Oregon's Instructional Frameworks | Transformative Social and Emotional Learning

Transformative Social and Emotional Learning in the Arts

Oregon Teacher's Guide and Lesson Sparks

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Oregon achieves . . . together!

About This Guide

In Oregon, leaders envision Transformative Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) as extending beyond a specific curriculum or standalone program, moving from a focus on each individual's development to an approach that is fully integrated with other aspects of teaching and learning and that supports all members of a school community in learning and thriving. To spark inspiration and provide guidance for teachers as they plan lessons that integrate Transformative SEL into their curricular focus, this resource offers examples of K–12 learning activities tailored to specific Art and Transformative SEL standards in Oregon.

Table of Contents

ABOUT THIS GUIDE 2

TEACHER'S GUIDE TO TRANSFORMATIVE SEL INSTRUCTION 4

GUIDING PRINCIPLES 5

- What is the relationship between culturally responsive education and Transformative SEL? 6
- How do teachers take a culturally responsive approach to their TSEL instruction? 6

CONTINUUM OF TRANSFORMATION 7

TRANSFORMATIVE SEL IN THE ARTS 8

EXPLORE INTEGRATED SIGNATURE PRACTICES 8

- Signature Practice: Inclusive Welcome 10
- Signature Practice: Engaging Strategy 11
- Signature Practice: Intentional Close 12
- Additional Inspiration 13

CONCLUSION 13

REFERENCES 14

APPENDIX A: CROSSWALK OF OREGON ART AND TRANSFORMATIVE SEL STANDARDS 15

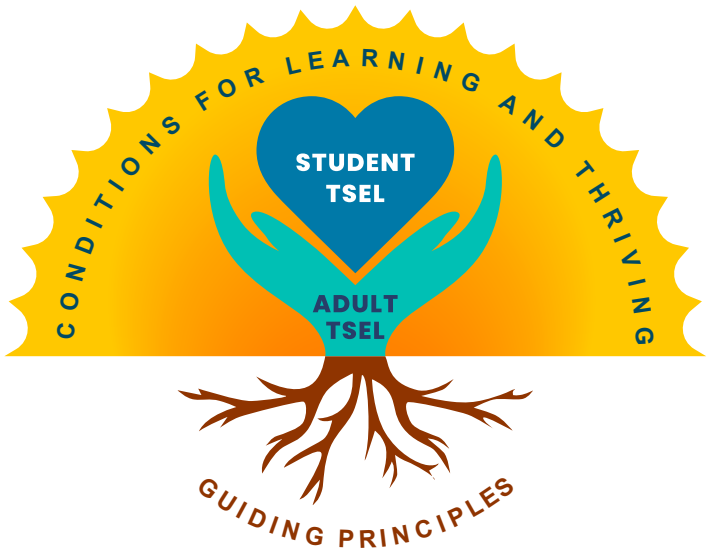
APPENDIX B: TRANSFORMATIVE SEL IN ARTS LESSON SPARKS 17

- Grades K-2 17
- Grades 3-5 19
- Grades 6-8 22
- Grades 9-10 25

Teacher's Guide to Transformative SEL Instruction

Just as an environmental ecosystem requires a balance of sunshine, water, nutrients, and a healthy atmosphere for plants to flower and bear fruit, the school ecosystem needs individuals, relationships, and the environment to work in interdependence so that everyone can flourish and thrive (Figure 1). For Transformative SEL to take root in schools, adults can reflect as learners on their own social, emotional, and cultural competencies so they can provide responsive, inclusive, and engaging learning opportunities for students. Teachers play an essential role as the gardeners of the learning ecosystem, creating an environment where learning can flourish, developing relationships with and between students, and guiding students in their personal and academic journeys.

Figure 1. Oregon's Transformative SEL Framework



Academic instruction serves as the soil in this learning ecosystem, as instruction is full of opportunities for integrating Transformative SEL so that students can experience consistent, high-quality learning. A transformative approach to SEL instruction must consider not just individual students, but also the social systems around them by recognizing that student actions and attitudes are influenced by systemic conditions. Conditions for learning and thriving therefore act as nutrients for instructional soil, as teachers should cultivate authentic partnerships, equitable policies, and thriving learning environments in order to meet the full range of students' social, emotional, and academic needs.

The Transformative Social and Emotional Learning in Arts Guide aims to help teachers build vibrant, engaging classroom communities that celebrate identity, build agency, cultivate belonging, foster collaborative problem-solving, and encourage curiosity. Rather than offering one-size-fits-all lesson plans, this resource provides "lesson sparks"—ideas and practices that are intended to spark inspiration in teachers and can be used dynamically to help shift classroom practices and policies toward transformation. The guide refers frequently to the accompanying **Transformative SEL Lesson Spark Tool** which teachers can use as they engage in the processes of reflection, integration, and lesson planning.

This guide includes:

- Guiding Principles from the Oregon Department of Education
- Guidance on Transformative SEL, including how to embed it into instruction
- Information on and examples of Signature Practices grounded in Transformative SEL and Arts, organized by grade band
- Additional resources and inspiration for units and lesson plans

The companion Lesson Spark Tool offers:

- Reflection questions to demonstrate the necessary mindsets, values, and beliefs for Transformative SEL
- Guidance for instructional and Transformative SEL alignment
- A resource for planning Signature Practices

Guiding Principles

Figure 2. Oregon's Transformative SEL Guiding Principles

This guide is grounded in the guiding principles outlined in Oregon's Transformative Social and Emotional Learning Framework and Standards (Oregon Department of Education, 2023). The principles are the roots of the learning ecosystem, serving as foundational values and beliefs that can lead to fruitful interactions, communication, and decision-making. The principles include **culturally responsive** education as a powerful pedagogical approach to cultivating Transformative SEL practices in students and adults by affirming and honoring their ways of being, knowledge, experiences, and cultures to promote engagement and learning. The principles also encourage teachers who bring a culturally responsive lens to their instruction to be **community responsive** and **strengths based** by centering and affirming students' lived experiences, perspectives, and contributions as assets for learning academic content. Finally, the framework is grounded in instruction that is **trauma informed** and in the **science of learning development**, acknowledging the importance of recognizing behavior as communication while building consistent, positive routines to ensure all students are primed for new learning.

What is the relationship between culturally responsive education and Transformative SEL?

A transformative approach to SEL invites adults and students to see and understand the systems and structures that influence their attitudes, beliefs, behaviors and interactions. Culturally responsive education offers an essential pedagogical approach for creating the conditions in which Transformative SEL can take root. Culturally responsive education stems from a long history of pedagogical research by scholars such as Gloria Ladson-Billings, Django Paris, Geneva Gay, in addition to Shawn Ginwright, who brings focus on healing-centered engagement, and Liza Talusan, who focuses on identity-conscious practices. By nurturing their self-identity, agency, and curiosity, culturally responsive teachers committed to Transformative SEL can harness the innate capacity of youth to actively create change in their own lives and the world.

How do teachers take a culturally responsive approach to their TSEL instruction?

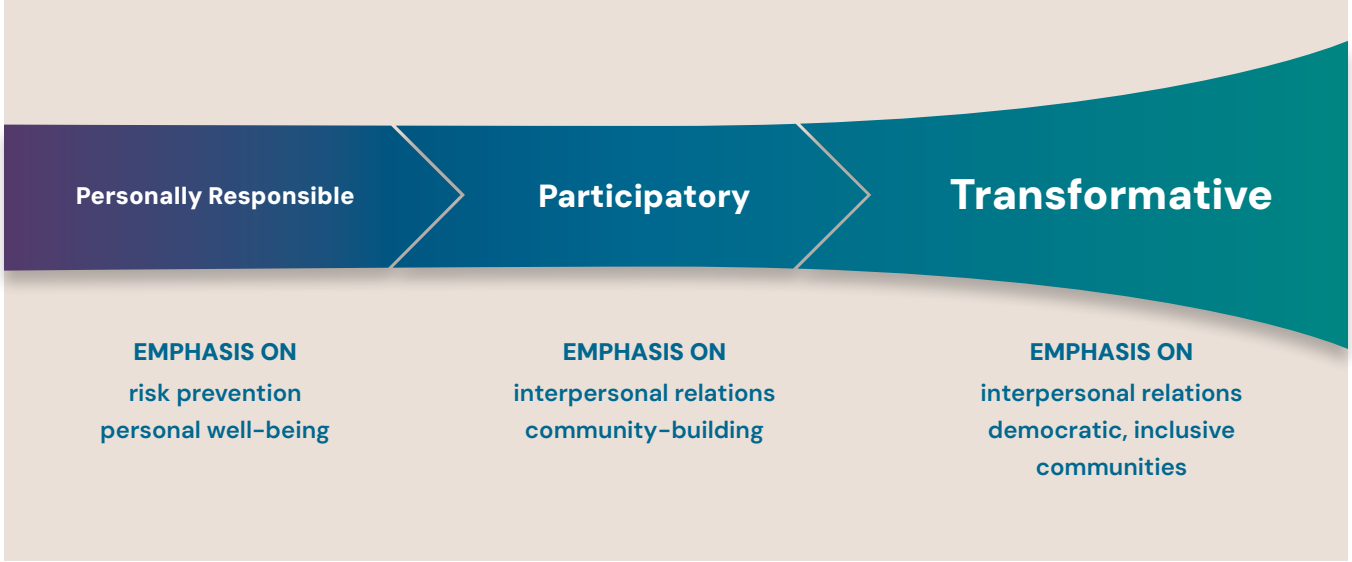
- Teachers build on students' cultural identities, perspectives, and contributions as key assets in the classroom
- Teachers encourage intellectual risk-taking and emotional connection to academic content
- Teachers understand and address the role that toxic and traumatic stress (including racial oppression) can play in shaping students' histories as learners, without seeing them as victims
- Teachers support students to make sense of the world around them, so they can name and act upon the norms, values, institutions, and systems that produce and maintain inequities
- Teachers practice critical self-awareness by reflecting on how their multiple and intersecting identities inform and affect how they act, how they interact with others, and how they see the world around them

Each of these guiding principles is built into the sample activities throughout the guide. Teachers can use **Step 1** of the Transformative SEL Lesson Spark Tool to reflect on the current strengths and skills they bring to enacting Transformative SEL in your classroom. The tool's prompts are designed to get teachers thinking about their own learning journey in preparation for working with their students.

Continuum of Transformation

A transformative approach to SEL is not confined to a single person, lesson, or specific time of the day and is not a one-size fits all program or curriculum. Instead, it is an ongoing process and practice of how adults and students show up for one another in moments throughout the school day. SEL practices exist on a continuum, moving from personally responsible and participatory SEL to a Transformative SEL approach (Figure 3). Transformative SEL was developed to shift the focus of educators away from behavior management and toward creating the conditions that support respectful, dignifying, and affirming interactions among all students and adults along the continuum of transformation. Once conditions for learning and thriving are put in place, students can learn to set goals, manage their own behaviors, and ultimately participate, improve, and change institutions and systems in ways that promote equitable outcomes (Jagers et al., 2019). When Transformative SEL is embedded throughout the day, it has the potential to humanize the learning environment by honoring students' and adults' lived realities of race, class, culture, and other intersectional identities.

Figure 3. Continuum of Transformation



Transformative SEL in the Arts

Learning to create, interpret, and express ideas effectively in the arts classroom is a highly social and joyful endeavor enriched by having an authentic audience. Arts educators can foster Transformative Social and Emotional Learning (TSEL) practices to cultivate a restorative classroom environment where students feel safe to experiment with new techniques, embrace the challenges of developing skills, and explore diverse perspectives. Engaging with artistic works—whether visual, musical, or performative—offers students relevant opportunities to consider identity and point of view, while the creative process invites them to provide constructive feedback and honor their peers' sense of belonging within the learning community. Collaborative practices in the arts classroom, such as group critiques, ensemble performances, or joint exhibitions, create spaces for students to take creative risks, navigate differing opinions, and engage constructively with conflict.

In the arts classroom, Transformative SEL aligns with core instructional practices. As creators, students build self-awareness by reflecting on their artistic intentions and progress, practicing skills like self-assessment and goal-setting. The iterative process of creating, revising, and refining their work encourages the development of agency and learner identity as students persist through challenges and deepen their technical and conceptual understanding. For example, when students interpret the symbolism in a painting, compose harmonies in a musical piece, or provide feedback during a rehearsal, they are simultaneously enhancing social awareness, self-regulation, and empathy. Transformative SEL not only enriches artistic learning but also equips students with the skills to thrive as thoughtful, resilient, and collaborative individuals.

Teachers can refer to **Step 2** of the Transformative SEL Lesson Spark Tool to help determine how instructional goals align with Transformative SEL standards. See Appendix A for a more detailed Standards Crosswalk to support curricular integration.

Explore Integrated Signature Practices

Oregon's Transformative SEL standards include guidance on practices and growth indicators. The guidance is intended to be broad enough to support adaptation while also specific enough to provide useful takeaways for adults to use with students across all contexts. Teachers may choose to adapt Transformative SEL from many different entry points, including:

- Aligning Transformative SEL standards with academic objectives by emphasizing student skillsets and outcomes in lesson planning
- Building a climate and culture for Transformative SEL, by placing student interests, needs, and learning styles at the center of instructional decision-making
- Integrating Transformative SEL through Student-Centered Instruction that puts collaborative problem-solving and student curiosity at the center of learning

Because Transformative SEL is an ongoing process, this guide describes how teachers can use Signature Practices as an entry point to Transformative SEL in the classroom by embedding predictable opportunities for relationship- and community-building and moving their practices along the continuum of transformation. Developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), the three Signature Practices are Inclusive Welcome, Engaging Strategies, Intentional Close. For each Signature Practice, this guide provides universal and content-specific examples to serve as a starting point for teachers wondering how Transformative SEL might look in the classroom. These examples are intended to demonstrate how educators can weave classroom routines and strategies that align to their learning objectives and the Transformative SEL focal constructs.

Step 3 of the **Transformative SEL Lesson Spark Tool** provides space to identify how Signature Practices can help support student outcomes, and **Step 4** includes a template for teachers to sketch their own practices.

CASEL developed the Signature Practices in response to frequently asked questions such as "What does SEL look like? How can we start?" After teachers choose a curricular focus, using CASEL Signature Practices can help teachers instill their classroom with routines and interactions that nurture Transformative SEL focal constructs while also connecting to disciplinary learning outcomes.

The following sections provide guidance and examples for teachers to use in integrating Signature Practices into their classrooms.

SIGNATURE PRACTICE:

Inclusive Welcome

Consider opening each class period with a welcome that is inclusive and respects cultural and linguistic diversity, builds community, and sets the stage for learning.

Examples include:

- **Whole-group greeting activities**
- **Deep breathing or mindfulness**
- **Morning circles or rituals**
- **Interactive do-nows,** such as peer-to-peer homework help or quick pair assignments

Engage the voice of all students through a morning ritual to welcome each student's unique creative perspective into the classroom.

TRANSFORMATIVE SEL IN ARTS K-2 LESSON SPARK:

Starfish Breathing and Drawing

Students engage in a guided arts activity combined with an accessible breathing exercise that can serve as an Inclusive Welcome or a transition into learning. Students trace their hand using color and line intentionally while centering their breathing and building sensory awareness. Following the tracing, students draw or color their piece, providing a mindful moment for artistic expression and joy. Students then write a one word intention for the day.

See the K-2 Lesson Spark in Appendix B for a more detailed lesson activity.

SIGNATURE PRACTICE:

Engaging Strategy

Consider embedding interactive or reflective opportunities that vary in complexity and style to allow students to grasp content while connecting learning to their experiences throughout the school day.

Examples include:

- **Think, Ink, Pair, Share** — silent time to reflect; time to write; partner discussions; close with a group share out
- **Mindful Minute Brain Break** — a calming activity, promoting focus and readiness to learn
- Gallery Walk
- Pass It On

Use **Mindful Minutes** to bring the classroom's attention to a centralized, whole-group activity if students have become unfocused.

TRANSFORMATIVE SEL IN ARTS 11-12 LESSON SPARK:

Pep Song

Students compose and create music in small groups that instills collaborative excitement, positive growth mindset, focus, and synced collective performance. The short musical piece can then be used as an Inclusive Welcome or Intentional Close, showcasing the strengths of the collective while promoting a sense of belonging and joy.

See the 11-12 Lesson Spark in Appendix B for a more detailed lesson activity.

SIGNATURE PRACTICE:

Intentional Close

Consider closing each learning experience by highlighting an individual or shared understanding of the lesson, reflecting on the process or the content, helping students identify next steps, or encouraging students to show appreciation for one another.

Examples include:

- Future Me
- One-Minute Accolade
- My Next Step — inviting students to commit to an action based on the lesson topic or experience
- One Takeaway I Am Going to Try

Incorporate One Takeaway I Am Going to Try after introducing a new artistic practice to the classroom, activating students' curiosity to experiment with new skills.

TRANSFORMATIVE SEL IN ARTS 3-5 LESSON SPARK:

Snapshot

Students define and embody Transformative SEL vocabulary words that are chosen by the teacher, acting out how they individually express or understand the chosen feeling or emotion. This provides a positive, playful opportunity to release endorphins and dopamine. Students then observe how other students, people, and cultures might demonstrate emotions differently to build cross-cultural community and understanding.

See the 3-5 Lesson Spark in Appendix B for a more detailed lesson activity

Additional Inspiration

The external links below provide inspiration as teachers work to incorporate Transformative SEL into their art lesson plans. Please note that these resources are neither affiliated with nor endorsed by the Oregon Department of Education.

RESOURCE & DESCRIPTION	K-5	6-8	9-12
Arts, Care, and Connection This collection of arts modules designed for K–5 students integrates social emotional learning content in dance, visual arts, theater and music.	◉		
OKYou These free, engaging arts projects and resources support student SEL, student voice, and self-advocacy.	◉	◉	◉
Draw Together Studio This website offers educators, families and students proven, standards-based programs and resources that support arts and SEL in the classroom, homeschools, libraries, community centers and beyond.	◉		
PBS Learning Media This collection of open source, standards-based resources supports SEL and arts learning.	◉	◉	◉
Metropolitan Museum of Art These unit lesson plans strengthen classroom SEL evidence-based reasoning and critical thinking, through art.	◉	◉	◉

Conclusion

Having now seen a variety of integrated activities and model units or lesson plans, teachers can next use **Step 4 of the Transformative SEL Lesson Spark Tool** to plan Signature Practices that aim to move their instruction, student relationships, and the overall classroom culture and climate toward Transformative SEL.

As Transformative SEL is a process and approach rather than a discrete strategy or program, there is no singular, correct way to implement the approach in your classroom. Instead, Transformative SEL should be embedded throughout your content area learning and school day interactions. This guide and its accompanying tool are designed to demonstrate the several different entry points and strategies teachers can adapt to build a Transformative SEL ecosystem in their school. Transformative SEL invites adults in the educational ecosystem to see themselves as co-learners alongside youths by learning about and critically reflecting on their own social, emotional, and cultural competencies (Jagers et al., 2019). As co-learning is essential to Transformative SEL, teachers might consider who they would identify as the members of their learning community and invite them to collaboratively explore this guide and tool.

References

CASEL. (n.d.) *SEL 3 signature practices playbook*. **https://signaturepractices.casel.org/**

Jagers, R. J., Rivas-Drake, D., & Williams, B. (2019). Transformative social and emotional learning (SEL): Toward SEL in service of educational equity and excellence. *Educational Psychologist, 54*(3), 162–184. **https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2019.1623032**

Oregon Department of Education. (2023). *Oregon's transformative social and emotional learning framework and standards*. **https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/SEL/Documents/ODE_Oregon%27s%20Transformative%20SEL%20Framework%20%20Standards_FINAL%20(2).pdf**

Ball State University. (n.d.). *Square breathing*. **https://www.bsu.edu/academics/centersandinstitutes/practicum/community-resources#accordion_mentalhealth**

APPENDIX A:

Crosswalk of Oregon Art and Transformative SEL Standards

This crosswalk includes examples of alignments between the Oregon Arts Standards and the Transformative SEL practices. The alignments depicted are not intended to be exhaustive; rather, they include areas that are likely to be natural instructional matches.

ARTS ANCHOR STANDARDS	EXAMPLE ALIGNMENT WITH TSEL STANDARD
Creating 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. **Creating 2:** Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. **Performing/Presenting/Producing 6:** Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work. **Responding 7:** Perceive and analyze artistic work. **Responding 8:** Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. **Connecting 10:** Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art. **Connecting 11:** Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.	**Practice 1A:** Identify and label emotions, thoughts, strengths, and potential (both personal and cultural). **Practice 1B:** Understand the stress response system (regulation and dysregulation) and what environments and experiences activate those responses. **Practice 1C:** Reflect on and evaluate how one's emotions, thoughts, and perspectives (including values, biases, and prejudices) can influence behavior. **Practice 1D:** Analyze personal and social intersectional identities and positionality, and how they relate to one's interests, purpose, and sense of belonging.
Creating 3: Refine and complete artistic work. **Creating 4:** Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation. **Performing/Presenting/Producing 5:** Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation. **Responding 9:** Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. **Connecting 10:** Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.	**Practice 2A:** Manage and express thoughts, emotions, impulses, and stressors in ways that affirm one's identity. **Practice 2B:** Use management strategies while recognizing that various situations and environments may require different approaches for achieving personal and collective goals and aspirations in ways that affirm one's identity. **Practice 2C:** Plan, evaluate, and achieve personal and collective goals and aspirations. **Practice 2D:** Develop personal and collective agency by using various forms of communication (i.e. verbal, body language, written, etc.) to make choices and take initiative.

ARTS ANCHOR STANDARDS	EXAMPLE ALIGNMENT WITH TSEL STANDARD
Responding 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work. **Responding 8:** Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. **Responding 9:** Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. **Connecting 10:** Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art. **Connecting 11:** Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.	**Practice 3A:** Demonstrate awareness and understanding of the similarities and differences that define, influence, and affirm personal and collective identities. **Practice 3B:** Apply social skills (i.e., empathy, compassion, etc.) to develop and maintain healthy relationships that collectively achieve mutual goals while affirming identities and perspectives. **Practice 3C:** Foster a sense of belonging that cultivates acceptance, support, inclusion, and encouragement of others within a diverse community, while addressing the impact of systemic injustices across situations and environments. **Practice 4A:** Form authentic relationships that encourage autonomy while building cultural awareness and empathy through various forms of communication. **Practice 4B:** Demonstrate empathy and affirm other's perspectives during teamwork and collaborative problem solving. **Practice 4C:** Recognize and acknowledge when there is harm to self and others and identify when support, agency, and practices to repair and restore are needed. **Practice 4D:** Restore relationships through actively engaging with others, working collaboratively, and affirming cultural and social perspectives.
Creating 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work. **Creating 2:** Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. **Responding 7:** Perceive and analyze artistic work. **Responding 8:** Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. **Connecting 10:** Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art. **Connecting 11:** Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.	**Practice 5A:** Demonstrate curiosity and open-mindedness while using critical thinking skills across various situations and environments. **Practice 5B:** Make informed choices and identify solutions for personal and social injustices after analyzing all types of information. **Practice 5C:** Anticipate, reflect and evaluate the impacts of one's choices and contributions in promoting pers onal, family, and community well-being.

APPENDIX B:

Transformative SEL in Arts Lesson Sparks

Grades K-2

SIGNATURE PRACTICE	Inclusive Welcome: Starfish Breathing

Context

Using the elements of art (color, line, shape), K–2 students trace their hand while doing starfish breathing. Then they design, draw, and color, writing an intention to invite in or center.

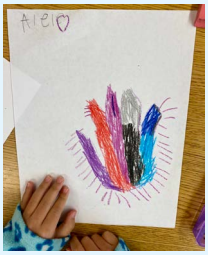
Learning Outcome	Classroom Format	Time
Students create expressive artwork while learning to identify and manage emotions.	Whole group	6-8 minutes

Teacher Moves

- Model tracing your own hand while using mindful breathing. Instruct students to draw lines tracing their open hand, breathing in slowly while tracing up fingers and exhaling slowly tracing down fingers.
- Remind students that each drawing will look different and there is no right, wrong, good, or bad way to create this artwork.
- Ask students to take out their sketchbooks or a blank piece of paper.
- Ask students to choose a crayon, colored pencil, or marker that matches their mood or feeling.
- Ask students to begin at the outside of their hand on their papers with an inhale as they trace up each finger, exhaling as students trace down each finger. Encourage students to play with the pressure of their colored pencil, crayon, or marker creating a lighter or heavier line weight. Optional: Repeat 1 to 2 more times, extending the length of inhales and exhales.
- Ask students to write a feeling or intention that they would like to center for the day (i.e., focus, calm, peace, kindness, joy).
- Ask students to color, draw, or add to their starfish in any way for a minute or two.
- Have students pair-share or table-share their artwork.
- Ask the collective or whole class for examples of intentions (may contribute to a word wall) and for ideas to support one another in achieving affirmations or goals. (i.e., positive reinforcement or acknowledging actions of peers when meeting their goals, not distracting their tablemates with side conversations [if focus is their goal], inviting others to play [if joy is a goal]).

Visual or Supporting Material

Example starfish drawings from an Oregon classroom:



Student Experiences & Identities

Draw on students' self-agency and the ability to collectively support one another to set their own intentions, building metacognition. Model how breathing and drawing can calm and recenter students to humanize the classroom.

Content Connections

Creating 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Connecting 11: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Transformative SEL Connections

Practice 2A: Manage and express thoughts, emotions, impulses, and stressors in ways that affirm one's identity.

Practice 3A: Demonstrate awareness and understanding of the similarities and differences that define, influence, and affirm personal and collective identities.

References or Attributions

Project Play Therapy: Starfish breathing

Grades 3-5

SIGNATURE PRACTICE	Intentional Close: Snapshot

Context

In an upper elementary classroom, students practice drama and theater skills by defining and embodying emotions.

Learning Outcome	Classroom Format	Time
Students embody different ways of expressing how feelings look and feel by acting or mirroring, practicing awareness of their emotions.	Whole group	5-10 minutes

Teacher Moves

- Consider three to five words and the order of presenting them. Starting with something simple, trying for more challenging words in the middle, and ending with something uplifting makes this more engaging and accessible. For example, first word - goofy, second word - anxious, last word - brave. Some other examples might be angry, overwhelmed, courageous. You might choose words from recent readings or in response to events happening in the classroom, on the playground, or in the world making this exercise more relevant. See examples of word choices, in order, below.
- Remind students that no two ways of showing and experiencing feelings are the same and there is no right or wrong way to act or express emotions. Encourage students to try acting and celebrate all the different ways of creating.
- Ask students to stand up, push in chairs, and silently stand behind desks or tables with at least an arm's distance between neighbors, facing the teacher. Consider mobility or accessibility concerns, students may stay seated or move closer to the teacher for ease of hearing or seeing. After class becomes more comfortable towards the middle of the year or when a trusting classroom community is safely established, consider doing this in a circle so students see one another.
- Ask a student to volunteer to model the directions. Optional: Identify a student beforehand to prepare them.
- Ask students to stand with feet hip distance apart, arms loose at sides, face neutral, and shoulders relaxed, and eyes on teacher. Share this element of theater and drama, "This is the open position in acting."

- Ask students to turn away, half circle or 180 degrees and resume the same stance. Share this element of theater and drama, "This is the closed position in acting."
- Ask students to practice both positions, by saying open, then close until all students are moving collectively. After about three tries practicing open and close, the teacher then shows one of the words, written large enough so that all students can read it. Consider writing in Spanish or another language.
- Call out "close." When students have their backs to the teacher, the teacher calls out the TSEL vocabulary word. Ask the whole class on the count of three to repeat the word out loud, in unison. This provides time for the class to practice pronunciation and briefly consider the upcoming moves. Consider repeating in Spanish or another language.
- Say, "On the count of three I'm going to say snapshot and all students turn around to open position and silently freeze into a snapshot expressing the word.
- Scan the students (with obvious delight and joy) looking for understanding and differing examples of expression and reinforcing acting elements and TSEL objectives such as, "I love that no two classmates' expressions are the same!" "I appreciate how Amina's brows are drawn together when she wants to look frustrated." "I see Dylan stooped over low to show overwhelmed, using the elements space and height." Positively reinforce students' effort and creation.
- Note: Do this quickly, so students can hold the pose, not break character, and not devolve into self-judgment or comparison.
- Repeat with two to four more words. It is tempting to continue for longer but the fun and joy of this is to do it quickly and often (one to three times a week, especially effective after lunch, at transitions, or end of day).
- Encourage students to contribute or suggest words that they come across in their reading or lives. Consider having occasional guest or cameo actors join (administrators, older students, or staff).
- Optional: Ask for the same word twice, or even three times, encouraging students to embody more ways or perspectives when expressing an emotion. Consider asking students to share how they felt in their bodies when acting the last word. Share the research that a person's body position can have positive effects on their well-being. For example, if a person's chin is raised high, shoulders back, hands on hips, smiling, it can impart confidence, pride, or courage.

Optional Extension: Arts, Care and Connection Integration Module: Character Expression with Tony Fuemmeler (4th Grade)

Visual or Supporting Materials

Example vocabulary words

Student Experiences & Identities

Draw on the different ways of expressing how feelings look and feel by acting or mirroring. Students observe how people and cultures demonstrate emotions differently and understand there is no right or wrong way to express emotions.

Content Connections

Performing/Presenting/Producing 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

Connecting 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art/act.

Transformative SEL Connections

Practice 1A: Identify and label emotions, thoughts, strengths, and potential (both personal and cultural).

Practice 3D: Demonstrate awareness and understanding of the similarities and differences that define, influence, and affirm personal and collective identities.

References or Attributions

Adapted from the Right Brain Initiative arts integration strategies

Grades 6-8

SIGNATURE PRACTICE	Engaging Strategy: Identity Iceberg

Context

In a middle school visual arts classroom that has worked on watercolor painting, students engage in an activity that incorporates personal and collective identity reflection in the creation of an identity iceberg.

Learning Outcome

Students use the visual art elements of line, shape, and color to create and paint an iceberg as a visual representation of their personal identity.

Classroom Format

- Whole group
- Individual

Time

30-40 minutes

Teacher Moves

Whole group

- Give a quick overview of the iceberg activity, emphasizing that identity is personal and the factors that make it up are not always fixed, explaining that there is no right or wrong in making art or exploring or sharing identities. Before students begin, share the audience for these identity icebergs (Will they be posted on a hallway bulletin board? Will students keep them in a personal sketchbook?)
- Write some examples of social or personal identities. Ask students, "What forms people's identities?" "What are some factors or markers that make up a person's identity?"
- Using a color wheel, identify which colors one might find in a frozen outdoor environment that included sky, water, ice, and glaciers. Students can choose to use these cool colors or choose to create their own.

Individual

- Ask students to write three to five things about who they are that are visible or readily known to others on notebook paper. Then ask them to write four to six things that are important to who they are that are not as readily visible, obvious, or known.
- Ask students to fold their watercolor paper in half and write their names on the back of this paper.

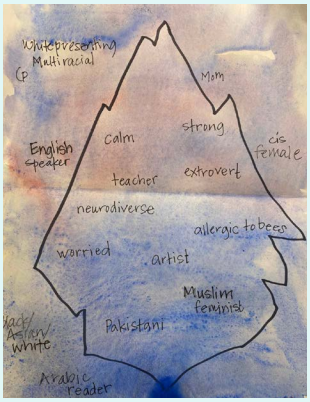
- Instruct students to use permanent markers or pencils to draw a large triangular shape that takes up most of the paper, with one pointed angle at the top and the two pointed angles at the bottom so that the greater area or mass is below the fold (waterline).
- Using crayons or markers, have students write the obvious markers of their identity above the water line (fold) in the shape and around the shape. Have students write their less obvious markers of their identity below the fold, in and around the shape.
- Using watercolor paint and brushes choose, have students mix and paint the colors wanted for the top half of the iceberg (wet on dry), stopping at the fold. Then, ask students to choose different colors for the lower half of their icebergs. Have students apply clean water using their brushes to lower half of paper then use their brushes to apply their chosen colors (wet on wet).
- Encourage students to experiment with gently moving the paper to shift wet paint, adding kosher salt to absorb paint color, play with crayon resist, or strategically blot with paper towels. Emphasize that watercolor is a changing medium, fun to experiment with, and impossible to control. Celebrate risk taking, curiosity and invention. Move about the room highlighting novel approaches and happy accidents.
- Allow artwork to remain flat to dry for at least 30 minutes. Do not stack before fully dry. If using salt, do not brush off until fully dry.

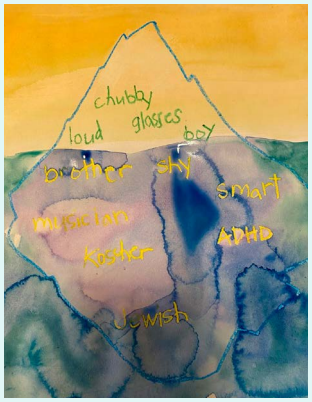
Optional Extension: **Arts, Care and Connection Integration Module: Basquiat's Crown with Michele Haney** (Designed for 5th Grade)

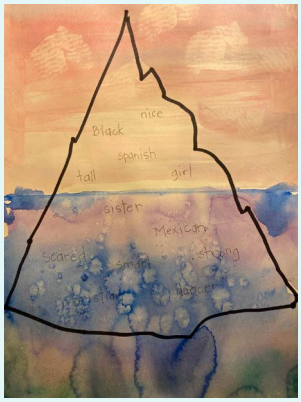
Visual or Supporting Material

Materials to have on hand: watercolor paper, multimedia paper or cardstock, permanent markers, watercolor sets with brushes, crayons, pencils, small cups with water, and paper towels (optional: kosher salt, and color wheel).

Example icebergs from an Oregon classroom:







Student Experiences & Identities

Draw on adolescent students' newly forming capacity for thinking in abstract terms and concepts by having students identify visible and nonvisible factors that contribute to their personal identity.

Content Connections

Connecting 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Transformative SEL Connections

Practice 1D: Analyze personal and social intersectional identities and positionality, and how they relate to one's interests, purpose, and sense of belonging.

References or Attributions

- Facing History's Exploring Concept Identity
- Learning for Justice Anti-Bias Framework – K-12 Identity

Grades 9-10

SIGNATURE PRACTICE	Engaging Strategy: Flocking

Context

In a high school health, dance, or theater classroom, students engage in a community-building movement activity that encourages nonverbal communication and spatial awareness.

Learning Outcome

Students use movement (dance and theater art elements) and mirroring, spatial awareness, empathy, and nonverbal communication to promote connection and belonging in the classroom.

Classroom Format

Whole group

Time

10-15 minutes

Teacher Moves

- Move furniture or choose an open space large enough for all students to move around comfortably. Set up a speaker to play instrumental music, ideally music that affirms or mirrors the cultures of students in the class.
- Explain that the flocking process is open, with no right or wrong way of moving. Ask students to maintain enough personal space to not touch or bump into one another or use words to communicate. Remind them that smiling and having fun are okay and expected.
- Emphasize that the rules are simple: students should watch the people next to them and imitate their movements and speed. Soon, the group begins to move as one, in a type of dance, with students' attention focused outside of themselves, reclaiming connection and space through sound and movement.

Visual or Supporting Material

World Health Organization video demonstrating the flocking strategy at a community center

Student Experiences & Identities

Draw on students' musical interests by rotating the instrumental music played for this activity, consulting students on the types of music they would like to have celebrated throughout the year.

Content Connections

Connecting 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Performing/Presenting/Producing 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

Transformative SEL Connections

Practice 4A: Form authentic relationships that encourage autonomy while building cultural awareness and empathy through various forms of communication.

Practice 2D: Develop personal and collective agency by using various forms of communication (i.e., non-verbal, body language etc.) to make choices and take initiative.

References or Attributions

Council of Ontario Drama and Dance Educators Resource on Flocking

Grades 11-12

SIGNATURE PRACTICE	Engaging Strategy: Pep Songs

Context

In a high school performance-level music class (vocal or instrumental) students compose a short, personal musical piece to perform as a regular classroom routine. This activity can be facilitated by a music director (choir, vocal, band, instrumental) after auditions, during camp, as new classes begin, or in preparation for performances or competition.

Learning Outcome

Students create songs or music in small groups, fostering relationship-building through collaboration and building a shared sense of belonging.

Classroom Format

- Whole group
- Small groups

Time

30 minutes

Teacher Moves

- Share with students that they are going to create compositions that highlight their abilities, strengths, and musical forms. Ask the classroom:
  - What elements of music make a good "walk-on song"?
  - How can lyrics or notation of music excite and bring people together?
- Ask students to center the joyful collective as a mood in their creations.

Small groups

Separate the class into small groups and have students create a unique, replicable, short (30 seconds or less) song meant to be performed to pump up their group. It can be a walk-on song, a means to get students excited to compete or to play together well.

Whole group

If time allows, have students perform their pieces for the whole group. Ask students to reflect on what musical elements and performance made the piece successful. Allow students to refine their work if desired.

Student Experiences & Identities

Draw on students' musical interests and identities in order to showcase different styles or time periods of musical performance that might be outside of the traditional western musical canon.

Content Connections

Connecting 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Transformative SEL Connections

Practice 3B: Apply social skills (i.e., empathy, compassion, etc.) to develop and maintain healthy relationships that collectively achieve mutual goals while affirming identities and perspectives.