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Social-Emotional Learning in Higher Education: A Program Evaluation

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**SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
A PROGRAM EVALUATION**

Liza D. Johnson

Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements of

Doctor of Education

National College of Education

National Louis University

April 2020

DISSERTATION

**SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
A PROGRAM EVALUATION**

Liza D. Johnson

Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted for Approval

February 14, 2020

Approved:

Stuart I. Carrier
Chair, Dissertation Committee

Harrington Gibson
Program Director

Carol A. Burg
Member, Dissertation Committee

Rob Muller
Dean, National College of Education

Margaret Machon
Dean's Representative

2/14/2020
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ABSTRACT

This program evaluation presents an assessment of a three-credit-hour undergraduate Social- Emotional Learning Competencies course in a regionally accredited, private, American, and Christian university. This course focuses on core life skills in the areas of self-awareness, self-management, empathy, and relationship management. The social-emotional learning (SEL) framework used in other educational settings has not yet been applied to a higher education population or setting (Conley, 2015). Due to a lack of pragmatic literature on SEL school-based programming in higher education, this program evaluation addresses a prominent postsecondary curriculum gap and provides a model for institutions to review and consider for adoption. This study used quantitative and qualitative mixed methods to assess course implementation effectiveness. It examined how the course impacted student learning outcomes and the broader undergraduate classroom experiences. The evaluation offers recommendations to improve the undergraduate course and expand SEL practices campus-wide.

PREFACE

Currently, I serve as the director of the Social-Emotional Competencies Program (S-ECP) (pseudonym) at Social-Emotional University (SEU) (pseudonym). My primary focus as director is to advance the growth and development of social and emotional learning (SEL) practices campus-wide. Throughout my eleven years working with college students, I realize there was a significant number of students who could benefit from a high-quality SEL education. Personally, I believe some of my life struggles would have been eliminated if given the opportunity in school to practice the tools and strategies provided through SEL early in life.

One of my job responsibilities is to lead the operations, development, and advancement of the Social-Emotional Competence Course 1. The S-ECP and S-ECP Course 1 for undergraduate students made big strides the past five years, yet there are existing challenges and opportunities. This dissertation addresses the barriers and outlook of the S-ECP through the work of Wagner et al. (2006) utilizing the “As-Is” and the “To-Be” practical frameworks to transform schools.

Throughout my dedication to this dissertation project, I have learned much about myself, including my position in the world of education. In the three years of extensively researching SEL, I have become extremely passionate about advocating for SEL in education. I care deeply about students’ well-being and understand the importance these practices play in our fast-pasted changing society.

Additionally, this experience has influenced my growth in leadership because it clearly helped define my passion, purpose, and mission as director of the S-ECP and generally as an educator. Throughout this process, I made connections and established

long-term relationships with like-minded individuals and organizations. I found these relationships to be critical to fostering movement and advancement in advocating SEL to individuals and groups of every age.

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I would like to express deep appreciation to my husband, parents, and parents-in-law. Dan, thank you for your strong commitment to our family. Mom and Dad, thank you for giving me a leg up in life and your continuous love and support. Clark and Lynn, thank you for the gift of time that allowed me to research and write, knowing my children were having fun going on adventures with grandpa and grandma.

DEDICATION

To my children, Colin, Brooke, and Luke, who inspire me to be a better person each day. I am truly grateful that God chose me to be your mother. I love you very much!

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In 2007, Social-Emotional University (SEU) (pseudonym), a regionally accredited, private, American, and Christian university, implemented a program called the Social-Emotional Competencies Program (S-ECP) (pseudonym). This program was designed to adapt to the changing demographics in higher education with the purpose of transforming lives through teaching and learning. When S-ECP started, it was offered to a group of the institution's faculty and staff in the form of a professional development workshop. In spring 2013, the Social-Emotional Competencies Course 1 (S-ECP Course 1) became available to undergraduate students as a general three-credit-hour academic course. The S-ECP was intended to help students, faculty, and staff develop and enhance personal and social competencies which include self-awareness, self-management, empathy for others, and relationship management.

The S-ECP's framework addresses emotional intelligence (EQ), which derives from the field of social-emotional learning (Elias & Arnold, 2006). Social-emotional learning (SEL) is often referred to as "the missing piece, because it represents part of education that is linked to academic achievement, well-being, and success but has not been given much attention until recently" (Bridgeland, Bruce, & Hariharan, 2013, p. 3). For many years, college curricula focused on the academic skills of education whereas other life skills were often missing from student learning experiences. In present-day higher education, traditional academic subjects are systematically taught and tested, but resilience, empathy, responsibility, and self-regulation are not routinely addressed in undergraduate curricula.

The S-ECP Course 1 embraces the application of transformational learning objectives. Transformational learning objectives require a student to examine, challenge, and change their current mindset including, but not restricted to, a greater understanding of one's own limited core beliefs, judgements, and assumptions held (Mezirow, 2000). During class interactive teaching strategies are used to encourage, support, and empower students in their learning and personal development. "Quality SEL programs view students as active learners and utilize techniques such as group work, discussions, cooperative learning, and role plays, as well as dialoguing, guided practice, and both teacher and peer reinforcement" (Graczyk et al., 2000, p. 401). These varied interactive techniques are part of the S-ECP Course 1 that offer students an opportunity to take charge of their own learning and personal growth throughout the semester.

The S-ECP Course 1 is a three-credit-hour undergraduate course grounded in SEL that meets a general education requirement for graduation, which is currently missing in higher education. I chose to evaluate the S-ECP Course 1 because I wanted to measure the quality of the course, especially since there is a lack of evidence on what a quality SEL school-based program looks like in higher education. To date, the small amount of literature on teaching EQ curriculum to college students originates primarily from institutions providing full-day workshops or seminars only to introduce EQ and its importance to student success (Parker, Taylor, Keefer, & Summerfeldt, 2018, p. 439). Therefore, there is a significant gap in the literature on EQ and SEL in higher education. Likewise, the literature on SEL guidelines and goals concentrates on the preschool through secondary education levels (Conley, 2015). This evaluation will provide useful

data to better equip SEU and other institutions currently including or considering the addition of SEL into their campus-wide practices.

Purpose of the Evaluation

The S-ECP focuses on personal growth and development by coaching individuals on four components of emotional intelligence (EQ). EQ is a “learnable, measurable, scientifically validated skillset that fuels better effectiveness, relationships, wellbeing and quality of life — for adults & children” (Freedman, 2012). The S-ECP at Social-Emotional University (SEU) is offered in four versions: a three-credit hour undergraduate course that fulfills a general education requirement; a six-week workshop offered to faculty and staff as a professional development opportunity; a certification course to train new or existing instructors to teach the S-ECP Course 1 or infuse the S-ECP curriculum into discipline-specific courses or programs; and a community partnership that offers S-ECP curriculum and training to other local organizations.

The S-ECP Course 1 operates under the explicit curriculum; however, SEL across the campus functions as part of the hidden or implicit curriculum. Implicit curriculum is defined as when “lessons arise from the culture of the school and the behaviors, attitudes, and expectations that characterize the culture” (Ebert, Ebert, & Bentley, 2014). At SEU, SEL arises from the culture of the university that largely contributes to a campus-wide initiative on Student Success. This initiative operates as a two-way street where both the student and faculty or staff member are committed to being partners with the intended outcome being to create a successful college experience and post-graduation future.

Conley (2015) reported that in higher education, a framework of SEL has yet to be established. The S-ECP is an innovated approach in higher education that includes a

SEL framework, yet to be most effective for students SEL needs to function as part of the explicit curriculum at SEU. Explicit curriculum is defined as, “subjects that will be taught, the identified ‘mission’ of the school, and the knowledge and skills that the school expects successful students to acquire” (Ebert et al., 2011). In other words, SEL should operate as an obvious or apparent element of the SEU community. In general, SEL in higher education is a new concept with various exciting opportunities to further development.

The S-ECP is strategically housed under the President’s Office to foster support of the program. However, even though the S-ECP Course 1 is part of the general education requirement, it is provided solely as one of two choices to fulfill a general education requirement rather than serving as the only option within a given requirement category. Therefore, not every student is receiving SEL-explicit curriculum through the S-ECP.

The S-ECP delivers a curriculum that concentrates on the technique of cognitive processing and reframing. This curriculum empowers participants to manage their own thoughts, feelings, and behavior to achieve positive life outcomes. According to SEU materials, “it is both an academic and experiential curriculum that provides high levels of participant engagement and group interaction in a setting which promotes cohort support of change and growth by the individual student” (citation omitted to preserve anonymity). The curriculum contains 33 concepts that address SEL competencies such as core beliefs, self-esteem, emotional regulation, stress tolerance, consequential thinking, impulse control, healthy relationships, gratitude, and empathy for others. For the complete list of

SEL competencies and learning outcomes see Appendix A: S-ECP Course 1 Concepts and Learning Outcomes.

EQ “relies on “hot” social-emotional-cognitive processes that are often highly charged, relationship driven, and focused on evaluations, predicting, and coping with feelings and behaviors- our own and other people’s” (Brackett, 2019, p. 24). Therefore, all S-ECP Course 1 instructors and educators infusing the S-ECP curriculum into their discipline-specific courses or programs are required to participate in a six-month certification training before teaching the content. The program requires participants to successfully complete three components: a six-week faculty and staff workshop, a three-day train-the-trainer workshop, and a semester-long S-ECP Course 1 co-taught with a certified S-ECP Course 1 instructor. This model provides assurance that an individual has demonstrated competency in the essential skills needed to teach the course or infuse the curriculum in a discipline-specific department, course, or campus program.

Certified as a Master Trainer in December 2016, I currently lead the certification course for the S-ECP. This training focuses on applied SEL, educational methods, and student development theory. Additionally, the training provides support to new instructors in the areas of demonstration, practice, onsite mentoring, and ongoing support and consultation. It assists instructors to acquire SEL skills that might not necessarily have been part of their educational background. Bradberry, Greaves, and Lencioni (2009) reported we enter into the workforce being able to read, write, and report but lack the skills to self-manage in the heart of difficult problems. Largely, the goal of the certification course is to prepare new or existing instructors to become comfortable, competent, and confident in teaching SEL competencies to students.

I became aware of the S-ECP when first employed by the university in 2012. I participated in the S-ECP faculty and staff workshop and fell in love with the value it brought to my life, both personally and professionally. I advocated becoming director of the program with the goal of growing and enhancing the S-ECP within the university and community. In fall 2014, I became director of the S-ECP. In spring of 2017, I led a major restructuring of the program with the goal to improve the quality of student learning outcomes.

This program relates to student learning because schools that account for healthy teacher-student relationships foster meaningful learning and ignite the growth of students' social and emotional skills (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). The success of learning depends on the strength of the social and emotional capacity of the student-teacher relationship. Shriver and Buffet (2015) note that "the real core [of education] is just that: the social and emotional dimensions of the learning relationship" (p. xv). If either the student or teacher do not possess SEL skills and fail to apply those skills in the classroom, the academic growth may not be achieved due to lack of self-awareness, self-management, empathy, or relationship management.

Educating teachers and students to relate more effectively to their emotions is not a distraction from what some would see as the cornerstone of education; it is in fact the vital foundation (Hanh & Weare, 2017). Unpleasant emotions such as stress, anger, and anxiety may block how one can effectively think, teach, and learn. SEL skills demonstrated by both the teacher and student in the classroom increases the likelihood of successfully meeting the learning outcomes and goals established.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the quality of the S-ECP Course 1 and to create any necessary modifications to improve it. The program evaluation will serve two purposes, the first of which is to determine the effectiveness of the S-ECP Course 1 and potential improvements. The second purpose is to increase awareness of a higher education SEL school-based program. With this new awareness, my hope is to expand SEL-explicit ongoing curriculum campus-wide within SEU and for other institutions to review and possibly adopt this model. Stassen, Doherty, and Poe (2001) suggest programs can make specific improvements based upon assessment that indicates whether the programs' goals are being achieved. The S-ECP Course 1 evaluation can positively affect the program and student learning if any necessary improvements are made.

I anticipate the evaluation of the S-ECP Course 1 as a two-step process. Step one of this study will evaluate the S-ECP Course 1. A future study, step two will evaluate the certification course. The two-step process of evaluation will create intentionality in each area that will result in placing the S-ECP on the right track for improvement and success.

Rationale

The rationale for choosing the S-ECP is because, as a director, it is my responsibility to ensure a high-quality learning experience. I care deeply for the program and understand the crucial necessity for SEL education in students' lives. Therefore I believe it is important to evaluate the program's effectiveness. Overseeing the development and effectiveness of a SEL approach is essential. Brackett, Elbertson, and Rivers (2015) found that collected formal and informal feedback from the stakeholders can be used to "evaluate achievement outcomes, guide modifications for improvement, and ultimately increase the likelihood that positive effects in students and school climate

will be obtained and sustained” (p. 20). Thus, performing a program evaluation of the S-ECP is particularly necessary. Furthermore, the evaluation will provide useful data on how to successfully implement and expand future SEL initiatives within SEU.

A critical issue related to this program evaluation is a lack of evidence and support addressing formal SEL programming in higher education (Castro & Clyde, 2018). Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) the nationally recognized leading organization, helps make evidence-based SEL an integral part of education by providing research, practice, and policy on SEL. However, CASEL exclusively focuses on preschool through high school, without attention to higher education.

An additional critical issue related to the program reveals an existing prominent gap in SEL at the higher education level. Sherman (2011) suggests there is a sparse amount of research on SEL practices in higher education. Integrating SEL in higher education can be challenging due to various reasons such as the magnitude and the silo mentality across campus. Brackett (2019) reports SEL initiatives in higher education operate as a piecemeal approach due to its nature, whereas a systematic operation is absent. If the S-ECP Course 1 is successfully evaluated, other institutions will be given a necessary resource on a SEL model in higher education. I have a dream that all students will have the opportunity to participate in quality SEL-explicit curriculum every day in their educational journey from their first day of preschool to their last semester as a senior in college.

This evaluation is important to the stakeholders, which consist of students, instructors, and the university at large because the university has devoted an ample

amount of time, money, and energy in building the S-ECP. It is important to SEU and the stakeholders to recognize first if students are advancing from the S-ECP Course 1 and if not, what could be done to change that. Secondly, it will be important to conduct a future program evaluation on the certification course to identify if instructors are benefiting from it and make any necessary modifications to improve it.

Goals of the Program Evaluation

The first goal of the program evaluation is to explore the students' insights of the effectiveness of the S-ECP Course 1 based upon their experiences as stakeholders. A second goal of the program evaluation is to determine if the course had a positive, negative, or neutral impact on student learning, student outcomes, and overall classroom experience. The final goal of the program evaluation will be to determine how SEL operates at similar regionally accredited, private, and American higher education institutions. More specifically, I will try to discover in a small scope if prominent SEL gaps exist in higher education. This data will uncover what similar institutions are providing in regards to SEL academic explicit curriculum. Moreover, this study will determine if the SEL academic explicit curriculum offered provides an experiential learning component; one in which students are able to reflect and apply SEL competencies versus solely learning the SEL framework.

The program evaluation will equip SEU to enhance and enrich student, faculty, and staff with learning experiences and continue to positively affect the way they choose to live their lives. With this program evaluation, SEU can improve the S-ECP Course 1 effectiveness and inform program decisions (Patton, 2008). This study is an impactful step that SEU can take towards enhancing student learning and outcomes as well as the

entire culture of the university.

The goals of the program evaluation will relate to student learning because social and emotional skills are critical for students to thrive and succeed in college. Higher education students need social and emotional skills to support their awareness of self and others, which consequently will help them adapt to perplexing academic, social, and emotional experiences (Conley, 2015). Higher education needs to begin prioritizing SEL-explicit initiatives as a part of their mission. This can be done by weaving SEL throughout campuses in various meaningful ways to educate and support the whole student.

Exploratory Questions

As the director of S-ECP, I wanted to examine the implementation of the S-ECP Course 1, so that I could use this information to enhance the effectiveness and expand the SEL initiatives at SEU.

My primary exploratory questions for this program evaluation were:

1. What do the stakeholders (students) report is working well in the S-ECP Course 1?
2. What do the stakeholders (students) report is not working well in the S-ECP Course 1?
3. What do the stakeholders (students) report as the greatest challenges in the S-ECP Course 1?
4. What do the stakeholders (students) report as ways to improve the S-ECP Course 1?

My secondary questions to support my primary inquiry were:

1. How is the instructors' level of preparation impacting students' experience?
2. How is the classroom environment impacting students' experience?
3. How is the course curriculum impacting students' learning experience?
4. How is the course impacting students' social and emotional preparation for the future?

Both the exploratory and secondary questions, I believed, would provide SEU meaningful insights and perspectives of students who completed the S-ECP Course 1.

Conclusion of Framing Context

In concluding my description of the initial context of this study, my hope is through careful evaluation of the S-ECP Course 1, the course improves the students' learning experience while continuing to expand SEL-explicit ongoing curriculum throughout SEU. Next, I hope this evaluation will provide a useful framework on SEL programming for other higher educational institutions. Most importantly, this program evaluation can be a small start to creating a movement of reinventing higher education by placing SEL at the forefront of campus practices and operations.

Conley (2015) identified a scarcity of formal SEL school-based programming in higher education. Furthermore, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) supports empirical evidence of SEL as a fundamental part of Pre-K through secondary education, leaving post-secondary education out of the equation. This

study intends to start the significant process of collecting data on SEL school-based programming in higher education.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Today, the vast majority of 21st century students are exceedingly different from the 20th century students. Schools are dealing not only with rigor in the curriculum but with a variety of students' social and emotional issues including poverty, stress, anxiety, and challenges with handling interpersonal problems, among others. Due to this educational shift, SEL is being readily accepted as an essential component to educate and support the whole child. SEL is being assessed considering its effectiveness, programming quality, and impact on students' wellbeing. To help determine the effectiveness of the S-ECP Course 1 in regards to student learning experiences and quality programming including implementation, I researched a vast amount of literature on SEL topics. These topics included Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), SEL-related student success, SEL school-based programming best practices and challenges, and an exploration of curriculum paradigms.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

When Goleman (1995) published *Emotional Intelligence*, he started the evolution of the field of SEL. SEL is referred to as the:

Process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. (CASEL, 2015, p. 1)

SEL focuses on educating and forming the whole person through applying the skills necessary to become a productive and contributing member of society.

Recently, SEL has established a large amount of attention in schools across the world (Freedman, 2016). Goleman's work on emotional intelligence (EQ) led to the creation of Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) that provided direction for stakeholders to improve their knowledge and practice of SEL. CASEL was established in 1994 with the intention of creating high quality, evidence-based SEL as a vital part of preschool through secondary education. Schools have widely adopted SEL school-based programs through the support of CASEL, in order to build, maintain, and embrace SEL skills.

Currently, social and emotional development standards in preschool exist in all 50 states and many states and some countries beyond the U.S. have integrated SEL into their academic learning standards beyond preschool (Weissberg, Durlak, Domitrovich, & Gullotta, 2015). National policy has developed guidelines for implementing effective evidence-based SEL programming. Additionally, CASEL has established an integrated framework on evidence-based practices for enhancing SEL skills for students.

CASEL has more than two decades of leading the development of this new field in education on SEL. However, the organization of CASEL is focused on preschool through secondary education and excludes postsecondary education. This study will help start to close the gap in providing much needed literature on SEL evidence-based practices in higher education.

Emotional Intelligence (EQ), Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), and Student Success

The S-ECP Course 1 at SEU was developed to assist students in becoming successful academically and more significantly emotionally. A study conducted on 1,502 first year students nationally found that students reported feeling better prepared more for college academically than emotionally (Stoltzfus, 2015). SEL education can help students feel emotionally prepared and connected with others which can lead to personal and academic success. Research shows that EQ, the field of SEL, is the foundation for achieving lifelong success (Goleman, 1995). A large amount of data reports student success is directly related to their EQ and SEL competencies.

In a recent study which included 400 students from Kuwait University, Al-Huwailah (2017) found there was a statistically significant positive correlation between EQ and quality of life. EQ provides a way to help people create effective and healthy coping skills. “Overall, emotional intelligence is currently evaluated as being an important and valuable potential personal resource for students in school settings” (Zeidner & Matthews, 2018, p. 103). EQ is a powerful and useful framework that allows schools to improve students’ wellbeing and quality of life.

Research findings suggest that skills related to SEL results in overall success in life, both personally and professionally (Wyatt & Bloemker, 2013). SEL creates a solid foundation for students’ ability to learn effectively. SEL programs break down learning barriers through cultivating students’ essential learning to acquire skills (Elias & Moceris, 2012). SEL competencies assist in academic learning and enhance student learning through students’ interactions with others by making effective connections to the course curriculum. Growth in social and emotional competencies is multi-layered and critical to

students' overall academic experience (Jones & Kahn, 2017). It is apparent that SEL is a gateway to creating a path of success for students in school and beyond.

Society and students' life experiences have transformed significantly in the last century (Weissberg, Walberg, O'Brien, & Kuster, 2003). In the 21st century, it is important for schools to deliver a holistic educational experience to students that includes an opportunity to learn and apply SEL competencies to ensure successful and productive lives. This is particularly important in higher education.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) School-Based Programming in Pre-K-12 and Higher Education

SEL school-based programming is implemented in various ways in preschool through postsecondary education. It is most beneficial when SEL school-based “programs provide a developmentally appropriate combination of formal, curriculum-based instruction with ongoing informal and infused opportunities to develop social and emotional skills” (Kress & Elias, 2007, p. 596). For example, in addition to curriculum-based work, an educator can include SEL in a less formal way within the classroom.

SEL school-based programming is not a cookie-cutter approach and may happen in various and different forms in schools today. SEL extends beyond the classroom by including SEL through parenting, community partners, and the mission of the school. Other SEL school-based programs are offered as prevention and promotion efforts that focus on a specific topic such as brain health, healthy relationships, character development, and parent training (Conley, 2015).

In terms of research, there are more than 500 evaluations of the various types of SEL programs (Weissberg et al., 2015). Humphrey (2013) explains SEL programs are operating in thousands of schools nationally and internationally. The majority of SEL

school-based programming research is particularly focused on preschool through secondary education, with little emphasis in postsecondary education. The current study will help close the gap in higher education by providing research on a school-based program within a university setting.

Best Practices of School-Based Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs

Many schools are including SEL inside and outside of the classroom and therefore administrators and educators need specific guidelines on determining if their SEL initiatives are effective. CASEL focuses on adolescents and serves as a guide and resource for SEL school-based programming initiatives. In 2013 and 2015, CASEL developed systematic frameworks for assessing the quality and effectiveness of SEL school-based programs in preschool through secondary education.

CASEL (2015) established guidelines for SEL evidence-based programs including three areas that high-quality programs should include:

1. Be well-designed classroom-based programs that systematically promote students' social and emotional competence, provide opportunities for practice, and offer multi-year programming;
2. Deliver high-quality training and other implementation supports, including initial training and ongoing support to ensure sound implementation; and
3. Be evidence-based with at least one carefully conducted evaluation that documents positive impacts on student behavior and/or academic performance (p. 3)

Likewise, it is important to address specific guidelines for educators who are teaching SEL competencies to students. It takes a caring educator; one who can demonstrate empathy and relationship skills to effectively model and teach SEL

competencies. Currently there are numerous ways of infusing SEL inside and outside of the classroom, but it takes a trained and caring educator to effectively demonstrate it.

O’Conner, De Feyter, Carr, Luo, and Romm (2017) found that the existence of an SEL “toolkit” would improve the application of SEL and would ideally consist of educational approaches, a warm class environment, and an educator that holds social and emotional competencies. In determining the quality of the S-ECP Course 1, I must consider the effectiveness of the instructors teaching the course in my study.

Challenges of School-Based Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs

Research shows that implementing SEL school-based programming is a significant challenge. Implementation has a range of limitations including an absence of preparation in teacher education regarding SEL (Sokal & Katz, 2017). Research shows that a large number of educators are not properly trained on SEL. In a survey study that consisted of 605 kindergarten through 12th grade teachers, Bridgeland et al. (2013) found only 55 percent of teachers received SEL training, which included 23 percent during in-service. In general, educators are not providing well-designed, systematic approaches to SEL due to a lack of training.

In the same survey study, Bridgeland et al. (2013) found 73 percent of teachers are challenged to teach SEL curriculum in the classroom due to lack of SEL training. Research suggests even though there is a known importance of teachers supporting students’ social and emotional skills, there is very little emphasis on providing SEL training in teacher preparation programs (Waajid, Garner, & Owen, 2013). It becomes challenging for educators to be effective when little emphasis is given on SEL training in their prior educational backgrounds.

Furthermore, scarcities of resources such as on-going training and educator support limit the availability of SEL in teacher development. CASEL (2013) recommended that during teachers' professional development time, they should be given the opportunity for quality training in SEL. Research shows that SEL supports the social, emotional, and academic development of students. Educators point out they will be able to teach SEL most successfully when they have proper training and support from their school and district leaders (Kendziora & Yoder, 2016). In addition to evaluating the S-ECP Course 1, it will be vital to conduct a future study to evaluate the certification course to determine if the training is effective and meets the specific needs of the instructors.

One major setback in providing on-going support and training is the cost, both in time and financial resources. Currently SEL is still competing against curriculum that is related to test score progress in education. However, research indicates the benefits are well worth the costs for schools and districts that develop comprehensive SEL programming. Belfield et al. (2015) reported for every dollar contributed to social emotional learning programming there was an \$11 return on long-lasting benefits. Although there is an acknowledged return on investment for SEL education, the reality of teacher training to meet the quality SEL programming falls short.

As director of a SEL program, I feel fortunate the S-ECP provides a certification course that offers training to the instructors who teach the S-ECP Course 1. However, this is a one-time training and further development needs to occur. My hope is through my work on evaluating the S-ECP Course 1, this study will provide the framework for other institutions to adopt SEL practices with an instructor certification course.

An Exploration of Curriculum Paradigms

Currently, SEL competencies are typically missing from institutions' core curriculum. Curriculum is "the means and materials with which students will interact for the purpose of achieving identified educational outcomes" (Ebert et al., 2011, p. 234). To date, programs that encourage SEL curriculum in higher education tend to be "researcher-initiated, relatively brief interventions that are disconnected from the institutions' curricula, staff, and goals" (Conley, 2015, p. 208). SEL curriculum in present-day higher education typically functions as fragmented and piecemeal approaches across campus.

Moreover, Conley (2015) describes 113 short-duration college intervention SEL programs such as mindfulness, cognitive behavioral change, and social skills development, however these programs are not at the center of the curriculum and could be viewed as a "band-aid" course that responds reactively to critical situations that occur on campus. Likewise, most of the existing research on SEL curriculum focuses on preventive and promotion programming in higher education. This research has not yet been conceptualized within a SEL framework, but embraces SEL outcomes. Even though promotion and prevention programs may be considered successful, research shows it is more meaningful if SEL curriculum is incorporated into the mission of the school and embedded throughout the institution in multiple ways by various stakeholders on campus (Conley, 2015). By taking this action, SEL would function as an integral part of instruction rather than a separate entity and conclusively would allow students to gain a foundation of SEL knowledge, skills, and competences.

Similarly, Conley (2015) suggests embedding SEL competencies within the

institutions' core curriculum would be most effective. For example, Wang et al. (2012) found that including SEL into a first year experience course might best provide the opportunity for institutions to introduce SEL to students. Importantly, there are various opportunities where SEL curriculum can arise in higher education that are meaningful and effective to foster student success academically, socially, and emotionally.

Furthermore, as previously stated, to be most effective for students in higher education, SEL needs to move from the null curriculum (excluded from) to the explicit curriculum (apparent element). Vander Ark (2017) states the teaching of social and emotional skills must be explicit, and similarly Resnik (2017) reports in classrooms that are implementing SEL effectively, SEL is promoted through explicit curriculum. Moving SEL from the null curriculum to the explicit curriculum does not happen by chance. It requires a proactive response by the stakeholders to infuse SEL into the academic content and social situations.

Lastly, due to a prominent gap in SEL-explicit curriculum at the higher education level, I analyzed evidence of involvement in similar accredited, private, and American higher education institutions. I conducted an overt examination of the institutions' course catalogs to determine the degree to which these institutions are including SEL-explicit curriculum in an academic form. I then evaluated the SEL-explicit academic course to identify if it operated as a lecture-based or experiential learning-based course.

Literature Review Conclusion

Through extensive research on SEL, I have identified gaps of literature, research, and best practices when addressing evidence-based programming at the postsecondary level. Over the last 10 years, great strides have occurred with SEL being implemented at

the preschool through secondary education levels with specific guidelines to measure its success. My hope is the S-ECP Course 1 evaluation will serve as a starting point toward including SEL as a common programmatic practice in higher education with specific guidelines to measure success.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Research Design Overview

Most of the research on SEL curriculum focuses on Pre-K through high school (Conley, 2015, p. 197). The importance of SEL does not decrease as students get older (Roberts, 2014). Rather it becomes the foundation for a student to succeed in college and life after. Therefore, my program evaluation of the S-ECP will address a prominent postsecondary curriculum gap of SEL in higher education.

My purpose in gathering the data for this study was to determine what impact the S-ECP Course 1 had on students. It was my desire to involve the primary stakeholder, the students, in a developmental evaluative way (Patton, 2008). The methods I used for gathering data were both qualitative and quantitative. I selected this Patton methodology because it is a means to properly answer my research questions and provide results that have greater breadth and depth (Roberts, 2010). My approach of using mixed methods in this research study will provide focus and clarity in addressing how the Social-Emotional University (SEU) can improve current and future SEL-explicit ongoing initiatives.

In this case, I evaluated the S-ECP Course 1 through a student's point of view, determined through student surveys and focus groups. It was my intent that through this extensive process, I would improve a program that would become highly effective for students' learning, development, and growth. Additionally, it was my goal to provide other higher education institutions a model to review and adopt to start or further develop their own SEL initiatives. I hoped to find imperfections throughout this process with the intention of working through identified challenges in continuing to develop the S-ECP.

Participants

The population for my study consisted of 111 undergraduate students approximately 18-24 years of age, in a regionally accredited, private, American, and Christian university. These students completed the S-ECP Course 1 during the 2017-2018 academic year. The course is open to all undergraduate students and is offered in the fall and spring semesters, as well as a month-long course option. One or two certified instructors taught the course with a maximum class size of 12 students. The SEU course catalog description for the S-ECP Course 1 is as follows:

Students will develop the core skills necessary to be successful in making sustained and positive change. The course focuses on the four components of emotional intelligence, which are self-awareness, self-management, empathy for others, and relationship management. Additionally, the course is designed to provide high levels of student engagement and group interaction in a setting, which promotes cohort support of change and growth, by the individual student (citation omitted to preserve anonymity).

S-ECP Course 1 operates as an experiential learning based course where students have the opportunity to learn about the framework of SEL and more importantly, reflect and apply it to their lives with the intention on personal growth and development.

The five learning objectives for the S-ECP Course 1 will allow students to:

1) Complete a self-assessment of their beliefs about their behavior, thought structures, emotional interaction, and behavioral outcomes; 2) identify methods for successfully regulating their behavioral responses to life events; 3) identify meaningful relationships they have or wish to have and the manner in which they will engage, build, and maintain that relationship both personal and professional;

4) demonstrate empathy and understanding of other people's values, beliefs, thoughts, actions, and related outcomes in a non-judgmental manner and develop interactions in which the student can discuss the same; 5) and demonstrate increased social competencies in communication, conflict management, leadership, collaboration, and teamwork (citation omitted to preserve anonymity).

I investigated the beliefs students had about their experience in the S-ECP Course

1. In order to capture their experiences, I purposely selected students who completed the S-ECP Course 1. Coupled with a survey design and interviews to discover student beliefs about the effectiveness of the S-ECP Course 1, I additionally investigated other institutions to determine if SEL was part of the school's academic curriculum. Conley (2015) states there is a small amount of examination in SEL at the higher education level. Through the findings of this research study, I am hopeful it will help grow the field of SEL in higher education.

Data Gathering Techniques

When deciding on which types of data to use for my study, I wanted to collect data that would produce deep and meaningful results. I chose three types of data gathering techniques that included a student survey, focus group interviews, and content analysis. Furthermore, the data I gathered clearly helped answer my research questions for the program evaluation.

Student Survey

The purpose of this survey was for students to evaluate the S-ECP Course 1. My primary and secondary research questions guided the development of the questions on the student survey. Through this survey, it was my intent to discover evidence of what type of impact the course had on student learning and general classroom experience. The

survey revealed whether the course was implemented effectively or ineffectively, in addition to determining if the course had a positive, negative, or neutral impact on students' social and emotional preparation for their future.

The anonymous survey was part of the course's normal activities and did not interfere with instructional time. The survey was administered once at the end of the semester using Qualtrics. It took approximately 15 minutes to complete. To provide students another opportunity to contribute information about their experience in the S-ECP Course 1, I asked at the end of the survey if they would like to be part of a focus group. I believe to truly understand students' experiences in the S-ECP Course 1 and to create meaningful change, it is vital to conduct focus groups in order to obtain detailed information.

Student Focus Groups

It was my intent to gather rich descriptive details through the given stories of the participants. Questions were developed to reach the goal of addressing my primary and secondary research questions during these focus groups. I collected direct accounts of students' perceptions on the S-ECP Course 1 from these focus groups. The goal of the completed focus groups was to use the data to determine the effectiveness of the implemented S-ECP Course 1 within SEU.

I emailed the undergraduate students who listed they were interested in being part of the focus group on the student survey that was distributed on the last day of the S-ECP Course 1. In the email, I emphasized that this was voluntary and this would not affect their grade or involvement in the course if they participated or not. Once the students

were determined, I set up a time for the focus groups and emailed the informed consent so participants were be able to preview it.

There were a total of 11 students with 1 focus group of 5 students and another focus group of 6 students. Each focus group lasted approximately 40 to 50 minutes. I asked about the feelings, views, and experiences students had towards the S-ECP Course

1. At the beginning of the focus groups, I provided and explained the informed consent. Additionally, I affirmed their understanding and answered questions before they signed the form (see Appendix B: Informed Consent: Adult Participant in Focus Group).

Content Analysis

The purpose of performing a content analysis was to identify how SEL operates at similar regionally accredited, private, and American higher education institutions. I wanted to discover if prominent gaps exist in SEL in higher education at similar institutions. This data had the potential to uncover to what extent other selected institutions are providing SEL as an experiential learning experience rather than a lecture on SEL in the academic course offerings.

From my previous extensive research on SEL in higher education, I anticipated finding very few academic course offerings that are experiential. I believed I might find academic courses that teach the framework and theories of emotional intelligence or SEL, and not necessarily provide an opportunity for students to reflect, develop, and improve on their emotional intelligence skills. My hope was to find SEL-explicit academic course offerings that are experiential at another similar institution to provide a strong learning foundation to compare and help improve best practices for the S-ECP.

I examined the institutions that are part of SEU's conference, which consists of eight institutions. To determine if the institutions have SEL academic explicit curriculum that is experiential, I searched the institutions' undergraduate course catalog during the 2018-2019 academic calendar. The keywords I searched to identify the institutions' SEL endeavors were *emotional intelligence*, *social-emotional learning*, *21st century skills*, *soft skills*, *non-cognitive skills*, *employability skills*, and *empowerment*.

I was interested in determining whether the institutions were providing students the opportunities to thrive in SEL academic explicit curriculum. If I found one or more of the keywords in the course catalog, I examined the course description to determine if the students were able to discuss, reflect, and practice applying SEL concepts versus learning about the SEL concepts through lecture only.

Ethical considerations

No physical or psychological harm occurred as a result of participation in this research study. Participants have not benefited from their contribution in this research study. However, it was my intention that participants involved in this research study obtained a better understanding of the effectiveness and impact of the S-ECP Course 1. Additionally, I set an inquiry goal of achieving a better understanding of what changes needed to be made in order to improve the program.

The participants in this research study and institutions were kept confidential. I am the only individual with access to the focus group audio tapes and transcripts which are stored securely in a campus office. After 5 years, I will destroy all confidential information. I will ensure that the students' autonomy, privacy, and confidentiality will be preserved.

Data Analysis Techniques

To understand the students' perspective of the S-ECP Course 1 clearly, I carefully analyzed the data from the student surveys and focus groups. I combined both qualitative and quantitative analysis in this research study to determine the effectiveness of the course. The goal of this research study was to determine the steps necessary to improve and expand the SEL program across campus and in higher education generally by using both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Student Survey

I produced a data visualization of the Likert-scaled response survey questions (see Appendix C: Student Survey). I decided to use a Likert-scale to effectively measure the students' attitudes and opinions. I analyzed each research question to identify themes and patterns by carefully examining the results of the students' Likert-scaled responses. Finally, I closely tallied and calculated the results for each question.

Focus groups

I conducted two focus groups that included voluntary students from the S-ECP Course 1. The focus groups followed the instructions under the methodology section of this study. I audio taped and transcribed the student focus groups in order to guarantee accuracy. I used a grounded theory approach by analyzing the data and taking note of the themes that emerged. Additionally, I analyzed the data for similar and different answers given by the participants during the interview. I analyzed the responses to determine the effectiveness of the S-ECP Course 1. Under the Findings Section in this study, the analysis of each question is presented (see Appendix D: Focus Group Questions).

Content Analysis

I conducted content analysis to identify how SEL operates at eight peer groups of similar regionally accredited, private, and American higher education institutions. I analyzed the institutions' undergraduate course catalogs for the 2017-2018 academic year to determine if SEL academic explicit course offerings operate as experiential. The keywords I searched to identify the institutions' SEL endeavors were *emotional intelligence, social-emotional learning, 21st century skills, soft skills, non-cognitive skills, employability skills, and empowerment*.

Methodology Conclusion

In conclusion, I have identified three methods of data collection I used to evaluate the S-ECP Course 1, which included a student survey, focus groups, and content analysis. These methods helped clearly answer my exploratory and secondary questions for the program evaluation. Through gathering and analyzing the data, it was my intention to use the information to improve the S-ECP.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Findings

For this program evaluation, I studied the stakeholders' (students') insights of the effectiveness of the S-ECP Course 1. To evaluate what type of impact the course had on students' learning experiences and outcomes, I collected and analyzed two types of quantitative and qualitative data: student surveys and student focus groups. The process of data analysis gave me a chance to gather and use valuable student feedback to evaluate classroom practices. Additionally, I conducted content analysis to provide a systematic and objective means to make valid implications from written data to describe SEL academic explicit curriculum in higher education. Within the procedures established by the Institutional Research Review Board (IRRB), I collected the data from December 2017 to May 2018.

Student Surveys

A total of 128 students were asked to complete the student survey. This included 10 S-ECP Course 1 sections from the 2017-2018 academic year. As part of this data collection, I obtained 111 student responses representing an 88% response rate. In response to the first demographic question (question 16) regarding university classification, 42 (37%) of the respondents were seniors, 37 (34%) of the respondents were first year, 18 (16%) of the respondents were juniors, and 14 (13%) of the respondents were sophomores. The responses from student survey question 16 are displayed in Figure 1.

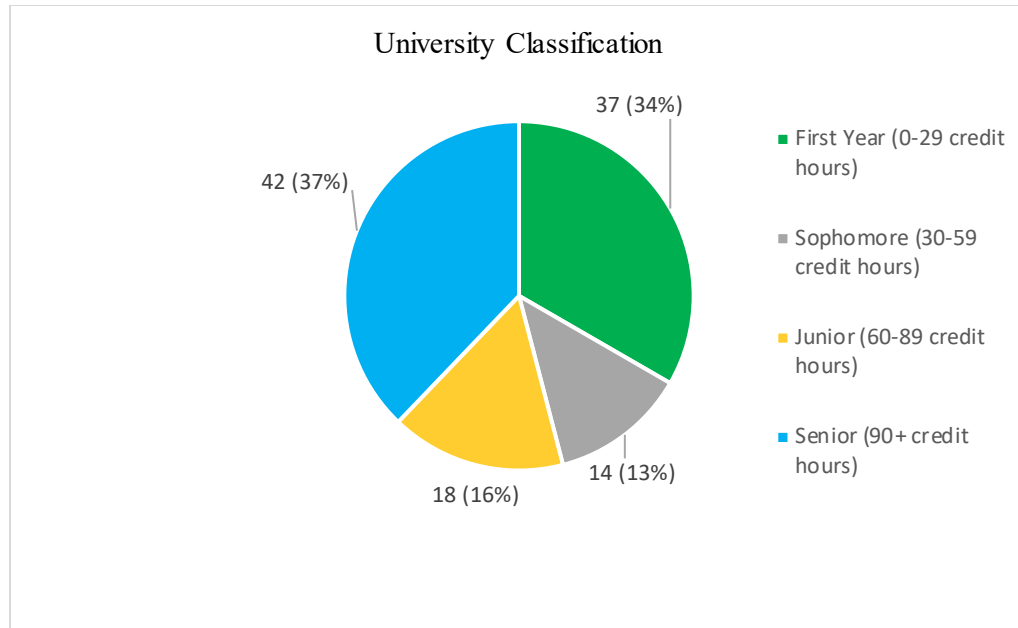


Figure 1. Survey responses to “Please indicate your university classification.”

In response to the second demographic question (question 17) regarding gender, 69 (63%) of the respondents reported as male, 39 (35%) of the respondents reported as female, and 2 (2%) of the respondents reported as different identity. The responses from student survey question 17 are displayed in Figure 2.

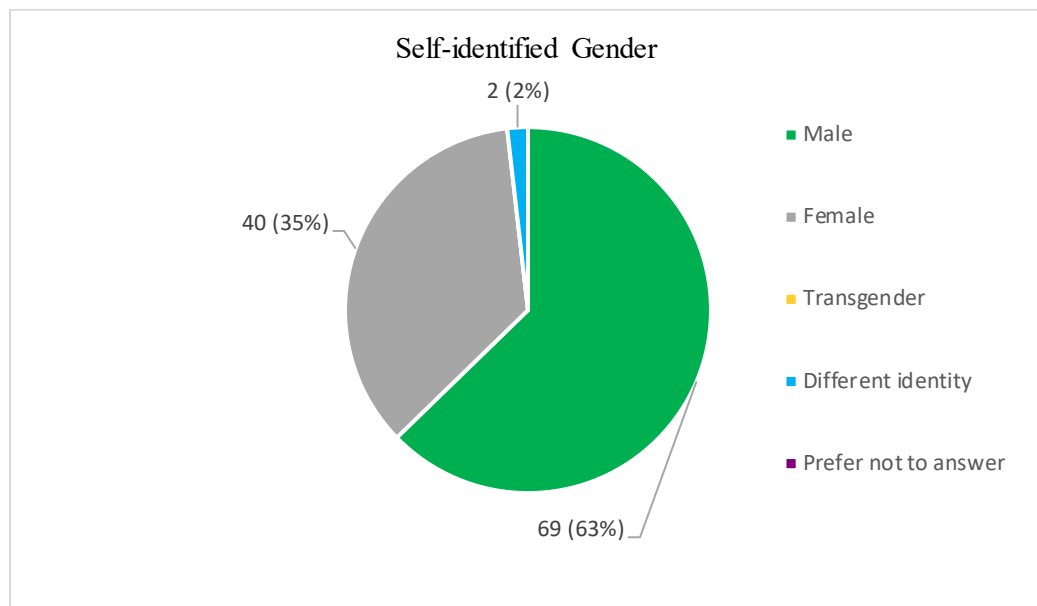


Figure 2. Survey responses to “Please indicate your self-identified gender.”

In response to the third demographic question (question 18) regarding ethnicity, 57 (52%) of the respondents were white or Caucasian (Non-Hispanic), 34 (30%) of the respondents identified as Black or African American (Non-Hispanic Origin), 10 (9%) of the respondents identified as Hispanic, 8 (7%) of the respondents identified as multiple ethnicities or other, and 2 (2%) of the respondents identified as Asian or Pacific Islander. The responses from student survey question 18 are displayed in Figure 3.

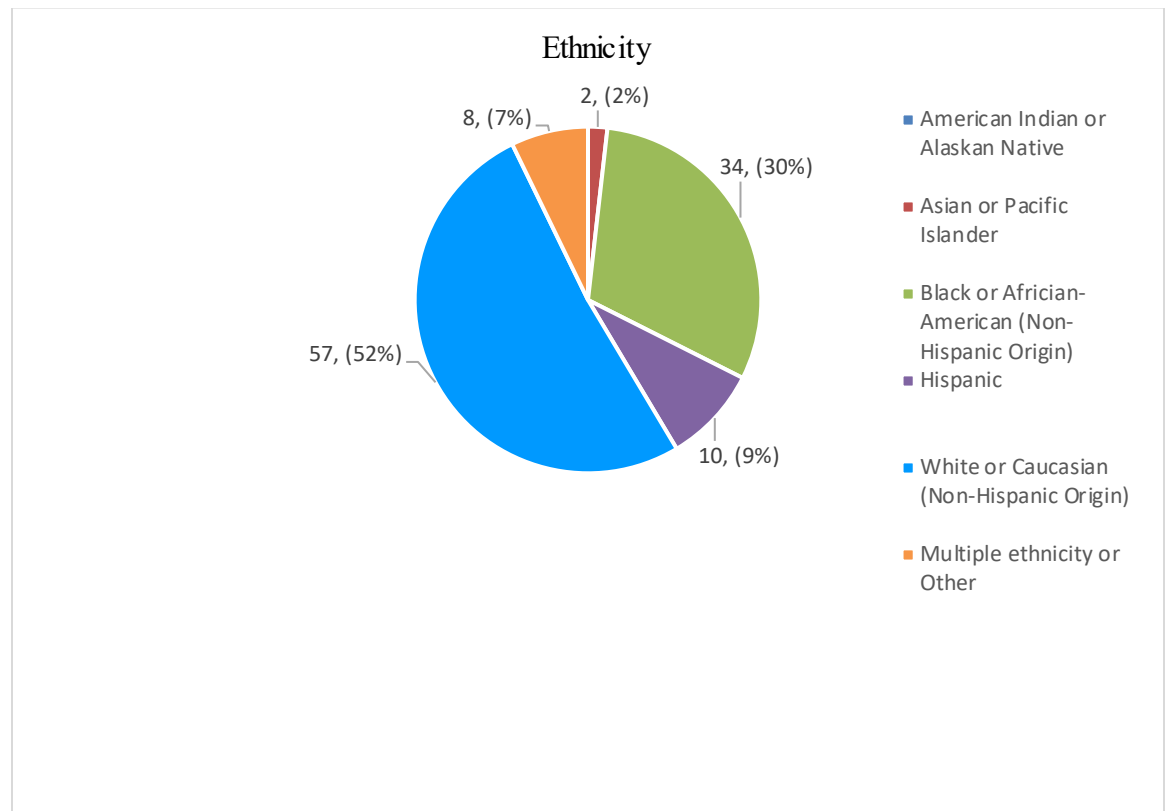


Figure 3. Survey responses to “Which ethnicity best describes you?”

In response to the fourth and last demographic question (question 19) regarding involvement in university programming, 51 (41%) of respondents were involved in student athletics. The surveys that were gathered appeared similar in demographic characteristics when compared with the overall student body at the university. The

remainder of the survey questions consisted of specific questions created to initiate responses from SEU students in regards to the S-ECP Course 1.

The teacher's social and emotional capability actively effect the environment and the embedding of SEL into the entire school (Jones, Bouffard, & Weissbourd, 2013). In response to question 2, which asked "How would you rate your instructor's knowledge about the topic of the course?", 109 (98%) of the respondents reported *very knowledgeable* and 2 (2%) of the respondents reported *slightly knowledgeable*. There were no responses for *no knowledge*, *slightly unknowledgeable*, or *neither unknowledgeable nor knowledgeable*. From the students' point of view, it is important to understand if the instructors are competent in teaching SEL. The results of question 2 indicate the instructors are coming into the classroom well-prepared, which may be a result of the instructors going through an extensive three-step certification course. The responses from student survey question 2 are displayed in Figure 4.

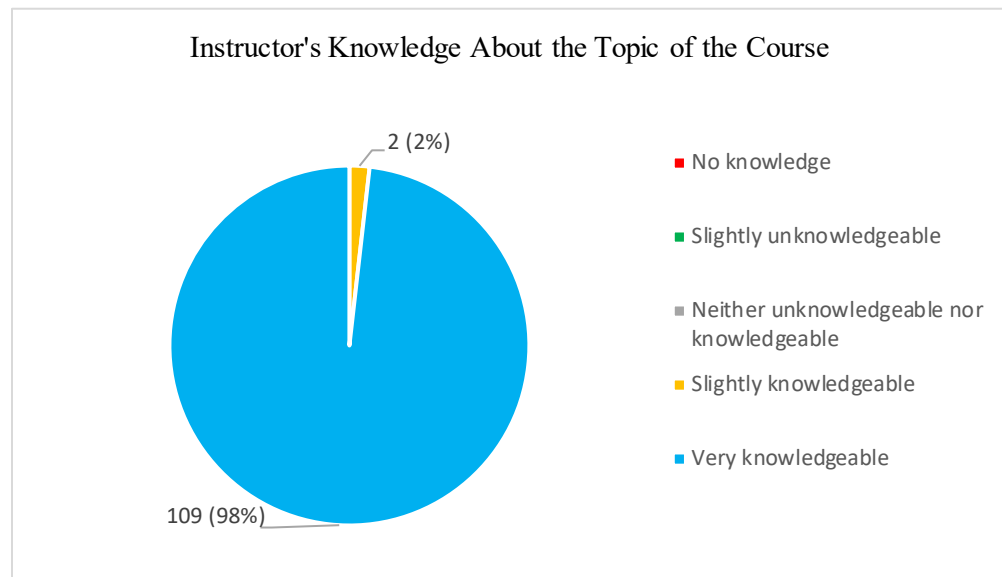


Figure 4. Survey responses to "How would you rate your instructor's knowledge about the topic of the course?"

Inspiring students' interest in learning is a significant task that is coming to be of greater urgency in education (Usova, 2002). In response to question 3, which asked "How would you rate your instructor's ability to make what you are learning in class interesting?", 91 (82%) of the respondents reported *excellent ability*, 18 (16%) of the respondents reported *moderate ability*, and 2 (2%) of the respondents reported *average ability*. There were no responses for *weak ability* or *no ability*. The results of question 3 indicate the instructors may be intentionally using the strategies and tools provided in the certification course to make class interesting. Although the majority of respondents stated *excellent ability*, the data suggests there is an opportunity for improvement. The responses from student survey question 3 are displayed in Figure 5.

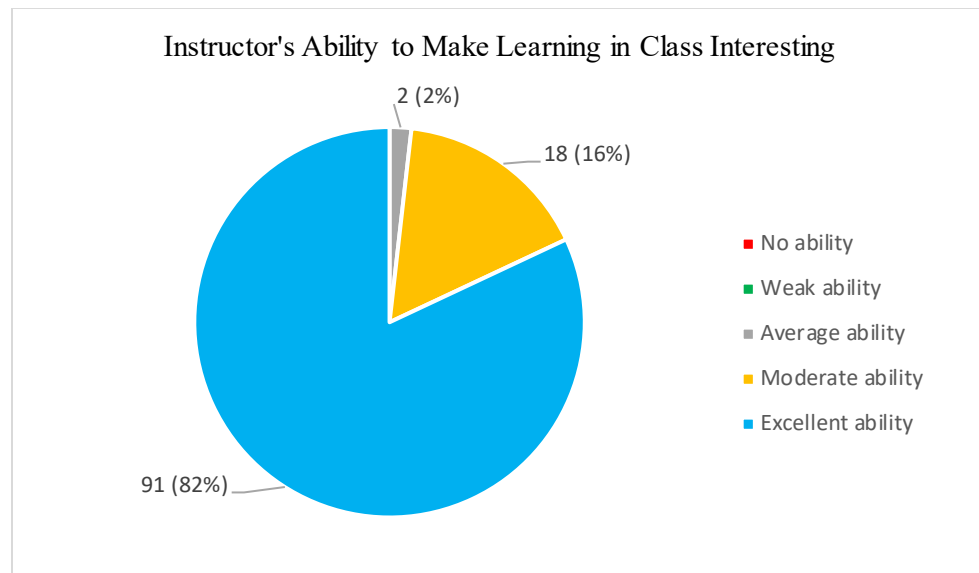


Figure 5. Survey responses to "How would you rate your instructor's ability to make what you are learning in class interesting?"

In response to question 4, which asked "How would you rate the physical space in your classroom?", 57 (51%) of the respondents reported *very enjoyable*, 35 (32%) of the respondents reported *slightly enjoyable*, 11 (10%) of the respondents reported *neither*

unenjoyable nor enjoyable, 5 (4%) of the respondents reported *slightly unenjoyable*, and 3 (3%) of the respondents reported *very unenjoyable*. The purpose of this question was to gauge how the classroom environment impacted the students' experience. The physical space in a classroom can include seating arrangement, room temperature, outside noise, and the level of natural lighting to name a few.

At SEU the S-ECP Course 1 takes place in various buildings across campus; therefore, the physical space varies from course to course. One aspect that is unique to the S-ECP Course 1 is the seating arrangements for students. From prior experiences as an instructor, traditional seating in classrooms is challenging to facilitate discussion and to provide an enjoyable learning experience. As part of the S-ECP Course 1, students sit in a semi-circle or conference style seating with the goal of promoting an enriched and enjoyable learning experience. Classroom physical arrangement is a vital component in influencing student motivation and learning (Phillips, 2014). The results of question 4 suggest the S-ECP Course 1 instructors could ask for students' feedback on the physical space of the classroom with the goal of improving it. There might be certain aspects of the physical space the instructor may be able to change to create a better learning experience for students. The responses from student survey question 4 are displayed in Figure 6.

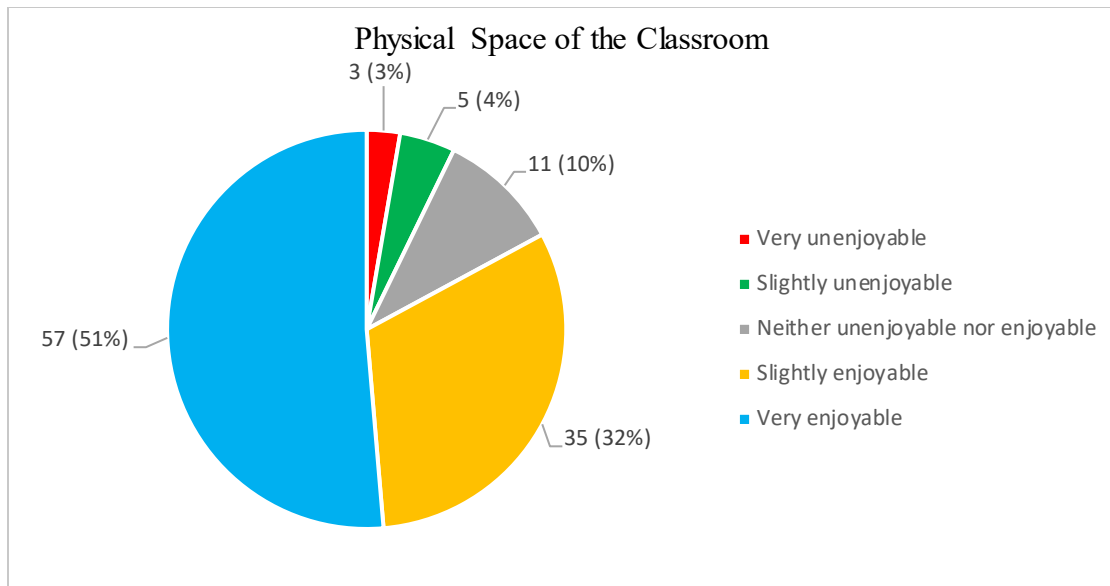


Figure 6. Survey responses to “How would you rate the physical space in your classroom?”

SEL skill development needs to happen in a safe, supportive, and well-managed atmosphere to be considered effective (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). In response to question 5, which asked “How would you rate the classroom’s atmosphere?”, 85 (76%) of the respondents reported *very positive*, 24 (22%) of the respondents reported *slightly positive*, and 2 (2%) of the respondents reported *neither negative nor positive*. There were no responses for *slightly negative* or *very negative*. I was glad to see a majority of the respondents’ reports *very positive*; however, the data indicates opportunity for growth in this area of the S-ECP Course 1. The responses from student survey question 5 are displayed in Figure 7.

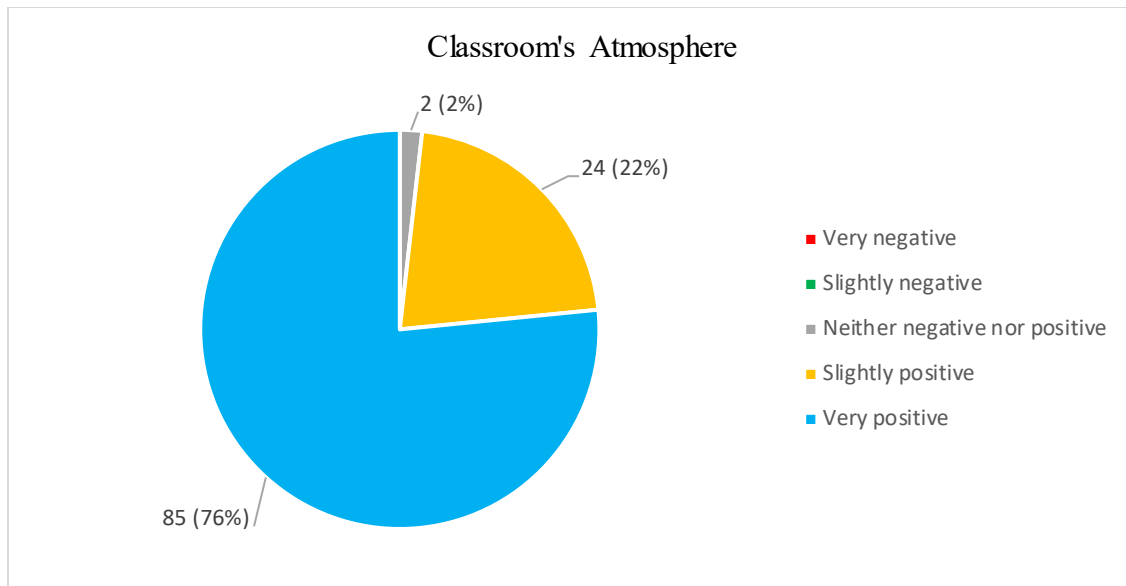


Figure 7. Survey responses to “How would you rate the classroom’s atmosphere?”

Teachers who regularly provide emotional support and encourage student engagement increases students’ capacities to learn (Weissberg et al., 2013). In response to question 6, which asked “How would you rate your excitement to go to this class?”, 61 (55%) of the respondents reported *very excited*, 41 (37%) of the respondents reported *slightly excited*, and 9 (8%) of the respondents reported *neither unexcited nor excited*. There were no responses for *slightly unexcited* or *very unexcited*. As the director, I can infer the training instructors receive on facilitation skills provide beneficial results including rich opportunities for discussion and student independence. The responses from student survey question 6 are displayed in Figure 8.

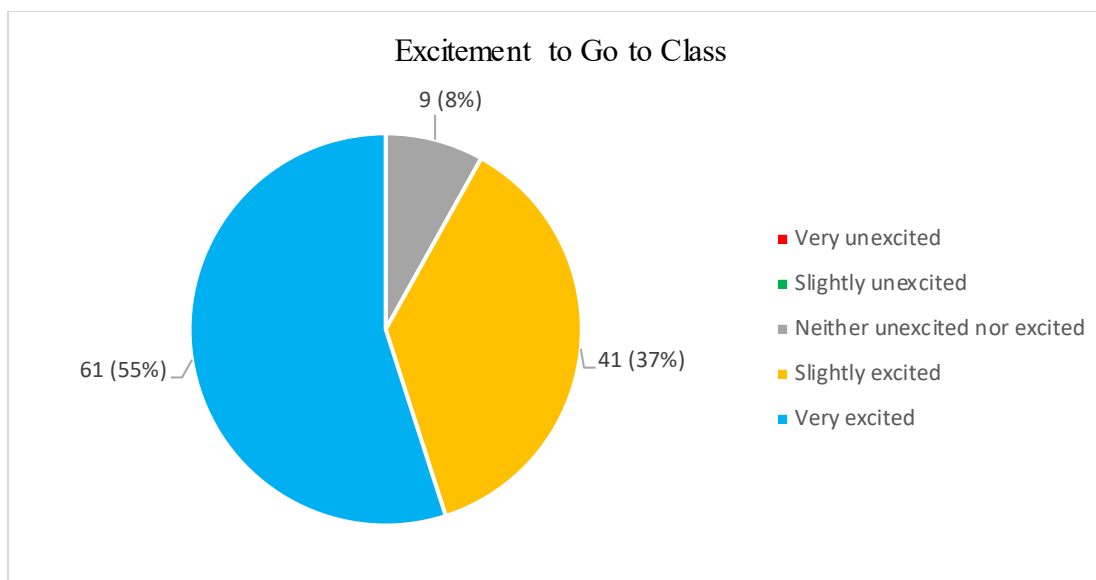


Figure 8. Survey responses to “How would you rate your excitement to go to class?”

When a teacher authentically cares for a student, they create a supportive classroom community that fosters empowering learning experiences (Darling-Hammond, 2015). In response to question 7, which asked “How would you rate the care your instructor has towards you?”, 104 (94%) of the respondents reported *very caring*, and 7 (6%) of the respondents reported *slightly caring*. There were no responses for *neither uncaring or nor caring*, *slightly uncaring*, or *very uncaring*. As a director, I find it important to ensure instructors have genuine intentions in teaching the course and truly care about the students in addition to the material being taught. As a result of question 7, it is quite apparent students feel cared for by their instructors. I believe the results of question 7 directly correlates with the student success commitment and the mission of SEU, in which caring for students is at the heart of the university, as well as the specific choices of individuals who instruct the course. The responses from student survey question 7 are displayed in Figure 9.

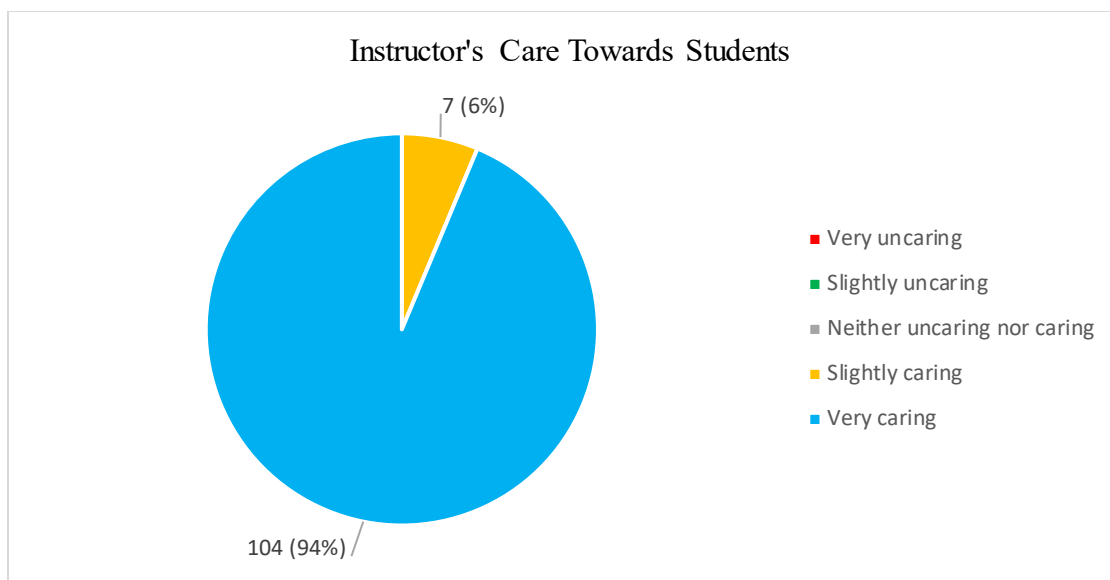


Figure 9. Survey responses to “How would you rate the care your instructor has towards you?”

When educators explain how skills will assist in their personal and professional lives, it creates an environment that supports students’ motivation to learn (Ambrose, Lovett, Bridges, DiPietro, & Norman, 2010). In response to question 8, which asked “How would you rate the S-ECP Course 1 topics (CPR, anger, empathy, etc.) you learn in class?”, 93 (84%) of the respondents reported *very helpful*, 16 (14%) of the respondents reported *slightly helpful*, and 2 (2%) of the respondents reported *neither unhelpful nor helpful*. There were no responses for *slightly unhelpful* or *very unhelpful*. In the S-ECP Course 1, there is a strong emphasis on teaching practical applications of the concepts to be implemented into students’ personal and professional lives. From the results of question 8, I can infer that students found the curriculum effective and developmentally appropriate. Moreover, it may imply students were able to apply the concepts into their personal and professional lives. While the majority of the students responded *very*

helpful, there is an opportunity for improvement in this area. The responses from student survey question 8 are displayed in Figure 10.

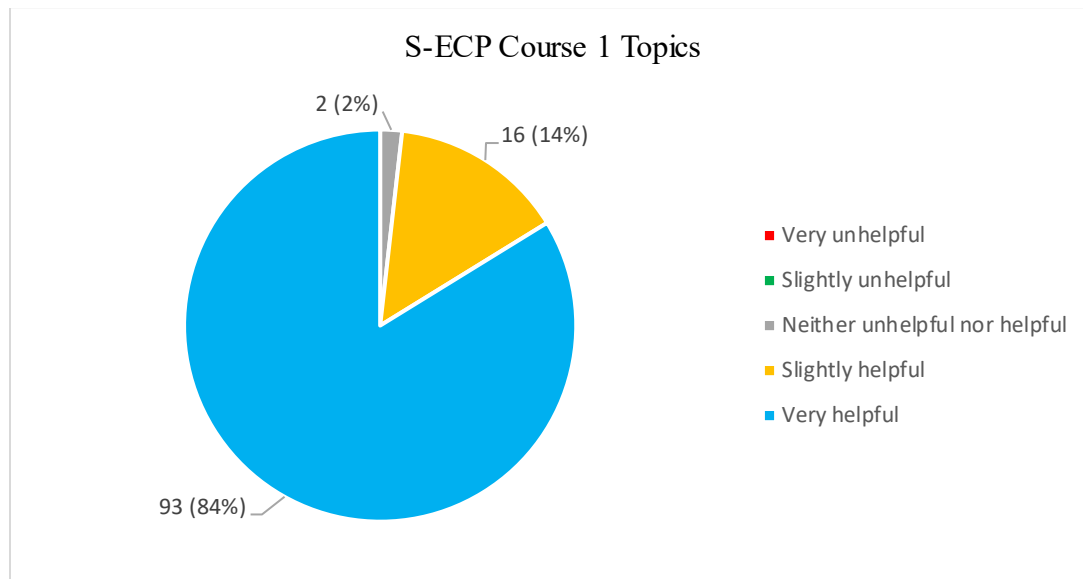


Figure 10. Survey responses to “How would you rate the S-ECP Course 1 topics (CPR, anger, empathy, etc.) you learn in class?”

SEL skills predict such significant life results for example completing high school on time, graduating from an institution, and securing a steady occupation (Hawkins, Kosterman, Catalano, Hill, & Abbott, 2005). In response to question 9, which asked “How would you rate the S-ECP Course 1 topics (CPR, anger, empathy, etc.) as being useful to you in the future?”, 94 (85%) of the respondents reported *very useful* and 17 (15%) of the respondents reported *slightly useful*. There were no responses for *neither useless nor useful*, *slightly useless*, or *very useless*. As a result of question 9, it is useful to see majority of the students perceived the SEL concepts to be useful in their futures. This may indicate that students will rely on these tools to effectively manage their relationships, be successful in their future endeavors, and to live a positive and productive life. The responses from student survey question 9 are displayed in Figure 11.

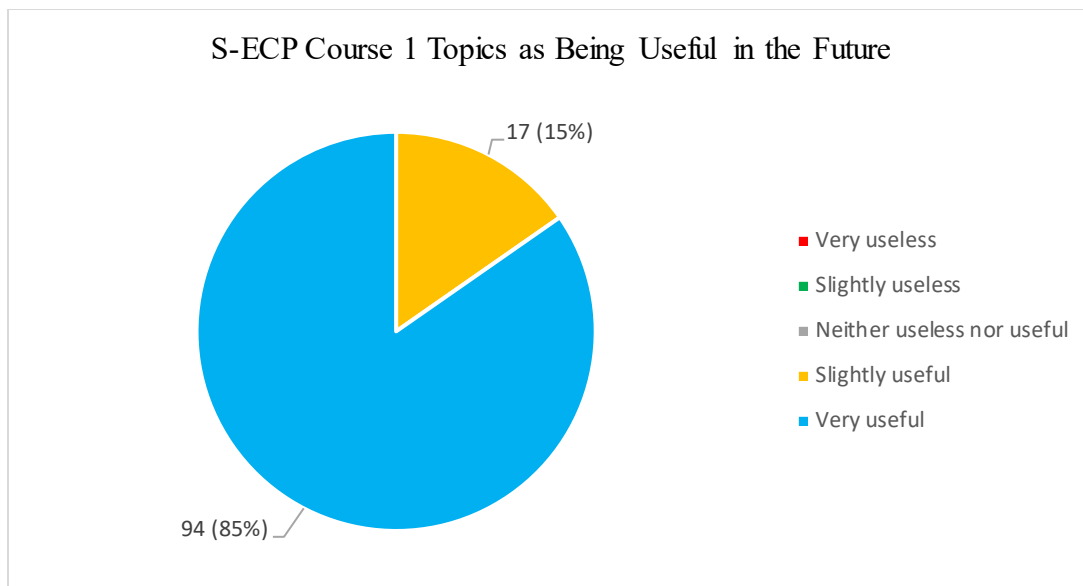


Figure 11. Survey responses to “How would you rate the S-ECP Course 1 topics (CPR, anger, empathy, etc.) as being useful to you in the future?”

To provide a quality education, teachers must make sure students have sufficient resources and good instructional materials (Darling-Hammond, 2015). In response to question 10, which asked “How would you rate the S-ECP Course 1 student workbook in presenting the topics (CPR, anger, empathy, etc.)?”, 71 (64%) of the respondents reported *very effective*, 38 (34%) of the respondents reported *slightly effective*, and 2 (2%) of the respondents reported *neither ineffective nor effective*. There were no responses for *slightly ineffective* or *very ineffective*. As a result of question 10, I can surmise the majority of students find the workbook useful and this indicates this is one part of the course that is working well. This is positive feedback because the workbook was developed and personalized for this specific course. The results from the focus groups will help determine specific information to support the advancement of the workbook. The responses from student survey question 10 are displayed in Figure 12.

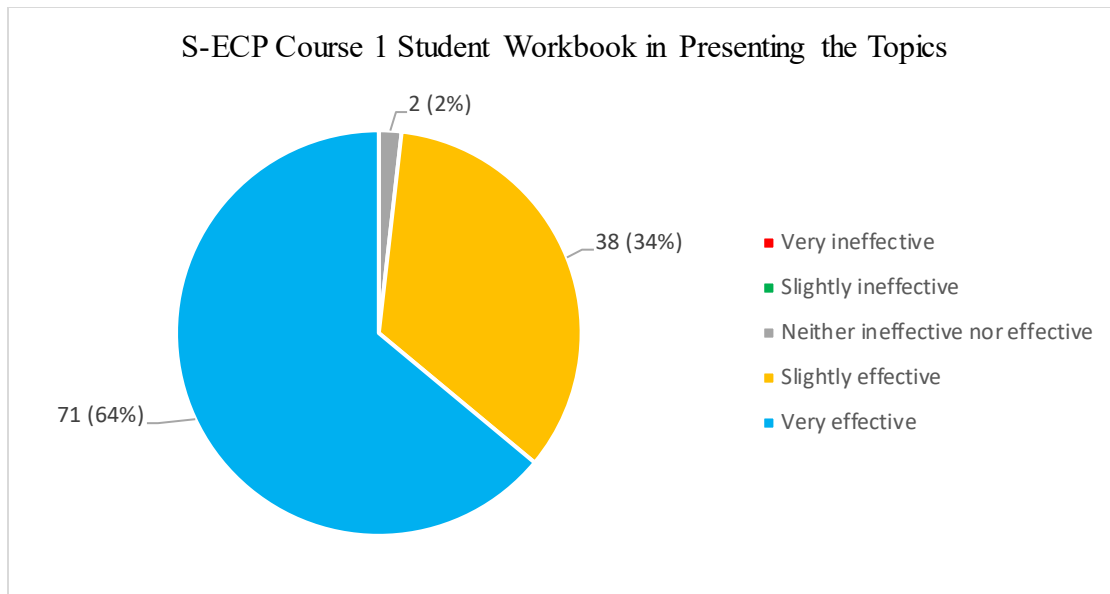


Figure 12. Survey responses to “How would you rate your S-ECP Course 1 student workbook in presenting the topics (CPR, anger, empathy, etc.)?”

SEL involves personalization of the education process and engaging pedagogies and relevant curricula that offer opportunities for deeper learning (Weissberg et al., 2015). In response to question 11, which asked “How would you rate the S-ECP Course 1 student workbook in providing an opportunity to apply newly acquired topics (CPR, anger, empathy, etc.)?”, 78 (70%) of the respondents reported *very helpful*, 30 (27%) of the respondents reported *slightly helpful*, and 3 (3%) of the respondents reported *neither unhelpful nor helpful*. There were no responses for *slightly unhelpful* or *very unhelpful*. The S-ECP 1 workbook was developed to provide a practical application for deeper and meaningful learning. As a result of the data from question 11, it is useful to see the majority of students reported *very effective* or *slightly effective*. This indicates the workbook is an effective part of the curriculum. The results from the focus groups will help gain more insight on question 11. The responses from student survey question 11 are displayed in Figure 13.

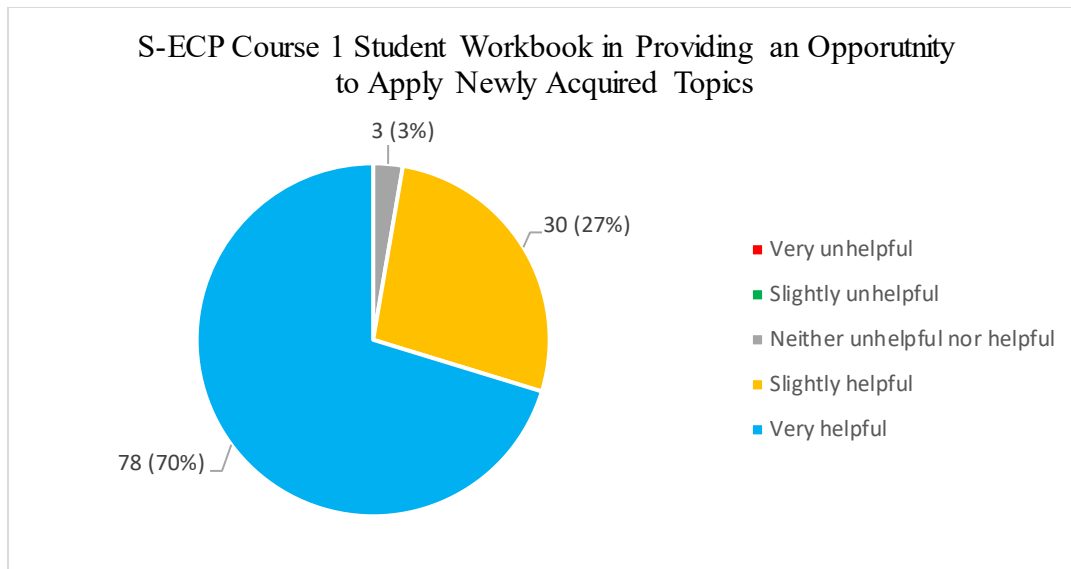


Figure 13. Survey responses to “How would you rate the S-ECP Course 1 student workbook in providing an opportunity to apply newly acquired topics (CPR, anger, empathy, etc.)?”

The S-ECP Course 1 student workbook is based on theories and logic models, and focuses on specific competencies in one or more of the five SEL competency areas, which is an indicator of successful SEL programs (Weissberg et al., 2015). In response to question 12, which asked “How would you rate the S-ECP Course 1 workbook in guiding your learning of the topics (CPR, anger, empathy, etc.)?”, 82 (74%) of the respondents reported *very useful*, 28 (25%) of the respondents reported *slightly useful*, and 1 (1%) of the respondents reported *neither useless nor useful*. There were no responses for *slightly useless* or *very useless*. The results from question 12 may indicate the workbook is a meaningful and effective resource for students. The responses from student survey question 12 are displayed in Figure 14.

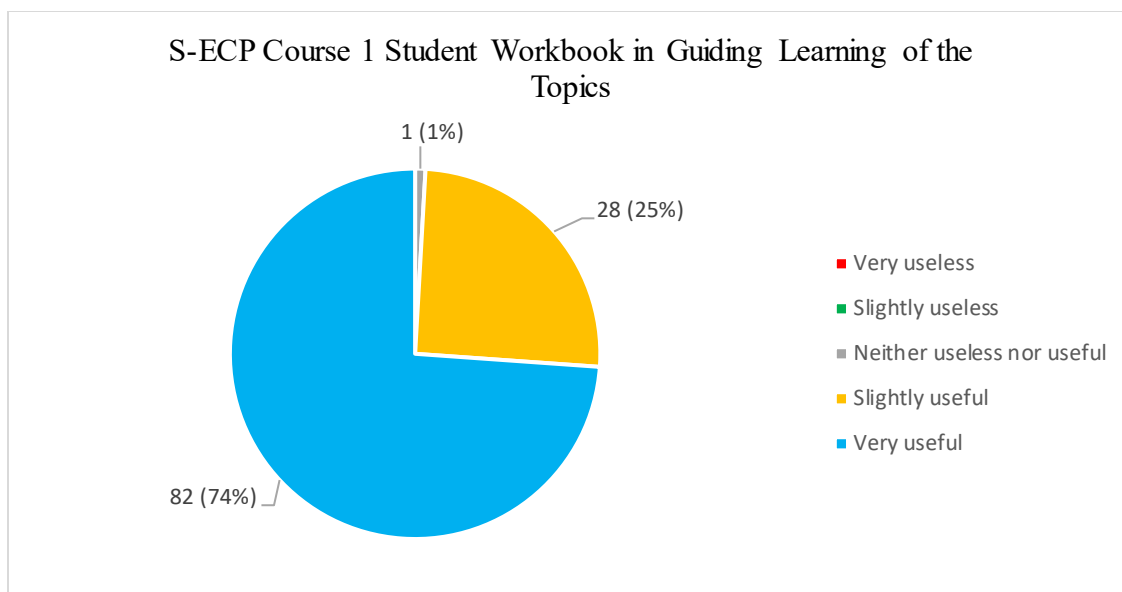


Figure 14. Survey responses to “How would you rate your S-ECP Course 1 student workbook in guiding your learning of the topics (CPR, anger, empathy, etc.)?”

Effective teaching involves much more than the presentation of fundamental skills. If teachers want students to develop mastery of their learning, students must be able to practice integrating the skills and understanding when to apply them (Ambrose et al., 2015). In response to question 13, which asked “How would you rate the effect of the S-ECP Course 1 in increasing your knowledge and understanding of the subject?”, 96 (86%) of the respondents reported *very effective*, 15 (14%) of the respondents reported *slightly effective*. There were no responses for *neither ineffective nor effective*, *slightly ineffective*, or *very ineffective*. The results of question 13 may indicate that the S-ECP instructors in addition to the curriculum are two aspects that are working well in the S-ECP Course 1. The responses from student survey question 13 are displayed in Figure 15.

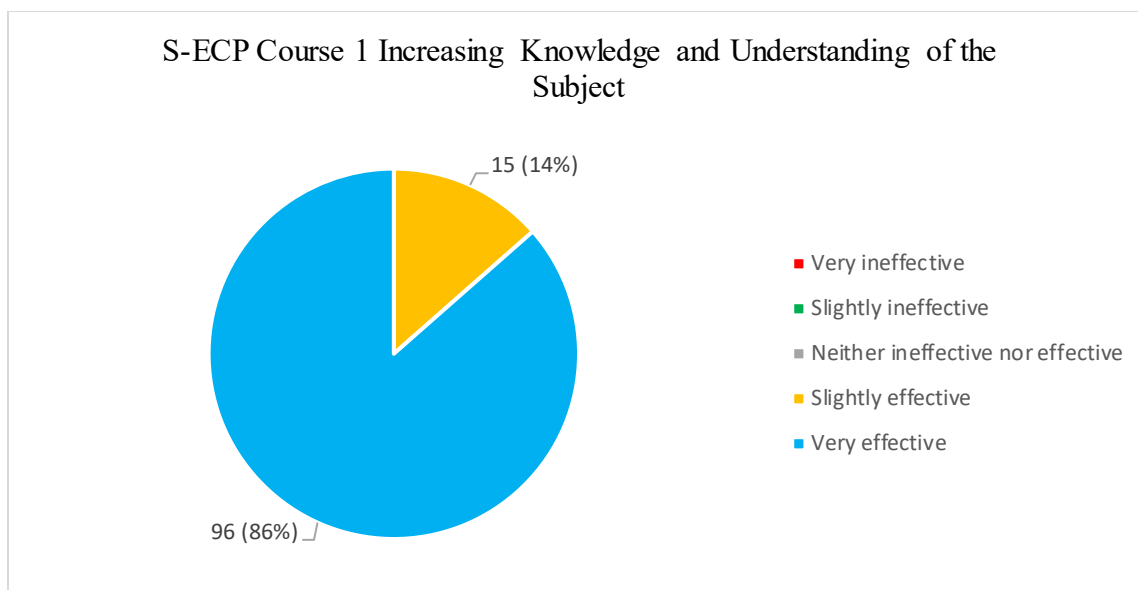


Figure 15. Survey responses to “How would you rate the effect of the S-ECP Course 1 in increasing your knowledge and understanding of the subject?”

Teachers are responsible for developing the foundational layers of a successful classroom climate, which include the social and emotional dimensions (Ambrose et al., 2015). In response to question 14, which asked “How would you rate your experience in the S-ECP Course 1?”, 98 (88%) of the respondents reported *very positive*, 12 (11%) of the respondents reported *slightly positive*, and 1 (1%) of the respondents reported *neither negative nor positive*. There were no responses for *slightly negative* or *very negative*. The results of question 14 indicate the instructors are well prepared in providing a safe, responsive, and positive environment. The results of question 14 may also indicate that students may be talking positively to other students, professors, and advisors about the course which helps for recruitment and expansion of the S-ECP. As a director, it is important to work towards continuous improvement in this area; therefore the results of the focus groups will be useful to provide valuable information. The responses from student survey question 14 are displayed in Figure 16.

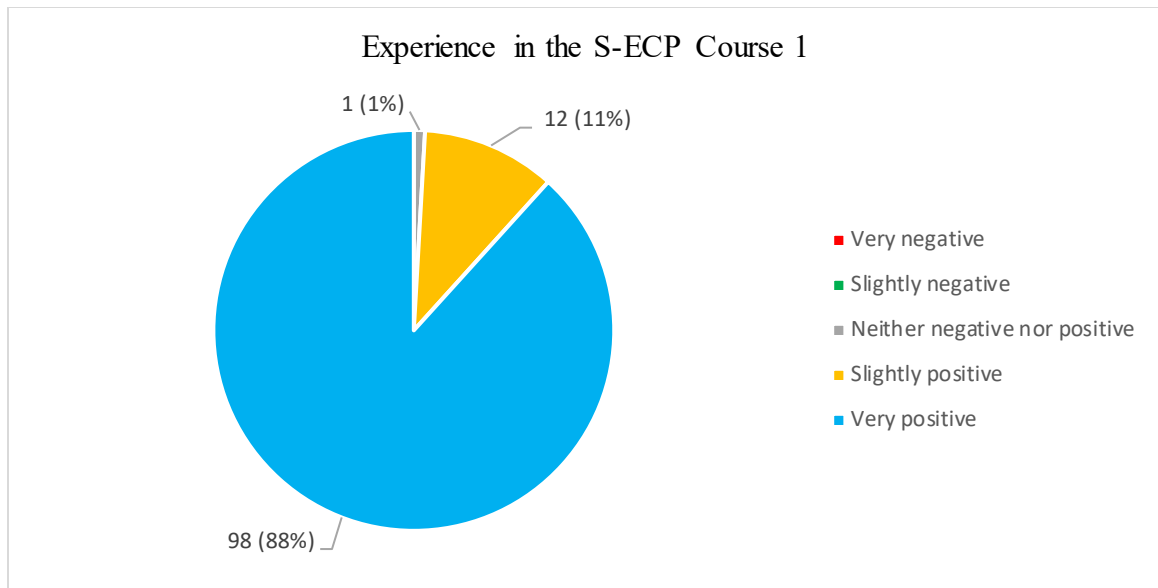


Figure 16. Survey responses to “How would you rate your experience in the S-ECP Course 1?”

Teaching students SEL skills leads to more success in school and in their daily lives (Weissberg, 2015). In response to question 15, which asked “How would you rate the effect the S-ECP Course 1 has had on your life?”, 83 (75%) of the respondents reported *very positive effect*, 24 (21%) of the respondents reported *slightly positive effective*, and 4 (4%) of the respondents reported *neither negative effect nor positive effect*. There were no responses for *slightly negative effect* or *very negative effect*. The results of question 15 indicate that the S-ECP Course 1 may have changed students’ lives toward becoming more productive and positive. The responses from student survey question 15 are displayed in Figure 17.

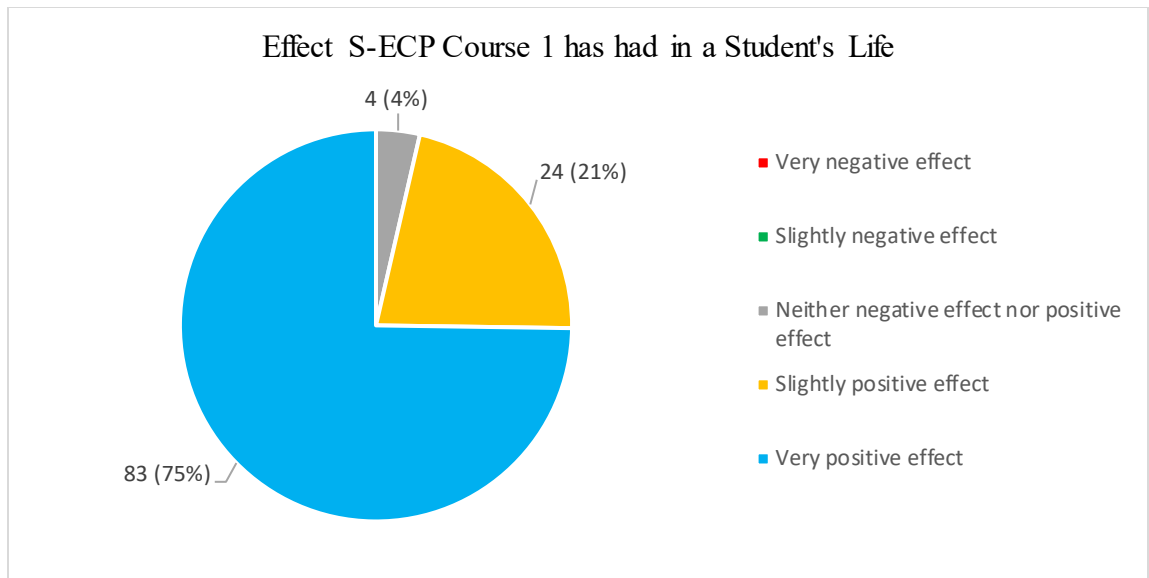


Figure 17. Survey responses to “How would you rate the effect the S-ECP Course 1 has had on your life?”

Focus Groups

Eleven students who completed the Social-Emotional Competencies Course 1 (S-ECP 1) accepted the invitation to participate in a focus group. A response rate of 11 out of 60 (18%) agreed to complete the focus group in a face-to-face audio-recorded process. The range of the focus groups was 38 minutes to 41 minutes in length of time involved, with the average session being 40 minutes.

The first question asked of the focus groups was, “What do you think is working well in the Social-Emotional Competencies Course 1 (S-ECP Course 1)?”. Four themes evolved. They were an Emotionally Intelligent Instructor, Application of Skills, Classroom Atmosphere, and Curriculum and Instruction. Eight (73%) of the respondents commented on either the instructor displaying high levels of emotional intelligence or showing genuine care for students. It appeared students felt the instructor had a great deal to do with what was working well in the S-ECP Course 1. This data suggest the

instructors teaching S-ECP Course 1 are modeling healthy social-emotional behaviors, which could be a benefit from the certification course and the established culture of SEU.

The second theme that emerged was Application of Skills. Eight (73%) of the respondents reported on their ability to apply the concepts to their everyday lives. One student reported, “You become more in tune with yourself and as a result of that, your relationships improve. You become a better person and you can see things that you didn’t see before and you can help people.” The opportunities for students to discuss, reflect, and practice SEL-explicit curriculum all seemed to support what worked well within the course.

The third theme that emerged was Classroom Atmosphere. Eight (73%) of the respondents commented on the classroom either as being safe, comfortable, or nonjudgmental. One student reported, “Even though we all come from very different backgrounds and different ages, everyone is really respectful of one another and we’ve become friends and care about each other.” From my experience as an instructor, features of the course that included capping S-ECP Course 1 to a maximum of 12 students, establishing ground rules on the first day, and sitting in a semi-circle or conference-style seating may appear to influence what was working well within the course.

The last theme that emerged was Curriculum and Instruction. Four (36%) of the respondents commented on the workbook either as being organized effectively or providing an opportunity to apply the concepts to their everyday lives. The homegrown workbook was created to provide a practical guide for SEU students to develop social and

emotional competencies. I can infer from the comments that the development of the workbook was a successful and effective use of the S-ECP's time and resources.

Three (27%) of the respondents commented never having a class that taught these skills before. This data suggest a prevalent SEL gap in Pre-K-12 and postsecondary education. In postsecondary, social-emotional development is absent when referring to institutional goals, assessments, and research (Castro & Clyde, 2018). From my experience as an instructor teaching the S-ECP Course 1, motivated students are grateful when given the opportunity to learn and apply SEL competencies that may have been absent from their previous educational journey.

One (0.09%) of the respondents commented on S-ECP Course 1 incorporating various methods in delivering instruction such as discussion, use of videos, and activities. Valuable learning happens in differentiated small group instruction and can make learning more accessible and exciting (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2010). The S-ECP Course 1 incorporates lesson plans that provide differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students. That seems to support what is working well within the course. Overall, these responses provided rich information on the strengths of the S-ECP Course 1. Additionally, this data help clarify and explain the responses on the student survey.

The second question asked was, "What do you think is not working well in the S-ECP Course 1?". Three themes emerged which were the Moodle Page (students' online learning platform), Fast Pace, and Classroom Expectations. Four (36%) of the respondents commented on the Moodle Page, either being poorly organized or not user friendly. One student commented, "We have to go and click on a folder and download the folder to see the assignment and then go and download another page just to see when it's

due.” This data could suggest that the S-ECP Course 1 may be limiting students’ academic success as a result of the Moodle Page being challenging to navigate.

The second theme that emerged was Fast Pace. Two (18%) respondents commented on the S-ECP Course 1 operating at a fast pace, which did not allow a sufficient amount of time on the concepts. In the S-ECP Course 1 there are 33 concepts taught where students are provided opportunities to discuss, reflect, and apply these concepts. These data suggest this is something to consider and address. This may then positively affect the students’ learning experience.

The third theme that emerged was Classroom Expectations. One (0.09%) of the respondents commented on Classroom Expectations. This was in regards to dreading setting up the chairs in a semi-circle or conference-style seating for each class period. These data help me possibly explain the results from question 4 in the student survey in which some students reported having an unenjoyable experience due to the physical space of the classroom. As a result of the data from focus group question 2, I can determine as a director, I need to reconsider and possibly revise important aspects of the S-ECP Course 1 including the Moodle Page, the Fast Pace schedule of concepts, and Classroom Expectations.

The third question asked was “What do you think are the greatest challenges in the S-ECP Course 1?”. Three themes emerged from this question. They were Vulnerability, Application of Skills, and Use of Time. Five (45%) of the respondents commented on Vulnerability that either related to challenges of sharing in class or experiencing an instructor who shows vulnerability. One student reported, “My instructor was the first grown man that I’ve ever seen completely embrace being a

vulnerable person with absolute strangers and I thought that was absolutely beautiful, but was hard for me to see. I was raised seeing men around me not this way.” Being vulnerable, expressing emotions, and sharing personal stories can certainly be challenging for students to engage in as part to the S-ECP Course 1. From these data, it seems that intentional time needs to be included when talking about these specific challenges in the beginning of S-ECP Course 1. This may lead to creating an effective learning environment.

The second theme that emerged was Application of Skills. Two (18%) of the respondents commented on difficulties applying the S-ECP Course 1 concepts to their life situation or future career fields. I believe the second theme connects with the third theme that emerged which is Use of Time. Two (18%) of the respondents suggested ineffective Use of Time in class considering the workbook worksheets. The S-ECP Course 1 workbook worksheets provide students the opportunity to discuss, reflect, and practice applying SEL concepts. These data suggests this may be the reason why students are experiencing difficulties when applying the tools and strategies of the course. Currently, there is no learning objective or assignment in S-ECP Course 1 connecting the SEL concepts to the students’ future career field, but it seems as though it would be beneficial to include this concept. As a result from focus group question 3, I can determine that all the respondents perceive the S-ECP Course 1 as beneficial, but there are certain aspects that are holding the students back in reaching their full potential. These data will help create meaningful changes in the S-ECP Course 1.

The last question stated, “What do you think are ways to improve the S-ECP Course 1?”. Four themes emerged from this question. They were Continuing the S-ECP

Course 1, Program Awareness, Differentiated Instruction, and Brain Health. Four (36%) of the respondents commented on creating an additional course to further develop the skills learned from S-ECP Course 1. One student commented, “Everybody wants S-ECP Course 1 (pseudonym) Part 2.” From these data, it supports the need for an advanced course, S-ECP Course 2 with concentration being on the application of skills through a coaching model for students.

The second theme that emerged from the final question was Program Awareness. Four (36%) of respondents commented on the need to create an awareness of S-ECP Course 1 by further educating the campus community of the course and the course objectives. As the S-ECP director, my role is to be a strong advocate for the course and continually communicate the importance of S-ECP Course 1 on campus. Currently, there are 27 SEU faculty or staff certified to teach S-ECP Course 1 or infuse SEL into their classrooms or interactions with students. These data suggest that I may need to rethink ways to intentionally involve the certified S-ECP faculty and staff to advocate for the S-ECP within the campus of SEU.

The third theme that emerged was Differentiated Instruction. Three (27%) of the respondents commented about Differentiated Instruction. They recommended instructors include more short videos clips and activities during class time. The S-ECP Course 1 has an online resource page for instructors with variety of short videos clips and activities to choose from for each concept. As a director, I know this page is sparse and needs further development to expand resources provided to the instructors. These data support that further development of the online resource page may increase the amount of Differentiated Instruction in the S-ECP Course 1.

The last theme that emerged was Brain Health. Three (27%) of the respondents reported on incorporating Brain Health resources as part of the in the S-ECP Course 1. One student commented, “Mental health is the most important health. I think introducing resources a little more in S-ECP Course 1 will help.” These data suggests the S-ECP Course 1 needs to make changes in regards to the instructors intentionally talking about Brain Health in S-ECP Course 1. This means added training for instructors is critical. As a result of the data from focus group question 4, there are very important and meaningful improvements that can be made to the S-ECP Course 1 in order to create a safe and effective learning environment for students.

Content Analysis

I examined eight institutions from SEU’s conference to determine the degree in which these similar regionally accredited, private, and American higher education institutions include or exclude SEL curriculum, both in an academic and experiential form. I examined the eight institutions’ course catalogs for the 2018-2019 academic year. The keywords I used to search for SEL academic explicit curriculum were *emotional intelligence*, *social-emotional learning*, *empowerment*, *21st century skills*, *soft skills*, *non-cognitive skills*, and *employability skills*.

Five (62%) of the institutions did not have any of the keywords identified in their course catalogs. Two (18%) of the institutions provided the term *emotional intelligence* on the course catalog. These were listed in both course descriptions but only offered to students admitted into TRIO Student Support Services (SSS). From the course descriptions, it could be determined that both qualified as providing the opportunity for students to discuss, practice, and apply SEL competencies. One of the descriptions

stated, “Students will be able to develop self-awareness and lifelong learning skills” (citation omitted to preserve anonymity). It is apparent from the description the course would qualify as an experiential curriculum delivered to students.

One (0.1%) of the institutions provided the term *21st century skills* in the course title and description. From the course description, it could be determined there was very little opportunities for students to discuss, practice, and apply SEL competencies but rather the emphasis was on learning about theory. The course description states, “particular attention is paid to emerging technologies, new paradigms for learning, changing conceptions of community, and the opportunities of living in a globalized world” (citation omitted to preserve anonymity). From the description, it appears students have the opportunity to learn new information about specific 21st century topics, but not necessarily to engage in experiential learning activities. Promoting SEL for students in the classroom entails teaching SEL skills, providing chances for students to use SEL skills, and relating SEL competencies to life situations (Weissberg et al., 2015).

From this analysis, it seems that SEL competencies are mainly excluded from the academic curriculum of the eight institutions examined. As a result, this data validates the shortage of SEL curriculum in higher education (Conley, 2015). However, the movement toward emotional intelligence is happening in schools including higher education. There are extensive efforts to integrate SEL into curriculum at the postsecondary level (Castro & Clyde, 2018). These study findings describe the need for SEL academic explicit curriculum in higher education.

Organizational Changes

The rich data provided by the stakeholders in this study can be applied to improve the S-ECP Course 1 and continue to expand efforts. SEL is not a trend or fad and the demand continues to grow as our world, society, and schools are continuously changing. However, SEL at times is referred to “soft skills” or personal qualities rather than clear objectives of instruction (Frey, Fisher, & Smith, 2019). Our school system was not created to address the needs of our students today (Wagner et al., 2006). SEL has forever operated in the implicit or hidden curriculum and if it continues this way there will be consistent gaps in student learning (Frey et al., 2019). For SEU to be successful in its mission of educating and forming the whole student, it is critical to provide all students the opportunity for SEL-explicit ongoing curriculum campus-wide with a shared vision and goals.

Often the problem is not a lack of SEL, but too many different objectives such as character education, healthy relationships week, and leadership training that lacks coordination (Jones & Kahn, 2017). A critical component to provide change at SEU will be to examine current SEL initiatives, reflect upon gaps and overlaps, and identify how the pieces fit together across the SEU campus. Higher education is notorious for working in silos. This anticipated change suggests SEU needs to break through the silos by creating partnerships across campus with a shared goal of creating meaningful SEL experiences for students. The data supplied by the stakeholders in this study will help achieve a plan of change that will improve student learning along with improving the quality of relationships students, faculty, and staff have with each other.

Although significant data confirms the benefits of SEL, the implementation of SEL continues to be challenging. Effective implementation will be an imperative action step to create the organizational changes needed for SEU to expand SEL-explicit ongoing curriculum campus-wide. Using Wagner et al. (2006) *Change leadership: A practical guide for transforming our schools*, I developed an “As-Is” plan that reflected the organizational changes of SEU (See Appendix E: 4C’s “As-Is” Analysis). Wagner et al. (2006) developed a framework to support leaders in school systems to fully understand and create efficiency to thrive at transforming schools. By utilizing this framework for change leadership, I will be able to use my findings from this study to achieve change within the campus and the larger educational community. I used the four organization areas developed by Wagner et al. (2006), which are also known as the 4 C’s. They are Context, Culture, Conditions, and Competencies to help provide meaningful and sustainable change within SEU.

In developing my “As-Is” analysis, I applied a transformative improvement process in creating a change plan for all SEU students to receive SEL-explicit ongoing curriculum. Wagner et al. provided the 4 C’s (2006) as a diagnostic tool that helps identify important issues and areas that are influencing the current problem “As-Is”. The purpose of this tool is to create an awareness of the current problems at SEU. By using the 4 C’s, I dissected the problem, understood influential elements, and communicated the requirements to create innovation. By examining the 4 C’s, I am able to uncover aspects of the problem that I may not have seen otherwise.

The next critical step of this framework is to construct a “To-Be” change plan using the same method of analysis that includes Context, Culture, Conditions, and

Competencies. The “To-Be” diagram is a systematic and dynamic vision of the future to which one aspires and it helps identify the landscape of work that is necessary in order to make progress in your “As-Is” diagram (Wagner et al., 2006). In the following paragraphs, I will share my “As-Is” (2006) diagram used to construct SEU’s current challenges and opportunities to further develop and grow.

Context

To begin, I looked into the general organizational structure of SEU that includes the social and historical context. SEU is a regionally accredited, private, American, and Christian university with a diverse student population. Historically, SEU transformed its mission, vision, and strategic plan, under a long-term President, to adapt to the needs of the 21st century student. In present-day higher education, the need and urgency for SEL skills are critical for the diverse demographic of the 21st century learner.

In my professional opinion and as an instructor for the S-ECP Course 1, I find that students have difficulties engaging in SEL content initially. During the first week of the course, we practice identifying emotions. Most students struggle due to a variety of factors. These include the inability to feel comfortable expressing emotions, lack of an emotional vocabulary, the inability to understand the difference between a thought and a feeling, and the inability to understand the difference between a physical and emotional state. This challenge, I believe, reflects the gap in SEL at the Pre-K-12 levels, as well as a possible absence of parental support on long-term emotional development. Thus, it is important that SEU students are receiving SEL-explicit ongoing curriculum campus-wide with a shared vision and goals.

SEL provides the opportunity for SEU students to develop tools and strategies to become successful during and after college (CASEL, 2015). The work of building foundational life skills for SEU students transpires through meaningful SEL efforts inside and outside of the classroom. This is no small task for SEU, yet it is imperative to support SEU students academically and emotionally.

Culture

Wagner et al. (2006) describes “culture as the shared values, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and behaviors related to students and learning, teachers and teaching, instructional leadership, and the quality of relationships within and beyond the school” (p.102). When describing the culture of SEU, the word *caring* is extremely prevalent. SEU’s mission focuses on caring for students in a way that is intrusive. It is apparent that SEU’s faculty and staff consistently go beyond the scope of their duties to provide meaningful experiences for students. Furthermore, the mission of SEU focuses on educating and forming the whole student and delivers a strong commitment to student success.

The President of SEU views SEL as a vital part of forming students’ lives, hence the development of the S-ECP at the institution. However, there is no clear direction for academic and non-academic departments to include SEL-explicit ongoing curriculum campus-wide with a shared vision and goals. If there is no direction for SEL, then the SEU community cannot completely benefit from the S-ECP that fosters the critical foundational skills and competencies of the program.

Conditions

The conditions of SEU are defined by Wagner et al. (2006) as the “external architecture surrounding student learning, the tangible arrangements of time, space, and resources” (p. 101). It is important to recognize that SEU is not starting from the beginning in employing social and emotional standards and competences. The S-ECP has been part of the university since 2007. In 2012 the S-ECP Course 1 was developed. Additionally, the S-ECP Course 1 is offered as an option to fulfill a general education requirement for undergraduate students. However, not all students are participating in SEL academic explicit curriculum at SEU.

Yet, it is important to realize there may be numerous different SEL initiatives taking place at SEU. Therefore, it will be important to identify how these pieces fit together. The need to develop and articulate clear goals for students’ social and emotional learning across campus is crucial. Developing a shared definition, vision statement, and implementation plan to facilitate consistent understanding and delivery of SEL throughout SEU will be part of the change plan. As a result, SEL initiatives on campus will not feel scattered or piecemeal, but rather intentional and explicit.

Based on the provided feedback from the participants in this study, I acknowledged the environment plays a vital part. The need for change to provide all students SEL-explicit ongoing curriculum revealed the need for ongoing training and professional development for the S-ECP Course 1 instructors and future instructors infusing SEL competencies within their courses. It is apparent these instructors must be fully prepared to provide an emotionally safe and supportive environment for students.

To achieve this effectively, SEU must provide accessible ongoing training, development, and resources.

Competencies

Clear expectations are one of the most important aspects of this change plan. Without clear direction from the institution, SEL will not reach the full benefits it could provide to the campus community of SEU. For my “As-Is” plan to change to my “To-Be” plan, the institution must establish clear expectations that are realistic and manageable for SEL. SEL is far too important to leave to chance, so it is important for the institution to set clear expectations for SEL-explicit ongoing curriculum campus-wide with a shared vision and goals.

There needs to be specific action steps established to achieve my change plan for SEU. First, the institution needs to identify gaps and overlaps within SEL initiatives throughout academic programs and all campus operations. To overcome gaps and overlaps, the S-ECP will collaborate with designated faculty and staff to establish a shared definition, vision statement, and implementation plan for SEL initiatives. Additionally, the institution must offer training, development, and resources for the campus community on a variety of SEL strategies and approaches.

Interpretation

The results indicate a need for SEL-explicit curriculum in higher education, beyond the existing curriculum in the Pre-K-12 system. The data from this study highlights the deficits of SEL competencies SEU students developed because of the gap in SEL during their Pre-K-12 school years and possible absence of parental SEL support. Research shows a large number of secondary students hold social-emotional skill deficits

that result in negative outcomes related to academics and relationships with peers (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). SEL is advancing every day in the Pre-K-12 system because of practice, policy, and research, but there is still progress to be made.

From my experience teaching and training SEL, I see how SEL positively affects students, faculty, staff, and community members. SEL-explicit curriculum is relatively new to higher education. The data from this study helps move the S-ECP at SEU in a positive direction. Additionally, I hope the data positively contributes towards future research on SEL within higher education institutions to review, modify, and possibly adopt.

Lastly, the data generated in this study suggest that postsecondary students benefit from social-emotional competencies. SEL can empower college students to navigate difficult academic, social, and emotional territory (Conley, 2015). In summary, higher education needs to start thinking of education differently by explicitly including SEL as a core component of the mission, vision, goals, and initiatives of the institution.

Judgments

The purpose of the S-ECP Course 1 program evaluation was to evaluate the quality of the S-ECP Course 1 and to create any necessary modifications to improve it. The data gathered provided information that highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the S-ECP Course 1. As a result, both the primary and secondary research questions were answered through the student survey and focus group questions.

More specifically during the focus groups, I asked questions in order to gain rich data about the students' perceptions of the S-ECP Course 1. The questions were open-

ended to achieve the goal of obtaining qualitative data. Next, the questions identified in the student survey achieved answering this study's primary and secondary research questions. The mixed-methods approach provided a deeper examination of the results, which will lead to creating effective changes within the S-ECP.

The results of the data were informative because they provided information on what needs to be changed in order to improve the S-ECP Course 1. The data emphasized concrete modifications that can be made to the S-ECP Course 1 to support student learning and to provide an effective classroom environment. Additionally, the data provides clear direction for future steps to implement SEL-explicit initiatives throughout the SEU campus effectively. The students view the S-ECP Course 1 as beneficial, but most importantly, they provided data on how to improve the course to achieve students' full growth potential.

Recommendations

Overall, the results of this study were helpful to determine improvements to the S-ECP Course 1, with the goal of creating a better learning environment and experience for both the students and instructors. Instructor training improvements are one vital area that I would like to focus on as a recommendation for the S-ECP. The training provided for the S-ECP Course 1 instructors reaps benefits shown in the data, but it must continue to grow in order to provide continuous training that addresses specific topics such as brain health and SEL best practices.

Due to the nature of the S-ECP Course 1, I believe focusing on brain health will be a priority. I am recommending two simple action steps to achieve this process. First, the S-ECP will require all instructors to obtain Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training

certification. Research suggests MHFA training is effective “in improving mental health literacy and appropriate support for those with mental health problems” (Morgan, Ross, & Reavley, 2018, p.17). In January of 2019, I became certified in MHFA at SEU. The skills that I developed in MHFA have benefited me in instructing the S-ECP Course 1 and in my everyday interactions with students. Lastly, a section entitled *Caring about You and Your Brain Health* will be included in the S-ECP Course 1 syllabus in order to help eliminate the stigma associated with brain health and create an open conversation with supportive information and resources. Additionally, brain health resources including on-campus and off-campus counseling information and the ULifeline website will be provided on the students’ learning platform for awareness and accessibility.

The data suggests students benefit from S-ECP Course 1 and expressed interest in additional opportunities to participate in SEL-explicit ongoing curriculum. A large piece of the organizational change would require SEU to develop a shared definition and vision for SEL to move forward effectively. A shared vision statement assists schools in developing a common language, understanding, and responsibility for prioritizing SEL for all students (CASEL, 2015). An audit would be necessary to gather information about existing SEL-explicit curriculum campus-wide and examine how it is being delivered. From there, SEU faculty and staff can then effectively plan necessary modifications to current SEL-explicit curriculum if needed and further implement SEL-explicit curriculum where there are prevalent gaps.

Furthermore, training would be expanded and continuous for faculty and staff delivering the SEL-explicit curriculum across campus. Professional development that includes initial and ongoing training seems to be necessary for implementing SEL

programming and practices (Durlak, 2015). It is critical to focus on both training and implementation as part of the organizational change of SEU.

The findings of this study connect to student learning because schools are to support the growth of every person. Classroom learning always includes cognitive, social, and emotional components (Frey et al., 2019). To support the whole individual, SEL needs to be a part of the explicit curriculum.

CHAPTER FIVE: TO-BE FRAMEWORK

Introduction

To create change within the university, I will be adopting the 4 C's change model for organizational renewal as described in *Change leadership: A practical guide to transforming our schools* (Wagner et al., 2006). The 4 C's, Context, Culture, Conditions, and Competencies, change model takes the approach of identifying the goals in universities and school districts systemically. To move forward in this approach, I must provide an in-depth analysis of the university. This analysis will help move from the problem (what is called the "As-Is" state, our current reality) to a future vision of structural improvement (our "To-Be" picture) (Wagner et al., 2006).

In creating my "As-Is" and "To-Be" charts, I took a systematic view of the university, focusing on the factors that could provide all students meaningful SEL-explicit curriculum. I have developed my "As-Is" chart and removed the problem by creating a solution in my "To-Be" chart in this section (Wagner et al., 2006) (See Appendix F: 4C's "To-Be" Analysis). I applied the 4 C's framework that includes Context, Culture, Conditions, and Competencies to ensure I examine all the areas of practice related to SEL within the university. This plan is to build a campus-wide blueprint to implement meaningful SEL-explicit ongoing curriculum with a shared vision and goals.

The "To-Be" solution plan requires the institution of SEU to support SEL by developing a shared definition, vision statement, and implementation plan. After the institution has identified gaps and overlap of SEL efforts throughout the campus, S-ECP staff will work together with departments currently infusing SEL. In addition, S-ECP

staff will assist in infusing SEL-explicit initiatives in the identified gap areas across campus. Finally, the institution will provide extended training, development, and resources on campus for a variety of SEL strategies and approaches.

Throughout the duration of this change across campus, there must be ongoing dialogue with key players including faculty, staff, administration, department heads, program directors, and the director of the S-ECP to create a successful change in the campus community. Historically, higher education operated from a view of functional silos or advancing agendas based on priorities. For my “To-Be” solution plan to actualize, administrators and decision-makers of the university will need to break down the historical silos and create a strong partnership with the S-ECP. This will provide SEL-explicit ongoing practices that work as a resource to further advance SEU students’ well-being.

Review of Literature Related to Change

Educational Change Leadership in Higher Education

Generation Z (those born 1995 through 2010) is swiftly taking the place of the Millennial generation on campuses in higher education. Generation Z students are driven by different characteristics, including ways of learning, ways of performing, and ways of living. Schools and universities need to adapt and adjust their initiatives both academically and non-academically to serve the needs of Generation Z students (Seemiller & Grace, 2016). These generational accommodations can be difficult to do effectively while at the same time keeping true to the mission and identity of the school or university (Seemiller & Grace, 2016).

Today's colleges and universities face complex problems that are continuously evolving due to the constant demands of our changing generation of students, schools, and the world in generally. An advanced global economy, combined with changes in students' life conditions, have created extraordinary challenges on educational leaders (Wagner et al., 2006). The life of a current educational leader can be challenging due to these changing demands. Inside college and universities, leaders must be able to lead and inspire a diverse workforce, perform across structural boundaries, increase effectiveness, and accomplish advancement (Gentry, Eckert, Stawiski, Zhao, 2014).

Additionally, today there is a strong emphasis for educational professionals to recognize the emotional dimension when implementing change on college campuses. A vast amount of research related to educational change concentrates on the organization's rational-structural components and overlooks the culture or human element (King, 2006). Today's emphasis is placed on institutions to contemplate about educational changes in a different way. It is vital for educational professionals and the school's culture and operations to recognize that SEL dimensions influence learning (Brown & Moffett, 1999). The work of change is not technical work. Wagner et al. (2006) reports instead it is adaptive work that requires changes in people's heads, hearts, and actions. This can result in a more thoughtful, purposeful, and effective outcome.

In conclusion, there is not a perfect answer on how to lead change in higher education today. It is important for the educational professionals on college campuses to recognize concrete strategies to best educate, serve, and interact with students. Moreover, when implementing my "To-Be" plan these important change factors need to be demonstrated by my leadership when moving into action.

Paradigm Shift in Education

There needs to be a paradigm shift in education to weave SEL into all teachings, practices, and initiatives within the schools. To facilitate the shift, SEL cannot be part of the implicit or hidden curriculum; it needs to be the foundation of the school's mission, vision, and goals. Widespread interest in SEL's possible applications to the real world provides an interesting and exhilarating opportunity for innovative researchers (Fiori & Vesely-Maillefer, 2018). SEU can be the leader in this paradigm shift by including SEL at the core of their identity. SEU is an innovative institution that has led various educational developments; therefore, this would be a realistic approach and accomplishment.

There are convincing explanations to consider that higher education has the ability to create powerful advancements in social-emotional learning (Castro & Clyde, 2018). Before SEU can become a healthy model for other institutions, various changes will need to happen that fall within the guidelines of best practices provided by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). There is a prominent need for innovation around the gap of SEL in higher education programming (Castro & Clyde, 2018). SEU will need to take an innovative and comprehensive approach to create a shift in higher education. This could generate positive results affecting millions of people.

“While social and emotional learning development in college today is not yet understood and planned, it may be among the most important and valuable dimensions of postsecondary education” (Castro & Clyde, 2018, p.11). Through effective change leadership, SEU can create more understanding around how SEL successfully operates in

higher education. Challenges and opportunities await SEU as a leader in the SEL movement in higher education.

CASEL's Theory of Action (School ToA)

As described in Chapter 2, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) was developed to make SEL an essential part of students' education by advancing related research, expanding effective practices, and improving state and federal policies. To assist schools in implementing SEL school-wide, CASEL developed a School Theory of Action framework (School ToA). This systematic method builds an environment that is supportive towards incorporating and continuing effective SEL programming and prevents schools from providing disjointed and disconnected implementation (Greenberg et al., 2003).

Taking action toward a school-wide SEL implementation requires strong support from a school that places value on students' social and emotional skills and provides essential means to cultivate a framework needed to produce and retain effective SEL programming (Mart, Weissberg, & Kendziora, 2015). The School ToA provides specific guidelines and activities for educators to participate, encourage, and incorporate effective SEL into their schools. Moreover, it recognizes the necessary contribution to guarantee effective and ongoing SEL school-based programming.

CASEL's School ToA outlines six key aspects that positively support schools to systemic SEL:

A shared vision for SEL is established among all stakeholders within a school, the needs and available resources for school-wide SEL implementation are assessed, ongoing and embedded professional learning in SEL instruction is

provided, evidence-based SEL programming is adopted and incorporated into the schools' educational practices, SEL is integrated into everyday practices at school, cycles of inquiry are conducted to ensure continuous improvement.

(Oberle, Domitrovich, Meyers, & Weissberg, 2016, pp. 287-289).

The School ToA needs to operate as a team-based approach, which can be challenging due to many facets of the program. For example, depending on the priorities and needs of the school, one might decide to form a committee to assist as a support team for SEL, whereas another may focus on school culture or integrating explicit curriculum (Meyers et al., 2015). To make SEL meaningful in a school, it is vital that SEL becomes part of the school's culture in which everyone becomes a key player.

In conclusion, an effective school-wide SEL plan is endeavoring but critically important as a fundamental part of education, student learning, and student success. The School ToA is a helpful framework for schools, yet it only focuses on Pre-K through secondary education, leaving higher education out of the equation. It is my hope my research study will ignite the movement of providing a framework for implementing SEL in higher education by CASEL and other supporting organizations.

Envisioning the Success To-Be

The future Context, Conditions, Competencies, and Culture would dramatically change if my institutional plan of change were accomplished. If my goal of all post-secondary students receiving SEL as opposed to a selective group of students were achieved, it would provide an inclusive, productive, healthy, and meaningful learning experience. Most importantly, it would provide the foundational skills to empower students to succeed in college and continue to use these skills in their adult lives.

Contexts

It is imperative that all students on campus have the opportunity to engage in SEL. Each student rightfully deserves the opportunity to develop and enhance positive social and emotional competencies and skills. If SEU were able to provide SEL-explicit ongoing curriculum to all students, the context of the university would positively change. The need and urgency for SEL skills are critical for the diverse demographic of the student body at the university. Furthermore, SEL skills are fundamental to create a campus that thrives as a socially and emotionally healthy community. If my “To-Be” solution plan were implemented, the university would develop, improve, and advance the students’ social and emotional skills and abilities.

Culture

In the “To-Be” (Wagner et al., 2006) model, the culture of the university will strengthen the community by placing action towards the university’s mission of educating and forming the whole person. Most importantly, the institution will provide clear expectations with a carefully developed one to five year action plan. The university will convey a strong message in which SEL plays a critical role in educating and forming the whole person.

All faculty, staff, and administration including deans, department heads, and program directors will prioritize, value, and support SEL-explicit ongoing curriculum campus-wide. In doing so, the institution will develop and communicate a shared definition, vision statement, and implementation plan to facilitate consistent understanding and delivery of SEL throughout SEU. It is my intent to develop a blueprint to improve the S-ECP and provide success in further implementation of SEL

across SEU's campus. It is my hope that other institutions find value and possibly adopt this change plan. With careful planning and inclusivity of SEL practices across campus, I will strengthen the quality and impact SEU has on students' learning and overall well-being.

Conditions

For the conditions to be changed, the institution needs to establish a campus-wide plan to identify gaps and overlap in SEL initiatives before implementing SEL-explicit ongoing curriculum across campus. It will be vital for the campus to share a common language in order to provide meaningful experiences for students to engage in SEL during class and beyond, including areas such as athletics and Greek life. Furthermore, for the plan to be successful, the *why* behind implementing SEL practices needs to be clearly communicated to students. This *why* is a purpose that is relevant and meaningful. The institution will set clear expectations that include understanding the importance and rationale of SEL practices within the common vision statement. Moreover, it is critical that each academic and non-academic department share the rationale of implementing SEL practices specific to their discipline in order for students to understand and value it.

To make my "To-Be" solution plan a reality, important program improvement steps need to be implemented. First, the institution has to identify gaps and overlaps within SEL-explicit ongoing curriculum campus-wide. Then the S-ECP will create a plan to overcome the gaps and overlaps successfully. In order for this to happen, faculty and staff including academic affairs, department heads, and the director of S-ECP will work together within the established shared definition, vision statement, and implementation plan for SEL campus-wide. For the "To-Be" solution plan to become

reality, sufficient time, funding, and resources need to be established. This is no small task; however, SEU will move forward in a solution-focused approach by taking small manageable steps.

Competencies

Once there is an established shared definition, vision, and implementation plan for SEL, the institution can set clear expectations for campus-wide SEL. For explicit ongoing SEL to occur, there must be ongoing training, development, and resources provided to the SEU campus community. Within this plan of change, every student on campus will have the opportunity to be better equipped for school, work, and generally in life.

Conclusion of “To-Be” Framework

The mission of SEU focuses on a commitment to educating and forming the whole student. A foundational piece in achieving SEU’s mission starts with the building blocks of social and emotional development. As a result of this change plan, the mission of the university will more strongly support student success. The next chapter will discuss the proposed plan to implement the SEL practices.

CHAPTER SIX: STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Introduction

In this section, I will further outline the implementation plan I have developed to resolve the “As-Is” problem and move to the “To-Be” solution (Wagner et al., 2006). The plan will mirror the latest resource provided by Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) called *The CASEL Guide to Schoolwide Social and Emotional Learning* (CASEL, 2019). Through this resource, CASEL has developed guides for districts and schools around the Theory of Action framework (School ToA) which I discussed in Chapter 5 of this study. Since *The CASEL Guide* was created for Pre-K-12 education, I will make appropriate modifications to make it relevant to higher education. This process will assist SEU to organize and build upon SEL-explicit ongoing curriculum with the goal of creating a healthy, connected community for faculty, staff, and students.

The foundation of SEU’s organizational plan includes three main components; to Organize, Implement, and Improve. There are five focus areas within the foundation to establish action steps to ensure a successful change within SEU. These focus areas include *Build Awareness, Commitment, and Ownership; Create a Plan; Strengthen Adult SEL; Promote SEL for Students; and Practice Continuous Improvement* (Appendix G: Strategies and Actions) (CASEL, 2019). This change plan provides a campus-wide approach with key players that include students, faculty, staff, families, and community members. SEL that is school-wide benefits students to excel in academics, form healthy relationships, and lead happy and more satisfying lives (CASEL, 2019). This framework will help SEU provide equitable outcomes for all students. Moreover, this change plan

will help move SEU from the “As-Is” problem to the “To-Be” solutions (Wagner et al., 2006).

Strategies and Actions

SEU’s organizational change will consist of a systematic plan that includes strategies and actions to help implement high-quality SEL throughout the entire campus. This one to five year plan will engage the SEU community towards building upon a caring, encouraging, and hospitable learning environment that promotes social, emotional, and academic growth. This plan should not be viewed as a “checklist” but as an engaged systematic implementation process that will eliminate fragmented and siloed SEL within SEU.

Organize is the first component of the change plan, which includes two focus areas of *Build Awareness, Commitment, and Ownership* and *Create a Plan*. The goal of this focus area is to create a strong foundation by developing an SEL task force, promoting SEL throughout the campus, and creating a united vision (CASEL, 2019). Building an SEL task force that consists of faculty, staff, students, and community members will help long-term planning for implementation of SEL at SEU. This team will have designated roles and responsibilities with established attainable goals. Next, SEL professional development opportunities will be created for all faculty and staff such as an onboarding process, trainings, and workshops. Finally, the SEL team will collaborate campus-wide to share the vision of SEL planning and implementation.

Additionally, the goal of the focus area *Create a Plan* is to determine what resources are needed to create an SEL implementation plan with a visible mission, achievable objectives, and specific responsibilities for the SEU community (CASEL,

2019). The SEL team will identify gaps and overlap within SEL-explicit initiatives. Furthermore, they will establish a plan to implement SEL in the gap areas and modify overlaps in SEL if needed to adapt to the shared vision of SEL at SEU. Lastly, there will be an established stable budget to provide resources and time devoted to SEU's faculty and staff for training and collaboration in order to establish an effective campus-wide SEL implementation plan.

Implementation is the second component of the change plan, which includes two focus areas of *Strengthen Adult SEL* and *Promote SEL for Students*. The goal of the focus area *Strengthen Adult SEL* is to build a community of faculty and staff members who effectively practice and model SEL skills in addition to working together to support SEL across the campus (CASEL, 2019). SEU will provide ongoing explicit professional development opportunities for faculty and staff. The SEL team will continuously work to establish an environment to support SEL, as they are the leaders of this organizational change. Following these efforts to promote a sustained SEL-friendly environment, stakeholders in the community will establish a shared agreement that confirms how faculty and staff should model and practice SEL competencies with one another, students, families, and community members. Lastly, faculty and staff will be engaged in ongoing improvements to expand their knowledge and skills in cultural competence.

The goal of the focus area *Promote SEL for Students* is to create an organized process for embracing students' SEL across the campus, classrooms, and communities (CASEL, 2019). Institutional leaders will provide faculty and staff with various ongoing professional learning opportunities aligned with the goals of SEU's SEL vision. The faculty will provide a supportive classroom environment for all students. Following this

theme, faculty and staff leaders will develop shared agreements campus-wide for display in all classrooms and departments. Additionally, faculty and staff will promote cultural responsiveness, student voice and engagement, and SEL integrated instruction as key elements of the vision of SEL at SEU.

Moreover, evidence-based SEL programs and practices, campus-wide norms and routines, and integrating all SEL-related initiatives will be established. SEU students will be provided a multi-tiered structure to serve all students' needs and discipline policies and practices will be reviewed by the SEU community to support SEL. SEU will develop strong partnerships with both family and community members. These partnerships will lead to improved and advanced SEL initiatives at SEU.

Improve is the final component of the change plan, which includes one focus area of *Practice Continuous Improvement*. The goal of this focus area includes establishing “a structured, ongoing process to collect, reflect on, and use implementation and outcome data to inform school-level decisions and drive improvements to SEL implementation” (CASEL, 2019). The SEL team will use a variety of data from the implementation to monitor, assess, and improve SEL-explicit initiatives across campus.

When these five focus areas are implemented completely, SEU will create a campus that infuses SEL into all facets of learning experiences for students. SEU's one to five year plan is no small task, but it is important to recognize this plan could generate long-lasting productive effects for a campus of students, faculty, and staff.

Strategies and Actions Conclusion

This organizational plan was created and designed with SEU students' best interest in mind to positively transform the SEU campus community with a genuine

regard for SEU students' best interests. My strong desire for this change plan is to empower members of the SEU community to live a more meaningful, productive, and healthy life. By implementing the one to five year strategies and action plan, SEU together will build upon a community that is empathetic, compassionate, peaceful, and mindful of others.

CHAPTER SEVEN: IMPLICATIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) as a conceptual framework impacts many facets of college life; both in social issues arising in the student services arena and in academic issues arising in courses and programs. For this chapter, I will focus on a policy issue that is related to my findings and the primary foundation of higher education: curriculum.

As discussed previously, SEL has forever existed in the hidden curriculum (Frey, et al., 2019). In regards to the findings of my program evaluation, 107 out of 111 (96%) of the participants in my study indicated the course provided a positive effect in their lives. Additionally, this relates with the vast amount of research indicating that SEL-explicit curriculum is critical for student success (Frey et. al., 2019). As a result, SEL should move from the implicit or hidden curriculum to the explicit curriculum within the campus of Social-Emotional University (SEU).

To start moving SEL in this direction, SEU will need to adopt a movement similar to the *Writing Across the Curriculum* and *Writing Across the Disciplines*. This movement found there is more student success when writing is taught in every department throughout students' four years and not limited to only the first year or English courses. Huskin (2016) explained that to correct students' shortcomings in writing proficiency, colleges and universities have adopted these initiatives, demonstrating that integrating writing strategies results in improved student writing. Using the same approach, to move SEL into the explicit curriculum across campus, SEU would adopt a movement entitled *SEL Across the Curriculum*. This policy recommendation would require SEL-explicit curriculum to exist campus-wide throughout

students' four years at SEU.

This policy issue is related to the S-ECP Course 1 program evaluation because SEL skills are vital to the personal and professional success of students in the 21st century (Elias, Zins, & Weissberg, 1997). Moreover, my findings in the focus groups revealed information that SEU students desired extended education on SEL to further develop and improve their social and emotional skills. Bradberry et al. (2009) reported that once you train your brain by repeatedly using new emotional intelligence (EQ) strategies, EQ behaviors become habits. By moving SEL from the implicit or hidden curriculum to the explicit curriculum at SEU, this will offer SEU students the possibility to develop and maintain healthy SEL habits that can aid their success in school and personally in life.

Additionally, this policy issue relates directly to my organizational change plan in regard to the goal of providing SEL-explicit ongoing curriculum campus-wide. Curriculum exists in classrooms, residential halls, athletic fields, orientations, student organizations, faculty development opportunities, First-Year Experience, just to name a few. This policy is directly related to student learning because SEL skills are necessary to provide students with a holistic education, likewise to prepare them for the 21st century (Vega, 2012). By focusing on creating policy around curriculum, it will be a small start to accomplishing my organizational change plan for SEU.

Policy Statement

I am recommending the policy of *SEL Across the Curriculum* in order to start the process of making my organizational change plan a reality at SEU. Today students in higher education are required to navigate widespread environmental stresses and difficulties in academic settings that hinder students' coping resources; examples include

grasping challenging course material, keeping financially healthy, and developing new social supports (Zeidner & Matthews, 2018). The demands on the 21st century students are very different and need certain skills relating to social and emotional development to be able to succeed.

Emotionally intelligent students, who can recognize, name, and regulate their emotions, should be more effective in coping with the academic challenges and stressors compared to their low EQ peers (Zeidner et al., 2018). I envision *SEL Across the Curriculum* to function as a proactive solution to resolve various intra- and interpersonal problems students face in college. At SEU, SEL-explicit ongoing curriculum can help our students develop effective and healthy coping mechanisms (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Therefore, the policy of *SEL Across the Curriculum* will address the critical issue of moving SEL campus-wide from the implicit or hidden curriculum to the explicit curriculum for SEU.

Analysis of Needs

The importance of SEL is quickly growing “at all levels of the education, from preschool and secondary school curriculum to post-secondary, professional, and continuing education programs” (Keefer, Parker, & Saklofske, 2018, p.1). Therefore, the recommended policy of *SEL Across the Curriculum* will be examined, addressed, and analyzed from six disciplinary areas—educational, economic, social, political, legal, and as well as moral and ethical. This section will take an in-depth look at the policy in order to support a greater understanding of its meaning, significance, and implications.

Educational Analysis

Learning may be viewed as an intellectual function only; yet learning is not just a

cognitive function. Bloom (1956) identified three main domains of learning; cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. There is substantial value in recognizing the potential to increase student learning by tapping into the affective domain. Students may experience affective barriers to learning that cannot be recognized or overcome when only using a cognitive approach. Likewise, it was reported “post-secondary students with high trait emotional intelligence may be better able to stay engaged with their studies because, on a day-to-day basis, they have more positive beliefs about the future – a state of mind that has been linked with increased efforts to reach desired academic goals” (Parker et al., 2018, p. 435).

Likewise, Stoltzfus (2015) reported when students feel they are not emotionally prepared for college, they are likely to produce unpleasant outcomes, including unsatisfactory grades. It is crucial for educators to acknowledge that the social, emotional, cognitive, and academic components of learning are profoundly linked. Educationally, students need to be equipped emotionally for successful learning to acquire. In studies by Carver and Connor-Smith, as well as Nes and Segerstrom (as cited in Parker et al., 2018), reported students with high levels of EQ are more effective in focusing and staying on track during challenging academic times. The opportunity for students to be educated on emotional and social development is crucial for successful learning to occur and assists students in developing the ability to handle post-secondary issues.

Lastly, educators and policy makers are becoming progressively mindful of the significance of providing all students with educational opportunities that enhance their emotional development and social competence (Graczyk et al., 2000). In post-secondary

education, it is necessary to include social and emotional competencies in the curriculum across campus. By including *SEL Across the Curriculum*, SEU can provide the students the opportunity to live a holistic lifestyle. SEU can weave emotional development with academic development into all facets across campus life to build the foundation for fostering a positive college experience for students.

Economic Analysis

Extensive initiatives to include SEL lessons into curriculum in secondary education, and increasingly postsecondary education, reflect agreement about the significance of SEL for college and career readiness (Castro & Clyde, 2018). SEL has been linked to numerous studies on implications for college and career success. Hence, the *Framework for 21st Century Learning* (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2019) was “developed to define and illustrate the skills, knowledge, expertise, and support systems that students need to succeed in work, life, and citizenship.” *Life & Career Skills* is identified as part of the comprehensive Framework for 21st Century Learning, which includes the need to develop social and emotional competences.

Additionally, Brackett, Rivers, and Salovey as well as O’Boyle, Humphrey, Pollack, Hawver, and Story (as cited in Parker et al., 2018), reported “there is growing evidence that [emotional intelligence] EI significantly contributes to both occupational and educational performance and it is not surprising that there have been calls that universities and colleges need to provide programming to develop or enhance EI-related competencies” (p. 439). The workplace demands effective application of various SEL skills including flexibility, self-direction, responsibility, and cross-cultural skills. Incorporating *SEL Across the Curriculum* can become a strong predictor for both

occupational and educational success performance for SEU students and alumni.

Furthermore, America's education system was created for an economy and a society that no longer exists (Kay & Greenhill, 2013). The world of work is changing and higher education needs to follow in turn to shape students for a prosperous future. Henceforth, the U.S. labor market indicates that over the last fifty years the number of jobs that require manual activities, including routine cognitive tasks, has severely dropped, while jobs requiring non-routine analytic and interpersonal processes have increased (Reimers & Chung, 2016). It is time for higher education to start making emotional and social development a priority and adjust to our societal changes. By adopting *SEL Across the Curriculum*, SEU could be a leader in SEL development and advancement with the intentions of preparing post-secondary students in the 21st century.

Social Analysis

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019), suicide is the second leading cause of death among eighteen-to-twenty-four-year olds. The Jed Foundation (2017) was created to provide "a comprehensive, public health approach to promoting mental health and preventing suicide." JED's programs are focused on mental health advancement and suicide prevention as a comprehensive approach for college and universities across the nation. A component of this comprehensive approach encompasses *Development of Life Skills* for college students. JED's (2017) approach believes "supporting life skills education is valuable in teaching healthy ways to cope with stress and college life."

A critical life skill that is a SEL competency is called *resilience* or *grit*. It is the ability to face and handle adversity, adapt to change, recover, learn, and grow from

setbacks. Research has determined that the lack of resilience is a main contributor to the increase of problems associated with mental health in college students (Parker et al., 2018). Social and emotional maturity and resilience are difficult to evaluate; however these have been determined as strong predictors whether a college student will effectively adjust to life in college (Hibbs & Rostain, 2019). Higher education leaders seriously need to look at different approaches to help reduce the number of social problems students encounter in college. A positive and proactive start would be for institutions to view SEL as a priority and explicitly include it campus-wide.

Zeidner and Matthews (2018) view EQ as a vital component for coping with stress successfully. Researchers identify various demanding issues and stressors that college students need to recognize and address in order to navigate college successfully. They may face a number of unfavorable outcomes such as homesickness, anxiety, stress, depression, and failure. By educating students on SEL competencies, such as healthy ways to cope and tolerate stress, SEL trained faculty and staff will help students learn to apply the appropriate tools and strategies to combat some of these tough issues.

Additionally, Parker et al. (2018) reported when college students exhibit strong EQ skills, they experience more constructive and fewer maladaptive coping strategies. SEU students need to develop coping with adversity as a vital skill in order to thrive in college. The advancement of *SEL Across the Curriculum* would provide SEU students the ability to develop, enhance, and maintain vital SEL competencies. Campus-wide SEL may mean the difference between a student having a positive college experience and having a dissatisfying one.

Political Analysis

Bolman and Deal (2011) identify four approaches or frames in which leaders should view organizational issues. These approaches include Structural, Human Resources, Political, and Symbolic. Each distinct frame comprises a wide array of concepts, representations, and principles that offer support intended for creating organizational learning and change. The Political Frame associates with multiple agendas found in complex organizations such as universities and addresses analyses of power within the organization. Within this frame, individuals and groups have the power to leverage their agendas into action. As a policy advocate for *SEL Across the Curriculum*, using the Political Frame will advance my change leadership agenda by securing support from key stakeholders and decision-makers within SEU.

Gaining institutional support and approval for *SEL Across the Curriculum* will be part of my change leadership agenda. Academic leaders advocating for change need to embrace a political view by setting an agenda, mapping out political territory, creating partnerships, and finally, bargaining and negotiating (Bolman & Deal, 2011). In advocating for the policy recommendation of *SEL Across the Curriculum*, the chances for success are improved greatly by fostering a political view and embracing the key action steps within the Political Frame.

To advocate successfully, coalition-building, conflict resolution efforts, and power-base building needs to be considered and recognized. Bolman and Deal (2011) refer to *power* as the ability to influence, in other words to produce actions and outcomes. In the Political Frame, the authors identify various key stakeholders and decision-makers who could support and enact *SEL Across the Curriculum*. Stakeholders on campus who

can fully support and influence the policy recommendation include the President, Dean of Academics, Dean of Student Life, Dean of Chapel, and Athletic Director.

In conclusion, the role of Political Analysis using Bolman and Deal (2011) as a conceptual and political leverage would advance my change agenda. “Achieving noble values and principles in a highly political context requires political sophistication, strong skills, empowerment, and personal courage” (Bolman & Deal, 2011, p. 87). The Political Frame provides vital approaches, insights, and skills for progress towards adopting *SEL Across the Curriculum* at SEU.

Legal Analysis

SEL has gained tremendous momentum at both the local, state, and national levels. In 2011, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) started the State Scan Scoreboard Project. The purpose was to determine state policies and guidance to support students’ social and emotional growth. By 2015, all 50 states had a method of preschool SEL guidelines, learning goals, or standards. For grades K-12, many states are doing the same. By 2018, eleven states have extended preschool competencies and standards to early elementary. Additionally eighteen states have K-12 competencies and standards and twenty-one states have SEL-related web pages that provide guidance and resources.

At the federal level, CASEL supports federal work with the goal of increasing capital for SEL research and practices that are evidence-based. For example, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) contains many opportunities for states to enhance students’ factors in success in their social and emotional development. Moreover, the Higher Education Act (HEA) is adjusting to meet the changing needs in education that might

lead to new funding opportunities. Lastly, CASEL has a strong relationship with the National Commission on Academic, Social, and Emotional Development.

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC), a regional accreditor for post-secondary education institutions in the U.S., is mainly focusing on student success. HLC is pursuing transformation in the conversation around student success for the 21st century learner in order to improve institutions' efforts and initiatives for students to succeed in college. Student success is the engine behind policy and campus endeavors in higher education (The Higher Learning Commission, 2018). HLC recommends institutions adopt “a student success framework that includes attainment of learning, personal satisfaction and goal/intent attainment, job placement and career advancement, civic and life skills, social and economic well-being, and commitment to lifelong learning” (The Higher Learning Commission, 2018).

Moral and Ethical Analysis

As a university with a religious affiliation, SEU has a set of moral and ethical codes to reinforce SEL education. In Moreland and Issler's study (as cited in Gliebe, 2012), it stated an indicator of displaying spiritual development is emotional self-awareness and trusting God to conquer our emotions with His goodness and grace. SEU has committed to being a home for students that “encourages their intellectual and personal growth – promoting mental, physical, and spiritual health” (citation omitted to preserve anonymity). Individuals who hold a strong awareness of one's self and purpose are better able to handle their overall well-being. Integrating SEL across campus offers students the potential to develop essential SEL skills, which would strengthen and build upon SEU's commitment to students.

Immordino-Yang and Damasio's study (as cited in Gliebe, 2012) reported by acknowledging students' learning process is not simply a cognitive process but also a social and emotional one. The implication of how to integrate EQ in Christian higher education is extremely pressing. Moving SEL to the explicit curriculum from the implicit or hidden curriculum would underline the importance of SEL in Christian higher education. The hidden curriculum exists as an ineffective component in education and it should be eliminated through becoming explicit specifically in college and universities (Semper & Blasco, 2018).

SEL-explicit curriculum can support the growth and development of SEU students in a holistic and collaborative approach on campus. The advantages of integrating SEL efforts can only happen in a holistic way. Adopting *SEL Across the Curriculum* can bring the SEU community together to infuse, demonstrate, and holistically facilitate SEL curriculum to enhance the student success commitment.

Reflective Conclusion on Campus-Wide SEL

To create a true paradigm shift in higher education, SEL must be presented as a priority on the campus of SEU. By adopting my policy recommendation, SEU will become a leader in higher education through providing SEL-explicit ongoing curriculum campus-wide. More importantly, SEU will provide students the opportunity to effectively develop healthy habits that will impact their learning, holistic development, relationships with others, and future decisions and outcomes.

Implications for Staff and Community Relationships

There will be implications for SEU faculty and staff relationships when advocating for *SEL Across the Curriculum*. The advancement of this policy offers

faculty and staff opportunities to improve their own social and emotional skills and model SEL to students throughout SEU. CASEL (2019) reports schools that cultivate SEL competencies in adults show a stronger ability to teach and strengthen SEL for students. Through provided resources, faculty and staff will be asked to use and promote social and emotional skills while embracing a campus-wide collaboration and a resilient community. It is important to consider that these changes may place strain on faculty and staff workload and resources needed for further professional development campus-wide. Working through these challenges will be critical to the success of implementing *SEL Across the Curriculum*.

Furthermore, opportunities for community relationships will exist as an advancement for SEU to build partnerships with local community organizations. CASEL (2019) reports schools can strategically leverage community partnerships to deepen their systemic SEL implementation. Regular communication and collaboration, aligned expectations, shared agreements, and a shared common language for SEL between SEU and community partners will contribute to a positive environment and support students' SEL education.

Lastly, implications for other stakeholder relationships exist in regards the opportunity to create authentic family partnerships. CASEL (2019) reports the collaborative partnership between schools and families creates a solid foundation for social and emotional growth and development. CASEL (2019) reports when SEL is present at school and at home, students have the opportunity to further develop their social and emotional skills. SEU can intentionally engage with parents on fostering SEL

to build a bridge together, with the goal of supporting their child's ability to achieve at a higher level.

Conclusion on Policy Recommendations

The findings of this program evaluation indicate a true need for SEL-explicit ongoing curriculum for the SEU students. The advancement of *SEL Across the Curriculum* will specifically support a campus-wide implementation process of assuring all students receive SEL-explicit ongoing curriculum and SEL integrated with academic instruction. This policy will start the movement in accomplishing the organizational change plan discussed in Chapter 6 of effectively implementing SEL at SEU.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

Introduction

The timing for this program evaluation was perfect. SEL is a new concept for higher education. I hope this program evaluation will contribute to the relatively small body of literature accumulated on SEL in higher education. More importantly, this process has provided the opportunity for the S-ECP Course 1 to improve based on student feedback and insights. Throughout this process, it is apparent that social-emotional learning (SEL) matters. Long are the days when education solely focuses on academics. Our future depends on SEL, more specifically for schools to educate and form the whole person effectively. Every Pre-K, elementary, middle, high school, and post-secondary institution should be required to deliver a school-wide SEL implementation plan. Developing core life skills in school is essential to the academic and personal success of our future generations.

Discussion

The purpose of the program evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of the S-ECP Course 1. The goals of the program evaluation were accomplished by data gathered from the students' perspective. Through surveys and interviews, I was able to determine specific improvements to make in order to advance the quality of student learning and the overall classroom experience.

In addition, I performed content analysis to determine if a gap exists in the academically explicit curriculum in higher education, focusing on institutions similar to Social-Emotional University (SEU). This process confirmed a prominent gap and critical need for SEL to move from the null curriculum to the explicit curriculum in higher

education. Furthermore, the S-ECP Course 1 showed evidence of providing a positive effect in a majority of the participants' lives and many shared a strong request to expand SEL-explicit ongoing initiatives throughout SEU.

The results of this program evaluation led to my organizational change plan by proposing a systematic guide to help SEU implement high-quality SEL campus-wide. The suggested policy of *SEL Across the Curriculum* created the environment for SEL to move from the implicit or hidden curriculum to the explicit curriculum at SEU. The *SEL Across the Curriculum* recommended policy is the start to accomplishing the organizational change plan of implementing high-quality SEL campus-wide at SEU.

Leadership Lessons

There is a tremendous amount of responsibility for me as an educator who teaches emotional intelligence to be emotionally intelligent myself. While implementing SEL in my own life and throughout my dissertation process, I was able to work on becoming a better leader and person through failure and successes along the way. I have a greater appreciation for my family and work tribe who truly support my personal and professional development and growth every day.

During the course of the past three years in pursuing my doctorate, I was able to become more self-assured as a young female leader. For me, researching, writing, and learning has been an enjoyable, rewarding, challenging, and empowering experience. One of the biggest benefits this process has given me is confidence.

Additionally, this process had allowed me to recognize the critical need for SEL in higher education and generally throughout our nation. As a leader in emotional intelligence (EQ), I have come to find a strong passion for providing people of all ages

and backgrounds the tools and strategies provided through the framework of SEL and EQ. As I look towards my future, I trust this work will open up new doors to a world where I can continue to create positive impact in people's lives.

Concluding Reflection

Education is slowly making a transformation from the traditional ways of teaching and learning. Educational practices and environments are shifting towards cultivating students' deep-rooted wholeness, happiness, and life success. Higher education needs to carefully consider how to navigate past the historic focus on mastering information to an innovative approach with a concentration on core life skills. Integrating SEL campus-wide will empower students to grow the vital life skills to meet the emerging realities of school, work, and life.

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Appendix A: S-ECP Course 1 Concepts and Learning Outcomes

EQ Area	Concept	Outcomes (Student will be able to...)
Self-Awareness	Check-in	Identify check-in and its significance. Participate in check-in using feeling words and understand connection to behaviors.
Self-Awareness	Thoughts	Identify thoughts and their significance. Demonstrate awareness of their own thoughts.
Self-Awareness	Feelings & Emotions	Identify feelings and emotions and their significance. Demonstrate awareness of their own feelings and emotions.
Self-Awareness	State of Mind	Identify state of mind and its significance. Identify their own state of mind in various situations. Recognize ways to control their own state of mind.
Self-Awareness	Core Beliefs	Identify core beliefs and their significance. Recognize their own personal values and core beliefs.
Self-Awareness	Empowering & Limiting Beliefs	Identify empowering and limiting beliefs and their significance. Recognize their own empowering and limiting beliefs and analyze the impact of these beliefs.

EQ Area	Concept	Outcomes (Student will be able to...)
Self-Awareness	Cognitive Processing & Reframing (CPR)	Identify CPR and its significance. Identify and explain their own core beliefs, thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and outcomes using the cognitive process strategy. Apply reframing of the process using the cognitive reframing strategy.
Self-Awareness	Problem-Focused	Identify problem-focused state of mind and its significance. Recognize their own limiting beliefs, thoughts, and feelings that relate to a problem-focused state of mind.
Self-Awareness	Solution-Focused	Identify solution-focused state of mind and its significance. Recognize their own empowering beliefs, thoughts, and feelings that relate to a solution-focused state of mind.
Self-Awareness	Self-Esteem	Identify self-esteem and its significance. Recognize their own strengths. Recognize new ways to use their own strengths to help in relationships and personal success.
Self-Management	Emotional Regulation	Identify emotional regulation and its significance. Demonstrate methods to regulate their own emotions to benefit self and others. Apply the Stop, Think, Choose method to practice emotional regulation.

EQ Area	Concept	Outcomes (Student will be able to...)
Self-Management	Anger	Identify anger and its significance. Recognize their own warning signs associated with anger. Demonstrate awareness of their own feelings that precede anger. Demonstrate methods to diminish anger.
Self-Management	Positive Self-Talk	Identify positive self-talk and its significance. Generate and use affirmations and solution-focused statements.
Self-Management	Negative Self-Talk	Identify negative self-talk and its significance. Identify their own negative self-talk and reframe to positive self-talk.
Self-Management	Stress Tolerance	Identify stress tolerance and its significance. Identify how they experience stress. Recognize methods to reduce their ongoing and daily stress.
Self-Management	Gratitude	Identify gratitude and its significance. Demonstrate gratitude in a reflective and written form to oneself and others.
Self-Management	Resilience	Identify resilience and its significance. Measure their resilience level and identify ways to build, improve, and increase resiliency.

EQ Area	Concept	Outcomes (Student will be able to...)
Self-Management	Problem Solving	Identify problem solving and its significance. Recognize that emotions influence one's problem solving abilities. Apply the Stop, Think, Choose method to solve problems effectively.
Self-Management	Consequential Thinking	Identify consequential thinking and its significance. Practice if/then thinking and select alternatives that lead to a solution- focused state of mind.
Self-Management	Responsibility Taking	Identify responsibility taking and its significance. Determine level of responsibility in their own life and analyze the impact of blaming oneself and others.
Self-Management	Fear	Identify fear and its significance. Recognize the impact fear has on self. Practice changing thoughts to reduce fear.
Self-Management	Impulse Control	Identify impulse control and its significance. Determine level of impulse control in their own life and analyze the impact.
Self-Management	Positive Self-Interest (PSI)	Identify PSI and its significance. Recognize ways to include PSI in their own life. Identify ways to overcome challenges in practicing PSI in their own life.

EQ Area	Concept	Outcomes (Student will be able to...)
Empathy for Others	Empathy	Identify empathy and its significance. Recognize and apply skills that will increase empathy.
Empathy for Others	Healthy Relationships	Identify a healthy relationship and its significance. Recognize healthy and unhealthy relationships in their own life. Reflect how they express love and appreciation in relationships.
Empathy for Others	Emotional Expression	Identify emotional expression and its significance. Recognize emotional expressions in self and others. Analyze their emotional expression through social media.
Empathy for Others	Feedback	Identify feedback and its significance. Recognize difference between feedback and criticism. Demonstrate ability to use “I” statements for feedback and in response to criticism.
Relationship Management	Independence	Identify independence and its significance. Recognize difference between independent and dependent behaviors and their consequences. Determine level of independence in their own life.

EQ Area	Concept	Outcomes (Student will be able to...)
Relationship Management	Communication Styles	Identify communication styles and their significance. Recognize the communication styles they use and the impact that has on others.
Relationship Management	Problem Ownership	Identify problem ownership and its significance. Analyze situations to determine problem ownership. Identify appropriate skills for the problem situation (i.e. empathy, active listening, "I" statements).
Relationship Management	Negotiation	Identify negotiation and its significance. Recognize and apply steps to successfully negotiate with others.
Relationship Management	Conflict Management	Identify conflict management and its significance. Recognize their own conflict management style and the impact it has on others. Apply skills to effectively manage conflict.

Appendix B: Informed Consent: Adult Participant in Focus Group

NLU IRRB Liza Johnson: Social-Emotional Learning in Higher Education: A Program Evaluation.

Appendix B: INFORMED CONSENT

Adult Participant in Focus Group

My name is Liza Johnson, and I am a doctoral student at National Louis University, [REDACTED]. I am asking for your consent to voluntarily participate in my dissertation project. The study is entitled: Social-Emotional Learning in Higher Education: A Program Evaluation. The purpose of the study is to perform an evaluation on the Social-Emotional Competencies Program, which includes the 3-credit undergraduate Social-Emotional Competencies Course 1, and to determine its effectiveness.

My project will address student experiences in the 3-credit undergraduate S-ECP Course 1 course and how it will help determine the quality of the course. I will use the data I collect to understand the process and changes that may possibly need to be made regarding the S-ECP Course 1.

You may participate in this study by signing this consent form indicating that you understand the purpose of the focus group and agree to participate in one 30-minute interview, with possibly up to 5 email exchanges in order clarify any questions I may have regarding your interview data. All information collected in the focus group reflects your experience and opinion as a student participating in the S-ECP Course 1.

Your participation is voluntary and you may discontinue your participation at any time. I will keep the identity of the institution and all participants confidential, as it will not be attached to the data and I will use pseudonyms for all participants. Only I will have access to all of the interview tapes and transcripts, and field notes, which I will keep in a locked cabinet at my home or on a password protected hard drive. Participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk beyond that of everyday life. While you are likely to not have any direct benefit from being in this research study, your taking part in this study may contribute to our better understanding of the effectiveness the S-ECP Course 1 and what changes, if any, need to be made.

While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed. You may request a copy of this completed study by contacting me at ljohnson124@my.nl.edu.

In the event you have questions or require additional information, you may contact ljohnson124@my.nl.edu. If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that you feel I have not addressed, you may contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Stuart Carrier, email: scarrier@nl.edu ; phone (847) 947-5017; 1000 Capitol Drive Wheeling, Illinois 60090; or the National-Louis Institutional Research Review Board: Dr. Shaunti Knauth, NLU IRRB Chair, shaunti.knauth@nl.edu, 224.233.2328, National Louis University IRRB Board, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603.

Thank you for your participation.

Name (Please Print)

Signature

Date

Researcher Name (Please Print)

Researcher Signature

Date

Appendix C: Student Survey

1. Please indicate which S-ECP Course 1 you are enrolled in:
 - PRF 200-01 (1)
 - PRF 200-02 (2)
 - PRF 200-03 (3)
 - PRF 200-04 (4)
2. How would you rate your instructor's knowledge about the topic of the course?
 - No knowledge (1)
 - Slightly knowledgeable (2)
 - Neither knowledgeable nor knowledgeable (3)
 - Slightly knowledgeable (4)
 - Very knowledgeable
3. How would you rate your instructor's ability to make what you are learning in class interesting?
 - No ability (1)
 - Weak ability (2)
 - Average ability (3)
 - Moderate ability (4)
 - Excellent ability (5)
4. How would you rate the physical space in your classroom?
 - Very unenjoyable (1)
 - Slightly unenjoyable (2)
 - Neither unenjoyable nor enjoyable (3)
 - Slightly enjoyable (4)
 - Very enjoyable (5)
5. How would you rate the classroom's atmosphere?
 - Very negative (1)
 - Slightly negative (2)
 - Neither negative nor positive (3)
 - Slightly positive (4)
 - Very positive (5)
6. How would you rate your excitement to go to this class?
 - Very unexcited (1)
 - Slightly unexcited (2)
 - Neither unexcited nor excited (3)
 - Slightly excited (4)
 - Very excited (5)
7. How would you rate the care your instructor has towards you?
 - Very uncaring (1)
 - Slightly uncaring (2)

- Neither uncaring nor caring (3)
- Slightly caring (4)
- Very caring (5)

8. How would you rate the S-ECP Course 1 topics (CPR, anger, empathy, etc.) you learn in class?

- Very unhelpful (1)
- Slightly unhelpful (2)
- Neither unhelpful nor helpful (3)
- Slightly helpful (4)
- Very helpful (5)

9. How would you rate the S-ECP Course 1 topics (CPR, anger, empathy, etc.) as being useful to you in the future?

- Very useless (1)
- Slightly useless (2)
- Neither useless nor useful (3)
- Slightly useful (4)
- Very useful (5)

10. How would you rate your S-ECP Course 1 student workbook in presenting the emotional intelligence topics (CPR, anger, empathy, etc.)?

- Very ineffective (1)
- Slightly ineffective (2)
- Neither ineffective nor effective (3)
- Slightly effective (4)
- Very effective (5)

11. How would you rate your S-ECP Course 1 student workbook in providing an opportunity to apply newly acquired emotional intelligence topics (CPR, anger, empathy, etc.)?

- Very unhelpful (1)
- Slightly unhelpful (2)
- Neither unhelpful nor helpful (3)
- Slightly helpful (4)
- Very helpful (5)

12. How would you rate your S-ECP Course 1 student workbook in guiding your learning of the emotional intelligence topics (CPR, anger, empathy, etc.)?

- Very useless (1)
- Slightly useless (2)
- Neither useless nor useful (3)
- Slightly useful (4)
- Very useful (5)

13. How would you rate the effect of the S-ECP Course 1 in increasing your knowledge and understanding of the subject?

- ☐ Very ineffective (1)
- ☐ Slightly ineffective (2)
- ☐ Neither ineffective nor effective (3)
- ☐ Slightly effective (4)
- ☐ Very effective (5)

14. How would you rate your experience in the S-ECP Course 1?

- ☐ Very negative (1)
- ☐ Slightly negative (2)
- ☐ Neither negative nor positive (3)
- ☐ Slightly positive (4)
- ☐ Very positive (5)

15. How would you rate the effect the S-ECP Course 1 has had on your life?

- ☐ Very negative effect (1)
- ☐ Slightly negative effect (2)
- ☐ Neither negative effect nor positive effect (3)
- ☐ Slightly positive effect (4)
- ☐ Very positive effect (5)

16. Please indicate your university classification:

- ☐ First year (0-29 credit hours) (1)
- ☐ Sophomore (30-59 credit hours) (2)
- ☐ Junior (60-89 credit hours) (3)
- ☐ Senior (90+ credit hours) (4)

17. Please indicate your self-identified gender:

- ☐ Male (1)
- ☐ Female (2)
- ☐ Transgender (3)
- ☐ Different identity (please state): _____(4)
- ☐ Prefer not to answer (5)

18. Which ethnicity best describes you:

- ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native(1)
- ☐ Asian or Pacific Islander (2)
- ☐ Black or African-American (Non-Hispanic Origin) (3)
- ☐ Hispanic (4)
- ☐ White or Caucasian (Non-Hispanic Origin) (5)
- ☐ Multiple ethnicity or Other (6)

19. Please identify university programming in which you are involved (check all that apply):

- ☐ Student Athletics (1)
- ☐ Student Organizations (2)
- ☐ TRIO program (3)
- ☐ Bridge program (4)
- ☐ Wendt Scholar program (5)
- ☐ Honors program (6)
- ☐ Other programs _____ (7)

20. Other helpful comments:

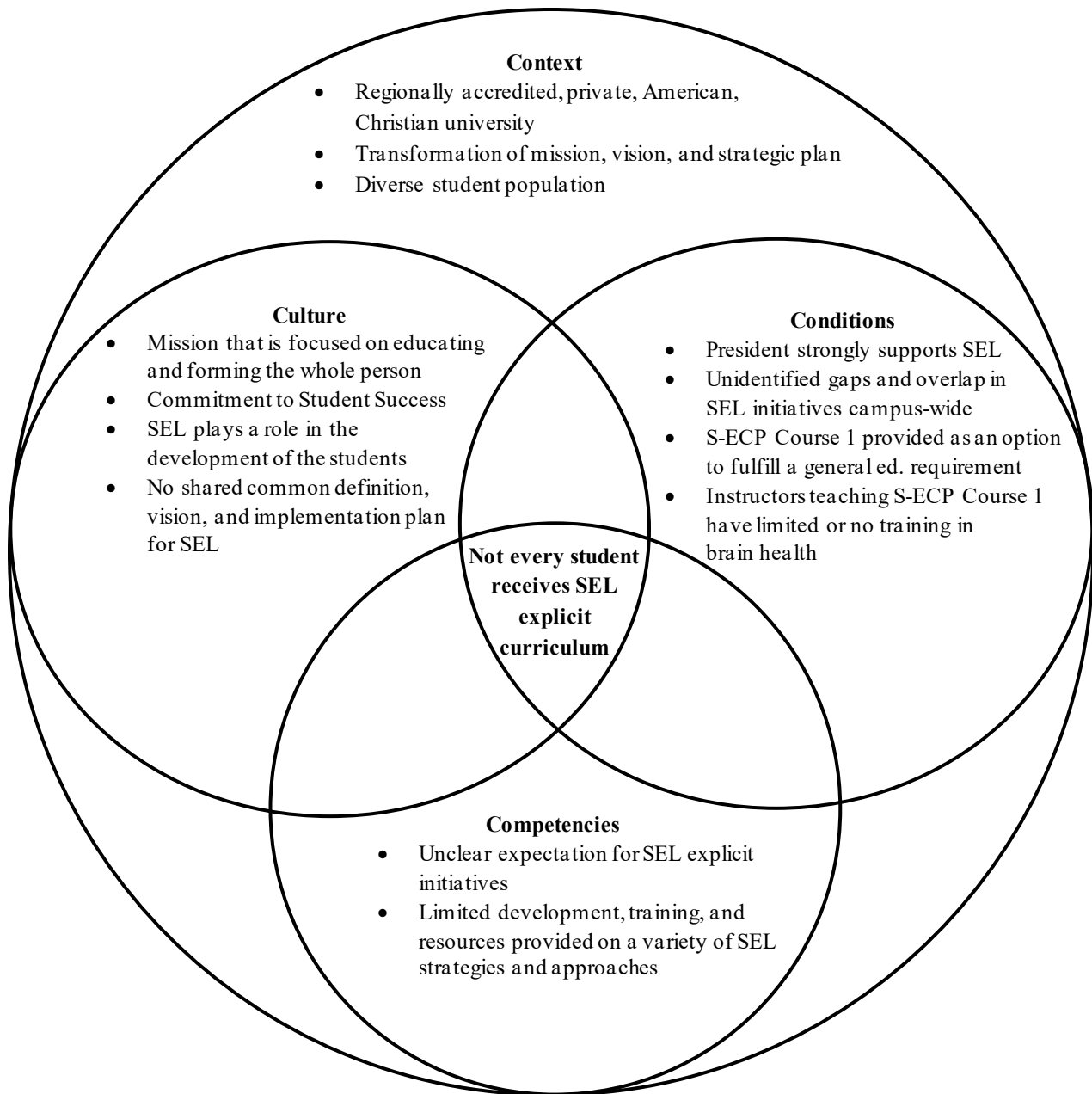
Please contact at ljohnson124@my.nl.edu if you would be interested in participating in a future focus group.

Thank you for taking the survey.

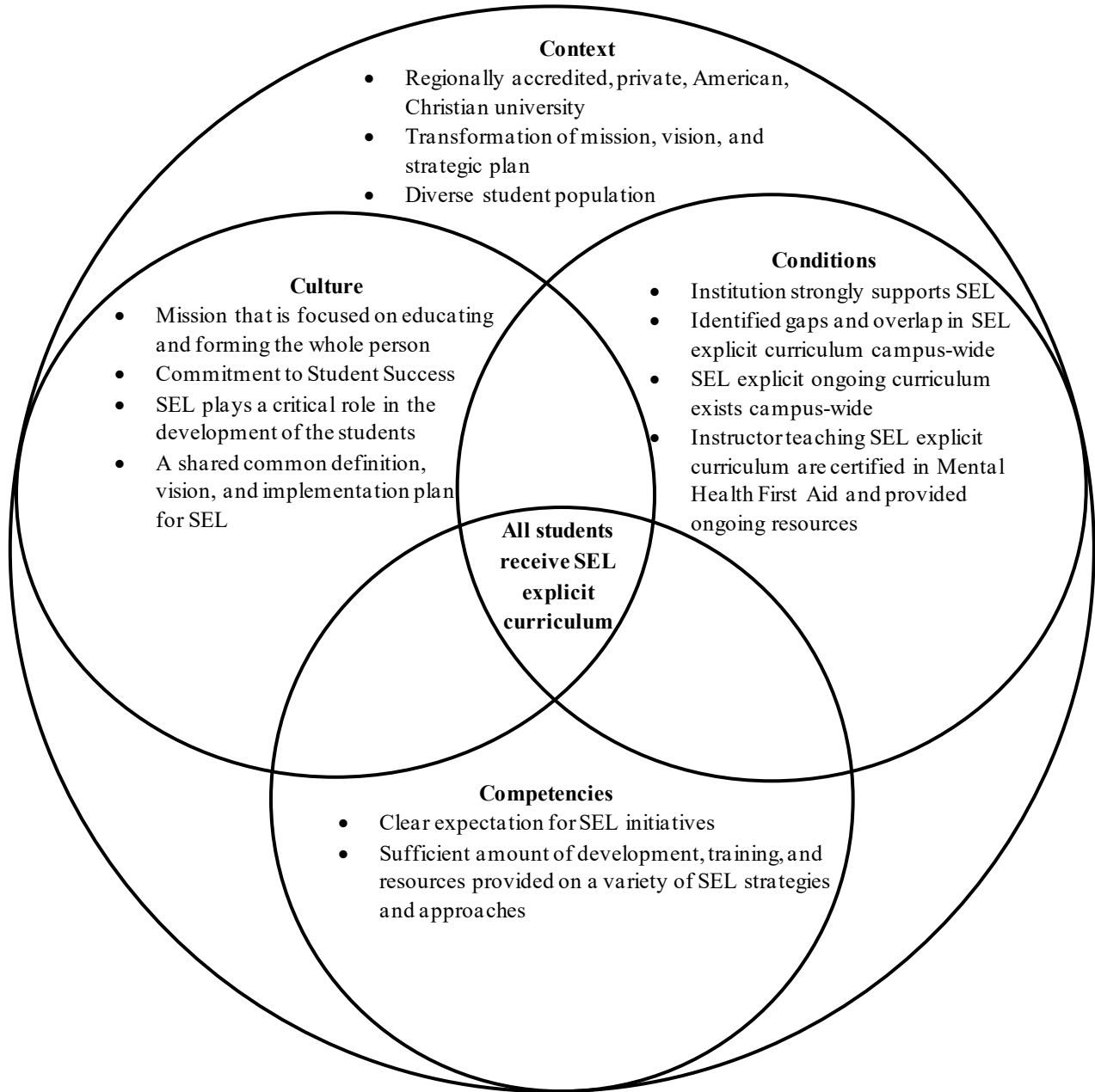
Appendix D: Focus Group Questions

1. What do you think is working well in the S-ECP Course 1?
2. What do you think is not working well in the S-ECP Course 1?
3. What do you think are the greatest challenges in the S-ECP Course 1?
4. What do you think are ways to improve the S-ECP Course 1?

Appendix E: 4 C's "As-Is" Analysis



Appendix F: 4 C's "To-Be" Analysis



Appendix G: Strategies and Actions

Organize/ Area 1 A			
Build Awareness, Commitment, and Ownership	Goal	Strategies	Actions (1-5 year plan)
	Build foundational support by establishing an SEL team, fostering SEL awareness, and developing a shared vision.	SEL Team	An SEL team established with designated roles and responsibilities meets once a month to lead campus-wide SEL.
		Foundational SEL Learning Opportunities	Foundational SEL learning opportunities are provided for all faculty and staff for the first year of implementation and then as part of the onboarding process.
		Shared Vision	The SEL team collaborates with other faculty, staff, and community members to develop a shared vision for SEU. The shared vision and SEL implementation plan is communicated to the entire campus. The plan is revisited regularly by the SEL team to modify or change as needed.

Organize/ Area 1B			
Create a Plan	Goal	Strategies	Actions (1-5 year plan)
	Assess needs and resources to develop an SEL implementation plan with clear goals, action steps, and assigned ownership.	Planning	The SEL team has identified gaps and overlaps within SEL-explicit initiatives and develops one-year SEL implementation plan with specific, measureable, achievable, realistic, and timely (S.M.A.R.T.) goals, action steps, and assigned ownership.
		Resources	There is a stable budget for SEL resources, professional learning, and staffing that is built into the SEU's financial plan. Time to support SEL at the classroom and campus level is written into SEU's master schedule.

Implement/ Area 2			
Strengthen Adult SEL	Goal	Strategies	Actions (1-5 year plan)
	Cultivate a community of adults who engage in their own SEL, collaborate on strategies for promoting SEL, and model SEL throughout the campus.	Professional Learning	Faculty and staff regularly attend ongoing professional learning opportunities to cultivate adult SEL. These opportunities are built into the SEU's professional learning strategy. Faculty and staff are able to inform which topics are offered.
		Environment to Support Adult SEL	The SEL team is actively cultivating an environment that supports the social and emotional learning of faculty and staff by collaborating with one another. They are modeling social and emotional competencies, using culturally responsive practices, and intentionally building positive relationships.
		Campus-Shared Agreements	Collaboratively developed and shared agreements for how faculty and staff will interact with one another, with students, and with students' families. This is modeled by faculty and staff and referenced in department meetings.

Implement/ Area 2			
Strengthen Adult SEL	Goal	Strategies	Actions (1-5 year plan)
		Cultural Responsiveness	<p>Faculty and staff are engaged in ongoing improvement of their cultural competence as individuals and as a group. This work is integrated into all aspects of professional learning and benefits from relationship building, collaboration, and co-learning with colleagues. Students and community stakeholders are deliberately included in this process. Learning from these interactions is used to cultivate equitable learning environments and to maximize learning outcomes for all students.</p>

Implement/ Area 3			
Promote SEL for Students	Goal	Strategies	Actions (1-5 year plan)
	Develop coordinated approaches for supporting students' SEL across the campus, classrooms, and communities.	Professional Learning	Ongoing opportunities for faculty and staff to learn how to promote SEL for students are built into the SEU's professional learning strategy and are aligned to SEU's SEL goals. Offerings include topics such as integrating SEL into instruction, implementing an evidence-based SEL program, and culturally responsive SEL strategies. In addition, topics that faculty and staff identify to be most helpful in the development of student social and emotional competence will be included.
		Supportive Classroom Environment	Teachers use inclusive, relationship-centered, and culturally responsive practices to create supportive classroom environments. Strategies are developmentally appropriate and focus on creating a community of learners that supports, honors, and acknowledges the cultural assets, contributions, and needs of all students.
		Classroom Shared Agreements	Each year classroom shared agreements are collaboratively developed in each classroom. These agreements are consistently modeled by adults and students and woven into daily routines and practices. Classroom shared agreements are on display in the classroom and regularly communicated to students and families.

Implement/ Area 3			
Promote SEL for Students	Goal	Strategies	Actions (1-5 year plan)
		Cultural Responsiveness	Teachers dedicate time to learning about their students' personal experiences, cultural backgrounds, and life circumstances, in addition to their local community context. Teachers frequently facilitate opportunities for students to learn about their peers' experiences and cultural backgrounds, and use instructional materials that offer diverse representations of culture, race, gender, etc. SEL instruction is responsive to students' cultural backgrounds and includes opportunities to explore and celebrate cultural identity and supporting advocacy especially in the face of injustice.

Implement/ Area 3			
Promote SEL for Students	Goal	Strategies	Actions (1-5 year plan)
		Student Voice and Engagement	Faculty and staff honor and elevate a broad range of student perspectives and experiences by engaging students as leaders, problem solvers, and decision-makers, by offering ways for students to inform instruction, construct knowledge collaboratively, and strengthen campus climate. Students take on leadership roles within the campus community and participate in meaningful service-learning opportunities.
		SEL-Integrated Instruction	Teachers promote SEL competencies to help students engage with and understand challenging academic content. This includes providing daily opportunities for students to engage in collaborative group work, inclusive class discussions, and reflection.
		Evidence-Based SEL Programs and Practices	Evidence-based programs and/or approaches to SEL are used with fidelity in all grade levels. These may include classroom based SEL lessons, teaching practices, SEL-integrated academic curricula, campus-wide community-building practices, or a combination of these strategies.

Implement/ Area 3			
Promote SEL for Students	Goal	Strategies	Actions (1-5 year plan)
		Campus-Wide Norms and Routines	Collaboratively developed campus-wide norms and routines are universally agreed upon and used consistently throughout the campus to support SEL. These norms and routines are consistently communicated and are revised as necessary.
		Integrating All SEL-Related Initiatives	The SEL team ensures that priorities, goals, and a common language are coordinated throughout all SEL-related initiatives. Each year, the SEL team takes inventory of all SEL-related initiatives and is strategic about how to improve integration in the coming year.
		Student Support	SEU provides a multi-tiered system of supports to meet the academic and behavioral needs of all students. SEL is fully integrated into supports at all tiers for both academics and behaviors.
		Discipline Policies and Practices That Support SEL	Campus discipline policies and practices support SEL and are restorative, instructive, and developmentally appropriate. These policies and practices are consistently and equitably used in the classroom and throughout the campus, as evidenced by sources of disaggregated campus-wide data.

Implement/ Area 3			
Promote SEL for Students	Goal	Strategies	Actions (1-5 year plan)
		Family Partnerships	SEU has multiple avenues for two-way communication with families, inviting families to understand, experience, inform, and support the social and emotional development of their family member in partnership with the campus. This partnership includes family participation on the SEL team and meaningful opportunities to learn more about and contribute to SEL in the campus.
		Community Partnerships	SEU has developed strategic and aligned community partnerships to support campus-wide SEL. SEU and community partners are familiar with one another's approach to SEL and have worked to align and integrate supports where possible. These partnerships lead to increased student access to a broad range of community services and expand the professional learning opportunities for SEL.

Improve/ Area 4			
Practice Continuous Improvement	Goal	Strategies	Actions (1-5 year plan)
		Resources to Drive High Quality Continuous Improvement	The SEL team uses a full range of implementation data and disaggregated outcome data to track progress toward SEL goals and monitor outcomes. Dedicated resources ensure that all faculty and staff have the time and skills necessary to regularly engage meaningfully in cycles of continuous improvement.
		Establish a structured, ongoing process to collect, reflect on, and use implementation and outcome data to inform school-level decisions and drive improvements to SEL implementation.	The SEL team uses a structured, ongoing process to collect, reflect on, and use implementation and outcome data to inform grade level decisions during each meeting. The team is empowered to lead faculty and staff in this process by regularly (at least quarterly) communicating their findings and creating opportunities to use data to drive continuous improvement at the campus, classroom, family, and community level.

Note. Adapted from “The CASEL Guide to Schoolwide SEL”. Retrieved from <https://schoolguide.casel.org/>. Copyright 2019 by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.