



Training Lesson Plan: Introduction to SEL for Residential Environmental Education Instructors

Overview

Essential Questions	How do we build inclusion and optimize opportunities for Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) through intentional programmatic design choices?
Audience	Field Instructors with a functional understanding of programming goals, curriculum, and context within your organization.
Duration	2 hours
Resources	Blindfolds for Eyes, Mouth, Body activity Collaborative puzzle for Eyes, Mouth, Body (e.g. puzzle pieces to spell something) Long pieces of butcher paper Markers CASEL Framework and Competencies handouts

Training Objectives

- Reflect on the value of inclusion as it relates to building SEL opportunities.
- Experience and reflect on an experience designed to promote SEL
- Explore the CASEL framework through the lens of residential environmental education (EE) student experiences
- Identify opportunities for more intentional programmatic design in support of SEL

Training Assessments

Building and sharing map of the opportunities for SEL

Reflection sharing at the conclusion of the training

Learning Plan

Invitation: 10 minutes

Reflect and Write: Think of a learning environment that you felt was particularly effective at promoting SEL outcomes. What characteristics made it that way?

Pair/Share: With a neighbor or partner, share a few of your reflections. Listen with an ear for convergent ideas and commonalities.

Large Group Share:

- What were some of the convergent ideas and commonalities, and what does this tell us about inclusion in learning environments, its importance, and the role of instructors in setting tone?
- Responses frequently include: the value of intentional program planning and implementation, the role of setting expectations for participants, celebrating similarities and differences, etc.

Facilitator Note:

- Acknowledge the gravity of the topic. Discussing SEL can bring up serious topics and lived experiences for any given individual. While facilitating this training, the facilitator should be sure to rely on existing expectations and values for field instructors in the professional learning environment. Encourage participants to contribute on a level that feels right for them and to tend to their own needs as they arise. Creating or revisiting an existing community agreement may be another way to address this.

Exploration—Eyes, Mouth, Body Activity: 35 minutes

Facilitate a shared experience with opportunities for SEL, which can be reflected upon in support of training objectives.

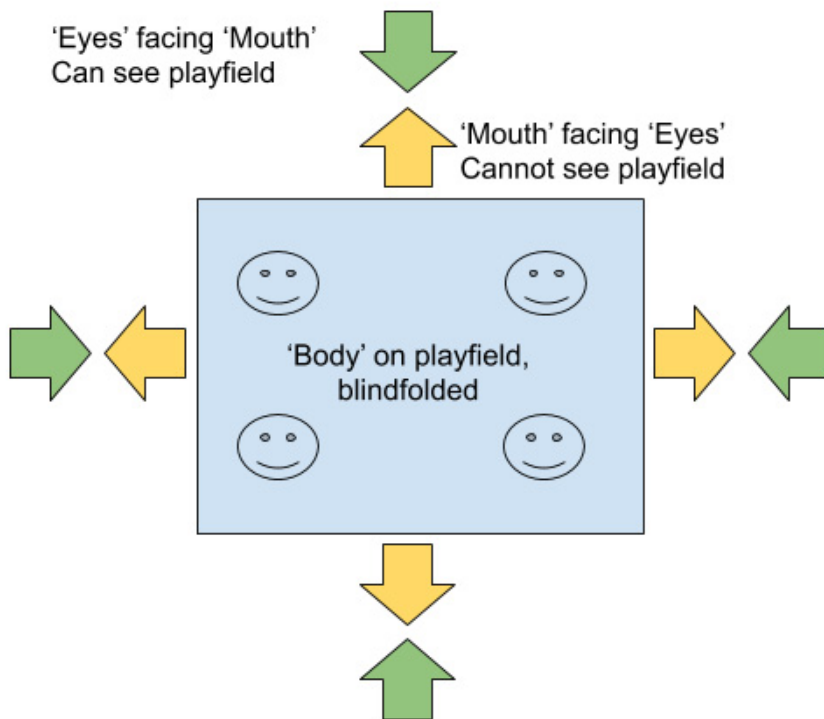
Set up:

- Create a rectangular or square “playfield” with defined boundaries. It should be large enough to allow one-third of your audience to move freely while blindfolded. For example, a group of 15 participants would need enough space for 5 people to move about freely. A 20’ x 30’ playfield should be sufficient for a group of that size.
- Gather objects for a collaborative (not competitive) group challenge. Constructing something specific from multiple loose parts works well, such as assembling a simple puzzle designed for small children (easy), constructing a small tower (moderate), or properly setting up a tent (difficult).

Framing for Participants:

- Share the objective of the challenge: the group is to assemble a given structure/object/puzzle while acting in various restrictive roles.
- The group decides when they are done and what “good enough” is.
- Break into groups of three. Each member of each group of three will take on a specific role: eyes, body, mouth.

- ◇ Eyes are stationed on the boundary of the playfield, facing inward toward the playfield, and cannot speak.
- ◇ Mouths are stationed on the boundary of the playfield, facing outward toward the person playing the role of Eyes. They cannot see the playfield, but can speak and give directions to the Body.
- ◇ Bodies are stationed on the playfield, blindfolded, and cannot speak. They can move around the playfield as directed by the Mouth.
- ◇ See the diagram below for an example:



NOTE: For groups that are not divisible by three, groups of four can be created. In this scenario, the facilitator can decide that there are multiple people playing the same role in a group. Having two Eyes or Mouths is likely the most challenging as it creates confusion in communication.

- Notes regarding risk management:
 - ◇ Bodies should move slowly and deliberately around the playfield with their hands out to avoid bumping into someone or something.
 - ◇ Eyes and Mouth can break the rules to stop a Body if they are going to cause harm to themselves or others. The facilitator should also watch for this and may step in to address issues as they emerge.
 - ◇ If a Body leaves the playfield, the facilitator can guide them back within the boundary.
- Give the group 1-2 minutes to decide who will play which role and to plan a strategy. Once everyone is in position and ready, they may begin. Allow for the group to complete the challenge as time allows, leaving 5-10 minutes for debriefing. If the group doesn't complete the challenge, that's ok. Debriefing will focus on the experience of the challenge and doesn't require completing the objective.

Debriefing the Experience:

- Assemble participants into groups based on their roles (Eyes with Eyes, Bodies with Bodies, Mouths with Mouths). Present these questions to the groups and allow them to discuss. Consider writing these questions on a white board or similar to allow folks to revisit if they forget.
 - ◇ What was it like to be in your role? What led to success? What was challenging?
 - ◇ What do you think it was like to be in another role? What challenges do you think others experienced?
 - ◇ Once groups have engaged with these questions for 3-5 minutes, allow individual groups to share key points they discussed.

- Regroup the participants into their original group of three, and discuss the following prompts:
 - ◊ What skills are important to the success of your group of three? How do these skills differ between roles? How are they similar?
 - ◊ As an individual, what is your responsibility to the group of three?
 - ◊ As a group of three, what is your responsibility to the larger group?
 - ◊ Once groups have engaged with these questions for 3-5 minutes, allow individual groups to share key points they discussed.

Concept Invention: 15 minutes

- Distribute paper copies of the CASEL Framework and provide 2-3 minutes for participants to review its structure and content.
- Present CASEL framework. Key points from [CASEL.org](https://casel.org) include:
 - ◊ SEL is the process through which youth and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.
 - ◊ Systemic SEL is promoted across multiple contexts every day. SEL is more than just a program or lesson; it is about how teaching and learning happens, as well as what you teach and where you learn. CASEL's widely used framework identifies five core competencies that when prioritized across settings—districts, schools, classrooms, families, and the wider community—can educate hearts, inspire minds, and help students navigate the world more effectively.
 - ◊ **Self-awareness:** Know your strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a “growth mindset.”
 - ◊ **Self-management:** Effectively manage stress, control impulses, and motivate yourself to set and achieve goals.
 - ◊ **Social awareness:** Understand the perspectives of others and empathize with them, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures.
 - ◊ **Relationship skills:** Communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.
 - ◊ **Responsible decision-making:** Make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety, and social norms.
 - ◊ Emphasize how some domains relate to others (self-awareness/self-management and social awareness/relationship skills), and explain that's why they are the same color in the graphic.

Application: 50 minutes

- Break into groups of 3-5 instructors
- Be sure to spread experienced instructors among the groups

Provide each group with a long strip of butcher paper with the following timeline drawn on it:

Arrival

Departure



Framing for Participants:

- Use this timeline to map out the intentional actions and activities you can make to support key SEL outcomes. Map the activities to specific components of the CASEL framework, and make note of any 'practice guidance' you would give to others taking those actions or leading those activities.
- Think specifically about things that you don't automatically think of when considering SEL (science investigations, service learning/stewardship, dorm orientations, orientation, getting students off the buses, etc.)

Leave 10-15 minutes for groups to share their best ideas for intentionally developing SEL opportunities within residential EE programming. Alternately, a gallery walk for 5-10 minutes can provide a conversation space.

Reflection: 10 min

Discussion question: How will you put more intention into your planning and instruction to support SEL? Be specific.

Write, pair, share.