



SEL AND THE ARTS: SOCIAL AWARENESS

Casel describes Social Awareness as “the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures; the ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.”

As we highlighted in relation to self-management last month, there are two ways we can look at promoting social awareness in and through the arts.

SOCIAL AWARENESS IN THE ARTS

The simple act of interpreting an artist’s intent behind a piece of work can be a natural means of allowing students to put themselves in the shoes of another artist. To take perspective. To find commonalities and appreciate differences.

Participation in the arts also allows artists to connect with people of diverse backgrounds. Whether it be the goal of a performance, or whether it be simply a shared passion, the arts unite.

SOCIAL AWARENESS THROUGH THE ARTS

Theatre is certainly a natural avenue to allow students to explore the boundaries of social awareness. It allows them to discuss social and ethical norms.

You might also use drama exercises in body language or vocal inflection to help students identify behavioral and social norms. You might also use role-playing in social stories to open up discussions about social awareness. As a result, this allows students to take on the perspective of others and to empathize with characters in these social stories.

Listen to a piece of music, and instruct students to write a monologue about what the instruments might be saying. This truly is a great way to think about perspective! Think about the social norms that might exist between these very abstract characters. Allow students to relate their own social norms to the listening experience imagine new norms.

So take a moment and think about how you might promote SEL and social awareness in and through the arts. And please feel free to share your ideas and success stories!