

CampFIRE of Learning: *Creating the conditions for spaces that are **Functional, Instructional, Relational & Engaging***

This image arose as a response to the question, “How might we visualize the role of social-emotional learning (SEL) in teaching and learning?” Just as we need heat (a spark), fuel, and oxygen to ignite and sustain a fire, so too do we consider multiple factors when we plan for instruction and—ideally—learning. Within the flames, we hold the conditions for safety at the core, which can then support the risk taking inherent in engaging with learning, which ultimately leads to making meaning of the learning.

- SEL/core competencies (the oxygen).** The relational work of teaching. Without SEL, we lack safety in learning.
Consider... How am I building and sustaining the relationships through and within which learning happens? How am I modelling the skills of SEL so that students and myself are sustained in our work together?
- Pedagogy (the spark).** The art and science of teaching. Without a spark, we lack engagement with learning.
Consider... How am I providing multiple entry points into learning? How am I modelling the skills and mindsets that promote growth and learning?
- Curriculum (the fuel).** The plans and expectations of teaching. Without fuel, we lack meaning in learning.
Consider... How am I thinking about building lessons so that I have considered how, where, and when to place pieces from kindling up to big logs to shape learning?

Extending the metaphor

The glow of the fire invites us into community, while the shimmer and the smoke are evidence of transformation. Building a fire often looks easier than it is: sometimes it is easy to light and sustain a fire, other times it takes a lot of time and care to get the fire going. Sometimes a fire needs close tending to be sustained, while at other times it will burn without much more than the occasional poke or extra piece of fuel.

Consider... How might we need to organize and arrange the fuel to support the size of fire we wish to build? What might be acting as a wet blanket that could smother our fire if we aren't careful? What kind of wood are we using to build our fire? Is it well-seasoned and ready to burn as a hot, fast-burning fire? Is it green and potentially in need of exposure to the heat of another fire to speed up its readiness or am I willing and able to put in the extra patience and management that it takes to build a fire with green fuels?

What might the metaphor of the campfire mean for you?
How might you see your own practice in its flames?

