

EDU 5900: Building School Communities with Social Emotional Learning



Catalogue Description:

This course provides students with an overview of the research on effective practices for assessing, planning, and supporting mental wellness for youth, their families, schools, and communities. Students will analyze specific strategies for working with diverse communities including English language learners (ELLs), refugees, and disenfranchised groups. Students will examine evidence-based interventions for supporting social, emotional, and behavioral wellness in learning environments and explore interdisciplinary collaboration with counseling, nursing, and other helping professions.

Course Objectives:

- Examine the foundations of SEL, including trauma-informed practice, ACEs, and schoolwide wellness strategies.
- Analyze how SEL is implemented at the classroom, school, and community level using CASEL's 3 Signature Practices.
- Apply theories of child development, community partnership, and whole-child education (Bronfenbrenner, Epstein, Darling-Hammond) to SEL planning.

- Evaluate real-world SEL implementation strategies, including findings from RAND's PSELI report and CASEL district case studies.

- Design a vision and strategic plan for strengthening SEL and relationship-building within a school or district setting.

- Understand the impact of trauma, ACEs, and mental illness on PK–12 students.
- Facilitate metacognitive and reflective strategies to encourage regulation and resilience.
- Demonstrate behavioral and mental health literacy.
- Analyze schoolwide interventions for SEL and wellness.
- Collaborate with families, agencies, and communities to build strong support systems for students.

Required Materials:

All readings and multimedia materials will be provided via Canvas.

Course Requirements & Grading:

Requirement	Weight
Major Assignment 1: SEL Foundations Reflection & Vision	33.3%
Major Assignment 2: SEL Planning Brief	33.3%
Canvas Engagement & Discussion Participation	33.3%

Assignment Descriptions:

Major Assignment 1: SEL Foundations Reflection & Vision (33.3%)

Part 1 – Relationship Ecosystem Reflection (300–400 words)

Reflect on the formal and informal relationships in your school. Consider:

- Student–student dynamics (peer mentoring, leadership groups)
- Staff–student relationships (advisory systems, check-ins)
- Family–school communication and trust
- School–community collaborations

Write a reflection on:

- Where relationships are strongest
- Where disconnection or inconsistency exists
- One actionable step your school could take to improve a specific relationship dynamic

Part 2 – Schoolwide SEL Vision (2–3 pages)

Based on your reflection and course resources (especially the CASEL 3 Signature Practices and RAND “Early Lessons” report), articulate a compelling, equity-centered vision for SEL in your school or educational community. Discuss your rationale, implementation vision, and how this aligns with research and community context.

You may refer to:

- Schoolwide SEL Program & Initiative Inventory (optional tool)
- Develop SMARTIE Goals for Schoolwide SEL (optional tool)

Major Assignment 2: SEL Planning Brief (33.3%)

Write a 1–2 page double-spaced planning brief grounded in three key sources:

- The RAND Early Lessons report
- The CASEL Schoolwide SEL Essentials guide
- One additional scholarly or professional source of your choice

Your brief should:

- Summarize key lessons from the two core documents
- Reflect on implications for your own school setting
- Propose one practical strategy to improve SEL implementation

Canvas Engagement & Discussion Participation (33.3%)

This includes participation in module activities, attendance in live sessions (if applicable), weekly Canvas reflections, and thoughtful responses to discussion board prompts. Students are expected to complete all posted assignments and respond to at least one peer for each discussion prompt.

Weekly Topics Overview

Module 1: Foundations of SEL and Community Wellness

- Importance of SEL in Schools and Communities
- Trauma-Informed Practice and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- School Wellness Ecosystems
- Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory
- Epstein's Six Types of School–Family–Community Partnerships
- Darling-Hammond's Whole Child Education Approach
- CASEL's SEL Framework and the 3 Signature Practices
- Reflection: Relationship Ecosystem Mapping

Module 2: Cultivating Relationship Skills to Strengthen Community

- Building Trust Through Peer and Adult-Student Interactions
- Communication Protocols with Families and Agencies
- SEL Implementation Essentials from CASEL
- Applying Relationship-Centered and Culturally Responsive Practices
- Leveraging Relationship Skills for Belonging and Equity
- Metacognition and Communication Skill Development
- Discussion of CASEL's 'What I Wish I Knew' video

Module 3: School Communities as Agents of Change

- Responsible Decision-Making and Equity-Centered SEL
- Collaborative School–Community Interventions
- Using Policy and Practice to Drive Equity
- Case Examples: Chronic Absenteeism and Community Coalitions
- Voices from Educators, PTAs, and Youth Advocates
- Discussion of CASEL's Equity and SEL Partner Districts video

Reference Guide

- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). **The ecology of human development**. Harvard University Press.
- Epstein, J. L. (2001). **School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools**. Routledge.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2021). **Whole child learning, whole school equity**. ASCD.
- CASEL. (2020). **What is SEL?** Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. <https://casel.org/>
- Schwartz, H. L., Hamilton, L. S., et al. (2020). **Early Lessons from Schools and Out-of-School Time Programs Implementing SEL**. RAND Corporation.
- Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (2021). **Schoolwide SEL Essentials Guide**. <https://schoolguide.casel.org/>
- Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (n.d.). **SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook**. <https://signaturepractices.casel.org/>

Academic Integrity Statement The college maintains and affirms a strong policy of academic honesty. Every member of the academic community has a duty neither to cheat nor to condone cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, or facilitation of academic dishonesty. Academic infractions are subject to disciplinary action as described in the Graduate Education catalog. Accommodations Molloy College makes a commitment to providing reasonable accommodations for any student with a documented disability or chronic illness. Like so many things this semester, the need for accommodations and the process for arranging them, may be altered by COVID-19. Students requiring accommodations in order to fully participate in this class are urged to contact Disability Support Services (DSS/STEEP) at dss@molloy.edu, as soon as possible.

APA Manuscript Style All manuscripts in the field of education are written in the style format of the American Psychological Association.

Attendance Policy In the case of any absence, please email the professor prior to class. As professionals in your field, you are expected to attend each class session, to be present when it begins, to come prepared for class, and to participate productively in whole-class and small-group activities. Professionalism and respect are expected in classroom participation. Professional behavior includes turning off and stowing cellphones, refraining from outside conversation or activities (including Internet surfing, text messaging, or preparing for other classes/activities), and being a thoughtful and active listener. Students are expected to attend classes regularly and punctually. For every absence after the third absence, your grade will be reduced by one-half letter grade for this class; e.g. a B+ become a B. Be advised that attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Students who arrive to class late are responsible for reminding the instructor to change the attendance for absent (A) to late (L). Three late class arrivals will officially count as one absence in determining your grade for this class. It is the

accepted practice at Molloy College that faculty take attendance in all courses. ● Students should notify faculty if an absence is necessary as the result of a serious situation. ● Failure to attend class for two (2) consecutive weeks at any point in the semester, without notification of extenuating circumstances, will result in an administrative withdrawal from the course. ● In the case of an online or hybrid course, attendance is considered similarly important. Therefore, failure to participate in academic activities in any given week is considered an absence. ○ Examples of participation in academic activities representing attendance would be ■ participation in a class chat or discussion board on an academic topic, ■ submission of a required assignment, ■ digital interaction with the professor on an academic topic, ■ and completion of a quiz or exam. Administrative withdrawal results in removal from the course with a grade of “WA” or WF” determined by the point in the term and the academic performance. Students should consult the College catalog for complete details regarding withdrawals and the potential financial implications of a withdrawal.

Class Participation Active class participation is expected of all . As future participants, it is expected that you will be interested in the course topics, and that you will share ideas, questions, and observations (from the field, if applicable) in each module. Only those participants who share ideas, comments, and observations in each module and demonstrate their knowledge of the course readings and content, will have the possibility of receiving a 9 or 10 for the class participation score.

Communicating Across the Curriculum: Communicating across the curriculum requirements are satisfied by: ● Module Assignments 20% ● Interdisciplinary Project 20% ● Canvas Discussions 15% **Diversity Statement** This course will highlight diversity in the following ways: ● use their knowledge of student diversity to affirm and support full participation and continued study of mathematics/STEM by all students; ● in nearly all discussions about teaching and learning; ● adherence to multi-modality lesson design that complies with learning standards and evidence within the written and presented lesson plan; ● demonstration of lessons that are interdisciplinary and subject-specific in accordance with: lessons, unit plans, and individual presentations, discussions about children with special needs, giftedness, and the evaluation procedures for diverse learners. ● diversity includes gender, culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, language, special needs, and mathematical learning styles.

E-mail Policy It is mandatory that every candidate have a Molloy College e-mail account and check it daily. Information re: the programs as well as communication from course professors utilize this media. This Molloy e-mail account must be activated immediately. If not utilized within 30 days, the account becomes defunct and needs to be reinstated.

Information Literacy Statement Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information." Information literacy also is increasingly important in the

contemporary environment of rapid technological change and proliferating information resources. Because of the escalating complexity of this environment, individuals are faced with diverse, abundant information choices--in their academic studies, in the workplace, and in their personal lives. Information is available through libraries, community resources, special interest organizations, media, and the Internet--and increasingly, information comes to individuals in unfiltered formats, raising questions about its authenticity, validity, and reliability. In addition, information is available through multiple media, including graphical, aural, and textual, and these pose new challenges for individuals in evaluating and understanding it. The uncertain quality and expanding quantity of information pose large challenges for society. The sheer abundance of information will not in itself create a more informed citizenry without a complementary cluster of abilities necessary to use information effectively. Information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. It is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments, and to all levels of education. It enables learners to master content and extend their investigations, become more self-directed, and assume greater control over their own learning. An information literate individual is able to: Determine the extent of information needed; Access the needed information effectively and efficiently; Evaluate information and its sources critically; Incorporate selected information into one's knowledge base; Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose; and Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally. American Library Association (Chicago: American Library Association, 1989). This course will address Information Literacy in the following ways: Recordings As a student enrolled in courses offered by Molloy College, Rockville Centre, New York, I understand that classes may sometimes be audio or digitally captured for instructional purposes. THESE RECORDINGS ARE INTENDED ONLY FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES AND WILL BE USED ONLY BY THE FACULTY AND STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE COURSE. PLEASE NOTIFY YOUR INSTRUCTOR BY EMAIL IF YOU DO NOT CONSENT TO PARTICIPATION IN A DIGITAL RECORDING OF YOUR COURSE. If no student elects to withhold his/her consent prior to _____, digital recording of the class will begin on _____. Any student who has not contacted the professor prior to that date will be deemed to have consented to the recording. You may notify your professor by email at any time if you choose to revoke your consent. Technology Statement This course will highlight technology in the following ways: ● use appropriate technology to support the learning of mathematics including, but not limited to, computers and computer software, smart board, calculators, interactive television, tablets, distance learning, electronic information resources, and a variety of relevant multimedia ● use a variety of print and electronic resources ● submission of Canvas assignment The

Respectful Classroom A major determinant of an effective teacher involves positive dispositions. It is expected that teacher will recognize and contribute to a mutually respectful classroom, both in word and deed. All cell phones and other hand-held or electrical devices **MUST** be turned off prior to the beginning of each class, put away, and kept off during class. An exception to this rule is if these devices are being used as part of the class. Teacher are not to leave class to receive or send telephone, text, other messages, or to use other devices.

Student Personal Counseling Center The Student Personal Counseling Center (SPCC) is a confidential and free service available to all currently enrolled Molloy College students. Through individual counseling, wellness workshops, crisis intervention, support groups, and on-campus trainings, the SPCC aims to enhance wellness, and offer students a more meaningful, and successful college experience. If you are interested in scheduling an appointment, please call 516-323-3484 Monday-Friday from 9am-5pm. The SPCC is located in Public Square 030.

Zoom in the Classroom Zoom is a video conferencing tool where instructors and students can meet online at the same time to interact in academic activities such as classroom lectures, student presentations, screen sharing and discussions. Zoom is often utilized with online synchronous courses at Molloy.

Minimizing Distractions During Synchronous Online Class Zoom, or conferencing sessions, can be impacted by many different environmental or situational variables. Here are some strategies and suggestions for minimizing such impact:

- Students should mute their microphone when they are not speaking.
- Consider using virtual backgrounds, which display the participant but mask the area behind them.
- Students should not watch videos, listen to music, or use other applications (other than note taking apps) while attending class. Doing so could not only distract the class but lead to a degradation in computer performance that may affect the student viewer experience.
- Student can use the chat feature in Zoom to communicate with the entire class and or the instructor but should not be participating in one-to-one chats with their peers during class.

Student Reminders and Etiquette

- Just as in an on-campus classroom, it is important to make the best virtual impression during a Zoom meeting.
- You may be viewable, or heard, by the entire class during a Zoom session and should conduct yourself accordingly.
- Classes may be recorded by the Instructor (see the Recordings section of this course outline for further information).
- Student recordings are only permitted if all participants are fully informed that the recording will take place and all participants consent to being recorded. Please refer to the Molloy Student Handbook for more details.
- Dress as if you are in a classroom setting.
- Students are expected to uphold Molloy College's Academic Honor Pledge.
- Abide by the Civility Policy found in the Molloy Student Handbook.