitioners like you can use frameworks to organize their SEL efforts. As discussed in our earlier “Frame” series, a framework is a tool that helps to provide a foundation for thinking, communicating, and acting. Finding a useful framework can provide a foundation for SEL implementation, assessment, and improvement efforts. Yet the number of SEL frameworks continues to grow. In a recent review, Berg and colleagues (2017) identified 136 different SEL-related frameworks. The existence of so many frameworks can cause confusion, and selecting a framework that works for your context and population can be challenging. This is why the Assessment Work Group developed [Ten Criteria for Describing and Selecting SEL Frameworks](#). These 10 criteria are meant to guide thinking about what characteristics of an SEL framework are most important to your specific work or context and help you prioritize what you want and need from a SEL framework.

This Descriptive Series discusses and illustrates ways to use the 10 criteria to prioritize, review, rate, and compare frameworks. The series also applies these criteria to review nine popular SEL frameworks to illustrate the process. The Descriptive Series briefs were designed to help practitioners and organizations determine their priority needs and provide snapshots of prominent SEL frameworks. Each framework review includes summaries, helpful links and references, and ratings and descriptive information related to the 10 criteria. The reviews and ratings are not endorsements of the frameworks. Rather, the briefs illustrate the review and ratings process and provide examples of different frameworks’ relative strengths, as well as areas for additional development and support.

### A Guide to Reviewing and Rating Frameworks

We encourage practitioners to use the 10 criteria for effective frameworks. This brief illustrates a three-step process to effectively use and apply the 10 criteria. Practitioners can use the steps to develop their own set of priorities, review and rate frameworks under consideration, and then compare the frameworks with their priorities to help find the best ones for their situation.

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The three steps are:

1. Prioritize
2. Review and Rate
3. Compare

By using the same criteria and tool for prioritizing, reviewing, and rating frameworks, practitioners can determine whether a framework is strong in the areas of their highest priorities.

## A Tale of Two School Districts

To begin, consider two very different school districts. The first, District 1, is a large school district in need of a broad and solid conceptual framework to guide how district leaders create and invest resources to support their school leaders in framing, implementing, and assessing SEL efforts. Each school's leadership team will decide how to independently implement and measure SEL, but district leaders want a guiding framework to coordinate efforts across schools and to serve as a common language.

The second school district, District 2, is a small district where leaders also need a strong framework to guide SEL efforts. However, District 2 leaders need readily available, well-aligned practical tools and implementation supports. While conceptual clarity of the framework is important, district leaders have little time to develop their own resources for effective implementation.

### Step 1: Prioritize

The [Ten Criteria for Describing and Selecting SEL Frameworks](#) were developed to help practitioners and organizations think systematically about their needs in areas critical to effective implementation of SEL efforts. The criteria can first be used as a tool to prioritize needs around SEL adoption, through a process called *building a priority profile*. Creating a priority profile can help to identify and organize SEL adoption priorities in a manageable way. Not all of the criteria are equally important in all situations. Practitioners at various levels should build a profile that captures their priorities and needs for SEL adoption and implementation, then seek out frameworks that are a good fit and that score high on the criteria most important to them.

We developed a one-page tool (Appendix A) to help practitioners develop such a priority profile using the 10 criteria. The tool can be used in multiple ways to capture the priorities of individuals and groups and help establish consensus on the overall priorities for the district or organization. For example, you might use the *Ten Criteria for Describing and Selecting SEL Frameworks* brief and give individuals copies of the tool and ask everyone to individually rate what they think are most important. These can then be discussed and compared to see what different people see as priorities in order to develop a working consensus. As an alternative, you might gather together key stakeholders and discuss each criterion separately in order to determine group priorities. You could even convene different groups of stakeholders such as the board, teachers, and support services staff to see what they perceive as the needs and then meet to compare and build a consensus.

Regardless of which process and what stakeholders are involved, the important point is to help alert stakeholders to the types of criteria they need to consider to agree on what is needed from an SEL framework that will help them frame, train, implement, and assess their SEL efforts. By using the 10 criteria (or a subset of critical ones for your situation), you help focus attention on specific needs that can be used in the next step - reviewing and rating frameworks you are considering.

Following their discussions, the districts in the two examples may have filled out their priority profiles. Figure 1 (below) shows that District 1 prioritizes high conceptual clarity and medium implementation support, while District 2 prioritizes medium conceptual clarity and high implementation support. As expected, the two districts have very different priorities that reflect their needs.

District 1:

District 2:

FIVE CRITERIA FOR CONCEPTUAL CLARITY				LOW PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	HIGH PRIORITY
1. <b>SPECIFICITY</b> – The extent to which a framework has competencies that are clearly and specifically defined		X			X	
2. <b>BALANCE</b> – The extent to which a framework balances intra-personal, inter-personal, and cognitive competencies and includes knowledge, skills and attitudes			X			
3. <b>DEVELOPMENTAL</b> – The extent to which a framework includes and utilizes a developmental lens that illustrates competencies are malleable, how they develop over time, and what they look like at different ages and stages of development			X			
4. <b>CULTURALLY SENSITIVE</b> – The extent to which a framework is 1) sensitive to and addresses cultural variations in SEL process, 2) includes culturally related competencies that matter for success and 3) does not privilege any one cultural group over others			X			
5. <b>EMPIRICALLY GROUNDED</b> – The extent to which the social and emotional competencies named in a framework are grounded in empirical studies that demonstrate their importance for success in school, work, and life			X			

  

FIVE CRITERIA FOR IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT				LOW PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	HIGH PRIORITY
1. <b>INTENDED FOR PRACTICE</b> – The extent to which a framework is designed for and/or has been useful to informing or guiding implementation of a SEL effort to build social-emotional competencies		X			X	
2. <b>RESOURCES FOR PRACTITIONERS</b> – The extent to which a framework has a set of resources and tools that support the use of the framework by preparing and supporting practitioners responsible for implementation		X			X	
3. <b>RESOURCES FOR USE WITH AND BY CHILDREN AND YOUTH</b> – The extent to which a framework has a set of resources and tools that use the framework and are designed for use directly by children and youth		X			X	
4. <b>RESOURCES FOR MEASUREMENT AND DATA USE</b> – The extent to which a framework has a set of resources or tools that support assessment of the competencies and the use of the resulting data to inform and improve practice			X			
5. <b>EMPIRICALLY TESTED</b> – The extent to which a framework has studied how it has been or is being used effectively in practice to guide SEL efforts		X			X	

figure 1

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

We encourage you to develop and use an appropriate process to help complete the criteria tool. When deciding on your priorities, it may be helpful to ask yourself, your team, and relevant stakeholders these types of questions either broadly or in reference to specific criteria:

- What do we need from a framework? Why is that important or needed?
- What are our goals for SEL in our district, school, or program? How could an SEL framework make a difference in reaching those goals?
- What types of resources and tools do we need to do the work effectively?
- What are the barriers or challenges we face, and what will help us overcome them?
- At the broadest level, are we more in need of conceptual clarity or implementation supports, or a specific mix of both?

In the figure it is clear that:

- District 1 generally prioritizes the five conceptual clarity criteria and believes it is able and willing to invest in developing resources for implementation that best fit their needs - except in resources for measurement (criteria 4), which they recognize they will need outside help to select or develop.
- While District 2 prioritizes a clear and balanced framework, even the best will not be helpful if it does not also have multiple types of implementation supports. As a result, this district places a high priority on most of the five implementation support criteria except resources for measurement, which are less critical because the state provided guidance or tools in this area.

All frameworks have strengths and limitations. Few frameworks will rate “high” on all 10 criteria. Deciding what your context’s priorities are and finding a framework that can most meet them is key. Your priority tool sheet – your *priority profile* – should guide the priorities for your context and provide a way to evaluate frameworks aligned to those priorities.

Once you have created a criteria priority profile that reflects your unique needs, the profile can guide the next steps: reviewing and rating frameworks.

## Step 2: Review and Rate

The second step in applying the 10 criteria is to evaluate different frameworks through a systematic review and rating process. This will help illustrate whether a framework is strong in the highest priority areas.

In this second step, we encourage you to review the information available for frameworks by identifying the framework’s key features and rating it on the 10 criteria. When reviewing and rating a framework, it is important to consider the following:

- The **definitions** of key social and emotional competencies included in the framework
- The **history** of how the framework was developed, tested, and used
- The **intended purpose** and audience for the framework

By reviewing framework websites and readily available resources, you can review and rate any framework you are considering, even those built or currently used internally. Appendices B and D provide additional information to guide your review and rating of frameworks. We hope these indicators of what to look for, questions to ask, and examples of how we did it are helpful in that process.

## APPENDICES

Thinking about the three areas, in addition to the 10 criteria, can help you focus on what you are looking for in reviewing a framework, whether or not it is represented in this series or not. We have done this for each of the nine frameworks illustrated in the rest of this series of briefs.

We encourage you to consider using our summaries or writing up similar brief summaries for any new framework in which you are interested so you can bring it to your comparison of frameworks and final decision-making process.

- **Appendix A:** Tool to help practitioners develop such a priority profile using the 10 criteria.
- **Appendix B:** Questions to look for in each of these areas
- **Appendix C:** A description of the process we used for developing and reviewing (with developers as well as external experts) the descriptions and ratings of the nine frameworks illustrated in this series.
- **Appendix D:** Defines each of the 10 criteria and describes what each level of rating represents.

Let's examine how the rating and review process played out in our two example districts. For simplicity's sake, each district decided to review and rate the same three frameworks (A, B, and C). Let's assume that two of the frameworks they are considering are part of this Descriptive Series so they could use our briefs to get them started. In the process they may wish to agree with and use or change the ratings based on what they found. The third was a framework not in this series, so they used the process described above to produce their own description and ratings. The results are illustrated in Figure 2. To avoid implying endorsement of any frameworks we are not naming any specific frameworks, altering ratings slightly, and only using letter designations here.

Consider the following example. The first criterion is **Specificity**, and the districts examined framework websites to review the key competencies of each framework they are considering.

- If **Framework A** names skills but does not seem to provide information beyond the description, Framework A would not meet the Specificity criterion and would receive a low rating.
- If **Framework B** provides a definition and names lower-order skills included in each construct, but does not provide observable behaviors, it receives a medium rating.
- If **Framework C** provides a thorough definition and description for each of the competencies, and presents examples of observable behaviors in practice, it receives a high rating.

	Framework A:			Framework B:			Framework C		
	LOW PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	HIGH PRIORITY	LOW PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	HIGH PRIORITY	LOW PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	HIGH PRIORITY
<b>FIVE CRITERIA FOR CONCEPTUAL CLARITY</b>									
1. <b>SPECIFICITY</b> – The extent to which a framework has competencies that are clearly and specifically defined	X				X				X
2. <b>BALANCE</b> – The extent to which a framework balances intra-personal, inter-personal, and cognitive competencies and includes knowledge, skills and attitudes			X			X			X
3. <b>DEVELOPMENTAL</b> – The extent to which a framework includes and utilizes a developmental lens that illustrates competencies are malleable, how they develop over time, and what they look like at different ages and stages of development	X				X				X
4. <b>CULTURALLY SENSITIVE</b> – The extent to which a framework is 1) sensitive to and addresses cultural variations in SEL process, 2) includes culturally related competencies that matter for success and 3) does not privilege any one cultural group over others	X				X			X	
5. <b>EMPIRICALLY GROUNDED</b> – The extent to which the social and emotional competencies named in a framework are grounded in empirical studies that demonstrate their importance for success in school, work, and life		X				X			X
<b>FIVE CRITERIA FOR IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT</b>									
1. <b>INTENDED FOR PRACTICE</b> – The extent to which a framework is designed for and/or has been useful to informing or guiding implementation of a SEL effort to build social-emotional competencies			X			X		X	
2. <b>RESOURCES FOR PRACTITIONERS</b> – The extent to which a framework has a set of resources and tools that support the use of the framework by preparing and supporting practitioners responsible for implementation			X			X		X	
3. <b>RESOURCES FOR USE WITH AND BY CHILDREN AND YOUTH</b> – The extent to which a framework has a set of resources and tools that use the framework and are designed for use directly by children and youth			X			X	X		
4. <b>RESOURCES FOR MEASUREMENT AND DATA USE</b> – The extent to which a framework has a set of resources or tools that support assessment of the competencies and the use of the resulting data to inform and improve practice			X	X			X		
5. <b>EMPIRICALLY TESTED</b> – The extent to which a framework has studied how it has been or is being used effectively in practice to guide SEL efforts			X			X		X	

figure 2

In this way, the district practitioners or teams decide to what extent Frameworks A, B, and C meet each of the 10 criteria (Figure 2).

We encourage you to use the criteria yourself to review frameworks both in and out of this Descriptive Series. Are your ratings similar to the ones we gave the frameworks? Why or why not? What nuances may be missing as you discover what is best for your district? The types of comparison charts created in Step 2 and noted in Figure 2 can be useful tools as you move on to Step 3.

### Step 3: Compare

Once you have reviewed and rated frameworks of interest, you can compare each framework to your priority profile. Both comparisons will help you decide which framework would most likely be useful to guide your SEL work in your specific context.

This process involves asking questions like the following:

- How do the frameworks you are considering compare in critical areas?
- How does each of the frameworks line up with your priority profile?
- Which framework scores highest on your priorities?
- What are you losing if you eliminate one of the frameworks being considered? (For example, one may not have measurement tools readily available)

Continuing with our example, we know that District 1 prioritized conceptual clarity and District 2 prioritized implementation support. For District 1, Framework C most closely matches the needs in their priority profile (as seen in Figure 3 below). Although none of the frameworks matches their priorities exactly, Framework C has a profile most consistent with District 1’s priorities.

District 1 Priority Profile Framework C Ratings

FIVE CRITERIA FOR CONCEPTUAL CLARITY				LOW PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	HIGH PRIORITY	LOW PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	HIGH PRIORITY
1. <b>SPECIFICITY</b> — The extent to which a framework has competencies that are clearly and specifically defined					X				X
2. <b>BALANCE</b> — The extent to which a framework balances intra-personal, inter-personal, and cognitive competencies and includes knowledge, skills and attitudes						X			X
3. <b>DEVELOPMENTAL</b> — The extent to which a framework includes and utilizes a developmental lens that illustrates competencies are malleable, how they develop over time, and what they look like at different ages and stages of development						X			X
4. <b>CULTURALLY SENSITIVE</b> — The extent to which a framework is 1) sensitive to and addresses cultural variations in SEL process, 2) includes culturally related competencies that matter for success and 3) does not privilege any one cultural group over others						X		X	
5. <b>EMPIRICALLY GROUNDED</b> — The extent to which the social and emotional competencies named in a framework are grounded in empirical studies that demonstrate their importance for success in school, work, and life						X			X

  

FIVE CRITERIA FOR IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT				LOW PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	HIGH PRIORITY	LOW PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	HIGH PRIORITY
1. <b>INTENDED FOR PRACTICE</b> — The extent to which a framework is designed for and/or has been useful to informing or guiding implementation of a SEL effort to build social-emotional competencies					X			X	
2. <b>RESOURCES FOR PRACTITIONERS</b> — The extent to which a framework has a set of resources and tools that support the use of the framework by preparing and supporting practitioners responsible for implementation					X			X	
3. <b>RESOURCES FOR USE WITH AND BY CHILDREN AND YOUTH</b> — The extent to which a framework has a set of resources and tools that use the framework and are designed for use directly by children and youth					X		X		
4. <b>RESOURCES FOR MEASUREMENT AND DATA USE</b> — The extent to which a framework has a set of resources or tools that support assessment of the competencies and the use of the resulting data to inform and improve practice						X	X		
5. <b>EMPIRICALLY TESTED</b> — The extent to which a framework has studied how it has been or is being used effectively in practice to guide SEL efforts					X			X	

figure 3

Although Framework C is the best choice for District 1, it would not be a good choice for District 2, because Framework C has low ratings for implementation support. District 2 placed high priority on most of the five implementation support criteria (except measurement). Among the three frameworks under consideration, District 2 decides to choose Framework B because Framework B most closely matches the needs in their priority profile (as seen in Figure 4 below).

District 2  
Priority Profile

Framework B  
Ratings

FIVE CRITERIA FOR CONCEPTUAL CLARITY				LOW PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	HIGH PRIORITY	LOW PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	HIGH PRIORITY
1. <b>SPECIFICITY</b> – The extent to which a framework has competencies that are clearly and specifically defined					X			X	
2. <b>BALANCE</b> – The extent to which a framework balances intra-personal, inter-personal, and cognitive competencies and includes knowledge, skills and attitudes						X			X
3. <b>DEVELOPMENTAL</b> – The extent to which a framework includes and utilizes a developmental lens that illustrates competencies are malleable, how they develop over time, and what they look like at different ages and stages of development					X			X	
4. <b>CULTURALLY SENSITIVE</b> – The extent to which a framework is 1) sensitive to and addresses cultural variations in SEL process, 2) includes culturally related competencies that matter for success and 3) does not privilege any one cultural group over others					X			X	
5. <b>EMPIRICALLY GROUNDED</b> – The extent to which the social and emotional competencies named in a framework are grounded in empirical studies that demonstrate their importance for success in school, work, and life					X				X

  

FIVE CRITERIA FOR IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT				LOW PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	HIGH PRIORITY	LOW PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	HIGH PRIORITY
1. <b>INTENDED FOR PRACTICE</b> – The extent to which a framework is designed for and/or has been useful to informing or guiding implementation of a SEL effort to build social-emotional competencies						X			X
2. <b>RESOURCES FOR PRACTITIONERS</b> – The extent to which a framework has a set of resources and tools that support the use of the framework by preparing and supporting practitioners responsible for implementation						X			X
3. <b>RESOURCES FOR USE WITH AND BY CHILDREN AND YOUTH</b> – The extent to which a framework has a set of resources and tools that use the framework and are designed for use directly by children and youth						X			X
4. <b>RESOURCES FOR MEASUREMENT AND DATA USE</b> – The extent to which a framework has a set of resources or tools that support assessment of the competencies and the use of the resulting data to inform and improve practice					X		X		
5. <b>EMPIRICALLY TESTED</b> – The extent to which a framework has studied how it has been or is being used effectively in practice to guide SEL efforts						X			X

figure 4

## Summary

Typically, no SEL framework will perfectly match every need and priority you have for your schools, districts, or programs. But finding the perfect framework need not discourage you. It is arguably more important to *select the framework that best fits with your priorities*.

We encourage you to follow and adapt the process laid out in this brief to assist in selecting a framework for SEL. Additional criteria and guidance, such as your local policies and existing initiatives, can inform this framework evaluation process. We hope that by clearly rating your priorities, systematically reviewing and rating SEL frameworks, and ultimately comparing frameworks to your priorities, your team will find an SEL framework to adopt and sustain SEL implementation.

The goal of the Descriptive Series is to select some of the most commonly-used and prominent frameworks to illustrate ways of describing and rating a framework. The remaining nine briefs in this series provide both descriptions and ratings for nine commonly used frameworks. They are designed to help you with these frameworks as well as illustrate things you may wish to consider as you do your own reviews and ratings of these or other frameworks. The frameworks selected are intended to be illustrative rather than exhaustive and are neither the only or necessarily the best frameworks available.

### SELECTION OF ILLUSTRATED FRAMEWORKS

The nine frameworks in the Descriptive Series were chosen based on their recurring presence in research and practice. We compared the list of SEL-related frameworks in the American Institutes for Research (AIR)'s study [Identifying, Defining, and Measuring Social and Emotional Competencies](#), and the list of frameworks identified or coded in the [Taxonomy Project](#) by the EASEL Lab at Harvard University. We also asked members of the ever-growing Measuring SEL [Collaborator Network](#) (currently more than 3,300 members) to let us know which frameworks they knew about or were using in their work. The survey to the network asked about 32 specific frameworks with options to fill in others. More than 200 members responded. The frameworks that appeared multiple times on these three lists are included in this series as illustrations. They are neither endorsements nor recommendations for use.

1. Character Lab's Tripartite Taxonomy of Character
2. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)'s Framework for Systemic Social Emotional Learning
3. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)'s Conceptual Framework for the Study on Social and Emotional Skills
4. Search Institute's Developmental Assets Framework
5. Forum for Youth Investment's Preparing Youth to Thrive
6. Institute for Habits of Mind's Habits of Mind
7. University of Chicago Consortium on School Research's Foundations for Young Adult Success
8. Partnerships in Education and Resilience (PEAR) Institute's Clover Model
9. P21 and Battelle for Kids's Framework for 21st Century Learning

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Dr. Dale Blyth is a senior research consultant and advisor who recently retired as Extension Professor in the College of Education & Human Development at the University of Minnesota, where he served as the Howland Endowed Chair in Youth Development Leadership and Senior Research Fellow with the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement. For 15 years, he served as Associate Dean directing the Center for Youth Development. Recently he led an initiative to advance social and emotional learning outcomes. He serves on several community, state, and national groups related to out-of-school time, data systems, and youth development.



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Appendix A.

FIVE CRITERIA FOR CONCEPTUAL CLARITY	LOW PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	HIGH PRIORITY
<p><b>1. SPECIFICITY</b> – The extent to which a framework has competencies that are clearly and specifically defined</p>			
<p><b>2. BALANCE</b> – The extent to which a framework balances intra-personal, inter-personal, and cognitive competencies and includes knowledge, skills and attitudes</p>			
<p><b>3. DEVELOPMENTAL</b> – The extent to which a framework includes and utilizes a developmental lens that illustrates competencies are malleable, how they develop over time, and what they look like at different ages and stages of development</p>			
<p><b>4. CULTURALLY SENSITIVE</b> – The extent to which a framework is 1) sensitive to and addresses cultural variations in SEL process, 2) includes culturally related competencies that matter for success and 3) does not privilege any one cultural group over others</p>			
<p><b>5. EMPIRICALLY GROUNDED</b> – The extent to which the social and emotional competencies named in a framework are grounded in empirical studies that demonstrate their importance for success in school, work, and life</p>			

FIVE CRITERIA FOR IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT	LOW PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	HIGH PRIORITY
<p><b>1. INTENDED FOR PRACTICE</b> – The extent to which a framework is designed for and/or has been useful to informing or guiding implementation of a SEL effort to build social-emotional competencies</p>			
<p><b>2. RESOURCES FOR PRACTITIONERS</b> – The extent to which a framework has a set of resources and tools that support the use of the framework by preparing and supporting practitioners responsible for implementation</p>			
<p><b>3. RESOURCES FOR USE WITH AND BY CHILDREN AND YOUTH</b> – The extent to which a framework has a set of resources and tools that use the framework and are designed for use directly by children and youth</p>			
<p><b>4. RESOURCES FOR MEASUREMENT AND DATA USE</b> – The extent to which a framework has a set of resources or tools that support assessment of the competencies and the use of the resulting data to inform and improve practice</p>			
<p><b>5. EMPIRICALLY TESTED</b> – The extent to which a framework has studied how it has been or is being used effectively in practice to guide SEL efforts</p>			

## Appendix B.

### Key Considerations for Reviewing and Describing a SEL Framework

#### Key Competencies/Constructs:

Name the specific competencies and how they are defined in each framework. This can be facilitated by asking the following types of questions while reviewing materials:

- *What are the key competencies/constructs of this framework?*
- *How many constructs are included?*
- *Are any constructs nested in others?*
- *If the framework is not focused solely on SEL, which of the constructs are explicitly social-emotional competencies?*

#### History of the Framework:

Seek to understand the history and evolution of the framework and to answer the following types of questions:

- *Who are the key developers, researchers, or experts behind this framework?*
- *Where did the framework originate?*
- *How was the framework developed?*
- *How has the framework been used and how has it evolved over the years?*

#### Purpose and Intended Audience:

Capture what you see as the purpose, audience, and intended uses of the framework by asking the following types of questions:

- *Why was this framework developed?*
- *For whom was this framework developed?*
- *Who are the intended as well as actual users of the framework?*
- *What does the developer say about how it is being used currently?*

#### Settings:

Capture where the framework is intended for use and currently being used.

## Appendix C.

### The Process of Describing and Rating Frameworks

To begin our efforts to describe and rate these common frameworks in the most accurate and informative ways possible, we were guided by the following two principles:

- Work with the people who developed and/or are responsible for the evolution and use of the framework in practice to the extent possible, as they are the ones most likely to know about key links, uses, and relevant resources.
- Work to make sure the people writing up the descriptions and finalizing the ratings are as neutral as possible and do not have any conflicts of interest. Where that is unavoidable, involve others to ensure potential bias is both minimized and acknowledged.

We went through a multistep process and also used multiple experts familiar with SEL frameworks to review each description and finalize the ratings to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the brief. Here are the basic steps we used.

First, the series author reviewed the framework-relevant materials that were easily available and accessible. This included websites, reports, and other online or published materials.

Second, we reached out to the developer(s) of each framework to obtain more information and ensure we accurately portrayed what each framework is, how it is currently being used, and related information important for practitioners to know in selecting and using it. The author spoke directly with the developer(s) of each framework and interviewed them regarding the information presented in the briefs. Developers also reviewed and offered feedback on the first draft of the brief describing their framework.

To ensure accuracy and alignment, we also compared our initial ratings (developed by the briefs' author) with those made by Harvard University's EASEL Lab as part of their Taxonomy Project. The ratings were closely aligned, and discrepancies were minor. Our teams also met to discuss these discrepancies and found they were explained by the technical differences in what was emphasized by or considered in our rating systems. To see the profiles and ratings of frameworks done by EASEL Lab, refer to their [ExploreSELwebsite](#) - especially their framework profile pages as well as the variety of interactive tools they have for comparing frameworks.

Finally, to avoid potential bias, the drafts of each descriptive brief were reviewed by our collaborators at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and Harvard's EASEL Lab, who had also reviewed multiple frameworks in their efforts. This process resulted in the final descriptive briefs and ratings found in this series.

## Appendix D.

### The Meaning of Rating Levels for Each of the Ten Criteria

This appendix reviews each of the criteria and defines each rating level. It describes the way we thought about each level of each of the ten criteria in doing our ratings and may be helpful in both understanding ratings and guiding your process for doing similar ratings. The tables below describe the meaning of each rating for each criterion. In the nine descriptive briefs included in this series, the comments made to summarize a rating fill in the appropriate bar length (short for no evidence, medium for some evidence, or long for much evidence). The bars are also colored to reflect the ratings.

**Five Criteria for Conceptual Clarity:** Conceptual Clarity refers to whether the framework makes clear and important distinctions in important areas that connect directly or indirectly to what is known about SEL.

**Specificity.** The extent to which the framework has competencies that are clearly and specifically defined.

Low	The framework names skills but does not provide information beyond a brief definition or description.		
Medium	The framework provides more information beyond labelling the skills or competencies, but there may not be a specific definition or clarification of what the competencies are and look like in practice.		
High	The framework provides a thorough definition and description for each of the competencies, identifies lower-order skills included in each construct, and presents examples of observable behaviors or how they look in practice.		

## Appendix D.

**Balance.** The extent to which a framework balances intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive competencies and includes knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Low	The framework is focused only on one domain or type of competence (e.g., only emotions, only behavioral skills, or a single competence like grit).		
Medium	The framework either is missing or overly focuses on a few domains or types of competence only, not all of them.		
High	The framework includes a balanced set of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive competencies, as well as knowledge, skills, and attitudes.		

**Developmental.** The extent to which a framework includes and utilizes a developmental lens that illustrates that competencies are malleable, how they develop over time, and what they look like at different ages and stages of development.

Low	No information regarding development is provided. The framework may acknowledge its importance but does not offer specific guidance.		
Medium	The framework acknowledges that the competencies change over time and provides some guidance or points to other resources.		
High	The framework explicitly addresses development and provides integrated, developmental benchmarks or descriptors of the competencies at each developmental stage or age range. Information on how competencies develop, progress, and change over time is provided.		

## Appendix D.

**Culturally Sensitive.** The extent to which a framework is (a) sensitive to and addresses cultural variations in SEL processes, (b) includes culturally-related competencies that matter for success, and (c) does not favor any one cultural group over others.

Low	No information regarding culture or equity is provided. The framework may acknowledge its importance but does not offer specific guidance in the three areas.		
Medium	The framework provides general information or guidance on how to adapt or use the framework with diverse groups or reflect explicit thinking in some of the three areas.		
High	The framework provides detailed information and guidance on how to use or adapt the framework with diverse populations and explicitly considers matters of culture, race, ethnicity, SES, or relevant work in the three areas.		

**Empirically Grounded.** The extent to which the social and emotional competencies named in a framework are grounded in empirical studies that demonstrate their importance for success in school, work, and life.

Low	Information about the evidence base is absent or limited.		
Medium	The competencies identified in the framework are supported by evidence showing the skill is important and malleable.		
High	The competencies in the framework were chosen based on evidence, are grounded in research, and are connected to success in school, work, and life. The empirical link is clear, explicit, and easily accessed and used by practitioners.		

## Appendix D.

**Five Criteria for Implementation Support:** Implementation Support refers to the extent to which the framework and its developers or users have created a set of different types of accessible resources that support effective communication, implementation, and use of the framework.

**Intended for Practice.** The extent to which the framework is designed for and/or has been useful to informing and guiding implementation of an SEL effort to build social-emotional competencies.

Low	The framework is mostly used in or focused on research. The framework may not provide much information on implementation or use in practice.		
Medium	The framework may be originally created for research or purposes other than practice but provides some translated materials and support for use in practice.		
High	The framework was intended for practice and provides multiple supports and uses for practice. The framework is widely used and/or shapes and informs practice.		

**Resources for Practitioners.** The extent to which a framework has a set of resources and tools that support the use of the framework by preparing and supporting practitioners responsible for implementation.

Low	The framework does not provide additional resources beyond research reports for practitioners to use.		
Medium	Summary materials (such as handouts, infographics, etc.) and recommendations or resources beyond research reports are provided. Support materials are not extensive or focus only on one type of support.		
High	Abundant practical, explicit resources are available for preparing and supporting those responsible for implementation, including professional development resources, tools, standards, a professional learning community, or online or printed materials that support the use of the framework in guiding SEL practice. Examples include lesson plans, curriculum manuals, classroom materials, professional development training, interactive websites, online educator or parent tools, guidance documents or reports, brochures, posters, etc.		

## Appendix D.

**Resources for Use with Children and Youth.** The extent to which a framework has a set of resources and tools that use the framework and are designed for use directly with and by children and youth.

Low	No materials are provided to use and focus on with children or youth.		
Medium	The developers of the framework did not create, but share what others (e.g., partners, practitioners) have created based on the framework.		
High	The developers created specific tools or resources (or link to resources) that provide activities, materials, programs, or curricula that can help practitioners work with children and youth in building competencies, as well as materials that engage youth more fully as partners in thinking about and developing SEL.		

**Resources for Measurement and Data Use.** The extent to which a framework has a set of resources or tools that support assessment of the competencies and the use of the resulting data to inform and improve practice.

Low	No tools or guidance related to measurement is provided.		
Medium	The developers of the framework provide some guidance on assessment or examples. Others have used the framework to create measurement tools.		
High	The developers of the framework have created or identified aligned measures or assessment tools and provide clear, explicit guidance on how to use measurement data.		

## Appendix D.

**Empirically Tested.** The extent to which a framework has studied how it has been or is being used effectively in practice to guide SEL efforts.

Low	The framework does not have evidence for use in practice.		
Medium	There is evidence that the framework is being used in practice to promote SEL-related efforts.		
High	There is evidence of how the framework is being used in practice and whether it is effective in changing practices and building young people’s competencies. This could include an evaluation of how the framework has been implemented.		

## 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.*