



Increasing College Access Network

Social-Emotional Learning Playbook



Introduction and Overview

This playbook grew out of the [Increasing College Access Network \(ICAN\)](#), a first-of-its-kind project that explored how integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) into online dual enrollment courses could support student success. Over several years, college instructors piloted and refined a set of SEL strategies, generating evidence about their impact on self-efficacy, future orientation, and instructor support.

While the ICAN project has concluded, the lessons learned remain relevant for any instructor teaching dual enrollment—whether virtually, in hybrid formats, or in person. This playbook distills those insights into a practical resource you can adapt for your own context, regardless of institutional affiliation.

By weaving SEL into the dual enrollment experience, instructors can help students strengthen skills that are essential but often implicit in college courses: managing time, advocating for themselves, building relationships, and seeing themselves as capable learners and college students.

This playbook will help you:

- Understand the unique challenges students often face in dual enrollment settings and how SEL can help address them.
- Explore a set of prioritized strategies (originally developed for and refined by instructors in the ICAN project) that give students authentic opportunities to practice and grow SEL skills.
- Adapt and implement these strategies in ways that make sense for your course and students.

How to Use This Playbook

This playbook is designed to help you understand the SEL skills most critical for online dual enrollment success. Resources are provided to help apply six high-impact classroom strategies (“SEL strategies”) to build those skills. Guidance and suggestions are offered to help adapt the strategies to fit your course structure and student needs. Finally, you’ll be prompted to reflect on what works to continuously improve your practice.

You can read this playbook start-to-finish or jump to what you need most:

- **Section 1** describes common challenges of dual enrollment—especially in online and hybrid delivery formats—and explains how SEL can be leveraged to address them and support student success.
- **Section 2** introduces the specific SEL objectives and student success habits that instructors can intentionally develop through their course design and instructional routines.
- **Section 3** outlines six concrete SEL strategies that instructors can implement, including step-by-step guidance and considerations for online, hybrid, and in-person delivery.

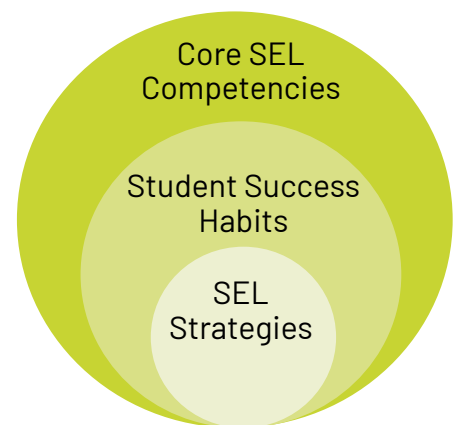
- **Section 4** provides tools for planning and adapting these strategies around your unique context.
- **Section 5** shares additional resources, including both instructor- and student-facing materials.

Playbook Glossary

This playbook will utilize three common terms to discuss SEL content and programming:

Term	Description	Components
Core SEL Competencies	Set of attitudes, skills, and knowledge; the “CASEL 5.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships • Self-Awareness • Self-Management • Responsible Decision-Making • Social Awareness
Student Success Habits	Concrete skills and practices students build through SEL-integrated dual enrollment coursework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships • Growth Mindset • Problem-Solving • Self-Management
SEL Strategies	Targeted activities, routines, or structures that allow opportunities for development, practice, and refinement of skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team-Building • Emotions Check-In • Challenge of the Week • Self-Assessment • Calendar Look-Ahead • Individual Check-Ins

Each SEL strategy provides structured, low-stakes opportunities for students to practice success habits that build toward core SEL competencies. For example, in a Challenge of the Week, students identify a real challenge, consider possible responses, and reflect on outcomes—practicing problem-solving and self-management habits that support competencies like responsible decision-making and self-awareness. Over time, these repeated routines help students develop the confidence and independence needed for college-level learning.



Alignment of SEL Objectives and Strategies

		Student Success Objectives			
		Relationships	Growth Mindset	Problem-Solving	Self-Management
SEL Strategies	Team-Building	X			
	Emotions Check-In		X		X
	Challenge of the Week	X	X	X	
	Self-Assessment		X	X	X
	Calendar Look-Ahead			X	X
	Individual Check-Ins	X		X	X

Each SEL strategy is aligned to multiple student success habits, allowing students to practice several at once. The SEL strategies function as a cohesive system rather than standalone activities, reinforcing key skills across different moments and contexts in the course. This design creates meaningful repetition without redundancy and ensures that no single strategy carries the full weight of student growth.

Playbook Contents

Section 1: SEL in Online Dual Enrollment Learning.....	6
Section 2: SEL and Student Success Habits.....	10
Section 3: Practical Classroom Strategies	13
Section 4: Planning, Blending, and Reflecting	18
Section 5: Resources & Tools.....	21

Section 1

The Why: SEL in Online Dual Enrollment Learning

A Changing Landscape

Online and hybrid dual enrollment courses are expanding access to higher education like never before. They enable high-school students—no matter their ZIP code—to earn college credit, experience rigorous coursework, and begin to see themselves as college students before officially stepping onto a campus. This expansion offers unprecedented access, affordability, and flexibility for learners and institutions alike.

Yet opportunity often comes with complexity. Students in online dual enrollment courses must navigate two institutions, competing calendars, and shifting expectations, often without the scaffolds and support they rely on in high school. They juggle shifting communication norms, limited face-to-face interaction, and the constant demand for self-management. These same factors that make virtual learning possible can also make it isolating or overwhelming.

Our work through the ICAN project shows that these obstacles are not fixed barriers—they're design opportunities. When instructors help students build the social-emotional and metacognitive skills to manage this space, online dual enrollment becomes more than a path to college credit; it becomes preparation for lifelong success.

The Hidden Curriculum of College Readiness

For many high school students, dual enrollment is an opportunity to “get ahead” in their college experience in critical ways. This process may include advanced academic preparation as well as collegiate credit—often at a reduced cost. Another benefit to this approach is the opportunity to “try on” college through anticipatory socialization and role rehearsal.

Anticipatory socialization describes how individuals learn about the attitudes, behaviors, and values of the desired role (e.g., high school students learning about what it means to be a college student).

Role rehearsal describes a hands-on approach to learning that allows individuals to experience a new role in a temporary manner (e.g., through participation in dual enrollment).

Students that find success in college courses may be more likely to see themselves continuing on with post-secondary education. Yet there is a big difference between being college-eligible and college-ready. Success often depends less on mastering course content and more on navigating the “hidden curriculum” of higher education—skills such as communicating with professors, advocating for support, and managing competing priorities. These implicit skills can make the difference between a student who feels like they belong in college and one who questions their ability to succeed.

Focus groups conducted as a part of ICAN underscored this reality. Students shared that the toughest parts weren't simply the readings or exams—they were the logistics and self-discipline that college assumes are already in place:

- **Academic rigor and time management:** Students found college-level coursework more demanding, often increasing stress and anxiety. Many struggled to balance dual enrollment courses with other high school classes, work, and personal commitments (e.g., extracurricular activities, work, and personal lives).
- **Self-paced learning and self-advocacy:** With less scaffolding, students had to manage their own progress and time. Several shared that they didn't realize they were off track until grades were posted, and some hesitated to ask for help—either unsure how or uncomfortable with reaching out.
- **Navigating educational institutions:** Several students mentioned that conflicting calendars, office hours, and exam schedules between high schools and colleges created logistical challenges—and those controlling these schedules often do not communicate with one another. Students had to manage scheduling conflicts on their own because there was often no one else to help coordinate across institutions.

Despite the challenges, dual enrollment courses offer a safe but authentic space to practice, stumble, and recover, helping students internalize not only what college looks like but who they can become within it.



Big Idea: *Dual enrollment works best when students get to practice being college students—not just take college classes.*

Recognizing these hidden barriers provides instructors with an opportunity to normalize them and intentionally teach the habits that lead to success.

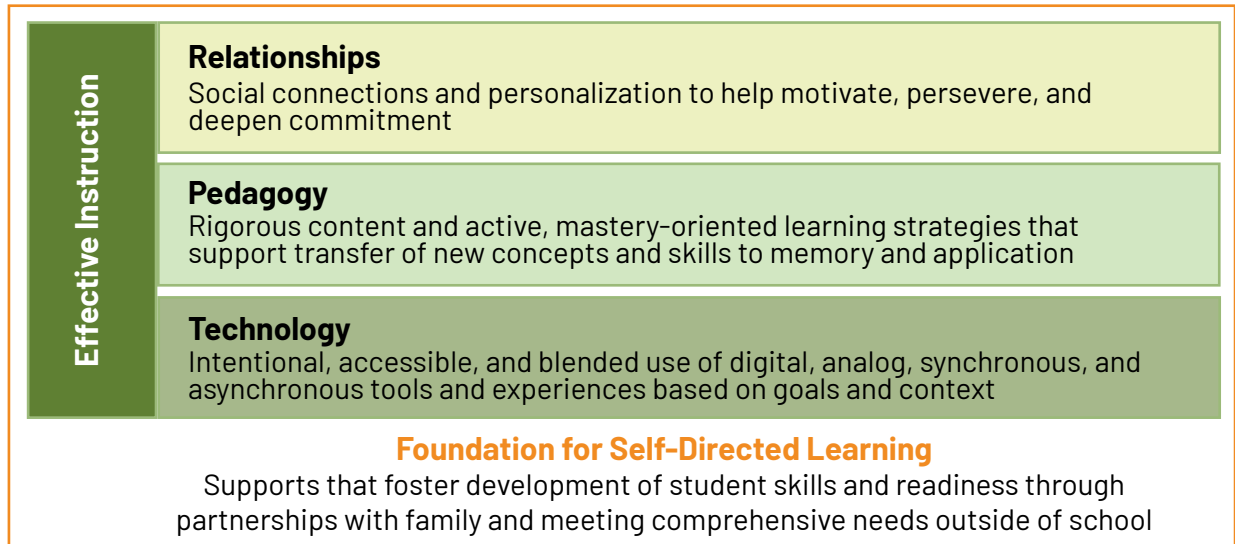
Why SEL Is the Missing Link

Effectively addressing these challenges requires more than content-centered instruction. SEL can serve as a framework to help students manage emotions, build relationships, and make responsible decisions—the very skills that enhance readiness in online dual enrollment courses.

Research has consistently shown that SEL programs produce [practical benefits](#) for students, with both [short- and long-term positive outcomes](#). While participation has positive impacts on soft skills such as attitudes toward self, attitudes toward others, and social behavior, [academic outcomes have also been shown to improve](#) with the effective incorporation of SEL programming. Students themselves [acknowledge that SEL is a powerful tool](#), often missing from their current educational experience.

This connection is reinforced by the research of FullScale (formerly the Learning Accelerator) through their report, "[Driving Quality in Virtual & Remote Learning](#)" (see visual below).

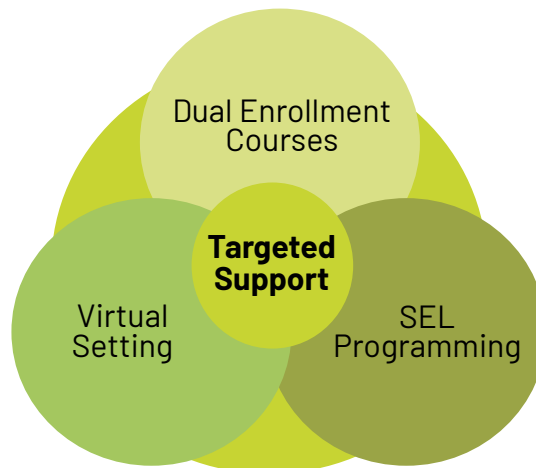
Key Factors that Help Drive Virtual and Remote Learning Quality



The report identifies *self-directed learning* as a cornerstone of success in online environments. SEL competencies—such as self-management, self-awareness, and responsible decision-making—form the emotional and behavioral foundation for that independence. As FullScale notes, quality remote instruction “meaningfully addresses, mitigates, and leverages the unique challenges and benefits created by technology and out-of-school learning to deeply engage and meet the needs of students.” In practice, this means that when instructors weave reflection, feedback, and connection into their teaching, they’re not just delivering content—they’re teaching students how to learn and how to lead their own learning. Findings from the ICAN project reinforced this insight: instructors consistently reported that integrating SEL and supporting self-directed learning provided meaningful structure and stability for students navigating dual enrollment courses.

When these three levers—SEL, dual enrollment, and virtual learning—work in concert, they amplify one another to:

- Expand equitable access to college-level opportunities.
- Support persistence through challenge and transition.
- Build a pipeline of confident, self-directed learners ready for college, career, and beyond.



The Instructor's Role

Given the high stakes of success or failure in dual enrollment—where a single course can shape GPA, transcripts, and a student's academic identity—it's important not to remove every obstacle, but to help students navigate them. The goal is to support learners in identifying challenges, problem-solving in real time, and processing their responses along the way. Instructors are uniquely positioned to guide this growth.

Community college and dual enrollment instructors stand at this intersection—both gateway and guide. Integrating SEL doesn't require new lessons or a rewritten syllabus; it's about using ordinary moments as opportunities for skill-building. Simple routines like quick check-ins, reflective prompts, and goal-setting conversations help students practice persistence, organization, and connection. Success in this space isn't about clearing the path—it's about teaching students how to walk it with confidence and purpose.

Key Takeaways

- Online dual enrollment = opportunity *and* complexity.
- SEL bridges the gap between access and success.
- SEL supports anticipatory socialization and self-directed learning as core readiness skills.
- The six SEL strategies can help operationalize these ideas in daily practice.

Section 2

The Foundation: SEL & Student Success Habits

What Is Social-Emotional Learning?

Every successful learning experience—especially one that asks high school students to navigate a college course online—rests on more than content knowledge. Students need confidence, focus, persistence, and the ability to connect with others. That’s the work of SEL. SEL programming’s benefits are well-evidenced, but what exactly is “SEL?” SEL is the infrastructure of learning—the set of competencies that enable students to engage, persist, and connect. [The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning](#) (CASEL), a leading organization on SEL, offers the following definition:

“SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.”

In practice, SEL appears every time a student uses a growth mindset to push through a challenge, collaborates effectively with peers, or plans ahead to manage multiple deadlines. Research—including ICAN project’s own pilot data—suggests these competencies can impact an increased belonging, persistence, and achievement.

In its [SEL framework](#), CASEL further breaks this down into the “CASEL 5”—broad but interrelated areas of core competence.

- **Self-Awareness** – The ability to recognize how emotions, thoughts, and values influence one’s behavior and decisions. It involves understanding personal strengths and growth areas, connecting feelings and actions, and reflecting on potential biases and assumptions.
- **Self-Management** – The ability to regulate emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different contexts. Often expressed through initiative, discipline, and organization, strong self-management helps students manage stress, stay focused, and achieve personal and academic goals.
- **Social Awareness** – The ability to understand and empathize with the perspectives of others across lines of difference. This skill involves compassion, respect for diversity, and awareness of how external factors—such as context, systems, and culture—influence people’s experiences and behaviors.
- **Relationships** – The ability to build and sustain positive, productive relationships with individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds. This includes effective communication, collaboration, and navigating conflict and difference with respect and empathy.
- **Responsible Decision-Making** – The ability to make thoughtful, ethical, and productive choices in academic and social situations. It includes gathering information, considering consequences, evaluating options, and reflecting on outcomes to guide future actions.



Why This Matters for Dual Enrollment

In online and hybrid dual enrollment settings, SEL provides the structure students need to self-direct, stay connected, and recover from inevitable stumbles. It transforms “figure it out on your own” into “learn how to do this successfully.”

From SEL Competencies to Student Success Habits

CASEL’s competencies describe *what* students need. Our research through the ICAN project translates them into four concrete **Student Success Habits**—the *how* of success in online dual enrollment.

Area of Focus	Objective	Aligned CASEL Competencies	Why It Matters in Dual Enrollment
Relationships	Build and maintain positive connections with peers, professors, and institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship Skills Social Awareness Self-Awareness 	Students operate across two institutions and multiple systems; strong relationships ensure they know where and how to seek help.
Growth Mindset & Academic Identity	Apply a growth mindset to challenges and believe in one’s ability to succeed in college.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-Awareness Self-Management Responsible Decision-Making 	Normalizes struggle as part of learning and helps students see themselves as capable college learners.
Problem-Solving	Identify challenges, analyze causes, generate and test solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible Decision-Making Self-Management 	Builds confidence, resilience, and transferable strategies for academic and personal hurdles.
Self-Management	Regulate emotions, organize tasks, and take initiative for learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-Management Self-Awareness Responsible Decision-Making 	Enables students to balance multiple calendars, deadlines, and responsibilities with greater autonomy.

While these four areas are not fully comprehensive of all social and emotional knowledge and skills, they were specifically chosen to support needs and capitalize on the opportunities provided by an online dual enrollment setting. Together, they help students navigate the hidden curriculum described in Section 1—turning uncertainty into opportunity and effort into growth.

Beyond college access, SEL competencies are foundational for *career readiness*. [National research](#) shows that the same attributes employers cite as critical—communication,

collaboration, adaptability, and self-direction—are strengthened through intentional SEL practice. SEL helps students build the habits of communication, teamwork, adaptability, and agency that prepare them not only for college success, but also for lifelong learning and career advancement. When instructors intentionally model and reinforce these skills, they are developing the very competencies that define 21st-century readiness.

Impact in Action

Across two years of ICAN implementation, instructors experienced positive benefits. Implementation data suggest SEL strategies were used consistently, with an initial learning curve followed by increased confidence in blending them into existing practice. Instructors reported a stronger ability to identify student needs and adjust instruction, with early signals of improved perceptions of a caring and supportive instructor. All participating instructors plan to continue using ICAN strategies, with some noting their broad applicability across courses and contexts.

Beyond our own findings, national studies reinforce that SEL:

- increases student engagement and belonging,
- improves academic performance, and
- reduces attrition in college-transition programs.



Durable Skills for College and Career

The same behaviors that drive college success—communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and adaptability—are the “durable skills” employers value most. By teaching SEL habits now, instructors are preparing students for lifelong learning and 21st-century work.

FullScale’s research adds another dimension: effective virtual classrooms cultivate **self-directed learning**, the ability for students to manage time, monitor progress, and seek support independently. SEL is the soil that lets that independence grow.

SEL doesn’t require a new curriculum. It thrives in the everyday rhythms of your class—how you start discussions, give feedback, or ask students to reflect. Small, consistent moves matter most, and that’s what these habits are intended to help you implement.

Intentional SEL routines help students build both the confidence and competence they need to thrive independently. Over time, these routines become the backbone of classroom culture—one where effort is normalized, reflection is routine, and growth is visible.

Key Takeaways

- SEL is more than a classroom add-on; it’s the foundation of learning, belonging, and persistence in dual enrollment settings.
- The CASEL 5 competencies align directly with the four Student Success Habits—Relationships, Growth Mindset & Academic Identity, Problem-Solving, and Self-Management—that help students thrive in online and college contexts.

- These habits translate beyond school, forming the core of career-ready skills: communication, adaptability, initiative, and collaboration.
- When instructors embed SEL intentionally through everyday routines and reflection, students strengthen both their academic resilience and their readiness for the workforce.

Section 3

The Six SEL Strategies: Practical Classroom Strategies

Every educator knows that even the most powerful frameworks only matter if they can live inside the rhythm of real classrooms. Section 2 outlined the four Student Success Habits that help students thrive in online dual enrollment courses—now we turn to the how.

Through the ICAN project, community college instructors tested and refined six SEL strategies for online and hybrid dual-enrollment courses, including asynchronous settings where concerns are often greatest. These SEL strategies are flexible routines that can be embedded into existing course structures (such as an LMS, surveys, or discussion tools) to build relationships, reflection, and resilience without overhauling curriculum or adding significant instructional time. In most cases, instructors found the strategies manageable to implement asynchronously when intentionally planned and aligned to course rhythms. When additional time was required, instructors reported that the investment led to greater awareness of student needs and stronger connections with learners.

Each SEL strategy was piloted in real online and hybrid classrooms and refined through ongoing instructor and student feedback. Instructors reported that the strategies fit naturally into existing (including asynchronous) course structures and helped address the very challenges surfaced in our research—time management, self-advocacy, communication, and persistence.



Instructor Reflection

“I was worried this would add more work, especially in an asynchronous class. Instead, I was able to fit strategies into tools I was already using, and they helped me see sooner when students were struggling, before it showed up in their grades.”

Across settings, instructors emphasized that success didn’t come from grand gestures. It came from intentional repetition: short routines that built trust, reinforced self-management, and reminded students that connection and reflection are part of learning.

Strategy 1: Team-Building

Primary Focus: Relationships	Suggested Frequency: Monthly
-------------------------------------	-------------------------------------

Team-Building activities help students connect with one another and their instructor from the start of the course. Low-stakes, non-academic interactions in particular—like quick introductions or shared playlists—create a sense of belonging and ease that carries into academic work. These early relationships often become sources of affirmation, support, and collaboration.

- **Purpose:** Build relationships and belonging through intentional, low-stakes peer interaction.
- **Implementation:** [See step-by-step guidance.](#)

- **Instructor & Student Benefits:** Students form early bonds that foster trust, affirmation, and collaboration. Instructors gain insight into their learners, setting the tone for a welcoming, connected, supportive class community.

Strategy 2: Emotions Check-in

Primary Focus: Self-Management, Growth Mindset & Academic Identity	Suggested Frequency: Weekly
---	------------------------------------

A quick check-in gives students space to stop, notice, and name/label how they're feeling before diving into coursework. Instructors embedded short prompts or emoji polls into weekly assignments or class openings. Over time, this simple routine builds students' emotional awareness and regulation—skills that directly influence focus, persistence, and engagement.

- **Purpose:** Strengthen self-awareness and self-management by giving students a routine space to recognize and process their emotions.
- **Implementation:** [See step-by-step guidance.](#)
- **Instructor & Student Benefits:** Students learn to identify emotional patterns and understand how their feelings shape engagement and effort. Instructors gain real-time insight into student readiness, allowing timely support and adjustments.

Strategy 3: Challenge of the Week

Primary Focus: Problem-Solving, Growth Mindset & Academic Identity	Suggested Frequency: Bi-Weekly
---	---------------------------------------

This routine helps students tackle common challenges in college learning—such as managing deadlines, communicating with professors, or staying organized. They identify what's getting in their way, test possible solutions, and reflect on the results. Over time, they build confidence, resilience, and transferable problem-solving skills, while learning that challenges are not a reflection of ability but a normal and valuable part of growth.

- **Purpose:** Build problem-solving and growth mindset skills by helping students break down and address common learning challenges.
- **Implementation:** [See step-by-step guidance.](#)
- **Instructor & Student Benefits:** Students develop independence by learning to analyze barriers, generate solutions, and evaluate outcomes. Instructors can surface class wide trends and address them proactively, creating shared accountability and problem-solving culture.

Strategy 4: Calendar Look-Ahead

Primary Focus: Self-Management, Growth Mindset & Academic Identity	Suggested Frequency: Monthly
---	-------------------------------------

Students map out upcoming academic and personal commitments, spot potential conflicts, and plan their workload and study time intentionally. Instructors used this strategy to model proactive time management and help students anticipate obstacles rather than react to them—a core skill for success in both college and career.

- **Purpose:** Strengthen self-management and planning skills by encouraging students to look ahead, organize priorities, and prepare for busy or demanding periods.
- **Implementation:** [See step-by-step guidance.](#)
- **Instructor & Student Benefits:** Students develop increased time-awareness and proactive habits that reduce stress and build lasting discipline. Instructors can identify potential pinch points in advance and offer targeted support before challenges escalate.

Strategy 5: Self-Assessment

Primary Focus: Growth Mindset & Academic Identity, Self-Management	Suggested Frequency: 2-3 times per term
---	--

Self-Assessments prompt students to reflect on their effort, confidence, and progress, linking actions to outcomes. This structured pause helps them identify what’s working, where they need support, and how their choices influence results—building motivation and persistence over time. These insights give instructors a valuable window into student experiences.

- **Purpose:** Foster reflection, goal-setting, and ownership of learning through structured self-evaluation.
- **Implementation:** [See step-by-step guidance.](#)
- **Instructor & Student Benefits:** Students strengthen metacognition by connecting effort, strategy, and results/outcomes. Instructors gain meaningful insights into student confidence and progress, creating space for personalized feedback and encouragement.

Strategy 6: Individual Check-Ins

Primary Focus: Relationships, Self-Management, Problem-Solving	Suggested Frequency: 1-3 times per term
---	--

A short but targeted one-on-one conversation can foster connection and accountability between students and their instructor. Since many students choose not to attend office hours, required check-ins can normalize help-seeking behaviors. These meetings are powerful opportunities to build trust, address challenges early, and guide students toward greater self-advocacy.

- **Purpose:** Deepen relationships and accountability through individualized conversations about progress, goals, and support needs.
- **Implementation:** [See step-by-step guidance.](#)
- **Instructor & Student Benefits:** Students practice self-advocacy and experience meaningful connections with their instructor. Instructors strengthen trust, clarify expectations, and address both academic and engagement factors influencing performance.



Tip for Implementation

Start small. Choose one or two strategies that align with your course goals, activities, and routines, introduce them consistently, and build from there. Sustainability matters more than scope.

Why These Strategies Work

Each SEL strategy supports multiple objectives simultaneously:

- **Academic Success:** Students practice planning, monitoring progress, and asking for help.
- **Social Connection:** They feel seen and supported by both instructors and peers.
- **SEL Development:** Repetition of these micro-practices turns abstract competencies into lived behaviors.
- **Career Readiness:** Students rehearse durable skills—communication, collaboration, initiative, and adaptability—that transfer directly to the workplace.

Additionally, each strategy supports the development of student success objectives noted above:

		<i>Student Success Objectives</i>			
		<i>Relationships</i>	<i>Growth Mindset</i>	<i>Problem-Solving</i>	<i>Self-Management</i>
SEL Strategies	Team-Building	X			
	Emotions Check-In		X		X
	Challenge of the Week	X	X	X	
	Self-Assessment		X	X	X
	Calendar Look-Ahead			X	X
	Individual Check-Ins	X		X	X

Adapting for Your Context

One of the clearest lessons from instructors who implemented the ICAN model was the power of flexibility. The strategies were never meant to be one-size-fits-all—they're tools you can adapt for your course structure, learning management system, and teaching style. Many instructors in the ICAN project started not by adding new content, but by refining existing routines.

- One instructor who regularly used end-of-unit reflections simply added **self-assessment prompts** that helped students connect their learning habits to their preparation and outcomes.
- Another, who frequently incorporated group projects, layered in **intentional teamwork** elements to strengthen collaboration and communication.
- For others, **emotions check-ins** became an easy addition to the top of weekly assignments, giving students a quick way to pause and reflect before diving into coursework.

These small, intentional adjustments helped instructors integrate SEL without increasing workload and made the habits feel organic to their teaching style. The goal isn't uniformity, but coherence: creating regular, predictable ways for students to engage both personally and academically, regardless of format.

As you consider these strategies, think about how they might come to life in your own context. Which ones connect most closely to your course goals and teaching style? What routines already exist that you can reframe or adjust using this framework? How might you gradually transfer ownership of these habits to your students? Step-by-step guidance for each strategy provides the essentials to help you adapt with confidence: a clear purpose, practical steps for virtual and hybrid use, sample framing language, and optional extensions for reflection. Use them as templates, not scripts—instructors in the ICAN pilot found that the best results came when they made these routines their own.

Key Takeaways

- SEL Strategies can be embedded into existing course structures to build relationships, reflection, and resilience through small, intentionally repeated practices.
- Step-By-Step Guidance by Strategy:
 - [Team Building](#)
 - [Emotions Check-In](#)
 - [Challenge of the Week](#)
 - [Calendar Look-Ahead](#)
 - [Self-Assessment](#)
 - [Individual Check-Ins](#)

Section 4

Bringing It Together: Planning, Blending, & Reflecting

By now, you've seen how SEL strategies can bring social-emotional learning to life in dual enrollment settings. This final section focuses on what happens next: how to put these strategies together, plan for success, and sustain your practice through reflection.

The truth is, SEL integration doesn't rely on perfection—it relies on consistency. Even small, well-chosen actions have ripple effects when they are intentional and repeated. Across the ICAN project, instructors who took the time to plan, adapt, and reflect found that their classes ran more smoothly, students were more responsive, and engagement grew over time.

Across settings, instructors emphasized that success didn't come from grand gestures. It came from intentional repetition: short routines that built trust, reinforced self-management, and reminded students that connection and reflection are part of learning.

Planning for Success

Like any effective instructional practice, these strategies work best when planned intentionally. Rather than simply adding new content, thoughtful planning helps instructors identify *where* each strategy fits best within existing structures and *how* to communicate expectations to students. To support, the **Instructor Planning Template** (see Section 5) is designed to help you align strategies with your course goals, pacing, and modality. Planning in this way helps these strategies feel intentional and connected—not separate activities, but recurring touchpoints for connection and reflection.

When completing your plan, consider:

- **Cadence:** How often will each strategy occur, and at what points in the term?
- **Context:** How does your course structure (synchronous, asynchronous, hybrid) shape implementation?
- **Connection:** How will you communicate the “why” behind these habits to your students?
- **Continuity:** How will you gather feedback and refine your approach across terms?

To make the process even more accessible, this playbook includes editable digital templates and student-facing materials you can adapt to your own learning management system in section 5. Instructors shared that intentional planning during the ICAN project improved their clarity and consistency. Some even incorporated portions of their plan into their syllabus to set expectations early and invite students into the process.

Blending the Habits

Instructors repeatedly shared that their most successful activities didn't isolate the six SEL strategies—they blended them. Over time, the strategies became part of the course's rhythm, helping students feel grounded, connected, and capable.



Instructor Reflection

"Treating each strategy as a separate activity didn't work in my course. Once I started blending them with each other and routines I already had, the strategies felt more natural instead of forced. Students picked up on this, too."

Blending can look different in every class, but the principle is the same: combine habits to create flow and efficiency while strengthening multiple skills at once. For example:

- Pair **Emotions Check-In + Challenge of the Week** as a five-minute opener that helps students name emotions and channel them toward problem-solving.
- Follow **Self-Assessment + Calendar Look-Ahead** at midterm to help students evaluate their progress and adjust their plans.
- Start with **Team-Building** early in the term to establish relationships, then reinforce with **Individual Check-Ins** later to sustain them.
- Use a **Challenge of the Week** as a jumping-off point for class discussion, closing with a brief **Self-Assessment** reflection to connect back to a growth mindset.

Continuous Improvement

During the ICAN project, instructors completed a simple **implementation log** each week. Many described this as one of the most unexpectedly valuable parts of the process. Taking five minutes to capture what worked, what didn't, and how students responded became a built-in opportunity to pause and reflect.

Even if you can't document every session, holding time for reflection—individually or with peers—pays dividends. Reflection helps instructors:

- Notice patterns and small wins that might otherwise go unseen,
- Identify strategies that resonate most with their specific students, and
- Model self-awareness and adaptability for learners.

Consider using a light structure for this process—something as simple as "Plan→Do→Reflect→Refine." Reflection doesn't have to be formal to be powerful; it just has to happen somewhat regularly. Across classrooms, instructors who embraced reflection found themselves growing alongside their students. They described the process as not just professional learning, but personal growth—a reminder that learning how to adapt and iterate is as valuable for adults as it is for young people.

These prompts can help you or your team pause, assess, and plan for ongoing improvement:

- Which strategies felt most natural to you and your students? Which felt forced or hard to sustain?
- How did the SEL focus influence your students' engagement, motivation, or sense of belonging?
- Where did you see growth in yourself as an instructor—particularly in patience, adaptability, or communication?
- What would you keep, change, or expand next term?
- How could you share your learning with colleagues or build a small community of practice around it?

Key Takeaways

- The most effective courses blend multiple SEL strategies, creating seamless routines that reinforce SEL without adding extra content.
- Intentional planning—through the Instructor Planning Template and student tools—turns good intentions into sustainable practice.
- Continuous improvement matters: structured reflection helps instructors adapt strategies and students recognize their growth.
- Instructor reflection logs from the ICAN project revealed that the act of reflecting itself was a lever for success—reinforcing self-awareness and problem-solving for educators and students alike.
- By modeling reflection and adaptation, instructors build a classroom culture of iterative learning—the same mindset that fuels professional and career growth in every field.

Conclusion

The goal of this playbook is to make SEL tangible, doable, and meaningful in online dual enrollment courses. You now have a framework, six tested and refined strategies, and reflection routines to anchor your planning. What happens next is about practice—trying a strategy, gathering feedback, and refining your approach until it fits your context and your students.

In the next section, Resources & Tools, you'll find ready-to-use planning templates and student materials that make implementation easier. Use them as scaffolds, adapting them for your course, your platform, and your teaching style. With intentionality and reflection, the habits you model here can ripple far beyond a single semester.

Section 5

Resources & Tools

Instructor Planning Template

[Link to editable template](#)

Course Context and Instructor Background		
Instructor:	Contextual Considerations: Setting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Fully Virtual <input type="checkbox"/> Hybrid Setting: Virtual and In-person <input type="checkbox"/> Other: 	Instructor College/ Institution:
Course Title:		Anticipated Class Size:
New or Existing Course:	Instruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Fully Asynchronous <input type="checkbox"/> Fully Synchronous <input type="checkbox"/> Hybrid Instruction: Synchronous and asynchronous <input type="checkbox"/> Other: 	

Instructor Reflection Questions
<p>Understanding Your Context</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How do the common challenges of dual enrollment and/or online courses show up in your classes? What patterns or student needs have you noticed? What strengths already exist in your course design or teaching style that could support SEL integration? When in your course (early term, midterm, before exams) do students seem to need the most structure, connection, or encouragement?

Current Practice and Readiness

1. To what extent do you currently incorporate SEL practices or routines? Which strategies feel most natural or effective?
2. What barriers might make SEL integration difficult (e.g., time, resources, perceptions), and how might you address them?
3. Which strategies feel most aligned to your goals and teaching approach? Which might need the most adaptation?

Reflection and Continuous Improvement

1. How will you capture insights during the term (e.g., quick notes, reflection log, team debrief)?
2. What will success look like for both you and your students by the end of the course?
3. How might you build time to reflect, refine, or share your learning with colleagues?

Strategy Planning: Overview

Strategy	Date of Introduction	Frequency	Format/Platform
Team-Building			
Emotions Check-In			
Challenge of the Week			
Self-Assessments			
Calendar Look-Ahead			
Individual Check-Ins			

Strategy Planning: Team-Building

How will you introduce and explain the purpose of these strategies so students understand their value?

How can you align this strategy with existing assignments, group work, or reflection routines?

What specific activities will you start with?

What indicators—such as engagement, feedback, or performance—will help you assess whether this strategy is working?

Strategy Planning: Emotions Check-In

How will you introduce and explain the purpose of these strategies so students understand their value?

How can you align this strategy with existing assignments, group work, or reflection routines?

How will you incorporate these check-ins? (e.g., in assignments, at the start of class, group chats)

What indicators—such as engagement, feedback, or performance—will help you assess whether this strategy is working?

Strategy Planning: Challenge of the Week

How will you introduce and explain the purpose of these strategies so students understand their value?

How can you align this strategy with existing assignments, group work, or reflection routines?

What are 5-10 authentic challenges that students in your course typically experience? (e.g., plagiarism, group work, time management, specific units, checking email)

What indicators—such as engagement, feedback, or performance—will help you assess whether this strategy is working?

Strategy Planning: Self-Assessment

How will you introduce and explain the purpose of these strategies so students understand their value?

How can you align this strategy with existing assignments, group work, or reflection routines?

What specific questions do you want to prompt students with, and what format is most compatible with your course? (e.g., google doc, a “quiz” within our LMS)

What indicators—such as engagement, feedback, or performance—will help you assess whether this strategy is working?

Strategy Planning: Calendar Look-Ahead

How will you introduce and explain the purpose of these strategies so students understand their value?

How can you align this strategy with existing assignments, group work, or reflection routines?

What format will you use that both feels consistent with your existing platforms but also prompts genuine reflection, rather than compliance?

What indicators—such as engagement, feedback, or performance—will help you assess whether this strategy is working?

Strategy Planning: Individual Check-Ins

How will you introduce and explain the purpose of these strategies so students understand their value?

How can you align this strategy with existing assignments, group work, or reflection routines?

What is a realistic format for these check-ins, given your particular context and course load?

What indicators—such as engagement, feedback, or performance—will help you assess whether this strategy is working?

Communicating to Students: Course Syllabus

Incorporating SEL objectives and strategies into the syllabus is an opportunity to elevate their importance and engage students as active participants in their own SEL development. Review your current syllabus and consider where you can incorporate the following:

- “The Role of SEL” language in your syllabus
- Student Success Habits
- SEL strategies and their cadence
- Student-facing tools, templates, resources

Student Tools

[Link to editable templates](#)

Problem-Solving Checklist

Use these four steps (and related reflection questions) to help you think through the challenge and possible solutions.

Assess the Problem:

- What is the specific problem you are trying to solve?
- Why is this a problem?
- What do you know about the possible causes/challenges creating this problem?
- Who do you know that might have experience with or advice around this problem?
- What is your desired outcome? What would it look like to solve this problem?

Identify a Response:

- What are all the possible responses (i.e., choices, actions) you could pursue?
- What is the most likely outcome of each of these responses?
- Which response is most likely to get you to your desired outcome? Why?

Execute Your Response:

- What response will you try first?
- What are the specific steps you will take to respond, and in what order?
- What is the timeline for taking these steps?

Reflect on the Outcome:

- What happened? Was this the result you wanted?
- If your problem isn't solved, what will you try next?
- If you could go back and make a different choice, would you? Why or why not?

Self-Assessment

Name:	Date:	Course:
<i>Who is in my support system?</i>		
<i>When looking at the syllabus, how comfortable do I feel with the upcoming course content and material?</i>		
<i>How confident am I in my ability to learn in a virtual setting? How have I performed in the past? What habits/actions might need to change?</i>		
<i>What is the grade I'm hoping to earn in this course? Is this realistic for me? How do I know?</i>		
<i>What proactive steps will I take to ensure I meet my goal?</i>		
<i>Who can support me in reaching my goal? In what specific ways can they help?</i>		
<i>Where and when will I receive feedback on my progress?</i>		
<i>What will I do if I'm not on track to meet my goal?</i>		

Calendar Look-Ahead

To complete this form, please have your course syllabus, a calendar, and any other relevant schedules (e.g., athletics/extracurriculars, work, other course exam calendars) for reference.

What projects, exams, or assignments are coming this month? How much out-of-class time is expected in order to successfully complete them?

Project/Assignment	Out-of-Class Time Needed

What are the key dates this month – both academic and personal? Consider exams, events, vacations, work, celebrations, and sporting events.

Key Dates:

When I look ahead at upcoming dates and classwork, what days/weeks feel busiest? Which feels slower?

Busiest Days/Weeks This Month:

Slowest Days/Weeks This Month:

Do I have any concerns about having enough time to meet my personal and academic obligations? If so, who can I reach out to for support? (Examples: instructor, advisor, employer, coach, peer, family member)

Concern	Who can help?

Resources & Further Learning

- [The CASEL Framework](#)
- FullScale's [Driving Quality in Virtual & Remote Learning](#)
- Jobs For the Future Publications on ICAN:
 - [Integrating Social-Emotional Learning for Online Dual Enrollment Success](#)
 - [Policies and Practices that Support Dual Enrollment Innovation](#)
 - [Innovative Dual Enrollment Model Shows Promise in Year One](#)
- Strategy Specific Resources:
 - Team-Building:
 - [Virtual Team-Builders](#) (several ideas could be adapted to an asynchronous setting)
 - [Question of the Day](#)
 - [SEL Reflection Prompts](#)
 - Emotions Check-In:
 - [‘How Are You Feeling Today?’ More Teachers Use Tech to Check Emotional Pulse of Students](#)
 - [Emotional Regulation Strategies](#)
 - Challenge of the Week:
 - [Teaching Problem-Solving](#) (math-focused but concepts can apply generally)
 - [Problem-Solving in Seven Steps](#)
 - Self-Assessment:
 - [Helping Students Thrive by Using Self-Assessment](#)
 - [Importance of Student Self-Assessment](#)
 - Calendar Look-Ahead:
 - [Time Management Tips for College Students](#)
 - [Time Management Tips for College-Bound High School Students](#)
 - [How to Get Students to Use Their Planners](#)
 - Individual Check-Ins:
 - [The Power of Student Check-Ins](#) (ideas for lower-lift, frequent touchpoints with students)



Building Bridges. Transforming Systems. Realizing Potential.

fullscalelearning.org