

## SEL in the Classroom

# CASEL

## 3 SIGNATURE PRACTICES

THE URGENCY OF THE TASK OR TOPIC OR THE TIME CRUNCH 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. THE 3 SIGNATURE PRACTICES ARE DESIGNED TO BUILD SAFETY, CONSISTENCY, AND BELONGING BY STARTING AND ENDING ROUTINES WITH CONNECTION, WEAVING SEL INTO ACTIVITIES, AND PROVIDING A POSITIVE, REFLECTIVE END.

### 1. INCLUSIVE WELCOME



These are short rituals at the start of class to bring everyone together and set a tone of belonging and readiness.

- If an important goal of the day is based in *creative work* or *planning*, consider choosing an inclusive welcome that includes brainstorming or a question.
- If an important goal of the meeting is *making a difficult decision*, you might choose a welcome that invites participants to make choices.
- If an important goal of the engagement is learning how to work in small groups, you might decide to welcome the group with an activity that is organized in trios, then debriefed with the whole group.



### 2. ENGAGING ACTIVITIES

These are active, hands-on techniques woven into lessons or meetings that build SEL skills like self-awareness, empathy, and problem-solving.

- Think-Pair-Share
- Small group discussions
- Short mindfulness exercises or "brain breaks" before complex problems to help with stress management.



**For more information and implementation activities:**  
**[Playbook](#)**

### 3. OPTIMISTIC CLOSURE

This is a brief wrap-up at the end that helps participants reflect on the learning, process emotions, and look forward positively. The closure is where some of the most powerful learning takes place and bridge today to tomorrow.

- Reflective beach ball
- Gallery Walk
- 3-2-1 Feedback where students record three things they learned, two fun facts, and one remaining question.

**Need More Resources? Check out <https://misiciowa.org>**  
By providing links to other sites, MISIC does not guarantee or endorse the information or products available on these sites.



Resources Compiled by L. Pulis, 2025