

3 SIGNATURE SEL PRACTICES PLAYBOOK



**OAKLAND UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Community Schools, Thriving Students

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OUSD SEL Definition and Competencies



OAKLAND UNIFIED
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Social and Emotional Learning

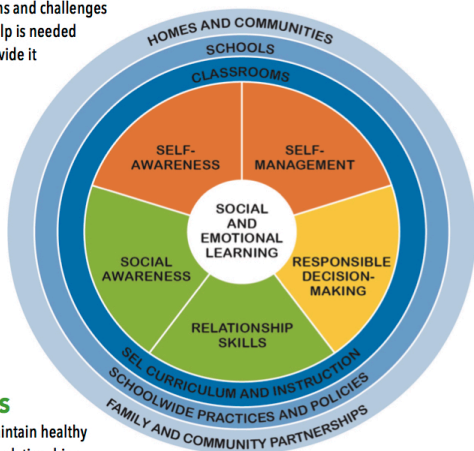
Social and emotional learning (SEL) is a process through which children and adults develop the fundamental skills for life effectiveness. These are the skills we all need to handle ourselves, our relationships, and our work effectively and ethically. Everyone strengthens their social competencies to connect across race, class, culture, language, gender identity, sexual orientation, learning needs and age.

SELF-AWARENESS

- Identify personal, cultural, and linguistic assets
- Identify prejudices and biases towards people different than oneself
- Understand the connections between one's emotions, social contexts and identity
- Demonstrate an accurate self-concept based on one's strengths and challenges
- Identify when help is needed and who can provide it

SELF-MANAGEMENT

- Regulate one's emotions and behaviors in contexts with people different than oneself
- Motivate oneself to set and achieve goals



RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKING

- Problem solve effectively while being respectful of people similar to and different from oneself
- Behave responsibly in personal, professional and community contexts
- Make constructive and respectful choices that consider the well-being of self and others

SOCIAL AWARENESS

- Establish and maintain healthy interactions and relationships across diverse communities
- Embrace diversity and take the perspectives of people different from oneself
- Demonstrate empathy for people similar to and different from oneself

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

- Relate to people similar to and different than oneself
- Communicate clearly and effectively
- Build, establish and maintain healthy relationships

Office of Social Emotional Learning • March 2017

"Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can." – Arthur Ashe

About this Resource

This **Three Signature SEL Practices Playbook** introduces some simple ways to get started with social and emotional learning. It is designed to help users create safe, generous, equity-centered, and productive learning spaces for adults and students.

The great part is that these practices are not new; you may already be using them or similar ones. What we know is that:

- When a **team or whole school** commits to using the Three Signature SEL Practices, they help us reach our classroom and meeting goals while building everyone's SEL skills and competencies in the process.
- When we are **intentional** about their purpose, frequency, and facilitation, they can become routines that build a solid foundation for a learning community.
- When used **consistently** and thoughtfully, they become habits that shape our organizational culture.

The Three Signature SEL Practices Playbook builds on, and is aligned with, the principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching, Restorative Justice, PBIS and trauma informed practices.

The activities in the Playbook are designed to support the three basic **ABC's** that must be present to motivate learning:

Autonomy: the need to be in control of oneself, and being empowered to make choices;

Belonging: the need to be accepted and valued by others; and

Competence: the need to be effective or to accomplish things.

Tapping into these ABC's helps us create effective learning communities for ourselves and our students.

Key Messages

When using the **Three Signature SEL Practices Playbook**, keep in mind that it:

- Aims to respect the judgment, experience, and language of the facilitator. Feel free to adjust activities to suit your needs.
- Is only a sample of activities within the SEL practices categories. You're encouraged to add more activities.
- Requires thoughtful selection and preparation.
- Identifies one key SEL competency per activity, but acknowledges that the SEL competencies are all interconnected.

Getting Started

The Three Signature SEL Practices Playbook begins with three considerations: **Purpose, Participants and Time.**

1. Start with a clear Purpose

Having a clear idea of what is important is vital for selecting SEL Practices that will support participants in achieving the goals of the engagement.

Ask yourself: *What is important about this engagement?*

Examples:

- If an important goal of the day is learning about *inquiry*, I might want a Welcoming Ritual/Inclusion Activity that includes a question as part of the protocol.
- If an important goal of the meeting is *making a difficult decision*, I might select a Welcoming Ritual/Inclusion Activity that asks participants to make choices.
- If an important goal of the morning is learning how to *work in small groups*, I might select a Welcoming Ritual/Inclusion Activity that is organized in trios.

2. Empathize with Participants

Having a hunch about the “state of the group” will help you select SEL Practices that will match the emotional, physical, and intellectual needs of the participants.

Ask yourself: *How can I meet the needs of participants?*

Examples:

- If the group is tired and low energy, I might select SEL Practices that involve movement and an upbeat tone.
- If participants need to feel productive and task oriented at all times, I might select SEL Practices that use the topic of the engagement as the focus.
- If the group has become unfocused and needs to become organized, I might select an Engaging Practice that brings their attention to one central whole-group activity.

3. Time

The urgency of the task or topic can trick us into thinking that we don't have time for SEL Practices, but creating the conditions for the group to do its best work actually results in more effective learning and collaboration.

Ask yourself: How much time is available?

Examples:

- If we are together for a whole day, I might select SEL Practices that take a little more time, to help establish the relationships in the group.
- If we are in a short meeting, I might select SEL Practices that take 1-5 minutes, to quickly establish the group and connect to the work of the engagement.
- If we are behind schedule, I might select SEL Practices that quickly get us into the group, help us stay focused, and allow us to end optimistically.

You will also notice that most of the activities include a **debrief**. This is where some of the most powerful learning takes place, so make sure you leave enough time for this step.

Getting Started in the Classroom

In addition to using the practices in the Playbook, some other simple ways to start using the Three Signature SEL Practices in the classroom include:

Welcoming Rituals/Inclusion Activities

- Smile and greet each person by name
- Morning meetings
- Whole-group greeting activities
- Interactive "do-nows," like peer-to-peer homework help

Engaging Practices

- Turn To Your Partner (TTYP) to discuss
- Think, Ink, Pair, Share (silent time to reflect, followed by time to write, followed partner discussions, closing with a group share out)
- Private think time (facilitator wait time)

Optimistic Closures

- Something I learned today... (to share at home/after school)
- I am looking forward to tomorrow because...
- I am curious about...
- I helped out today when...

Adding to the Playbook

There are many other activities that you can use within the Three Signature SEL Practices categories. When you are adding to the Playbook it's important to look for these elements in the activities:

Welcoming Rituals/Inclusion Activities: Creating a climate of inclusion, belonging, and connection.

- Everyone's voice is heard by at least one other person
- There is an element of personal choice
- The activity matches the purpose and needs of participants
- When possible each person is welcomed by name

Engaging Practices: Building a relationship to academic learning

- Create opportunity for sense making with self or others
- Support everyone's learning
- Help the group stay focused and in a state of optimal learning

Optimistic Closures: Leaving the group on an optimistic note.

- Gives participants time to reflect
- Is forward/future focused
- Respects the diversity and varied experiences of the group
- Everyone's voice is heard by at least one other person

You are encouraged to add to the Playbook, and to modify activities and create your own variations. We have provided blank pages at the end of the Playbook for you to design your own activities.

We sincerely hope that you find this resource useful and welcome your ideas and feedback!



Welcoming Rituals/Inclusion Activities

Welcoming Ritual/Inclusion Activity

Name & Motion

Adapted from Engaging Schools



Time Needed: 10 minutes (depending on the number of people)

Overview: Participants gather in a circle to learn each other's names and share about an activity they enjoy.

When and why:

Use this activity when a new group is coming together. It will help participants learn names and get to know a little bit about one another - a great way to begin building relationships.



SEL Focus:

This activity focuses on both **Self-Awareness**, as participants need to create a gesture relating to an activity they enjoy; and **Relationship Skills**, through participation and positive interactions.

Steps:

1. Explain that the purpose of the activity is to learn names and get to know each other.
2. Invite the group to form a circle.
3. Offer instructions:
 - Participants will take turns saying their own name while making a motion that represents something they enjoy doing.
 - Each participant, in turn, will repeat the names and gestures of those who have gone before, prior to adding their own name and gesture.
4. Model with your name and motion of your own, e.g., "I'm Sue and I like to play basketball." (Pretend to throw a ball towards a hoop).
5. Check for understanding, then ask the person to your right to begin. Model by repeating his name and mimicking his motion.
6. If someone can't remember a name or motion, invite her to ask a colleague for help and thank that person for their help.
7. Debrief by asking, "Why it is important to know each other's names? What was it like to participate? Were there any surprises? What's something you had in common with someone? What is something several people in the group had in common?"

Modifications and Variations:

If making a gesture is challenging, a person can say the activity instead.

Synectics

Adapted from "Groups at Work: Strategies and Structures for Professional Learning," Laura Lipton and Bruce Wellman, based on the work of George M. Prince.



Time Needed: 8 - 10 minutes

Overview:

Participants take part in brainstorming and metaphorical thinking that allows for a high level of inclusion and encourages the acceptance of offbeat or novel ideas.

When and why:

This activity promotes creative and fluid thinking. It sparks conversation and establishes readiness for further exploration of the topic.



SEL Focus:

Synectics allows the group to focus its energy on a topic or concept in a low-risk way in which all voices are included, particularly supporting the development of **Self-Awareness**, **Self-Management**, and **Social Awareness** skills.

Steps:

1. Project an image on a screen, or supply a picture card on each table.
2. Explain that the task is to complete the sentence stem: "This [topic] is like this [image] because..." Participants generate and record as many comparisons between the image displayed and the topic presented as possible in 1-2 minutes. They can do this either individually, or in small groups.
3. If done individually, participants review their brainstorm list and choose one to share and discuss with a partner. Then invite two or three participants to share their completed sentence stems with the whole group.
4. If done as a group, after brainstorming, invite each group to work together to choose one comparison to share out loud to the whole group.

Modifications and Variations:

In addition to making comparisons, individuals/groups can also generate contrasts: "This [topic] is NOT like this [image] because..."



What's New?



Time Needed: 2 - 4 minutes

Overview:

This is a quick welcoming activity in which everyone's voice is heard. It can be used repeatedly to continue building relationships, because there's always something that's new!

When and why:

This activity offers a simple way to transition a group into a learning space while honoring a diversity of experiences and voices. It also promotes connectedness within the group, and is a good example of a "low vulnerability" activity since each person decides for themselves what level of personal experience they wish to share.



SEL Focus:

This activity builds **Self-Awareness** by encouraging participants to reflect, while simultaneously addressing **Relationship Skills** as participants speak and listen to each other, respectfully sharing and receiving information.

Steps:

1. Ask participants to find a partner (or pair them if that is appropriate for your group).
2. Say, "Think of something that is new with you that you want to share with your partner." Then give participants a moment to think of their News.
3. Explain that each person will share their News while their partner fully listens silently, without comment or questions.
4. Tell participants that you will be keeping time and that you will let them know when it is time to switch roles.
5. Give pairs a minute to decide who will go first, ask the starting partners to raise their hands to make sure everyone is ready, then give the green light to begin.
6. At the end of a minute or two, use your attention signal to bring the room to quiet and let participants know it is time to switch roles, and time them for an equal sharing time.
7. After partners have shared, ask them to reflect with each other or with the whole group: "How was it to share and listen to one another?"

Modifications and Variations:

Give participants more time (3 - 5 minutes) to share and process their News.



Four Corners



Time Needed: 5 - 15 minutes

Overview:

Participants reflect on a statement, image, or prompt and move to a "corner" that matches their choice. There they share their rationale with others in their corner before the group reconvenes.

When and why:

This activity is helpful in promoting the importance of divergent perspectives, and the value of having all voices heard and seen. Participants have the opportunity to connect in alliance with others, while hearing a variety of reasons for being drawn to the common category. The activity also incorporates movement and injects energy into the room.



SEL Focus:

Participants will be practicing **Responsible Decision Making**, as they choose and discuss their "corner" choice. They will also be using **Social Awareness** skills as they listen and process each other's choices.

Steps:

1. Before the activity, mark 4-5 "corners" in the room with a large image, number, or word that corresponds to the choices you will be giving.
2. Ask participants to silently reflect on a statement or question prompt that is aligned to the content of the engagement.
3. Share the 4-5 response choices with the group, using a poster or slide.
4. Instruct participants to choose one of the responses, then ask them to move to that designated "corner" of the room, find a partner or trio, and to share what drew them to that choice.
5. Invite 2-3 participants to share their choice and rationale with the whole group. (If time, you might invite one person from each group to share.) You may also ask what they notice about the size and composition of the groups and/or what SEL skills and competencies came into play during the activity.
6. NOTE: If you end up with a solo participant in a "corner," join that person to hear their thoughts, using a timer to keep on track.

Modifications and Variations:

Create an "Other" corner to encourage and acknowledge divergent and creative thinking. Post a quote at each corner, read them out loud, and ask, "Which quote best captures your [thinking, definition, understanding] of _____?"



Maître d'



Time Needed: 5 - 10 minutes

Overview:

Acting as a maître d', the facilitator calls participants to form "tables" where they "dine" (exchange ideas) with a variety of tablemates.

When and why:

This activity helps participants feel a sense of connectedness when sharing ideas, encourages listening to a wide range of ideas (rather than focusing on a topic in depth), and incorporates movement as an energizer.



SEL Focus:

Participants will practice **Relationship Skills** as they engage in meaningful social interactions, with a particular emphasis on communication skills.

Steps:

1. Prepare engaging prompts (questions, quotes or images) that are aligned to the gathering's content or SEL goal.
2. Explain that when you, the maître d', call a "table," (e.g., "Table for three!"), participants must move quickly to arrange themselves into groups of that number and then begin discussing the prompt.
3. Let them know that in order to keep things moving and encourage mingling, they will only have a few minutes to talk with each at their "tables."
4. Share the first prompt and call out, "Table for ____!"
5. Use your attention signal to bring the room to silence when time is up.
6. Repeat several times, each time offering a different prompt for discussion.
7. Debrief by asking one or more questions: "What is something you heard about _____ that stood out to you? What is something about _____ that you are now wondering? In what ways did your understanding of _____ deepen or change? What was a benefit or challenge of doing this activity?"

Modifications and Variations:

Play music as groups are being formed. Keep the same prompt each time, and ask the tables to carry on the conversation from their previous table group. This activity also makes an effective "engaging pedagogy" strategy, when used to build and share knowledge in a content area.

Mindful Minute (Brain Break)



Time Needed: 1 - 3 minutes



Overview:

Often times our bodies can be present but our minds are elsewhere - planning, making our grocery list, etc. Asking participants to focus on a single, simple action helps everyone become fully present.

When and why:

This activity works well both to start a meeting - as a way to help participants focus, and as a “brain break” - to allow participants to decompress and refocus during an engagement.



SEL Focus:

This activity promotes both **Self-Awareness** and **Self-Management** as participants practice regulating themselves.

Steps:

1. Explain that our breath is always with us and can be used to calm our bodies and steady our minds.
2. Ask participants to silently bring awareness to their breathing when you sound a tone. It may be helpful for participants to place their hands on their bellies and notice the gentle rising and falling of their breath.
3. Gently sound a triangle or bell.
4. Debrief the experience by asking participants to share how the activity felt to them, when they might use this in their lives, or to share similar ideas like this that help them stay present and focused.

Modifications and Variations:

For an energizing mindfulness activity, choose something that involves concentration, for example, ask participants to pat their heads while they rub their bellies.



1-2-3 Clap



Time Needed: 7 - 10 minutes

Overview:

Partners stand and engage in a counting and clapping focusing activity. The facilitator asks short questions that guide the reflective process.

When and why:

The purpose of this activity is to quickly bond a group together in preparation for collaboration, especially when you want to encourage innovation during the engagement.



SEL Focus:

This activity builds **Self-Management** and **Relationship Skills** by demonstrating how making mistakes together is a fast track to building a cohesive group.

Steps:

The same partners face each other during each of the three rounds.

Round 1:

1. Ask participants to find a partner (or partner them up in a way that is appropriate for your group).
2. Explain that pairs will count to three over and over again, with partners alternating saying the next number in the sequence.
3. Model slowly with a partner.
4. Once everyone has had a minute or two to play, use your attention signal to bring that round to a close. Ask, "How many of you made a mistake?" "What did you do when you made a mistake?" (Typical answers are, "Laughed," or said, "Sorry," or pulled back).
5. Explain that these are all ways that people give cues to the group that say, "I've got this. I'll laugh at myself or apologize so you won't push me out."
6. Tell the group that during the next round, when someone makes a mistake, they should raise their hands in the air and say, "Ta-da!"

Round 2:

1. Explain that for this round, pairs should replace the number "1" with a clap and then continue the number sequence "2 - 3" counted out loud (Clap-2-3, Clap-2-3, etc.).
2. Model slowly with a partner. During the modeling purposefully make a mistake, such as saying "1" instead of clapping after "3." Raise your hands in the air and say, "Ta-da!"
3. Once everyone has had a minute or two to play, call the round to a close. Ask, "Was anyone glad that they weren't the one making a mistake?"
4. Tell the group that in the next round when one person makes a mistake, both partners will raise their hands in the air, give each other a double high-five, and both say, "Ta-da!"

Round 3:

1. Explain that in this round, pairs should clap for "1," replace the number "2" with a foot stomp, and say "3." (Clap, stomp, 3, Clap stomp, 3, etc.).
2. Model this with a partner and purposefully make a mistake, such as saying "2" instead of stomping. You and your partner now give each other double high fives and shout, "Ta-da!" together, and start over again.
3. Once everyone has had a minute or two to play, call the round to a close.
4. Ask participants to notice how they were taking care of each other and were learning to sync with each other – finding the right pace for everyone to succeed.
5. Ask participants to notice the positive energy that was created with each mistake in the group and explain that they will now be working together for the next few days and want to keep that same energy when mistakes are made. Ta-da!

Modifications and Variations:

Add another round with a clap, stomp and snap. Notice the joy that is in the room even when the task becomes more difficult.

Mix & Mingle

Adapted from Engaging Schools



Time Needed: 5 - 10 minutes

Overview:

This activity involves moving around the room and sharing ideas with a partner or small group.

When and why:

Mix and Mingle builds community by encouraging participants to interact with each other, and sets the expectation that everyone's thinking and voice are valued.



SEL Focus:

This activity builds **Social Awareness** and **Relationship Skills** as participants share their ideas and actively listen to divergent perspectives.

Steps:

1. On a card or half-sheet of paper, ask participants to write down a response to a prompt you give that is related to the topic at hand.
2. When you announce, "Mix and mingle!" and turn on music, participants should stand up and move around the room.
3. When the music stops, participants should find a partner near them. Help with pairing if necessary.
4. Partners share their responses, listen actively to each other, and ask follow up questions.
5. Debrief by asking, "What were some of the the things you appreciated about doing this activity? What was challenging about it? What SEL skills did you use? What might be done differently next time?"

Modifications and Variations:

Groupings can be in pairs, trios, or even groups of four. You can post several prompts, and run the activity several times, so that participants can discuss their various responses with different partners.

Give One, Get One, Move On (Go, Go, Mo)



Time Needed: 5 - 10 minutes



Overview:

Through this activity, participants share and pass along new ideas.

When and why:

This activity enables participants to spread good ideas and share what they know or have learned with each other in a way that maximizes equitable “air time.”



SEL Focus:

Go, Go, Mo promotes **Relationship Skills** by allowing participants to practice active listening in order to learn from their peers, and provides an opportunity for participants to practice clear and effective communication as they teach each other.

Steps:

1. Ask participants to write down 3-5 key learnings or important ideas about the topic at hand. Each idea or learning should be written down on a separate index card or sticky-note.
2. Explain the activity, then invite the group to get up and mingle.
3. After 30 seconds, use your agreed-upon attention signal to gain the group's attention and call out, “GIVE ONE to a partner!”
4. Participants form pairs and each “gives” one of his or her key learnings or important ideas about the topic to their partner while explaining what they wrote, so that each person “gives one” and “gets one.”
5. Call out, “Move on!” and instruct participants to mingle again.
6. Repeat the sharing process. This time, participants can share their own card or a new idea they received from their previous partner.
7. Continue the activity as time permits and for as long as the group is engaged in sharing ideas.

Modifications and Variations:

Instead of random mingling, have people gather in various clusters, such as by birth month, by designated categories of shared interests, by role, etc.

Pass It On



Time Needed: 5 - 10 minutes



Overview:

In this activity participants silently share their ideas with each other.

When and why:

This activity enables participants to share ideas with each other in a quiet, focused way. It is particularly useful after a round of active engagement.



SEL Focus:

This activity promotes **Relationship Skills** and allows participants to practice clear and effective written communication.

Steps:

1. Provide a sheet of paper to each participant, and instruct them to fold it so that the creases form six boxes.
2. Ask participants to think of an important idea they have learned or that has recently been reinforced during the engagement.
3. Give participants 1-3 minutes to write it down in Box 1, telling them that this is their upper left hand box.
4. Instruct participants to pass their sheet to another participant, (e.g. the person next to them at the table), who will silently read what was written in the first box.
5. That person will add an idea in Box 2 (upper right hand box). Explain that participants should not repeat ideas that are already listed, but, rather, should generate new ideas.
6. Ask participants to continue passing the papers and adding ideas until all of the boxes are filled with ideas.
7. When the papers are filled in, instruct participants to return the sheets to their original owners.
8. Debrief by asking, "What did you learn from reading your paper when it was filled in? Did anyone have similar ideas or ideas that pushed your own thinking?"

Modifications and Variations:

Fold the papers into quarters if time is short. Invite participants to share out one new idea on their completed paper that they particularly like or agree with. This can be done as a partner activity, trading papers with one other person. If done with students, you may wish to give conversation time after the fact- or information-writing section, to discuss areas of disagreement and clarify for accuracy and meaning.

Clock Partners

Adapted from Reading Quest



Time Needed: 3 – 5 minutes



Overview:

In this pairing activity, each person has his or her own copy of a "Clock Buddies" sheet, with the name of a fellow participant on each hour's slot. These will become partners for various activities throughout the engagement.

When and why:

Clock Buddies is a quick and easy way to create pairs for future partnered activities while avoiding the potentially monotonous effect of continually turning to an elbow partner.



SEL Focus:

This activity encourages participants to build **Relationship Skills** as they partner with various peers throughout the engagement.

Steps:

1. Find, print, and make copies of a "Clock Buddy" handout (available online).
2. Distribute a handout to each participant, and ask them to write their own name at the top of their paper.
3. Instruct participants to stand up with their papers and a pen and move quietly around the room until you use your attention signal, at which point they should stop and find a partner.
4. When everyone has a partner, ask them to sign each other's paper on the 3 o'clock line. It is very important that they all start on the same line.
5. Give the signals again to mix, stop, and find a new partner. Check to be sure everyone has a new partner before you ask participants to sign each other's papers on the 6 o'clock line.
6. To complete the activity, have partners mingle and pair up two more times. They'll sign next on the 9 o'clock line and finally on the 12 o'clock line.
7. After all lines are signed, invite participants to return to their seats.
8. Each time you need participants to form pairs during the engagement, have them take out their appointment clocks and announce one of the four times as their partner for this time. For example, "Now you will meet with your 9 o'clock appointment to reflect and discuss..."



Engaging Practices



SEL Attention Signal



Time Needed: Less than a minute

Overview:

The facilitator raises a hand in the air then waits for everyone else in the room to raise a hand and be silent before proceeding with directions or information.

When and why:

A well-practiced and consistently implemented attention signal is essential in group learning situations in order to calmly regain the group's attention.



SEL Focus:

This practice reinforces **Self-Management**, as participants must stop what they are doing in order to refocus on the facilitator, and **Social Awareness**, as participants cue in on what the people around them are doing.

Steps:

1. Explain that as the facilitator, you will need to be able to get the group's attention.
2. Demonstrate that when you raise your hand, participants should also raise their hands.
3. Explain that this will give everyone in the room a visual cue that they should quietly look towards the facilitator and pause in their conversations. This will help the room quickly become quiet, so everyone can hear the next direction or announcement.
4. You may choose to point out the SEL skills that this activity is reinforcing.

Tips:

- Be patient: Realize that it's a positive sign when participants are so caught up in their conversations that they are reluctant to stop, or don't immediately notice your silently raised hand.
- Wait until everyone is completely silent before you begin speaking.
- Refrain from restating your expectations or from singling out participants with requests for silence. Let your silent raised hand be the only signal they have to attend to, and soon it will become the only signal they need!

Card Sorts

Adapted from Engaging Schools



Time Needed: 10 - 30 minutes

Overview:

Participants collaborate to sort, match, or sequence cards with content/information.

When and why:

Card sorts help keep small groups focused as they narrow large brainstormed ideas down into key concept categories.



SEL Focus:

This activity emphasizes **Responsible Decision Making** and **Social Awareness** as participants work together to solve the task.

Steps:

1. Provide a topic or question for participants to respond to, (e.g. "How do you build relationships with your students?"). Participants should write one idea – legibly - per index card.
2. Allow enough time for each participant to write 3-7 cards.
3. Ask participants to form small groups and lay their cards out together on a table so that all group members can see them.
4. Groups should read all of the cards and then decide together how they want to sort them (What possible categories emerge?).
5. Instruct groups to work as a team to sort the cards, listening as each person contributes ideas, and taking turns moving the cards into a variety of categories.
6. Debrief by asking, "What was beneficial to your learning or enjoyable about working with your small groups and why? What was challenging about the process and what strategies did you use to accomplish the task anyway? How does discussing with colleagues impact your learning? Were you able to find patterns and meaningful categories?"

Modifications and Variations:

Vary the group sizes and/or the number of cards each individual may contribute. If the groups are struggling to figure out categories, the facilitator can provide the categories and let the groups decide which cards should go into which category.

Save the Last Word for Me

Adapted from National School Reform Faculty



Time Needed: 15 minutes

Overview:

Working in small groups, participants follow a pattern of sharing and discussing their responses to a text or video clip.

When and why:

Through creating a clear structure for discussion, this strategy encourages everyone to be both active speakers and listeners, and ensures that frequent speakers give space for others to share.



SEL Focus:

This activity focuses on **Self-Management**, as participants are required to take turns being both speaker and listener.

Steps:

1. Identify a reading or video excerpt that will serve as the catalyst for this activity.
2. Have participants read/view the selected text/video and highlight three sentences or make note of three ideas that particularly stand out for them.
3. Ask participants to write each sentence/idea on the front of an index card. On the back of the card, ask them to write a few sentences explaining why they chose that quote, (what it meant to them, reminded them of, how it connects to their own experience, etc.)
4. Divide the participants into groups of three, identifying one person as A, one person as B, and the other as C in each group.
5. Invite the A participants to read one of their chosen quotations to their group. Then persons B and C discuss the quotation while person A listens. (For example, What do they think it means? Why do they think these words/idea might be important? To whom?)
6. After several minutes, ask the A participant to read the back of their card (or to explain why they picked the quotation), thus having "the last word."
7. This process repeats with B sharing and others reflecting before B gets "the last word," then is repeated again with C sharing.

Engaging with Data

Adapted from ATLAS Data Protocol



Time Needed: 45 minutes

Overview:

This protocol offers a structured way to engage with data, with a focus on reflecting on implications and developing next steps.

When and why:

The purpose of this activity is to help participants make meaning out of data. It is useful when you want to use a data set to drive change.



SEL Focus:

This activity emphasizes **Responsible Decision Making** as participants exercise their problem-solving skills together.

Steps:

1. **Predictions:** Explain the data you have in hand and ask participants to predict what they think the data will say. Chart their responses.
2. **Descriptions:** Distribute the data and ask participants to work in pairs to describe what they see while avoiding judgments or jumping to interpretations. What trends do they notice? Chart.
3. **Interpretations:** Ask pairs to discuss what the data suggests. Encourage participants to come up with as many interpretations as possible, ask each other questions, and base their responses on evidence from the data set. Chart.
4. **Implications:** In pairs, invite participants to recommend next steps, develop strategies that may be effective in addressing the evidence found in the data, and suggest additional data that might be helpful to look at. Chart.
5. **Reflections:** Ask participants to write or discuss with a partner any or all of the following questions: What did you learn from listening to your colleagues that was interesting or surprising? What new perspectives did your colleagues provide? How well did the process work? What could be improved? Invite share outs.

Modifications and Variations:

This can be done in small groups instead of in pairs, and groups can be responsible for charting and sharing out their responses between steps.



Gallery Walk



Time Needed: 20 minutes or longer if schedule permits

Overview:

Like viewers at a gallery, small groups of participants will rotate from poster to poster, stopping to view, discuss, and add ideas at each station.

When and why:

This brainstorming activity allows small groups to discuss a variety of topics and learn from one another in a short amount of time.



SEL Focus:

During this activity participants will be drawing on **Responsible Decision-Making** skills as they problem-solve with their group and **Relationship Skills** as they talk and listen to each other.

Steps:

1. Share an over-arching question with the group, such as, "How can we make our school environment safer for students?"
2. Hang posters with headings that relate to the over-arching question around the room. For example, with, "How can we make our school environment safer for students?" the headings might be "Between Classes," "At Dismissal," "During Lunch," etc.
3. Divide participants into small groups, give each group a marker, and direct each group to one of the posters. Explain the over-arching question, and what each of the poster topics is.
4. Allow groups to stand at each poster for 3-5 minutes to share, discuss, and write down their responses to the to the category.
5. When time is up, ask the groups to rotate clockwise, so each group is in front of a new poster, to continue the activity. Each group now reads the offerings of the previous authors, using small sticky notes to add clarifying questions or comments/compliments. Rotate every 3-5 minutes, until every group has visited every poster.
6. Next allow time for individuals to silently walk around the room and read the completed posters, noting ideas that they see that they agree with or that seem like something they'd like to try.
7. Debrief the activity by asking participants to share out their favorite idea, an insight, or a proposed next step.

Modifications and Variations:

If space is limited, the "posters" can be sheets of paper that are passed from table to table.

Jigsaw



Time Needed: 20 – 30 minutes

Overview:

Small groups each discuss a different excerpt of an article or topic. Groups then reorganize so that each new group contains one member from each of the original groups. The members of the new group then "teach" their excerpt to the members of their new group.

When and why:

"Teaching others" is a highly effective strategy that enables individuals to deeply learn and synthesize information.



SEL Focus:

This activity supports **Relationship Skills and Self-Awareness**, as participants are challenged to teach what they have learned to their peers.

Steps:

1. Select an appropriate text and divide it into sections so that each group gets a section that's readable during the amount of time you'll be providing.
2. Divide participants into same-sized small groups, and assign one section of the article to each group.
3. Allow groups to discuss their section or topic for 5-10 minutes, with everyone in the group supporting one another to fully understand the material.
4. Ask each group member to number off within their group. Then ask all of the "1s" "2s" "3s" etc., to find each other and form new groups.
5. The new group members now take turns teaching their piece to their new group, in the sequenced order of the article. Designate a "timer" who ensures that each group member has equal time to do their piece of teaching, answer questions from the group, etc.
6. Debrief the activity with one of these ideas: By asking participants to return to their original groups and share one new thing they learned; offer a public or private "thank you" to the person whose teaching they found easiest to understand and why they felt that person's teaching was effective; or write a silent reflection to rate themselves on how well they thought they taught their piece and what they might try to do differently next time.

Fishbowl



Time Needed: 30 minutes



Overview:

In this activity, participants are divided into two groups which are seated in concentric circles, all facing the center. The outside circle listens while the inside group has a discussion about a topic. Then the groups switch places so the listeners become the speakers, and vice-versa.

When and why:

This activity strengthens listening skills and encourages everyone to participate in turn in a discussion. It can be used during a session to discuss content, or at the end of an engagement to give air time to everyone about what they learned or found useful.



SEL Focus:

While the main emphasis of this activity is on the **Social Awareness** skills needed to participate in constructive dialogue, the activity also strengthens **Relationship Skills** as participants aim to communicate effectively.

Steps:

1. Set up two concentric circles of chairs, all facing the center of the circle, and have everyone take a seat.
2. Provide the question prompt or discussion topic, and set a timer for 10 minutes. Only the inside group members may speak during this time. Instruct the outside group to quietly listen and notice their own ideas that surface during the discussion, as well as observing their inner-circle partner to be able to offer feedback, if that's a part of this engagement.
3. When the time is up, ask the groups to trade places, with the outside group now sitting on the inner circle chairs and vice-versa. Set the timer again, and let the new inside group discuss the topic.
4. Debrief this activity by asking participants to write down a response to one comment they heard and explain why they agree/disagree; turn to a partner and discuss how it felt, both being a "listener" and a "discusser;" or share one word or a short phrase with the whole group that was important about the discussion to you.

Modifications and Variations:

You can assign the groups opposing views in an argument. This works especially well when you have read an article or watched a video prior to the discussion that shows opposing views.



Optimistic Closures



Future Me



Time Needed: 5 - 7 minutes

Overview:

This activity involves asking participants to write a letter to their "future self" about what they learned from the engagement and what they'd like to take away. It may be appropriate to encourage them to offer themselves "sage advice and heartfelt appreciations" to remind themselves of the goals and aspirations of today.

When and why:

This is a great exercise for the start or end of the school year. You can mail the letters at the end of the year or right before school begins, or have participants use the website www.futureme.org and email their letter to their future self, choosing when they would like their message sent to them.



SEL Focus:

This activity builds **Self-Awareness**, as participants identify what they have learned and how they will use that knowledge.

Steps:

1. Hand out paper, pens, and stamped envelopes and ask participants to self-address the envelope.
2. Read or post prompts that connect to the session, for example, "What have you learned that you plan to apply to your practice? What do you want to remember from today's session?"
3. Collect letters in their sealed, self-addressed envelopes, and inform participants that you will mail the letters to them at a later date.

Modifications and Variations:

Provide a postcard to each participant instead of paper and an envelope, reminding participants that this "letter to self" will be public, since their writing will be visible during the delivery process.

Human Bar Graph

Adapted from EL Education



Time Needed: 5 minutes

Overview:

Participants form a human bar graph by standing in the line that best represents their current level of understanding.

When and why:

This activity gauges participant understanding at the end of a session and helps plan for the next session. Be mindful of the level of vulnerability you're asking of participants, as they publicly reveal their level of mastery or comfort with the topic, and create the conditions for that ahead of time.



SEL Focus:

This activity addresses **Self-Awareness** as participants are asked to identify what they understand and learned and what they still need more support with. **Social Awareness** also comes into play as the group supports each person in noting that wherever they are in their learning process is okay.

Steps:

1. Identify a range of levels of understanding or mastery (e.g. beginning – developing – accomplished; or confused - I'm okay - I am rocking it!) as labels for 3-4 adjacent parallel lines. Removable blue painters' tapes makes it easy to "lay down" and take up the lines.
2. Invite participants to form a human bar graph by standing on the line that best represents their current level of understanding.
3. Debrief the process by asking participants to share out why they stood in the line they chose, what would have enabled them to stand in a different line, what this means for a future session, or what they most need or want next, to make forward progress.

Modifications and Variations:

You can prepare a piece of chart paper with the labels at the bottom, and invite participants to add a sticky-note to their bar in the graph. Add names if you are using this as a targeted formative assessment; no names are needed if you are getting a general pulse of the group.



"One Takeaway I'm Going to Try"



Time Needed: 3 - 5 minutes

Overview:

Participants are asked to consider and name a takeaway – an idea, strategy, tool, action step – that they want to try out.

When and why:

Often times participants are presented with a variety of ideas, strategies, and tools, with the implicit understanding that they will use one or more of the "takeaways." This activity invites participant to explicitly connect their learning to their practice and encourages ownership and responsibility for taking action.



SEL Focus:

This activity primarily focuses on **Self-Management** as participants are asked to set a personal goal.

Steps:

1. Direct participants to reflect on what they have heard and learned, then ask, "Thinking about what you heard and learned today, what is one takeaway you want to try, and why? A takeaway can be an idea, a strategy, a tool, or an action step."
2. Give participants a minute of silent think time.
3. Pair participants and allow 1-2 minutes for each person to share their takeaway and thinking with their partner.
4. If time permits, invite 2-3 participants to share their takeaway and thinking with the whole group.

Modifications and Variations:

With all participants standing up, person #1 shares aloud her takeaway and then sits down. Other participants with the same or similar takeaway sit down as well. Move to the next person and repeat until everyone is seated.



I Am Curious



Time Needed: 1 - 5 minutes

Overview:

At the end of an engagement, participants are asked to reflect on something that they are curious about as a result of their day/meeting/lesson. They will then share their reflection with a partner or with their table group.

When and why:

This activity respects participants' learning processes and is a quick way to find out what questions they might have. It is useful when you want to solicit input on planning for future engagements.



SEL Focus:

This activity builds **Self-Awareness** as participants identify their learning gaps, and are encouraged to be curious about learning more. **Social Awareness** skills are practiced as they form and share opinions and receive one another's input respectfully.

Steps:

1. At the end of an engagement, ask participants to complete this sentence, "I am curious to learn more about..." or, "I am curious about..."
2. Give participants a minute to think and write a "note to self."
3. At the end of the minute ask participants to share their "curiosity" with a partner or their table group.
4. After 1-3 minutes of partner talk, ask for 2-3 people to share what they are curious about with the whole group.
5. Collect the "notes to self" if you are using this as a formative assessment for future planning.

Modifications and Variations:

If your group is small enough, allow more time for reflection and discussion and/or hear from everyone. It will give you and the group a sense of shared learning and help prepare for the next engagement. You can debrief this option by asking whether anyone notices any themes or reoccurring curiosities raised by the group.



My Next Step



Time Needed: 3 - 10 minutes

Overview:

Close the engagement or an activity by asking participants to make a commitment to take immediate action.

When and why:

This activity encourages participants to make a commitment to action in the near future.



SEL Focus:

This activity focuses on both **Self-Awareness**, as participants reflect on their own learning, as well as on **Responsible Decision Making**, as they are encouraged to follow up on a commitment.

Steps:

1. Ask participants to think of their first next step based on what they learned during the engagement. It might be a conversation, gathering additional resources, or thinking more about the topic.
2. After giving participants a minute to think about what that step would be, ask them to share their next step with a partner or at their table.
3. Ask participants to write their "next step" on a sticky-note and post the note somewhere where they will be reminded of their task, such as on their desk, inside the cover of their related text, etc.

Modifications and Variations:

Help participants set up an "accountability partner" from the group to check in with on their action step during the following week.

Suit Yourself

Adapted from "Playing with a Full Deck: 52 team Initiatives Using a Deck of Cards" by Michelle Cummings. 2006. Training Wheels Inc.



Time Needed: 5 - 10 minutes

Overview:

Participants reflect on, and then share, valued take-aways from the experience using playing card suits as a focus area.

When and why:

Use this activity when you would like the group to hear a broad range of what was seen as valuable from the engagement.



SEL Focus:

This activity builds **Self-Awareness** as participants are asked to identify how the engagement impacted them.

Steps:

1. Pass out a playing card to each participant. The suit the participant gets describes the category of their response as follows:
 - **Hearts:** generate conversations about something from the heart—how you felt, what it meant to you, etc.
 - **Clubs:** describe things that grow—new ideas, new thoughts, a new point of view.
 - **Diamonds:** are gems that last forever. What are some of the gems of wisdom gathered from people or content?
 - **Spades:** used to dig in the garden, so generate conversation about planting new ideas or things participants dug up during class.
2. Provide 1-2 minutes of quiet time for each participant to jot down (or think about) their answer, then use one of the following three options:
 - Ask for one volunteer from each 'suit' to stand and share their response. Do not comment between sharing.
 - Ask participants to turn to a neighbor and share their response.
 - Invite each participant to answer aloud to you as they walk out door, or hand in their written response as an exit ticket.

Optimistic Closure

UFO/Energy Ball

The UFO Circuit Energy ball is available from many sources, including local science or toy stores, and can easily be found with an internet search.



Time Needed: 3 - 7 minutes

Overview:

Participants form a standing circle, join hands, and are surprised when the connection of their hands allows the UFO/Energy Ball to light up.

When and why:

The element of surprise and delight makes this a great closing activity after a full day or multi-day professional development experience. The activity promotes the ideas that it takes all of us working together and that we may not be able to see the fruits of our individual work or collective work, but that those fruits do exist.



SEL Focus:

This activity focuses on **Social Awareness**, as participants recognize their productive contribution to the group.

Steps:

1. Gather participants in a circle.
2. Express appreciation for everyone's contributions during the engagement. Remind them that everyone's work, while often feeling invisible or as if you're the only one doing it, is actually adding to the forward progress of the field, and is important, even when we don't always see the fruits of our labor right away.
3. Ask everyone to join hands. (Assure them no singing is involved, if that humor fits the group and the moment!)
4. With your right index finger, touch the UFO ball on the metal strip closest to you while you hold hands with the person on your left.
5. Ask the person on your right to touch the metal connector on their side of the Energy/UFO ball instead of joining hands with you.
6. The ball will light up and make a noise.
7. Let people take turns letting go and rejoining hands (one at a time) to make the light and sounds stop and start again.
8. Offer closing language that appreciates the energy everyone has put into the shared experience, and in the work they do with and for others or invite participants to share a closing thought or appreciation, "Something that's giving me new energy for my work..."



One Word Whip Around



Time Needed: 1 - 2 minutes

Overview:

This activity is a quick and easy way of starting out or closing a session. The facilitator asks a question and participants go around and provide a one word answer.

When and why:

This activity brings all voices into the room and enables the facilitator to quickly get a sense of the group in a short amount of time.



SEL Focus:

This activity focuses on **Self-Awareness** and **Relationship Skills**, as participants choose a single word that communicates their thoughts.

Steps:

1. Prepare a statement or question prompt that is aligned to the content of the engagement. For example, "Think of one word about how you are feeling now that you have participated in this engagement," or "Share one word that sums up your learning for today."
2. Invite participants to stand in a circle.
3. State the prompt, explain that everyone should prepare a one-word response, and allow a minute of think time.
4. Ask for a volunteer to start off by sharing their word. The volunteer then chooses a direction to go in (left or right), and participants continue to respond in turn around the circle. As always, it's okay to pass by saying, "Pass."
5. If time allows, debrief the activity by asking participants if they noticed any themes or similar responses and ask what that might tell us about the engagement or participants.

Modifications and Variations:

If there is not enough time or space to form a circle, participants can do a whip around from their seats.



One Minute Accolade



Time Needed: 2 minutes

Overview:

The facilitator invites a moment of reflection on the current experience, then sets a timer for one minute to allow the group to contribute toward seeing how many voices can be added to the room during that time.

When and why:

Quick, meaningful and informative, this activity is especially useful when it feels like there just isn't time for an Optimistic Closing!



SEL Focus:

This activity focuses on **Self-Awareness** as participants reflect on their learning; **Self-Management** as they choose how to contribute in a way that leaves air time for others; and **Social Awareness** as they absorb the variety of input from those who share aloud.

Steps:

1. Inform participants that you are going to set the timer for one minute (or 2-3 minutes if you have a large group, or a group that is familiar with this activity). During that time, the group will see how many people it can hear from.
2. Invite participants to think silently for a minute about a reflection question that you provide, such as: Something you appreciated about today, something you learned, something you want to thank someone for, or something that went very well. (Pick one.) Ask them to raise their hand when they have an idea of what they'd like to share.
3. Once several hands are raised select one person to start off. Explain that once you start the timer, the first person will go. Then anyone can share, whenever they're ready.
4. Remind participants to listen attentively to each speaker. When one person finishes, someone else begins. It's OK if there is quiet between people sharing; that is natural.
5. Repeat the reflection question and start the timer.
6. When the timer goes off, listen as the person who is already speaking finishes. Then thank the group and move on. It's okay if not everyone who wanted to share got a turn this time. With repeated opportunities, the group grows more fluent and also more comfortable with silence between sharing. This closing activity can be used over and over without losing its impact!



SEL Standards Connections



Time Needed: 5 - 7 minutes, depending on group size

Overview:

Participants review the skills connected to their local SEL standards that they used, or saw others use, during the engagement, and select one to share with the group. As volunteers share out, everyone who selected that same skill sits down at the same time as the speaker.

When and why:

In this low-risk activity, reviewing and connecting learning to SEL skills and standards helps participants keep sight of the SEL nature of the work we do in meetings, professional learning, and classrooms.



SEL Focus:

This activity focuses on **Self-Awareness** in selecting the skill that most resonated with participants, and **Relationship Skills** and **Social Awareness** as connections are made and diversity of experiences highlighted during the whole-group sharing.

Steps:

1. Distribute a copy of your local SEL Standards and ask participants to put a checkmark next to each of the SEL skills they used, or saw others using, during your time together.
2. After a few minutes, ask participants to go back through the skills they checked and circle one that is especially important to them.
3. After another few minutes, invite everyone to stand.
4. Explain that you will go around the room and one at a time, each participant will read their one circled SEL skill (or standard) and then be seated.
5. Encourage participants to look boldly around the room as they read their choice, because everyone who happened to choose the same skill or standard will sit down when they do. If participants want to wave or make a signal of connection, invite them to do so!
6. Ask for a volunteer or invite someone to begin.
7. Once everyone is seated, you may wish to make a general closing remark or connection to student skill development.

Modifications and Variations:

If using with students, share only one or two competencies to narrow the focus until they become fluent in identifying the SEL skills they are using.

Appendix



1. Begin by asking and answering the following questions:

- What do you want your participants to **KNOW**?
- How do you want your participants to **FEEL**?
- What do you want your participants to **DO**?

2. Integrate the 3 Signature SEL Practices into your learning space:

Welcoming Rituals/ Inclusion Activities	Clear Purpose	How does the activity connect to the purpose of this meeting/PD?	
	Empathy for and among Participants	How can I meet the needs of the participants?	
	Time	How much time is available and fits well with our agenda?	

Engaging Practices	Clear Purpose	How does the activity connect to the purpose of this meeting/PD?	
	Empathy for and among Participants	How can I meet the needs of the participants?	
	Time	How much time is available and fits well with our agenda?	

Optimistic Closures	Clear Purpose	How does the activity connect to the purpose of this meeting/PD?	
	Empathy for and among Participants	How can I meet the needs of the participants?	
	Time	How much time is available and fits well with our agenda?	



How is this important to my practice as a leader?	
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Welcoming Rituals/ Inclusion Activities	
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Engaging Practices	
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Optimistic Closures	
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Welcoming Ritual/Inclusion Activity



Title:



Time Needed:

Overview:

When and why:



SEL Focus:

Steps:

Modifications and Variations:

Engaging Practice



Title:



Time Needed:

Overview:

When and why:



SEL Focus:

Steps:

Modifications and Variations:

Optimistic Closure

Title:



Time Needed:

Overview:



When and why:



SEL Focus:

Steps:

Modifications and Variations:



PreK-Adult Social and Emotional Learning Standards

Anchor Standard	Learning Standard	
1 Self-Awareness Develop and demonstrate self awareness skills to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify personal, cultural, and linguistic assets Identify prejudices and biases towards people different than oneself Understand the connections between one's emotions, social contexts and identity Demonstrate an accurate self-concept based on one's strengths and challenges Identify when help is needed and who can provide it 	1A	Individual demonstrates an understanding of one's emotions.
	1B	Individual demonstrates knowledge of personal strengths, challenges, cultural, linguistic assets, and aspirations.
	1C	Individual demonstrates awareness of personal rights and responsibilities.
	1D	Individual demonstrates an awareness of when help is needed and who can provide it.
2 Self-Management Develop and demonstrate self-management skills to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulate one's emotions and behaviors in contexts with people different than oneself Motivate oneself to set and achieve goals 	2A	Individual demonstrates the skills to manage and express one's emotions, thoughts, impulses and stress in constructive ways.
	2B	Individual demonstrates the skills to set, monitor, adapt, achieve, and evaluate goals.
3 Social Awareness Develop and demonstrate social awareness skills to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain healthy interactions and relationships across diverse communities Embrace diversity and take the perspectives of people different from oneself Demonstrate empathy for people similar to and different from oneself 	3A	Individual demonstrates empathy for other people's emotions, perspectives, cultures, languages, and histories.
	3B	Individual contributes productively to one's school, workplace, and community.
	3C	Individual demonstrates an awareness and respect for one's similarities and differences with others.
	3D	Individual recognizes leadership capacity in themselves and others.
4 Relationship Skills Develop and demonstrate relationship skills to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relate to people similar to and different than oneself Communicate clearly and effectively Build, establish and maintain healthy relationships 	4A	Individual uses a range of communication skills to interact effectively with individuals of diverse backgrounds, abilities, languages, and lifestyles.
	4B	Individual cultivates constructive relationships with individuals of diverse backgrounds, abilities, languages, and lifestyles.
	4C	Individual demonstrates the skills to respectfully engage in and resolve interpersonal conflicts in various contexts.
5 Responsible Decision Making Develop and demonstrate responsible decision making skills to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problem solve effectively while being respectful of people similar to and different from oneself Behave responsibly in personal, professional, and community contexts Make constructive and respectful choices that consider the well-being of self and others 	5A	Individual considers the well-being of self and others when making decisions.
	5B	Individual uses a systematic approach to decision making in a variety of situations.
	5C	Individual applies problem-solving skills to engage responsibly in a variety of situations.



THREE SIGNATURE SEL PRACTICES FOR THE ADULTS*

Creating the Conditions for Adult Learning

OUSD Core Values: Students First • Equity • Excellence • Integrity • Culturally Responsive • Joy

Social and Emotional Learning for Facilitating Meetings and Professional Learning Engagements

Highly engaging, effective and purposeful meetings and professional learning experiences are created using three key social and emotional learning (SEL) practices:

WELCOMING RITUALS • Activities for Inclusion

ENGAGING PRACTICES • Sense Making, Transitions, Brain Breaks

OPTIMISTIC CLOSURES • Reflections and Looking Forward

Even if you are using these three SEL practices for the first time, they can be effective. When they are carefully chosen, effectively facilitated, and thoughtfully debriefed, they create a solid foundation of safety, consistency and joy in adult learning environments. These signature practices create conditions for growth and learning across all five SEL competencies while using culturally responsive teaching strategies. They also build upon and are aligned with the principles of adult learning, Restorative Justice (RJ), Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and trauma-informed practices.

Establishing these three practices is beneficial for every adult participant, and is absolutely essential for some:

- *Adults who walk into our meetings after a day, a week or a lifetime of difficult situations need calming, centering and focusing routines in order to participate fully.*
- *Humans are internally soothed by sameness – while paradoxically our brains need freshness too. It's balancing novelty within routines and rituals that allows us to move with confidence through our work days while navigating multiple competing demands on time, energy and attention. These routines provide a solid foundation for our most overextended participants to be engaged as learners and contributors.*
- *In order for the learning to be purposeful and applicable, adults need direct, concrete experiences to use what they have learned, and they need structures that promote self-direction.*
- *Productivity and creative thinking result only when our basic human needs have been met and our neocortex is engaged and available.*

*Adapted from the work of Ann McKay Bryson, CASEL SEL Professional Learning Consultant



THREE SIGNATURE SEL PRACTICES FOR THE ADULTS*

Creating the Conditions for Adult Learning

OUSD Core Values: Students First • Equity • Excellence • Integrity • Culturally Responsive • Joy

WELCOMING RITUAL (1-9 minutes)

Activities for Inclusion

Adults bring their experience; allow them to use it.

Ritual openings establish safety and predictability, support contribution by all voices, set norms for respectful listening, and allow people to connect with one another creating a sense of belonging. To be successful they must be: carefully chosen, **connected to the work of the day**, engagingly facilitated, and thoughtfully debriefed.

EXAMPLES

- **Community Building:** Using an open-ended question (e.g., from the *Circle a Day* cards), build community in a quick and lively way. Each participant shares their response with a partner. After sharing, ask for 2-3 comments from the whole group.
- **Check-In:** Begin with a sentence starter:
 - "A success I recently had ____."
 - "One thing that's new about ____."
 - "One norm I will hold today is ____."

ENGAGING PRACTICES (1-15 minutes)

Sense Making, Transitions, Brain Breaks

Adults want to make their own meaning and have fun.

Engaging practices are brain compatible strategies that can foster: relationships, cultural humility and responsiveness, empowerment, and collaboration. They intentionally build adult SEL skills. These practices can also be opportunities for brain breaks that provide a space for integrating new information into long-term memory. (Otherwise it is soon forgotten.)

EXAMPLES

- **Think Time:** 30-90 seconds of silent think time before speaking, sharing.
- **Turn To Your Partner:** Sharing and listening to make sense of new input,
- **Think-Ink-Pair-Share:** Generating ideas and deepening understanding,
- **Brain Break - Stand and Stretch:** Refresh and reset the brain.
- **Opportunities for Interaction:** Cultivate practices that involve interactions in partnerships, triads, small groups and as a whole group.

OPTIMISTIC CLOSURE (3-5 minutes)

Reflections and Looking Forward

Adult learning occurs when behavior changes.

End each meeting or professional learning by having participants reflect on, then name something that helps them leave on an optimistic note. This provides positive closure, reinforces the topic, and creates momentum towards taking action.

EXAMPLES OF REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

- "What are my next steps?"
- "What's the next conversation I'm going to have about this and with whom?"
- "Who do I want to connect with about this topic?"
- "A word or phrase that reflects how I feel about moving forward with this..."
- "Offer an appreciation for someone in the room..."
- "I'm eager to learn more about ____."

*Adapted from the work of Ann McKay Bryson, CASEL SEL Professional Learning Consultant



THREE SIGNATURE SEL PRACTICES FOR THE CLASSROOM*

Creating the Conditions for Student Learning

OUSD Core Values: Students First • Equity • Excellence • Integrity • Culturally Responsive • Joy

“With compassion, we can help remove students’ triggers by providing smoother transitions and safe, predictable classrooms.”

-The Heart of Teaching and Learning: Compassion, Resilience and Academic Success
<http://www.k12.wa.us/compassionateschools/pubdocs/TheHeartofLearningandTeaching>

Dr. Richard Davidson, a neuroscientist at the University of Wisconsin, speaks about “every behavioral intervention being a biological intervention.” A student’s repeated experiences in school can be a powerful influence for the rewiring of the neural pathways necessary for habits to be built and sustained. Having routines and rituals in our classrooms and school communities is beneficial for every child, and absolutely essential for some.

Three main categories of carefully chosen, effectively facilitated and thoughtfully debriefed teaching practices work together to build a solid foundation of safety, consistency and joy in classrooms across the school day:

WELCOMING ROUTINES & RITUALS • Activities for Inclusion

ENGAGING PEDAGOGY • Academic Integration, Transitions, Brain Breaks

OPTIMISTIC CLOSURE • Reflections and Looking Forward

When used consistently, these signature SEL practices create conditions for growth and learning across all five SEL competencies while using culturally responsive teaching strategies to help create collaborative classrooms that develop group harmony and interdependence. They also build upon and are aligned to Common Core State Standards, Restorative Justice (RJ), PBIS and trauma-informed practices.

By providing repetitive and engaging opportunities, they help students improve the skills and habits of:

- *self-awareness and social awareness through noticing and naming feelings, and seeing how they are connected to what is happening within us and around us*
- *self-management and relationships by interacting with people and with content in ways that intentionally strengthen our skillset of being aware of and in control of our thoughts, emotions, actions and interactions*
- *focusing and persevering by balancing novelty with routines and rituals; we are internally soothed by sameness, while paradoxically, our brains need freshness too!*

*Adapted from the work of Ann McKay Bryson, CASEL SEL Professional Learning Consultant



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WELCOMING RITUAL (2-10 minutes)

Activities for Inclusion

Ritual openings establish safety and predictability, support contribution by all voices, reinforce norms for respectful listening, allow students to connect with one another and create a sense of belonging. To be successful, these activities must be: carefully chosen, **connected to the learning of the day** and engagingly facilitated.

EXAMPLES FROM THE CLASSROOM

- Every voice is heard
- Purposeful social interactions
- Class meetings
- Smile & greet each person by name

SCHOOL-WIDE

- Adults express joy in seeing students
- Stack of breakfast items on office counter = glad to see late arrivals
- Morning announcements include student voice

ENGAGING PRACTICES (1-15 minutes)

Academic Integration, Sense-Making, Transitions & Brain Breaks

Engaging practices are brain-compatible strategies that can foster relationships, cultural humility and responsiveness, empowerment, and collaboration. Intentionally build student SEL skills and then authentically practice these skills throughout the school day. Provide thoughtful transitions and opportunities for brain breaks that help integrate new information into long-term memory, otherwise it is soon forgotten. Balance opportunities for quiet reflection and writing with more active activities.

EXAMPLES FROM THE CLASSROOM

- **Opportunities for Interaction:** Cultivate practices that involve interactions in partnerships, triads, small groups and as a whole group
- **Explicitly teach** SEL skills through evidence-based programs
- **Turn To Your Partner:** Sharing and listening to make sense of new input
- **Co-create and regularly revisit** working agreements with your students
- **Brain Break - Stand and Stretch:** Refresh and reset the brain with movement, music, quiet reflection

OPTIMISTIC CLOSURE (3-5 minutes)

Reflections and Looking Forward

Provide intentional closure by having students reflect on and then name something that helps them transition on an optimistic note. This provides a positive way to reinforce learning, can connect school to home/community, and creates a moment of looking forward to coming back.

EXAMPLES FROM THE CLASSROOM

Think of...

- Something I learned today
- Someone I was able to help
- Something I want to share with an adult
- Something I'm looking forward to doing tomorrow
- Something I enjoyed about the day
- Someone who was kind/helpful to me

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