TRANSFORMATIVE SEL FOR TODAY'S TEACHER

PROGRAM BRIEF JANUARY 2024

CITY
TEACHING
ALLIANCE

TRANSFORMATIVE SEL FOR TODAY'S TEACHER:
Program Brief From City Teaching Alliance

Despite growing attention paid to whole-child well-being in recent years, today's students still often learn and develop in environments that emphasize and focus on the most salient, visible indicators of academic success. Attention is paid to formative and summative assessment data, as well as students' routine ability to produce assignment deliverables. However, a student's classroom experience is greatly influenced by their emotional processes and the relationships they form with peers, teachers, and themselves. Organizations such as CASEL (the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) have homed in on this connection between behavioral awareness and school success through a framework centering five key social emotional learning (SEL) competencies: *Self-Awareness*, *Self-Management*, *Social Awareness*, *Relationship Skills*, and *Responsible Decision-Making*. These domains speak to the foundational knowledge both teachers and students need to be able to reflect on and repair the previously-indiscriminate relationship between academic success and social emotional awareness. Such reflection and growth involves both interpersonal and metacognitive processes that can be leveraged to meet the needs of a diverse student body.

More recently, CASEL has elaborated on their foundational SEL framework to cast a new vision for Transformative Social Emotional Learning (T-SEL), "where young people and adults build strong, respectful, and lasting relationships to engage in co-learning [through facilitation of] critical examination of individual and contextual factors that contribute to inequities and collaborative solutions that lead to personal, community, and societal well-being" (CASEL). Stepping into this still-nascent field in 2020, City Teaching Alliance took up the charge to **design, test, refine, and expand new professional development offerings** appropriate for early-stage educators **aligned to the five T-SEL elaborations** (*Identity, Agency, Belonging, Collaborative*

"Being a part of City Teaching Alliance's Transformative Social-Emotional Learning (T-SEL) program has me falling in love with this work again and again. **For me, it's the joy and optimism involved in co-creating these conditions for teachers and students to thrive as individuals and as a collective.** T-SEL instruction truly provides teachers with the tools to create safe spaces that support generational wellness for all communities."
– Taylor Carter, Assistant Director, T-SEL Partnerships

Problem–Solving, and Curiosity) – bringing our highly clinical approach and distinctive lens on embedding culturally responsive, inclusive, and cohesive instructional practices throughout the school day. In this brief, we will highlight how we have approached these elaborations within our newly–conceived T–SEL professional learning activities and content, and early insights regarding how this work is translating to classroom settings.

WHO WE ARE: CITY TEACHING ALLIANCE

At City Teaching Alliance (previously known as Urban Teachers), our mission is **to improve educational and life outcomes of children in urban schools by preparing culturally responsive, effective career educators who accelerate student achievement and disrupt systems of racial and socioeconomic inequity.** Our core values guide every aspect of our work to meet our mission: we serve children, we are an anti–racist organization, we are life–long learners, and we value each other.

Since 2010, we have recruited, developed, and supported hundreds of diverse, effective, culturally responsive educators in Baltimore and Washington, DC classrooms through a distinctive multi–year, residency–anchored teacher development pathway, expanding to Dallas in 2016 and Philadelphia in 2022. Our vibrant national network of practitioners is expected to reach well over 50,000 students during the 2023–24 school year alone. Now, building on our track record in community–embedded, clinically–based teacher preparation and development, we have begun to grow our offerings to include stand–alone professional development and professional learning opportunities for all teachers in the cities we serve. In an educational landscape where the primacy of social–emotional skill sets and support has only been amplified by COVID–19, we have strategically chosen to invest in the transformative social–emotional learning space in our first foray into discrete PD programming to leverage the positive impact of T–SEL supports on student outcomes to ensure the benefits of SEL for all students and the teachers who serve them.

In 2020, we were awarded a multi–year SEED (Supporting Effective Educator Development) grant from the U.S. Department of Education, which we named "GAIN (Growth, Accessibility, and Inclusion Network)." This grant enabled the creation of an effective professional development (PD) strategy centered around supporting teachers to know, identify, and intentionally use T–SEL strategies in interaction with children in our communities' classrooms, with inaugural core offerings tested through a randomized controlled trial to ensure efficacy. This grant also enabled the first pilot measurement of students' experience of T–SEL in classroom experiences with peers and teachers. Throughout this work, we have prioritized teacher involvement in the design, development, and refinement of professional learning, resulting in a PD solution that is meaningful, relevant, and both teacher– and student–centered. As a result, City Teaching Alliance is swiftly emerging as a national leader in T–SEL.

THE RELEVANCE AND ADVANTAGE OF T-SEL

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is defined as the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to **develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions** (CASEL). SEL provides a framework to describe the attitudes and skills students need to navigate everyday tasks inside *and* outside the classroom, helping them to develop mindsets conducive to healthy behavior management and lifelong success (Gueldner et al., 2020). These are critically important, complex components of our students' developmental and educational journeys, and as in any other complex learning endeavor, teachers need practice-rich professional learning and support to effectively facilitate identification of and engagement across SEL core competencies.

In today's landscape, many of our students still do not have access to learning opportunities and environments that honor and maximize their full potential – and more specifically, high-quality, resonant social-emotional learning opportunities are not yet consistently available to students regardless of socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, zip code, home language, or disability status. Particularly in urban communities, where incoming educators too often receive little preparation to effectively deliver instruction that centers and affirms the identities and assets of all students in their care, **it is essential that we equip our instructional teams with a more coherent and comprehensive body of content knowledge, practical skills, and developmental supports that enable them to lead the work of social-emotional learning** with rigor, inclusiveness, cultural resonance, intentionality, and a sharp equity lens. For example, if teachers do not intentionally consider the role of identity, interactions that support SEL development in the classroom may be more readily available to students with more proximal backgrounds to their teacher than to students whose backgrounds may differ more significantly from their teacher's, even within the same classroom. Consciously bridging cultural gaps in student-student and student-teacher relationships plays a critical role in understanding one's own beliefs and biases as well as developing empathy for others, and SEL practices are most transformative when sociopolitical, cultural, community, and individual contexts that influence thinking are integrated for the benefit of both students and educators (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020).

Responding to the need for more culturally responsive, inclusive, and equity-centered SEL instruction, CASEL now defines Transformative SEL as "a form of SEL implementation where young people and adults build strong, respectful, and lasting relationships to engage in co-learning… facilitat[ing] critical examination of individual and contextual factors that contribute to inequities and collaborative solutions that lead to personal, community, and societal well-being." The associated revised framework offers five elaborations on the original "CASEL 5": *Identity, Agency, Belonging, Collaborative Problem-Solving, and Curiosity*. As more recent additions to the nationally-recognized SEL canon, these elaborations are supported by significantly fewer accessible, quality planning and content resources and professional development offerings available to individual practitioners and

school communities to date. Recognizing the tremendous potential for accelerated classroom impact and our unique positioning to act on it, City Teaching Alliance embarked on a multi-year project to develop, test, refine, and begin to expand T-SEL professional development for both pre-service and in-service teachers - an endeavor clearly aligned to our mission, our values, our distinctively comprehensive and practice-focused program model, our and vision of instructional excellence and equity for the K-12 students in our communities.

THE CITY TEACHING ALLIANCE DIFFERENCE

By design and mirroring the breadth of teaching roles undertaken by our own flagship teacher development program participants and alumni, **our T-SEL resources and instructional support are applicable across all subjects and grade levels.**

- With respect to **content**, the core T-SEL professional development "modules" offered within the program are designed to prepare all elementary and secondary educators, regardless of the content being taught - and, the emphasis throughout is on classroom embeddedness, wherein SEL is not treated as a discrete content block within in the school day, but rather as an overarching and essential condition for learning and well-being which can and should be threaded throughout the day-to-day experiences and activities of teachers and students.

> "[After taking City Teaching Alliance's Transformative Social-Emotional Learning PD] I would describe my understanding [of T-SEL] as almost expert! **I have learned so much that allows me to connect with scholars beyond curriculum and even beyond the surface-level relationships.** I have many strategies and knowledge that definitely support my own SEL as well as my scholars' SEL."
>
> **– Samantha M.**

- With respect to **structure**, the modular and flexible nature of the suite of offerings we have developed is reflective of our keen awareness that educators' plates have only grown fuller in recent years, and PD is an investment of precious time and energy. Core content is easily accessible "on the go" through self-paced assignments and discussions, easily adaptable to modified formats (e.g., intensive workshops or district PD days), and easily paired with follow-on coaching support reflective of the needs of each practitioner, classroom, and school community.

Table 1. CASEL Domains and Equity Elaborations

CASEL Domain	Equity Elaboration	Connector
Self-Awareness	***Identity***	Identity is the equity elaboration of the Self-Awareness competency. "Identity implies understanding and sensibilities associated with multifaceted personal and social group statuses (often discussed in terms of intersectionality and positionality). It suggests self-reflection and self-respect" (Jagers et al., 2021).
Self-Management	***Agency***	Agency is the equity elaboration of the Self-Management competency. "Agency confers the wherewithal to impact positively on this psychological and social reality. It reflects hope and self-direction" (Jagers et al., 2021).
Social Awareness	***Belonging***	Belonging is the equity elaboration of the Social Awareness competency. "Belonging suggests the sense of connectedness and trust needed to engage in co-constructing an equitable, thriving local community and vibrant civil society. It enhances self-worth" (Jagers et al., 2021).
Relationship Skills	***Collaborative Problem Solving***	Collaborative Problem Solving is the equity elaboration of the Relationship Skills competency. "Collaborative Problem Solving acknowledges and helps realize the collective rights and responsibilities of full citizenship in local, national, and global community contexts. It is a critical feature of efforts to pursue equity and excellence" (Jagers et al., 2021).
Responsible Decision-Making	***Curiosity***	Curiosity is the equity elaboration of the Responsible Decision-Making competency. "Curiosity reflects the deep need to continuously surface and curate information about oneself in relation to others and the physical world. It prioritizes informed decision making based on open-minded investigation that sparks self-development and careful social analysis" (Jagers et al., 2021).

A CUSTOMIZABLE, TEACHER-AND-LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACH

"The professional development course…was nothing short of amazing. **I appreciate the curated space to share out both personal and professional understanding about what SEL can look and feel like in the work…I** *have never been in a course where so many voluntarily shared their vulnerabilities and strengths to a room full of people they didn't know."*

– Anonymous Program Participant

The wide-ranging utility of our professional development offerings enables the T-SEL program to be customized based on the specific characteristics of students and teachers. In other words, our PD is not a continuation of identity-neutral SEL content, but rather harnesses student and teacher identity as a means of personalizing T-SEL experiences for both students and educators alike.

More specifically, our T-SEL professional development explores intersectionality, preparing educators and students to build **understanding around how one's experiences are influenced by the intersections of identity, experience, and sociopolitical structures**. For example, our activities and content emphasize how social awareness is critical to developing meaningful, diverse relationships. Acknowledging and celebrating cultural differences is essential for transforming perspectives and developing a lasting sense of belonging for all students. That sense of belonging is related to the psychological safety needed for students to take intellectual risks necessary to learn from mistakes rather than being defined by them, and critical to having the confidence to become lifelong learners which can inoculate them from stereotype identity threat (Hernandez & Darling-Hammond, 2022; Roorda et al., 2011).

A LOOK INTO CORE PD CONTENT & DESIGN EVOLUTION

Our core T-SEL professional development series initially consisted of five modules aligned to the competency areas enumerated in *Table 1* below, each highlighting the equity elaborations of the five CASEL SEL domains, and has since been consolidated to three modules (two competency areas covered in each of first two modules) to increase access and persistence for busy practitioners. The professional learning is designed to be supportive and not evaluative, with a variety of resources available for all participants. Each module includes curriculum library access for all educators, as well as the option of intensive coaching with a certified T-SEL specialist. Teachers have the opportunity to record and upload their instruction to receive feedback on their practice through equity lenses.
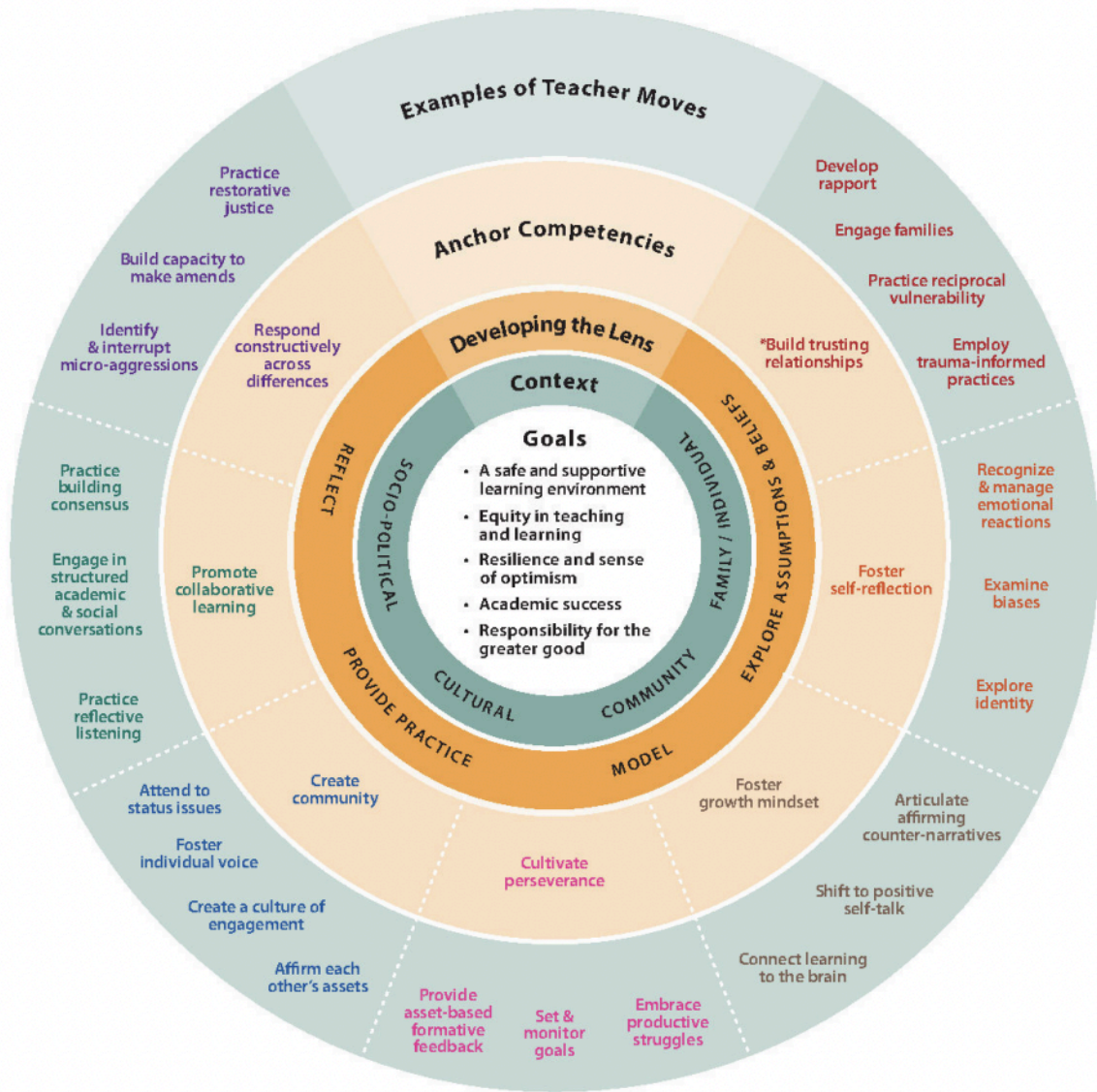
Table 2. PD Content Foci by Core T–SEL Competency

T-SEL Competency	Content Focus
Self–Awareness Equity Elaboration: *Identity*	• Evaluating prior knowledge of T–SEL • Understanding the importance of student–teacher relationships • Unpacking perspectives and teacher biases
Self–Management Equity Elaboration: *Agency*	• Taking action as an anti–racist educator • Recognizing and defining equity • Engagement vs. compliance • Motivation
Social Awareness Equity Elaboration: *Belonging*	• Intersectionality • Privilege • Metacognition • Classroom Climate
Relationship Skills Equity Elaboration: *Collaborative Problem Solving*	• Student diversity • Student relationships • Types of relationships • Importance of relationship building
Responsible Decision–Making Equity Elaboration: *Curiosity*	• Teaching effective decision making • Modeling responsible decision–making • Connections to curiosity

The Center for Teaching and Reaching the Whole Child ([CTRWC](#)) *Social, Emotional, and Cultural Anchor Competencies* framework undergirds the activities we have developed for each T–SEL competency domain. This framework centers goals related to transformation, with an emphasis on each teacher developing a critical lens – promoting development of crucial educator–side competencies (e.g., building trusting relationships, fostering self–reflection, creating community) necessary to create a safe and welcoming learning environment for all students, and essential to ensure the effective implementation of T–SEL equity elaborations within these environments. Each module activity and instructional task, exemplified by the teacher moves in the outer ring of CTRWC's Teacher Moves Wheel (*Figure 1*), is designed to aid teachers in strengthening competencies through the lens of T–SEL.

Figure 1. Teacher Moves Wheel

Social, Emotional, and Cultural Anchor Competencies Framework

Examples of Teacher Moves

Anchor Competencies

Developing the Lens

Context

Goals
- A safe and supportive learning environment
- Equity in teaching and learning
- Resilience and sense of optimism
- Academic success
- Responsibility for the greater good

REFLECT · SOCIO-POLITICAL · PROVIDE PRACTICE · CULTURAL · MODEL · COMMUNITY · EXPLORE ASSUMPTIONS & BELIEFS · FAMILY / INDIVIDUAL

Anchor Competencies (ring):
- Respond constructively across differences
- Promote collaborative learning
- Create community
- Cultivate perseverance
- Foster growth mindset
- Foster self-reflection
- *Build trusting relationships

Examples of Teacher Moves (outer ring):
- Practice restorative justice
- Build capacity to make amends
- Identify & interrupt micro-aggressions
- Practice building consensus
- Engage in structured academic & social conversations
- Practice reflective listening
- Attend to status issues
- Foster individual voice
- Create a culture of engagement
- Affirm each other's assets
- Provide asset-based formative feedback
- Set & monitor goals
- Embrace productive struggles
- Connect learning to the brain
- Shift to positive self-talk
- Articulate affirming counter-narratives
- Explore identity
- Examine biases
- Recognize & manage emotional reactions
- Employ trauma-informed practices
- Practice reciprocal vulnerability
- Engage families
- Develop rapport

*Building trusting relationships is essential to the development of all anchor competencies.

SAMPLE PD ACTIVITIES:

Identity: Conversation Starters

The development of social-emotional learning occurs in multiple contexts for both students and teachers. Our lives as well as our beliefs are shaped by connected experiences and relationships within environments influenced by race, class, gender, and culture. "Any attention to teaching social and emotional competences must integrate attention to sociopolitical, cultural, community, and individual contexts that influence thinking and actions of both adults and children" (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020).

City Teaching Alliance T-SEL professional development provides educators with conversation starters that aid in conducting discourse with students surrounding identity and self-awareness. For example, suggested question starters include the following:
- "What am I good at and how do I know?"
- "When I do not understand something or need help, what do I do?"
- "What am I feeling right now, and how can I act in a way that is helpful to myself and others?"

We also offer a variety of instructional videos in our curriculum library that can be used to initiate conversations surrounding bullying, cultural differences, and personal biases.

Agency: Engagement vs. Compliance

[City Teaching Alliance's Transformative Social-Emotional Learning PD taught me that] **explicitly teaching students to recognize a felling and then select a positive self-management strategy is necessary for creating a classroom culture that feels safe.** Positive self-management strategies will be important skills for students to have outside the classroom and later in life."

– Brian L.

Personal agency is known as one's ability to develop and direct actions for a purpose. It is influenced by the person's self-efficacy and skill. Similarly, collective agency includes people acting together, towards a common goal. This may include having a voice and making choices about learning and career goals to pursue, overcoming personal challenges, and engaging in collaborative problem solving. Agency is key to young adults' success, allowing them to take intentional actions to shape the course of their lives. Agency also includes collective efficacy, which has been shown to improve teachers' abilities to improve school outcomes for students from under-resourced communities and to increase coordinated actions among adolescents and adults that contribute positively to civic life.

City Teaching Alliance T-SEL professional development equips instructors with the tools necessary to help students effectively set reasonable and achievable goals. Instructional resources and discussions are designed to

support teachers in helping students reflect on how their identity influences their motivation and overall academic experience. For example, the Engagement vs Compliance Activity (*Figure 2*) engages participants in an analysis of motivation that they can easily use with their own students to provide instruction on the concept of self-management and explore how being organized and setting attainable goals impacts student success in and outside of the classroom.

Figure 2. Engagement vs. Compliance Activity

You DO!

Complete the instrument, **"What Makes You Act The Way You Do?"** (*click on the image below*). Connect this exercise back to the Identity Wheel exercise in the Learning Module #1. Do these results make sense to you? What do they tell you about who you are as a teacher and what you expect of your students in terms of agency (self-management)? **How does this align to who they are?**

Belonging: Metacognitive Steps to Social Awareness

Belonging is a focus area within social awareness competencies and connotes experiences of acceptance, respect, and inclusion within a group or community. It implies not only feeling recognized but also being fully involved in relationship-building and co-creating learning spaces. Having a sense of belonging is critical to students' and adults' cognitive, social, and emotional well-being, as well as school and work satisfaction and academic motivation and achievement. "Social awareness" refers to our abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts. This includes the capacities to feel compassion for others, understand broader historical and social norms for behavior in different settings, and recognize family, school, and community resources.

City Teaching Alliance T-SEL professional development asks participants to engage in conversations with their students geared toward understanding different backgrounds. Sentence starters are used to establish engagement norms in order to support awareness and belonging. For example, phrases such as "Walk me through your thinking…" or "Good try, I see how you got there…" can be used to establish and model positive standards of discourse. The activity, Metacognitive Steps to Social Awareness (*Figure 3*), engages teachers in reflecting on the impact of their efforts to foster belonging in their own classroom.

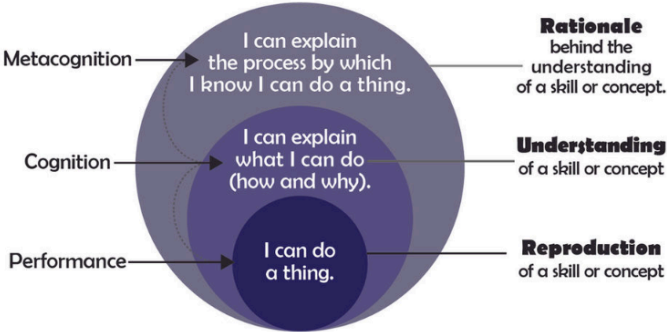*Figure 3. Metacognitive Steps to Social Awareness*

In an article for Exploring the Core, Mullen (2020) connects social emotional learning to metacognition. What is metacognition? Often referred to as one's ability to be aware and reflect on their own thinking processes, metacognition occurs "any time a person stops what they are doing to consider if it is the best way to do that thing [...]. It is this awareness of perspective which a person can learn to *intentionally* shift away from a challenging task or situation to consider the effectiveness of their approach. This awareness can be taught, studied, and extended to develop a more purposeful understanding of how this shift in perspective can be strengthened through processes of self-reflection, analysis and evaluation."

Collaborative Problem Solving: Things to Do Together

Developing relationship–building skills in students and teachers has the potential to foster healthy communities that can help all members communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, seek and offer help when needed, and ultimately establish and maintain rewarding connections with diverse individuals and groups. Therefore, the equity emphasis for this competency centers on the collaborative problem–solving process as it requires a precise focus on building healthy communities for all. At the core of this work is a focus on relationship skills competencies, reflecting a complex skill set in high demand in our increasingly multifaceted local, national, and global contexts.

City Teaching Alliance T–SEL professional development asks teachers to select strategies for relationship building and collaborative problem solving that they can see themselves implementing in their classroom. For example, educators could conduct a "Town Hall Circle" in which students mimic the process of a town hall meeting, where community members take the floor to share their perspective on a topic of concern. Using this format, students have the opportunity to share their different perspectives by tapping into and out of the group conversation. Feedback and reflection is another essential aspect of building relationships, and our PD prepares teachers to implement reflective strategies

such as the "Feedback Carousel," where groups rotate around the classroom evaluating the work of their peers. Once students have completed the exercise, they are tasked with reflecting on the experience and constructively critiquing their peers using effective feedback language stems, such as "I like how you…" "I noticed that…" "Have you considered…" and "Can you tell me more about…"
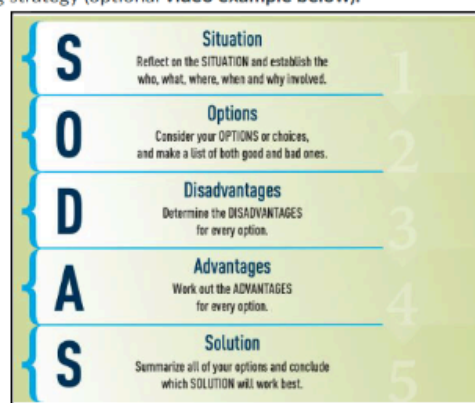
Curiosity: SODAS Decision Making Tool

Responsible decision-making includes abilities such as making a commitment to center the voices of those traditionally marginalized to address the needs of diverse communities, identifying and challenging social biases, privilege, and positions of power that impact our perception and capacity to make decisions that demonstrate equity and justice, and being an active upstander in the face of discrimination based on one's identity and/or ability.

City Teaching Alliance T-SEL professional development introduces the SODAS Decision Making Tool (*Figure 4*). This acronym summarizes a multi-part analysis framework – *Situation, Options, Disadvantages, Advantages, Solution* – which serves to aid teachers and students in following a distinct, effective decision-making process. When implemented in the classroom, students learn to first reflect on the situation and consider those involved before weighing the pros and cons of their existing options and finally arriving at the most beneficial solution.

Figure 4. SODAS Decision Making Tool

LEAD activity

- You may choose to start by holding up a real soda and tell your students about the "**SODA + S**" acronym (Situation, Options, Disadvantages, Advantages, Solution);
- Introduce **SODAS** decision-making strategy (optional **video example below**):

	Situation Reflect on the SITUATION and establish the who, what, where, when and why involved.
S	
O	**Options** Consider your OPTIONS or choices, and make a list of both good and bad ones.
D	**Disadvantages** Determine the DISADVANTAGES for every option.
A	**Advantages** Work out the ADVANTAGES for every option.
S	**Solution** Summarize all of your options and conclude which SOLUTION will work best.

- Use this **SODAS form** to work through a problem/conflict situation using the strategy;

DEBRIEF

- How is the **SODAS** strategy similar/different to how your students usually resolve conflicts and solve problems?
- How do your students think this strategy could make a difference in how conflicts are resolved?
- How do your students think using **SODAS** would affect their stress level when it comes to friendships and relationships?
- What do you students think they need (e.g., conditions in the environment etc.) to increase willingness to make use of the strategy more often?

EARLY TESTING & CONTINUED LEARNING

In school year 2021-22, City Teaching Alliance formally piloted our T-SEL professional development content and coaching with a small cadre of first- and second-year teachers from Dallas, Baltimore, and Washington, DC. This pilot served as a randomized controlled trial (RCT) in partnership with American Institutes for Research (AIR), verifying several of our initial hypotheses around real-time impact on teacher practice and highlighting potential for classroom impact acceleration as teachers fully adopt and hone these practices over time. Specifically:

- AIR found that our T-SEL programming produced **large, positive, and statistically significant effects on teachers' self-reported use of T-SEL strategies**, with particular impact in the areas of Agency, Collaborative Problem Solving, and Curiosity.
- More than half of the PD participants who were interviewed by AIR attributed at least one of the following to T-SEL: **improved student behavior; engagement, learning, or assessment scores**; or a **positive change in how teachers and peers are treated**. All interviewed teachers affirmed that the PD content increased their understanding of T-SEL.
- The RCT also revealed a positive (though not statistically significant) trend among students who had a T-SEL trained teacher, wherein they reported **higher SEL competencies than students with comparison teachers, as well as more positive perceptions of school climate outcomes** - a promising early indicator at small scale that we expect will grow more pronounced at greater scale and over longer time periods.

These findings echo through the qualitative feedback we've heard from PD participants – for example:

- City Teaching Alliance educator Kaiyana Cervera explains that as a result of the intentional moves she built into her day-to-day practice following PD participation, her students in DC "knew that they were a part of a family" and began to "communicate in ways that validate themselves and the other person."
- Devante Woodson, an exemplary Baltimore kindergarten teacher in our network, likewise emphasizes the effect T-SEL has on the entire learning community – observing that T-SEL empowers both individual students and the collective by "helping students understand themselves," increasing engagement and collaboration between students, teachers, and families.
- Another participant-teacher interviewed by AIR during the RCT spoke to how T-SEL practices directly contributed to her students' academic experiences, sharing: "With the goal setting, some of them are trying very hard or harder than they usually do. And I had these kids last year too. So, I saw how much they tried last year. . . . This year, they know the goals and that's what they're reaching towards now. So, kids who never tried before are getting amazing scores because they're trying… [and] it is improving the scores. I wasn't focused on setting goals, and the T-SEL training brought that in."

Taylor Carter, Assistant Director of T–SEL Partnerships at City Teaching Alliance, has also seen firsthand the immense positive impact our T–SEL PD has on classroom dynamics, such as power sharing, decision making, engagement, and belonging, as well as the very positive reception to our T–SEL PD content and approach by participants who have now seen its results in action in their own classrooms and school communities. She emphasizes that "integrating SEL into daily instruction helps students *and* teachers center their core social emotional learning needs in addition to academic achievement," and our team has further noted that our intentional RCT process with AIR strengthened our PD-to-classroom connection by enabling City Teaching Alliance to pinpoint and quickly act on areas where relevancy, intensity, and/or delivery of content could be further enhanced.

MORE OPPORTUNITY AHEAD

"We always want to give students the ultimate choice to make the world around them a better place and when we give them the tools to do so – such as learning yourself, identifying yourself, helping others around you, and making sure you're showing kindness – we give them the absolute mechanisms it takes to change this world."

– Devante W.

Compounding the preexisting need for more (and more effective) social–emotional supports in our classrooms, the significant educational and social upheaval of recent years has had a **dramatic and incalculable impact** on the self–efficacy and learning perspectives of a generation of students – exacerbating the opportunity and outcome gaps our communities are working urgently to address. Attempts by our students to communicate their beliefs, needs, preferences, and feelings are often lost in translation, leading to behaviors and experiences that put near– and long–term social and academic success and social–emotional thriving at significant risk.

T–SEL's personalized, inclusive, and strategic methods offer a more equitable and holistic approach to SEL that is undeniably necessary to build productive, nurturing classrooms across the country. Both educators *and* students need a relevant, actionable framework for building up social skills and techniques for self–regulation in the ever–changing, stressful environment in which we currently learn and live. City Teaching Alliance seeks to mobilize effective, inclusive, and culturally responsive educators nationwide with evidence–based practices to help students maximize their learning experiences and achieve their full potential, and our work to deeply understand, capture, and promulgate actionable T–SEL content knowledge and teaching practices has set the stage for an even more holistic and integrated approach to whole–teacher and whole–child development in our communities' schools. As we expand this work within and beyond our core cities, we welcome outreach from prospective partners, collaborators, and co–learners.

For More Information

City Teaching Alliance is currently recognized as a certified professional development provider for Baltimore City Schools, the Maryland Charter School Alliance, the state of Maryland, and the District of Columbia, with certifications also expected in Dallas and Philadelphia in 2024. We are now seeking to collaborate with new partners while continuing to expand our T–SEL PD offering with our current district and charter partners. For more information, contact TSEL@cityteachingalliance.org.

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