



ArtsEdSEL

The Center for Arts Education
and Social Emotional Learning

THE HEART OF THE ARTS ARTICLE SERIES

*ArtsEdSEL: Centralizing Social
Emotional Learning Within the Arts*

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The implicit connections between SEL and the arts

(dance, media arts, music, theatre, visual arts) are becoming more explicit as teachers, researchers, and policy-makers further these initiatives. For SEL to help build the capacity to encounter the tests of life, and equally important, nourish and advance the artistic processes (create, perform/present/produce, respond, and connect) it must be approached intentionally, embedded into the arts, and be sustained. The lines between SEL and arts can be blurred to a point that a casual observer (and even our students) do not know where one ends and the other begins. A common question is: "How many minutes should I spend on SEL?" The best answer is ALL OF THEM. When SEL is effectively embedded into the arts classroom, it simply looks like amazing arts teaching!

* The COVID-19

pandemic, systemic racism and racial injustice, political unrest, a general sense of divisiveness, and great uncertainty have left our students and teachers

in uncharted waters navigating teaching and learning amidst extreme challenges. Any one of these challenges would be enough to push our capacity to teach and learn effectively. Combined, however, they result in turbulent waters that can be challenging for students and teachers to navigate as they attempt to learn, teach, and collectively grow. Terms like trauma-informed, equity, academic loss, and emotional setbacks are saturating educational narratives. As we are learning to persevere, sustained, intentional strategies need to be embedded into school processes to help students and teachers forge a path forward, because simply expecting calm and collected responses to challenges that are rocking everyone is not reasonable. SEL skills are seen as foundational to managing these collective difficulties. Implementation of SEL in K-12 schools is growing steadily and key to its further expansion and effective delivery is the role of arts educators.

"ARTS EDUCATORS

and their classrooms provide a welcoming environment and uniquely meaningful, sustained learning experiences to build these responsive skills. For many students, the arts are the portal to their hearts, souls, and minds because of the way in which the arts provide an opportunity for deeper understanding of emotions, eliciting empathy and compassion, and to see how the arts have been used to address social issues and problems throughout history "

Dr. Maurice Elias





SEL has often been defined as

building capacity in the areas of self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. The language of SEL is purposeful, it does not say self-control; instead, self-management. The objective is for students, teachers, and communities to better understand their emotions, their root causes, and envision and enact productive actions from them. Control is silencing (“You shouldn’t feel that way, control your emotions”); management is empowering.

The lived experiences

we have all gone through during 2020 (and beyond) have fundamentally changed us. We learn and teach differently. We realize that our educational priorities may not have best reflected what our students need. Our students’ artistic, educational, and personal needs have changed and we have become refocused on what was missing, lacking, and greatly needed. Personal connection, connectedness, and student voice are now even more necessary (and always have been) for meaningful teaching and learning.

If schools and teachers

wish to have any meaningful teaching and learning the social, emotional, mental, and physical needs of students and teachers needs to be of paramount concern. Intentional, embedded, and sustained attention to SEL in schools and through arts education can help facilitate moving students from trauma back to trusting relationships and environments. This potential has long been imperative and prized in arts classrooms.

The Center for Arts Education and Social Emotional Learning (ArtsEdSEL)

is dedicated to illuminating the intersection between arts education and social emotional learning to facilitate the embedded, intentional, and sustained application of SEL-informed arts education. Though many are familiar with basic terminology, ArtsEdSEL helps educators fully understand the many opportunities and approaches to realize the

connections so that SEL skills development is supported artistically. ArtsEdSEL is the central voice linking social emotional learning to the arts education landscape, while positively impacting the entire education ecosystem resulting in artistic SEL that is embedded, intentional, and sustained in classrooms, schools, and communities. Student artists will learn that through the artistic process their voice can affect meaningful change in school and community contexts.

ArtsEdSEL supports

practices related to development of student artists’ IDENTITY, BELONGING, and AGENCY through the arts. ArtsEdSEL focuses on Practice, Research, Policy, Collaboration, SEL-infused Artistic Works, and elevating Student Voice. By shaping curriculum, supporting teacher practice, and furthering the arts education and social emotional learning research agenda, ArtsEdSEL builds capacity for high-quality arts education, grounded in culturally-responsive, relevant, and sustaining practices that will embrace the needs of diverse student populations.



Pillars of ArtsEdSEL

PRACTICE

ArtsEdSEL equips arts educators and educational leaders with practices designed to activate the SEL competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making to enrich scholastic arts education environments.



SEL ARTISTIC WORKS

ArtsEdSEL collaborates with and commissions artists in all content areas to create purposefully integrated SEL artistic works.



RESEARCH

ArtsEdSEL promotes empirically-grounded insight that builds capacity for high-quality PreK-16 arts education, informed by culturally-responsive and sustaining practices by establishing and enacting a research agenda for arts education and social emotional learning.



STUDENT VOICE

ArtsEdSEL elevates and amplifies student voices related to their artistic, social emotional growth, and experiences.



COLLABORATION



ArtsEdSEL supports a collaborative space to translate and build upon established artistic SEL work by engaging the broad artistic and SEL communities to achieve complementary objectives.




POLICY

ArtsEdSEL assists with systematic approaches to development and implementation of policies that will lead to embedding SEL into arts education at the local, state, and national levels.





Embedded, intentional, and sustained attention to SEL in schools and through arts education can help facilitate moving students from trauma back to trusting relationships and environments. This potential has long been imperative and prized in arts classrooms.



By recognizing the implicit role of social emotional learning in artistic works and making this role explicit in arts education, ArtsEdSEL aims to dramatically impact the role of arts education. This Center for Arts Education and Social Emotional Learning now launches with the vision and mission to dramatically impact the role of arts education. Intentional SEL-informed arts education is a powerful vehicle to develop student artists' identity, belonging, and agency which propels them toward school and life success.



ArtsEdSEL: Putting SEL Center Stage

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