

Response to Student Feedback HAERT Program (November 2020)

Read through all responses or click on a particular topic:

- [Why do we have to learn about Social and Emotional Learning?](#)
- [Why can't we just have a short demographic Google Form instead of the HAERT Program as the Wednesday Attendance Activity?](#)
- [With all of our academic workload and homework, we are too busy for the HAERT Program.](#)
- [The content of HAERT seems to undermine the seriousness of mental health disorders.](#)
- [SEL curriculum should not be graded.](#)
- [Online videos are not the most effective way to teach SEL.](#)
- [The HAERT Program is helpful! Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to learn these skills.](#)
- [I am having trouble accessing the HAERT Program.](#)
- [I would like to provide more feedback.](#)

“Why do we have to learn about Social and Emotional Learning?”

As we outlined in our [Student Introduction to Social and Emotional Learning](#) video, there are many social, emotional, and academic benefits to implementing an integrated and systemic SEL-based curriculum. A 2011 meta-analysis of 213 studies found that SEL programming leads to improvements in SEL skills; improves student attitudes about themselves and others; contributes to a positive classroom environment; and unlocks academic potential including an 11 percentile point gain on standardized achievement tests.

Statistically significant associations also exist between SEL skills in kindergarten and graduating high school, completing college, and obtaining stable employment. Finally, the top 10 skills identified by the World Economic Forum indicate that more and more employers are seeking SEL-based skills from graduates Complex Problem Solving; Critical thinking; Creativity; People management; Coordinating with others; Emotional intelligence; Judgment and decision-making; Service orientation; Negotiation; Cognitive flexibility.

In addition to the documented benefits of SEL, Wellness continues to be a priority in all of our district and site-based professional development plans.

- Wellness is one of [MVLA District's 6-Year Goals](#).
- Wellness appears in our campus-specific Administrative and Department goal.
- Wellness support is also outlined in each of our campus' WASC Plans, Site Safety Plans, Single Plans for Student Achievement, and the district Local Control Accountability Plan's actions and services.
- Multiple stakeholders groups including students, staff, and families have repeatedly requested foundational SEL education.
- SEL curriculum has been implemented as pilot programs over the years, and the feedback has been positive.

[GO BACK TO TOP OF PAGE](#)

“Why can’t we just have a short demographic Google Form instead of the HAERT Program as the Wednesday Attendance Activity?”

One of the California State requirements for Distance Learning is to have a “meaningful” interaction with students each day of the week including during our asynchronous learning days. At the start of the year, we asked teachers to take attendance each period through an academic task. This led to students and teachers feeling inundated with disparate activities, and the feedback from both students and teachers was that the process was overwhelming.

We incorporated feedback from staff and students as we redesigned the Wednesday Attendance Activities so that students would only have one Attendance activity to complete. The State requirement of a “meaningful” interaction would preclude us from simply using a Google Form with demographic information.

[GO BACK TO TOP OF PAGE](#)

“With all of our academic workload and homework, we are too busy for the HAERT Program.”

We are very aware of the heavy workload that some MVLA students carry. The additional requirement of a weekly 10-20 minute SEL lesson on top of academic workloads can feel overwhelming. The MVLA Board Policy (BP6154) and the accompanying Administrative Regulations (AR6154) have established expectations for homework-load including 2-3 hours of homework a week for College Preparatory courses and 4-5 hours of homework per week for AP/Honors courses.

During Distance Learning, Administration has been working with our teaching staff to help balance workloads. We have shared and discussed the results of our Distance Learning surveys with our site leadership teams, and we continue to explore best practices to support student learning. Academic workload is a very complicated and individualized conversation, and we encourage students to talk with their teachers, families, school counselors, and administrators when they are feeling overwhelmed.

Overall, we believe the skills and strategies that students will learn through the HAERT Program have the potential to enhance time management skills, build resiliency, and realize one’s academic potential. Based on a schedule of six classes, 20 minutes of weekly SEL activities through the HEART Program amounts to less than 1-3% of a student’s “homework load” each week.

[GO BACK TO TOP OF PAGE](#)

“The content of HAERT seems to undermine the seriousness of mental health disorders.”

The HAERT Program is NOT intended to be a replacement or an alternative to treatment for a mental health disorder. If you have been diagnosed with a mental health disorder, please consult with your primary care doctor or a mental health expert to determine the best treatment plan and support.

For students who are struggling and in need of extra support, please reach out to a trusted MVLA adult or submit a non-emergency request to meet with our mental health team (bit.ly/mvlasupport in English; bit.ly/mvlaayuda in Spanish). For the 2020-21 school, MVLA has also expanded our partnerships with CHAC, Uplift Family Services, and Stanford Child Psychiatry to better support our students during Distance Learning.

The goal of the HAERT Program is to teach preventative skills and strategies and to strengthen the foundational SEL skills of Self-Awareness and Self-Management. The HAERT Program is particularly structured around strengthening the [5 Core SEL Competencies and Associated Skill Sets](#) that we identified at the beginning of the year.

The content of the HAERT Program is created and curated by a licensed occupational therapist from El Camino Hospital's ASPIRE Program (an intensive outpatient mental health program). The strategies and skills taught through the HAERT Program are based upon Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) techniques which are often utilized in clinical settings.

In general, SEL skills are preventative life skills. [The Self-Care Presentation](#) shared at the beginning of the year outlines some of these preventive skills and is based upon Dr. Nadine Burke Harris's research. While these strategies may seem simple on the surface, they require focused learning and intentional practice. These strategies are evidence-based, and they have been demonstrated to be effective in buffering the negative effects of adversity. The HAERT program delves deeper into many of these strategies.

[GO BACK TO TOP OF PAGE](#)

"SEL curriculum should not be graded."

Students are NOT receiving a grade for the HAERT Program. The "quizzes" and "assessments" included in the program are opportunities to reinforce and contemplate the content. Accuracy on the quizzes and assessments are not necessary to progress through the curriculum. Brain research suggests that the act of reflecting upon content reinforces learning and helps to move content into long-term memory.

[GO BACK TO TOP OF PAGE](#)

"Online videos are not the most effective way to teach SEL."

As we discussed in the [Student Introduction to Social and Emotional Learning](#) video, the best approach to SEL is a schoolwide, systemic approach to infusing social and emotional learning into every part of our students' educational experience. This would include SEL in classrooms, in

our school policies and practices, and during out-of-school time in partnership with families and the community.

CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) has identified [10 indicators](#) that can be used as a marker for a fully integrated SEL system. These indicators are not a “checklist” or a “to-do” list, but rather a landscape view and a philosophy to education. We know that a one-off presentation to students or staff, or a series of videos, will not adequately integrate SEL into our culture; however, these are the crucial steps to building a systemic approach to SEL. What is inspiring to me, is that MVLA has been consciously working to implement and strengthen these approaches, and we are excited that we now have a framework for SEL integration.

As we outlined in the Student Introduction to SEL, our ultimate goal would be to embed SEL curriculum within the content of each course. Throughout the years, many course teams have started to incorporate SEL into course content, skill objectives, and instructional strategies. We have hosted two teacher workshops for the HAERT Program, and we have been working with our special education and English language development departments to better support students.

During Distance Learning, our teachers have been working diligently to restructure curriculum, objectives, assessments, and instruction within their content areas to best support our students. While it would be ideal to incorporate the HAERT Program into specific courses, the current Distance Learning format better supports this asynchronous completion model.

[GO BACK TO TOP OF PAGE](#)

“The HAERT Program is Helpful! Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to learn these skills.”

As mentioned previously, the goal of the HAERT Program is to increase awareness, to cultivate intentional focus, and to provide the opportunity to practice self-awareness and self-regulation skills. Students who are actively engaged in the HAERT Program with this mindset and intentionality have reported benefits including reduced anxiety, better sleeping habits, and improved academics.

[GO BACK TO TOP OF PAGE](#)

“I am having trouble accessing the HAERT Program.”

Unfortunately, we have experienced some technical issues during the launch of the HAERT Program, and we know that navigating technology can often be a challenge. As with much of our transition to Distance Learning, we appreciate everyone’s patience with technology.

To support students, we have hosted HAERT Support Student Drop-in Sessions each week; over the month, the number of students who have needed technological support has dramatically decreased. In addition to the [slide deck](#) which guides students through a step-by-step process for logging in, we have also created a [HAERT How to Log In Screencast](#) for visual support if needed. If students have forgotten their password, we have created a document with steps for

[resetting your password](#), or students can email our HAERT contact at course_support@haertprogram.com for help with remotely changing their password.

If you are still experiencing technical difficulties with the HAERT Program, please complete this [HAERT Technical Support Google Form](#) so that we can help support you.

[GO BACK TO TOP OF PAGE](#)

“I would like to provide more feedback.”

Some students have expressed very strong opinions about the HAERT Program, and we see this as a perfect opportunity to implement one of our core SEL practices: Empowering Student Voice. If you are interested in continuing this conversation about the HAERT Program and the integration of SEL practices, please complete this [Google Form](#), and we will contact you soon.

[GO BACK TO TOP OF PAGE](#)

Take care,
William Blair