

# Supporting the Whole Child through Social-Emotional Learning and Positive Learning Environments



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transforming  
education

# Good Morning!

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**True** 

Stand up if the  
statement we read is  
true for you!

**FOR YOU**





- What do we know about the integrated nature of academic, cognitive, and social-emotional development?
- What does that mean for our classrooms & schools?

# A broad range of research has converged...

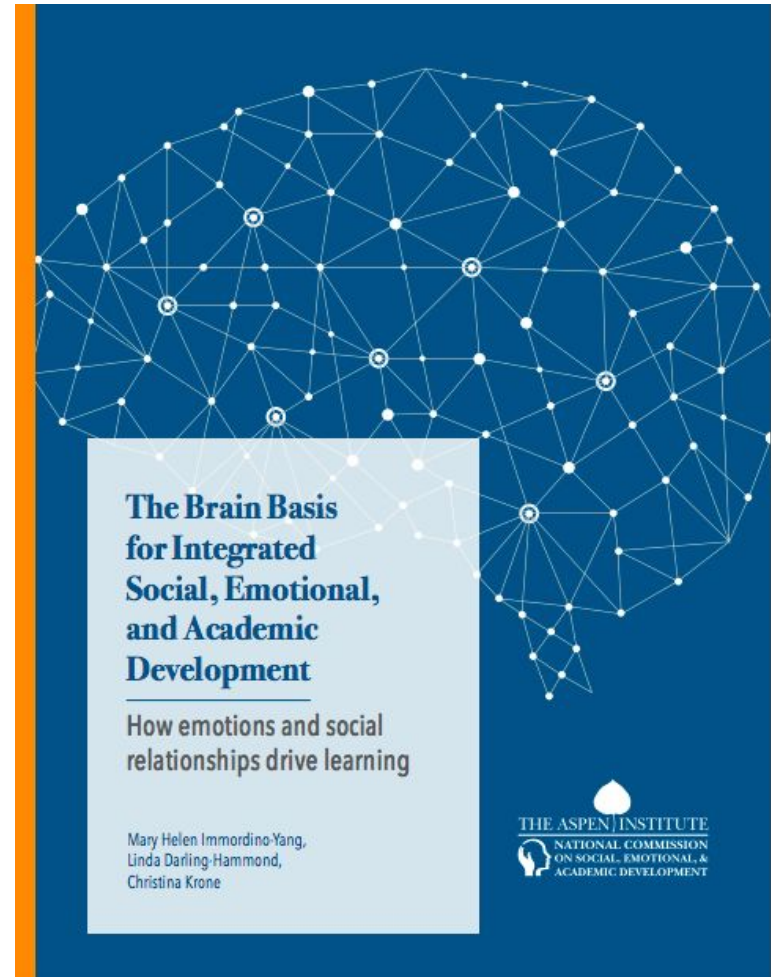


## What Brain Science Says

How Scientific Breakthroughs can Improve Policy to Ensure SEL, Equity, and Excellence for All Students



Source: Aspen SEAD Commission:  
[http://nationathope.org/wp-content/uploads/aspen\\_research\\_final\\_web.pdf](http://nationathope.org/wp-content/uploads/aspen_research_final_web.pdf)



# Key finding: “All learning is social and emotional”

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# We need to feel safe to engage in learning



# **Personal Reflection:** **What do you remember learning in school?**

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**Take one minute to write down three things you remember learning in school.**



# **Turn and Talk:**

## **What do you remember learning in school?**

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**Did you have some kind of emotional engagement in learning those things?**



# LEARNING HAPPENS

by paying attention to the whole person.

#howlearninghappens

When the intellectual, social, and emotional aspects of learning are integrated, students are more engaged, persistent, and successful.

# Parallels with Deeper Learning, Inclusive Practice & UDL

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Multiple means of  
**ENGAGEMENT**

The “**why**” of learning



Multiple means of  
**REPRESENTATION**

The “**what**” of learning



Multiple means of  
**ACTION & EXPRESSION**

The “**how**” of learning

“

The developing brain expresses its fullest potential when affective, cognitive, social, and emotional development are intentionally integrated.

Education designed for this kind of integrated comprehensive developmental experience will accelerate student learning, skill development, and the expression of each students' potential.

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# Breaking Down Silos

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## **Turn and Talk:**

### **What are the implications for schools / districts?**



**What is one practice already in place in your school or district that supports the integrated nature of learning?**

**What is one thing that might need to change?**

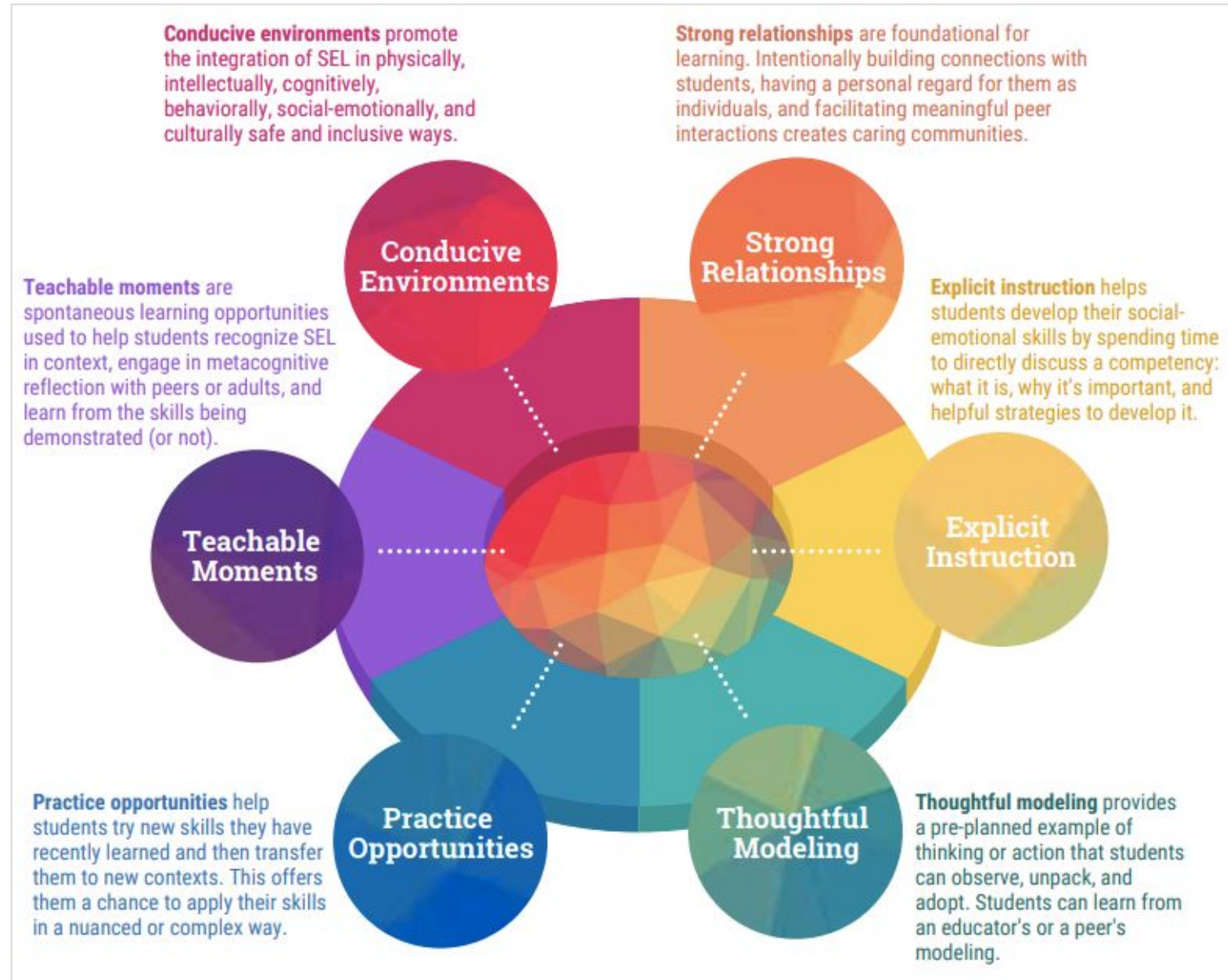


# Integrating SEL with Academics





# SEL Integration Approach for Classroom Educators





## **Turn and Talk: What resonates?**

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**What resonates in this SEL integration approach?**

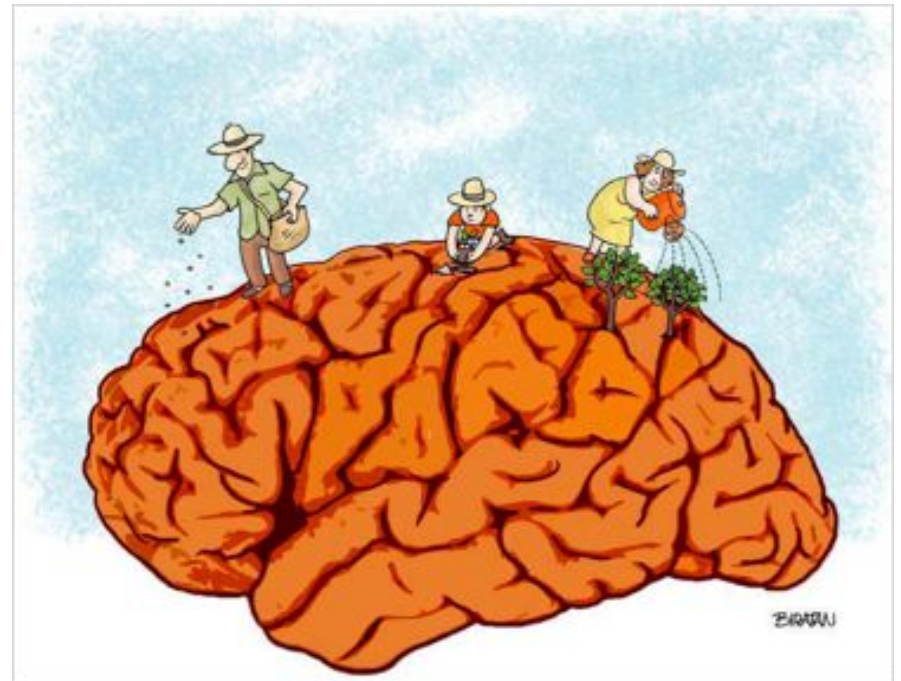
**How does this relate to what you already know about good pedagogy?**

# SEL Integration should follow common tenets of strong pedagogy

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For instance, students learn through:

- (some) direct instruction
- repeated practice
- modeling and example
- opportunities to apply content in new or challenging ways
- self-reflection
- collaboration



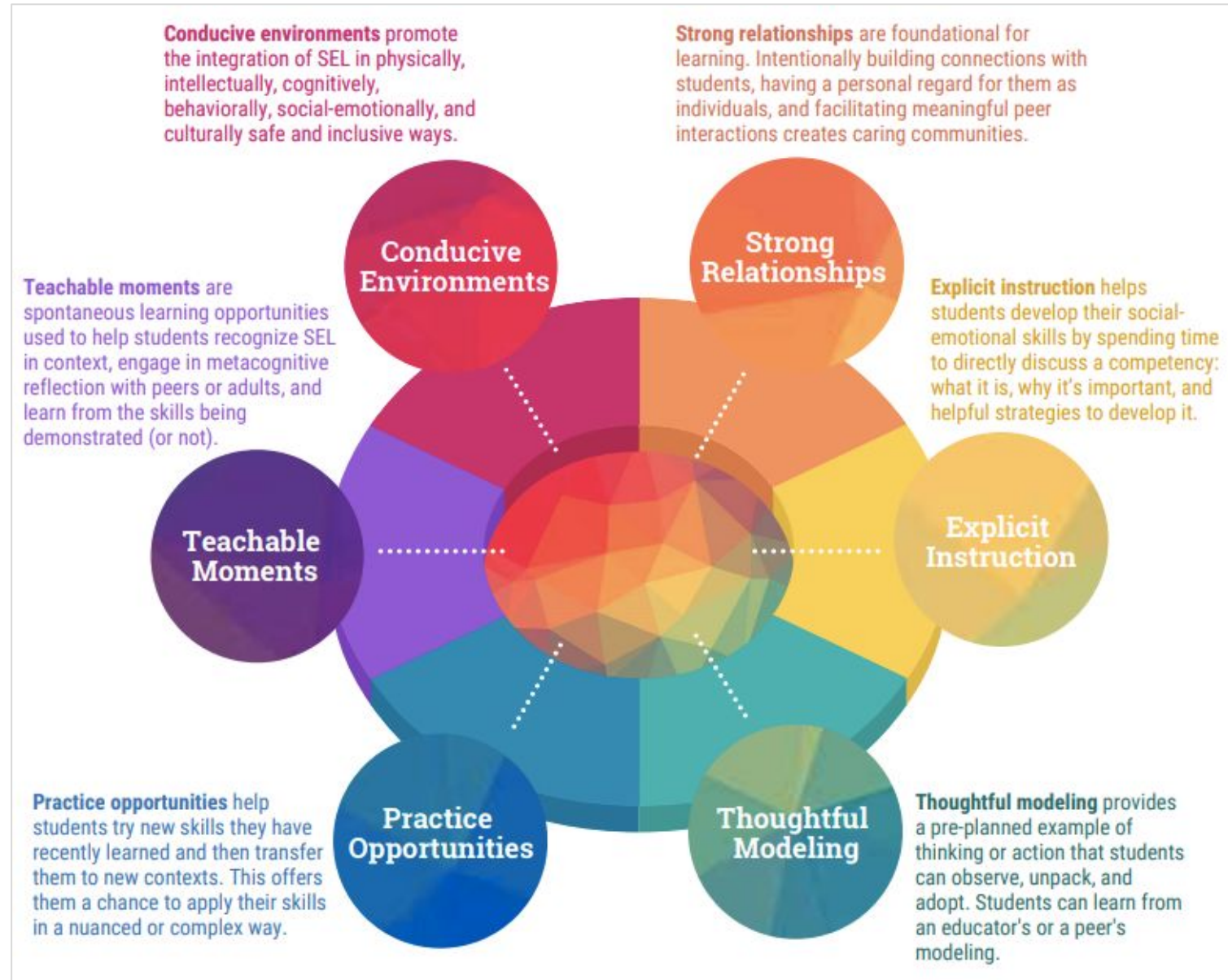
# The Role of Leaders

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Some guiding questions for administrators include:

- How does this relate to your school or district's definition of good teaching?
- How can we build upon any existing practices that already support SEL?
- What structures could support the development of long-term relationships?
- Which staff members already have the capacity to support this type of approach?
- How can we support all educators in using this type of approach?
- How might existing policies and norms need to change?

# SEL Integration Approach for Classroom Educators





# Explicit Instruction

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**Explicit instruction** helps students develop their social-emotional skills by directly discussing a competency: what it is, why it's important, what it looks like in practice, and which strategies students can use to help develop it.

# Tips: Explicit Instruction

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- Carve out dedicated time for explicit instruction (from 5-60 minutes).
- Focus on evidence-based, high-quality approaches.
- Use materials that reflect and represent students' diversity.
- Ensure that all lessons are adapted to meet students' developmental needs, languages, and interests.
- Rather than focusing on didactic lessons, engage students in discussion about how a competency plays out in their own lives.

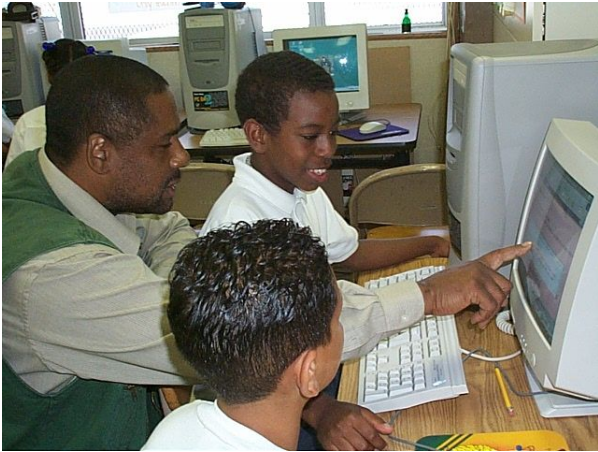
# Thoughtful Modeling

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**Thoughtful modeling** provides an example of thinking or action that students can observe, unpack, and adopt. It also provides educators with an opportunity to empathize and anticipate any challenges that students might have in continuing to develop their social-emotional skills.

# Tips: Thoughtful Modeling

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- Model positive, appropriate behaviors rather than modeling what *not* to do.
- Plan out some opportunities to model in advance.
- Remember that teachers' positive interactions with other adults are important opportunities for students to observe.
- Ensure that students are active participants in the process.
- Utilize peer modeling so students learn from one another.
- Use modeling as an opportunity to display behaviors that show respect, for the range of cultures, backgrounds, languages, and experiences of students' communities.



# Strong Relationships

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**Strong relationships** are foundational for learning. Intentionally fostering connections with students, having a personal regard for them as individuals, and facilitating meaningful peer interactions create caring communities.

# Tips: Strong Relationships



- Build relationships throughout the school year, not just during orientation.
- Learn about, include, and celebrate various cultural and racial/ethnic backgrounds year-round.
- Establish positive, two-way communication between school and home communities as a norm.
- Resolve conflict through restorative approaches that promote empathy.
- Foster complex understandings about one another in order to disrupt implicit biases and deficit-based views.

# What Might This Look Like in Practice?



Making Sure Each Child Is Known

## Turn and Talk:

**What did you see? What might you do?**

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**What did you see?**

**How do educators in your school or district approach relationships, explicit instruction, or modeling?**





# Practice Opportunities

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**Practice opportunities** help students try out new skills they have recently learned and then transfer them to new contexts or apply their skills in a nuanced or complex way.

# Tips: Practice Opportunities



- Reinforce concepts that have already been explicitly taught and modeled.
- Plan ahead to embed the practice into your existing lessons. Offer students choices in how they want to engage those skills.
- Find ways to apply learning in different domains such as math, social studies, or sports, so that students can see how these skills apply in areas of personal interest to them.
- Design developmentally-appropriate activities and respond to a range of students' abilities so that, with your support, students can build towards independently applying skills.



# Teachable Moments

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**Teachable moments** help students recognize SEL in context, engage in metacognitive reflection with peers or adults, and learn from the skills being demonstrated (or not).

# Tips: Teachable Moments

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- Reinforce the transfer of skills that have already been taught.
- Don't call out or shame students.
- Attend to the connections between students' successes and their use of social-emotional skills.
- Focus on moments where something in the students' experience makes them ready or especially open to learning.
- Identify personally relevant and meaningful opportunities for conversation, learning, and feedback (e.g., an argument with a friend) to highlight the relevant social-emotional skills connected with the situation.

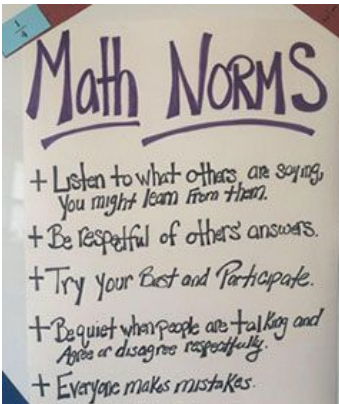


# Conducive Environments

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**Conducive environments** promote the integration of social-emotional and academic development in ways that are physically and psychologically safe and inclusive for all students.

# Tips: Conducive Environments



- Create an inviting physical space with thoughtfully-chosen materials, furniture, and displays of student work.
- Maintain rigorous expectations for all students and leverage trust to encourage one another to work towards important goals.
- Provide actionable feedback and targeted support.
- Prioritize a felt sense of belonging for all students and create psychological safety for learning.

# What Might This Look Like in Practice?



Pearl-Cohn Entertainment Magnet High School: Building School Culture to Address Students' Needs

## **Turn and Talk:**

**What did you see? What might you do?**

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**What did you see?**

**How do educators in your school or district approach practice opportunities, teachable moments, or conducive environments?**



# What Might This Look Like in Practice?



Elevating Student Voice Through Senior Talks



## **Turn and Talk:**

**What did you see? What might you do?**

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**What did you see?**

**What strategies have you heard today that you want to bring back to your school or district?**





# Continuing the Journey



# About Transforming Education

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We partner with school and system leaders to identify and implement evidence-based practices and policies that create positive learning environments and support students' social-emotional development.

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We've worked with over 1500 schools and organizations in 20 states, helping improve student outcomes for over 1 million students.



**River Dell Regional School District**  
Creating Lifelong Learners



# Free Tools & Resources at TransformingEducation.org

- Overview of the SEL Integration Approach: <http://bit.ly/2KzMdjl>
- Teacher Self-Check Tool: <http://bit.ly/2KXh5YX>
- Newsletter Sign-Up: <http://bit.ly/2FUCAsA>

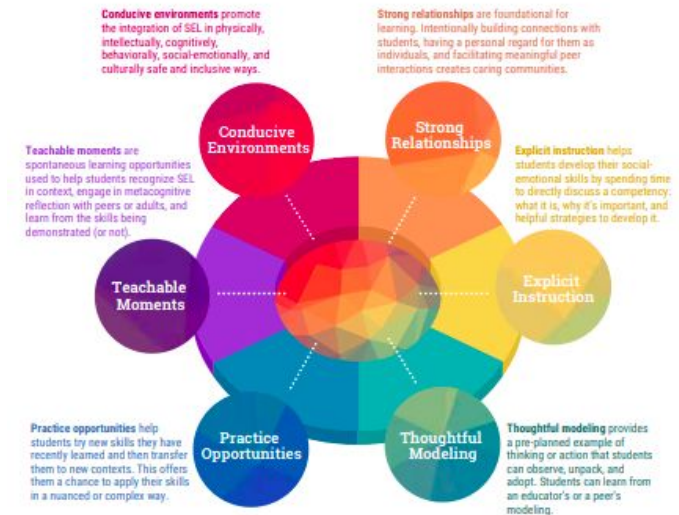
## Transforming Education's SEL Integration Approach for Classroom Educators

### WHY INTEGRATION?

By integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) into the fabric of the school day, educators can support students in honing their existing skills and mindsets to help them succeed in school and in the broader world. The development of social-emotional skills is informed by context, culture, and students' interaction with different environments. Therefore, it is important that SEL-related activities in the classroom focus on helping students to learn, build, and practice skills that they can also apply at home and in their communities.

The SEL Integration Approach guides classroom educators in how to integrate SEL into academic curriculum and daily classroom routines. Using this approach, teachers can support students' development of social-emotional skills in ways that are applicable across various areas of their lives, more sustainable over time, and flexible to changing goals and priorities across the lifespan. This approach thus serves as an impactful resource to support and promote students' lifelong learning.

### TransformEd's SEL Integration Approach



**HOW DO THESE COMPONENTS INTERACT?**  
We recommend a holistic approach to SEL integration that strikes a balance between environments, relationships, instruction, modeling, practice, and teachable moments, rather than emphasizing one action more than the others.

Teachers who successfully embed SEL in the classroom integrate all of the above components and discern when each component would be most beneficial for their students at any given moment.

Doing so provides students with multiple opportunities to learn about, observe, practice, and continuously develop social-emotional skills.

Based on knowledge gleaned from K-12 pedagogy, neuroscience research, developmental psychology, and the science of learning, this SEL Integration Approach serves as a starting point for educators. Want to learn more about how to implement it in your school and district? Contact us at [info@transformingeducation.org](mailto:info@transformingeducation.org)

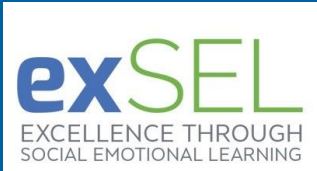


[www.transformingeducation.org](http://www.transformingeducation.org)



Component	Elements for Optimal SEL Integration	Self-Check and Plan
<b>Conductive Environments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I create and maintain a learning space that is warm and inviting to all students and their families.</li> <li>I foster student agency (e.g., voice, choice, autonomy, input, student-led goal-setting) in developmentally-appropriate ways.</li> <li>The content I use in lessons is authentically representative of my students' cultural identities.</li> <li>The content and practices I implement reflect rigorous expectations for all of my students.</li> <li>My students and I regularly offer positive, actionable feedback to one another.</li> <li>I have co-constructed classroom norms with my students, and we discuss them explicitly throughout the year. We make sure to talk about how our norms help maintain a great learning environment.</li> <li>There are readily-available resources in my classroom to support different learning and social-emotional needs. We have ongoing conversations about these resources, and I offer my students reminders about how they can be helpful.</li> </ul>	<p><b>How many of these elements are you incorporating?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am incorporating most of these elements.  <input type="checkbox"/> I incorporate some, but not most.  <input type="checkbox"/> I need to better incorporate these elements.</p> <p><b>Planning for next steps</b> I would like to be more intentional in incorporating the following elements:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<b>Strong Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I make intentional efforts to get to know all of the students in the classroom, both academically and personally.</li> <li>I incorporate personal check-ins with students regularly throughout the school day, week, and year. I track interactions to ensure that I am connecting often with all of my students.</li> <li>I find ways to celebrate students' academic mastery, growth, and other strengths regularly.</li> <li>I consistently engage in reflective practices to learn about my own identities, experiences, and potential biases, and how they might influence my interactions with students and families.</li> <li>I offer opportunities for my students to collaborate on work and build relationships with one another, while providing scaffolding and strategies to facilitate positive interactions.</li> <li>I use restorative practices in my classroom to help my students prevent and resolve conflicts and promote empathy.</li> <li>The events I host for students' families are scheduled in a way that is inclusive of different family needs and schedules.</li> <li>I engage in positive interactions and communications with my students' families regularly and throughout the year.</li> </ul>	<p><b>How many of these elements are you incorporating?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am incorporating most of these elements.  <input type="checkbox"/> I incorporate some, but not most.  <input type="checkbox"/> I need to better incorporate these elements.</p> <p><b>Planning for next steps</b> I would like to be more intentional in incorporating the following elements:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

# Way to Engage with TransformEd



- Learning network for MA districts
- Builds capacity of a district-wide team to lead SEL efforts



- DESE-sponsored Academy for MA schools and districts
- Offers free capacity building support on SEL & mental health



- Federally-funded Center
- Offers free resources and TA on SEL to districts and states

## Individualized District Partnerships

- Customized partnerships
- Support to prioritize, integrate, and continuously improve a whole child approach





## Contact Us

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