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Hi everyone. My name is Elizabeth Peterson. I'm a classroom teacher, Arts Integration Specialist, and the host of TheInspiredClassroom.com. It is an honor to be presenting here today because I have presented at everyone of EducationCloset's summer conferences. Susan is amazing and I'm so happy she lets me come back year after year to share my ideas with you.

Now, today at the conference and through all your professional development, you are learning new and exciting activities, techniques, strategies, and arts-integrated lessons you can bring into your classroom to use with your students. Still there is something that can be blocking your path to reaching your students. You probably have felt it just like I have over the last few years. It's that our students are not always ready to learn. Go ahead and comment now if you agree.

Our students are anxious, sad, angry, unsure, afraid of failure. I know this because I have seen it too. My own students are dealing with the same issues as yours, and it is challenging, isn't it? But listen, there is a way to reach and teach these students. There's a way for teachers like you who appreciate the power of arts integration to really make a difference. It's by having the mindset of a SEAL teacher.

Now, I've been working with teachers for years, over 20 years. Not just as colleagues, but through workshops and connecting online. And recently with the development of SEAL, I have seen teachers transform their teaching and make an impact on their students by gaining the SEAL teacher mindset, and I'm happy to be sharing it with you today.

SEAL stands for Social-Emotional Artistic Learning, and to become a SEAL teacher you must first understand how you can stand out among all others. And it starts with the three Cs of the SEAL teacher: caring, connecting, and creating.

First and foremost, you have to care about your students and show them that you care by your actions. You see, this ability to show you care stretches far beyond the normal work that's expected from a teacher. Correcting a pile of papers in a timely manner just doesn't cut it. Getting personalized report card comments, that really doesn't either. Instead it's what you do outside the norm, how you talk to your students, how you carry yourself when you're around them, and of course the actions that you take. So you may do things like walk the room and genuinely comment on your students



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process and help them to understand the importance of the mistakes that they make, and the perseverance that you see. Maybe you make positive phone calls or emails home to share the wonderful talents and progress you see your students making in your classroom. Those are all fantastic actions to take to show that you care.

The next C is for connecting. Making connections with students helps you to build relationships, and you probably already know how important relationships are between teacher and student. In fact, relationships are the key to a successful classroom and a successful classroom management. And of course that brings us right back to connecting. Doing things like talking with your students when they're in the hallway or sharing a song you enjoy with your class and then asking them what music they enjoy will help you to truly connect with your students. And of course, it's also going to show that you care.

And finally the last C is for creating. Now, this is what sets a SEAL teacher apart from all others who want to incorporate SEL strategies. And you being an arts integrator already have this in the forefront of your mind. You already allow the arts to be a big part of your classrooms culture and the backbone of many of your lessons. You know how important creativity and self-expression and going through the creative process is to learning, and allowing that to be part of your classroom's culture and your students experience in your room is so important. So see how you're already on your way to being a SEAL teacher?

So the three Cs make up one of the two foundations of every SEAL teacher, and what's just as important is the arts integration. After all, we're talking about social-emotional artistic learning. So as an arts integrator yourself, you have the keys to providing engaging, meaningful, arts filled lessons that not only teach the students about an art form, but also allow them to explore their own social emotional strengths and weaknesses. So let's take a look at a couple of examples.

We're going to start by having me tell you about a girl we'll call Cindy. She is a former student of mine who has a very hard time staying focused. For her, soundtracking, one very popular SEAL strategy worked wonders. Now if you were with me at another EdCloset conference, you may have already heard me talk about soundtracking. When I soundtrack my classroom, I play alpha wave, yoga type music that just lays a sound blanket down around my room. You certainly cannot just play the music and expect it



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to work for your students. You really need to take the time to introduce the idea of soundtracking and then allow students to adjust to working with the music as a means of self-management. In your handout, I've described some of the basics of how you can go about soundtracking in your classroom.

Now, for Cindy focusing is always a challenge. It's like her brain has a parade marching through it, different groups and acts just streaming in and causing constant distractions. So while the other students were off working quietly, I would spend a little bit more time with Cindy helping her to really focus in on the music first. By breathing and listening, and then allowing the music to almost take over her mind to quiet her brain. With some practice, her focus skyrocketed soon a math practice paper that would take 35 minutes took only 12, isn't that amazing? Now, of course, soundtracking will not be the answer to every student's attentional needs, but as a SEAL teacher, I had the connection and knowledge about Cindy to know what might work for her, the care to want to try, and the creativity to individualize the SEAL strategy just for her.

Now, Nate was a different story, and isn't that true of so many of our students who have different needs. Nate, another made-up name came from a very difficult life. He was part of and actually still is part of a blended family and his dad is not very present. He didn't always get treated as well as some of the other children in the family, and he was always coming to school with dirty clothes, and he just looked so unkempt. So in school, he would turn abtinent at the mention of an assignment, especially if one of his teachers wasn't there right away to give him one to one help. Well, it wasn't long before Nate revealed an interest in drawing, and over the course of the year I worked hard to make sure he was encouraged to draw. I would staple papers together for him to create drawing books and gave him a special folder to keep his art work and his special ed teacher and I told him often how great of an artist he was.

Soon, we came up with a great strategy for Nate to keep a drawing paper next to him as he worked so that if he got stuck or he needed to wait for a teacher to get to him, he could just a draw as he waited. This really helped him immensely to stay calm while he waited for help. Now don't get me wrong, there were other things that needed to be implemented in order for Nate to self-managed and get his work done, but the drawing strategy was the perfect outlet for him in those working situations. And it wasn't long before he was actually using positive self-talk to say that he was a good artist. Don't you just love it when students can actually do some positive self-talk?



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You see, these are the types of strategies that you can open up your mind to when you think like a SEAL teacher. We all need to incorporate SEL into our classroom. Now that's just a given now, that we all need to have social-emotional learning embedded in our classroom. And again, as teachers who know and appreciate what the arts can do for students, it seems only natural to consider all the possibilities with SEAL.

So here's one more. A teacher favorite, Friendly Fridays. So Friendly Fridays are a SEAL stream or way to incorporate specific SEAL lessons and strategies that focus on social awareness and relationship skills into the classroom. And each week, on Friday, my students create something that they can give, share, or do with their classmates to help build relationships and community. Now of course you don't have to do this type of thing only on Friday. While that works for many teachers and their schedule, other teachers modify the timing to work better for them. And by the way, that's really true for all SEAL activities and integrations. SEAL is not a program that you follow or an initiative that bogs you down, instead you have the flexibility to do what's best for you and for your students.

The place to start with Friendly Friday's is with a simple note exchange. Simply give your students a blank paper and the name of a classmate and allow them time to create a note or card for that person, then collect them, make sure everyone is accounted for, and then distribute them to your students. And their faces will just light up. Like I said, this is a teacher favorite.

In fact, one teacher emailed me after her first Friendly Friday card exchange and said, "Their notes of kindness warmed my heart and it was just what the kids and I needed that day. I was so touched by their expressions of gratitude and was warmed by their kind words to each other as they complimented a drawing, or just thank their friend. We agreed as a class that this is an activity worth continuing this year."

Caring enough to give your students the opportunities embedded in SEAL is something special and everyone reaps the benefits. So I hope you got some good insights to the possibilities of SEAL. Remember, it really all boils down to the three Cs. Show your students you care for them, work on ways to really connect with them, and of course use your ever-growing interest in arts integration to always bring creativity into your classroom. See, the thing is that you are the most important part of your



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classroom. You design your classroom's atmosphere, the lessons your students will experience, and the overall feeling they will get in your classroom. So consider how you can continue to develop your own SEAL teacher mindset.

If you're interested in learning more about SEAL, how to teach SEAL, or even better, how to get a complete SEAL teacher training, then great. You can contact me anytime at Elizabeth@TheInspiredClassroom.com. I love hearing from other teachers. You can also head over to teachSEAL.com, where I have resources, lessons, SEAL tools for you to try out, and not to mention a free SEAL ebook to give you more information about how the arts are truly integrated with each of the five SEL competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

It is time for us to harness all the power of the arts so that we can effectively reach and teach our students through arts integration and SEAL. All right, so our time for now has ended, but be sure to keep in touch. This is Elizabeth Peterson and I hope you have a fantastic rest of your day. Bye.