Promoting the Social Inclusion of Newcomer Emerging Adults in Canadian Post-Secondary Schools: An Online Social-Emotional Learning Pilot Study

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Abstract

Inclusive education plays a critical role in addressing the diversity of needs of all students—regardless of disability or background (UNESCO, 2019). It promotes positive academic outcomes for newcomers (i.e., immigrant/international students; Weine et al., 2013), and for domestic students (Graham, 2018). However, despite the rise in migration (IOM, 2020), and the growing number of newcomer students in Canada (IRCA, 2022), there is still a gap in understanding how to promote their social inclusion (Bossaert et al., 2011). Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) has been identified as a key factor for promoting social inclusion (Weissberg et al., 2015), and for addressing common challenges to newcomers (Agnafors et al., 2021) such as improving school engagement (Zins et al., 2004), and reducing students' stress (Payton et al., 2000). This study integrated the literature on social inclusion and SEL to evaluate the effectiveness of a two-month online SEL program in promoting the social inclusion of newcomer students in Canadian post-secondary schools. This study assessed (a) changes over time in social inclusion, school engagement, and academic stress; and explored (b) how changes in social inclusion predicted changes in school engagement and academic stress. Participants included post-secondary students in Canada ($N = 40$, 50% control). They completed pretest-posttest and follow-up measures on their perceived levels of social inclusion (i.e., relationships, interactions, consciousness, acceptance), school engagement, and academic stress. Growth mixture modeling results showed that program participants experienced a significant increase over time in relationships, interactions, and acceptance, while social consciousness decreased. Both program participants and control group showed a decrease in academic stress, with no significant change in school engagement for either group. Further structural equation modeling results showed that among program participants, changes in relationships increased school engagement and

decreased academic stress; changes in social acceptance decreased academic stress but did not increase school engagement; changes in consciousness decreased school engagement while increased academic stress; changes in interactions did not predict either outcome. In contrast, the control group showed decreased school engagement and increased academic stress associated with changes in interactions, with no significant associations found for changes in relationships, acceptance, or consciousness. Taken together, the findings emphasize how crucial SEL is for promoting social inclusion and school engagement, and for reducing the academic stress among newcomer students. The findings also suggest the importance of fostering a socially and emotionally supportive educational context that promotes the social inclusion of all students.

Résumé

L’éducation inclusive joue un rôle essentiel pour répondre à la diversité des besoins de tous les élèves, quels que soient leur handicap ou leur origine (UNESCO, 2019). Il favorise des résultats scolaires positifs pour les nouveaux arrivants (c.-à-d. les étudiants immigrants/internationaux ; Weine et al., 2013) et pour les étudiants nationaux (Graham, 2018). Cependant, malgré l’augmentation de la migration (IOM, 2020) et le nombre croissant d’étudiants nouveaux arrivants au Canada (IRCA, 2022), il existe encore des lacunes dans la compréhension des moyens de promouvoir leur inclusion sociale (Bossaert et al., 2011). L'apprentissage socio-émotionnel (ASE) a été identifié comme un facteur clé pour promouvoir l'inclusion sociale (Weissberg et al., 2015) et pour relever les défis communs aux nouveaux arrivants (Agnafors et al., 2021), tels que l'amélioration de l'engagement scolaire (Zins et al., 2004) et réduire le stress des étudiants (Payton et al., 2000). Cette étude a intégré la littérature sur l'inclusion sociale et l'ASE pour évaluer l'efficacité d'un programme ASE en ligne de deux mois pour promouvoir l'inclusion sociale des étudiants nouveaux arrivants dans les écoles postsecondaires canadiennes. Cette étude a évalué (a) les changements au fil du temps dans l'inclusion sociale, l'engagement scolaire et le stress scolaire, et a exploré (b) comment les changements dans l'inclusion sociale prédisaient les changements dans l'engagement scolaire et le stress scolaire. Les participants comprenaient des étudiants de niveau postsecondaire au Canada (N = 40, contrôle à 50 %). Ils ont complété des mesures prétest-post-test et de suivi sur leurs niveaux perçus d'inclusion sociale (c'est-à-dire relations, interactions, conscience, acceptation), d'engagement scolaire et de stress scolaire. Les résultats du modèle de mélange de croissance ont montré que les participants au programme ont connu une augmentation significative au fil du temps de leurs relations, interactions et acceptation, tandis que leur conscience sociale diminuait. Les participants au

programme et le groupe témoin ont montré une diminution du stress scolaire, sans changement significatif dans l'engagement scolaire pour les deux groupes. Les résultats de la modélisation d'équations structurelles ont montré que parmi les participants au programme, les changements dans les relations augmentaient l'engagement scolaire et diminuaient le stress scolaire; les changements dans l'acceptation sociale ont réduit le stress scolaire mais n'ont pas augmenté l'engagement scolaire; les changements de conscience ont diminué l'engagement scolaire tout en augmentant le stress scolaire; les changements dans les interactions ne prédisaient aucun des deux résultats. En revanche, le groupe témoin a montré une diminution de l'engagement scolaire et une augmentation du stress scolaire associés aux changements dans les interactions, sans qu'aucune association significative ne soit trouvée pour les changements dans les relations, l'acceptation ou la conscience. Pris ensemble, ces résultats soulignent à quel point l'ASE est crucial pour promouvoir l'inclusion sociale et l'engagement scolaire, ainsi que pour réduire le stress scolaire chez les nouveaux arrivants. Les résultats suggèrent également l'importance de promouvoir un contexte éducatif socialement et émotionnellement favorable qui encourage l'inclusion sociale de tous les élèves.

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Contribution to Original Knowledge

This study has important theoretical, methodological, and practical implications. Theoretically, this study contributes to the growing evidence that shows the effectiveness of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programming in improving the academic outcomes of all students regardless of their background. It examines the potential of SEL programming among newcomer students, the promise of SEL approaches using digital technologies, and the potential of increasing the use of SEL content among post-secondary school students. Methodologically, this study contributes to the understanding of how SEL programming influences individual growth through time by employing a short-term pre-test, post-test, follow-up pilot intervention design. Practically, this study emphasizes the importance of more explicit real-life applications of SEL theory over more traditional lecture-based instructional approaches. It shows that the content and delivery of this program has the potential to help every student to improve their indicators of social inclusion regardless of background. Thus, this study shows that a self-paced online SEL programming has the potential to enhance educational and socially inclusive practices nationwide, and by doing so, furthering the advancement of Canadian society.

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I. Introduction

Inclusive education is generally understood as the processes that shapes educational institutions to address and respond to the diversity of needs of *all students* (Frederickson & Cline, 2002; The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; UNESCO, 2012, 2019). In efforts to understand its positive outcomes, previous studies have shown that inclusive education has not only promoted positive academic outcomes for newcomers (i.e., immigrants and international) (e.g., Cummins, 2015; Weine et al., 2013; Wilkinson, 2002), but that it has also fostered positive academic outcomes for domestic students (e.g., Graham, 2018; Rjosk et al., 2017). Nonetheless, despite the existing evidence of its implementation in educational institutions across the world, there are still no universally agreed upon definitions, and even less universally agreed upon models of inclusion (e.g., Snyder et al., 2001; Wedell, 2008). Moreover, despite the continuous growth in the scale of international displacement and migration (International Organization for Migration; IOM, 2022; Yoshikawa et al., 2022), as well as the growth in the number of newcomer students to Canada (International Education Canada, 2020; Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada; IRCA, 2022; Statistics Canada, 2023), very little is still known about how to properly promote their rightful inclusion into the national education systems.

Inclusive education has been associated with enabling students to take a full and active part in school life, to be valued members of the school community, and to be perceived as integral participants of the educational institution (Farrell, 2000), as it has been linked to increase participation in learning, cultures, and communities (UNESCO, 2019). However, although it has become one of the central topics in contemporary educational discourses (Bossaert et al., 2011), its conceptualization, its development, and its adoption have been nothing but complex.

The move towards inclusion originated from special education. Still, special education only transitioned to an inclusive model when disability was re-examined from a human rights perspective. That is, it was thanks to both activists and people with special educational needs highlighting their numerous, diverse, and complex educational issues (Reaume, 2012). Therefore, inclusion emerged in this context as an attempt to combine and apply practices from special, compensatory, and general education to better serve all students (Winzer, 1998). However, beyond this generous intention, the implementation of inclusion, in particular in the Canadian context, has been challenging (Wedell, 2008; Winzer, 1998).

In fact, some teachers have even indicated that although they agree inclusion is a great philosophy, it has taken place with disorganized and unrealistic implementations (Wedell, 2008; Winzer, 1998). In other words, "philosophical acceptance, however, far outstrips commitment to implementation" (Winzer, 1998, p. 234). For example, not so long ago educators were even expected to run inclusion programs without adequate resources, funding, or support (Winzer, 1998). These types of implementations were particularly challenging when teachers had to accommodate (e.g., modifying instructional and behavior management strategies, curriculum) individuals of different strengths, needs, and backgrounds. As such, it is not surprising that many teachers, though pro-inclusion, are still concerned and anxious over the feasibility of the ongoing inclusive initiatives within their classrooms (McLeskey & Waldron, 1996; Snyder et al., 2001; Wedell, 2008). These apprehensions have been further accentuated by the fact that effective training has remained mostly absent at both the pre-service and in-service levels (McLeskey & Waldron, 1996). Even now, there is still little evidence that general educators have received the proper training to successfully implement inclusive educational practices of any type. Further, it is worrying that there is still no easily accessible model or guideline, up to the present, for a

successful inclusive program (McLeskey & Waldron, 1996; Snyder et al., 2001; Wedell, 2008).

In addition, not only implementation practices have remained unclear, but the actual concept of inclusion seems to have also been interpreted and understood in different ways. “The spectrum runs from radical or full inclusionists to those who would retain much of the status quo” (Winzer, 1998, p. 230). Thus, the questions of what and how to better integrate diverse students remain issues of passionate debate among researchers and practitioners. This is meaningful because, as it has been stated, few professionals in education dispute inclusion from a philosophical perspective. In fact, today there is a clear consensus that every student, *regardless of disability or background*, is rightfully entitled to a free and appropriate education (Frederickson & Cline, 2002; McLeskey & Waldron, 1996; Winzer, 1998). However, the application of inclusive educational practices has told—and keeps telling—a different story.

Sadly, even less is known about the appropriate inclusion of newcomer emerging adult students in post-secondary education. That is, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration, education is still the greatest weakness regarding integration policies in most countries around the world (IOM, 2022). Firstly, one of the most common obstacles to improve the overall educational and life-long outcomes among newcomers has been the lack of education tailored to their needs (e.g., Raabe, 2019; Strohmeier & Wagner, 2023; Terhart & von Dewitz, 2018). Secondly, the explicit lack of inclusive practices has also meant that many of these newcomers have also experienced prejudice, discrimination, language difficulties, and acculturative stress at their own educational institutions (Fandrem et al., 2021; IOM, 2022; UNESCO, 2012). These challenges have unfortunately not been any better for emerging adults in post-secondary education. Namely, although these higher education institutions now enroll a more diverse

student body than ever before (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2018; International Education Canada, 2020), these international recruitment efforts have been mostly geared towards the improvement of global rankings, or have even had an income-raising agenda (Tienda, 2013; UNESCO, 2019), after the number of available resources in post-secondary schools has continuously been thinning (Harden, 2017). Moreover, even when the increased diversity on campus has been a pragmatic first step towards inclusion, research has also highlighted that the pedagogical goals of inclusive education have mostly remained unmet for these newcomer emerging adults, as most of the research in the field has focused on elementary and secondary school students (Tienda, 2013).

Students with a newcomer status are generally either first-generation immigrants (i.e., foreign-born students whose parents are also foreign-born), or second-generation immigrants (i.e., students born in the country of residence whose parents are foreign-born; Cerna et al., 2021). Further background characteristics could also be considered in the case of second-generation immigrants (e.g., ethnicity/race, socio-economic status), with one of the most salient factors being the discrepancy between the language newcomer students speak most frequently at home from the language of instruction. This discrepancy between languages is not only a common risk factor among newcomer student populations (Cerna et al., 2021), but it represents a stronger risk among those students who grow up in numerically larger groups of their immigrant group (van Tubergen & Mentjox, 2014). Therefore, in this study both first-generation and second-generation with discrepancy between the language newcomer students speak most frequently at home and the language of instruction are considered for students' newcomer status. In other words, ethnic/racial minority students in Canada, even when born in the country, would have newcomer status if they mostly speak a language other than English or French at home.

Alternatively, in this study, if students were born in Canada and mostly speak English or French at home, even when part of an ethnic/racial minority group, would have domestic status.

In this regard, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) provides a framework that could potentially help with the implementation of some inclusive education practices (Wu et al., 2023). That is, SEL promotes practices that help students understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Weissberg et al., 2015; Zins et al., 2004). This is relevant because, despite the issues for the effectively implementation of inclusion, the social dimension of inclusive education has been considered one of its most crucial components (Bossaert et al., 2011).

More importantly, regarding this social dimension of inclusive education, previous studies have shown that social inclusion has been beneficial in fostering school engagement and in reducing or even preventing academic stress. That is, research evidence suggests that socially inclusive practices seem to increase school engagement (Beasley, 2020; Engels et al., 2020; Garcia-Reid et al., 2015), and to reduce stress among students (Becker et al., 2013; Sirin et al., 2013). Similarly, aligning with these findings in the field of social inclusion, there is also evidence of SEL programming having boosted students' school engagement (Zins et al., 2004) and lowered students' stress (Payton et al., 2000). This is critical as these are often common problems among newcomer students in post-secondary education (Agnafors et al., 2021; Assunção et al., 2020).

Unfortunately, as indicated earlier, both the frequent financial cutbacks in higher education (Harden, 2017), and the adjustments these institutions have been forced to make after the unprecedented global situation (e.g., COVID-19; Strohmeier & Branje, 2023), have made it

even more difficult to further socially inclusive practices in these post-secondary schools. Therefore, although a growing number of countries have started to integrate diversity into their curricula, teachers and administrators in these institutions still need support to effectively promote diversity and social inclusion (IOM, 2022). Fortunately, digital technologies have the potential to be useful and readily available tools to properly tackle some aspects of this challenge.

For starters, digital technologies are already widely used by newcomers (e.g., Bacigalupe & Cámara, 2012). Furthermore, they have been proven beneficial for their social inclusion as they have promoted newcomers' interpersonal relationships by connecting them with locals (e.g., Alencar, 2018; DeAndrea et al., 2012). Digital technologies have also increased newcomers' sense of school belonging by keeping them in touch with friends and family (e.g., Beech, 2018; Dekker & Engbersen, 2014), as well as increased their well-being by helping them overcome feelings of isolation and marginalization (e.g., Bharucha, 2018). Now more than ever, educational institutions need to be innovative in providing evidence-based programming aimed at rightfully integrating these students into our education systems (e.g., Messiou & Azaola, 2018; Soriano-Ayala & Cala, 2017). More importantly, these findings also highlight that social inclusion is not the unique responsibility of newcomer students, but instead a joint effort that is tackled in collaboration with domestic students, teachers, and with educational systems as a whole (e.g., Alencar, 2018; DeAndrea et al., 2012). However, there are still important shortfalls in the current research examining the role of digital technologies in the promotion of the social inclusion of newcomers (IOM, 2022; UNESCO, 2019), even though digital technologies are tools with a promising potential to deal with important aspects of this task (IOM, 2022).

Thus, the present study addresses these gaps (i.e., the social inclusion models, the social

inclusion of newcomer post-secondary students, and the use of SEL and digital technologies for social inclusion) by developing, implementing, and evaluating an online SEL pilot intervention to examine the growth trajectories and potential contributions of social inclusion on the school engagement and academic stress of newcomer emerging adults in Canadian post-secondary education. Further, since social inclusion is not the unique responsibility of newcomer students, but instead a joint effort better tackled in collaboration with the host society, both newcomer and domestic students are considered in the sample. This study begins with a literature review that bridges the major components of the study, including a review of social inclusion, a revisit of social inclusion from a SEL perspective, the potential role of social inclusion in school engagement and academic stress, and the use of technology to promote social inclusion.

II. Literature Review

What is Social Inclusion?

As indicated earlier, inclusive education has been described as the processes that shape educational institutions to address and respond to the diversity of needs of all students (UNESCO, 2012, 2019), *regardless of disabilities or background* (Frederickson & Cline, 2002; Winzer, 1998). In the inclusive education literature, social participation has been considered a crucial component for the promotion of inclusion. However, just as the actual concept of inclusion has been interpreted and understood in different ways, researchers have also been inconsistent about the use and meaning of social participation, social inclusion, and social integration. This has not only caused confusion in the past, but has also contributed to the lack of clarity about the social elements of inclusive education (Storey & Smith, 1995).

Koster and colleagues (2009) conducted a literature study focusing on the social dimension of inclusion in education with the hopes of clarifying the meaning of these terms and

of identifying the key elements of social inclusion. They concluded that social participation, social inclusion, and social integration were generally used as synonyms in the inclusive literature. However, Bossaert and colleagues (2011) conducted a similar study, and they were able to highlight subtle but meaningful differences between these concepts. Firstly, they identified that *social participation* generally referred to the level of involvement of students in social group dynamics. Secondly, that *social inclusion* usually alluded to students' mutual friendships and belonging to social networks. Thirdly, they unveiled that *social integration* described an overall sense of belonging that was achieved through acceptance by others, and by equal participation in mutually valued activities (Bossaert et al., 2011).

Nonetheless, despite these concepts being generally used as synonyms in the inclusive literature, both studies were able to distinguish four elements of the social dimension of inclusion in education (Bossaert et al., 2011; Koster et al., 2009). More precisely, both literature reviews identified: (a) relationships, (b) interactions, (c) consciousness, and (d) acceptance as the major components of social inclusion. Figure 1 shows the four elements of inclusive education.

Firstly, the element of *relationships* refers to the reciprocal interpersonal relations among individuals. That is, whether students are part of cohesive groups of relationship networks with friends, peers, families, and teachers (Bossaert et al., 2011; Koster et al., 2009). Previous studies have also shown that students' interpersonal relations are a vital component of the promotion of social inclusion (Cavicchiolo et al., 2023; Nathoo, 2017; Soriano-Ayala & Cala, 2017).

Secondly, the element of *interactions* describes both verbal and non-verbal communicative behaviours towards others. For example, whether students spend free time with others, work together on tasks, participate in group activities (Bossaert et al., 2011; Koster et al., 2009). In essence, this element incorporates the overall students' involvement in school related

activities. Similarly, previous research has highlighted how involvement, even online, has had positive impacts on students' sense of inclusion (Evans et al., 2016) and in their overall motivation (Li et al., 2018; Ribeiro et al., 2023).

Thirdly, the element of *consciousness* speaks of students' subjective impressions of their social situation within the school setting. Namely, this element emphasizes the importance of considering students' subjective well-being (e.g., satisfaction with life, positive and negative experiences) and sense of belonging as elements of social inclusion (Bossaert et al., 2011; Koster et al., 2009). Expectedly, there has also been evidence linking the promotion of students' well-being (Bagci et al., 2017; Chigeza et al., 2017; McLean et al., 2023), and boosting their sense of belonging (Quaicoe, 2011; Stebleton et al., 2014) with a greater sense of social inclusion.

Lastly, the element of *acceptance* focuses on the students' respectful recognition by others around them. That is, whether students sense they are socially supported or socially rejected (Bossaert et al., 2011; Koster et al., 2009). Here, it is of special importance the role of both student and faculty acceptance of diversity in school (Gardiner & Iarocci, 2014; Lewis et al., 2018; Prieto, 2020; Wentzel et al., 2021).

Social Inclusion in Post-Secondary Schools

Although the four-element model of social inclusion described earlier has been supported by previous research, so far this model has only been applied to primary (Koster et al., 2009) and secondary school students (Bossaert et al., 2011). There is still scarce research investigating this social inclusion model among emerging adults in post-secondary schools.

Emerging adulthood describes a developmentally distinct stage with five defining features for the period between adolescence and adulthood (Arnett, 2000; Syed, 2018). First, *age of identity exploration* describes youth searching to find meaning in school, work, and

relationships. Second, *age of instability* refers to youth's tendencies to change residences, jobs, and relationships more frequently than at other life stages. Third, *age of possibilities* illustrates the many options youths at this stage see before them. Fourth, *age of self-focus* implies their relative freedom from obligations to parents, partners, and children, which allows youth to pay greater attention to their own lives. Lastly, *age of feeling in-between* indicates the subjective experience of these youth who describe not feeling like adolescents anymore, but also not feeling fully like adults (Arnett, 2004; Syed, 2018).

Thus, social participation is vital to emerging adults' adjustment, and is central to their lives thanks to the support social relationships provide during the challenges of this developmental stage (McNamara Barry et al., 2018). A sense of social inclusion is particularly critical for the developmental stage of most post-secondary students, as these social interactions play an important role in shaping emerging adults' experiences (Arnett, 2000; McNamara Barry et al., 2018). Furthermore, since many emerging adults find themselves navigating this transition while enrolled in post-secondary education, the relationships established in these educational institutions have shown to be very influential (Baxter Magolda & Taylor, 2018).

Social Inclusion From a Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Perspective

What is SEL?

To promote the four components of social inclusion (i.e., relationships, interactions, consciousness, and acceptance) among newcomer emerging adults in post-secondary school, this study adopted an SEL perspective. The term SEL has continuously developed since it was first introduced more than two decades ago (Weissberg et al., 2015). Initially, it was used as a guiding mechanism for the provision of evidence-based programming in educational settings, and was mainly employed for students to acquire the necessary skills for attaining and maintaining well-

being and success (Brackett et al., 2015; Zins et al., 2004). Then, SEL was a broad combination of diverse ideas coming from researchers, educators, and advocates with the goal of improving students' academic and life outcomes (Brackett et al., 2015; Weissberg et al., 2015).

Now, more specifically, SEL encompasses fostering social-emotional (SE) competencies using explicit instruction and student-centered learning approaches to help them engage in the learning process while developing analytical, communication, and collaborative skills (Brackett et al., 2015; Weissberg et al., 2015; Zins et al., 2004). In particular,

> SEL programming involves implementing practices and policies that help children and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that can enhance personal development, establish satisfying interpersonal relationships, and lead to effective and ethical work and productivity. These include the competencies to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show caring and concern for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Weissberg et al., 2015, p. 6)

More precisely, these competencies include: (a) self-awareness, (b) self-management, (c) social awareness, (d) relationship skills, and (e) responsible decision-making. This study proposes that SEL competencies are crucial to adequately promote all four dimensions of social inclusion. Figure 2 shows a unifying model of social inclusion from an SEL perspective.

Firstly, *self-awareness* competencies involve understanding emotions, personal goals, and values. To this end, it is important for students to accurately assess strengths and limitations, to have positive mindsets, and to possess a realistic sense of self-efficacy (Weissberg et al., 2015; Zins et al., 2004). Furthermore, it is clear that these self-awareness competencies are crucial to properly encourage all four dimensions of social inclusion (i.e., relationships, interactions,

consciousness, and acceptance; Bossaert et al., 2011), as they are the basis of all SE skills.

Secondly, *self-management* competencies facilitate the ability to regulate emotions and behaviours. Namely, to delay gratification, to manage stress, to control impulses, and to persist despite life's challenges (Weissberg et al., 2015; Zins et al., 2004). Similarly, as with the previous competencies, self-management skills are vital to maintain relationships, to promote interactions, and to encourage acceptance among students, which are important dimensions of social inclusion (Bossaert et al., 2011).

Thirdly, *social awareness* competencies promote the ability to take the perspective of those with different backgrounds or cultures, to empathize, and to feel compassion. That is, these competencies help students to understand social norms for behaviour, and to recognize family, school, and community resources (Durlak et al., 2011; Weissberg et al., 2015). More explicitly, social awareness skills are also important when developing all four dimensions of social inclusion, as students need to be socially aware to maintain relationships, to encourage interactions, to be accurately conscious about their social environment, and to promote acceptance (Bossaert et al., 2011).

Fourthly, *relationship skills* competencies provide students with the tools to establish and maintain healthy relationships. For example, it is crucial for every student to communicate clearly, to listen actively, to cooperate, to resist inappropriate social pressure, to negotiate conflict constructively, and to seek help when needed (Durlak et al., 2011; Weissberg et al., 2015). Moreover, it is also crucial for every student to develop their relationship skills to know how to establish a relationship, to understand how to interact with others, to perceive their social situation within the school setting, and to foment their own acceptance (Bossaert et al., 2011).

Lastly, *responsible decision-making* competencies require students to develop the

knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to make constructive choices across diverse settings. It is important to highlight that the responsible decision-making competencies are thoroughly incorporated in the other SE competencies (i.e., self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills). Students need to consider ethical standards and safety concerns, accurate behavioural norms to make realistic evaluations of consequences of diverse actions, and to take the well-being of self and others into consideration as part of their self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship skills repertoire (Weissberg et al., 2015).

Therefore, in the following sections each of the four dimensions of social inclusion are revisited by incorporating relevant SEL components.

Social Relationships From an SEL Perspective

The first dimension of *relationships* refers to the reciprocal interpersonal relations among individuals (Bossaert et al., 2011). From an SEL perspective, individuals need to be self-aware and to self-manage to promote their relationships. They also need to be socially aware to maintain the relationships they build, as well as need to develop their relationship skills to establish and cultivate positive social relationships. This section explores current research in interpersonal relationships and presents their associations with social inclusion and SEL.

Traditionally, there have been a wide variety of conceptual approaches describing what interpersonal relationships entail (Buhrmester et al., 1988; Konrad et al., 2020; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1989). However, interpersonal relationships could be described as the set of aptitudes that are concerned with how individuals interact effectively with one another (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1989).

A study from Spain has shown that while measuring the social relationships (i.e., social capital) of newcomers in secondary schools with their peers, teachers, and family, the greater

their perceived relationships with peers and teachers at school, the better their SE competencies and sense of social inclusion, when compared to out-of-school peer and family relationships (Soriano-Ayala & Cala, 2017). However, another study from Australia highlighted that, at least from the perspective of the teachers, building up caring relationships at school with newcomers in high schools was not as critical to increase their perception of social inclusion, as it was the newcomers perceived support they felt from everyone at school (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012).

Moreover, similar research has been conducted among newcomer students in Canada. On one hand, while investigating how teachers tried to implement socially inclusive practices in secondary schools, findings suggested that promoting interpersonal relationships enabled them to recognize what supports these newcomer adolescents required, which allowed students to become more comfortable at school, and ultimately increased their overall sense of inclusion (Nathoo, 2017). Nonetheless, another Canadian study highlighted that newcomer high school students still have many interpersonal relationships needs, as they are rapidly learning how to interact in a new environment with people from different backgrounds and ethnicities (Georgis, 2014). In addition, these findings emphasize how relationships are essential for newcomer social inclusion and reinforce that social inclusion in education is not the unique responsibility of newcomers, but instead a joint effort only properly tackled with the collaboration of domestic students, of teachers, and of the whole educational systems.

In the same way, beyond the typical school setting, research has also explored how the use of existing digital technologies could potentially aid the efforts in promoting socially inclusive practices. For example, a study conducted in the Netherlands used social media to help newcomers acquire the language and the cultural practices of the host society (Alencar, 2018). The main findings of this study stressed that using these digital tools allowed newcomers to build

their relationships with local people and to increase their perceived integration into their new out-of-school society. Similar research has also indicated that social media use, especially when promoting the creation of online friendships, has been associated with higher perceptions of subjective well-being among post-secondary students in India (Bharucha, 2018). Therefore, interpersonal relationships are key for social inclusion as they allow newcomer students to collaborate with domestic students, to engage with others, and to resolve conflicts (Croucher, 2011). Thus, the present study further explored how interpersonal relationships are associated with the social inclusion of newcomer emerging adults in Canadian post-secondary education in collaboration with domestic students.

Social Interactions From an SEL Perspective

The second element of *interactions* describes whether students spend free time with others, work together on tasks, and participate in group activities (Bossaert et al., 2011). In alignment with SEL, students' self-awareness and self-management skills will help students initiate positive interactions. Their social awareness skills will help them sustain healthy interactions with others. Then students' relationship skills will help them to better understand how to interact with different people. The following section describes extracurricular involvement as an important SE element of this dimension of social inclusion and presents its associations with the core SEL competencies.

Extracurricular Involvement. Extracurricular involvement could be defined as the participation in academic or non-academic activities that are conducted outside of normal classroom time, and that are not part of the official curriculum (Farb & Matjasko, 2012; Feldman & Matjasko, 2005). Previous research has shown that high involvement in extracurricular activities among college male students in the U.S. predicted a growth in their empathy over time

(Hudson-Flege & Thompson, 2017). Moreover, a different Canadian study showed that university students with continued participation in extracurricular activities showed greater persistence in goal pursuit, which in turn was positively associated with greater emotional well-being and academic success (Guilmette et al., 2019). These findings are relevant, as they show that extracurricular involvement may support, directly or indirectly, students' empathy, well-being, and success (Ribeiro et al., 2023).

Similarly, another group of research has also highlighted how involvement, even when the efforts have been implemented using existing digital technologies, has had positive impacts on students' social inclusion. That is, one study examining the relationships between socio-academic exchanges on different online social networks and academic outcomes showed that, among community college students in the U.S., greater involvement was associated with better outcomes like academic performance (Evans et al., 2016). Further, another investigation assessing the effects of mobile apps on the learning motivation, social interaction, and study performance of post-secondary Hong Kong students indicated that, students who were actively involved with others on the mobile apps for studying supplementary materials had an overall increase in their learning motivation and study performance (Li et al., 2018).

Social Consciousness From an SEL Perspective

The third element of *consciousness* speaks of students' perceptions of their social situation within the school setting (Bossaert et al., 2011). Considering an SEL perspective, by developing self-awareness competencies students can more accurately assess how they are individually perceived in their school setting. Also, by improving their social awareness and relationship competencies students can more accurately gauge their social situation within the school setting. Therefore, the following sections explore current research in students' subjective

well-being and sense of belonging and presents their associations with social inclusion and the core SEL skills.

Subjective Well-Being. Subjective well-being traditionally describes a broad category of phenomena that includes people's emotional responses, experiences, and global judgements of satisfaction (Diener, 2009; Diener et al., 1999). Previous evidence has also linked the promotion of students' well-being with a greater sense of social inclusion. For example, an increase in the subjective well-being of first-year post-secondary students in South Africa was positively associated with greater sense of social inclusion, better support, and the improvement in the students' ability for self-reflection and perspective taking (Chigeza et al., 2017). Another investigation from Spain found that greater satisfaction with the social relationships at school (i.e., with peers and teachers) was identified as a positive predictor of social inclusion among both domestic and newcomer students (Santos et al., 2016). Moreover, in this study newcomers' school satisfaction was ultimately associated with school retention (Santos et al., 2016).

Similarly, a different study from the U.K. showed that elementary-school students who reported greater cross-ethnic friendships were more likely to report positive mental well-being and greater resiliency, which ultimately increased their positive educational outcomes like academic self-concept and reported academic abilities (Bagci et al., 2017).

However, when considering the use of already existing digital technologies to support these inclusion efforts, results about students' well-being have not been as conclusive. Social media use that promotes the creation of online friendships has been associated with increased subjective well-being among post-secondary Indian students (Bharucha, 2018). But on the contrary, extensive use of social media has also been significantly associated with less positive emotions (i.e., overall happiness, positive self-esteem), less school engagement, and decreased

perceptions of social support among post-secondary Chinese students (Zhou & Zhang, 2019). Even so, as the vast majority of students consider positive emotional responses, positive life experiences, and feelings of satisfaction to be essential (Diener, 2009; Diener et al., 1999), it is still relevant to further explore how subjective well-being is associated with the social inclusion of newcomer emerging adults in post-secondary education in collaboration with domestic students.

School Belonging. In recent years, more attention has been paid to the relationship between belonging and school life (e.g., Palikara et al., 2021; Slaten et al., 2016). School belonging usually describes students' feelings of inclusion in the life and experiences of the school (Eccles et al., 1993). In other words, it is the extent to which students are conscious about their social environment, and based on its positive interpretations they potentially feel accepted, valued, and supported by teachers and peers (Goodenow, 1993).

Students' high sense of belonging has been associated with a greater sense of social inclusion. More specifically, school belonging has been positively associated with feelings of being accepted, respected, supported, included, and valued by others at school (Goodenow, 1993; Slaten et al., 2016). A recent study from the U.K. has revealed that school belonging was shown to be positively associated with elementary school students' SE well-being (i.e., gratitude, optimism, zest, and persistence), and negatively associated with their feelings of loneliness (Palikara et al., 2021). Further, in this study school belonging partially mediated the associations between SE well-being and loneliness among domestic students. In this context, these results stress the importance of experiencing school belongingness, for both newcomer and domestic students, to encourage social inclusion.

In the context of post-secondary education, a study has shown that teacher conversations,

but most importantly peer conversations, were positively associated with a greater sense of belonging on campus of newcomer post-secondary school students in the U.S. (Stebleton et al., 2014). Also, in this study the overall perception of the campus climate, including feelings of being accepted and respected, was positively associated with greater levels of sense of belonging, especially among newcomers (Stebleton et al., 2014).

Similar research has been conducted in Canada among newcomer students in Newfoundland elementary schools. Findings highlighted that physical inclusion alone (i.e., having integrated classrooms with both domestic and newcomer students) did not translate into social inclusion for newcomer students (Quaicoe, 2011). Unsurprisingly, it was only when interpersonal relationships were promoted that students started experiencing a sense of belongingness, and that socially inclusive practices started working for students (Quaicoe, 2011).

Nonetheless, most research on school belonging has focused on the in-person context, leaving the potential role of existing digital technologies to promote it unknown. Thus, it is still pertinent to explore how school belonging is associated with the social inclusion of newcomer emerging adults in Canadian post-secondary schools in collaboration with domestic students.

Social Acceptance From an SEL Perspective

The element of *acceptance* focuses on the students' respectful recognition by others around them (Bossaert et al., 2011). From an SEL perspective, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship skills are all crucial for students to encourage their acceptance among other individuals in the school setting. Thus, this section reviews research in social acceptance and presents their associations with both social inclusion and SEL competencies.

Social acceptance has been associated with various indicators of well-being. Furthermore, acceptance occurs on a continuum that ranges from mere tolerance of another person's presence

to actively pursuing someone as a partner (DeWall & Bushman, 2011). This study conceptually defines social acceptance as the degree to which other people signal the individual that they wish to include them in their groups and relationships (Leary, 2010).

In the field of social inclusion, a study from the U.S. has shown that peer acceptance has positively contributed to elementary students' overall school adjustment (i.e., positive school affect, more school liking, less school avoidance; Ladd et al., 1997). More specifically, these authors indicated that students' adjustment was indeed positively associated with their perceived level of peer acceptance, even more when peer acceptance was expressed in the form of friendships. Similarly, another study from Canada also indicated that social acceptance from peer was a positive predictor of extracurricular involvement among university students with autism spectrum disorder (Gardiner & Iarocci, 2014).

Furthermore, a different study found that for both domestic and ethnically diverse students, greater acceptance of cultural diversity was associated with better academic outcomes, such as better academic performance and less self-reported school aversion, among high school students in the U.S. (Lewis et al., 2018). Similarly, a greater acceptance of culturally diverse post-secondary students in the U.S. was also associated with faculty assigning greater importance to incorporating content regarding cultural diversity into their courses, and spending more time discussing diversity issues in class (Prieto, 2020).

Nevertheless, most of the research on social acceptance has also been limited to the in-person school context, leaving the potential role of existing digital technologies in the efforts to promote social acceptance practices still unexplored. Therefore, this study explored how social acceptance is associated with the social inclusion of emerging adults in Canadian post-secondary education in collaboration with domestic students.

Social Inclusion on the School Engagement and Academic Stress of Emerging Adults

As explored earlier, the promotion of socially inclusive practices has been previously associated with positive academic outcomes. The following sections describe the role of school engagement and academic stress as relevant academic outcomes of social inclusion for emerging adults, and their associations with the four dimensions of social inclusion.

School Engagement

Recently, school engagement has been the subject of increasing interest as research continues to show its association with improving academic performance (Chen, 2005; Fredricks et al., 2004; Jelas et al., 2016), student boredom (Sahil & Hashim, 2011; Sakiz et al., 2012), and dropout rates (Fall & Roberts, 2012; Geng et al., 2020; Pan et al., 2017). Naturally, continuous research has been devoted to understanding how pedagogical practices, or how different contexts could increase or decrease school engagement (e.g., Chen, 2005).

School engagement is a multidimensional concept that describes how students behave, feel, and think (Fredricks et al., 2004). Traditionally, school engagement has been conceptually divided in three dimensions (Fredricks et al., 2004). First, the *behavioural dimension* describes behaviours involved in classroom and school participation (e.g., positive conduct). Second, the *emotional dimension* includes affective reactions to teachers, classmates, academics, and school (e.g., positive relationships). Third, the *cognitive dimension* encompasses the general investment in learning (e.g., positive effort; Fredricks et al., 2004). Therefore, the present study conceptually defines school engagement according to its three conventional dimensions.

The positive outcomes of school engagement have also been observed among newcomer students. That is, previous studies have found encouraging associations between engagement and the aforementioned school outcomes for both domestic secondary school students in China

(Geng et al., 2020), newcomer secondary school students in Belgium and the U.S. (Engels et al., 2020; Garcia-Reid et al., 2015), and ethnically diverse college students in the U.S. (Beasley, 2020). Moreover, research on school engagement among emerging adults has uncovered some meaningful associations with academic performance. That is, studies have indicated that post-secondary school students who reported greater school engagement were more likely to show improved academic performance (Dupont et al., 2015; Vayre & Vonthron, 2019). Unfortunately, most of this research has focused on domestic elementary and secondary school students.

School Engagement and Social Inclusion. Previous research has also explored how the different dimensions of social inclusion are associated with school engagement. Regarding the dimension of *relationships*, ethnically diverse secondary school students in the U.S. who reported better social relationships were more likely to show greater school engagement both in the context of traditional academic performance (Cadwallader et al., 2002; Jenkins & Demaray, 2015), and in the context of extracurricular activity participation among post-secondary school students in the U.S. (Mahoney et al., 2003). To that end, in respect of the element of *interactions*, the greater the time students spent in extracurricular activities, the better school engagement was reported among ethnically diverse students in U.S. secondary schools (Dotterer et al., 2007).

Regarding the component of *consciousness*, Spanish secondary school students who reported more subjective well-being were more likely to show both greater emotional school engagement (Rodríguez-Fernández et al., 2016), and greater behavioural school engagement among Spanish and Chinese secondary school students (Rodríguez-Fernández et al., 2016; Zhu et al., 2019). Likewise, secondary school students from Germany and the U.S. who indicated perceiving a greater sense of school belonging were also more likely to show improved behavioural and cognitive school engagement (Raufelder et al., 2015; Singh et al., 2010). Lastly,

about the dimension of *acceptance*, Greek elementary school students who reported higher levels of peer acceptance and friendships in school were more likely to have greater school engagement (Antonopoulou et al., 2019). Thus, as this evidence shows, school engagement has been previously associated with the four elements of social inclusion proposed in this study.

However, as indicated earlier, most of the studies (e.g., Antonopoulou et al., 2019; Cadwallader et al., 2002; Rodríguez-Fernández et al., 2016) have focused on elementary and secondary school students. In fact, recent research has highlighted some criticisms regarding the applicability of school engagement findings to emerging adults, as not many studies sample this population (Assunção et al., 2020). Accordingly, there is still a need to further explore the possible contributions of social inclusion to school engagement among newcomer emerging adults in post-secondary school in collaboration with their domestic counterparts.

Academic Stress

Like school engagement, academic stress among post-secondary students has been of increasing concern over the years. Not only students experience high stress at predictable times each semester due to academic commitments, but high stress can also be related to financial pressures, and to a lack of social support (Misra et al., 2000). Unfortunately, when stress is perceived negatively, or becomes excessive for students, it has the potential to negatively impact their health (Sirin et al., 2013), and academic performance (Becker et al., 2013; Galderisi et al., 2015). Fortunately, recent research has also shown that promoting positive SE skills (Galderisi et al., 2015; Payton et al., 2000) has not only been associated with higher levels of academic resilience (Abdollahi et al., 2020), but has also predicted greater academic performance (Agnafors et al., 2021; Dix et al., 2011).

Stress is conventionally conceptualized as a process in which environmental demands

exceed the adaptive capacity of an individual (Cohen et al., 1995). These exceeding demands often result in psychological and biological changes that could place the individual at a health risk (Cohen et al., 1995). Hence, it is important to highlight that if an individual's resources are deemed adequate, the stressor is perceived as a challenge. That means, although the demand is stressful it is still manageable. However, if resources are perceived to be inadequate, the stressor assumes the proportions of a threat, which triggers mental and somatic disturbances (Amirkhan et al., 2020). This is meaningful as it highlights the importance of supporting the acquisition of resources to appropriately cope with environmental demands.

The importance of improving the levels of academic stress has also been highlighted among newcomer students. One longitudinal study from the U.S. highlighted that greater exposure to acculturative stress predicted significantly more withdrawn, anxiety, and depression among newcomer secondary school students over time (Sirin et al., 2013). Moreover, another study comparing the academic stress among domestic and newcomer post-secondary students in the U.S. found that immigration status (i.e., domestic or international), as well as the interaction of their immigration status with stressors, were the two strongest predictors of behavioral, emotional, psychological, and cognitive reactions to stress (Misra & Castillo, 2004). In this case, for newcomer students, stressors had a larger effect on cognitive reactions compared to domestic students. These findings underscore the need to further examine the students' immigration status in relation to their academic stress.

Academic Stress and Social Inclusion. Prior research has also explored how different dimensions of social inclusion are associated with academic stress. Firstly, regarding the element of social *relationships*, one study from Spain showed that the more satisfied post-secondary students were with interpersonal relationships (i.e., greater informational social support), the less

academic stress they were perceiving to experience (Fernández-González et al., 2015). Secondly, on the subject of social *interactions*, post-secondary students in Germany who reported greater ability to handle social interaction effectively (i.e., social competence) were more likely to face the social demands of school (i.e., assertiveness and adaptation), which in turn helped them better cope with their academic stress experiences (Carstensen & Klusmann, 2021).

Thirdly, regarding the element of social *consciousness*, previous research has also underlined that, high school students in Spain who reported greater subjective well-being were more likely to report greater emotional intelligence (i.e., emotional attention, emotional clarity, emotional repair), and at the same time were less likely to experience high levels of perceived stress (Villanueva et al., 2020). Similar studies have also highlighted that Turkish and Iranian secondary school students who reported greater school belonging were less likely to experience emotional health concerns (Arslan, 2018), and less likely to experience academic stress (Abdollahi et al., 2020). Lastly, regarding social *acceptance*, another study showed that academic stress was significantly correlated with the perception of teacher acceptance (i.e., warmth and affection) among Turkish secondary school students (Kuyumcu & Kirazcı, 2020). That is, the more teacher acceptance was perceived by secondary school students, the less academic stress was reported by the students.

However, most of these studies have focused on in-person academic stress prevention, and not all of them have explored the associations of these variables among post-secondary school students. Moreover, the relationship between digital technologies use and stress among newcomers is not always consistent (e.g., Li & Peng, 2019). Thus, this study aimed to respond to this need by further assessing the academic stress of emerging adults in post-secondary schools.

The Present Study

Taken together, and responding to the need to promote the social inclusion of newcomers in Canadian post-secondary education, and how these need of social inclusion is a combined effort between newcomer student, domestic students, and educational systems, the purpose of the present study was: (a) to develop a socially inclusive program in alignment with the SEL perspective, (b) to implement the program in an online environment with students attending Canadian post-secondary schools, and ultimately (c) to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in promoting the social inclusion of emerging adults in Canadian post-secondary schools. The specific research questions and their corresponding hypotheses are presented in "Methods" under the "Procedure" sub-section of "Evaluation of the Program."

III. Methods

The following sections describe the research design of the study. They detail participants (i.e., sampling, recruitment strategies, and ethical considerations), procedure (i.e., development, implementation, and evaluation), measures, and analytical plan.

Participants

Participants included emerging adult students ($N = 40$, $M_{age} = 23.45$, 85% women, 65% straight) actively attending post-secondary schools located in Canada. Most participants were attending undergraduate school (70%), with most of them in their first (22.5%) and second year (20%) of undergraduate. Most participants identified as European (40%), followed by East Asian (27.5%). Most participants were Canadians by birth (57.5), and citizens of another country (40%). Most participants spoke a language at home different than English or French (60%). Most participants were not working (50%). Most did not have a disability (92.5%). Table 1 shows the demographic characteristic for the total sample and by condition (i.e., program, control).

Procedure

This study obtained ethical clearance through McGill University's Research Ethics Board (see Appendix A). Participants were recruited via social media platforms and channels that targeted post-secondary schools located in Canada. The initial message contained an abbreviated description about the background, purpose, methods, risks, benefits, potential compensation, and provided two links: (a) the first one took participants to a website with detailed information about the background, purpose, methods, risks, benefits, potential compensation, and official consent form letter, (b) the second link took participants directly to the online survey. In both cases, they were encouraged to contact the researcher if they have any questions or concerns.

This study utilized a pre-test, post-test, follow-up pilot intervention design. The responses for the pre-test were used to assign study participants to program and control groups paying attention, when possible, to their demographic information (e.g., age, newcomer status). The goal was to obtain two somewhat balanced groups based on their demographic characteristics (e.g., school level, immigration status, gender). Therefore, as recruitment was anticipated to require additional time and efforts, the pre-test was extended throughout the entire Fall 2022 term. The implementation of the program happened during the Winter 2023 term, from January to March 2023, immediately followed by the post-test data collection. Lastly, the follow-up data collection happened in July 2023. Participants were given a full month to complete both their post-test and follow-up questionnaires. Participants' responses were individually tracked through pre-test, post-test, and follow-up data collection procedures, but were immediately anonymized and were only identified by the alphanumerical pseudonyms assigned at the beginning of the study. Participants were given up to one month after the follow-up data collection to withdraw from the study (i.e., until September 2023). One month after the follow-up data collection all identifiable

information was deleted, removing the association of a particular participant with a particular set of responses, which impeded participants from withdrawing their responses after identifiable data was removed.

Lower than anticipated participation rates prompted additional recruitment efforts that extended from Fall 2022 throughout the implementation of the program until March 2023. First, flyers were posted across campus in areas with high traffic (e.g., common areas, elevators). Second, in-class personal invitations were given, when possible, in courses with more than 50 students enrolled. Third, synchronous online personal invitations were given, when possible, in fully online courses with more than 100 students. In all cases, the messages provided students with a short description about the background, purpose, methods, risks, benefits, potential compensation, and the two links to the website and to the online survey.

Development of the Program

The program was specifically developed for the purposes of this study. It was an original evidence-based intervention that targeted all five SEL core competencies and encouraged their real-life application with meaningful individual and group reflections.

Appendix B contains detailed information of the final version of the socially inclusive program from an SEL perspective. The program has been structured using a grid with the complete list of topics covered in the different socially inclusive program modules, the time requirements for each module and for each of the specific topics, the expected outcomes for each module, the content of the different topics, the activities that were used to encourage individual reflections, and the exercises used to promote group discussions. The program was self-paced, allowing participants to complete the modules whenever it was the most convenient for them, and it took approximately 45 minutes to complete each of the modules.

First, the program was developed after intensive theoretical SEL training in the course "EDPI 667: Promoting Social and Emotional Well-Being" taught by the supervisor of this study, and by actively participating in the scholarly activity of the Social-Emotional Development Research Group (SED-RG) directed by the supervisor of this study. Second, the content of the program underwent peer-review from other SED-RG members to validate the theoretical content and wording of each of the modules, and the real-life applicability of each of the activities. Lastly, the entirety of the program was validated and refined by the supervisor of this study, who is an internationally renowned expert in the field of SEL.

Implementation of the Program

All participants were given free access to Classcraft, a secure Quebecois online Learning Management System (LMS). More specifically, the LMS provides gamified "Quests," which are self-paced online modules that allow participants to explore the content at their own time, but still following the order of the releases dictated by the structure of the program. The LMS also allowed participants to create their own avatars, and automatically awarded them with experience points after watching the content and/or completing the individual and group reflections. The experience points automatically ranked participants according to their completion level and allowed them to use these points to further customize their avatars if wanted. However, no explicit attention was given to experience points during the implementation of the program among program or control group participants. Participants in both groups were only identified by numbers to protect their identity (e.g., Student 1).

Before the final implementation and release of the content, members of the SED-RG validated the first two modules of the program in their Classcraft version to make sure the content was accurate, and the platform was easy to navigate.

The intervention group received the content of the evidence-based SEL program that was developed for this study (see Appendix B). The content for each SEL core competence was released bi-weekly for a total of eight weeks (i.e., two months) of intervention. Participant responses and progress were only monitored to assure interactions were respectful, but beyond these monitoring participants were allowed to complete the program at their own pace, and on their own, with no explicit intervention from the members of this study.

To really understand how distinctly the SEL program influenced the outcome variables in the study, the control group did not receive any SEL-related content, but instead were given access to general Canadian history and social studies content to complete as part of their participation. This decision was explicitly made since this quasi-experimental study did not control for any additional external experimental variables other than group assignment and program content. A total of five history and social studies modules were released bi-weekly for a total of eight weeks (i.e., two months) of control group participation. Similarly, control group responses and progress were only monitored to assure interactions were respectful, but participants were allowed to complete the content at their own pace.

Evaluation of the Program

The content of the SEL program was evaluated by analyzing the data obtained at the three collecting time points: pre-test, post-test, and follow-up. More specifically, the program was evaluated by exploring the following research questions, and corresponding hypotheses: **(RQ1)** Does the implementation of a digital socially inclusive program in alignment with the SEL perspective contribute to the participants' *social relationships, social interactions, social consciousness, social acceptance, school engagement*, and *academic stress* over time compared to the control group?

(H1) The participants of the program would show a significant increase sustained over time in their *social relationships, social interactions, social consciousness, social acceptance, school engagement* compared to the control group (see Figure 3).

(H2) The participants of the program would show a significant decrease sustained over time in their *academic stress* compared to the control group (see Figure 3).

(RQ2) How do changes over time in participants' *social relationships, social interactions, social consciousness,* and *social acceptance* predict their *school engagement* and *academic stress*?

(H3) Changes over time in participants' *social relationships, social interactions, social consciousness,* and *social acceptance* would positively predict their *school engagement* (see Figure 4).

(H4) Changes over time in participants' *social relationships, social interactions, social consciousness,* and *social acceptance* would negatively predict their *academic stress* (see Figure 4).

Measures

Data were acquired from the following set of standardized questionnaires with proven reliability and validity to appraise the study variables. Study participants responded to the following questionnaires online using the Qualtrics Software.

Social Relationships

This concept was procedurally defined by the *Network Relationships Inventory-Relationship Qualities Version* (NRI-RQV; Buhrmester & Furman, 2008; see Appendix C). This questionnaire comprises 30 items assessing both positive interpersonal features (i.e., companionship, disclosure, emotional support, approval, and satisfaction) (e.g., "How often do you spend fun time with these people?"), and negative interpersonal features (i.e., conflict,

criticism, pressure, exclusion, and dominance) (e.g., “How often do these people push you to do things that you don’t want to do?”). Participants were asked to rate each item using a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 = *never or hardly at all* to 5 = *always or extremely much*), about different relationships in their environment (i.e., best friend, partner, sibling, mother). Items assessing negative interpersonal features were reverse-coded and averaged together with items measuring positive interpersonal features to obtain a single overall score for the scale. In this context, higher scores reflect greater positive social relationships. This tool has been extensively validated in the past for use among youth and adults with high reliability and sound construct validity (Buhrmester & Furman, 2008; Furman, 1996; Furman & Buhrmester, 2009). The internal consistency of this scale in this study was excellent (α = .928).

Social Interactions

To procedurally define this concept, this study used the *Opportunities Scale* of the School Climate Questionnaire (Konishi et al., 2020; see Appendix D). This scale comprises eight items assessing the opportunities for extracurricular involvement facilitated by the educational institution (e.g., “My school provides opportunities for extracurricular sports-related activities”). Participants were asked to rate each item using a 7-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*). Similarly, items were averaged to obtain a single overall score for the scale, in which higher scores indicate greater positive social interactions. This tool has been recently developed to be a comprehensive measure of school climate, and its validity has been assessed by both experts in the field, students via focused groups, and factor analyses (Konishi et al., 2020). In this study, the internal consistency of this scale was good (α = .883).

Social Consciousness

This concept was assessed using measures on subjective well-being and school belonging. Subjective well-being and school belonging scores were averaged to obtain a single social consciousness score. More specifically, items assessing negative experiences were reverse-coded and average together with items measuring positive experiences, satisfaction with life, flourishing, and social connectedness. In this study, higher scores reflect greater positive social consciousness. The following sections describe the details of the individual subjective well-being and school belonging measures that were used to assess the overall construct.

Subjective Well-Being. This study used three different scales to procedurally define subjective well-being. Firstly, the *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985; see Appendix E). This questionnaire comprises five items assessing the global measure of cognitive judgements about participants' satisfaction with their own life (e.g., "In most ways my life is close to my ideal"). Participants were asked to rate each item using a 7-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*). This tool has been previously validated for use among adults with sound psychometric properties (Gadermann et al., 2010; Kobau et al., 2010; Pavot & Diener, 2008). The internal consistency of this scale in this study was good ($\alpha = .880$). Secondly, the *Scale of Positive and Negative Experience* (SPANE; Diener et al., 2009; see Appendix F). This scale comprises 12 items assessing both positive and negative feelings. For both positive and negative items, half are general (e.g., "Positive", "Negative"), and half are specific (e.g., "Joyful", "Sad"). Participants were asked to rate each item using a 5-point Likert scale on the frequency of their experience (i.e., 1 = *almost never* to 5 = *almost always*). Similarly, this tool has also been previously validated for use among adults and post-secondary students with sound psychometric properties (Diener et al., 2009; Kobau et al., 2010). Similarly, the internal

consistency of this scale in this study was good (α = .884). Thirdly, the *Flourishing Scale* (FS; Diener et al., 2009; see Appendix G). This questionnaire comprises eight items that measure the individual's overall self-perceived success in important areas like relationships, self-esteem, purpose, and optimism (e.g., "My social relationships are supportive and rewarding"). Participants were asked to rate each item using a 7-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*). Likewise, the psychometric properties of this tool have been previously assessed yielding appropriate validity and reliability among post-secondary students (Diener et al., 2009). In this study, the internal consistency of this scale was excellent (α = .910).

School Belonging. This concept was procedurally defined by the *Social Connectedness Scale* (Lee & Robbins, 1995; see Appendix H). This questionnaire comprises a total of 20 items assessing how much participants feel they belong in a group, and how much they are concerned about not fitting in a group (e.g., "I see people as friendly and approachable"). Participants were asked to rate each item using a 6-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 = *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree*). This tool has also been extensively validated in the past for use among youth with high reliability and sound concurrent, construct, convergent, and discriminant validity (Lee et al., 2001; Lee & Robbins, 1995). Its internal consistency in this study was excellent (α = .922).

Social Acceptance

This concept was procedurally defined by the *Adult Acceptance of Diversity Scale* and the *Student Acceptance of Diversity Scale* of the School Climate Questionnaire (Konishi et al., 2020; see Appendix I). Each scale comprises six items assessing their perception of adult and student acceptance of diversity in their educational institution regarding ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, gender, among others (e.g., "Adults at my school are accepting of all individuals regardless of their race, ethnicity or culture"). Participants were asked to rate each

item using a 7-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*). Items were averaged to obtain a single overall score from both scales, in which higher scores reflect greater positive social acceptance. As indicated before, this tool that has been recently developed to be a comprehensive measure of school climate, and its validity has been assessed by both experts in the field, students via focused groups, and factor analyses (Konishi et al., 2020). In this study, the internal consistency of the adult scale (α = .923), and the student scale (α = .997), were excellent.

School Engagement

This study procedurally defined this concept by using the *Multidimensional School Engagement Scale* (MSES; Wang et al., 2011; see Appendix J). This questionnaire comprises 23 items assessing participants' behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement with school. Participants were asked to rate each item using a 5-point Likert scale on either the frequency (i.e., 1 = *almost never* to 5 = *almost always*) (e.g., "How often do you have trouble paying attention in classes?"), or their agreement (i.e., 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*) (e.g., "I feel happy and safe in this school"). Items assessing negative features of engagement were reverse-coded and averaged together with items measuring positive features of engagement to obtain a single overall score. Therefore, in this study higher scores indicate greater positive school engagement. This scale has been previously validated for use among youth, and results provided a psychometrically sound foundation for capturing the behavioral, emotional, cognitive aspects of student engagement (Wang et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2011). For this study, the internal consistency of this scale was good (α = .867).

Academic Stress

The concept of academic stress was procedurally defined by the *Perceived Stress Scale* (PSS; Cohen et al., 1983; see Appendix K). This questionnaire comprises 10 items assessing the

degree to which different situations in participants' lives affect their feelings and are perceived as stressful (e.g., "In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?"). Participants were asked to rate each item using a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., 0 = *never* to 4 = *very often*). Items assessing positive dimensions were reverse-coded and averaged together with items measuring negative dimensions to obtain a single overall score of academic stress. Here, higher scores reflect greater negative stress. The validity and reliability of this scale has been previously tested with overall good results supporting its use (Baik et al., 2019; Lee, 2012). Similarly, the internal consistency of this scale was good ($\alpha = .855$).

Demographic Information

Participants were also asked to provide information about their age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, (dis)ability, immigration status, level, and languages (see Appendix L).

Analytical Plan

First, assumptions relevant to multivariate inferential statistics (e.g., linearity, normality, outliers), and preliminary descriptive statistic analysis (e.g., mean, standard deviation, correlations) were conducted using SPSS Statistics 29. The results of these analyses determined the model estimation (e.g., maximum likelihood, maximum likelihood robust).

Second, to evaluate the first research question regarding the trajectory models, growth mixture models were performed using M*plus* Statistics 8.10 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). Linear trajectory models were first fit with the entire sample to explore changes in social relationships, social interactions, social consciousness, social acceptance, school engagement, and academic stress. Then, these linear trajectory models were tested again accounting for the differences between participants of the program with the participants in the control group. Significant intercept means were interpreted as the average levels of the different variables at initial status,

whereas significant slope means as evidence of significant rate of change through time (i.e., from pre-test to post-test and follow-up; Jung & Wickrama, 2008). Further, significant intercept variances were interpreted as evidence of systematic individual differences at initial status (e.g., some individuals with significantly higher or lower initial status values), and significant slope variances as evidence of systematic differences in the rates of change through time (e.g., some individuals increased or decreased at faster rates through time). Similarly, a significant factor covariance between intercept and slope was interpreted as evidence of average levels of the variables at initial status influencing the rate of change through time (Jung & Wickrama, 2008). Model fit was assessed with model comparison indexes by evaluating changes in Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), and sample-adjusted Bayesian Information Criterion (aBIC), with lower values indicating better fit than the previous model (Browne & Cudeck, 1992).

Third, to evaluate the second research question regarding the comprehensive models, structural equation modeling (SEM) techniques were employed using M*plus* Statistics 8.10 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). Previous evidence suggests that the number of participants in this study, although small, was sufficient for meaningful statistical patterns of associations to emerge (Wolf et al., 2013). Path analyses were used to evaluate the direct effect of each of the pre-test on post-test measures (path a), the direct effect of each post-test measures on each of the outcomes at follow-up (path b), the total effects (path c) and the direct effects (path c') of each of the pre-test measures on each of the outcomes at follow-up, and the indirect effects of each of the pre-test measures on each of the outcomes at follow-up (path ab). The significance of the indirect path was interpreted as evidence of a mediating effect (MacKinnon, 2008). Namely, a complete mediation was inferred if all other paths except path c' were statistically significant, a partial mediation was inferred if all paths were statistically significant with a lower path c' compared to

path c, and a suppression effect was inferred if all paths were statistically significant with a higher path c' compared to path c (MacKinnon, 2008). Model fit was assessed with two absolute indexes: the chi-square goodness of fit test (i.e., non-significant values were interpreted as good model fit; Hu & Bentler, 1999), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA; values equal or less than .06 indicate good model fit, between .07 and .08 moderate fit, between .08 and .10 marginal fit, higher than .10 poor fit; Browne & Cudeck, 1992). Model fit was also assessed with one relative index: the comparative fit index (CFI; values equal or higher than .95 indicate good model fit, between .90 and .95 acceptable fit; Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Fourth, multigroup sensitivity analyses were also conducted using M*plus* 8.10 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017) to check whether the differences between participants of the program with the participants in the control group were statistically significant. More specifically, one multigroup model was run in which path coefficients were constrained to be equal across groups, and another multigroup model was run in which path coefficients were unconstrained across groups. The statistical significance of the chi-square model fit difference was interpreted as evidence of differences across condition groups.

IV. Results

The following sections present the findings of the study. They detail the assumptions and preliminary descriptive statistic results, the growth mixture model results, as well as the path analyses and multigroup sensitivity results.

Assumptions

The assumptions of *linearity* and *equal variances* (i.e., homoscedasticity or homogeneity of variance) were assessed by visually examining a standardized residuals scatterplot. Figure 5 shows data points forming a generally smooth shape gathered mainly in the center of the chart.

This shape was interpreted as an indication that variables were linearly related and that equal variances among these variables could be assumed. Therefore, both the linearity and the equal variances assumptions were adequately met in this sample.

The assumption of *independence* was initially assumed due to the nature of the participant recruitment. However, after participants were assigned to program and control groups, the assumption of independence could no longer be assumed. Therefore, the trajectory models were initially tested considering the whole sample of participants and then separating participants of the program from participants in the control group, while the comprehensive models were tested accounting from the start for differences between participants of the program from participants in the control group.

The assumption of *normality* was assessed in several ways. First, residual univariate outliers were detected using boxplots. Figure 6 shows several univariate outliers were detected in each of the study variables. Next, *z* scores were computed to pinpoint the univariate outliers in each of these variables. Results indicated that, in each of the variables, a number of cases surpassed the absolute value of |2| in social relationships (pre-test = 2 cases, post-test = 2 cases, follow-up = 2 cases), social interactions (pre-test = 2, post-test = 3, follow-up = 2 cases), social consciousness (pre-test = 2, post-test = 2, follow-up = 2 cases), social acceptance (pre-test = 1, post-test = 4, follow-up = 2 cases), school engagement (pre-test = 2, post-test = 4, follow-up = 4 cases), and academic stress (pre-test = 3, post-test = 3, follow-up = 3 cases). Second, residual multivariate outliers were then assessed using *Mahalanobis* distance statistics: $\chi^2(17) = 34.267$, $p < .005$. None of the cases surpassed the critical value indicating there were no residual multivariate outliers. Therefore, due to the essentially multivariate nature of the research questions and hypotheses, as well as the small sample size, the following analyzes included all

participants of the sample. Third, the assumption of normality was also assessed by visually examining two plots. Figure 7 shows a histogram with slightly positively skewed results for the first multivariate normality assumption check. Similarly, Figure 8 shows a normal P-P plot of regression standardized residuals with data points loosely forming a curve around the central line. Thus, all evidence considered, the normality assumption was not met in the sample of this study. As a result, the analyzes utilized maximum likelihood estimation with robust test statistic for model evaluation that accounts for non-normally distributed data.

Lastly, potential issues with multi-collinearity were assessed using tolerance statistics (i.e., values less than .1), and variance inflation factor (VIF; values greater than 4). No multi-collinearity issues were present in the sample according to tolerance (values ranging from .316 to .717) or VIF results (values ranging from 1.395 to 3.166). In addition, Table 2 shows that Pearson correlation coefficients showed most of the variables were low to moderately correlated, further indicating no multi-collinearity issues were present in this sample.

Preliminary Analyses

Preliminary analyses were then performed for the study variables. For the purposes of preliminary analyses, and since both groups were as balanced as possible, results in this section reflect pooled data from the total sample of study participants. Table 2 presents Pearson correlation coefficients, as well as descriptive statistics information for all study variables. These results showed, in general, low to moderate statistically significant correlations between pre-test, post-test, and follow-up data collections of each of the variables of the study. In these results, positive correlations were interpreted as the greater the values in one of the variables the greater the values in the other, whereas negative correlations were interpreted as the greater the values in one of the variables the lesser the values in the other.

Regarding social relationships, pre-test scores were positively correlated with relationships at post-test, relationships at follow-up, interactions at post-test, consciousness at pre-test, acceptance at post-test and at follow-up. Social relationships at pre-test were also negatively correlated with stress at pre-test. Additionally, post-test scores were positively correlated with relationships at follow-up, consciousness over time (i.e., pre-test, post-test, and follow-up), acceptance at post-test and follow-up, as well as engagement over time. Social relationships at post-test were also negatively correlated with stress over time. Similarly, social relationships at follow-up were positively correlated with interactions at post-test, as well as positively correlated with consciousness over time and engagement over time; social relationships at follow-up negatively correlated with stress over time (see Table 2).

For social interactions, pre-test scores were positively correlated with interactions at post-test, consciousness at pre-test and post-test, acceptance at pre-test and post-test, as well as engagement at pre-test. Post-test scores were positively correlated with consciousness at pre-test, as well as acceptance at post-test and follow-up. Interactions at follow-up were positively correlated with consciousness and engagement at follow-up (see Table 2).

Regarding social consciousness, pre-test scores were positively correlated with social consciousness at post-test and follow-up, acceptance at post-test and follow-up, and engagement at pre-test and post-test, they were also negatively correlated with stress at pre-test. Consciousness at post-test were positively correlated with social consciousness at follow-up, acceptance at pre-test, and engagement at pre-test and post-test, while negatively correlated to stress at post-test and follow-up. Consciousness at follow-up were positively correlated with engagement at follow-up, and negatively correlated with stress at post-test and follow-up (see Table 2).

Pre-test scores of social acceptance were positively correlated with acceptance at follow-up, as well as with engagement over time. Post-test scores of acceptance were positively correlated with acceptance at follow-up, and with engagement at post-test, and negatively correlated with stress at post-test. Follow-up scores of social acceptance were positively correlated with engagement at post-test (see Table 2).

For school engagement, scores at pre-test were positively correlated with engagement scores at post-test and follow-up, and negatively correlated with stress over time. Scores of school engagement at post-test were positively correlated with engagement at follow-up, and negatively correlated with stress over time. Scores of engagement at follow-up were negatively correlated with stress at follow-up. For academic stress, pre-test scores were positively correlated with stress at follow-up, and post-test scores were positively correlated with stress at follow-up (see Table 2).

Trajectory Models

The first research question assessed how participation in the program contributed to social relationships, social interactions, social consciousness, social acceptance, school engagement, and academic stress compared to participants in the control group. First, each of these trajectory models were assessed with all participants in the sample (i.e., baseline model). Second, the same trajectory models were assessed again accounting for the differences between the participants of the program with the participants in the control group (i.e., multigroup analyses). Then, AIC and aBIC values were compared between baseline models and trajectory models by group. In general, results indicated that accounting for group differences provided a better model fit (i.e., lower AIC and aBIC values) compared to the corresponding baseline model. In other words, group assignment better explains the differences in the trajectory models

of participants. Table 3 shows the complete growth parameter estimates for all different versions of the trajectory models.

Social Relationships

There were statistically significant differences at initial status in the mean level of relationships for all participants in the sample ($M = 3.526$, $p < .001$; $s^2 = .021$, $p = .046$). In other words, some participants had higher levels of relationships at pre-test than others. Similarly, the rate of change in relationships was marginally significant for all participants ($M = .039$, $p = .055$). That is, the extent to which participants experienced their relationships increased linearly across the entire sample of the study. The variance of this positive rate of change was not statistically significant ($s^2 = .003$, $p = .485$), indicating that participants in general increased their levels of relationships at a similar rate. Figure 9 shows the growth trajectories in relationships both in general and by group condition (i.e., program and control groups).

Further, when comparing the initial status in the level of relationships between participants of the program ($M = 3.447$, $p < .001$), with participants in the control group ($M = 3.580$, $p < .001$), control group showed slightly higher levels of relationships at pre-test than participants of the program. However, there were no statistically significant differences at initial status within participants of the program ($s^2 = .020$, $p = .241$), nor within participants in the control group ($s^2 = .008$, $p = .226$). Namely, participants had similar levels of relationships at pre-test in each of the group conditions.

Even so, there was only a statistically significant positive rate of change in relationships for participants of the program ($M = .081$, $p = .001$), when compared to control group ($M = .012$, $p = .649$). This means that only for program participants there was a linear increase in the levels of relationships throughout the study. Also, the variance of this positive rate of change was not

statistically significant (s^2 = -.005, p = .566), indicating that program participants increased their levels of relationships at a similar rate.

Moreover, compared to the fit indices of the baseline model conducted with the entire sample (AIC = -36.414; aBIC = -47.938), model fit results for the social relationships trajectory model accounting for group condition showed improvement (AIC = -76.967; aBIC = -100.013).

Social Interactions

Similarly, there were marginally statistically significant differences at initial status in the level of relationships for all participants of the sample (M = 4.954, p < .001; s^2 = .650, p = .075). Namely, some participants had higher levels of interactions at pre-test than others. However, the negative rate of change in interactions was not statistically significant for participants in general (M = -.065, p = .538). That means that the extent to which participants experienced their interactions did not decrease in general throughout study. Figure 10 shows the growth trajectories in social interactions both in general and by group condition.

Moreover, participants of the program showed slightly lower levels of social interactions at pre-test (M = 4.638, p < .001), than participants in the control group (M = 4.879, p < .001). Then again, there were no statistically significant differences at initial status within participants of the program (s^2 = .480, p = .295), nor within participants in the control group (s^2 = .781, p = .160). Namely, participants had similar levels of interactions at pre-test in each of the conditions.

Further examination showed a marginally significant positive rate of change for participants of the program (M = .233, p = .062), when compared to the non-significant negative rate of change for the control group (M = -.120, p = .453). In other words, only for program participants there was a linear increase in the levels of social interactions throughout the study.

Similarly, the variance of this rate of change was not statistically significant (s^2 = .016, p = .934), indicating that program participants increased their levels of interactions at a similar rate.

Similarly, model fit indices showed an overall improvement when comparing the baseline trajectory model of the entire sample (AIC = 335.388; aBIC = 319.178), to the trajectory model controlling for group condition (AIC = 330.701; aBIC = 312.341).

Social Consciousness

Results showed no statistically significant differences at initial status in the level of social consciousness for the entire sample (M = 4.625, p < .001; s^2 = .261, p = .142). That is, participants had similar levels of consciousness at pre-test. Nevertheless, the rate of change in consciousness was statistically significant (M = .152, p = .007), which means that the extent to which participants in the entire sample experienced their consciousness increased linearly over time. Further, the variance of this positive rate of change was not statistically significant (s^2 = -.076, p = .123), indicating that participants increased their levels of consciousness at a similar rate. Figure 11 shows the growth trajectories in consciousness both in general and by group condition.

Comparing between program participants (M = 4.486, p < .001), with control group participants (M = 4.891, p < .001), showed the control group had slightly higher levels of consciousness at pre-test than participants of the program. However, program participants were the only ones with marginally significantly differences in their levels of consciousness at pre-test within this condition (s^2 = .485, p = .069). The non-significant variance of the control group indicated similar levels of consciousness at pre-test in this condition (s^2 = .063, p = .654).

Furthermore, the positive rate of change in consciousness was only statistically significant for participants of the program (M = .262, p < .001), compared to the non-significant

negative rate of change in the control group (M = -.072, p = .224). In other words, program participants showed a linear increase in the levels of consciousness throughout the study. Also, this variance of this positive rate of change was not statistically significant (s^2 = .112, p = .145), pointing that program participants increased their levels of consciousness at a similar rate over time.

In the same way, compared to the fit indices of the baseline model in general (AIC = 215.985; aBIC = 204.462), the model fit results for the trajectory model of social consciousness accounting by group condition showed improvement (AIC = 183.215; aBIC = 160.169).

Social Acceptance

Regarding social acceptance, results showed there were no statistically significant differences at initial status for all participants in the sample (M = 5.256, p < .001; s^2 = .197, p = .179), indicating that the levels of acceptance at pre-test were similar for all. Results also showed the rate of change in acceptance was not statistically significant (M = .062, p = .378). That is, the extent to which participants experienced their acceptance did not increase in general throughout the study. Figure 12 shows these growth trajectories both in general and by group condition.

Participants of the program (M = 5.261, p < .001) showed slightly higher levels of social acceptance at pre-test than participants of the control group (M = 5.191, p < .001). Additionally, participants of the program participants were the only ones with marginally significantly differences in their levels of acceptance at pre-test (s^2 = .450, p = .051). Participants in the control group had similar levels of acceptance at pre-test (s^2 = -.058, p = .447).

Both participants of the program (M = -.174, p = .010), and participants in the control group (M = .329, p = .001), showed significant rates of change in acceptance. Taken together, results showed that the levels of acceptance decreased for participants of the program, while the

levels of acceptance increased for participants of the control group. Furthermore, variances of change were not statistically significant for program (s^2 = -.050, p = .537), nor for control group (s^2 = -.054, p = .378), indicating that their corresponding rates of change in acceptance were similar among each of these groups.

The trajectory model of social acceptance accounting for program status showed better fit (AIC = 252.816; aBIC = 229.770), than the general baseline model (AIC = 292.139; aBIC = 280.616).

School Engagement

There were no significant differences at initial status of school engagement for participants in general (M = 3.893, p < .001; s^2 = .066, p = .215), and the rate of change in engagement was not statistically significant either (M = -.059, p = .113). That is, there were similar levels of school engagement at pre-test among participants in general, and the change in participants' experience of engagement did not significantly change throughout study. Figure 13 shows the school engagement growth trajectories both in general and by group condition.

Similar patterns emerged when accounting for program status. For participants of the program, there were no significant differences at initial status of school engagement (M = 3.794, p < .001; s^2 = .027, p = .502), and no significant rate of change (M = .034, p = .274). Likewise, for the control group, there were no significant differences at initial status of school engagement (M = 3.981, p < .001; s^2 = .071, p = .430), and no significant rate of change (M = -.069, p = .246). In other words, there were no differences in the levels of school engagement at pre-test for neither participants of the program nor participants in the control group, and the change in their experience of engagement did not significantly change for neither condition.

In a similar way, model fit indices showed an overall improvement when comparting the general trajectory baseline model (AIC = 109.627; aBIC = 98.104), to the school engagement trajectory model by group condition (AIC = 104.455; aBIC = 81.409).

Academic Stress

Results showed there were no statistically significant differences at initial status for the entire sample of participants in the levels of academic stress ($M = 3.088$, $p < .001$; $s^2 = .033$, $p = .675$). In general, participants had similar levels of stress at pre-test. However, the rate of change in stress was significant for participants ($M = -.232$, $p < .001$). The extent to which all participants experienced their academic stress decreased linearly in the study. Further, the variance of this negative rate of change was not statistically significant ($s^2 = -.014$, $p = .522$), indicating that participants decreased their levels of stress at a similar rate. Figure 14 shows the growth trajectories of academic stress both in general and by program status.

Likewise, neither participants of the program ($M = 2.945$, $p < .001$; $s^2 = .096$, $p = .411$), nor participants in the control group ($M = 3.062$, $p < .001$; $s^2 = -.038$, $p = .548$), showed significant differences at initial status, although control group had slightly higher levels of stress than participants of the program. Furthermore, the negative rate of change in stress was statistically significant for both participants of the program ($M = -.216$, $p < .001$), and participants in the control group ($M = -.187$, $p < .001$). This means that for program participants and control group there was a significant linear decrease in the levels of academic stress throughout the study, with program participants showing a slightly steeper change rate than in the control group. Moreover, the variance of this negative rate of change was marginally significant for participants of the program only ($s^2 = -.053$, $p = .064$), compared to participants in the control group ($M = -.009$, $p = .736$), pointing that program participants decreased their levels

of stress at slightly different rates over time. Furthermore, the covariance between initial status and subsequent change in stress was statistically significant for program participants ($r = .059$, $p = .021$), indicating that program participants that had a higher level of stress at pre-test decreased at faster rates over time than participants who started off with lower levels.

Moreover, compared to the fit indices of the general baseline model (AIC = 151.570; aBIC = 140.047), model fit results for the academic stress trajectory model by group condition showed improvement (AIC = 146.276; aBIC = 123.230).

Comprehensive Models

The second research question assessed how changes over time in social relationships, social interactions, social consciousness, and social acceptance between program participants and control group predicted their respective school engagement and academic stress.

To better understand the differences by group between these associations, a multigroup comprehensive model was tested by comparing participants of the program with participants in the control group. Here, although the chi-square of model fit: $\chi^2(36) = 536.522$, $p = .179$, and comparative fit index (CFI = .940) showed good and acceptable model fit respectively, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA = .834) showed marginal model fit. Nevertheless, this model still explained 93% of the variance in school engagement, and 89.8% of the variance in academic stress for program participants; while 63.5% of the variance in school engagement, and 81.4% of the variance in academic stress for the control group. Table 4 shows the complete standardized model results for the two group conditions.

All social constructs at pre-test were statistically significant positive predictors of change at post-test for participants of the program: relationships ($\beta = .458$, $SE = .102$, $p < .001$), interactions ($\beta = .623$, $SE = .110$, $p < .001$), consciousness ($\beta = .536$, $SE = .081$, $p < .001$), and

acceptance (β = .653, *SE* = .122, $p < .001$). Figure 15 shows the results of the hypothesized model for participants in the program.

Regarding school engagement at follow-up, for participants of the program relationships at post-test were associated with increased school engagement (β = .705, *SE* = .083, $p < .001$), while consciousness at post-test were associated with decreased school engagement (β = -.492, *SE* = .113, $p < .001$). First, relationships showed statistically significant indirect effects that completely mediated the changes on school engagement. Namely, relationships had a statistically significant positive indirect effect on school engagement (β = .322, *SE* = .084, $p < .001$), with a significant total effect (β = .433, *SE* = .093, $p < .001$), and a non-significant direct effect (β = .110, *SE* = .078, $p = .155$). This means that the increase in relationships after participating in the program better explains the increase in participants' school engagement. Second, consciousness also showed marginally significant indirect effects that completely mediated the changes on school engagement. That is, consciousness also had a statistically significant positive indirect effect on school engagement (β = -.264, *SE* = .070, $p < .001$), with a marginally significant total effect (β = -.154, *SE* = .081, $p = .057$), and a non-significant direct effect (β = .110, *SE* = .081, $p = .174$). In other words, the decrease in levels of school engagement could be marginally explained by participating in the program. Table 5 shows the complete standardized total, direct, and indirect effects for all the different model conditions.

Regarding academic stress at follow-up, for participants of the program both relationships (β = -.881, *SE* = .075, $p < .001$), and acceptance at post-test (β = -.279, *SE* = .085, $p < .001$) were associated with decreased academic stress, whereas consciousness were associated with increased academic stress (β = .211, *SE* = .082, $p = .011$). All three associations showed statistically significant indirect effects from pre-test to academic stress at follow-up through

changes at post-test. First, the change in relationships completely mediated the changes in academic stress. Namely, the indirect effect was negative and statistically significant (β = -.403, SE = .113, p < .001), with a significant total effect (β = -.528, SE = .138, p < .001), and a non-significant direct effect (β = -.124, SE = .096, p = .196). In other words, results showed that relationships increased after participating in the program, which in turn decreased participants' academic stress. Second, the change in consciousness partially mediated the changes in academic stress. That is, the indirect effect was positive and statistically significant (β = .113, SE = .045, p = .013), with a reduced direct effect (β = .296, SE = .077, p < .001), when compared to the total effect (β = .409, SE = .089, p < .001). This means that although consciousness increased after participating in the program, this change in turn also increased participants' academic stress. Third, the change in acceptance showed a suppression effect on academic stress. In other words, the indirect effect was negative and statistically significant (β = -.182, SE = .077, p = .018), with an increased direct effect (β = .513, SE = .154, p = .001), when compared to the total effect (β = .331, SE = .128, p = .010; see Table 5). This means that although acceptance increased after the program, and although the changes in acceptance after the program decreased the levels of academic stress at follow-up, the decrease in academic stress is not explained by participating in the program, but instead it is better explained by the initial status in acceptance.

Figure 16 shows the results of the hypothesized model for participants in the control group. In contrast with the results from participants of the program, interactions were the only statistically significant predictor of change from pre-test to post-test for the control group (β = .515, SE = .087, p < .001). Therefore, although post-test measures of relationships (β = .365, SE = .089, p < .001), interactions (β = -.270, SE = .117, p = .021), consciousness (β = .308, SE = .112, p = .006), and acceptance (β = .289, SE = .096, p = .003) were all significantly associated

with school engagement at follow-up, only interactions showed a statistically significant indirect effect that partially mediated the changes on school engagement for participants in the control group. In other words, the indirect effect was negative and statistically significant (β = -.139, *SE* = .061, p = .024), with a reduced direct effect (β = -.378, *SE* = .149, p = .011), when compared to the total effect (β = -.517, *SE* = .133, p < .001). So, although interactions increased from pre-test to post-test, this in turn decreased the school engagement of participants of the control group. The positive associations of relationships, consciousness, and acceptance on school engagement are not explained by changes from pre-test to post-test. Table 5 shows the complete standardized total, direct, and indirect effects for all the different model conditions.

In a similar way, for participants in the control group, although interactions (β = .492, *SE* = .079, p < .001), consciousness (β = -.531, *SE* = .090, p < .001), and acceptance (β = -.266, *SE* = .069, p < .001) were all significantly associated with academic stress at follow-up, only interactions showed a statistically significant indirect effect that partially mediated the changes of interactions on academic stress. In other words, the indirect effect was positive and statistically significant (β = .253, *SE* = .064, p < .001), with a reduced direct effect (β = .313, *SE* = .130, p = .016), when compared to the total effect of interactions on academic stress (β = .566, *SE* = .135, p < .001). This means that although interactions increased from pre-test to post-test, this change in turn also increased the academic stress of the participants in the control group. Likewise, the negative associations of consciousness and acceptance on academic stress are not explained by changes from pre-test to post-test.

Finally, multigroup chi-square difference sensitivity analyses were conducted to assess whether the group differences in the models between participants of the program and participants in the control group were statistically significant. Since maximum likelihood estimation with

robust test statistics was employed to account for non-normally distributed data, the Satorra-Bentler scaled chi-square difference testing technique was used to account for the chi-square scaling correction factor. Table 6 shows the sensitivity analyses results, which indicated that differences found in the model between program participants and control group were statistically significant ($N = 40$, 50% program participants): $\Delta\chi^2(21) = 811.287$, $p < .001$. Therefore, the differences in the results of the hypothesized model between program and control group were statistically significant. In other words, among program participants changes in relationships increased school engagement and decreased academic stress; changes in social acceptance decreased academic stress but did not increase school engagement; changes in consciousness decreased school engagement while increased academic stress; changes in interactions did not predict either outcome. In contrast, control group participants showed decreased school engagement and increased academic stress associated with changes in interactions, with no significant associations found for changes in relationships, acceptance, or consciousness.

V. Discussion

The purpose of this study was (a) to develop a socially inclusive program in alignment with the SEL perspective, (b) to implement the program in an online environment with students attending Canadian post-secondary schools, and (c) to ultimately evaluate the effectiveness of the program in promoting the social inclusion of these students. This study argued that social inclusion is not the unique responsibility of newcomer students, but instead a common effort that includes the collaboration of domestic students, and ideally of the entire educational system. Therefore, the following sections discuss the findings of both trajectory and comprehensive models, discusses limitations of the study and future directions, then describes potential implications and recommendations derived from this study.

Trajectory Models

The first hypothesis explored the growth trajectories of program participants in contrast to the control group. More specifically, it contended that participants of the program would show a significant increase sustained over time in their social relationships, social interactions, social consciousness, social acceptance, and school engagement compared to the control group. Results partially supported this first hypothesis showing that program participants significantly increased in positive relationships, constructive interactions, and positive consciousness of social status. These results are in line with previous literature indicating that SE competencies indeed promote the development of positive social relationships (e.g., Nathoo, 2017; Soriano-Ayala & Cala, 2017), positive social interactions (e.g., Guilmette et al., 2019; Hudson-Flege & Thompson, 2017), and positive social consciousness (e.g., Chigeza et al., 2017; Santos et al., 2016).

Furthermore, from an SEL perspective, these findings suggest that the program positively impacted the social and emotional development of participants across multiple dimensions of social inclusion. In other words, and regarding the competency of self-management, these results highlight that by promoting a better understanding of their own emotions, their own strengths, and their own self-worth, participants of the program seemed to improve their social relationships and interactions, which could have made them better equipped to navigate different social situations, and in doing so could have improved their own consciousness of their social status (e.g., Palikara et al., 2021; Stebleton et al., 2014). Regarding self-management, these findings emphasize the importance of including strategies for managing emotions, managing impulses, and managing stress, and how developing these skills could have helped program participants to increase their emotional regulation, and to exercise a more constructive decision-making in social situations, which could have led to their increase in these dimensions of social

inclusion (e.g., Carstensen & Klusmann, 2021; Fernández-González et al., 2015). Similarly, having been exposed to content explicitly tackling social awareness (i.e., perspective taking, affective empathy, appreciating diversity, and respect for others) could have developed a heightened sensitivity to the feelings and needs of others among participants of the program, leading to their improved social relationships, interactions, and consciousness (e.g., Lewis et al., 2018; Prieto, 2020). Building on social awareness skills, the focus on relationship skills seemed to have also played a meaningful role in the overall improvement of these social inclusion dimensions. For instance, program participants could have been able to practice effective communication, conflict resolution, and collaboration, which resulted in enhanced social relationships (e.g., Georgis, 2014; Nathoo, 2017). Lastly, responsible decision-making was embedded throughout the intervention, and these skills could have helped participants of the program to make responsible and ethical decisions, which in turn could have allowed them to be better equipped to navigate social situations, make thoughtful choices, and contribute positively to their interactions with others (e.g., Chigeza et al., 2017).

However, contrary to the first hypothesis, perceived acceptance significantly decreased among program participants while it increased in the control group, and neither program participants nor control group had significant changes in school engagement.

Regarding the results showing a significant decrease in social acceptance, although SE training has been associated with many positive outcomes, suddenly becoming more aware of one's emotions and behaviours could also bring about feelings of discomfort (Goodenow, 1993; Slaten et al., 2016), that could have potentially impacted how individuals perceive their levels acceptance as they start to navigate the world with a series of new insights about themselves and about other people (Wentzel et al., 2021). Additionally, external factors in the immediate

environment of participants could have also influenced the decrease in their perception of social acceptance (IOM, 2022; UNESCO, 2019). For instance, although the study took place after the reopening of educational institutions, the pandemic had unfortunate negative consequences in the discourse against certain ethnic/racial groups that were part of the study (i.e., East Asian; McGarity-Palmer et al., 2023; Wu et al., 2021), which could have impacted their own perception of social acceptance. Moreover, the overall discourse around newcomers, not only in Canada but around the world, seems to have also shifted to a more nationalist stand (e.g., Abu-Laban, 2023; Dekeyser & Freedman, 2021), which could have also made a difference on how accepted these participants felt, especially after being sensibilized about what appreciating diversity, and respect for other looks like (Stebleton et al., 2014). Alternatively, these findings could also indicate that the program increased participants' awareness and critical reflection on social issues, leading to a heightened sensitivity to instances of exclusion or discrimination. In turn, as students became more attuned to the dynamics of social acceptance and prejudice, they might have perceived or experienced more acute feelings of exclusion, or a lack of acceptance, in their social environments which would further reinforce the complexities and challenges of developing and implementing socially inclusive practices (Stebleton et al., 2014).

In contrast, regarding the results showing a lack of significant change over time in the levels of school engagement for both the program and control groups, having conducted the study among post-secondary students, especially focusing on newcomers (International Education Canada, 2020), could explain why neither group showed significant changes. Not only recent research has already highlighted some difficulties of adapting the findings on school engagement to emerging adults (Assunção et al., 2020), but it is not surprising that many post-secondary students could be taking courses in an already engaging program, or that being part of

a Canadian post-secondary institution could be already fulfilling and engaging (e.g., Magnan et al., 2015; Stebleton et al., 2014). In other words, if participants were already highly engaged in their school activities, it could have been challenging to detect significant changes over time. It is also important to acknowledge that the study collected data well into the summer, where many of the questions asked about school engagement could have not been as contextually relevant anymore and influenced the overall trajectory of this variable. Additionally, some of the changes mentioned before in discourse around newcomers (Abu-Laban, 2023; Dekeyser & Freedman, 2021), could have also influenced how they engage with their educational institution, which was eventually apparent in their growth trajectories.

Nevertheless, as school engagement has been shown to improve academic performance (Jelas et al., 2016), student boredom (Sakiz et al., 2012), and dropout rates (Geng et al., 2020), it is still meaningful to continue exploring how to potentially increase it among post-secondary school students, especially in a context in which the growth in the scale of international migration continues to increase (IOM, 2022; Statistics Canada, 2023), and in which newcomer students still struggle to feel fully engaged (Green et al., 2008; Koehler & Schneider, 2019; Strohmeier & Wagner, 2023).

The second hypothesis assessed whether participants of the program would show a significant decrease sustained over time in their academic stress compared to the control group. Results supported this second hypothesis showing that, although both program and control group participants significantly decreased their levels of stress, program participants showed a slightly steeper change rate than the control group. These results are also in line with previous literature indicating SE competencies promote the reduction of academic stress (e.g., Carstensen & Klusmann, 2021; Villanueva et al., 2020).

For an SEL perspective, these findings suggest that the program positively impacted the levels of stress of participants by potentially developing coping strategies or seeking additional support, which in turned decreased their stress levels (Fernández-González et al., 2015). More specifically, the program explicitly targeted stress management as part of the self-management competency, which could help explain the steeper change rate compared to the control group. However, it is important to acknowledge that both conditions had significant decreases in their levels of academic stress. Firstly, these findings could potentially be explained by a potentially greater awareness about mental health and well-being, and the negative impact of stress, which could have led them to seek other experiences unrelated to this study that contributed to stress reduction (Davis et al., 2021). Many post-secondary institutions in Canada, and around the world, have dedicated advisors that supports students throughout the academic year. Secondly, external factors could also potentially explain these findings, such as changes in lifestyle, changes in physical activity, adaptation to the new environment, or even changes in the amount of spare time (Li & Peng, 2019). In this line, it is important to acknowledge that the study collected data well into the summer, where levels of stress could have naturally decreased beyond the intervention (Misra et al., 2000).

Taken together, these trajectory model results still highlight the importance of integrating SEL into educational programs to foster a more holistic student development, that could potentially enable both newcomer and domestic students to improve their social relationships, interactions, and consciousness, while at the same time maintaining their engagement to their post-secondary schools and reducing their academic stress. Further, it is important to consider the profound effects that the pandemic has had on education systems worldwide, as it likely influenced various aspects of this study. The shift to online learning environments, required by

school closures and social distancing measures, may have had long-lasting effects on students' social interactions and engagement levels, making SEL programs like the one in this study even more critical. The pandemic also exacerbated stress, anxiety, and feelings of isolation among students, potentially heightening the need for programs that support social-emotional well-being. Additionally, the online delivery of the SEL program aligns with the increased reliance on digital learning platforms during the pandemic, offering a relevant and accessible approach to supporting students remotely. However, the pandemic also introduced challenges such as varying levels of access to technology, differences in home learning environments, and heightened economic and emotional stressors, which could have also impacted the participation and effectiveness of the intervention. Better understanding these contextual factors is crucial for interpreting the study's findings and for considering how SEL programs can be adapted to address the evolving needs of post-secondary students in a post-pandemic educational landscape.

Comprehensive Models

The third hypothesis explored the comprehensive way in which these variables related to each other. More specifically, it contended changes over time in program participants' social relationships, social interactions, social consciousness, and social acceptance would increase their school engagement compared to the control group. The fourth hypothesis argued that changes over time in participants' social relationships, social interactions, social consciousness, and social acceptance would negatively predict their academic stress compared to the control group. Results partially supported both hypotheses. In view of the comprehensive nature of both hypotheses, they are discussed at the same time in this section.

First, changes over time in the levels of social relationships indeed increased program participants' school engagement, and at the same time decreased their academic stress. However,

changes over time in relationships were not significant for the control group. These results reinforce findings previously indicating the positive effect of nurturing social relationships on the growth in the levels of engagement to school (e.g., Cadwallader et al., 2002; Mahoney et al., 2003), while also highlighting the protective role of relationships on reducing the experiences of academic stress (e.g., Carstensen & Klusmann, 2021; Fernández-González et al., 2015).

From an SEL perspective, these findings underline the positive outcomes potentially associated with participating in an online intervention geared to develop SE skills. Namely, the program seemed to have fostered the development of stronger relationships among program participants (Bossaert et al., 2011; Koster et al., 2009), which in turned could have increased their access to social support, ultimately improving their overall well-being (i.e., lower stress levels and higher school engagement; Carstensen & Klusmann, 2021; Jenkins & Demaray, 2015). For example, specific program components that focused on communication and relationship building could have helped participants to develop, and in some cases acquire, the competencies needed to maintain positive connections with others (Durlak et al., 2011; Weissberg et al., 2015). In other words, the improvement of positive connections with others after the program could have contributed to an increased sense of belonging and perceived emotional support (Slaten et al., 2016), which in turn could have buffered against their stress and enhance their engagement in different school activities (Fernández-González et al., 2015).

Second, changes over time in the levels of social acceptance significantly decrease the academic stress among participants of the program but did not significantly increase their school engagement. Similarly, changes over time in acceptance were not significant for the control group. These results reinforce previous evidence highlighting the importance of how perceiving to be socially accepted positively influence the experiences of academic stress by significantly

reducing them (e.g., Abdollahi et al., 2020; Arslan, 2018; DeWall & Bushman, 2011). However, these results are different from previous research indicating the positive effect of acceptance on school engagement (e.g., Antonopoulou et al., 2019).

On the one hand, from an SEL perspective, social acceptance implies improved social interactions and relationships, which showed an increase after participating in the program, and in turn could have enabled participants to experience greater emotional support, or a more positive social and emotional states, which then seemed to have acted as a buffer against their experiences of academic stress (Arslan, 2018; Stebleton et al., 2014). For instance, after the program participants could have experienced greater acceptance in their social group and felt more valued by a support network they could easily access during challenging times (Kuyumcu & Kirazcı, 2020). Alternatively, by having been explicitly exposed to ways in which they could try to take another person's perspective and experience empathy, program participants may have been able to focus less on social rejection, which could be a significant source of stress (Carstensen & Klusmann, 2021), and instead focused on navigating their social environment more effectively, reducing the chances of rejection (Bossaert et al., 2011; Koster et al., 2009).

On the other hand, regarding the role of acceptance on engagement, the quality of social acceptance could have played a role in the lack of significant results on school engagement. For instance, previous evidence shows that if social acceptance was deemed superficial or conditional, it could have not translated into a genuine sense of engagement with the school environment (DeWall & Bushman, 2011; Wentzel et al., 2021). Further, while social acceptance has been an important factor for the promotion of school engagement (Antonopoulou et al., 2019), it may not be as salient of a predictor of school engagement as social relationships. Teacher-student relationships, peer relationships, as it has been indicated by numerous studies,

and perhaps even other social or personal motivators, could then play more significant roles in influencing school engagement (e.g., Beasley, 2020; Garcia-Reid et al., 2015; Geng et al., 2020).

Third, changes over time in the levels of social consciousness, contrary to both hypotheses, decreased the school engagement, while simultaneously increased the academic stress of program participants. However, changes over time in consciousness were not significant for the control group. These findings also diverge from previous research highlighting the role of social consciousness in boosting the levels of engagement among students (e.g., Raufelder et al., 2015; Singh et al., 2010), and in lessening the detrimental influence of stress (e.g., Villanueva et al., 2020). Several key elements could help understand these seemingly contradictory results.

For instance, from an SEL perspective, the significant increase in social consciousness after the program could have also amplified participants perceived social expectations and social pressure (Misra & Castillo, 2004). Feelings of scrutiny or pressure in the social context could have contributed to increased stress and to decreased engagement, especially if the social environment, like most post-secondary schools, becomes more demanding or competitive over time (McLean et al., 2023; Misra et al., 2000). In the same way, a heighten perception regarding social expectations, in turn, could have led participants to pay greater attention to social comparisons. Previous evidence shows that individuals who engage in frequent social comparisons experience increased stress—even more if they perceive themselves to stand unfavorably in comparison to others, which in turn could impact their overall engagement with school (Wang et al., 2023). Individuals immersed in this particular social context could have also been more sensitive to negative social feedback (i.e., criticism), which could also have contributed to increased levels of stress, and to decreased levels of engagement, as it would be expected if participants felt rejected or poorly judged (Kotera et al., 2023). Lastly, the changes in

discourse around newcomers (Abu-Laban, 2023; Dekeyser & Freedman, 2021), could have also influenced how, even with an increase in the levels of social consciousness, these changes in the social context could have heightened participants' stress and decreased their engagement.

Fourth, changes over time in the levels of social interactions were not significant predictors of school engagement nor academic stress for participants of the program. However, these changes decreased the school engagement, while increased the academic stress, of participants in the control group. Similarly, these findings are different from previous research highlighting the role of social interactions in the promotion of school engagement (e.g., Dotterer et al., 2007), and the decline of academic stress (e.g., Carstensen & Klusmann, 2021).

In this regard, it is important to acknowledge that this study may have not fully distinguished between quantity of social interactions and quality (Ribeiro et al., 2023). That is, while findings did show a significant increase in interactions for both conditions, the positive impact of this social element of social inclusion on engagement and stress could depend more on the nature and quality more than the quantity of these interactions. In other words, focusing more on positive and meaningful social interactions could have had a different influence on both outcomes than the level of interactions alone (Ribeiro et al., 2023). Similarly, the social interactions measured in this study could have not been interpreted as related to the school-related activities, or school environment, of these post-secondary students in Canada. That is, is the social interactions were perceived as mainly related to participants' out-of-school life, their potential influence on school engagement and academic stress could have been weakened (Leksuwankun et al., 2022).

Additionally, the statistically significant differences observed between program and control group participants reinforce the effectiveness of SEL programming in promoting the

social inclusion, while addressing common challenges, among newcomer students in Canadian post-secondary schools. More specifically, the statistically significant differences suggest that the online SEL program evaluated in this study had a discernible influence by encouraging positive social relationships, by nurturing a more accepting school environment, by potentially increasing—or at least maintaining—school engagement, while together reducing the academic stress of program participants compared to the control group.

Taken together, the results from these comprehensive models underscore the potentially positive influence of evidence-based SEL programming in the promotion of social inclusion, in the support of school engagement, and in the reduction of academic stress possibly for all students, including both newcomers and domestic students. More specifically, this SEL program potentially address challenges such as prejudices and discrimination by fostering empathy, respect, and cultural awareness, which are crucial for building an inclusive school environment. Moreover, by enhancing social and emotional skills, the program helps students navigate language difficulties and develop effective communication strategies, easing their integration into the school community. Additionally, this SEL program provides critical support in managing acculturation stress, helping newcomer students adapt to new cultural norms and expectations while maintaining their own cultural identity. Overall, these findings highlight the importance of SEL programs in creating supportive educational contexts that promote the well-being and success of all students, particularly those facing the unique challenges associated with migration and acculturation to the Canadian society.

Limitations & Future Directions

Nonetheless, despite these previous findings, this study recognizes several limitations. First, although many attempts were made to increase the sample size, the final sample size in this

study is less than ideal to assess the full impact of the online SEL program more conclusively. The level of commitment required from participants to engage in three data collections and a two-month program, while actively enrolled in their own school studies, could help explain the low levels of participation in the study. A larger and more representative sample would improve the generalizability of these findings and provide a more conclusive interpretation of the results. Furthermore, a larger sample would allow for comparisons between different newcomer statuses (i.e., immigrant and international students), as well as comparisons between newcomer and domestic students, which would provide more meaningful data in the context of a more culturally diverse world. Second, purposive volunteer sampling is highly prone to research bias, and participants who were assigned to the program condition could have been more motivated from the beginning that participants assigned to control group. The sampling strategy was the most ethically appropriate way to recruit participants in this study, yet a larger probabilistic sample would improve the representativeness of the participants. Third, all variables in the study were exclusively measured using self-report questionnaires, which are known to be subject to participant biases. Including more objective measures (e.g., learning analytics), or including additional research informants (e.g., teachers, supervisors, peers), would refine the assessment of the variables in this study. Fourth, some of the measures (e.g., school engagement) did not seem to properly capture the essence of the construct or did not adequately capture the subtleties of the participants' experience in the context of post-secondary schools in Canada. Ascertaining that all the measures properly capture the essence of the phenomena would increase the validity of these findings and allow a better understanding of the role of the online SEL program in the observed changes. Fifth, the program was designed to be delivered online, and heavily relied on participants' willingness to read the texts and reflect, either in written form or personally, about

the different activities in the program. It is possible to assume that not all potential participants would have regular access to a digital device, to an internet connection, and not all potential participants would enjoy reading regularly as part of a SEL program. Including alternative ways to deliver the content and to develop these SE skills would potentially improve the level of engagement with the study. Sixth, this study implemented the program in an existing online environment, and ultimately evaluated the effectiveness of the program content in promoting the social inclusion of these students. Evaluating the influence of the actual digital tools, or even designing a tool or application that particularly addresses the needs of the intervention program, would improve the understanding of how technology contributes to the social inclusion of newcomer students, instead of using digital technology only as a medium of delivery. Seventh, the data presented had some marginally significant statistical findings, which require a cautious interpretation of the results presented in this study. Recruiting more participants would increase the statistical power needed to obtain more conclusive results. Eight, the usefulness and effectiveness of each module, or a particular sub-module, were not evaluated at the individual level, but instead the evaluation considered the overall participation in the program. Assessing how particular components influence the different variables of the study would help better understand at a more granular level how useful each individual SEL topic would be for the promotion of social inclusion, school engagement, and the reduction of academic stress. Additionally, it is important to evaluate each component of the program in the context of the standards of evidence in prevention science to ensure that each element meets rigorous criteria for effectiveness and contributes to the overall goals of the intervention. In this context, this evaluation also includes validating the content of the program with experts in the field of SEL and social inclusion both outside of the advisory committee and outside the SED-RG members.

Contributions & Recommendations

Despite these limitations, this study still recognizes important theoretical, methodological, and practical implications.

Research Contributions

Theoretically, these findings contribute to the growing evidence that shows the effectiveness of SEL programming in improving the academic outcomes of all students, regardless of their background. More specifically, they underscore the need to further examine the potential of SEL programming among newcomer students, the promise of SEL approaches using existing digital technologies as a medium of delivery, as well as the potential of increasing SEL content among post-secondary school students. For instance, it would be meaningful to explore how a similar online SEL program would benefit more specific groups of newcomer students (e.g., international students only, immigrants only, refugees only), across different online deliveries of the programming (e.g., text only, video only), among different school levels (e.g., elementary, secondary, post-secondary). It would also be meaningful to explore how a similar intervention would benefit both newcomer and domestic students, or if there are differences in how these student populations benefit from SEL programming. These findings also highlight that better understanding the differences between diverse conditions would help better implement SEL approaches that more appropriately target the SE needs of specific groups of people. Furthermore, these findings underscore the complexity of social and emotional development, and the multifaceted nature of outcomes influenced by SE interventions. This complexity stresses the need for comprehensive theoretical frameworks—like SEL—that properly account for the interplay between different social and emotional competencies.

Methodologically, these results reinforce the need for further short-term and long-term longitudinal studies to better understand how SEL programming influences individual growth through time. Longitudinal research like this one better allows for the exploration of how SEL intervention effects unfold over time and provides more accurate insights into the sustainability of changes in social and emotional outcomes. They also reinforce the importance of implementing, when possible, quasi-experiments that allow researchers to track changes in the development of individual competencies while still maintaining a realistic non-fully controlled research setting. This type of research enhances the ecological validity of the findings by considering real-world contexts and settings and gives more authentic insights into how SEL interventions influence outcomes in diverse populations. In this context, the findings further support the use of control groups to compare intervention effects against alternative conditions. However, attempting to control for potential confounding variables is essential when assigning participants for both program interventions and control groups to guarantee comparisons reflect as much as possible the effects of the intervention. This study, as a quasi-experimental design, only controlled for group assignment (i.e., attempting to create balanced groups in terms of participant demographic characteristics), and program content (i.e., SEL for program participants, history for control group). However, it is important to highlight that in these more real-world conditions, using a completely different content as a control condition in the study could provide an innovative way to account for some of the potential confounding variables, and more importantly, could help to isolate as much as possible the effects of the SEL intervention on the outcomes of interest. These results also emphasize the potential usefulness of using measures that do not rely exclusively on self-report techniques or that include other respondents of assessment of the variables of the study (e.g., teachers, supervisors, peers), or other sources of

information (e.g., learning analytics), that would provide a more complete and objective account of what students experienced during the program implementation. Although including more sources could become more burdensome for the research team, it could also alleviate participant burden of having to be part of several data collection points, as well as part of the programming. Lastly, although the focus of this evaluation was less on the digital technology, and more on the SEL content, this study shows the need for assessing the features and functionalities of the actual digital technology. In doing so, researchers could obtain further insights into how the intervention works, and what were the most meaningful mechanisms of action. This understanding could, in turn, help instructional developers to identify which components of the intervention could be further replicated or expanded, and which components were not as effective in achieving the goals of the intervention.

Practical Contributions

Practically, this research provides meaningful contributions for SEL approaches as it emphasizes more explicit real-life application of SEL theory over more conventional expository approaches. For instance, although this study mainly focuses on newcomer students, having included domestic students shows that the content and delivery of this program has the potential to help every student, regardless of background, to improve their indicators of social inclusion. Similarly, these findings show that allowing students to go through a well-curated selection of SEL content, while potentially time consuming at first, could be used time and time again by educators to potentially develop the SE competencies of their students. For instance, the program's flexible, self-paced online format makes it accessible and adaptable to diverse student populations (e.g., Indigenous students), who may benefit from SEL interventions tailored to their unique cultural contexts and experiences. By promoting understanding, empathy, and respect for

diversity, the program can support the social and emotional development of all students, fostering a more inclusive and supportive educational environment and practices nationwide, furthering the advancement of Canadian society.

Practical Implications for Educational Institutions. These findings highlight that educational institutions invested in the social inclusion of their students could adopt comprehensive SEL programs that address multiple aspects of social and emotional development. Integrating these programs into the curriculum and school culture to provide consistent support for students' social and emotional well-being. Furthermore, the results of this study emphasize the importance of recognizing the diverse needs of students, educational institutions should tailor SEL programming to meet the specific needs of different student populations (e.g., newcomers, domestic). For instance, international students may benefit from SEL programs that focus on cultural adjustment and navigating new academic environments, while immigrant students might need support related to long-term integration and balancing dual cultural identities. Refugee students often face unique challenges such as trauma and displacement, necessitating SEL interventions that include trauma-informed care and resilience-building strategies. By offering targeted interventions for students experiencing social exclusion, or social-emotional difficulties, and providing differentiated support based on individual strengths and weaknesses, educational institutions can more effectively promote the social inclusion and well-being of all their newcomer students.

Even more, educational institutions could also integrate culturally responsive practices that actively acknowledge and value the diversity of students' cultural identities, that integrate these diverse perspectives into the curriculum, and create an inclusive environment where all students feel respected and valued. The program could also easily be implemented among

teachers and administrators to enhance their own social-emotional skills, and in doing so promoting more inclusive practices within the school environment. By equipping educators and school leaders with SEL tools, they can model positive social interactions, foster a supportive and inclusive school culture, and effectively address the diverse needs of all students.

Practical Implications for Families and Communities. The results of this study show that, families could be actively involved—as well as the broader community—in SEL initiatives that are aimed at creating a collaborative support network for students. For instance, engaging through workshops, family activities, and communication channels between students, families, and educational institutions could reinforce the SEL skills learned in the initiatives, and enhance the consistency between home and school environments. Moreover, families could try to maintain open and supportive communication with their children, not only about social and emotional topics, but in general. In this context, encouraging their children to express their feelings, concerns, and experiences would foster trust between family members, and would help families better understand their children's social and emotional needs.

Conclusion

This study highlights the potential positive outcomes in social relationships, social interactions, social consciousness, and stress reduction of self-paced online SEL programming. However, the unexpected findings in school engagement and social acceptance emphasize the need for nuanced and individualized approaches to SEL programming. Further, this study provides initial evidence emphasising how positive changes in social relationships after having been part of a self-paced online SEL program could help boost school engagement and reduce academic stress even months after the intervention, and how positive changes in social acceptance could equally improve the experience of academic stress. Finally, this study shines

light on the complex interplay of social and emotional factors, and the need to better understand the difference between quantity and quality of developmental growth.

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Table 1

Demographic Characteristics for the Total Sample and by Condition

	General	Program	Control
Mean Age (Standard Deviation)	23.45 (12.47)	25.5 (17.42)	21.40 (2.66)
School Level (Proportion, Single Choice)			
1st year of undergraduate	22.5	35	10
2nd year of undergraduate	20	30	10
3rd year of undergraduate	12.5	5	20
4th year of undergraduate	10	10	10
5th year or more of undergraduate	5	10	-
Graduate student	30	10	50
Sex (Proportion, Single Choice)			
Female	92.5	95	90
Male	7.5	5	10
Gender (Proportion, Single Choice)			
Woman	85	90	80
Man	7.5	5	10
Non-binary	7.5	5	10
Sexual Orientation (Proportion, Single Choice)			
Asexual	5	5	5
Bisexual	15	20	10
Gay/Lesbian	10	10	10
Straight	65	60	70
Pansexual	2.5	5	-
Queer	2.5	-	5
Ethnicity/Race (Proportion, All That Apply)			
African/Caribbean	5	10	-
East Asian	27.5	30	25
European	40	45	35
First Nations	2.5	-	5
Latin American	5	-	10
Middle Eastern	7.5	5	10
South Asian	15	10	20
Another ethnicity	15	25	5
Disability Status (Proportion, Single Choice)			
Have a disability	7.5	-	15
Do not have a disability	92.5	100	85
Citizenship Status (Proportion, All That Apply)			
Canada, by birth	57.5	45	70
Canada, by naturalization	12.5	15	10
Another country	40	75	55
Languages at home different than English and/or French (Proportion, Single Choice)			
Yes	60	55	25
No	40	45	75
Working Hours (Proportion, Single Choice)			
Not working	50	70	30
Less than 20 hours	40	30	50
20 to 40 hours	7.5	-	15
More than 40 hours	2.5	-	5
Number of participants	40	20	20

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for the Total Sample

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Relationships T1	1							
2.	Relationships T2	.352*	1						
3.	Relationships T3	.271†	.658**	1					
4.	Interactions T1	.186	.025	.258	1				
5.	Interactions T2	.314*	.037	.285†	.506**	1			
6.	Interactions T3	.003	.004	-.008	.141	.086	1		
7.	Consciousness T1	.406**	.505**	.450**	.375*	.301†	-.114	1	
8.	Consciousness T2	.124	.604**	.524**	.350*	.188	.025	.351*	1
9.	Consciousness T3	.162	.603**	.430**	.123	.027	.498**	.277†	.605**
10.	Acceptance T1	.136	.254	.153	.460**	.119	.245	.179	.302†
11.	Acceptance T2	.352*	.311†	.192	.293†	.664**	.035	.294†	.231
12.	Acceptance T3	.413**	.397*	.068	.141	.356*	.036	.355*	.138
13.	Engagement T1	-.155	.323*	.380*	.316*	.128	-.044	.386*	.429**
14.	Engagement T2	.249	.496**	.511**	.175	.234	-.142	.415**	.265†
15.	Engagement T3	.173	.483**	.471**	.060	-.059	.408**	.229	.251
16.	Stress T1	-.386*	-.500**	-.476**	-.249	-.118	.095	-.694**	-.236
17.	Stress T2	-.004	-.405**	-.535**	-.234	-.172	.002	-.015	-.599**
18.	Stress T3	-.132	-.599**	-.807**	-.137	-.083	-.194	-.264	-.529**
	M	**3.567**	**3.556**	**3.609**	**4.920**	**4.940**	**4.744**	**4.682**	**4.712**
	SD	**.325**	**.172**	**.191**	**1.086**	**.760**	**1.059**	**.830**	**.647**

Note. T1 = Pre-test, T2 = Post-Test, T3 = Follow-Up, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, †$p < .10$, *$p < .05$, **$p < .001$

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for the Total Sample (Continued)

	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. Relationships T1										
2. Relationships T2										
3. Relationships T3										
4. Interactions T1										
5. Interactions T2										
6. Interactions T3										
7. Consciousness T1										
8. Consciousness T2										
9. Consciousness T3	1									
10. Acceptance T1	.166	1								
11. Acceptance T2	.151	.263	1							
12. Acceptance T3	.177	.287†	.780**	1						
13. Engagement T1	.093	.349*	.256	.164	1					
14. Engagement T2	-.055	.430**	.466**	.422**	.458**	1				
15. Engagement T3	.279†	.377*	.130	.221	.369*	.444**	1			
16. Stress T1	-.261	.025	-.208	-.220	-.341*	-.360*	-.250	1		
17. Stress T2	-.323*	-.202	-.317*	.085	-.402*	-.289†	-.201	.245	1	
18. Stress T3	-.585**	-.085	-.210	-.113	-.394*	-.386*	-.506**	.472**	.580**	1
M	**4.922**	**5.171**	**5.362**	**5.386**	**3.865**	**3.855**	**3.750**	**3.132**	**2.808**	**2.628**
SD	**.444**	**1.119**	**.815**	**.845**	**.443**	**.335**	**.406**	**.577**	**.502**	**.381**

Note. T1 = Pre-test, T2 = Post-Test, T3 = Follow-Up, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, †$p < .10$, *$p < .05$, **$p < .001$

Table 3

Unstandardized Growth Parameter Estimates

	Initial Status (Intercept)		Subsequent Change (Slope)		
Model	Mean	Variance	Mean	Variance	Covariance
Relationships					
General	3.526**	.021*	.039†	.003	-.002
Program	3.447**	.020	.081**	-.005	.011
Control	3.580**	.008	.012	.008	-.008
Interactions					
General	4.954**	.650†	-.065	.074	-.245
Program	4.638**	.480	.233†	.016	-.030
Control	4.879**	.781	-.120	.168	-.457
Consciousness					
General	4.625**	.261	.152*	.076	-.081
Program	4.486**	.485†	.262**	.112	-.118
Control	4.891**	.063	-.072	-.025	-.022
Acceptance					
General	5.256**	.197	.062	.113	.034
Program	5.261**	.450†	-.174*	-.050	.138
Control	5.191**	-.058	.329**	-.054	.056
Engagement					
General	3.893**	.066	-.059	-.003	.038
Program	3.794**	.027	.034	.007	.021
Control	3.981**	.071	-.069	-.030	.005
Stress					
General	3.088**	.033	-.232**	-.014	.034
Program	2.945**	.096	-.216**	-.053†	.059*
Control	3.062**	-.038	-.187**	-.009	.027

Note. †$p < .10$, *$p < .05$, **$p < .001$

Table 4

Standardized Model Results for the Comprehensive Model by Condition

	Program	Control
Pre- to Post-Test		
Relationships	β = .458**, *SE* = .102	β = .040, *SE* = .092
Interactions	β = .623**, *SE* = .110	β = .515**, *SE* = .087
Consciousness	β = .536**, *SE* = .081	β = .218, *SE* = .179
Acceptance	β = .653**, *SE* = .122	β = .069, *SE* = .111
Post- to Engagement		
Relationships	β = .705**, *SE* = .083	β = .365**, *SE* = .089
Interactions	β = -.025, *SE* = .069	β = -.270*, *SE* = .117
Consciousness	β = -.492**, *SE* = .113	β = .308*, *SE* = .112
Acceptance	β = .083, *SE* = .055	β = .289*, *SE* = .096
Post- to Stress		
Relationships	β = -.881**, *SE* = .075	β = .154, *SE* = .105
Interactions	β = -.065, *SE* = .097	β = .492**, *SE* = .079
Consciousness	β = .211*, *SE* = .082	β = -.531**, *SE* = .090
Acceptance	β = -.279**, *SE* = .085	β = -.266**, *SE* = .069

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .001$

Table 5

Standardized Total Effects, Direct Effects, and Indirect Effects

	Program	Control
Pre- to Engagement		
Relationships		
Total	β = .433**, *SE* = .093	β = .236, *SE* = .128
Direct	β = .110, *SE* = .078	β = .222, *SE* = .116
Indirect	β = .322**, *SE* = .084	β = .015, *SE* = .032
Interactions		
Total	β = .071, *SE* = .059	β = -.517**, *SE* = .133
Direct	β = .087, *SE* = .067	β = -.378*, *SE* = .149
Indirect	β = -.015, *SE* = .043	β = -.139*, *SE* = .061
Consciousness		
Total	β = -.154†, *SE* = .081	β = .506*, *SE* = .077
Direct	β = .110, *SE* = .081	β = .439*, *SE* = .202
Indirect	β = -.264**, *SE* = .070	β = .067, *SE* = .077
Acceptance		
Total	β = .310**, *SE* = .072	β = -.096, *SE* = .104
Direct	β = .256*, *SE* = .079	β = -.116, *SE* = .111
Indirect	β = .054, *SE* = .036	β = .020, *SE* = .030
	Program	Control
Pre- to Stress		
Relationships		
Total	β = -.528**, *SE* = .138	β = -.114, *SE* = .070
Direct	β = -.124, *SE* = .096	β = -.120, *SE* = .069
Indirect	β = -.403**, *SE* = .113	β = .006, *SE* = .016
Interactions		
Total	β = -.226*, *SE* = .107	β = .566**, *SE* = .135
Direct	β = -.186, *SE* = .112	β = .313*, *SE* = .130
Indirect	β = -.040, *SE* = .061	β = .253**, *SE* = .064
Consciousness		
Total	β = .409**, *SE* = .089	β = -.266, *SE* = .163
Direct	β = .296**, *SE* = .077	β = -.150, *SE* = .123
Indirect	β = .113*, *SE* = .045	β = -.116, *SE* = .110
Acceptance		
Total	β = .331*, *SE* = .128	β = .135, *SE* = .175
Direct	β = .513*, *SE* = .154	β = .153, *SE* = .171
Indirect	β = -.182*, *SE* = .077	β = -.018, *SE* = .030

Note. †$p < .10$, *$p < .05$, **$p < .001$

Table 6

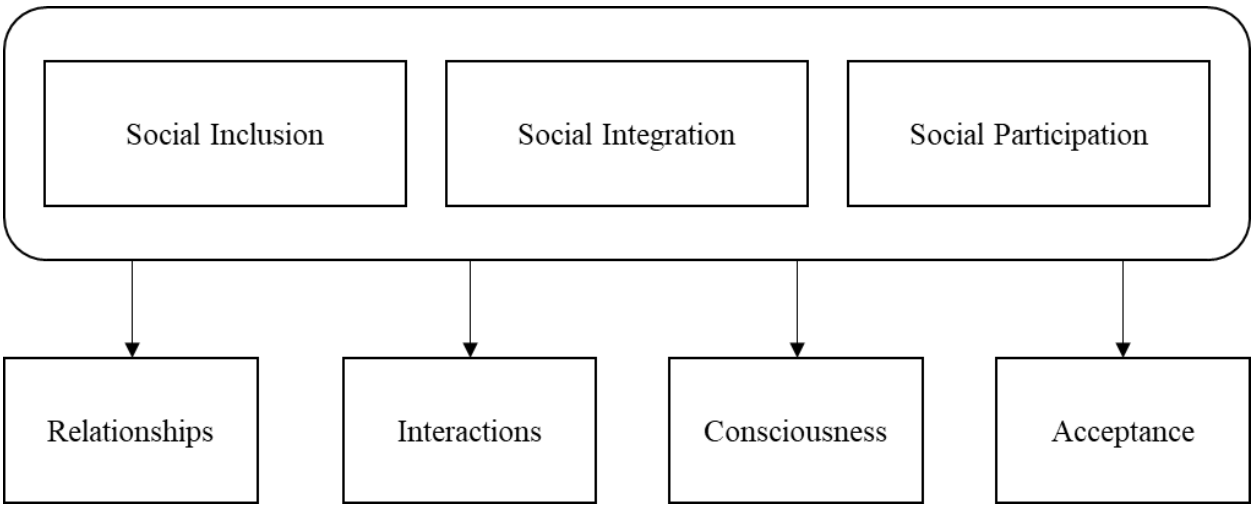
Summary Statistics for Multigroup Models Between Program and Control Participants

Model	χ^2	*df*	*scf*	CD	TRd	*⊿df*	*p*
Constrained	1073.527	57	.1366	-	-	-	-
Unconstrained	536.522	36	.1795	.0631	811.287	21	.001

Note. χ^2 = Chi Square, *df* = Degrees of Freedom, *scf* = Scaling Correction Factor, CD = Test Scaling Correction Difference, TRd = Sattora-Bentler Scaled Chi-Square Difference, *⊿df* = Degrees of Freedom Difference.

Figure 1

Four Elements of the Social Dimension of Inclusive Education



Note. Model from Bossaert et al. (2011)

Figure 2

Unifying Model of Inclusive Education From an SEL Perspective

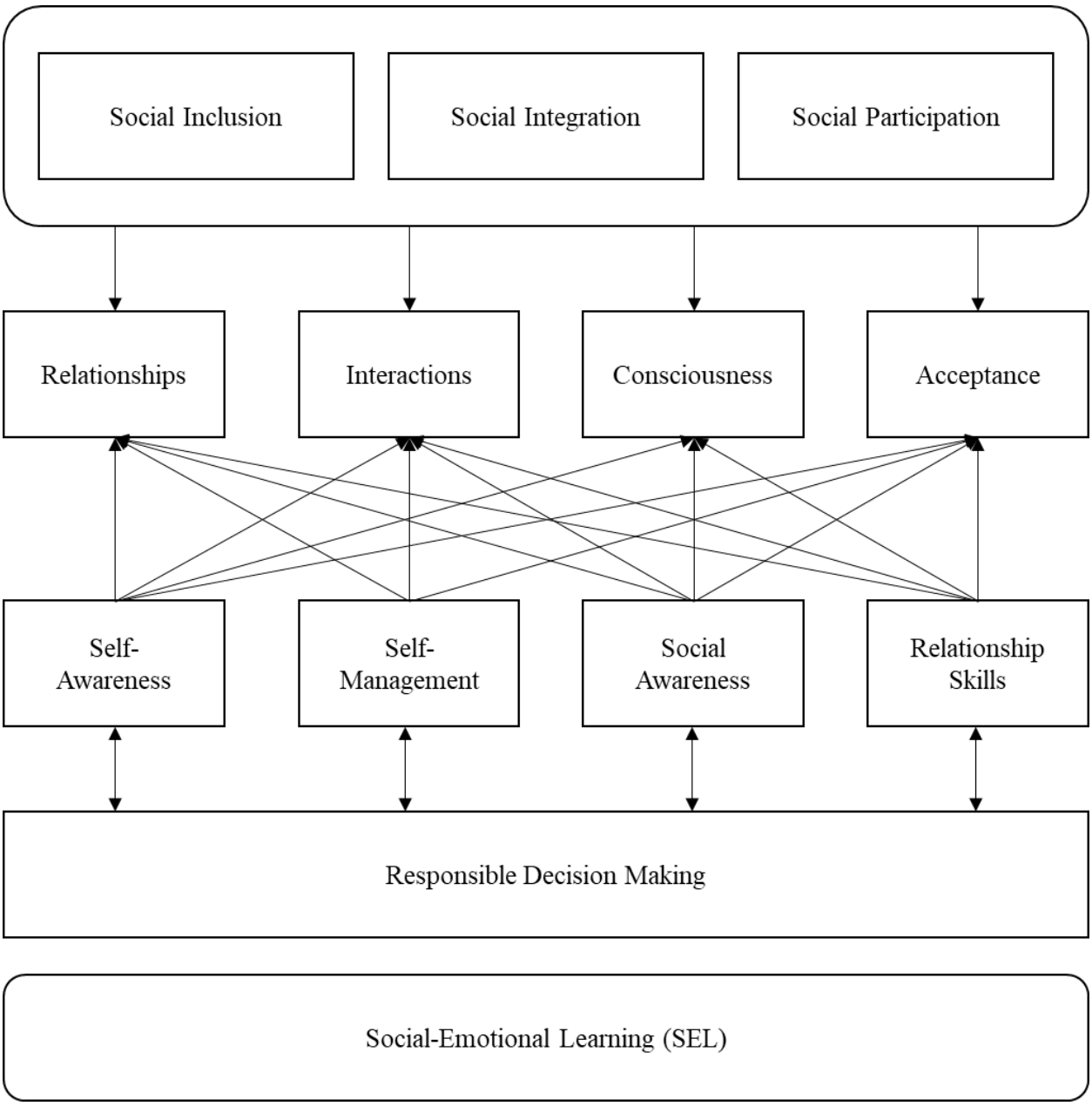


Figure 3

Hypothetical Trajectory Model

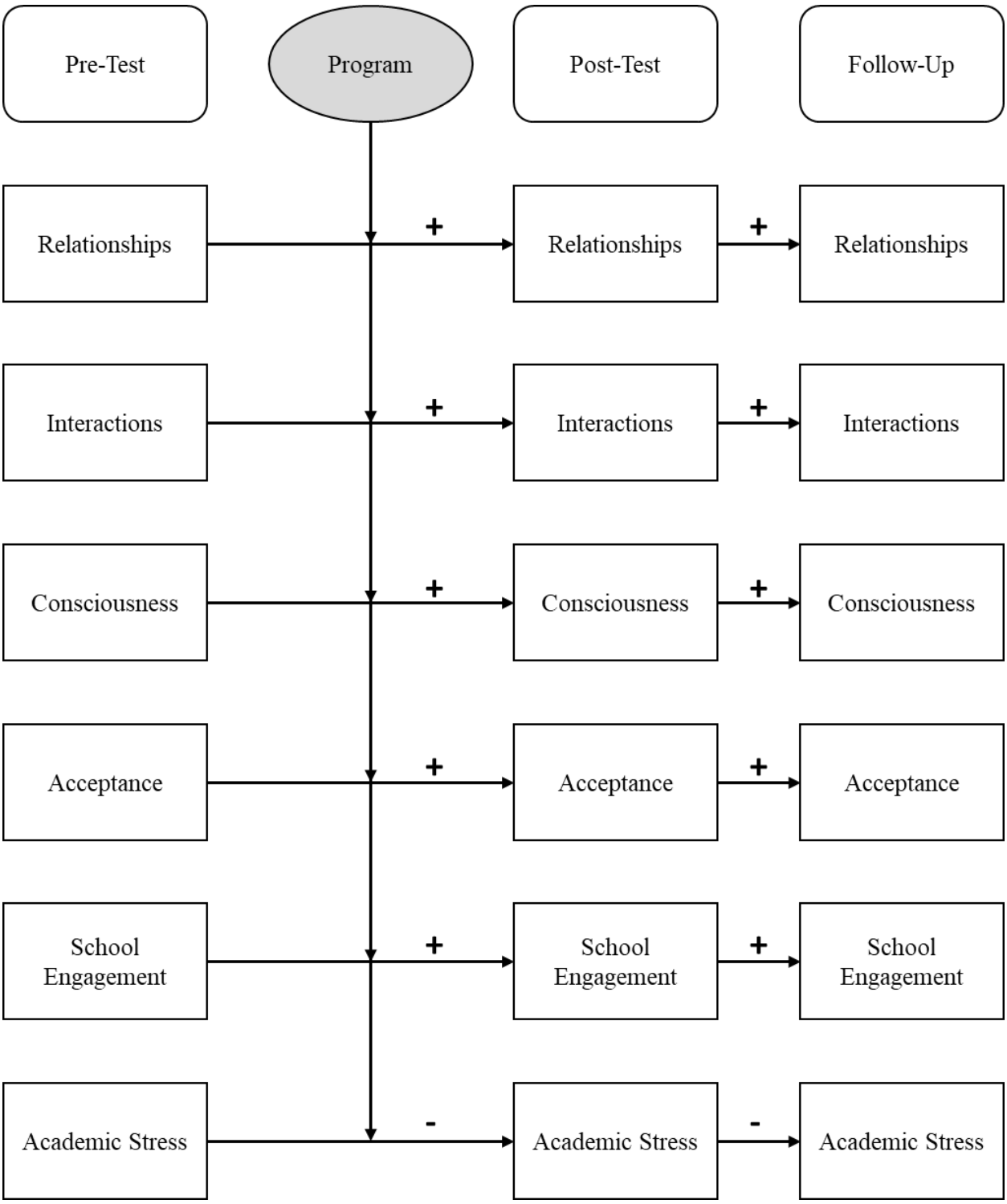


Figure 4

Hypothetical Comprehensive Model

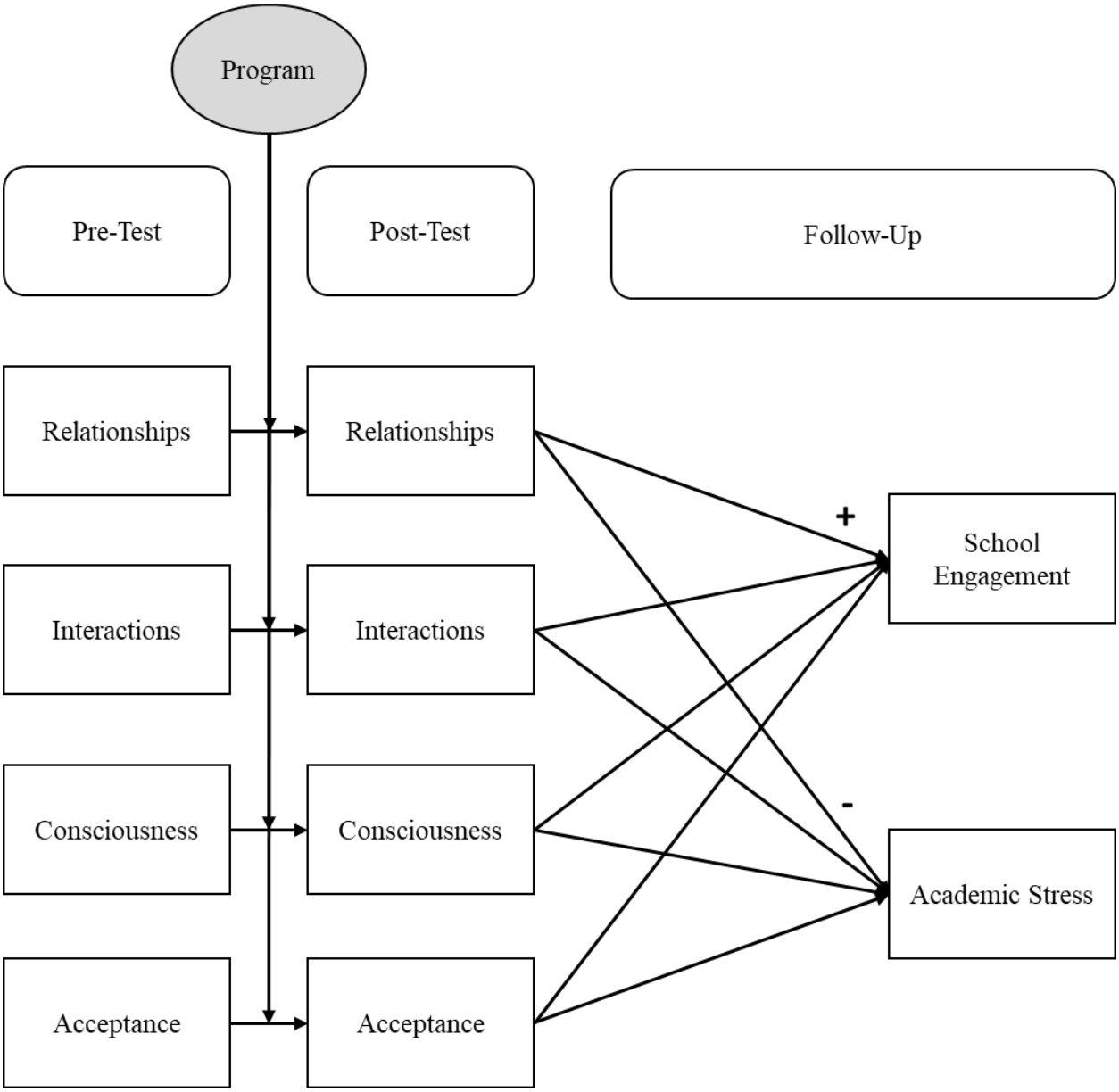


Figure 5

Scatterplot Results for Multivariate Linearity and Homoscedasticity Assumption Checks

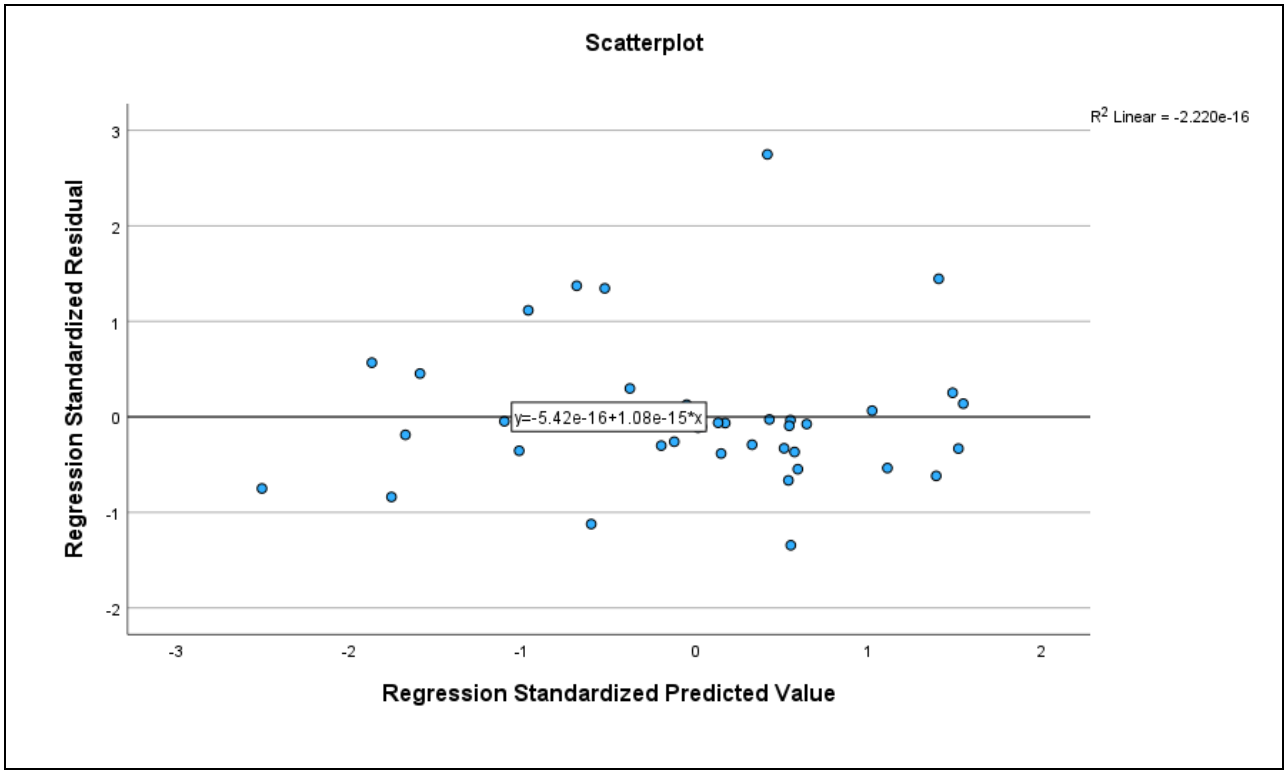


Figure 6

Boxplot Results for Univariate Outliers Exploration

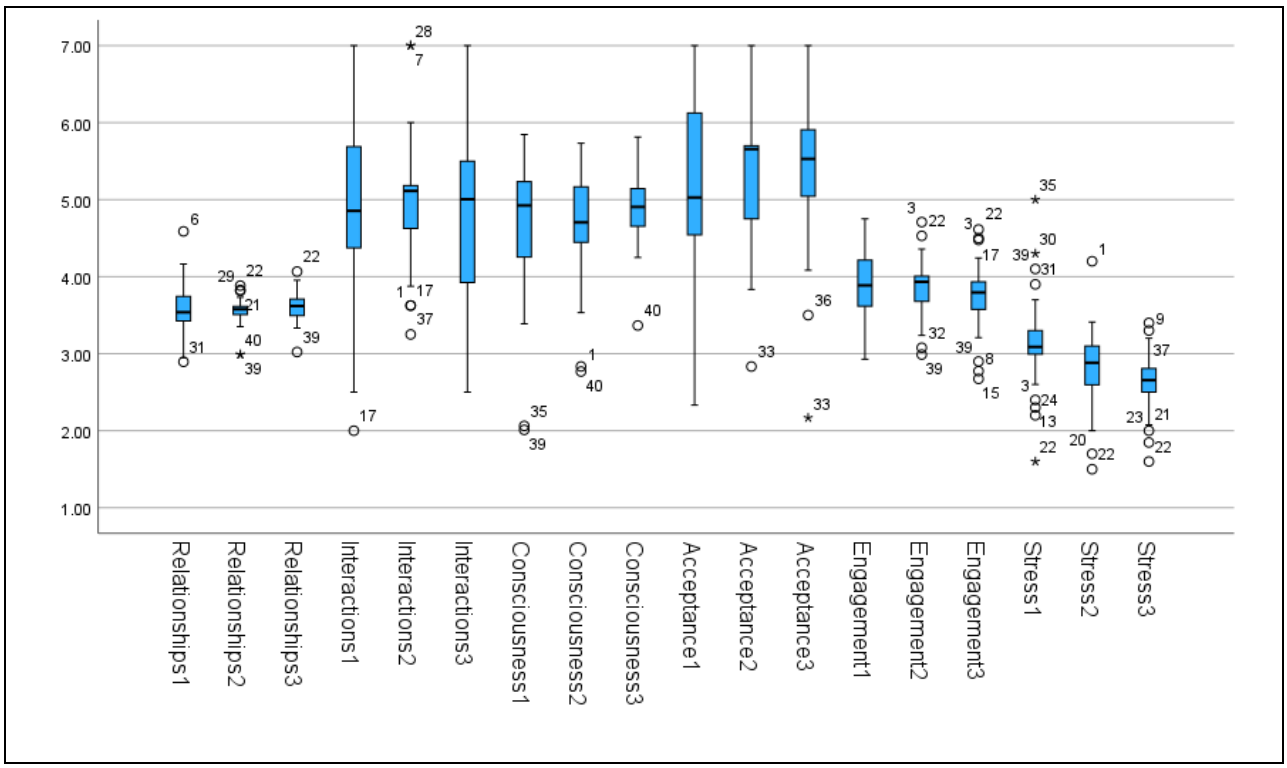


Figure 7

Histogram Results for Multivariate Normality Assumption Check

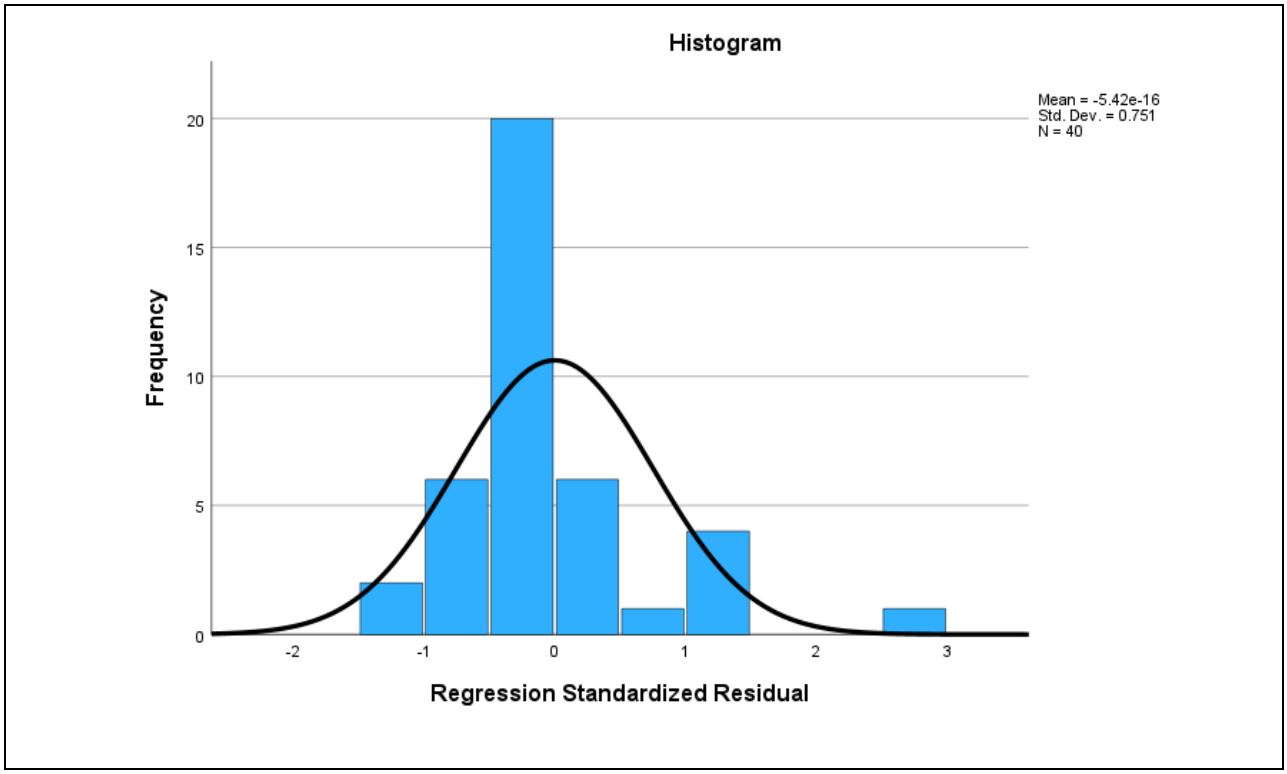


Figure 8

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual Results for Normality Assumption Checks

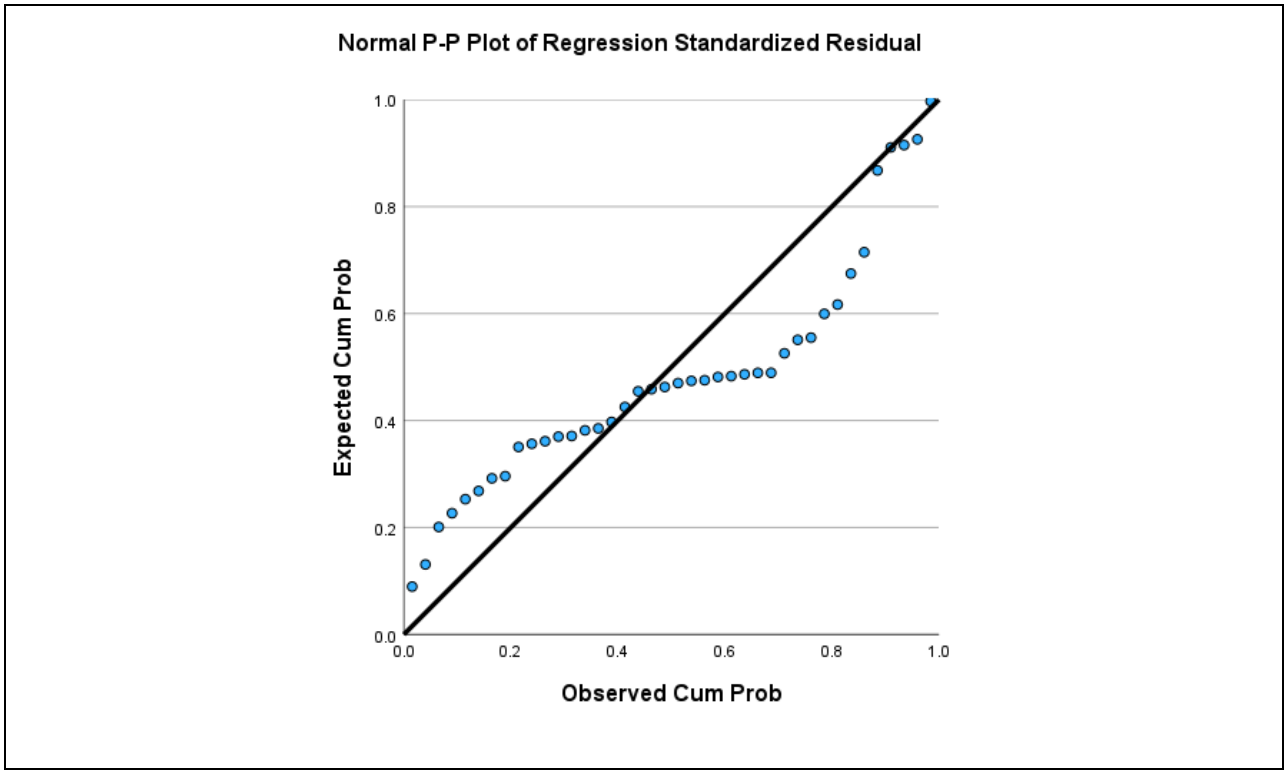


Figure 9

Social Relationships Trajectory Models in General (Left) and by Condition (Right)

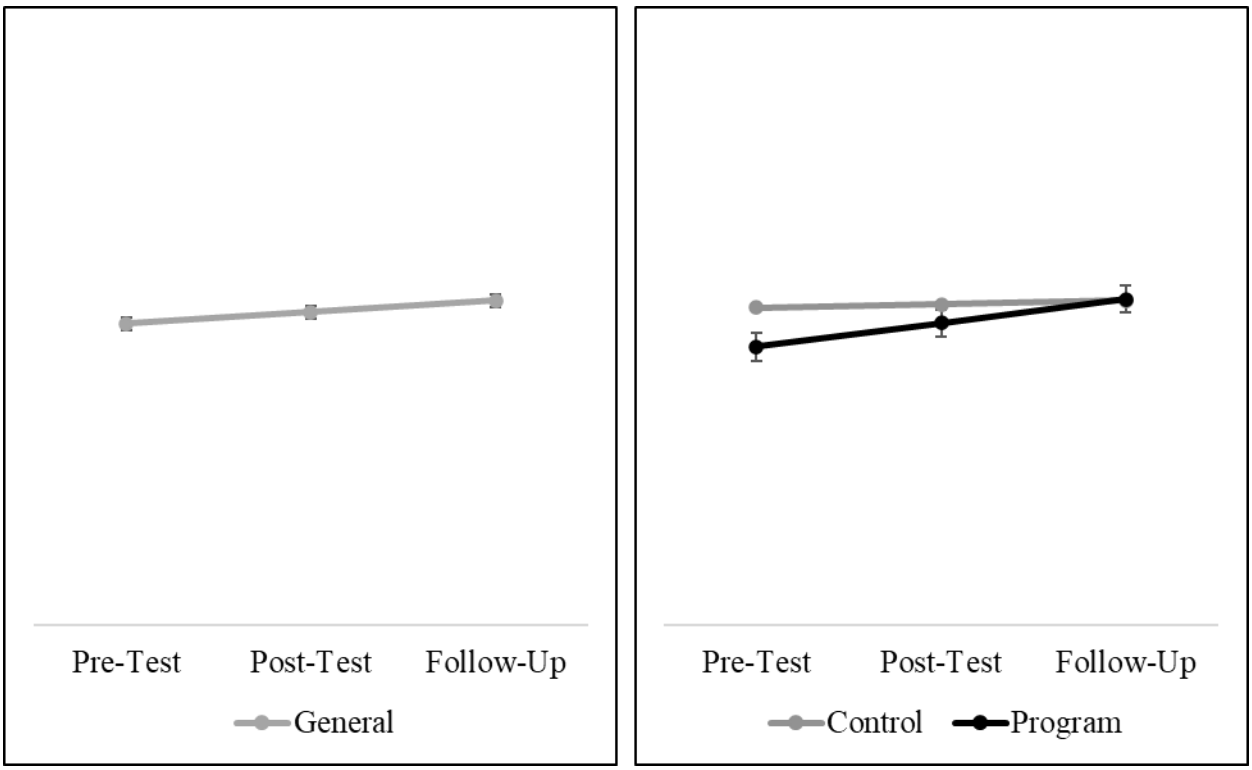


Figure 10

Social Interactions Trajectory Models in General (Left) and by Condition (Right)

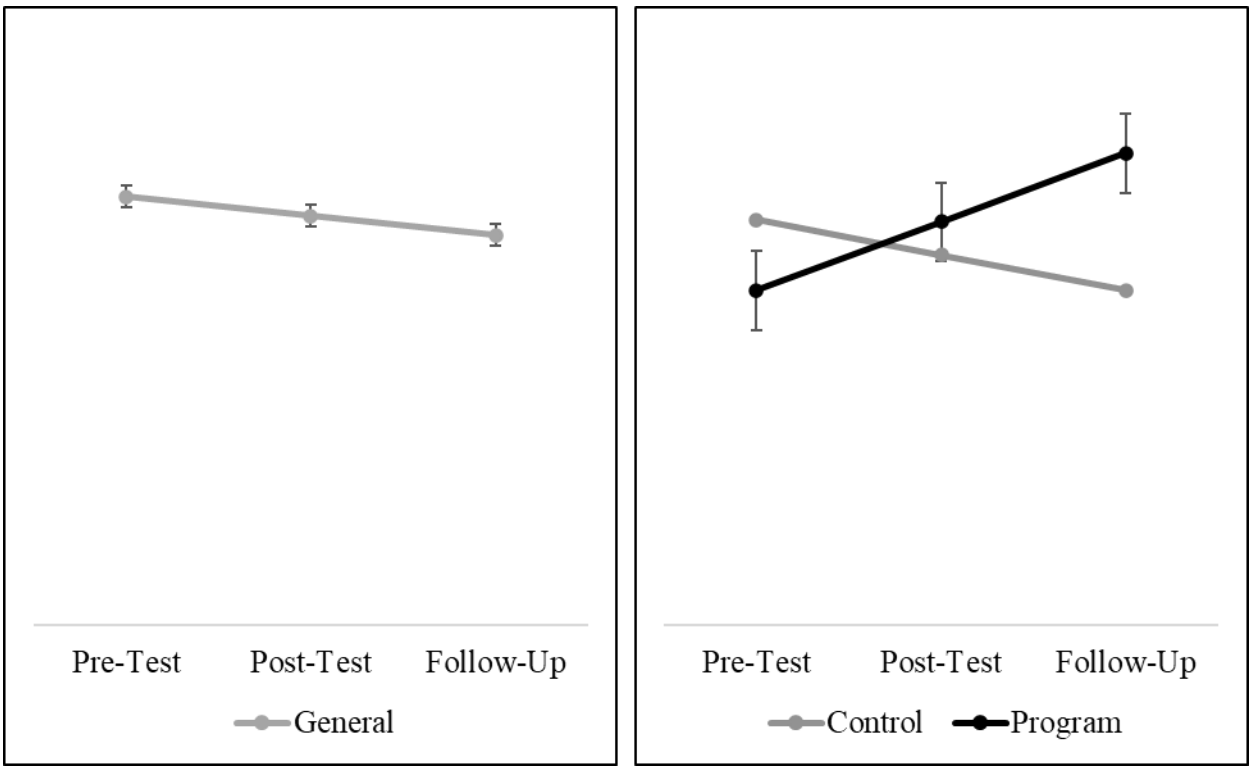


Figure 11

Social Consciousness Trajectory Models in General (Left) and by Condition (Right)

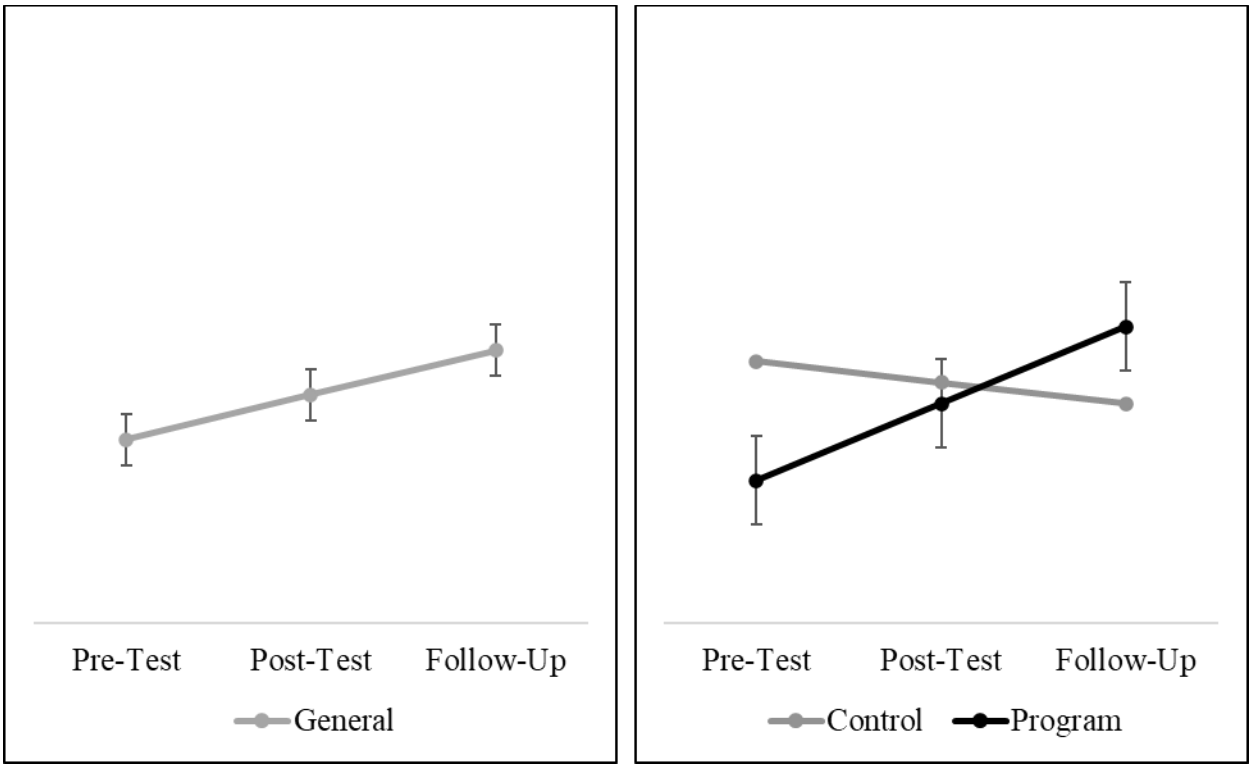


Figure 12

Social Acceptance Trajectory Models in General (Left) and by Condition (Right)

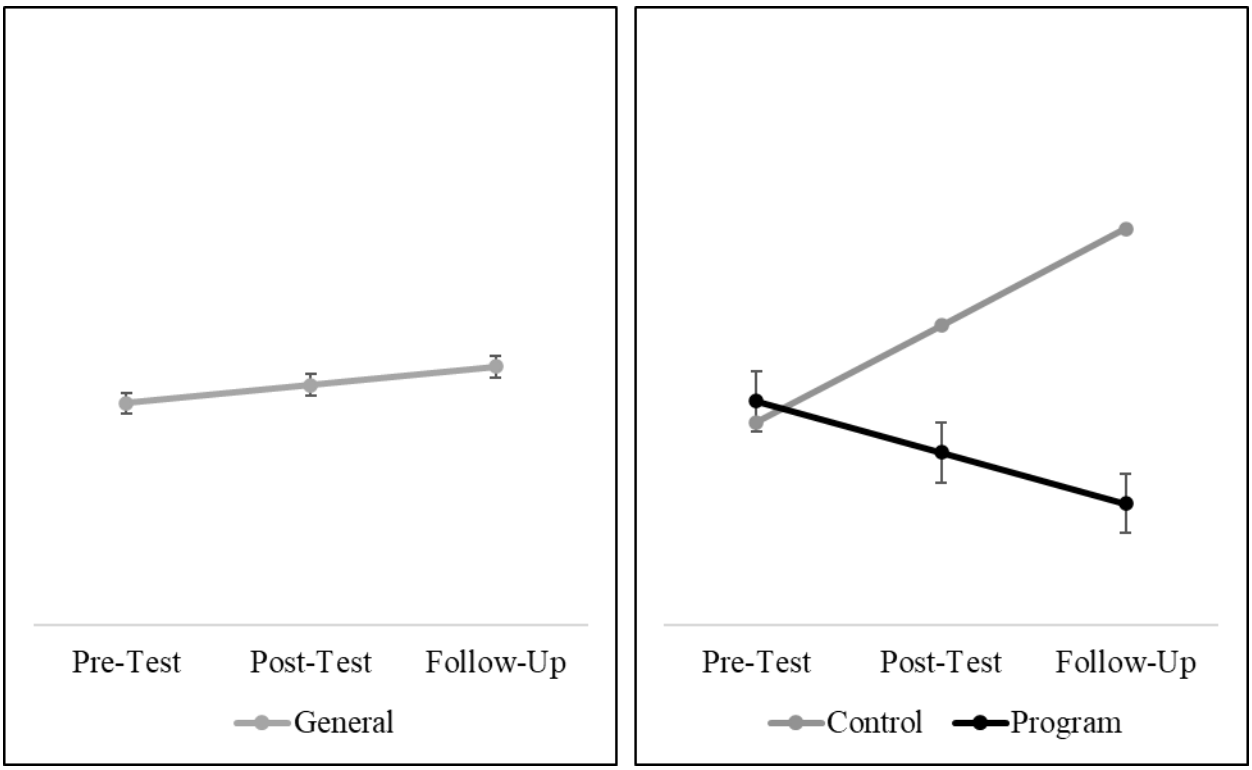


Figure 13

School Engagement Trajectory Models in General (Left) and by Condition (Right)

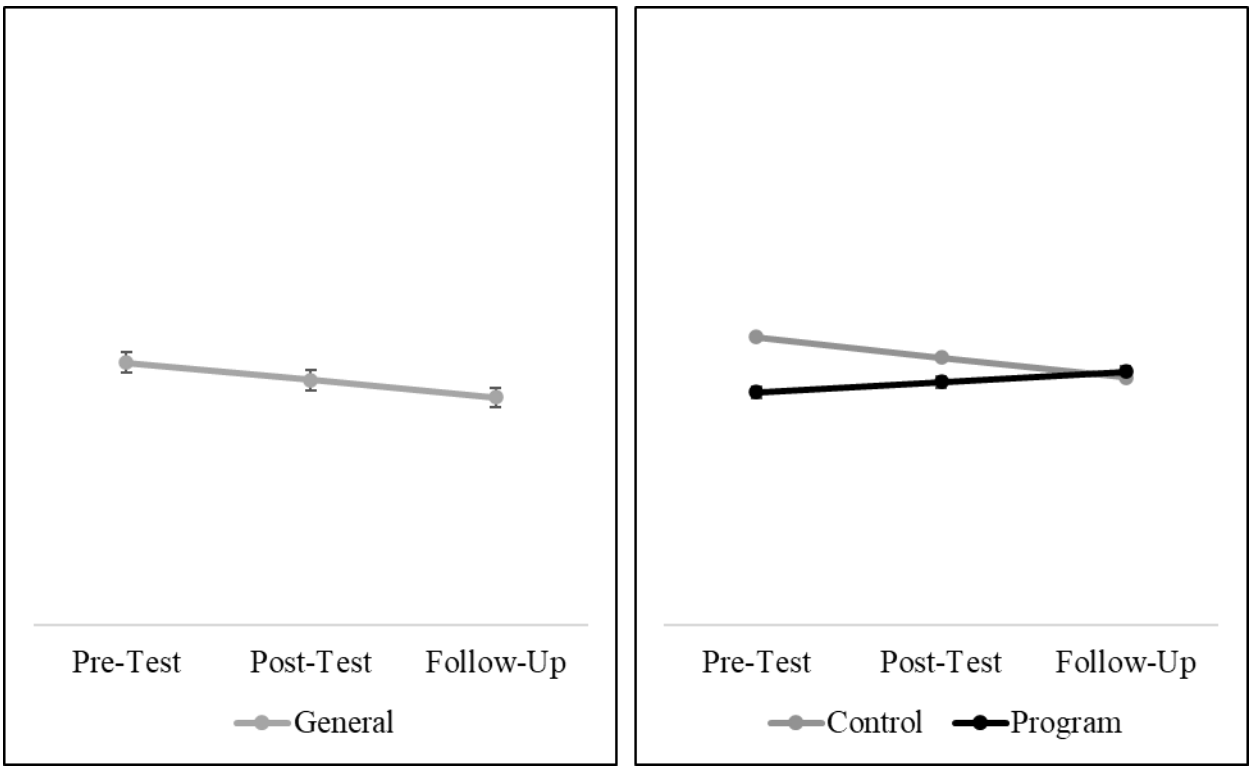


Figure 14

Academic Stress Trajectory Models in General (Left) and by Condition (Right)

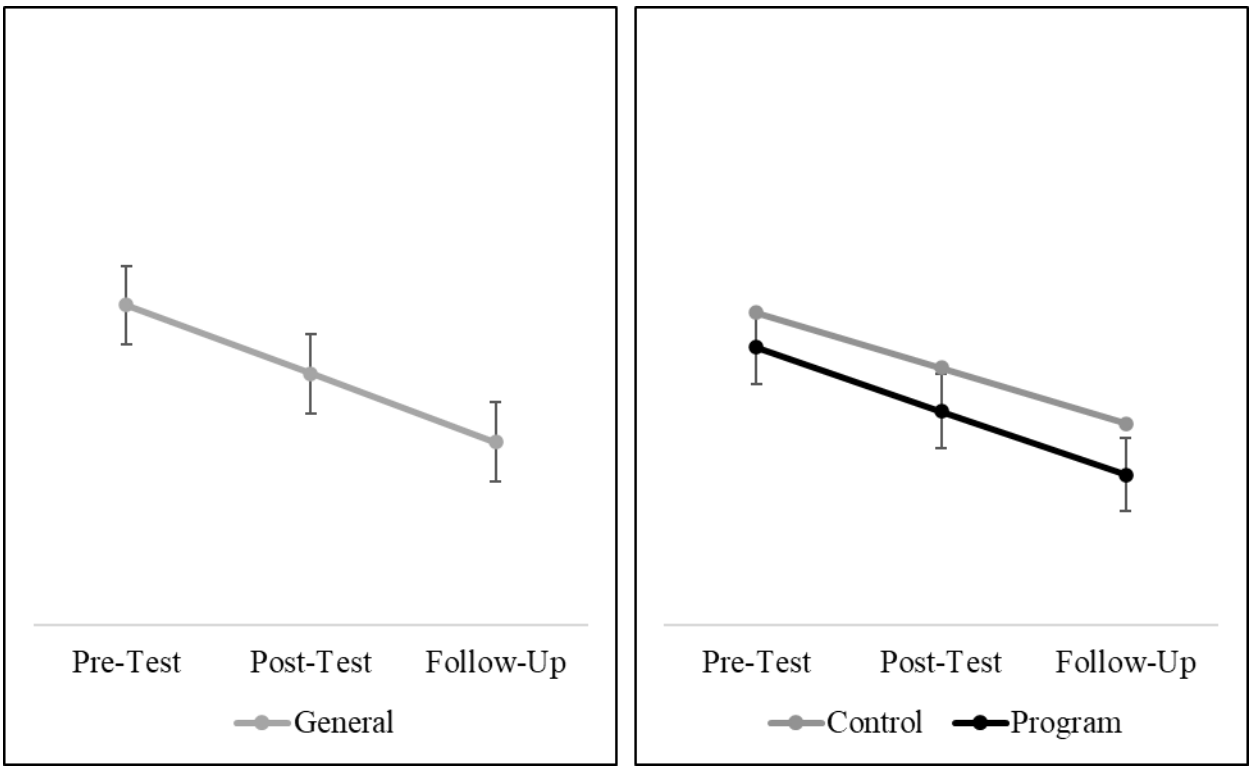
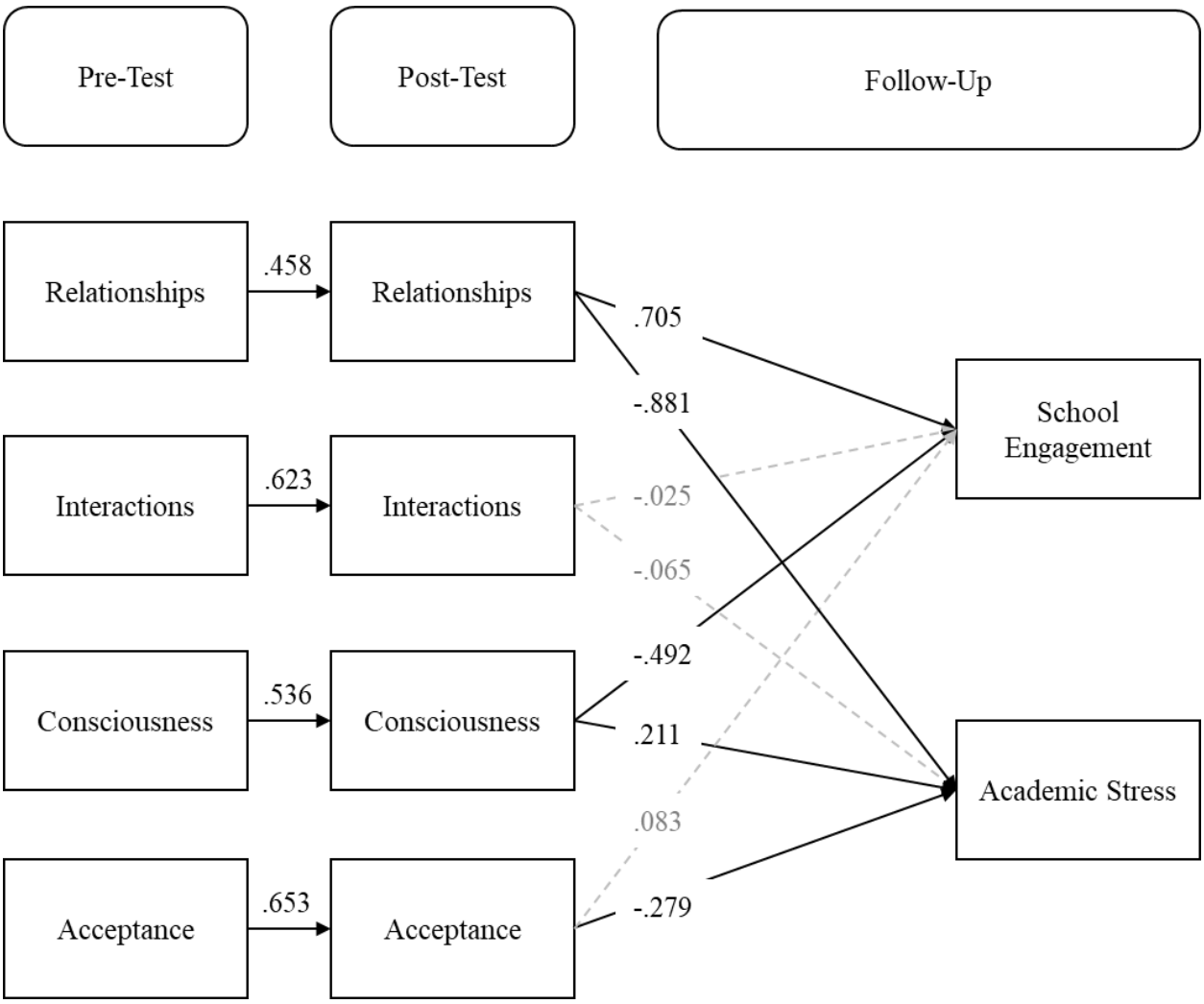


Figure 15

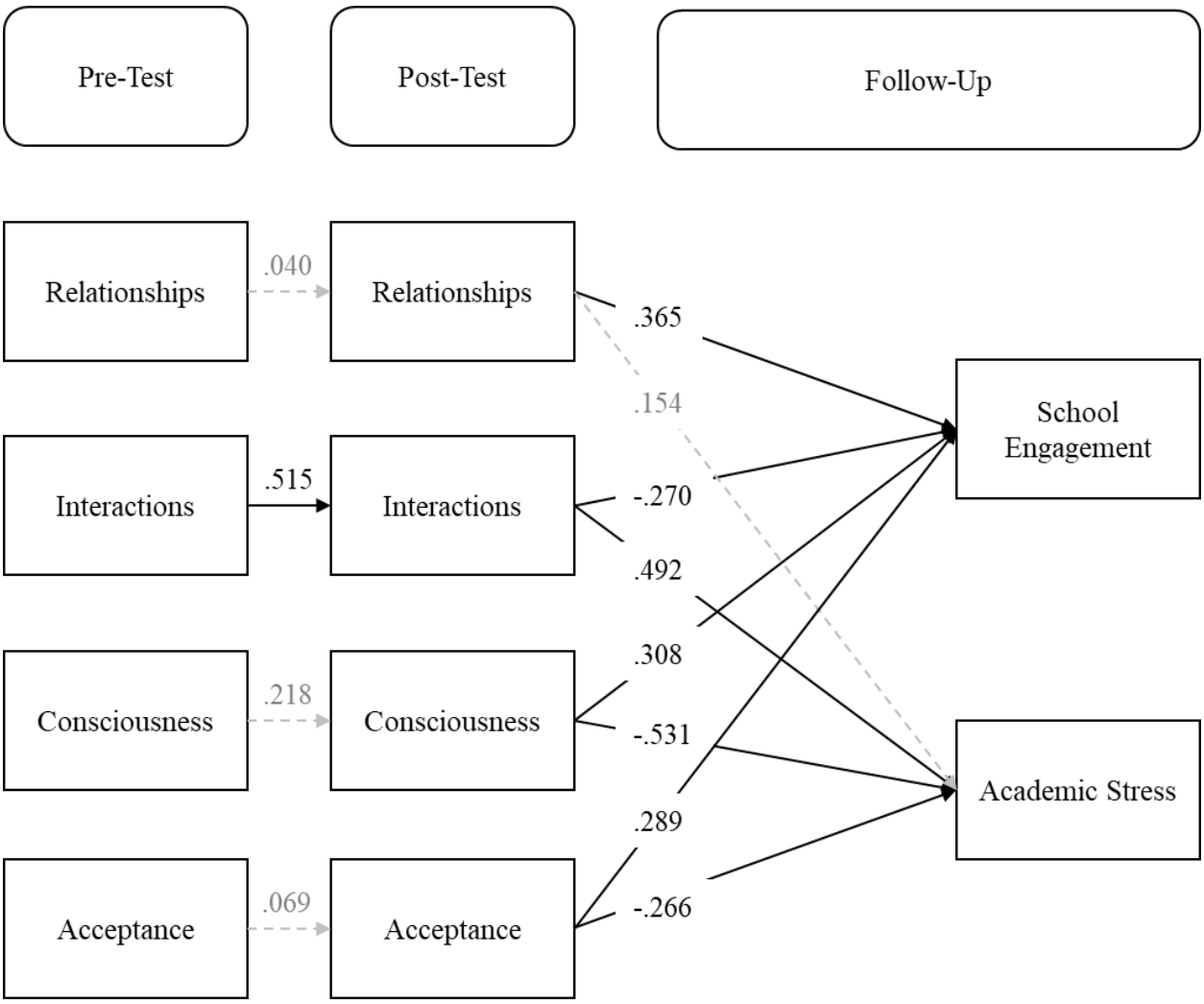
Hypothesized Model Results for Program Participants



Note. Statistically significant paths in black.

Figure 16

Hypothesized Model Results for Control Group Participants



Note. Statistically significant paths in black.

Appendix A

Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans

McGill

Research Ethics Board Office
James Administration Bldg.
845 Sherbrooke Street West. Rm 325
Montreal, QC H3A 0G4

Tel: (514) 398-6831

Website: https://mcgill.ca/research/research/compliance/human/reb-i-ii-iii

Research Ethics Board 2
Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans

REB File #: 22-01-025

Project Title: Promoting the Social Inclusion of Newcomer Emerging Adults in Canadian Post-Secondary Schools Using Digital Technologies

Principal Investigator: Luis Francisco Vargas Madriz

Department: Educational & Counselling Psychology

Status: Ph.D. Student

Supervisor: Professor Chiaki Konishi

Approval Period: April 19, 2022 – April 18, 2023

The REB 2 reviewed and approved this project by delegated review in accordance with the requirements of the McGill University Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Human Participants and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.

Georgia Kalavritinos
Ethics Review Administrator

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* Approval is granted only for the research and purposes described.
* Modifications to the approved research must be reviewed and approved by the REB before they can be implemented.
* A Request for Renewal form must be submitted before the above expiry date. Research cannot be conducted without a current ethics approval. Submit 2-3 weeks ahead of the expiry date.
* When a project has been completed or terminated, a Study Closure form must be submitted.
* Unanticipated issues that may increase the risk level to participants or that may have other ethical implications must be promptly reported to the REB. Serious adverse events experienced by a participant in conjunction with the research must be reported to the REB without delay.
* The REB must be promptly notified of any new information that may affect the welfare or consent of participants.
* The REB must be notified of any suspension or cancellation imposed by a funding agency or regulatory body that is related to this study.
* The REB must be notified of any findings that may have ethical implications or may affect the decision of the REB.

Appendix B

Socially Inclusive Program From an SEL Perspective

The following pages describe the complete list of topics covered in the different socially inclusive program modules, the time requirements for each module and for each of the specific topics, the expected outcomes for each module, the content of the different topics, the activities that were used to encourage individual reflections, and the exercises used to promote group discussions. Individual reflections were submitted using the "Assignment" feature of Classcraft, which allowed participants to enter their personal reflection privately in a textbox. Group discussions were submitted using a "Discussion" forum, which allowed participants to add their own reflections, see everyone else's reflections, and comment on someone else's responses. Each module and sub-module also include the complete list of icons that were used during the implementation of the program. These icons were freely obtained from Flaticon (https://www.flaticon.com/), which provides authorization to use its content free of charge under the "Flaticon License" where any use is done by duly crediting said content to the Website/Company. Icons were chosen to provide a visual representation of the content, and when possible, aimed to represent human diversity. For instance, in "Module 1.1: Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions" an icon of a happy face was used to represent the core emotion of "joy." The following table provides a visual summary of the modules in the program:

Week	SEL Competency	Module	Time Commitment
0	Self-Awareness	1. Self-Awareness: Introduction	5 minutes
0	Self-Awareness	1.1.Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions	15 minutes
0	Self-Awareness	1.2.Self-Awareness: Recognizing Strengths	15 minutes
0	Self-Awareness	1.3.Self-Awareness: Self-Worth	15 minutes
2	Self-Management	2. Self-Management: Introduction	5 minutes
2	Self-Management	2.1.Self-Management: Impulse Control	15 minutes
2	Self-Management	2.2.Self-Management: Stress Management	15 minutes
4	Social Awareness	3. Social Awareness: Introduction	5 minutes
4	Social Awareness	3.1.Social Awareness: Perspective Taking	15 minutes
4	Social Awareness	3.2.Social Awareness: Affective Empathy	15 minutes
4	Social Awareness	3.3.Social Awareness: Appreciating Diversity	15 minutes
4	Social Awareness	3.4.Social Awareness: Respect for Others	15 minutes
6	Relationship Skills	4. Relationship Skills: Introduction	5 minutes
6	Relationship Skills	4.1.Relationship Skills: Communication	15 minutes
6	Relationship Skills	4.2.Relationship Skills: Relationship Building	15 minutes
6	Relationship Skills	4.3.Relationship Skills: Teamwork	12 minutes
8	Responsible Decision-Making	5. Responsible Decision-Making	10 minutes

Module 1. Self-Awareness: Introduction – 5 minutes

Time	Outcomes	Content	Individual Reflection	Group Discussion
1 min	Introduce SEL competencies	**Introduction: First SEL Competency** Social-Emotional Learning helps people to acquire and apply the knowledge, the skills, and the attitudes that could enhance their personal development, establish fulfilling relationships, and achieve tasks effectively and ethically. Social-Emotional Learning includes five main competencies. This week you will explore **self-awareness**.	No	No
3 min	Introduce self-awareness skills	**1. Self-Awareness** [Image 1] Did you know? **Self-awareness** is the ability to recognize our own emotions, thoughts, and values. It also includes recognizing how they influence our behavior. Examples of self-awareness skills include: [Image 2] **Identifying emotions:** There is a wide diversity of emotions from happiness and love to sadness and anger, and many more in between! It's normal to experience all different types of emotions! [Image 3] **Self-perception:** Knowing what our abilities and qualities are, as well as what we really think. [Image 4] **Recognizing strengths:** Large, small, visible, or hidden. We all have them! [Image 5] **Self-understanding:** Feeling trust in our abilities, qualities, and our own judgment. [Image 6] **Self-efficacy:** Believing in our capacity to behave in a way that helps us accomplish our goals.	Hooray! You just took the first step in developing your self-awareness skills! What do you consider is your current level of self-awareness skills? A. Novice B. Intermediate C. Proficient D. Expert Take a good look at the options and enter your response in the textbox available next! *FYI: It's OK if you just enter the letter of the options you choose! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	Yes
1 min	Introduce self-awareness skills	**The good and the not-so-good!** [Image 7] As you can see, self-awareness also includes ability to accurately assess our strengths and limitations. **But remember!** It is important to do so with a realistic sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset."	No	No

Note. [Image 1] [Image 2] [Image 3] [Image 4] [Image 5] [Image 6] [Image 7]







1.1. Self-Awareness: Identifying Emotions – 15 minutes

Time	Outcomes	Content	Individual Reflection	Group Discussion
1 min	Introduce the skill of identifying emotions	**1.1. Identifying Emotions** [Image 1] Did you know? Most people can't name the emotion they're feeling! That could be because we have the potential to feel many different emotions, and we can even feel more than one emotion at once.	No	No
5 min	Describe the importance of identifying emotions	**Importance of Identifying Emotions** The truth is, feeling more than one emotion at once could make it difficult to identify our emotions. Examples of core emotions include: [Image 2] **Joy:** Feelings of great pleasure and happiness [Image 3] **Fear:** Unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, painful, and/or a threat. [Image 4] **Sadness:** Feeling sorrow or unhappiness. [Image 5] **Disgust:** Feeling of revulsion or strong disapproval caused by something unpleasant or offensive. [Image 6] **Anger:** Feeling of annoyance, displeasure, or hostility. **But remember!** It is really important to try to identify our emotions. Why? Because emotions can affect our behavior, just as behavior can affect our emotions. [Image 7] For example: ● If we're sad, we could cry or stop talking to our friends. ● If we're angry, we could yell or be rude to our friends. In both cases, emotions affected our behaviors. Similarly: ● We could feel joy after playing sports or hanging out with friends. ● We could feel fear after doing something wrong. In both cases, behaviors affected our emotions. **Emotions can also have physical effects!** [Image 8] For example: We could feel like puking when we experience disgust or when we experience fear.	Now, try to identify what emotions you could feel in one, or in more, of the following situations: A. Lying down listening to your favourite song. B. Giving a presentation in front of the whole class. C. Moving to another country where people don't speak your language. Use the textbox next to enter your answer. *FYI: There's no right or wrong answer! Just try to identify what you would feel! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	Yes
3 min	Describe the changing nature of emotions	**Manage your emotions!** [Image 9 **Remember!** It is very important to identify our emotions, so we can be more "in control" of our own actions! Also, we can have the power to improve how we feel by actively changing how we behave! [Image 10 No matter how it feels, emotions are temporary, they can and will change!	So, what do you think? Are emotions temporary? A. Yes, emotions can and will change! B. No, emotions never change! Take a good look at the options and enter your response in the textbox available next!	Yes

			FYI: It's OK if you just enter the letter of the options you choose! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.	
5 min	Promote reflection regarding the skills of identifying emotions	**Let's brainstorm!** What can you do to improve how you feel? What can you do to improve how others at school feel? *Use the discussion to enter your answer. You're also welcome to comment on other people's answer! Remember, there's no right or wrong answer.*	No	Yes
1 min	Conclude the skill of identifying emotions	Hopefully now you can name some of your emotions! **Suggestion:** Try to pay attention to your daily life and see if you can match one of these names to what you are feeling.	No	No

Note. [Image 1]

[Image 2]

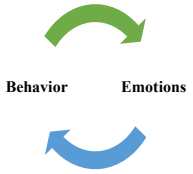
[Image 3]

[Image 4]

[Image 5]

[Image 6]

[Image 7]



[Image 8]

[Image 9]

[Image 10]

1.2. Self-Awareness: Recognizing Strengths – 15 minutes

Time	Outcomes	Content	Individual Reflection	Group Discussion
1 min	Introduce the skill of recognizing strengths	**1.2. Recognizing Strengths** [Image 1] Did you know? Most people tend to focus on their weaknesses, so much sometimes that they forget about their own strengths!	No	No
5 min	Describe the importance of recognizing strengths	But identifying our own strengths is really important because they can help us grow. Examples of strengths include: [Image 2] **Enthusiasm:** Showing enjoyment, interest, and approval. [Image 3] **Creativity:** Using imagination or original ideas. [Image 4] **Trustworthiness:** Being considered as honest, reliable, and truthful. [Image 5] **Discipline:** Being able to behave and work in a controlled way. [Image 6] **Patience:** Tolerating delay, trouble, or problems without getting upset. [Image 7] **Respectfulness:** Showing politeness towards others' feelings and actions. [Image 8] **Determination:** Having a clear purpose or goal. [Image 9] **Dedication:** Being committed to a task or goal. [Image 10] **Honesty:** Speaking and acting truthfully. [Image 11] **Versatility:** Adapting to different situations in the environment. These are only **a few** examples of the many different strengths that we could have. That means, we can identify with many of these examples at the same time, or with none at all. This is only the tip of the iceberg!	So, what do you think? Are you aware of your own strengths? A. Yes, I know a few! B. No, but I'm starting to learn about them! Take a good look at the options and enter your response in the textbox available next! *FYI: It's OK if you just enter the letter of the options you choose! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	Yes
3 min	Describe the unique nature of strengths	**We all have strengths!** [Image 12] **Remember!** Strengths could be large, small, visible, or hidden. However, the most important thing is to remember that we all have them! It's like we all have some kind of personal recipe of our strengths that makes us different, **and unique**. [Image 13] Knowing Ourselves = Helping Ourselves! This means, the more aware we are of our own strengths, the more… ● we are aware of our positive qualities. ● we can reconnect and/or evaluate our values. ● we can be confident that we can handle daily tasks and challenges. ● we can work on building more strengths, expanding our interests, and trying new things!	So, what do you think? From this list, what are the strengths you already have? A. Showing enjoyment, interest, and approval. B. Using imagination or original ideas. C. Being considered as honest, reliable, and truthful. D. Being able to behave and work in a controlled way. E. Tolerating delay, trouble, or problems without getting upset. F. Showing politeness towards others' feelings and actions. G. Having a clear purpose or goal. H. Being committed to a task or goal. I. Speaking and acting truthfully.	Yes

			J. Adapting to different situations in the environment. Take a good look at the options and enter your response in the textbox available next! *FYI: It's OK if you just enter the letter of the options you choose! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	
5 min	Promote reflection regarding the skill of recognizing strengths	**Let's brainstorm!** What are some strengths you would like to develop? How can you help others develop their strengths? *Use the discussion to enter your answer. You're also welcome to comment on other people's answer! Remember, there's no right or wrong answer.*	No	Yes
1 min	Conclude the skill of recognizing strengths	Hopefully now you can identify some of your strengths! **Suggestion:** Try to pay attention to your daily life and see what tasks or activities are really easy for you.	No	No

Note. [Image 1] [Image 2] [Image 3] [Image 4] [Image 5] [Image 6] [Image 7] [Image 8]

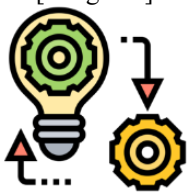







[Image 9] [Image 10] [Image 11] [Image 12] [Image 13]

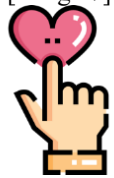




1.3. Self-Awareness: Self-Worth – 15 minutes

Time	Outcomes	Content	Individual Reflection	Group Discussion
1 min	Introduce the skill of self-understanding	**1.3. Self-Worth** [Image 1] Did you know? Many people struggle to talk about their positive qualities. Some of us are told that we should be humble, or that we shouldn't be too proud. Others are told that we should be proud of ourselves, but not too much. In fact, we often tend to focus on our negative qualities! But when we become more aware of our strengths, we also become more conscious of our uniqueness and our self-worth.	No	No
5 min	Describe the importance of self-worth	[Image 2] **Self-worth** can be described as the feeling that you are a good person who deserves to be treated with respect. It is important that we become more aware of how our self-worth tends to affect our lives and tends to be related to the kinds of choices we make. [Image 3] For example: ● If we're aware of our worth, "bad" grades could be an opportunity to improve and learn more. "We have many other things going on!" We will study harder next time, and we will pay more attention in class. ● If we're not aware of our worth, "bad" grades could make us feel *really* bad about ourselves. "We're just "bad" at this subject!" We could put off studying or even begin hating going that this class, In both cases, self-worth affected our emotions, our choices or behaviours, and ultimately our well-being.	So, what do you think? Can we improve our self-worth? A. Yes, we can change how we feel about ourselves! B. No, we will always feel the same way. Take a good look at the options and enter your response in the textbox available next! *FYI: It's OK if you just enter the letter of the options you choose! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	Yes
3 min	Describe the unique nature of our self-worth	**It's all a myth!** Self-worth is complicated. It's starts by understanding how we feel, and by knowing our strengths, but every one of us is different. Like our own personal recipe, remember? That being said, these are some of the things that **do not,** and **should not,** determine our self-worth. [Image 4] **Our to-do list:** Achieving goals is great, but it doesn't change our worth as humans. [Image 5] **Our job:** It doesn't matter what we do, but that we do it well, and it fulfills us! [Image 6] **Our number of followers:** Social media followers are not an indication of our worth as humans. [Image 7] **Our number of likes:** People like all kinds of different things. Likes are not a reflection of our worth. [Image 8] **Our age:** We're never too young or too old for life. We're all worthy regardless of our age.	Now, try to identify how one, or more, of the following situations could impact your self-worth: ● Your friend has invited you to a party, which you'd really like to attend. Unfortunately, you have nothing new to wear and you don't have the money to buy a new outfit. ● You are a very skilled soccer player and want to join your local school soccer team. After tryouts, the coach pulls you aside and tells you that you are too short to play.	Yes

		[Image 9] **Other people:** It doesn't matter what other people do, say, or accomplish; our self-worth comes from within! [Image 10] **Our grades:** We all have different strengths and weaknesses. Our grades are not an indication of who we are as humans. [Image 11] **Our number of friends:** It's not about the number of connections, but the quality of those connections. [Image 12] **Our relationship status:** Single, dating, or committed, our relationship status doesn't change our worth as human beings. [Image 13] **Our financial situation:** Money doesn't necessarily bring us happiness, and it shouldn't influence our self-worth. [Image 14] **Our bodies:** Blonde, or glasses, or thin, or (dis)able. Our bodies, although important, do not determine our worth as human beings. [Image 15] **Anything or anyone but ourselves:** We are the only ones who determine our self-worth! **Remember!** The most important part of self-worth is the **SELF.**	• You enjoy doing activities such as yoga and meditation during your free time. You tell some people in your class that there will be free yoga classes at the local community centre. Some classmates in your class tell you that you don't look like the type that should be doing yoga. Use the textbox next to enter your answer. *FYI: There's no right or wrong answer! Just try to identify how these situations could make you feel and what they could do to your self-worth! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	
5 min	Promote reflection regarding the skill of self-understanding	**Let's brainstorm!** Describe something that you like about yourself that makes you unique. Describe something that you like about somebody else (e.g., classmate, friend, or family) that makes them unique. *Use the discussion to enter your answer. You're also welcome to comment on other people's answer! Remember, there's no right or wrong answer.*	No	Yes
1 min	Conclude the skill of self-understanding	Hopefully now you can better identify that your-*self* is what's the most important part of self-worth! **Suggestion:** Try to pay attention to your daily life and see what makes you feel worthy.	No	No

Note. [Image 1]  [Image 2]  [Image 3]  [Image 4]  [Image 5]  [Image 6]  [Image 7]  [Image 8] 

[Image 9]

[Image 10]

[Image 11]

[Image 12]

[Image 13]

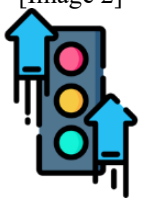
[Image 14]

[Image 15]

Module 2. Self-Management: Introduction – 5 minutes

Time	Outcomes	Content	Individual Reflection	Group Discussion
1 min	Introduce SEL competencies	**Introduction: Second SEL Competency** **Thank you for coming back!** **Remember!** Social-Emotional Learning helps people to acquire and apply the knowledge, the skills, and the attitudes that could enhance their personal development, establish fulfilling relationships, and achieve tasks effectively and ethically. This week you will explore **self-management**.	No	No
3 min	Introduce self-management skills	**2. Self-Management** [Image 1] Did you know? **Self-Management** is the ability to regulate our own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations. It includes effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating ourselves. Examples of self-management skills include: [Image 2] **Impulse control:** Managing our desire for immediate gratification. It includes our emotions, thoughts, and behaviours! [Image 3] **Stress management:** Managing our own stress for the purpose of improving our well-being. [Image 4] **Self-discipline:** Being able to make ourselves do things we know we should do, even when we don't want to! [Image 5] **Self-motivation:** Being able to do what needs to be done without influence from other people or situations. [Image 6] **Goal setting:** Identifying something we want to accomplish and establishing the steps to do it. [Image 7] **Organizational skills:** Being able to efficiently assess the feasibility of tasks and manage our own time, workload, and resources.	Thank you for coming back to learn more and developing your self-management skills! What do you consider is your current level of self-management skills? A. Novice B. Intermediate C. Proficient D. Expert Take a good look at the options and enter your response in the textbox available next! *FYI: It's OK if you just enter the letter of the options you choose! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	Yes
1 min	Introduce self-management skills	**Both personally and academically!** [Image 8] As you can see, self-management includes setting and working toward both personal and academic goals. **But remember!** It is also important to do so with a realistic sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset."	No	No

Note. [Image 1] [Image 2] [Image 3] [Image 4] [Image 5] [Image 6] [Image 7] [Image 8]



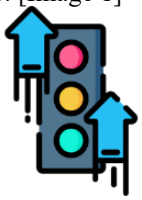


2.1. Self-Management: Impulse Control – 15 minutes

Time	Outcomes	Content	Individual Reflection	Group Discussion
1 min	Introduce the skill of impulse control	**2.1. Impulse Control** [Image 1] Did you know? It's completely natural to feel impulsive.	No	No
5 min	Describe the importance of impulse control	Impulse control is not about eliminating our impulses. It's probably not even possible to do that! It's about learning to control them in an appropriate way. Examples of common impulses include: [Image 2] **Buying:** Buying products or services we don't need. [Image 3] **Eating:** Eating food when we're not hungry. [Image 4] **Texting:** Texting when we're upset or angry. [Image 5] **Substances:** Drinking alcohol just because we were offered. [Image 6] **Relationships:** Rushing into a relationship. Again, **impulse control** is not about eliminating our impulses. They're normal and natural! It's about learning to manage them and expressing them in an appropriate way. [Image 7] **Impulse control** includes our emotions, thoughts, and behaviours! Let's take texting as an example: ● Emotion: we're angry about something that happened with a friend. ● Thought: we think of all the things we're going to text them. ● Behavior: we write all these things and send them to our friend. **Remember!** Most things in our lives are a combination of emotions, thoughts, and behaviors.	So, what do you think? What could happen if we can't control our impulses? A. We could get in trouble and/or hurt others. B. Nothing that I can think of! Take a good look at the options and enter your response in the textbox available next! *FYI: It's OK if you just enter the letter of the options you choose! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	Yes
3 min	Describe how to improve our impulse control	**Actions have consequences!** [Image 8] **Remember!** Our actions have consequences, and sometimes our actions could get us in trouble, could hurt others, or could end up hurting ourselves. So, how can we improve our impulse control? Here's an idea: [Image 9] **Stop:** Take time to think about what we're going to do. [Image 10] **Breathe:** Breathe in and breathe out. It really helps! [Image 11] **Think:** How am I feeling? What am I thinking? What is really the problem? Is there another, or more than one, way to react? [Image 12] **Act:** Do what is best for ourselves and others!	Now, try to identify how in one, or more, of the following situations you could manage your impulses: ● At lunch when you line up at the cafeteria, someone pushes in front of you. ● The person next to you in an exam keeps tapping their desk. ● The person you are talking to about something has a different opinion than you. ● You are online and notice that a friend on Instagram has unfriended you.	Yes

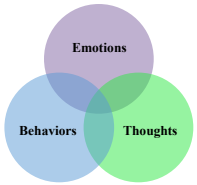
			• You have saved $150 towards the cost of a new laptop, but a pair of shoes you love costs exactly that. Use the textbox next to enter your answer. *FYI: There's no right or wrong answer! Just try to identify how these situations could make you feel and how you could manage your impulses! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	
5 min	Promote reflection regarding the skill of impulse control	**Let's brainstorm!** What are the consequences if we don't control our impulses? How do our reactions and responses impact on others? *Use the discussion to enter your answer. You're also welcome to comment on other people's answer! Remember, there's no right or wrong answer.*	No	Yes
1 min	Conclude the skill of impulse control	Hopefully now you know that impulse control is not about eliminating our impulses but managing them! **Suggestion:** Try to pay attention to your daily life to events that make you feel impulse. Then try to Stop, Breathe, Think and later Act!	No	No

Note. [Image 1] [Image 2] [Image 3] [Image 4] [Image 5] [Image 6] [Image 7] [Image 8]









[Image 9] [Image 10] [Image 11] [Image 12]




2.2. Self-Management: Stress Management – 15 minutes

Time	Outcomes	Content	Individual Reflection	Group Discussion
1 min	Introduce the skill of stress management	**2.2. Stress Management** [Image 1] Did you know? It's completely natural to feel stressed sometimes! However, feeling constantly stressed out can have really negative impacts on our mind and our bodies. Stress is supposed to be a short-term response to danger!	No	No
5 min	Describe the importance of stress management	Examples of common signs of stress are: [Image 2] **Feelings:** Feeling worried, nervous, or unable to switch off. [Image 3] **Heart:** Heart beats harder and faster to pump more blood to the muscles. [Image 4] **Breath:** Breathing harder and faster to send more oxygen around the body. [Image 5] **Tummy:** Stomach-aches due to the rush of stress hormones. [Image 6] **Skin:** Skin becomes more sensitive and oily. [Image 7] **Muscles:** Muscles tense up preparing to make a run for it. [Image 8] **Head:** Tension headaches and migraines can occur. **Not always bad!** [Image 9] Stress can be healthy and helpful depending on the situation. For example, stress helps us get through public speeches, job interviews, an exam, or awkward social interactions. Stress is helping us here! **Remember!** Stress only becomes a problem when it's constant or when the situation is out of our control. Stress can lead to serious problems in the long term. [Image 2] **Mental health:** Mental health is the state of your psychological and emotional well-being. It is a necessary resource for living a healthy life and a main factor in overall health. Stress can impact our mental health. [Image 3] **Heart:** Stress can cause serious heart problems. [Image 4] **Breath:** Stress can cause trouble breathing, hyperventilating, and panic attacks. [Image 6] **Skin:** Stress can start bad skin reactions and hair conditions.	So, what do you think? Is stress always bad? A. Yes, stress is always bad. B. No, stress can be good. It's only when it's constant! Take a good look at the options and enter your response in the textbox available next! *FYI: It's OK if you just enter the letter of the options you choose! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	Yes
3 min	Describe how to improve our stress management	**Coping with stress** So, how can we better cope with stress? Here's an idea: [Image 10] **Stop:** Take time to acknowledge the signs of stress we're experiencing. [Image 11] **Breathe:** Breathe in and breathe out. It really helps for stressful situations! [Image 12] **Think:** Remembering what we know about stress can really help us better cope with it! [Image 13] **Act:** Trying to be present in every activity. For example, washing the dishes, writing a "thank you" list, exercising, eating a snack, or having some tea. It's important to really focus on what we're doing.	Now, what could help you remember the following steps to better manage stress? ● Stop ● Breathe ● Think ● Act Use the textbox next to enter your answer. *FYI: There's no right or wrong answer! Just try to identify what you could do to*	Yes

			remember these steps to manage your stress! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.	
5 min	Promote reflection regarding the skill of stress management	**Let's brainstorm!** What are things that causes us to stress out? What can we do to try to prevent stress from negatively impacting our lives? *Use the discussion to enter your answer. You're also welcome to comment on other people's answer! Remember, there's no right or wrong answer.*	No	Yes
1 min	Conclude the skill of stress management	Hopefully now you know stress only becomes a problem when it's constant or when the situation is out of our control! **Suggestion:** Try to pay attention to your daily life and see what makes you stressed out. Then try to Stop, Breathe, Think and later Act!	No	No

Note. [Image 1] [Image 2] [Image 3] [Image 4] [Image 5] [Image 6] [Image 7] [Image 8]








[Image 9] [Image 10] [Image 11] [Image 12] [Image 13]





Module 3. Social Awareness: Introduction – 5 minutes

Time	Outcomes	Content	Individual Reflection	Group Discussion
1 min	Introduce SEL competencies	**Introduction: Third SEL Competency** **Thank you for coming back!** **Remember!** Social-Emotional Learning helps people to acquire and apply the knowledge, the skills, and the attitudes that could enhance their personal development, establish fulfilling relationships, and achieve tasks effectively and ethically. This week you will explore **social awareness**.	No	No
3 min	Introduce social awareness skills	**3. Social Awareness** [Image 1] Did you know? **Social Awareness** is the ability to take the perspective of others, as well as being able to empathize with others. This is especially important to understand those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Examples of social awareness skills include: [Image 2] **Perspective taking:** Putting ourselves in another person's shoes. [Image 3] **Affective Empathy:** Understanding or feeling what another person is experiencing from their point of view. [Image 4] **Appreciating diversity:** Understanding that everyone is unique and appreciating our individual differences regardless of background and culture. [Image 5 **Respect for others:** Showing politeness towards others' feelings and actions.	Thank you for coming back to learn more and developing your social awareness skills! What do you consider is your *current* level of social awareness skills? A. Novice B. Intermediate C. Proficient D. Expert Take a good look at the options and enter your response in the textbox available next! *FYI: It's OK if you just enter the letter of the options you choose! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	Yes
1 min	Introduce social awareness skills	**It's also about support!** [Image 6] **Social Awareness** also includes the ability to understand **social and ethical norms** for behaviour. It involves being able to recognize family, school, and community **resources and supports**.	No	No

Note. [Image 1] [Image 2] [Image 3] [Image 4] [Image 5] [Image 6]





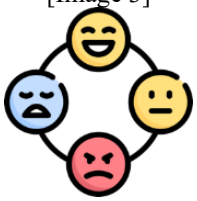

3.1. Social Awareness: Perspective Taking – 15 minutes

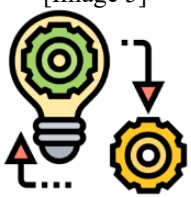
Time	Outcomes	Content	Individual Reflection	Group Discussion
1 min	Introduce the skill of perspective taking	**3.1. Perspective Taking** [Image 1] Did you know? In many situations, it's incredibly useful to be able to look beyond our own point of view, and to consider how someone else might be experiencing such situations. It's the very essence of perspective taking!	No	No
5 min	Describe the importance of perspective taking	Some essential components of perspective taking are: [Image 2] **Thoughts:** We need to have some *understanding* of the other person's thoughts. [Image 3] **Feelings:** We should *understand* their feelings. [Image 4] **Motivations:** *Understand* their motivations. [Image 5] **Intentions:** Their intentions. [Image 6] **Context:** As well as having some *understanding* of important background information about them or being able to make some informed guesses about their background and/or how they experience the world. As you can see, perspective taking is all about understanding the experiences of others! **Let's take bullying as an example!** [Image 7] **Bullying** is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviours that intend to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. Let's see how the essential components of perspective taking could help us understand bullying. **Let's consider both victims and bullies!** [Image 2] **Thoughts:** What could they be thinking about the whole situation? Could they blame each other? Could they believe this is the right solution? [Image 3] **Feelings:** What could they be feeling about this situation? Could they find it enjoyable, stressful, or neutral? Does it depend on whether they are the victim or the bully? [Image 4] **Motivations:** Could this be a motivating or de-motivating situation for them? If so, what could they be thinking of doing? Does it depend on whether they are the victim or the bully? [Image 5] **Intentions:** What could be the intentions behind bullying? Could it be to simply hurt, to make things even? [Image 6] **Context:** Where does the bullying happen? At school? Online? Everywhere? **Remember!** Bullying can involve both an individual and/or a group misusing their power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening. Bullying can happen in person, online, or a combination of both. And believe it or not, bullying affects negatively both the victims and the bullies.	So, what do you think? Could perspective taking improve bullying perpetration and/or victimization? A. Yes, the world can be a better place if we all understand each other! B. No, bullies will always bully! Take a good look at the options and enter your response in the textbox available next! *FYI: It's OK if you just enter the letter of the options you choose! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	Yes
3 min	Describe how to improve our	**Successful perspective taking!** So, how can we achieve successful perspective taking? Here's an idea using the same steps you already know:	Now, remember (or imagine) an experience where you or a friend	Yes

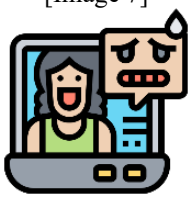
	perspective taking	[Image 8] **Stop:** Setting aside our thoughts, feelings, motivations, and intentions. Don't worry, this is only momentarily! [Image 9] **Breathe:** Breathe in and breathe out. As always, it helps! [Image 10] **Think:** Considering others' thoughts, feelings, motivations, and intentions. It's also important that we determine whether or not our behaviour should change based on that information. [Image 11] **Act:** Finally, by making any necessary changes. Let's aim to be understanding to each other!	experienced bullying or cyberbullying. What happened in terms of…? ● Thoughts ● Motivations ● Intentions ● Context Choose one of these components and use the textbox next to enter your answer. *FYI: There's no right or wrong answer! Just try to identify what could have happened in this scenario! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	
5 min	Promote reflection regarding the skill of perspective taking	**Let's brainstorm!** Think of a conversation with a friend, family member, or someone you really care about that experienced, or witnessed, some type of bullying or cyberbullying. How did that experience make them feel? How do you feel about their experience with bullying? *Use the discussion to enter your answer. You're also welcome to comment on other people's answer! Remember, there's no right or wrong answer.*	No	Yes
1 min	Conclude the skill of perspective taking	Hopefully now you know perspective taking is all about understanding the experiences of others! **Suggestion:** Try to pay attention to the people in your life and when they tell share an experience with you, try to put yourself in their shoes.	No	No

Note. [Image 1] [Image 2] [Image 3] [Image 4] [Image 5] [Image 6] [Image 7] [Image 8]









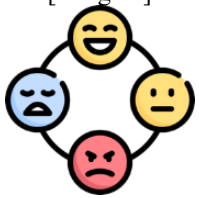
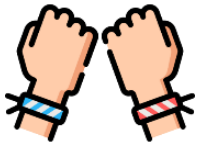

[Image 9] [Image 10] [Image 11]



3.2. Social Awareness: Affective Empathy – 15 minutes

Time	Outcomes	Content	Individual Reflection	Group Discussion
1 min	Introduce the skill of empathy	**3.2. Affective empathy** [Image 1] Did you know? As we remember, **perspective taking** considers how people might be experiencing in different situations. It's a very intellectual understanding! **Affective empathy** builds on this knowledge, and it considers more deeply someone else's experience. It's about having a personal response in relation to their situations. This is as close as putting ourselves in people's shoes!	No	No
5 min	Describe the importance of empathy	The three core components of empathy are: [Image 2] **Emotional:** First, we need the ability to recognize emotions in ourselves, but also in others through facial expressions, speech, or behaviour. [Image 3] **Cognitive:** Second, we need to take over the perspective of another person, but always maintaining the essential distinction between ourselves and others. This is **perspective taking.** [Image 4] **Empathic:** Third, we need to share emotional states with others, or at least the ability to experience similar emotions as them. As you can see, empathy is not the ability to recognise another person's feelings, but more importantly, to respond accordingly and respectfully. **Stronger relationships!** Empathy is also important because it helps us become resilient through developing strong and supportive relationships. [Image 5] For example: ● If we cannot exercise empathy, it is likely that we won't be able to fully understand what our family, friends, or even classmates are going through. Maybe we can comprehend the logic behind their circumstances, but it's unlikely that we can do it in a deep way. ● If we exercise empathy, however, it's very likely that we will be able to understand more deeply their experience, and behave in a way that is more appropriate, and comforting, for them. This is important in all relationships!	So, what do you think? Is empathy important? A. Yes, I'm certain. B. Not really. Take a good look at the options and enter your response in the textbox available next! *FYI: It's OK if you just enter the letter of the options you choose! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	Yes
3 min	Describe when to exercise our empathy skills	**When to use empathy?** Here are some examples. But remember that it's always good to use empathy! [Image 6] **Comforting:** When we need to comfort someone who is disappointed. [Image 7] **Tension:** When we need to defuse tension in a conflict situation. [Image 8] **Listening:** When we need listen to someone who is upset.	Now, what emotions could people feel in one, or more, of the following situations? ● Your favourite professor is away, and you have a not-so-great substitute. ● An acquaintance is being bullied at school.	Yes

			• Your lift is late picking you up. • A friend's grandmother passes away. • A friend fails an exam. Choose one of these components and use the textbox next to enter your answer. *FYI: There's no right or wrong answer! Just try to identify what could have happened in this scenario! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	
5 min	Promote reflection regarding the skill of empathy	**Let's brainstorm!** What barriers may prevent us from identifying and acknowledging the feelings of others? How can we check in with ourselves to ensure we are considering others' feelings? *Use the discussion to enter your answer. You're also welcome to comment on other people's answer! Remember, there's no right or wrong answer.*	No	Yes
1 min	Conclude the skill of empathy	Hopefully now you know affective empathy is all about understanding the experiences of others! **Suggestion:** Try to pay attention to the people in your life and when they tell share an experience with you, try to put yourself in their shoes.	No	No

Note. [Image 1]  [Image 2]  [Image 3]  [Image 4]  [Image 5]  [Image 6]  [Image 7]  [Image 8] 

3.3. Social Awareness: Appreciating Diversity – 15 minutes

Time	Outcomes	Content	Individual Reflection	Group Discussion
1 min	Introduce the skill of appreciating diversity	**3.3. Appreciating Diversity** [Image 1] Did you know? We might share some things in common with our family, friends, and classmates. However, we're all unique! Being different and diverse is a good thing, and we should learn to appreciate our differences.	No	No
5 min	Describe the importance of appreciating diversity	Examples of diversity include: [Image 2] **Food:** We probably all appreciate different kinds of foods. [Image 3] **Music:** Enjoy—and dance to—different types of music. [Image 4] **Sports:** Watch and/or practice a few different sports. [Image 5] **Fashion:** Wear different kinds of clothing depending on our mood, or the occasion! [Image 6] **Arts:** Have expressed ourselves through different art forms. [Image 7] **Hobbies:** Enjoy different hobbies. [Image 8] **Background:** And most importantly, we all have a different background! It might not be so obvious, if our parents were born in our country, but two, three generations ago, we all came from a different place. As you probably realize, we all already appreciate diversity! We just need to learn to better apply it to people.	So, what do you think? Are we all the same? A. No, we're all different and diverse! B. Yes, everyone I know is the same… Take a good look at the options and enter your response in the textbox available next! *FYI: It's OK if you just enter the letter of the options you choose! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	Yes
3 min	Describe the importance of celebrating diversity	**Celebrating diversity** [Image 9] **Remember!** Although it might not seem like it, we're all different! We're all diverse. We should celebrate these differences because they make us stronger. Some ways in people are diverse include: [Image 10] **Culture & Origin:** We could identify as Canadian, or French-Canadian. We could also just identify as someone with European-descend, Asian-descend, Hispanic-descend, or African-descend. We could have been born in the country or been born elsewhere. [Image 11] **Language:** We could speak the same language at school and at home or speak one language at school and another(s) at home. Some people know two or three languages fluently! [Image 12] **Ethnicity:** We could identify as Indigenous, Black, Hispanic, Asian, or White. We could have been more from a mixed family and look nothing like our parents. We're all a mix. [Image 13] **(Dis)Abilities:** We could have visible disabilities that explicitly makes it difficult for us to see, talk, hear, or walk. We could have invisible disabilities too, like mental or physical health conditions. More importantly, we could be non-disabled today, but we could become disabled at a certain point.	Now, remember a person that allowed you to appreciate them in terms of: ● Culture & Origin ● Language ● Ethnicity ● (Dis)Abilities ● Gender ● Sexual Orientation Choose one of these categories and use the textbox next to enter your answer. *FYI: There's no right or wrong answer! Just try to identify how you can celebrate diversity! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	Yes

		[Image 14] **Gender:** We could have different gender denominations, and gender expressions! [Image 15] **Sexual Orientation:** We could discover we are straight, gay/lesbian, bisexual, or pansexual. [Image 16] **Bodies:** We could be tall, short, medium, big, or small. We know our bodies are all diverse. **Diversity makes us better!** [Image 17] More importantly, diversity has helped people become smarter, and more creative! Let's all appreciate diversity.		
5 min	Promote reflection regarding the skill of appreciating diversity	**Let's brainstorm!** What are some examples of diversity in our country and in our classroom? What can we do to better appreciate this diversity? *Use the discussion to enter your answer. You're also welcome to comment on other people's answer! Remember, there's no right or wrong answer.*	No	Yes
1 min	Conclude the skill of appreciating diversity	Hopefully now you know being different and diverse is a good thing, and we should learn to appreciate our differences! **Suggestion:** Try to pay attention to the people in your life and notice/appreciate what makes them unique.	No	No

Note. [Image 1]

[Image 2]

[Image 3]

[Image 4]

[Image 5]

[Image 6]

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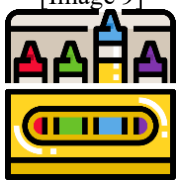

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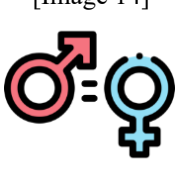

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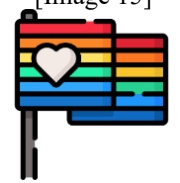

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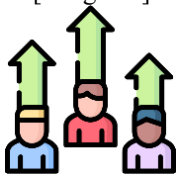


3.4. Social Awareness: Respect for Others – 15 minutes

Time	Outcomes	Content	Individual Reflection	Group Discussion
1 min	Introduce the skill of respect for others	**3.4. Respect for Others** [Image 1 Did you know? When things get better for others, things tend to get better for us too! That means, if we treat other with respect, it's very likely they will respect us in return.	No	No
5 min	Describe the importance of respect for others	Examples of key ingredients of respectful relationships include: [Image 2] **Trust:** Being reliable and truthful to one another. [Image 3] **Care:** Being attentive and considerate to each other. [Image 4] **Safety:** Being, and feeling, protective of one another. [Image 5] **Fun:** Enjoying spending time with each other. [Image 6] **Shared views:** Talking about common interests, as well as things we individually like, but we don't necessarily enjoy. [Image 7] **Communication:** Talking and listening attentively to each other. [Image 8] **Honesty:** Speaking truthfully, whether we have good or bad news. [Image 9] **Loyalty:** Feeling allegiance to one another. [Image 10] **Support:** Provide assistance to each other. For example, listening to each other, providing advice.	So, what do you think? Is respect the same for everyone in every situation? A. No, it changes depending on the person and the situation. B. Yes, respect is respect! Take a good look at the options and enter your response in the textbox available next! *FYI: It's OK if you just enter the letter of the options you choose! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	Yes
3 min	Describe the importance of respecting others	**Respect is like a recipe!** [Image 11] **Remember!** These are only ingredients of respectful relationships. Respect is like a recipe, and the amount of each of these ingredients changes depending on our culture, our even in different situations! However, it is important to find out the right ingredients, and the right amounts, to make a great relationship. [Image 12] Let's take communication as an example: ● At school, it's likely that we will use a more formal tone to address our teachers, the principal, or even classmates we're not too close to. ● At school, we tend to use a very informal language when we interact with friends. ● At home, depending on our culture, we could use a formal tone with adults, such as parents or grandparents, but an informal tone with siblings. **Praise and apologize…** [Image 13] We all like to be praised and to receive an apology when someone hurt us. Well, in order to cultivate respectful relationships, it is also important for us to praise and apologize when appropriate. **Respect must be earned!** [Image 14]	Now, how are these people showing their respect for others? ● Lynn and Young are being attentive and considerate to each other. ● David always speaks truthfully, whether she has good or bad news. ● Vanessa is providing advice to her friend Luis. Choose one, or more, of these scenarios and use the textbox next to enter your answer. *FYI: There's no right or wrong answer! Just try to identify how these scenarios are demonstrating respect! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	Yes

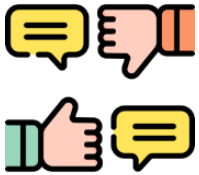
		Respect cannot be demanded. It must be earned! Think about it, if someone demands respect, they're probably not giving it in the first place. **Remember!** We tend to get what we give.		
5 min	Promote reflection regarding the skill of respect for others	**Let's brainstorm!** How can we demonstrate respect in our relationships? What would the "recipe" for your respectful relationship look like? *Use the discussion to enter your answer. You're also welcome to comment on other people's answer! Remember, there's no right or wrong answer.*	No	Yes
1 min	Conclude the skill of respect for others	Hopefully now you know if we treat other with respect, it's very likely they will respect us in return. **Suggestion:** Try to always address people in your life with respect.	No	No

Note. [Image 1] [Image 2] [Image 3] [Image 4] [Image 5] [Image 6] [Image 7] [Image 8]







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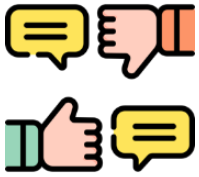
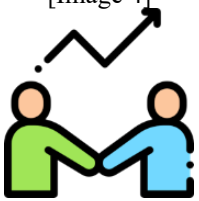



Module 4. Relationship Skills: Introduction – 5 minutes

Time	Outcomes	Content	Individual Reflection	Group Discussion
1 min	Introduce SEL competencies	**Introduction: Fourth SEL Competency** **Thank you for coming back!** **Remember!** Social-Emotional Learning helps people to acquire and apply the knowledge, the skills, and the attitudes that could enhance their personal development, establish fulfilling relationships, and achieve tasks effectively and ethically. This week you will explore **relationship skills**.	No	No
3 min	Introduce relationship skills	**4. Relationship Skills** [Image 1] Did you know? **Relationship Skills** include the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. Examples of key ingredients of positive relationship skills include: [Image 2] **Communication:** Communicating clearly with others, and listening well to what others have to say. [Image 3] **Social engagement:** Participating constructively in our community and our society. [Image 4] **Relationship building:** Identifying, initiating, and developing potential positive relationships with others, as well as maintaining them in a way that benefits everyone. [Image 5] **Teamwork:** Effectively and efficiently combining our actions to work together for a common goal.	Thank you for coming back to learn more and developing your social awareness skills! What do you consider is your *current* level of relationship skills? A. Novice B. Intermediate C. Proficient D. Expert Take a good look at the options and enter your response in the textbox available next! *FYI: It's OK if you just enter the letter of the options you choose! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	Yes
1 min	Introduce relationship skills	**Resist social pressure!** [Image 6] As you can see, **relationship skills** include the ability to communicate clearly, listen well, and cooperate with others. However, it is important to know that relationship skills are also about resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed.	No	No

Note. [Image 1] [Image 2] [Image 3] [Image 4] [Image 5] [Image 6]



4.1. Relationship Skills: Communication – 15 minutes

Time	Outcomes	Content	Individual Reflection	Group Discussion
1 min	Introduce the skill of communication	**4.1. Communication** [Image 1] Did you know? Communicating well can help us maintain good relationships, avoid unnecessary conflicts, and sometimes even increase the likelihood of getting what we want. It pays off to learn how to communicate well.	No	No
5 min	Describe the importance of communication	Examples of key ingredients of good communication include: [Image 2] **Be an active listener:** Let others talk, don't judge them, accept that they may disagree, ask open questions, and pay attention to what they're saying. [Image 3] **Be an assertive communicator:** Aggressive communication is forceful and hostile, passive communication fails to clearly express our thoughts, feelings, and wishes. **Assertive communication** involves expressing our thoughts, feelings, and wishes, but *without* demanding to have things our way! [Image 4] **Pay attention to body language:** Be relaxed and comfortable, adopt an open posture, lean towards the person, maintain eye contact, and face the person. **Our beliefs…** Believe it or not… our beliefs influence how we communicate with others! [Image 5] Let's take talking about our feelings as an example: ● Some people believe talking about their feelings should be avoided. This belief could have started at home if their families don't talk about feelings, or at school if they witnessed someone being made fun of for opening about feelings. It is very likely these people won't talk about their feelings very openly. ● Some people believe talking about feelings help friendships grow stronger. They are careful about who they share their feelings to, but they believe that makes them feel closer. It is very likely these people will talk about feelings with their friends.	So, what do you think? Could our beliefs influence the way we communicate with others? A. Yes, what we think impacts how we talk to others! B. No, beliefs and communication are not related… Take a good look at the options and enter your response in the textbox available next! *FYI: It's OK if you just enter the letter of the options you choose! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	Yes
3 min	Describe the importance of respect when communicating	**It's also about respect!** [Image 6] Communicating well is all about respecting ourselves, by being honest, but also respecting others, by allowing them to talk, and knowing they may not agree with us. **Remember! Empathy is key**.	Now, are these examples of good or bad communication? ● It's better to go along with the crowd, than to be singled out as different. ● When I'm upset with a friend, I message them about it. ● If my friend had a problem with me, I would want them to have a face-to-face	Yes

			conversation with me about the issue. ● I'm pretty easy-going, but I'll stand up for myself when I feel strongly about something. Choose one, or more, of these scenarios and use the textbox next to enter your answer. *FYI: There's no right or wrong answer! Just try to identify how these scenarios are demonstrating communication skills! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	
5 min	Promote reflection regarding the skill of communication	**Let's brainstorm!** How can we improve our communication skills? How can we have difficult conversations with others without being an aggressive or passive communicator? *Use the discussion to enter your answer. You're also welcome to comment on other people's answer! Remember, there's no right or wrong answer.*	No	Yes
1 min	Conclude the skill of communication	Hopefully now you know that communicating well can help us maintain good relationships! **Suggestion:** Try to always communicate with people in your life with respect.	No	No

Note. [Image 1] [Image 2] [Image 3] [Image 4] [Image 5] [Image 6]



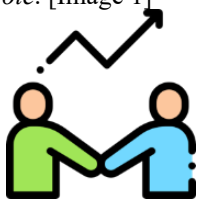



4.2. Relationship Skills: Relationship Building – 15 minutes

Time	Outcomes	Content	Individual Reflection	Group Discussion
1 min	Introduce the skill of relationship building	**4.2. Relationship Building** [Image 1] Did you know? Relationships are very important at any age. We should try to create positive and stable relationships because they can influence our physical health, strengthen our self-worth, promote school belonging, and give us problem-solving and social skills.	No	No
5 min	Describe the importance of relationship building	Examples of groups we should aim to relate positively include: [Image 2] **Family:** We are highly influenced by our families, and we tend to see home as a safe space where we learn values and coping strategies. [Image 3] **Friends:** Establishing and maintaining friendships can be difficult, but it's also very rewarding. Adolescence is a time of transition and change which can lead to pressures in our friendships. [Image 4] **Partners (Special Relationships):** Intimate or special relationships can also be both rewarding and challenging. We can feel pressured into having a partner if all our friends are in relationships, or we can feel stressed if we're not in a relationship. **Remember!** Just as stable relationships are positive influences, difficult relationships can impact our lives, our school performance, our work commitments, and sometimes even lead to anxiety and unhappiness.	So, what do you think? Could relationships become negative influences in our lives? A. Yes, if there are signs of trouble and we don't do anything about it. B. No, relationships can only be positive influences in our lives. Take a good look at the options and enter your response in the textbox available next! *FYI: It's OK if you just enter the letter of the options you choose! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	Yes
3 min	Describe how we can build better relationships	**How can we build better relationships?** Our goal is to build better relationships with our family, friends, and partners. Here's a few ideas how to do so: [Image 5] **Identifying:** We need to identify people with lots of key ingredients for respectful relationships. Sometimes we don't have a lot of options, like in our families, but we can still decide to let some family members closer than others. [Image 6] **Initiating:** We should initiate relationships. There's nothing wrong with being the one that takes the first step! Relationships often make us feel good, so why not take the first step? [Image 7] **Developing:** We need to develop this relationship through time, respect, empathy, communication. Everything we've learned so far! [Image 8] **Maintaining:** Like everything in life, it takes time and dedication to see the benefits of any relationships. Life gets busy, but we shouldn't forget to maintain our relationships, especially if they make us feel good! **Signs of trouble…** Sometimes things don't go as we planned, or we have a few days off. However, it is also important to recognize when there are signs of trouble in our relationships. [Image 9]	Now, how can these circumstances impact your relationships? ● Expectation and academic pressures. ● Different opinions and values. ● Family changes. ● Peer pressure. ● Arguing and falling out with a friend. ● Balancing and managing time. Choose one, or more, of these circumstances and use the textbox next to enter your answer. *FYI: There's no right or wrong answer! Just try to identify how these circumstances could impact your relationships! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	Yes

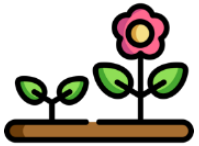
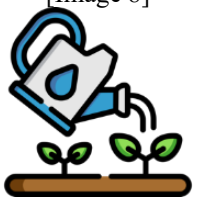
		Some of these signs include: ● constant fighting with family, friends, or partner. ● feeling angry, frustrated or lonely most of the time. ● being unable to discuss things with family, friends, or partner. ● relationship pressures. ● being left out or bullied. ● difficulty focusing at school. **Remember!** Pay attention to these signs of trouble, and exercise empathy, communication, respect, and every other skill we have learned to try to solve the trouble.		
5 min	Promote reflection regarding the skill of relationship building	**Let's brainstorm!** What are your rights and responsibilities as part of a family? as part of a friendship? as part of an intimate relationship? *Use the discussion to enter your answer. You're also welcome to comment on other people's answer! Remember, there's no right or wrong answer.*	No	Yes
1 min	Conclude the skill of relationship building	Hopefully now you know positive relationships can strengthen our self-worth, promote belonging, and give us problem-solving and social skills! **Suggestion:** Try to always address and solve conflicts with the important people in your life.	No	No

Note. [Image 1] [Image 2] [Image 3] [Image 4] [Image 5] [Image 6] [Image 7] [Image 8]







[Image 9]

4.3. Relationship Skills: Teamwork – 12 minutes

Time	Outcomes	Content	Individual Reflection	Group Discussion
1 min	Introduce the skill of teamwork	**4.3. Teamwork** [Image 1] Did you know? Teamwork and group discussions can help us feel connected in and outside school. More importantly, being part of a group discussion can promote the skills we require to work together, stimulate creativity, and even encourage empathy.	No	No
5 min	Describe the importance of teamwork	Examples of key ingredients of effective work teams include: [Image 2] **Stay realistic:** It's important that we recognize our strengths and our weaknesses. We need to be aware of what we bring to the table! [Image 3] **Stay confident:** No matter what we bring to the table, we need to remember we are worthy, and our input matters! [Image 4] **Stay calm:** As always, staying calm, breathing, thinking, and then acting is helpful in any situation. [Image 5] **Be fair:** We should try to take others' perspectives, and more importantly, try to exercise empathy. [Image 6] **Be respectful:** Just as we want people to respect our strengths and weaknesses, we should be respectful of what other people bring to the table. [Image 7] **Communicate clearly:** We should always communicate clearly our thoughts, emotions, and wishes. Others are not equipped with crystal balls that tell them what we're thinking. We should! **Remember!** These are the skills that we learned throughout this program. We can apply them in many different situations, not just the ones exemplified here!	Now, how could you work as a positive member of the team in one of these scenarios? ● You are the captain of the local high school track team. Your coach tells you about several teammates who have behaved like poor sports after losing a race recently. As captain, you need to work with your track team to put together a policy on sportsmanship including some basic behavioral guidelines and consequences. ● Your team is lost in the wilderness on a camping trip. The leader must ensure that the group is safe for the night and have a plan to get them back to their base camp in the morning. Discuss with your team about what needs to be done to make this happen. The team members are experienced campers and have tents and food along. Choose one of these scenarios and use the textbox next to enter your answer. *FYI: There's no right or wrong answer! Just try to identify how you could work as a team member in one of these*	Yes

			scenarios! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.	
5 min	Promote reflection regarding the skill of teamwork	**Let's brainstorm!** What are the benefits of effective teamwork? Can we use teamwork skills outside of school and work (e.g., at home, with friends)? *Use the discussion to enter your answer. You're also welcome to comment on other people's answer! Remember, there's no right or wrong answer.*	No	Yes
1 min	Conclude the skill of teamwork	Hopefully now you know teamwork and group discussions can help us feel connected in and outside school! **Suggestion:** Try to work respectfully as a team member when circumstances in your life demand it.	No	No

Note. [Image 1] [Image 2] [Image 3] [Image 4] [Image 5] [Image 6] [Image 7]







Module 5. Responsible Decision-Making – 10 min

Time	Outcomes	Content	Individual Reflection	Group Discussion
1 min	Introduce SEL competencies	**Introduction: Fifth SEL Competency** **Thank you for coming back!** **Remember!** Social-Emotional Learning helps people to acquire and apply the knowledge, the skills, and the attitudes that could enhance their personal development, establish fulfilling relationships, and achieve tasks effectively and ethically. This week you will explore **responsible decision-making**!	No	No
3 min	Introduce responsible decision-making skills	**5. Responsible Decision-Making** [Image 1] Did you know? **Responsible Decision-Making** includes the ability to make constructive choices about personal behaviour and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The truth is you have been already practicing all responsible decision-making skills! Examples of responsible decision making includes: [Image 2] **Identifying problems:** Similar to what we did in 2.1 Impulse control & 4.2 Relationship building [Image 3] **Analyzing situations:** Similar to what we did in 1.1 Identifying emotions & 3.1 Perspective taking [Image 4] **Solving problems:** Similar to what we did in 2.2 Stress management & 4.1 Communication [Image 5] **Evaluating:** Similar to what we did in 1.3 Self-worth & 3.3 Appreciating diversity [Image 6] **Reflecting:** Similar to what we did in 1.2 Recognizing strengths & 4.3 Teamwork [Image 7] **Ethical responsibility:** Similar to what we did in 3.2 Affective empathy & 3.4 Respect for others	Thank you for coming back to learn more and developing your social awareness skills! What do you consider is your *current* level of responsible decision-making skills? A. Novice B. Intermediate C. Proficient D. Expert Take a good look at the options and enter your response in the textbox available next! *FYI: It's OK if you just enter the letter of the options you choose! It's also OK if you want to say more in the discussion.*	Yes
1 min	Introduce responsible decision-making skills	**Keep it real!** [Image 8] **Responsible Decision-Making** is also about the realistic evaluation of consequences of our various actions, as well as the consideration of the well-being of ourselves and others.	No	No

Note. [Image 1]  [Image 2]  [Image 3]  [Image 4]  [Image 5]  [Image 6]  [Image 7]  [Image 8] 

Appendix C

Network Relationships Inventory-Relationship Qualities Version (NRI-RQV)
(Buhrmester & Furman, 2008)

The questions below ask about your relationships with the six types of people listed on the right. On each blank line, write one number from 1 to 5. Look at the top left of the page to see what each number means. Rate the "father figure" or "mother figure" who lives in your home if you live with someone who is not your natural parent.

1 = Never or hardly at all
2 = Seldom or not too much
3 = Sometimes or somewhat
4 = Often or very much
5 = Always or extremely much

	Best Friend-s	Sibling-s	Mother	Father	Class-mates	Teacher-s
1. How often do you spend fun time with these people?						
2. How often do you tell these people things that you don't want others to know?						
3. How often do these people push you to do things that you don't want to do?						
4. How happy are you with your relationship with these people?						
5. How often do you and these people disagree and quarrel with each other?						
6. How often do you turn to these people for support with personal problems?						
7. How often do these people point out your faults or put you down?						
8. How often do these people praise you for the kind of person you are?						
9. How often do these people get their way when you two do not agree about what to do?						
10. How often do these people ***not*** include you in activities?						
11. How often do you and these people go places and do things together?						
12. How often do you tell these people everything that you are going through?						
13. How often do these people try to get you to do things that you don't like?						
14. How much do you like the way things are between you and these people?						

1 = Never or hardly at all
2 = Seldom or not too much
3 = Sometimes or somewhat
4 = Often or very much
5 = Always or extremely much

	Best Friend-s	Sibling-s	Mother	Father	Class-mates	Teacher-s
15. How often do you and these people get mad at or get in fights with each other?						
16. How often do you depend on these people for help, advice, or sympathy?						
17. How often do these people criticize you?						
18. How often do these people seem really proud of you?						
19. How often do these people end up being the one who makes the decisions for both of you?						
20. How often does it seem like these people ignores you?						
21. How often do you play around and have fun with these people?						
22. How often do you share secrets and private feelings with these people?						
23. How often do these people pressure you to do the things that he or she wants?						
24. How satisfied are you with your relationship with these people?						
25. How often do you and these people argue with each other?						
26. When you are feeling down or upset, how often do you depend on these people to cheer things up?						
27. How often do these people say mean or harsh things to you?						
28. How much do these people like or approve of the things you do?						
29. How often do these people get you to do things their way?						
30. How often do it seem like these people ***do not*** give you the amount of attention that you want?						

Appendix D

Opportunities Scale
(Konishi et al., 2020)

Below are statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by selecting that option. Please be open and honest in your responding.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. My school provides opportunities for me to get involved in community or neighborhood activities.							
2. My school provides opportunities for extracurricular sports-related activities.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
8.							

Appendix E

Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)
(Diener et al., 1985)

Below are statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by selecting that option. Please be open and honest in your responding.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.							
2. The conditions of my life are excellent.							
3. I am satisfied with my life.							
4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.							
5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.							

Appendix F

Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE)
(Diener et al., 2009)

Please think about what you have been doing and experiencing during the past four weeks. Then report how much you experienced each of the following feelings, using the scale below. For each item, select a number from 1 to 5, and indicate that number on your response sheet.

	Never or hardly at all	Seldom or not too much	Sometimes or somewhat	Often or very much	Always or extremely much
1. Positive					
2. Negative					
3. Good					
4. Bad					
5. Pleasant					
6. Unpleasant					
7. Happy					
8. Sad					
9. Afraid					
10. Joyful					
11. Angry					
12. Contented					

Appendix G

Flourishing Scale (FS)
(Diener et al., 2009)

Below are 8 statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1–7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by indicating that response for each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I lead a purposeful and meaningful life							
2. My social relationships are supportive and rewarding							
3. I am engaged and interested in my daily activities							
4. I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others							
5. I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me							
6. I am a good person and live a good life							
7. I am optimistic about my future							
8. People respect me							

Appendix H

Social Connectedness Scale
(Lee & Robbins, 1995)

Below are statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by selecting that option. Please be open and honest in your responding.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I feel distant from people.						
2. I don't feel related to most people.						
3. I feel like an outsider.						
4. I see myself as a loner.						
5. I feel disconnected from the world around me.						
6. I don't feel I participate with anyone or any group.						
7. I feel close to people						
8. Even around people I know, I don't feel that I really belong.						
9. I am able to relate to my peers.						
10. I catch myself losing a sense of connectedness with society.						
11. I am able to connect with other people.						
12. I feel understood by the people I know.						
13. I see people as friendly and approachable.						
14. I fit in well in new situations.						
15. I have little sense of togetherness with my peers.						
16. My friends feel like family.						
17. I find myself actively involved in people's lives.						
18. Even among my friends, there is no sense of brotherhood/sisterhood.						
19. I am in tune with the world.						
20. I feel comfortable in the presence of strangers.						

Appendix I

Acceptance of Diversity Scales
(Konishi et al., 2020)

Below are statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by selecting that option. Please be open and honest in your responding.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Adults at my school are accepting of all individuals regardless of their race, ethnicity or culture.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7. Students at my school are accepting of all individuals regardless of their race, ethnicity or culture.							

8.							
9.							
10.							
11.							
12.							

Appendix J

School Engagement Scale (SES)
(Wang et al., 2011)

Using the scale below, indicate how often you engage with each action by selecting that option. Please be open and honest in your responding.

	Never or hardly at all	Seldom or not too much	Sometimes or somewhat	Often or very much	Always or extremely much
1. How often do you have trouble paying attention in classes?					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					

Below are statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by selecting that option. Please be open and honest in your responding.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
8. I feel happy and safe in this school.					
9.					
10.					
11.					
12.					

13.					
14.					
15.					

Using the scale below, indicate how often you engage with each action by selecting that option. Please be open and honest in your responding.

	Never or hardly at all	Seldom or not too much	Sometimes or somewhat	Often or very much	Always or extremely much
16. How often do you try to figure out problems and planning how to solve them?					
17.					
18.					
19.					
20.					
21.					
22.					
23.					

Appendix K

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)
(Cohen et al., 1983)

Using the scale below, indicate how often you engage with each action by selecting that option. Please be open and honest in your responding.

	Never	Almost never	Sometimes	Fairly often	Very often
1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?					
2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?					
3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"?					
4. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?					
5. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?					
6. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?					
7. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?					
8. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?					
9. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?					
10. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?					

Appendix L

Demographic Information Questionnaire

How old are you? (Open ended)

How do you identify in terms of sex?
- Female
- Male
- Intersex
- Another sex identity

How do you identify in terms of gender?
- Woman
- Man
- Non-binary or Queer
- Two-Spirit
- Another gender identity

How do you identify in terms of sexual orientation?
- Asexual
- Bisexual
- Gay or Lesbian
- Heterosexual or Straight
- Pansexual
- Queer
- Two-Spirit
- Another sexual orientation

How do you identify in terms of ethnic or cultural heritage?
- African/Caribbean
- East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, etc.)
- European (Anglo, European descent, etc.)
- First Nations (Indigenous, Metis, Inuit, etc.)
- Latin American (Mexican, Central American, South American, etc.)
- Middle Eastern (Arabic, Iranian, Persian, etc.)
- South Asian (East Indian, Indonesian, Pakistan, etc.)
- Southeast Asian (Cambodian, Filipino, Indonesian, Vietnamese, etc.)
- Another ethnic or cultural heritage

How do you identify in terms of (dis)ability?
- I have a disability.
- I do not have a disability.

Of what country are you a citizen? (All that apply)

- Canada, by birth.
- Canada, by naturalization.
- Another country

Are you a landed immigrant?

- Yes
- No

Do you speak other language(s), different from English or French, well enough to conduct a conversation?

- Yes
- No

How many hours a week are you employed?

- I am not working.
- Less than 20 hours
- 20-40 hours
- More than 40 hours