



NWEA Researchers Win Inaugural Competition for Measuring Social-Emotional Learning

Study Finds Student Engagement in Assessment Indicative of SEL

Portland, Ore. – August 7, 2017 – [NWEA](#) researchers won first place in the first annual [Social-Emotional Assessment Design Challenge](#), a competition for assessments that measure social-emotional learning, or SEL. The winning study, led by NWEA research scientists Jim Soland and Nate Jensen, focused on how students' "rapid guessing" behavior on an academic assessment can be used as a proxy for measuring SEL competencies, specifically self-management. CASEL (the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning) sponsored the challenge.

Rapid guessing behavior is defined as responding to assessment items too quickly to comprehend the question. Extensive research, conducted by NWEA senior research fellow Steve Wise, links rapid guessing behavior to a lack of student engagement on an assessment. Based on this research, Soland and Jensen studied rapid guessing behavior on NWEA's MAP Growth assessment and found that it directly correlates to the social-emotional constructs of self-management and self-regulation. Students who demonstrated a pattern of rapid guessing also demonstrated a lower ability to self-manage and self-regulate in school.

Many schools and districts measure SEL through subjective assessments, such as informal classroom observations and self-reported student surveys. By identifying a direct assessment of SEL, this new study introduces quantitative measures that can be used by educators in a multiple measures strategy. Teachers can use this information to identify students who may benefit from SEL interventions.

The goal of the challenge is to stimulate the development and adoption of direct assessments of social-emotional competence, supporting effective instruction and positive student development. Applications were rated on a number of items, including innovation, scalability, developmental and cultural awareness, and technical merit. An invitation to a webinar on the first year's design challenge and a brief on key design principles will be available [here](#).

The research was conducted in partnership with Santa Ana Unified School District (SAUSD) in California. NWEA is donating the \$5,000 award prize to SAUSD who will use it for student scholarships.

"We are honored to receive this award from organizations that are leaders in the SEL field," said Dr. Raymond Yeagley, senior vice president of research and chief academic officer at NWEA. "This is an important step in our broader research agenda to find innovative ways to measure SEL with MAP Growth assessment data."

About NWEA

NWEA™ is a mission-driven, not-for-profit organization that supports students and educators worldwide by creating assessment solutions that precisely measure growth and proficiency—and provide insights to help tailor instruction. For 40 years, NWEA has developed innovative Pre-K–12 assessments, professional learning that fosters educators' ability to accelerate student learning, and research that supports assessment validity and data interpretation. Educators in 140 countries and more than half the schools in the US rely on our flagship interim assessment, MAP® Growth™; our progress monitoring and skills mastery tool, MAP® Skills™; and the OECD Test for Schools (based on PISA). Visit [NWEA.org](https://www.nwea.org) to find out how NWEA can partner with you to help all kids learn.

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