

# Students Taking Action Together (STAT): Build Student Engagement and Civility via Social Action Pedagogy in Social Studies/Civics/Current Events

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# Will Our Students Lead or Follow?

- Recent social and political events raise clearly and seriously the challenges to creating stability, safety, and an atmosphere of collaboration and respect in our schools and how these challenges can-- and must-- be overcome.
- It will not happen by waiting for others to take action. Those who care must act in the interest of those they care about and in support of the principles and values they cherish.

# What is Needed to be College, Career, Community, & Life Ready... in 2028?



[www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqZiIO0YI7Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqZiIO0YI7Y)

We are preparing our students for an uncertain future! But one constant will be the importance of caring interpersonal relationships, civil discourse, and a commitment to democratic citizenship and the skills to enact it.

# Can We Prepare Our Students to Lead and Follow... and Listen?

- Einhorn Family Charitable Trust: Helping People Get Along Better and Become Civil and Civically Engaged
- Einhorn believes there is a pedagogy of civility, and it is especially important in an increasingly polarized environment

# Citizenship Requires Organization and Action

- Our students will inherit the instruments of democratic government, and *we need them to be ready*.
- To be ready, *they need social-emotional and character development competencies*.
- They also need their time in schools to provide them with *opportunities to organize for meaningful social action* directed at real school and community problems.
- This is aligned with *social studies / civics / history / current events / school issues* in the present curriculum.

# STAT—Students Taking Action Together

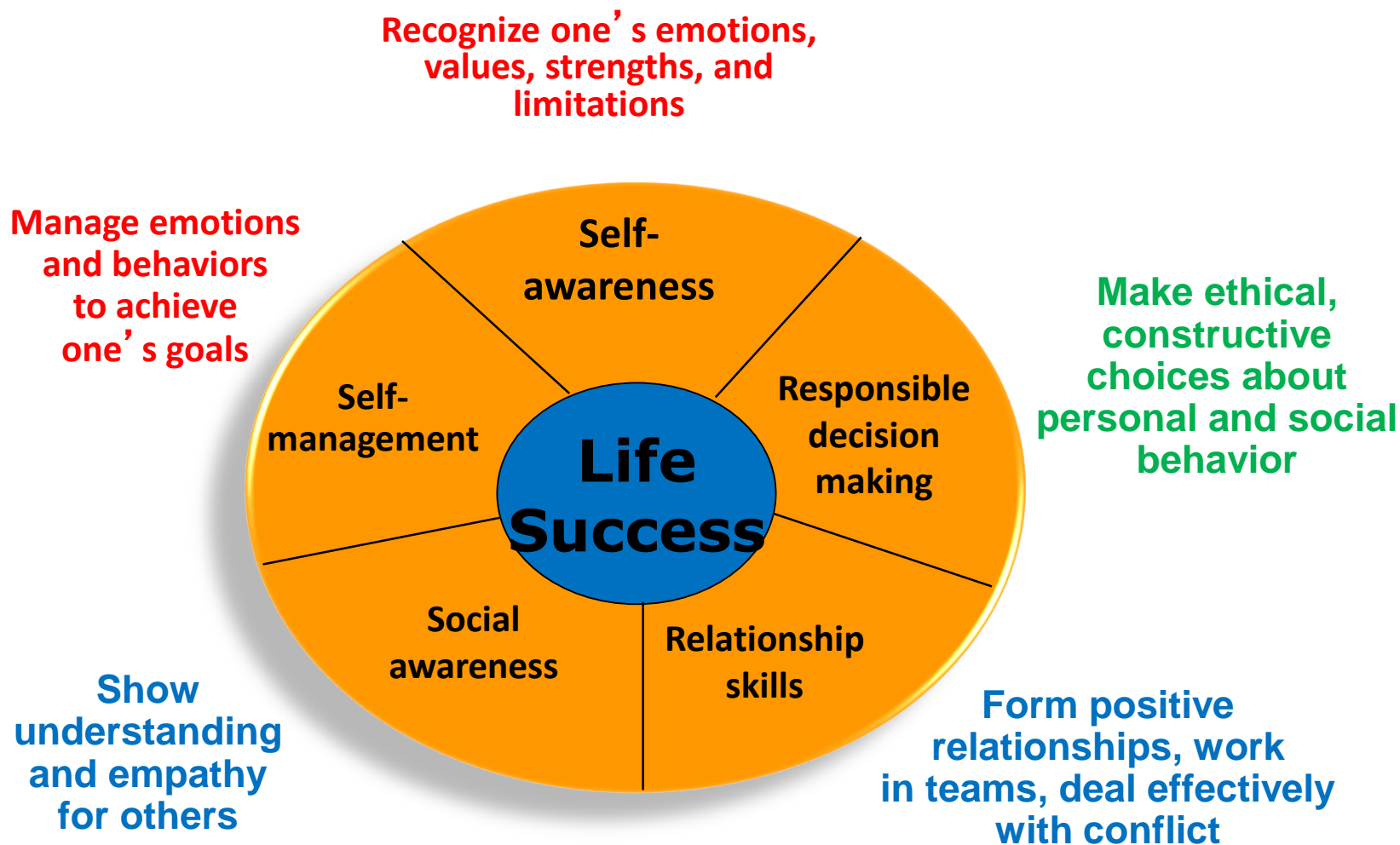
- The SECD Lab at Rutgers is undertaking a pilot project to take a basic social action instructional strategy, which we call STAT—Students Taking Action Together—and adapt it for use as part of everyday social studies, history, civics, and current events instruction, as well as to address school problem situations as they happen.

# New Jersey Social Studies Standards Are Forward Looking

- **Mission:** *Social studies education provides learners with the knowledge, skills, and perspectives needed to become active, informed citizens and contributing members of local, state, national, and global communities in the digital age.*
- **Vision:** An education in social studies fosters a population that:
- Is civic minded, globally aware, and socially responsible.
- Exemplifies fundamental values of American citizenship through active participation in local and global communities.
- Makes informed decisions about local, state, national, and global events based on inquiry and analysis.
- Considers multiple perspectives, values diversity, and promotes cultural understanding.
- Recognizes the implications of an interconnected global economy.
- Appreciates the global dynamics between people, places, and resources.
- Utilizes emerging technologies to communicate and collaborate on career and personal matters with citizens of other world regions.



# The NJ State Board of Education is Forward Looking: Resolution on the SEL Competencies, August 2017



# We Know How Students Can Truly Achieve: Climate, Character, and SEL Competencies

True achievement in school and in life integrates the intellectual, emotional, and social facets of learning. These are inextricably interconnected.

Positive,  
Character-Building  
School  
Climate

+

Explicit  
Instruction  
in SEL Skills

+

Habits of mind, eye, ear, mouth, and hand that include curiosity, explaining their reasoning, feedback process, asking questions, and defining and solving problems, and striving to communicate clearly and proudly.

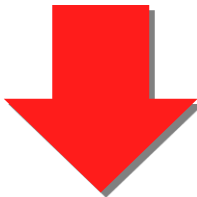
# Benefits of SECD

## Good Science Links SECD to the Following Student Gains:



- Social-emotional skills
- Improved attitudes about self, others, and school
- Positive classroom behavior
- 10-11 percentile-point gains on standardized achievement tests

## And Reduced Risks for Failure:



- Conduct problems
- Aggressive behavior
- Emotional distress

**Source:** Durlak, J.A., Weissberg, R.P., Dymnicki, A.B., Taylor, R.D., & Schellinger, K. (2011). The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions. *Child Development*. (available at [www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)) and M. Berkowitz & M. Bier, *What works in character education*. (Washington, DC: Character Education Partnership, 2006) (available at [www.characterandcitizenship.org](http://www.characterandcitizenship.org).)

# *SECD, Purpose, Mindset, & Social Action*

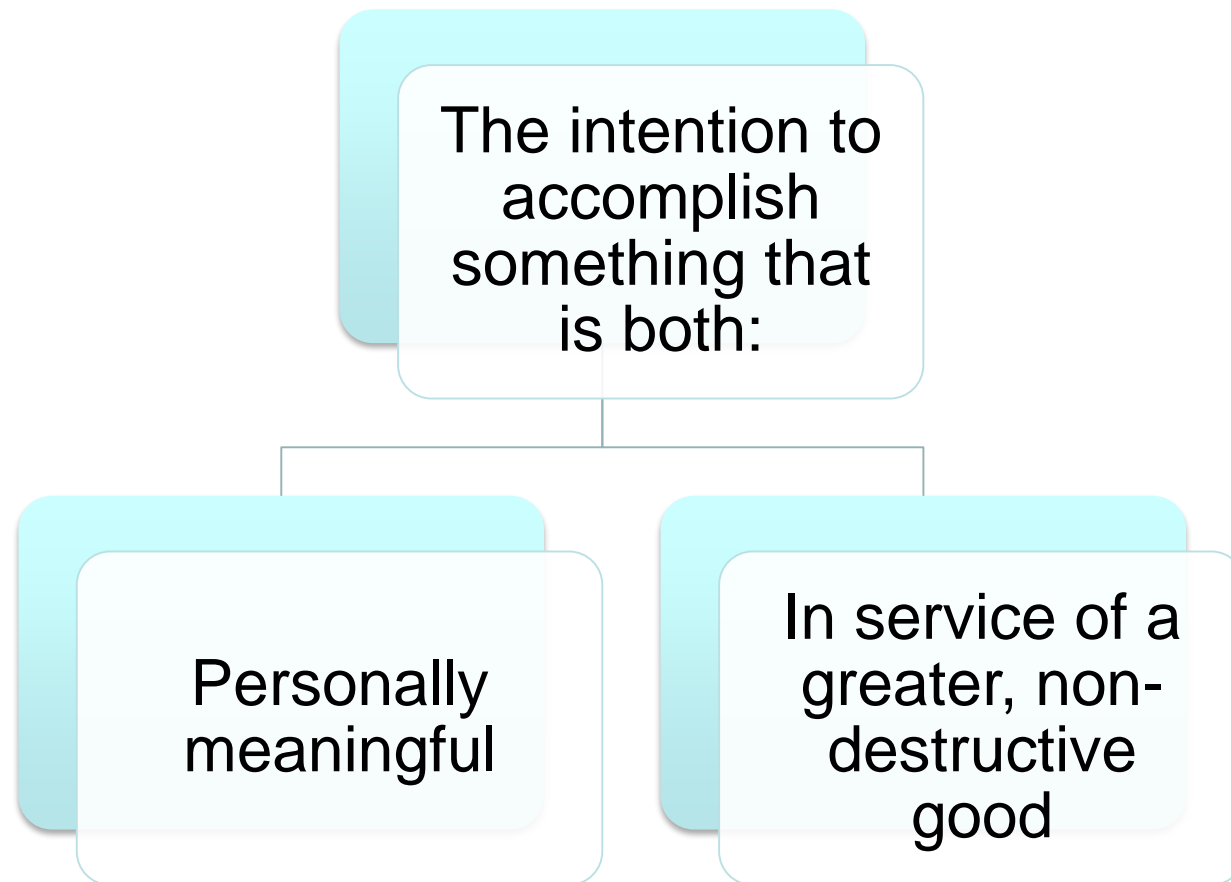
*Social-emotional and character development (SECD) competencies are as basic, foundational, and essential to academic achievement as reading competence, and must be fostered in schools of character that focus on supporting and actualizing students' sense of positive purpose. When students have a positive purpose and a mindset of contribution, they are willing to learn and cooperate for social action.*

# Preparation for College Completion“+” and Career Continuity

College and Career success are mediated  
by EQ at least as much as IQ.

Students must be prepared for citizenship  
by understanding our democracy and its  
history and by living it in the present in our  
schools (Dewey)

# Basic to Humanity: Belief in Oneself as an Agent of Positive (Noble) Purpose



# STAT—Students Taking Action Together

- One of the purposes of STAT is to build students' SECD to create dialogue and civility among diverse students, and a sense of empowerment and civic engagement.
- We would like students to start with the classroom and move outward to the school, community, and world.

# STAT—Students Taking Action Together

- From pilot work done in middle schools, it is clear that building the desired habits of mind/mind set and skill set in students requires strong continuity of STAT pedagogy in the middle school years—typically, grades 6-7-8; this is equally relevant for adjacent grade levels



# STAT—Students Taking Action Together

- The STAT approach is ideal for partnerships between school support personnel and those teaching social studies and related classes, as well as language arts, in partnering to conduct respectful debates, social action methodologies, and build communication, problem solving, and other skills needed to achieve effective and sustained social action in the context of our common humanity.

- *Brief Table/Pair Share Conversation:*
- *How did you learn about democracy and how it works?*
- *How satisfied are you with the education you had in history and civics?*
- ***What were your best instructional experiences in those areas?***

# The MOSAIC/STAT Approach to Preparing Students for Engaged Citizenship

**MOSAIC/STAT**

*Mastering Our Skills And  
Inspiring Character*

*by*

*Students Taking*

*Action Together*



# Focal Social-Emotional Skills in the MOSAIC/STAT Approach

1. Empathy
2. Perspective Taking
3. Communication
- 4. *Social Problem Solving***
5. Emotion Regulation



Students Should be able to Think,  
Speak, and Act on Statements Like  
These: **Yes-No-or Maybe**

- All schools should have metal detectors for the protection of students and staff.
- Students should participate in school committees about bullying, drugs and alcohol, and discipline.

# Pedagogy of People Getting Along Better and Being Civil and Civically Engaged

- **(a) PLAN Problem Solving:** an overall framework for analyzing all issue, to provide a repeated strategy that can become internalized
- **(b) Responsible Listening:** having to summarize the positions one just heard
- **(c) Respectful Empathic Debate:** asking students to argue from the perspective of all sides of an issue, especially ones they disagree with, perhaps regarding specifics of how a situation was handled, or the specific actions taken
- **(d) Peer Opinion Sharing:** Yes-No-Maybe

# Pedagogy of People Getting Along Better and Being Civil and Civically Engaged

- **(e) Collaborative Creativity:** how else could the problem have been viewed? What other solutions might have been considered?
- **(f) Audience-Focused Communication:** how can students share what they have learned with others? Write a letter to a newspaper? Conduct a mock interview? Send something to people involved? Create an artistic or musical depiction? Reach out to an elected official? Conduct a mock debate? Some other kind of social action?

# Pedagogy of People Getting Along Better and Being Civil and Civically Engaged

- Key to the approach is for **students to create products they have to prepare, deliver, and defend collaboratively**. These might be social action improvements in their classrooms or schools, or they might be alternative solutions to historical problems or proposed solutions to current events.
- A part of the learning process that creates flexibility is for **students to get feedback on what they create and have the opportunity to modify in light of feedback**. This will include situations where their ideas are not supported.



# PLAN Problem Solving Social Action Strategy

Each STAT lesson uses the **PLAN** social action process:

- 1) creating a problem description (**P**), which defines the issue being discussed,
- 2) brainstorming a list of options (**L**) to solve the problem,
- 3) developing and acting on an action plan to solve the problem (**A**), and
- 4) noticing successes as part of ongoing evaluation and refinement (**N**).

# Examples of STAT in Action

- **Example #1: Social Studies/History class**
  - **Topic: the Civil War**

# Example #1 of STAT in Action

- Consider beginning with a debate, or a Yes-No-Maybe discussion on this question, based on this statement:

***All through history, many countries have had slaves. What the South was doing was no different.***

- Then, with background reading, consider the problem from different perspectives, using the PLAN framework

# Example #1 of STAT in Action

- **P:** How did the North and the South define the problem in the country? What were the issues, from each perspective? Who were the key people involved in making important decisions?
- **L:** What were their goals? What options did they consider to be acceptable ways to resolve the problem? What did they ultimately decide?
- **A:** How did they carry out their plan? What obstacles did they encounter? How did they deal with them?
- **N:** How did it work out? What can be learned from their experiences that are relevant to the present?

# Examples of STAT in Action

- **Example #2: Current Events**
  - **Topic: Low Voter Turnout**

# Example #2 of STAT in Action

- Consider beginning with a debate, or a Yes-No-Maybe discussion, based on this statement:

***People should not be able to vote unless they can prove they have a real understanding of the issues in an election.***

- Follow up with an analysis using the PLAN framework, with research/readings as appropriate:

# Example #2 of STAT in Action

- P: How do different groups in the community define the problem? Who are the various voting groups in the community? Do all individuals want to see all different groups of voters increase their voting? What are the issues, from each perspective? Who are the key people involved in making important decisions?
- Note: At this point, it might be valuable to invite diverse community members to come to the class/classes/school to speak about these issues.
- L: What are the goals of different groups with regard to increasing voter turnout? What options did they consider to be acceptable ways to resolve the problem? What are they currently doing?

# Example #2 of STAT in Action

- A: How are they carrying out their plans? Who is involved? What obstacles are they encountering? How are they dealing with them?
- N: How is it working out? What has been successful so far? What has not? What can be learned from these experiences that are relevant for future action?



# Example of STAT in Action

- **Example #3: Current Problem in the School**
  - **Topic: Cheating on tests (or HIB, etc.)**
- Start with a Yes-No-Maybe or debate, and then have students consider the problem from different perspectives, using the PLAN framework

# Example #3 of STAT in Action

- Consider a debate, or a Yes-No-Maybe discussion, based on this statement:

***Cheating is only wrong if you get caught.***

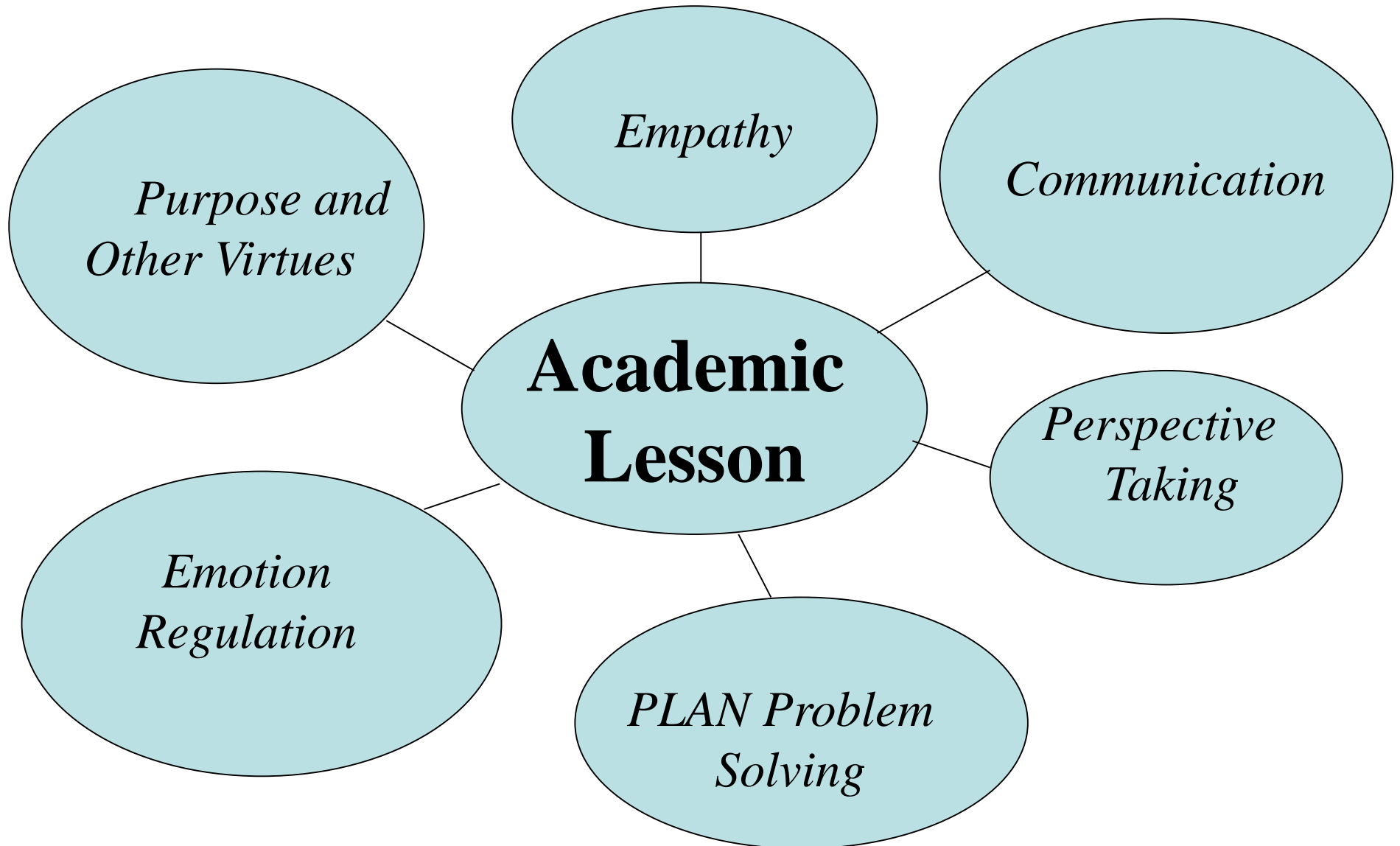
***Otherwise, no one is affected.***

- P: What was the problem that those who cheated were trying to solve? What were the issues, from their perspective? What feelings did they have? What were the issues from the perspective of teachers and administrators? Students not involved in cheating?
- L: What options did those who cheated consider to be acceptable ways to resolve the problem? What did they ultimately decide? How did they arrive at the decision that cheating was acceptable?

# Example #3 of STAT in Action

- A: How did they carry out that plan? What obstacles did they encounter?
- N: How did it work out? What consequences did they not consider that they should have? How would their action have been wrong even if they were not caught? What can be learned from their experience that are relevant to the present?
- **Audience-Focused Communication:** How could students share the outcome of their conversation? What action steps might their be? How can they learn to monitor the success of their plan, and make improvements as needed for the future?

# Integration of SECD into Social Studies-Related Lessons



# Translate Into Small, Time-Limited Goal(s): Essence of Growth Mindset

- Make clear connections between goals and larger values/virtues
- Phrase in positive terms
  - (What you will do, not what you won't)
- Make *performance-based*, rather than *outcome-based*
- SMART: Specific, Measurable, Active, Realistic, Time-Framed

# The Possibilities for Youth Action Are Greater Than We Might Realize







# ***Participate in the STAT Pilot Project!!!***

- Create respectful learning and work environments
- Build problem solving skills and empathy systematically
- Promote youth voice, empowerment, service
- Lead youth toward social action in the school, community, and globally
- ***Provide feedback to improve the procedures***



# Sarge on the Banks, Watching and Looking to the Future— It's Our Turn to Affirm Our Beliefs in Equity and Decency



*“Don’t let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.”*

*John Wooden*



# Contact Information for Involvement in STAT Pilot Work in 2018-2019

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- Samuelnayman@gmail.com
- ***We will let you know how to get electronic copies of all STAT lesson materials, and the feedback surveys***
- For ongoing information about SECD:
- [www.edutopia.org/profile/maurice-j-elias](http://www.edutopia.org/profile/maurice-j-elias)
- [SELinSchools.org](http://SELinSchools.org)