



SNAPSHOT: The SEL 3 Signature Practices

WELCOMING INCLUSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGING STRATEGIES

OPTIMISTIC CLOSURE



1. Open each class period, meeting, or professional learning experience with a **WELCOMING INCLUSION ACTIVITY, ROUTINE, OR RITUAL** that builds community and connects to the work ahead.

Examples of Welcoming Activities, Routines, and Rituals:

- Smile warmly and greet each person by their preferred name
- Whole-group greeting activities
- Morning circles
- Interactive “do-nows,” such as peer-to-peer homework help



2. Embed **ENGAGING STRATEGIES**, including brain breaks to anchor thinking and learning, throughout the experience. Engaging strategies offers many opportunities that vary in complexity to practice SEL skills. Engagement and learning individually (e.g., “[turn-to-your-partner](#)”) and collectively (e.g., “[Socratic Seminar](#)” and “[Jigsaw](#)”) are supported by intentionally chosen strategies and activities with sequenced steps that suit your group’s current needs. Build in a balance of interactive and reflective experiences to meet the needs of all participants.

Examples of Engaging Strategies:

- Think, Ink, Pair, Share (silent time to reflect; time to write; partner discussions; close with a group share out)
- [Clock Partners](#) (prearrange partners for quickly pairing up for reflection and discussion)
- Private think-time (facilitator wait-time)
- [Mindful Minute Brain Break](#) (a calming activity, promoting focus and readiness to learn)



3. Close each experience in an intentional way. An **OPTIMISTIC CLOSURE** is not necessarily a “cheery ending,” but rather highlights an individual and shared understanding of the importance of the work, and can provide a sense of accomplishment and support forward-thinking. The closing activity may be reflective of the learning, help identify next steps, or make connections to one’s own work.

Examples of Optimistic Closure:

- [One-Minute Accolade](#)
- [Suit Yourself](#)
- Something I learned today...
- Something I’ll do as a result of this meeting is...
- I am curious about...
- Something I still question...
- I am looking forward to tomorrow because...
- Something that still concerns me...



Establish a shared agreement that it is always okay to pass.

Encourage participants to verbally say “Pass” or
“Please come back to me” if that is their choice today!

About the SEL 3 Signature Practices

The SEL 3 Signature Practices were developed in response to these commonly heard questions: “*But what does SEL LOOK like?*” and “*How can we start doing SEL right now?*” Educators and OST providers understood and believed in the power of SEL, but sought clarity about how to demonstrate and observe SEL in action during the school day and beyond.

The **SEL 3 Signature Practices** are one tool for fostering a supportive environment and promote SEL. They intentionally and explicitly help build a habit of practices through which students and adults enhance their SEL skills. While not an SEL curriculum, these practices are one concrete example of a way to help people understand and practice the goals of an overall systemic SEL implementation plan.

Why? We set the tone for our learning and interactions as we launch the school day, run a staff meeting, deliver a lesson or facilitate professional development. Our goal is to purposefully and thoughtfully design each element to achieve a particular outcome. Adults and students walk into work or school each day as our whole selves. We bring our strengths, challenges, and outside circumstances which contribute to how we embrace or face the day. We transport our intentional goodwill and our implicit biases. We carry the memory of our last time in this environment, as well as our history of similar situations.

What? Intentionally chosen strategies, activities, and protocols foster interactions that model SEL in action and help create an equitable experience. They establish a safe container for equity of voice, for truly seeing one another, and celebrating one another as our fullest selves. By integrating moments of reflection, positive interactions, and appreciations, we craft the climate and culture we’re striving for— one in which everyone in the room feels they belong to a safe and caring community of learners, where they are valued and able to learn and work together productively.

Who? Everyone! Students and adults alike are a part of the lifelong learning process for developing and using strong SEL skills. Teachers, leaders, district staff, and out-of-school time agencies use these practices to great effect, to collaboratively build environments in which the fullness of each person’s identity is acknowledged and elevated.

How? This playbook offers examples and resources to draw from as you build your repertoire of SEL practices. It also offers insights about how to make planning and facilitating the Signature Practices a fluid, natural part of your work. You and your colleagues are each other’s richest data sources, so we encourage you to dialogue regularly about how you consistently build these Signature Practices into your daily work, and to learn from one another!

When? Build in these practices throughout the day, *every day* as a regular part of daily lesson planning, meeting agendas, and professional learning facilitation to create a climate and culture of safety, inclusion and belonging, and to support strong, effective learning environments.