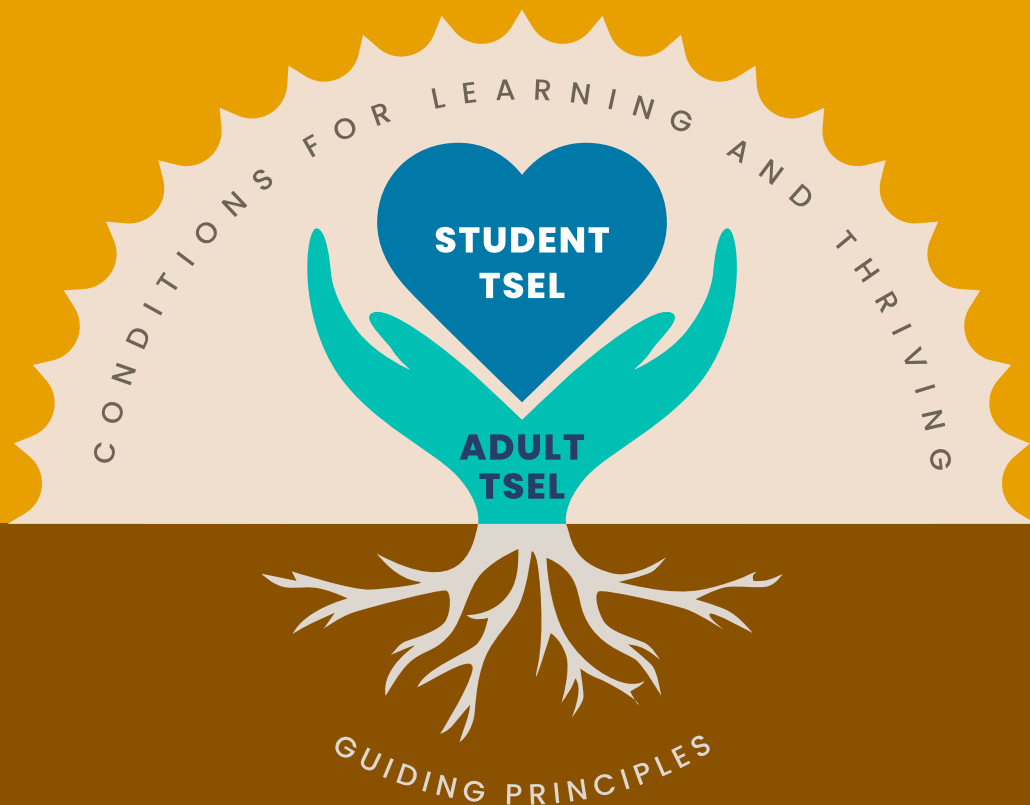


Social Awareness & Belonging



The following resource is designed to support a structured facilitation session based on content from the eight asynchronous Transformative Social and Emotional learning (SEL) professional learning modules. Each session seeks to develop collective understandings of Transformative SEL practices and competencies in a group setting. School and district facilitators are to adapt this guidance to lead groups of educators in lesson-planning, reflection, and more.

The Social Awareness & Belonging Collaborative Learning Session (CLS) is scheduled to take 60 minutes, with optional extension activities that would lengthen the session up to 80 minutes.



Oregon's

Instructional
Frameworks

Transformative Social
and Emotional Learning



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Learning Module Overview

The Social Awareness & Belonging Module supports educators in exploring how social awareness and belonging contribute to just, equitable and thriving school communities. Grounded in Oregon's Transformative SEL Standard 3, this module guides participants to define key concepts, reflect on their significance and begin building a toolbox of practices to strengthen both individual and collective practice. Through reflection prompts, practical strategies and optional extension activities, educators engage with compassion and empathy, identifying actionable ways to foster social awareness and belonging in their classrooms and school communities.

Participation in the Social Awareness & Belonging Module is not required for participation in the CLS, but it is highly recommended.

Adaptive Facilitation

The agenda, activities and resources included in this guide are intended to spark inspiration in facilitators. Facilitators may adapt these materials to better suit the context of educators they are supporting. This guide refers to the [Transformative SEL Facilitator Spark Tool](#) which facilitators can use to scaffold reflection, integration and activity planning.

Transformative SEL Guiding Principles

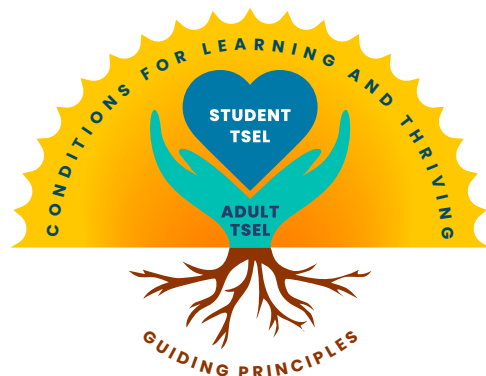
Figure 1. Guiding Principles



Guiding Principles (Figure 1) represent the roots of the Transformative SEL learning ecosystem (Figure 2), serving as the foundational values and beliefs that can lead to fruitful interactions, communication and decision-making.

A transformative approach to facilitating each Collaborative Learning Session (CLS) will attend to the Guiding Principles. Facilitators can embed **culturally responsive** education in sessions by affirming and honoring the knowledge, experiences and cultures that adults bring to the space. Opportunities for dialogue and relationship-building are

Figure 2. Transformative SEL Framework



built into each session so that participants can learn more about each other and facilitators can harness the collective wisdom present in each session. A **community responsive** approach ensures that facilitators give educators time to check in, challenge and engage with the content as needs, interests and tensions become apparent. Facilitators can uplift their own learning journeys with the content while supporting educators to engage in productive discourse pertaining to mindset shifts. Facilitation that is **strengths-based** affirms the perspectives and contributions of participants as assets for deepening Transformative SEL learning. These sessions represent unique opportunities for collaborative, reciprocal learning and problem-solving that humanizes the concepts through applied activities and scenarios. Facilitators can be **trauma-informed** by prioritizing trust-building activities that promote positive relationships, while also creating transparent, predictable and positive routines for new learning to regulate participants' brains, minds and bodies. Facilitation that is **grounded in neuroscience and the science of learning and development** builds on evidence about neuroplasticity and neurodiversity to appreciate and build on each adult's potential for learning while encouraging participants to show up as their authentic selves. When facilitated with these principles in mind, each CLS can spark curiosity in educators, encouraging continued exploration and iteration in the classroom.

Signature Practices

A transformative approach to SEL is an ongoing process and practice of how adults and

Figure 3. Signature Practices



Inclusive Welcome



Engaging Strategy



Intentional Close

students show up for one another throughout the learning ecosystem. This guide describes how facilitators can use Signature Practices (Figure 3) as an entry point to putting the Guiding Principles into action throughout each CLS. In response to frequently asked questions such as “What does SEL look

like?” and “How can we start?”, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) developed three Signature Practices: **Inclusive Welcome**, **Engaging Strategies** and **Intentional Close**. Facilitators will interweave each practice into learning experiences for adults, opening each session with an Inclusive Welcome that builds community and sets the stage for learning, embedding Engaging Strategies throughout the session to support adults in connecting content to their own learning experiences, and closing sessions with opportunities for reflection, shared sense-making or identifying next steps through an Intentional Close.

Preparing for the Social Awareness and Belonging Session

For this CLS focused on Standard 3: Social Awareness & Belonging, we deeply explore the concept of teacher caring as one important inroad to explore and improve social awareness skills. It is critical to understand that belonging is not possible without teacher caring. We focus on individual practices and approaches, understanding that this is just one very important facet of creating a culture of belonging for all students.

Agenda and Participant Tool




Materials


- ⦿ Print: [Teaching Caring | Learning Condition Guide](#)
- ⦿ Notebooks and papers and pens or pencils for note-taking
- ⦿ Whiteboard, chart paper, or Padlet
- ⦿ Print: [Five Strategies to Support Social Awareness and Belonging](#)




Learning Goals




- ⦿ Reflect on their experiences of belonging.
- ⦿ Consider the role that educators have in creating conditions for belonging.

Agenda

TIME	SIGNATURE PRACTICE	LEARNING PROGRESSION AND FACILITATOR GUIDANCE	MATERIALS
10m	 Inclusive Welcome	<p>Grounding</p> <p>Welcome participants to the space. Invite the learning community to create their own metaphors as a way of accessing a feeling of belonging.</p> <p> Small Groups</p> <p>Offer the following sentence stems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Belonging feels like ... because ... ● Othering, or a lack of belonging, is like ... because ... <p>Facilitator tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Model vulnerability by sharing an example from your own experiences of belonging and othering ● Emphasize that participants control what they share ● Thinking about belonging and othering, a lack of belonging, can stir up many feelings. Be prepared to offer a sensitivity pause to honor these feelings. <p> Whole Group</p> <p>After participants share in small groups, ask the group for volunteer shareouts.</p> <p>Introduce Purpose and Goal of the CLS</p> <p>Begin by sharing the language of Standard 3: “Develop social awareness that fosters a sense of belonging and leads to co-constructing equitable, thriving communities and a vibrant society.” Explain that the purpose of this session is to explore one important facet of social awareness that supports belonging: teacher caring. Teacher caring practices draw upon and improve social awareness skills, while promoting student sense of belonging cannot be experienced by all students</p>	

10m	 Engaging Strategy	<h3>Reflecting on Your Experiences of Belonging</h3> <div data-bbox="574 233 667 325"> <p>Individual Reflection Invite participants to think back to their time as a young person using the following prompt: “Who were some of your favorite educators? This can include teachers, coaches, and family members. What were some of the qualities or characteristics that made them stand out?”</p> </div> <div data-bbox="574 499 667 592"> <p>Pairs After about a minute of reflection, invite participants to turn and talk to a partner. Ask participants to share:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which educator came to mind • What qualities and practices made that educator so impactful or memorable </div> <div data-bbox="574 766 667 858"> <p>Whole Group Following the pair-share, invite a few volunteers to share highlights with the whole group. Optional: Record the qualities and practices of the educators on chart paper.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="597 1003 1198 1031" style="background-color: #e1f5fe; padding: 10px;"> <p>Bridge to Standard 3: Social Awareness & Belonging</p> <p>Point out how the qualities and practices named are powerful examples of what social awareness and belonging can look like in action. Offer two reflection questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do these qualities and practices by our favorite educators exhibit social awareness? • How did they make belonging possible? <p>Let participants know that these questions are meant to frame the learning ahead.</p> </div>	Chart paper
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10m	 Engaging Strategy	<h3>Expanding Our Toolkit</h3> <p>Explain that today participants will have a chance to look more closely at research and best practices around teacher caring. Teacher caring draws on social awareness and is necessary to create the conditions for belonging.</p> <p>Share an overview of the text on teacher caring by highlighting that the resource is organized around three principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Get to know your students as people. 2. Let students know they matter to you. 3. Address disciplinary problems with empathy. <p>Invite each participant to select a principle they want to read more about during the session. Ideally, each principle would be selected in order to share knowledge of the entire text. However, participant choice is more important than reading all the principles.</p> <div data-bbox="574 825 672 919">  </div> <p>Individual Reading & Reflection Time Create a space for participants to read and annotate the principle they selected.</p> <div data-bbox="574 957 672 1052">  </div> <p>Whole Group Discussion Ask for volunteers to share their connections, questions, and ideas. Participants can engage in a chalk talk or a whole-group brainstorm. Encourage them to identify portions of the text that are connected to their idea. This can support participants to listen for each other's ideas and build on their own. You can also encourage participants to respond to one another. If possible, try to ensure all principles are discussed, even if that means you provide a quick overview of one yourself.</p> <p>Capture participants' responses in a shared space (whiteboard, chart paper, or a Padlet) so that you can return to them.</p> <p>Invite participants to notice patterns in the group's responses.</p>	<p>White board, chart paper or Padlet</p> <p>Teaching Caring Learning Condition Guide</p>
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15m	 Engaging Strategy	<h3>Connecting to Social Awareness and Belonging</h3> <p>Invite participants to share ideas about how the three principles of teacher caring are connected to Standard 3: Social Awareness & Belonging.</p> <p>After gathering ideas, explain that we will now look at Five Strategies to Support Social Awareness & Belonging.</p> <div>  Pairs </div> <p>Invite participants to read the handout together.</p> <p>As they read, invite them to consider what strategies they already incorporate into their teaching by responding to the following questions. Explain to participants that starting with what they already do is an assets-based approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How have these strategies impacted your students' engagement and learning experiences? How do you imagine implementing a new strategy would impact student engagement and learning experiences? 	Five Strategies to Support Social Awareness & Belonging
5m	 Intentional Close	<h3>One-word Wraparound</h3> <p>Using a one-word wraparound, ask participants to finish the prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Something I plan to learn more about or try is... <p>Express your gratitude for their presence and contribution today and then close the session on time.</p>	

Facilitator Spark Tool

Each Collaborative Learning Facilitator Guide provides specific, useful strategies to use with K–12 educators and staff. CLS agendas are written with a range of staff audiences and learning contexts in mind. Facilitators may need to adapt portions of the agendas for timing, learner familiarity with session context and group sizes or spaces. The [Facilitator Spark Tool](#) is intended to support facilitators as they integrate Transformative SEL into their professional learning practices. This tool offers reflective prompts, planning tools and adaptable strategies that align with CASEL's Three Signature Practices and Oregon's Transformative SEL Guiding Principles. By centering educators' identities, experiences and well-being, the tool helps foster professional spaces that model the competencies we aim to cultivate in students.

Extension Guidance and Activities

Consider additional best practices for creating supportive learning conditions by exploring the guides from the University of Chicago:

- Learning Condition Guides: <https://consortium.uchicago.edu/LDGresources/learning-condition-guides>

Resources and Support Materials

- Oregon Department of Education. (2023). *Oregon's Transformative Social and Emotional Learning Framework & Standards*. [https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/SEL/Documents/ODE_Oregon%27s%20Transformative%20SEL%20Framework%20%20Standards_FINAL%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/SEL/Documents/ODE_Oregon%27s%20Transformative%20SEL%20Framework%20%20Standards_FINAL%20(2).pdf)

Five Strategies to Support Social Awareness and Belonging

Commit to knowing your students well

- ⦿ Gather detailed information about students' families, traditions and values through surveys, interviews or informal conversations.
- ⦿ Engage in regular discussions with parents, guardians and community leaders to understand cultural expectations and influences on learning.
- ⦿ Explore diverse books, movies, music and media that reflect your students' backgrounds, and incorporate these materials into lessons.
- ⦿ Arrange home visits when possible, or create structured class activities where students share personal and cultural experiences through projects, storytelling or showcase events.
- ⦿ Study different cultural perspectives on learning, collaboration and authority, and reflect on how they shape classroom interactions.
- ⦿ Explicitly teach students about code-switching, providing real-world examples and practice scenarios that help them navigate different social and academic spaces while affirming their cultural identity and language.

Build on the life experiences of your students

- ⦿ Incorporate current events, news stories and community issues that relate to students' backgrounds and lived experiences.
- ⦿ Use problem-based and inquiry-driven learning approaches that encourage students to draw on personal experiences and community knowledge.
- ⦿ Design assignments that allow students to explore and present on topics connected to their heritage, interests or local history.
- ⦿ Foster cross-cultural dialogue by creating structured opportunities for students to share perspectives, traditions and personal narratives in a respectful environment.

Create a classroom learning community

- ⦿ Establish clear classroom norms that emphasize mutual respect, empathy and accountability, and involve students in defining these expectations.
- ⦿ Develop routines that provide stability and predictability, such as morning meetings, peer check-ins or collaborative goal-setting sessions.
- ⦿ Design a physically inclusive classroom with flexible seating, culturally representative decorations and spaces for students to showcase their identities and work.
- ⦿ Encourage teamwork and peer mentorship by assigning collaborative projects where students learn from and support each other.
- ⦿ Celebrate student successes—both academic and personal—through shout-outs, displays of work and opportunities for leadership within the classroom.

Hold high academic standards

- ⦿ Communicate ambitious yet achievable learning goals for all students, emphasizing effort, persistence and growth over time.
- ⦿ Provide targeted scaffolding and differentiated instruction to help each student meet high expectations without lowering the bar.
- ⦿ Regularly check for understanding using multiple assessment methods, including discussions, written reflections and creative demonstrations of learning.
- ⦿ Implement a strengths-based approach by recognizing students' talents and skills while addressing areas for growth with constructive feedback.
- ⦿ Ensure lesson plans prioritize engagement for historically underserved students by incorporating culturally relevant pedagogy, real-world connections and hands-on learning experiences.

Understand your own cultural identity and its consequences

- ⦿ Reflect on your own cultural norms, biases and assumptions, especially in moments of classroom management and discipline, to ensure fairness and inclusivity.
- ⦿ Seek professional development opportunities or engage in conversations with colleagues to deepen your understanding of how culture shapes teaching and learning.

- ⦿ Regularly solicit student feedback about their classroom experience and be open to adjusting your teaching approach based on their perspectives.
- ⦿ Model authenticity by being open about your own background, perspectives and learning journey, fostering an environment of mutual respect and understanding.

Adapted from *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain* by Zaretta Hammond, *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World* by Django Paris and H. Samy Alim, and *Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy* by Gloria Ladson-Billings