

Equity, Ecology, and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):

Anne Gregory, Ph.D.

annegreg@gsapp.rutgers.edu

Rutgers University

The Future of Children

PRINCETON-BROOKINGS



Social and Emotional Learning and Equity in School Discipline

Anne Gregory and Edward Fergus

Equity- and Ecologically-Oriented Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

- Typical SEL interventions tend to focus on building student skills through classroom lessons.
- Student-centered notions of SEL can fall prey to “deficit” perspectives of highly disciplined students.
- Student-centered notions of SEL neglect to consider the “ecology” of schools.
- Students may become the sole focus of “rehabilitation,” without concerted intervention to improve the social and emotional competence (SEC) of adults or the school ecology.

Equity-oriented SEL includes both:

1) Consciousness about disparities in schooling, opportunity gaps, and history of unequal schooling.

2) Consideration of culture

- Definition: The beliefs and behaviors of groups that are bound to history and are passed down from generation to generation. Yet, culture *is not static* and *it is multi-layered*.
- “Rings of culture” include youth culture, religion, nationality, gender, ethnicity (Hollie, 2011).

“Colorblind”, “Cultureblind”, or “Equityblind” notions of SEL

- Colorblindness ideology:
 - 1) the best form of removing racism is to omit race, gender, and other social identities as a descriptor;
 - 2) treat people as individuals and do not consider their social identities;
 - 3) focus on commonalities between individuals.

(Bonilla-Silva, 2003)

The Cultural Iceberg

Surface Culture

Food
Flags Festivals
Fashion Holidays Music
Performances Dances Games
Arts & Crafts Literature Language

Deep Culture

Communication Styles and Rules
facial expressions gestures eye contact
personal space touching
body language tone of voice
handling and displaying of emotion
conversational patterns in different social situations

Notions of:
courtesy and manners
friendship leadership
cleanliness modesty beauty

Concepts of:
self time past and future
fairness and justice
roles related to age, sex, class, family, etc.

Attitudes toward:
elders adolescents dependents
rule expectations work authority
cooperation vs. competition
relationships with animals age sin death

Approaches to:
religion courtship marriage raising children
decision-making problem-solving

Hall, E. T. (1976, 1989).
Beyond Culture. NY:
Anchor Books Editions.

Social and Emotional Competencies (SEC)

- **Self-awareness:** Ability to *accurately* recognize one's own own emotions/thoughts and how their emotions/thoughts influence their behavior.
- **Social awareness:** Ability for *perspective taking* and *empathy* with others of diverse cultures and backgrounds in one's own family, school, and community.
- **Self-management:** Ability to *regulate* one's own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors *effectively* in different situations.
- **Relationship skills:** Ability to *establish* and *maintain* healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups.
- **Responsible decision-making:** Ability to make *constructive* and *respectful* choices about personal behavior and social interactions.

The core five social emotional learning competencies as identified by the **Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning** (CASEL, 2013). See: <http://www.casel.org>

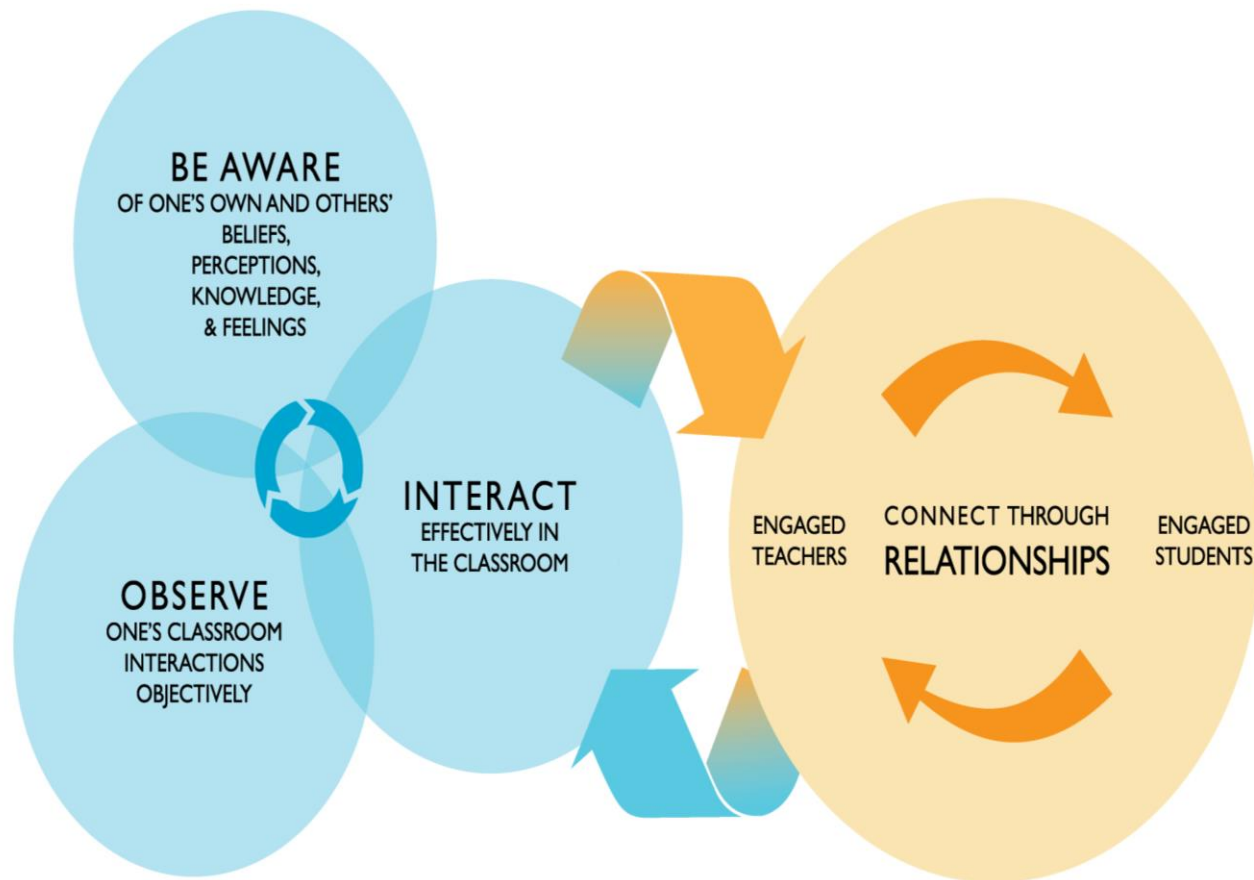
SEC: Relationship skills

- The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.

The need for an equity-oriented approach to relationship-building

- We know this is needed given:
 - “Relationship gaps” across groups (Anyon, Zhang, & Hazel, 2016; Bottiani et al, 2014; Hughes, 2011; Voight et al., 2015).
 - Latino and Black students are subject to frequent discipline for more subjective behaviors (“disrespect” “insubordination;” Heilburn, Cornell, & Lovegrove, 2015).
 - Experimental evidence of teacher explicit/implicit bias (Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015).

Creating Opportunities through Relationships (COR)



Developed at the Center for the Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning University of Virginia and supported by Atlantic Philanthropies and the William T. Grant Foundation.

Creating Opportunities through Relationships (COR)



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

Five interactive online modules (Grades K–8)

Module 1: The Power of Relationships

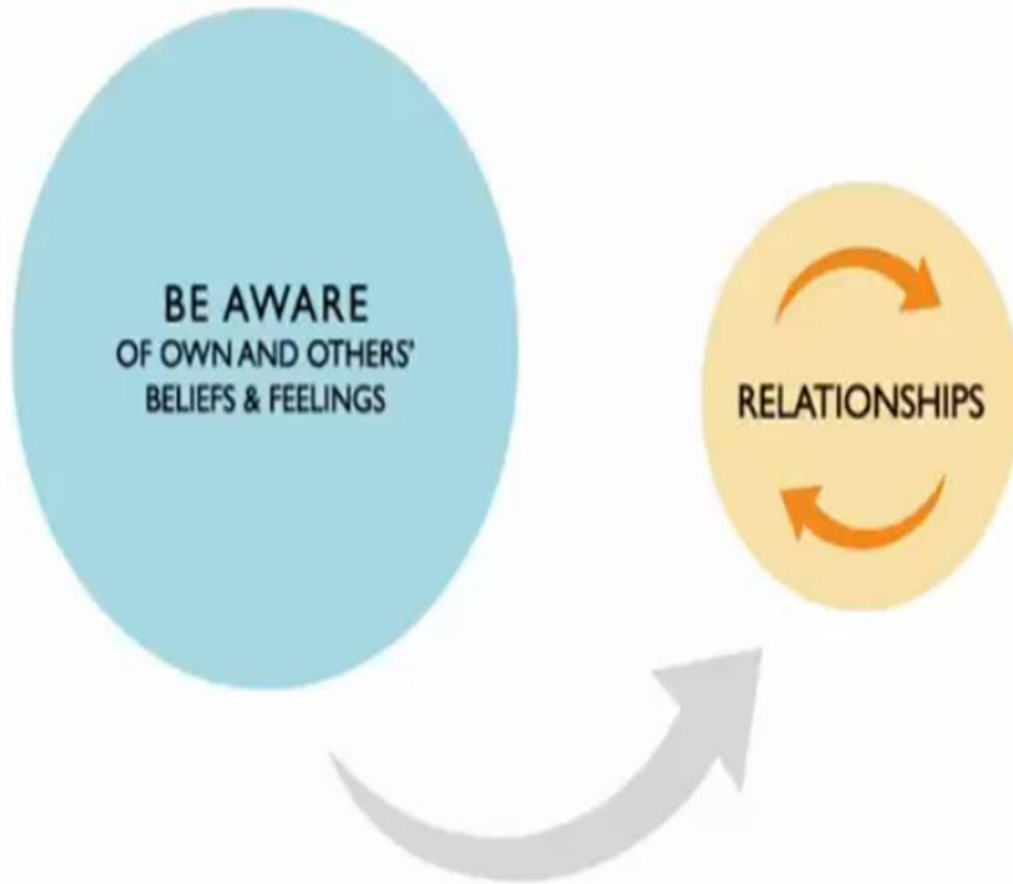
Module 2: **Recognizing and Understanding Our Own Lenses Practical Strategies for Increasing Awareness**

Module 3: Interactions that Promote Safety and Happiness

Module 4: Interactions that Promote Feeling Capable and Valued

Module 5: Interactions that Promote Engagement in Learning

Building relationships: Being aware



Our thoughts, feelings, and perceptions influence how we:

- React in the moment
- Observe and interpret the behavior of others
- Act in future situations

This is natural!

Harmful Beliefs



People can hold harmful beliefs about any number of things.

Gender

Language Proficiency

Clothing

Race

Ethnicity

Family History

Neighborhood

...and more!

Example: Assumptions based on gang affiliation



Juail, teacher

Teachers make assumptions about students based on their gang affiliation.

SEC: Self-awareness

Improving accuracy of self-perception

- **Equity-oriented self-awareness:** Educators consider whether they hold negative stereotypes about students' cultural and stylistic codes.
 - For example, some may make snap judgements about students of color who sag their pants by stereotyping them as not committed to education or as prone to reject adult authority.
 - In developing self-awareness, educators might also learn about how their *unconsciously* held beliefs can affect their decision-making.

COR PD can be found online.
Just set up an account, and you are
ready to go.

www.corclassrooms.org

SEC: Social awareness

- Perspective-taking,
 - Empathy,
 - Appreciating diversity,
 - Respect for others
-
- Adopting a sociocultural, historical orientation might help educators understand how their students experience social inequalities.
 - Understanding more about systemic racism and abuse of power, educators may better engage with their students of color if they describe feeling unfairly treated during a disciplinary incident.

Activity: Listening to student perspectives



For each student, put yourself in his shoes.

http://colorlines.com/archives/2014/05/life_cycles_of_inequity_a_colorlines_series_on_black_men.html

Produced by ColorLines

Documentary filmmaker [André Robert Lee](#) directed the series, including a focus group of eight young men in Oakland.

SEC: **Self-management**

Effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself.

- Educators recognizing whether they have culturally-laden expectations for what good 'self-management' looks like.
- Educators helping marginalized students recognize the **self- and cultural management** demands they face.

Social emotional competency of code-switching

- Students may carry the extra burden of learning to code switch and/or **minimize** their cultural expressions in order to ensure dominant cultural group's sense of comfort during interactions.

The Future of Children

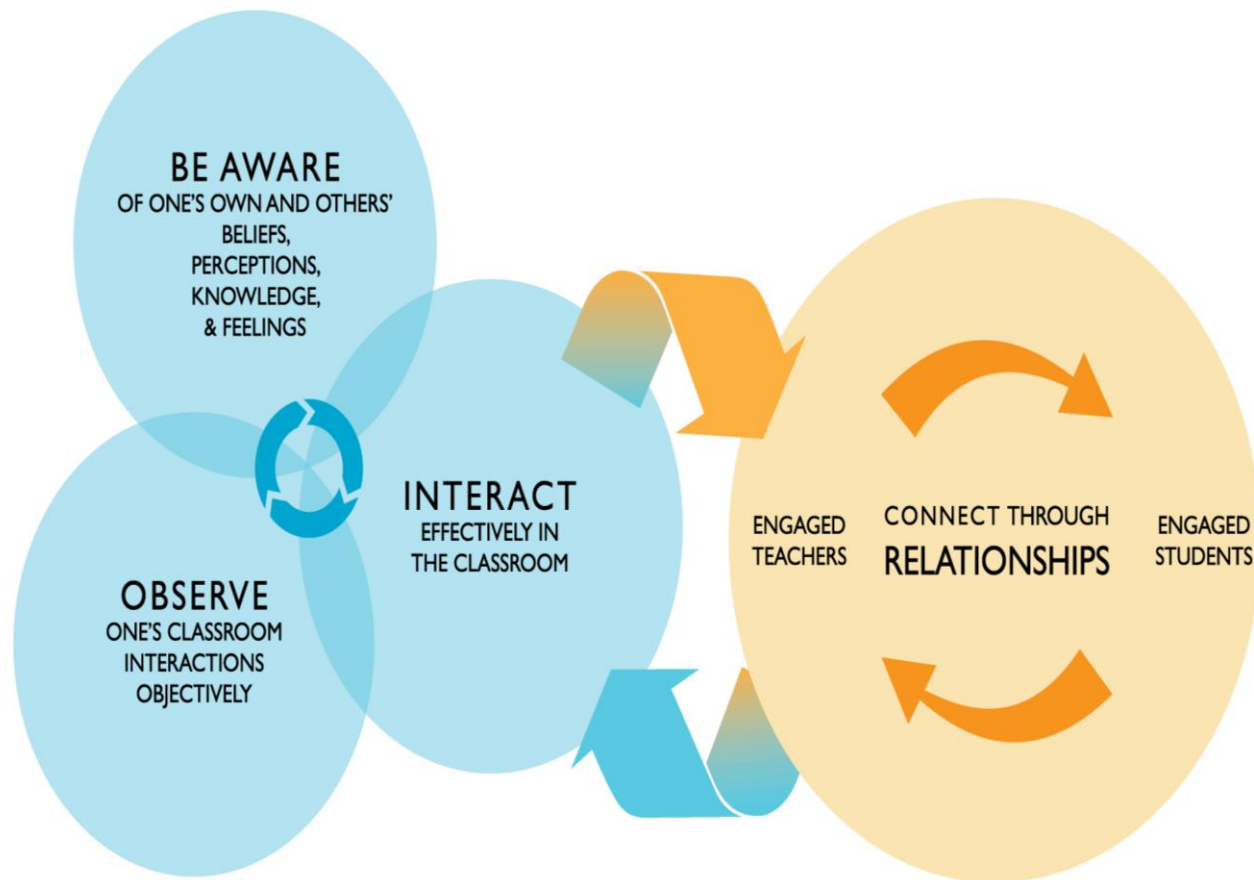
PRINCETON-BROOKINGS



Social and Emotional Learning and Equity in School Discipline

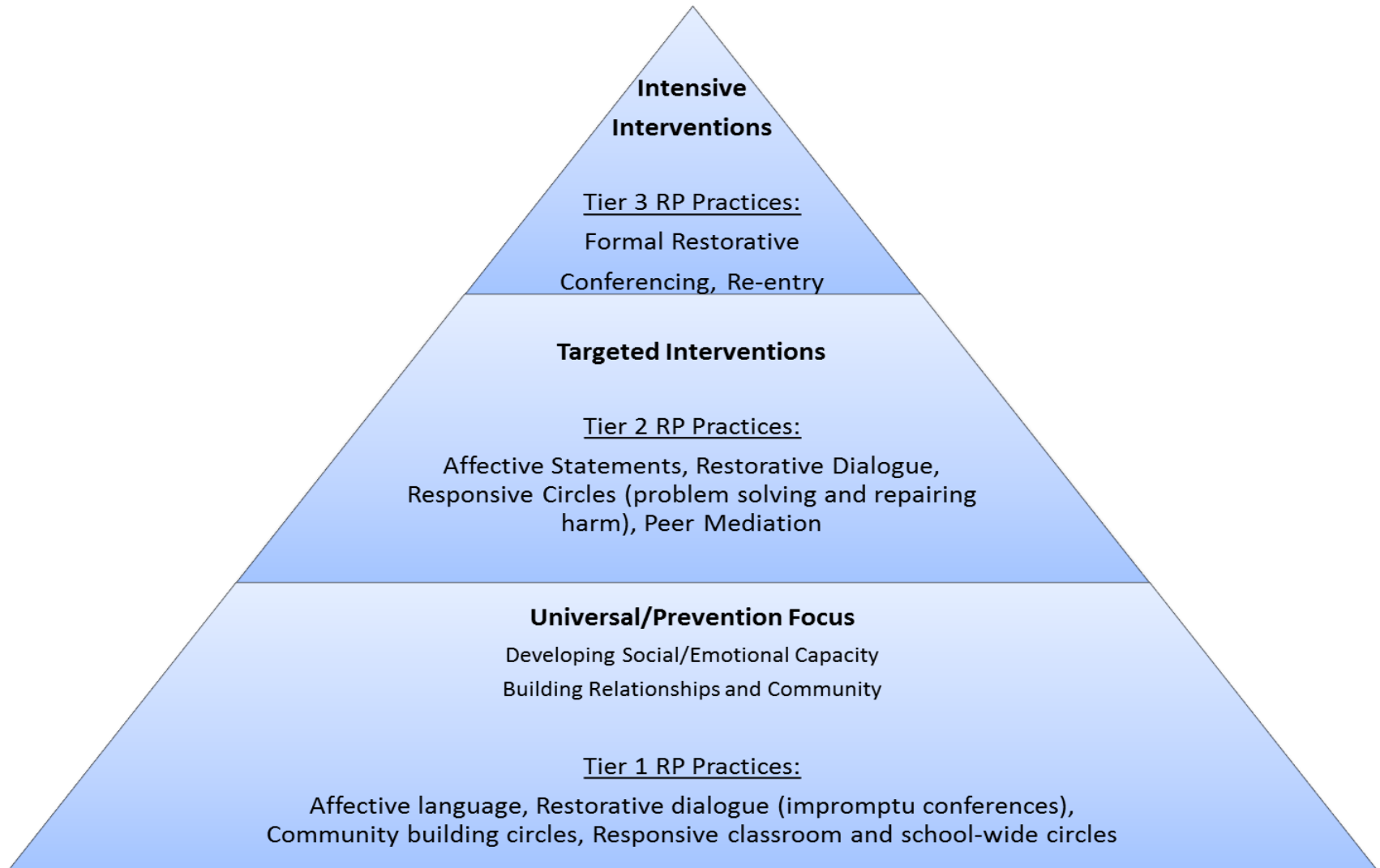
Anne Gregory and Edward Fergus

Creating Opportunities through Relationships (COR)



Developed at the Center for the Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning University of Virginia and supported by Atlantic Philanthropies and the William T. Grant Foundation.

RP/RJ in a multi-tiered system of support



Racial/Social and Restorative Justice

Restorative approaches to discipline may:

- Build sense of community and support to prevent negative interactions from occurring in the first place.
- Create opportunities for perspective-taking and relationship-building which could help address cultural misunderstanding, implicit bias, or negative racial beliefs.
- Increase cultural competence and relational trust
- Offer opportunities for joint problem solving and repair of damaged relationships. This could reduce distrust, build good will and prevent future negative interactions.
- Reducing exclusionary discipline in predominantly Black and Latino schools could also disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline.