Social Emotional Learning and Online Programs

Introduction

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) has become a major focus of the education community partly due to the interest that businesses and parents have expressed in teaching methods that will increase the emotional intelligence of their future employees and children. SEL is a process for learning life skills, including how to deal with oneself, with other relationships, and how to work effectively. SEL helps develop sympathy and empathy for other people and teaches how to build and maintain positive relationships.[1] Since the onset of Covid-19, it has moved to the forefront of educational practices. With so many students moving to online learning over the past few years, students may not be getting the social or emotional support that they typically get in an in-person setting.

Background Research

- SEL interventions that address the five core competencies increased students' academic performance by 11 percentile points, compared to students who did not participate.[2] These components include academic engagement: Students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in school; Task value motivation: The extent to which students find what they learn in class to be important and useful; College-going culture: Students' perceptions that adults and students in their school expect students to go to college or earn an industry certificate in IT; Support for postsecondary life with an emphasis on IT/STEM related fields: Students' perceptions of how helpful their high school is preparing them to apply to and enroll in college; and Sense of belonging: The extent to which students feel like they are a part of their school and that their teachers and peers respect them.
- Students participating in SEL programs showed improved classroom behavior, an increased ability to manage stress and depression, and better attitudes about themselves, others, and school.[3]
- A 2021 systematic review found that universal SEL interventions enhance young people's social and emotional skills and reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety in the short term. In comparison, other approaches have produced inconsistent results (mindfulness interventions) or limited evidence of impact (positive youth development interventions).[4]
- An SEL approach was consistently effective with all demographic groups both inside and outside the United States. This supports the idea that social and emotional assets promoted in SEL can support the positive development of students from diverse family backgrounds and geographic contexts.[5]

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Based on this background research, there is a high need for students to have knowledge of SEL strategies as part of their educational programs if they are going to know how to cope in stressful situations, work well with others, and handle their own conflicts in life or careers. Students should not be deprived of these opportunities regardless of their program of study. Online programs must continue to incorporate SEL into their instruction.

"Self-care is not about self-indulgence; it is about self-preservation."

Applying the Research to Social Emotional Learning for High School Students within Online Programs

SEL is essential in every educational program, especially online programs in which students may not have social interactions with others that help them develop the skills necessary to deal with personal and professional issues, both while in school and into the workplace.

EEDW supports SEL by

1. Working closely with each school's ECHS teachers to ensure site- based counseling support and college advisement is available to all students;
2. Providing online access to business partnerships that will provide students with mentors and role models that students can look up to, talk to, and learn from; and
3. Integrating key SEL components in the project design.

Conclusion

SEL strategies are essential in the development of the whole student. It is important that SEL is addressed in some way through online programs so that students have the necessary skills to deal with stress, emotional issues, and other socially related concerns while in school as well as in the workplace. By implementing the EEDW program you can address SEL student development needs.

Endnote

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[1] https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/Taylor_et_al_-_FINAL_document_6_17_2017_2.pdf