

# Pine Project

## Pine Project Professional Development

The Pine Project uses two innovative tools created by the nonprofit I'm Your Neighbor Books to help educators and students navigate Social Emotional Learning. The first is the Welcoming Library: Pine Collection, a selection of 30 picture books with embedded SEL-aligned discussion questions featuring the experiences of immigrant families and their new generations.

The second is this Pine Project: Professional Development which is a self-guided training to use the Pine Collection to teach self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

The Pine Professional Development modules are designed for your professional development and guided by the CASEL framework. We encourage you to engage with them sequentially, taking time to reflect and participate in the reflection opportunities before advancing to the next module.

## Resources

We do reference two texts that you may wish to borrow or acquire, and we will also note other reference texts throughout the training.

Hammond, Zaretta. *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*. Corwin, 2023

El Yaafouri, Louise. *Restoring Students' Innate Power: Trauma-Responsive Strategies for Teaching Multilingual Newcomers*. ASCD, 2022

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## Module 1: Introduction

### Pine Project Leads

Kirsten Cappy, I'm Your Neighbor Books

Melanie Junkins, Maine Department of Education

### Pine Content Creators

Michelle Amato, Lead Educator

Kirsten Cappy, I'm Your Neighbor Books

Melissa Guerrette, Consulting Educator

Melanie Junkins, Maine Department of Education

### Project Assistants

Ange Ishimwe

Dhananji Rathnayake

\*Inspired by the 18 educators in the PINE Project Pilot.

### Pine Voices

Michelle Amato

Aris Ayala Cruz

Dezh Azaad

Abusana Micky Bondo

Xavier Botana

Kirsten Cappy

Leonarda Carranza

Louise El Yaafouri

Melissa Guerrette

Ange Ishimwe

Terry Catasús Jennings

Melanie Junkins

Francie Latour

Anne Sibley O'Brien

Muon Thi Van

Andrea Wang

M.O. Yuksel

### Pine Producer

BOCO Video Production

**Each module uses the books and discussion materials from the Pine Collection. The Maine DOE provided a collection to each district.**

**Public schools across Maine were allocated a Welcoming Library, which were shipped directly to the superintendents' offices.**

**If you or your school would like to acquire your own Welcoming Library: Pine Collection please reach out to I'm Your Neighbor Books.**

# Pine Project

## Module 2: Self Awareness

### Reflective Opportunity 1

It is time to read *I'm An American*. Use the discussion questions in the back of every book in the Pine Collection. At the top of every set of Welcoming Library discussion questions is the invitation to “explore this story and your own.” In the I DO, WE DO, YOU DO model, you will be exploring your own story in preparation for helping your students develop a positive identity. Your answers to the discussion questions can be internal or written out in your journal—your choice. Book Link: <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/im-an-american/>

### Reflective Opportunity 2

Reflective Opportunity 2 is a paper craft (the structure of which you might recognize from your childhood) that will allow you to process your identities and beliefs, and the actions (real or envisioned) that uphold those beliefs. The final product of that paper craft is best when it is shared. I invite you to share the book and activity with colleagues at a time in the future. Synergies emerge between individuals that do the activity together. LINK to paper craft: <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/DK-ImAmerican-FoldShare-429PM.pdf>

### Reflective Opportunity 3

Read *Alma and How She Got Her Name*. Then, pull out your journal and write about the story of your name. Book Link: <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/alma-y-como-obtuvo-su-nombre-alma-and-how-she-got-her-name/>

### Reflective Opportunity 4

Read *Wherever I Go* and then journal. Write about where you were born, what your family structure was as a child, and write about who in your life was able to “crown” you or help you feel confidence and joy—even in the hardest of circumstances. I know that some of us did not have that person or have not yet found that person. If that is the case, when and where did you find your confidence and joy at Abia’s age and now? Add notes about what you have learned about refugee camp life and what you have questions about. Book Link: <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/wherever-i-go/>

### Reflective Opportunity 5

Read *The Carpet*, its incredible author’s note, and the discussion questions. One discussion question reads, “Each of the pages ends with the phrase, “The carpet is for...” Whether or not your family life is centered around a carpet, your family, like this Afghan family, may also spend time together prepping, helping, sharing, caring, playing, learning, listening, and remembering.”

- What is the cultural background of your family? Explain how your home or family culture interacted with the activities of prepping, helping, sharing, caring, playing, learning, listening, and remembering.” Is there a single object like the carpet that represents your family’s culture?
- When did that home or family culture conflict with school culture in a way that made you feel like you did not belong?
- Add notes about what you have learned about the Afghan community and what you have questions about.
- Book Link: <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/the-carpet-an-afghan-family-story/>

## Resources

- Learn to pronounce the Acholi words in *A Feast for Joseph*. "Learn to Pronounce": <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/a-feast-for-joseph/>
- Newell, Chris *If You Lived during the Plimoth Thanksgiving*. Scholastic, 2021.

# Pine Project

## Module 2: Self Awareness

### Reflective Opportunity 6

Read *Watercress*

Book Link: <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/watercress/>

### Reflective Opportunity 7

Take out your journal and reflect on Andrea Wang's statement, "Your memories are essentially stories. And just like fictional stories, they can transform people's lives. For me, and for the girl in *Watercress*, knowing more about my family's history, broke down walls of resentment and misunderstanding that I had built between myself and my parents."

- What went unspoken in your family or cultural community that needed to come out for you to truly understand yourself and others?
- What did you learn about the Chinese community and what do you have questions about?

### Reflective Opportunity 8

Watch Brene Brown's TED Talk, "The Power of Vulnerability"

Link: [https://www.ted.com/talks/brene\\_brown\\_the\\_power\\_of\\_vulnerability](https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_the_power_of_vulnerability)

### Reflective Opportunity 9

Read the picture book *A Feast for Joseph*.

Book Link: <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/a-feast-for-joseph/>

### Reflective Opportunity 10

Read *Abuelita and Me* and its Discussion Questions. Follow this by writing your understanding of microaggressions.

Book Link: <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/abuelita-and-me/>

### Reflective Opportunity 11

Understanding our biases is a crucial step in fostering personal growth and promoting inclusivity. This is an opportunity for you to understand your hidden biases by taking the implicit bias test. The American Psychological Association defines implicit bias as an unconscious negative attitude against a specific social group that influences people's perceptions and behaviors. In short, perspective is based upon experience and learned associations between particular qualities and social categories such as race and or gender. It's a revelation. It's also challenging and sometimes heartbreaking. But it's essential to doing this work. Project Implicit has a variety of different tests, each designed for different biases. Start with the Race Attitudes Implicit Associations Test, but feel free to explore as many tests as you would like. These tests can help you better understand yourself and identify areas where you need to work on improving your awareness and attitudes. Project Implicit link:

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

To understand the design, impact, and global results of the *Project Implicit*, listen to the *Hidden Brain's* "Revealing Your Unconscious Bias" part one and two.

Link part 1: <https://hiddenbrain.org/podcast/revealing-your-unconscious-part-1/>

Link part 2: <https://hiddenbrain.org/podcast/revealing-your-unconscious-part-2/>

## Resources

Jana, Tiffany, and Michael Baran. *Subtle Acts of Exclusion: How to Understand, Identify, and Stop Microaggressions*. Updated ed., Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2023.

# Pine Project

## Module 3: Social Awareness

### Reflective Opportunity 1

In preparation for our first speaker, open your journal and make three columns. Without doing any research, make a list of things in the first column that you know or associate with Haiti. Next, read *Auntie Luce's Talking Paintings* including the Author's Note. In the second column of your journal, make a list of impressions and the new information you gained about Haiti based on what you found in the book. In the third column, list the things written and illustrated in the book that you recognize you need more context to understand.

Book Link: <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/auntie-luces-talking-paintings/>

### Reflective Opportunity 2

Cultural humility is ongoing self-reflection and learning, recognizing the limits of one's cultural understanding. Cultural competence is developing the skills to engage respectfully with diverse cultures. Both promote inclusion and respect. Reflect on a situation where greater Cultural Competence or Humility could have changed an outcome. Be specific and honest in your reflection, as this exercise is for your eyes only. Afterward, consider identifying any implicit biases that may have influenced the situation.

### Reflective Opportunity 3

In your journal make a list of the false narratives about Islam that you have heard shared in the past. Read *In My Mosque* and journal about what new narratives or feelings the book is sharing about the Muslim community. Book link: <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/in-my-mosque/>

## Resources

- Talking about race. National Museum of African American History and Culture. (2021, November 20). Talking about race link: <https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race>
- Resources. EmbraceRace. (n.d.). Resources link: <https://www.embracerace.org/resources>
- Wee the People: <https://www.weethepeopleboston.org/>

### Reflection Opportunity 4

In your journal, recall a time when you lacked a certain Cultural Competence. Write out the pathway you took to gain that Cultural Competence directly from community-created resources. If you haven't had this experience yet, now is the time to plan for it. What does the Cultural Humility you need to put in place look like?

### Reflective Opportunity 5

Before we hear from educator Xavier Botana and author Leonarda Carranza, please return to the picture book *Abuelita and Me*. Think about the silence on the bus as Abuleita was physically confronted and verbally attacked. How could someone (of any age) have stood up on that bus and said, "This is not fair." changing the impact that Leonarda covers in this next piece? Book link:

<https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/abuelita-and-me/>

### Reflective Opportunity 6

Consider the concept of "inclusion" and how its various meanings resonate across different contexts—language, mineralogy, mathematics, politics, and personal experience. Reflect on "inclusions" from your own life that have helped shape who you are today. How have the intersections in your cultural background, personal experiences, and professional roles influenced your perspective on leadership, community, and identity?

### Reflective Opportunity 7

Write about a specific moment or series of moments that exemplify how these inclusions have informed your approach to building inclusive environments. How do you see yourself in relation to others, and how do your decisions and actions impact both your immediate community and the broader world? Consider how the belief that "I am you, and you are me" influences your leadership style and relationships with others. What challenges have you faced in striving to create a space where everyone feels seen, heard, and valued, and how have these challenges shaped your growth as a leader?

# Pine Project

## Module 4: Self Management

### Reflective Opportunity 1

Read the picture book *Wishes* spending particular time with the illustrations. Students (of all backgrounds) each have their own journeys and go through so much. Journal about the line from the book, “And I wished...I didn’t have to wish...anymore.” How does this connect to your students’ needs? How does it reflect the obligation you feel as an educator navigating their needs? Book link: <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/Wishes/>

### Reflective Opportunity 2

Read *Stepping Stones: A Refugee Family’s Journey*. As you read the book, take note of the illustrations and how they contribute to the story. Book link: <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/stepping-stones-a-refugee-family-journey/>

### Reflection Opportunity 3

Read the picture book *Where Are You From?* and note the final Discussion Question. Book link: <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/where-are-you-from/>

### Reflective Opportunity 4

Use the “Same, Different, Connect, Engage” exercise from the Reimagining Migration Social & Emotional Thinking Routines. Consider invasive questions and the ways they show up when you are not aligned with your own Cultural Competence and Cultural Humility. Lin “Same, Different, Connect, Engage”: <https://reimaginingmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/SEL-THINKING-ROUTINES-FINALPM.pdf>

## Resources

- Maine schools: [McKinney Vento Education in Maine](#)
- [National Center for Homeless Education](#)  
<https://nche.ed.gov/personnel-resources/>

### Reflective Opportunity 5

Read Bao Phi’s picture book *My Footprints* and spend some time with the book and discussion questions. The more time you spend the more you will discover. In your journal, consider how to use Thuy’s behavior of taking on the characteristics of animals to sketch out a lesson on stress management. Book link: <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/my-footprints/>

### Reflective Opportunity 6

Read *A Different Pond* and sketch out a classroom dialogue about what responsibilities your students hold at home. Book link: <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/a-different-pond/>

### Reflective Opportunity 7

Read the picture book *Story Boat*. Refugee stories like this one, can show the adaptability and responsibility children manifest when forced to leave home. Sketch out a student dialogue about the sister’s strengths, the importance of holding onto familiar family objects, and the power of being present in the moment. Book link: <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/story-boat/>

### Reflective Opportunity 8

Read *Silent Music* and journal about Ali’s self-awareness and how it affects his self-management in a time of crisis. Book link: <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/silent-music/>

### Reflection Opportunity 9

Open your journal and define “self-compassion.” Be introspective and write about the ways you find time to practice self-care. If you find this journal entry difficult, it’s time to start a self-care routine. Next, think about an unmet need in your classroom. How do you address these situations while keeping self-care and self-compassion at the forefront? Finally, think about the ways that fostering self-compassion can improve your own self-regulation and impact your teaching practice.



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## Module 5: Relationship Skills and Responsible Decision Making

### Reflective Opportunity 1

Take a moment to reflect on the relationships in your life. You can list names, draw webs, or organize them however you'd like. Think about a few people from different areas of your life and consider what it takes to maintain each relationship. Do you communicate the same way with all of them? How did you connect? Do some relationships have more conflict? Why do some require more or different attention? How might these differences make it challenging for young people to navigate relationships as they develop their social-emotional skills?

### Reflective Opportunity 2

Pull out your copy of *A Different Pond* and reread it if has been some time since you last reviewed it.

Book link: <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/a-different-pond/>

### Reflective Opportunity 3

Pause to think about predictability and scaffolds in your own educational setting. What moves do you already make that help to reduce the unknowns and ambiguities for students about relationship building and social problem-solving? What are some common interactions that you might be able to rehearse more or make more explicit still?

### Reflective Opportunity 4

In book design, a "spread" refers to two facing pages that are visible when a book is opened. This layout allows for seamless storytelling and design continuity across both pages. The 11th spread in *The Carpet* is a single moment on a playground. How could the relationships of all the students on those pages play out over an extended period of time?

Read *I'm New Here* followed by its companion book, *Someone New*. After reading, open the books side-by-side. Open to the first spread in each. Go through the two books spread by spread, so that the pages in *I'm New Here* and *Someone New* complement each other with the alternate perspectives of the long-term students and the new arrival students. Take in the interplay of the relationships between the characters. Who is taking risks, and what risks are they? Who is engaging in collaborative problem-solving? What examples are there of leadership and support in their relationships?

Book links:

- <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/the-carpet-an-afghan-family-story/>
- <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/im-new-here/>
- <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/someone-new/>

### Reflective Opportunity 5

Read the picture book *My Two Blankets*. Note in your journal how the two characters struggled and overcame communication barriers and intergroup anxiety to build a cross-group friendship.

Book link: <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/my-two-blankets/>

# Pine Project

## Module 5: Relationship Skills and Responsible Decision Making

### Reflective Opportunity 6

Read *My Name is Sangoel* and *When I Get Older* in preparation for exploring Responsible Decision-Making.

Book links:

<https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/my-name-is-sangoel/>

<https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/when-i-get-older-the-story-behind-wavin-flag/>

### Reflective Opportunity 7

Reflect on the potential consequences Sangoel, an immigrant student, might have faced in speaking up about the mispronunciation of his name. How could these consequences, such as feeling isolated or misunderstood, prevent Immigrant and New Generation students from exercising personal agency? Consider who else in the classroom, including yourself, could have supported Sangoel in addressing this issue. Beyond correctly pronouncing names, what other cultural differences should you learn about to create an environment where our students feel respected and understood without having to correct misunderstandings? How can you, as an educator, foster a classroom that empowers all students?

### Reflective Opportunity 8

Pause now to read the two texts *Salma the Syrian Chef* and *Mama's Nightingale*. Specifically, look for and note examples of where Salma and Saya are 1. using empathy to identify a problem, 2. using critical thinking skills, and 3. engaging with resources or others to help make decisions to support their families. Book links:

<https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/salma-the-syrian-chef/>

<https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/mamasnightingale/>

### Reflective Opportunity 9

Reflect upon the phrase “pay it forward.” What is the concept of paying it forward and what does it look like to do so? Can you recall a time when you showed gratitude for help you received by paying it forward? How does the concept of “pay it forward” align with decision-making that supports community well-being?

### Reflective Opportunity 10

Read *The Little House of Hope* before moving on, including the Author’s Note. When you’re ready to continue, come back to hear from author Terry Catasús Jennings.

Book link: <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/the-little-house-of-hope/>

### Reflective Opportunity 11

Please take a break here to read and unpack *The Suitcase*. What lessons from the Pine Project do you see playing out on the pages? Booklink: <https://imyourneighborbooks.org/book/the-suitcase/>

## Resources

Teach the interconnected texts *I'm New Here* and *Someone New*.

<https://imyourneighborbooks.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Welcoming-Conversations.pdf>