



**Теорія і практика навчання**

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**Упровадження моделі соціально - емоційного навчання у закладах вищої освіти України**

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***Анотація. Мета.** Дослідження спрямоване на теоретичне обґрунтування та концептуалізацію моделі впровадження соціально-емоційного навчання у закладах вищої освіти України, що функціонують в умовах війни, інституційної трансформації та європейської інтеграції. У статті розглянуто суперечність між зростаючою потребою системної соціально-емоційної підтримки в університетах і відсутністю моделі соціально-емоційного навчання, адаптованої до національних соціально-політичних реалій та пріоритетів повоєнного відновлення. **Методи.** У дослідженні застосовано теоретичне*



моделювання, системний огляд наукових джерел, порівняльний аналіз моделей соціально-емоційного навчання, а також контекстуальний аналіз освітньої політики у сфері вищої освіти України. **Результати.** Аналіз засвідчив, що наявні програми соціально-емоційного навчання переважно орієнтовані на середню освіту та потребують адаптації до особливостей здобувачів вищої освіти. Українські дослідження демонструють зростання інтересу до розвитку соціально-емоційних компетентностей у здобувачів вищої освіти, однак залишаються фрагментарними та не забезпечують їх системної інтеграції на інституційному рівні. Запропонована модель охоплює чотири взаємопов'язані компоненти: інтеграцію соціально-емоційних компетентностей у навчальні програми; професійний розвиток науково-педагогічних працівників; механізми активного залучення здобувачів освіти; стратегічне управління із системами моніторингу та оцінювання. Очікувані результати застосування цієї моделі включають покращені результати навчання, розвиток психологічної стійкості, соціальної згуртованості та посилення інституційної адаптивності. **Висновки.** Запропонована модель формує теоретично обґрунтовану основу для інтеграції соціально-емоційних компетентностей в управління та практику закладів вищої освіти. Вона може сприяти сталим інституційним трансформаціям, підвищенню добробуту здобувачів освіти та довгостроковій суспільній стійкості. Подальші дослідження мають бути спрямовані на емпіричну перевірку моделі та розроблення контекстно - чутливих інструментів оцінювання її ефективності та масштабованості.

**Ключові слова:** модель соціально-емоційного навчання, соціально-емоційні компетентності; інституційна стійкість; повосенне відновлення; реформа вищої освіти; добробут здобувачів освіти.



## Implementation of social and emotional learning model in higher education institutions in Ukraine

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**Abstract. Objective.** *The study aims to substantiate and conceptualize implementation of a context-sensitive model of social and emotional learning in tertiary education institutions in Ukraine that operate under conditions of the war, institutional transformation, and European integration. The research addresses the gap between the growing demand for structured socio-emotional support in universities and the absence of a comprehensive, system-level framework adapted to national socio-political realities and post-war recovery priorities. Methods.* *The study applies theoretical modeling, systematic literature review, comparative analysis of social and emotional learning frameworks, and contextual policy analysis of Ukrainian higher education. Results.* *The analysis reveals that existing social and emotional learning programs predominantly target secondary school education and require adaptation for adult learners in university settings. Ukrainian scholarship demonstrates increased interest in socio-emotional competencies; however, research remains fragmented and*



*lacks institutional-level integration. The proposed model consists of four interrelated components: curriculum embedding of transversal competences; professional capacity building for academic staff; participatory student engagement mechanisms; and strategic governance with monitoring and evaluation instruments. Expected outcomes include enhanced academic performance, improved psychological resilience, strengthened social cohesion, and increased institutional adaptability. **Conclusions.** The proposed model provides a theoretically grounded and policy-oriented foundation for integrating socio-emotional competencies into tertiary education governance and practice. Its implementation may contribute to student well-being, sustainable institutional transformation, and long-term societal resilience. Further empirical validation and development of context-sensitive assessment instruments are required to evaluate effectiveness and scalability.*

**Keywords:** *social and emotional learning model; social and emotional competencies; institutional resilience; post-conflict recovery; higher education reform; student well-being.*

**Introduction.** Social and emotional learning (SEL) refers to the process through which individuals develop and apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to understand and regulate emotions, pursue meaningful goals, empathize with others, build constructive relationships, and make responsible decisions [3]. SEL is becoming more widely recognized in the discourse surrounding education as a fundamental aspect of holistic development rather than as an additional component. It supports the interpersonal skills, psychological resilience, and emotional intelligence required for sustained wellbeing.

The importance of SEL in higher education (HE) goes beyond scholastic success. Students must negotiate the intellectual demands, interpersonal difficulties, and personal transitions in universities, which are complex social environments. Strengthening social and emotional competencies enhances students'



ability to manage stress, collaborate productively, think critically, and engage in ethically informed decision-making. When systematically integrated into curricula and campus life, SEL supports comprehensive student development and better prepares graduates for professional and civic participation. Moreover, institutions that cultivate emotionally supportive and inclusive learning environments tend to demonstrate higher levels of student engagement, retention, and academic performance [9].

In Ukraine, HE institutions operate under particularly demanding socio-political conditions shaped by ongoing war, systemic reforms, and the broader challenges of post-conflict recovery. These circumstances have profound implications for student well-being and for the availability and accessibility of emotional support mechanisms. Against this backdrop, embedding SEL into university structures becomes not merely desirable but necessary. It offers a structured pathway for strengthening resilience, reinforcing social cohesion, and supporting students facing heightened psychological stress.

This study proposes a theoretical framework for developing a comprehensive SEL model tailored specifically to Ukrainian higher education institutions. The objective is to identify its structural components, contextual determinants, and practical mechanisms of implementation in alignment with national educational reforms and contemporary social realities. The proposed model is intended to inform policy design, curriculum development, faculty training, and student engagement initiatives.

**Literature Review.** Over the past decades, multiple conceptualizations of SEL have been developed to systematize the cultivation of emotional intelligence, interpersonal competence, and responsible decision-making. Among the most influential is the framework proposed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), which identifies five interrelated competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making [3]. Originating in the United States, this approach has gradually



gained international recognition and has been adapted across diverse educational systems, including European contexts [2].

Subsequent models have expanded the conceptual boundaries of SEL by incorporating culturally responsive practices and developmental considerations to ensure relevance across varied learning environments [5]. While differing in emphasis, many frameworks converge around themes of 21st-century competencies, employability, and holistic development. Notable alternatives to CASEL include the ACT Holistic Framework, UNICEF's Life Skills and Citizenship Education model, and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills [5]. These approaches typically emerge from the fields of education, youth development, and workforce preparation, and they prioritize academic achievement, positive behavioral outcomes, and career readiness.

Globally, the significance of SEL within higher education has received growing scholarly attention [4; 15; 24; 26]. Unlike primary and secondary education, university-based SEL initiatives address adult learners and therefore emphasize autonomy, critical reflection, ethical reasoning, and professional identity formation. Universities have introduced SEL through curriculum redesign, faculty development programs, and co-curricular initiatives. Empirical findings suggest that embedding SEL enhances resilience, communication competence, and leadership potential, while also contributing to student persistence and academic success [4; 8; 9; 10]. At the same time, implementation strategies differ across regions due to cultural norms, institutional priorities, and resource constraints [8]. Sustainable integration appears to depend on interdisciplinary collaboration and long-term institutional commitment [7; 11].

In contrast to global developments, the Ukrainian context remains underexplored. Existing research predominantly addresses SEL at the primary and secondary levels [20; 22; 23; 27], with limited attention to university settings. Although some initiatives have introduced SEL-related programs in tertiary education [24; 26], examined continuing education integration [19], documented emerging institutional



practices [21], or explored its relevance for leadership development [18], a coherent and context-sensitive framework for Ukrainian higher education has yet to be articulated. Scholars such as O. Rasskazova, O. Elkin, V. Hrynko, and O. Marushchenko emphasize the need for interdisciplinary collaboration to deepen theoretical understanding and design effective socio-emotional development programs responsive to national and community needs [12]. The urgency of this task has intensified during the war, which has significantly increased psychological distress and mental health risks among university students [25; 28]. This gap highlights the necessity of constructing a contextualized SEL framework adapted to Ukrainian realities.

**Theoretical foundations of SEL.** The conceptual foundations of SEL draw heavily on Emotional Intelligence Theory (D. Goleman) and Social Cognitive Theory (A. Bandura). The former posits that the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and use emotions effectively is crucial for personal and social functioning. SEL competencies align closely with emotional intelligence components, emphasizing emotional regulation and social skills as critical for success in educational and professional contexts. The latter emphasizes how behavior development is influenced by reciprocal determinism, self-efficacy, and observational learning. By encouraging self-regulation, setting an example of positive social behavior, and creating spaces where students can practice and internalize social and emotional skills, current SEL frameworks integrate these concepts.

The principles of SEL must be modified for adult learners in higher education settings because it was primarily developed for K–12 education. Due to their increased life experience, adult learners require SEL strategies that prioritize critical reflection and self-directed learning. SEL for HE must integrate with disciplinary content and professional skill development to remain relevant and engaging. Emphasis on peer collaboration, leadership development, and real-world application of SEL competencies supports adult learners' transition to complex social and professional



environments. Flexibility in delivery methods, including experiential learning, mentoring, and co-curricular activities, ensures accessibility and responsiveness to diverse student needs.

**Contextual analysis of Ukrainian HE.** HE system in Ukraine is functioning within a complex socio-political context marked by military conflict, planned post-war reconstruction, and structural reforms. A framework that specifically addresses trauma-informed practices, resilience-building, and social cohesion is necessary because these factors influence students' emotional experiences and social interactions. Community solidarity, national identity, and collective responsibility are important cultural aspects that should be represented in SEL design.

Inequitable institutional capacities and restricted access to psychological services are common barriers to students' well-being. Resource limitations, socio-economic pressures, and conflict-related stressors contribute to anxiety, social fragmentation, and emotional exhaustion [25]. Strengthening counseling services, peer networks, and campus-based resilience initiatives therefore represents a strategic priority.

Although some universities have incorporated elements of SEL through extracurricular programs or student support services [21; 24; 26], systematic policy integration remains limited. Institutional disparities in funding, staff training, and leadership commitment further complicate implementation. Post-conflict recovery, however, also creates opportunities. Educational reforms aimed at modernization and European alignment provide openings to embed SEL within curricular redesign, interdisciplinary cooperation, and enhanced student support systems. Strategic planning, stakeholder collaboration, and sustainable resource allocation are essential to transform these opportunities into durable institutional practices.

### **Development of the SEL Model for Ukrainian Higher Education**

A context-sensitive SEL framework for Ukrainian universities should encompass four interrelated dimensions: curriculum integration, faculty and staff



development, student engagement mechanisms, and institutional leadership. Systematic curriculum integration ensures that social awareness, self-regulation, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making are cultivated across disciplines. Incorporating SEL into STEM and other professional fields aligns cognitive development with emotional regulation and intrinsic motivation. Research indicates that such integration enhances engagement, resilience, and academic achievement [4]. Interdisciplinary collaboration between education specialists, psychologists, and subject-matter faculty further contextualizes SEL competencies within real-world challenges [14; 17, p. 310].

Faculty development is equally critical. Educators' own social-emotional competence significantly influences classroom climate and student outcomes. Professional training should therefore address self-awareness, emotional regulation, and relational communication skills [6; 13]. Sustained mentoring structures and access to methodological resources reinforce long-term integration. Technological tools, including AI-supported personalized feedback systems, may additionally support monitoring and adaptive implementation [16].

Student engagement strategies including peer-led initiatives, co-creation projects, and extracurricular activities provide practical contexts for applying SEL competencies. These experiences strengthen empathy, collaboration, and ethical reasoning while reinforcing campus cohesion [4; 15].

Institutional leadership must formalize SEL within strategic documents, allocate adequate funding, and embed evaluation mechanisms into quality assurance processes [10]. Continuous monitoring, data-informed adjustments, and organizational learning processes enhance sustainability and institutional resilience [1].

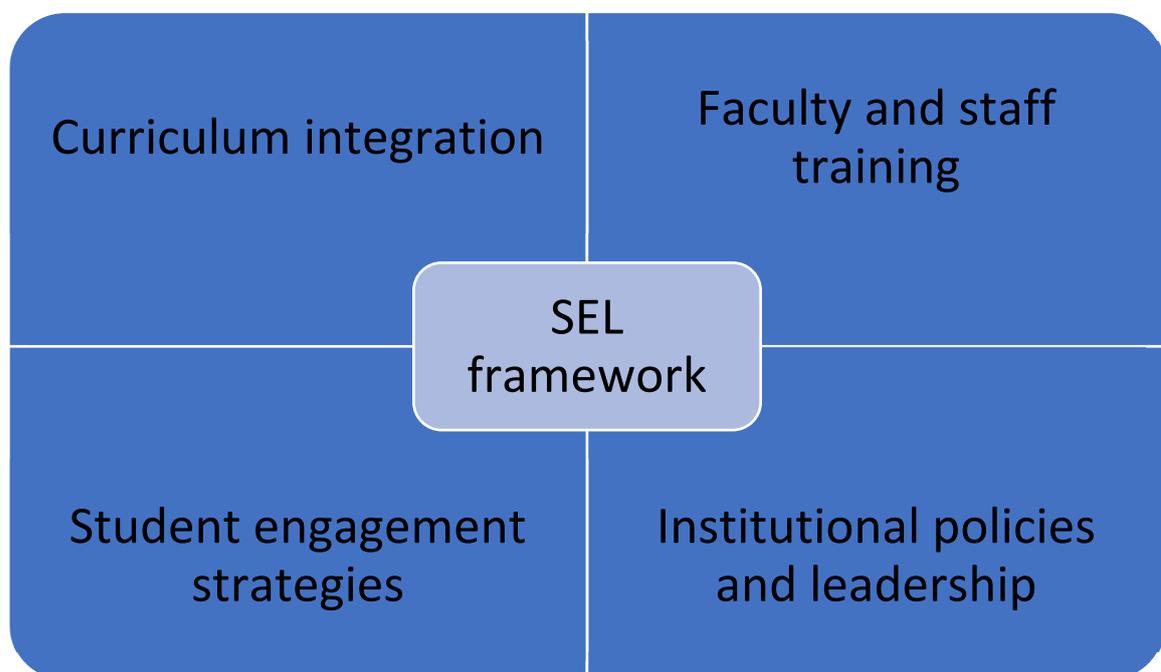
Successful implementation requires coordinated collaboration among university administrators, faculty, students, mental health professionals, policymakers, and community partners. Institutional capacity may be increased through external funding sources, such as Erasmus+ CBHE programs. In order to ensure that SEL programs

respect a range of experiences and lessen the stigma associated with mental health, cultural responsiveness and inclusivity must continue to be crucial. Responsiveness to changing sociopolitical conditions is ensured by adaptive management and continuous assessment.

These components create a coherent SEL framework (see Figure 1) that is suited to the requirements of Ukrainian universities.

Figure 1.

SEL framework for higher education in Ukraine



Source: authors' own work

Successful Implementation of SEL in Ukrainian HE will require the active participation of all stakeholders (e.g., university administrators, faculty, staff, students, mental health practitioners, etc.), as well as external partners (e.g., government officials, community groups). Involving multiple stakeholders enables the development of SEL programs that are both contextualized to the specific environment in which they will be implemented and responsive to the needs of the various stakeholders.

Universities must set aside enough funds to implement SEL by giving faculty members opportunities for professional development, creating curriculum materials



that are appropriate for SEL, offering students counseling and other psychological support, and setting up peer support programs. To improve their capacity to finance SEL programs, HE institutions can also look for outside funding sources and/or collaborate with outside organizations engaging in international partnerships. When implementing SEL, it is crucial that the programs being developed are inclusive and culturally sensitive because the process of recovering from conflict is extremely delicate. This entails recognizing and honoring the variety of students' identities, experiences, and backgrounds. Reducing the stigma attached to seeking mental health treatment and fostering an inclusive and equitable campus environment for all students depend on the use of culturally sensitive SEL practices. Students' level of engagement with SEL programs and the programs' efficacy will both increase when SEL programs are developed with consideration for the particular needs of various student populations. In order to ensure that the framework remains flexible, and that SEL programs can continue to develop based upon ongoing input from students, faculty, and other stakeholders, and based upon changes in the internal or external environment, continuous assessment and improvement of the SEL program will be necessary. The use of systematic monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for assessing the effectiveness of the SEL program(s); identifying challenges associated with the implementation of the program(s); and making improvements to the program(s), as needed, will assist in ensuring that the SEL program is meeting its intended goals. Creating an institutional culture of learning and innovation will help to facilitate an institution's response to emerging student needs, evolving educational reforms, and broader social and political trends. The potential benefits of developing a culture of continuous learning and innovation include the development of programs that are both relevant and effective over time.

**Conclusions.** The proposed SEL framework for Ukrainian HE conceptualizes social and emotional development as a systemic, institution-wide priority embedded in curricula, faculty training, student engagement, and strategic governance. Future



empirical research should evaluate implementation processes, identify context-specific barriers, and measure long-term effects on student well-being, academic performance, and campus climate. The development of culturally responsive assessment instruments is particularly important. Comparative studies across institutions and regions may further inform scalable and adaptable models.

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