Social Emotional Learning

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) helps students of all ages to better comprehend their emotions, feel those emotions fully, and demonstrate empathy for others. These learned behaviors of comprehending and managing emotions are then used to help students make positive, responsible decisions; create frameworks to achieve their goals; and build positive relationships with others. Social-emotional learning can be supported and enhanced in online environments by promoting self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

1. What is my understanding of Social-Emotional Learning and how have I incorporated it into my teaching?
2. Why does the inclusion of Social-Emotional Learning help me develop a safe and supportive online culture?
3. What are some strategies for incorporating Social-Emotional Learning in an online environment?

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KEY Elements

Social-Emotional Learning, often referred to as SEL, is the process through which people learn to comprehend their emotions, feel those emotions fully, and demonstrate empathy for others. When students learn how to feel fully and comprehend emotions, they can effectively express their needs. Teachers are then able to efficiently and effectively respond to needs expressed by students and teach students to identify and empathize with the needs of others in the classroom. Cultivating an environment in which students learn how to deal with problems that affect them on a personal level, and at an early stage, helps them successfully navigate all aspects of life, including school.

Five core interrelated areas of competence that contribute to social and emotional learning are: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. These social-emotional learning competencies can be interwoven through classroom routines or individual lessons. The self-awareness competency is about equipping students with the ability to understand their emotions and how these emotions influence behavior across contexts. Self-awareness can be promoted in online environments by providing time for students to reflect on their emotions, thoughts, and values about classroom experiences. Self-management is about the ability of students to effectively manage emotions and behaviors to reach their goals. Self-management can be enhanced by giving students tasks that compel them to stay on track and using tools such as sticker charts, themed challenges, logs, and checklists to promote time management, goal setting, and behavior management skills among students. Social awareness is the ability of students to understand the viewpoints of other students from different backgrounds, cultures, and contexts, and to empathize with them. The social awareness competency can be encouraged in online environments by providing opportunities for students to share stories about their experiences. Relationship building is the ability to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships that promote effective navigation of different settings with diverse individuals and groups. Teachers can help students build and maintain relationships by fostering teamwork and collaborative problem-solving in online environments. Responsible decision-making is about making caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions in various situations. Teachers can promote responsible decision-making skills in online environments by guiding students to think critically about their decisions.

Promoting the five areas of competency that contribute to Social-Emotional Learning can be challenging, especially in online environments. However, the reward of students effectively managing emotions, empathizing with others, making responsible decisions, and building meaningful relationships makes the challenge worth it.