



Dear Academy Members,

As we settle into the school year, our September focus at the Academy for SEL has been on self-awareness. To actively build our self-awareness, we are taking temperature checks throughout the day to notice our feelings and our thoughts. We are also reflecting on our values and how we can live those values in our personal and professional lives. We invite all of our Academy members to join us in taking moments each day for self-awareness. Check-in with yourself, notice your feelings, catch your thoughts and ground yourself in your values.

To bring self-awareness to students, educators can build in emotional temperature checks during the school day. A temperature check may look like asking students to pause and notice their current feeling, to whisper their feeling to themselves, to journal about how they feel in the moment or to record their emotional temperature on a class thermometer.

If you want to dig deeper into self-awareness, [this episode](#) of The xSELeRate Positivity Podcast with Claudia Lopez, LPC focuses on how to promote self-awareness for your students and yourself. For even more SEL-focused podcast episodes, visit The xSELeRate Positivity Podcast's [Soundcloud](#).



Facing History's Teaching Strategies

This week we are sharing two teaching strategies from Facing History.

Strategy #1: Head, Heart, Conscience

The Head, Heart, Conscience teaching strategy provides a structure for students to discuss emotionally laden current or historical events by using their emotions, intellect and ethics. In this strategy, students respond to prompts about an event in their journal from the perspective of their head, their heart and their conscience. Head questions include, “what information do you know about this event?” and “what remains uncertain?” Heart questions include, “what emotions does this event raise for you?” Conscience questions include, “what questions about fairness, equity or justice does this event raise for you?” After responding to the prompts, students share their responses with their teacher or classmates.

Strategy #2: Toolbox for Care

The Toolbox for Care strategy aims to help students who have experienced traumatic events develop a sense of agency to cope with and process these events. Students create a physical toolbox (a shoebox, a sewn object or any box) of tools that

“represent the skills, attitudes, and actions that are necessary to care for themselves and their communities during difficult times.” The activity walks students through questions to help them effectively choose their tools, which may include images, collages, quotations and objects. Once students have chosen their tools, the class as a whole reflects on why they chose certain tools for their toolboxes. After the activity ends, students can save their toolboxes to use during future events that require coping and reflection.



SECD Lab Lesson Plan Library

The Social Emotional and Character Development Lab at Rutgers University has compiled a compendium of [SECD lesson plans](#) for the new academic school year. The lessons are organized in a Google Sheet, which provides links to and information about each resource, including the intended grade, activity focus, school subject and modifications to tailor the activity to processing the COVID-19 pandemic.



Understanding Boredom

In this [Greater Good Magazine article](#), Rebecca Branstetter, Ph.D. unpacks what students mean when they say “I’m bored” at school. Dr. Branstetter outlines the various reasons behind a student’s boredom ranging from a subject being too difficult or too easy to depression, anxiety, helplessness or apathy. She also provides strategies to help educators talk to students to understand why they are bored in school and, once the underlying issues have been identified, to address these issues to re-engage students in their education.

Upcoming Events

Committee for Children and CASEL are hosting a webinar, “The Future of Civic Engagement is Social-Emotional Learning”, to gear up for the SEL Virtual Exchange Summit in October. This webinar will explore how educators can leverage SEL to promote civic engagement and justice in themselves and their students.

Topic: The Future of Civic Engagement is Social-Emotional Learning

Date and Time: Tuesday, September 28, 2021, 12 PM ET// 9 AM PT

Registration Link:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/2916301041327/WN_exGai_iQS9GHX9H77kdS6A



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