

# EXPLORING SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING THROUGH NETFLIX MOVIE ENOLA HOLMES: LESSONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR EFL EDUCATION

Simron Krisnuarjati Hindom ([simronkrisnu50@gmail.com](mailto:simronkrisnu50@gmail.com))<sup>1</sup>

Natalina Antonia dos Santos ([natasantosfdcc@gmail.com](mailto:natasantosfdcc@gmail.com))<sup>2</sup>

Edeltrudis Patrisia Soge ([patriciasoge1819@gmail.com](mailto:patriciasoge1819@gmail.com))<sup>3</sup>

Ouda Teda Ena ([ouda@usd.ac.id](mailto:ouda@usd.ac.id))<sup>4</sup>

Concilianus Laos Mbato ([cons@usd.ac.id](mailto:cons@usd.ac.id))<sup>5</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

*This study explores the integration of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) with the Netflix movie Enola Holmes (2020), focusing on its relevance and implications for EFL educational contexts. The analysis of this study is based on SEL's five core competencies as defined by CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning), including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. The study applied a qualitative descriptive design, with thematic content analysis, to examine how the SEL competencies are seen in the film's main character, Enola Holmes, throughout the narrative. Using the film and its script as primary data sources, key scenes and dialogues were coded and analyzed to identify SEL indicators. The findings reveal that Enola Holmes, as the main character, constantly expresses the five core components of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) through her collaborative skills, moral reasoning, and independent decision-making. Therefore, the study suggests that integrating popular media like Enola Holmes into educational settings can enhance the delivery of SEL core competencies, specifically with regard to the implications in educational settings by offering a contextually meaningful, relatable, and engaging medium for students. The study contributes to the limited body of research that connects SEL and film analysis, emphasizing the value of visual storytelling in the educational environment. It highlights how popular media can be harnessed to cultivate emotional intelligence and character development in classroom settings.*

**Keywords:** social emotional learning, movie analysis, Enola Holmes, EFL education

## INTRODUCTION

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students often face academic pressures and growing emotional and social challenges in today's fast-changing educational landscape. According to English et al. (2022), since the pandemic era, students have faced emotional challenges such as stress and anxiety about their physical health, and have been looking for social support from various sources. This urgent situation often leads students to

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<sup>1</sup> Graduate Student, Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta

<sup>2</sup> Graduate Student, Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta

<sup>3</sup> Graduate Student, Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta

<sup>4</sup> Lecturer, Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta

<sup>5</sup> Lecturer, Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta

misbehaviour because different sources may teach conflicting ideas, even though they address a similar topic. Furthermore, research by Elias (2024) highlights that screen time and social media exposure can impair students' emotional, cognitive, and social skills and increase bad habits, which lead to mental health issues. It can be seen that these factors can influence the cultural values by which human beings socialize with others.

The realities above demonstrate the importance of integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) into the teaching and learning process. Kim et al. (2024) assert that social-emotional learning (SEL) is essential for achieving long-term academic and personal success. However, several traditional SEL instructions are often conveyed through textbooks or school programs, creating a gap in their understanding of their social and emotional levels. It sometimes made the students feel disconnected from where they should live. Regarding this situation, students need tools that indirectly teach them how to manage emotions and cognitive skills, helping them take a significant step in building relationships with others (Warden, 2004).

As part of modern tools to teach English, Netflix films can be suitable for teaching students social-emotional learning. According to Boyatzis (1994), film can be a suitable tool to teach social development and enhance students' understanding of emotions. It is also supported by Champoux (1999), who states that films or movies can teach and improve the learning process by providing a unique message that other media cannot offer. It shows how film raises a topic by creating engaging audiovisuals that can capture students' attention. These realities underscore the urgent need to integrate Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) into educational experiences in ways that are both meaningful and relatable to students.

Some previous studies have delved into the same topic of Social Emotional Learning or SEL. The first study was conducted by Váradi (2022). The researcher discussed socio-emotional learning (SEL) by compiling a hundred previous studies from international journals related to social-emotional learning and music education, which encompass various types of music. Then, the second study conducted by Arieny et al. (2023) focuses on engaging students' activity during learning by implementing social-emotional learning. Moreover, the third study by Astuti et al. (2024) investigated the social-emotional learning of junior high school students in Java to examine differences in SEL among students based on gender and grade. The fourth study, analyzed by Widodo et al. (2024), focuses on the development of social-emotional learning by the Economic teachers of Central Java MGMP. This study aims to optimize SEL, which can support the curriculum throughout the school learning process. In addition, the fifth study by Guanotasig et al. (2024) examined social and emotional learning for improved teaching practices.

While previous studies above share similarities by exploring social-emotional learning, it is crucial to highlight their significant differences. The first study employed a systematic review of 100 studies from the international literature related to music education to examine its connection with social-emotional learning. The second study employed classroom action research (CAR) for ecosystem subjects to enhance students' learning activities through the implementation of social-emotional learning. By employing quantitative research, the results of the third study indicate that neither gender nor grade level affects students' social-emotional learning. Moreover, the fourth study focuses on implementing the Merdeka curriculum to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills in designing effective lesson plans by incorporating social-emotional learning to support education. In addition, the fifth study combines qualitative and quantitative approaches to emphasize the urgency of social-emotional learning (SEL), aiming to integrate it into language learning as part of an interdisciplinary axis through its application in daily life.

This research stands out from previous studies because it explores social-emotional learning (SEL) through the Netflix movie *Enola Holmes* (2020) to draw lessons and educational implications. While earlier research has extensively explored SEL through various approaches and themes such as music education, classroom action research, teacher professional development, student profiling, and interdisciplinary research, there remains a lack of studies examining how fictional narratives in movies can model SEL competencies for educational purposes. Consequently, this research will address two research questions:

1. How does the character of Enola Holmes demonstrate key components of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) throughout the movie?
2. What are the implications of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) from Enola Holmes (2020) that can be implemented in educational settings?

By analysing the Netflix movie Enola Holmes (2020) through the lens of five components of social-emotional learning, this research offers a novel perspective on how SEL components are embedded in popular media. This research significantly contributes to the EFL education setting by highlighting the role of a Netflix movie as a well-known medium, making SEL instruction more engaging and contextually rich for students, where visual media greatly influence youth behavior and values.

The research by Weissberg et al. (2015) states that in the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), there are five social and emotional competencies, such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2020; Li et al., 2023). These competencies for Social Emotional Learning (SEL) are structured to support individuals' emotional well-being, academic success, and positive interactions with others. The previous study by Yeh et al. (2022) shows that SEL is focused on building stronger emotional and cultural connections in and out of the classroom. This indicates that through SEL, individuals can improve themselves.

According to Ori Learning (2025), self-awareness is a part of SEL that encourages students to acknowledge their emotions, behaviour, confidence, and decision-making based on self-knowledge. Self-awareness is essential for students because it helps them understand and appreciate their mental experiences. The previous study from Thaintheerasombat (2022) shows that students who studied with social and emotional models developed a higher level of self-awareness than students who studied with standard models. This indicates that self-awareness, a part of SEL, is not just a fad but essential for students' growth.

Self-management is the ability to manage oneself. According to CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning), self-management is the ability to manage and regulate an individual's thoughts, behaviour, and emotions to achieve personal and academic goals. A previous study from Mahfouz et al. (2019) shows that adequate self-management constructs emotional safety for educators, students, and staff teams. This prior study proved that self-management is crucial in SEL.

Social awareness is a component of SEL that enables individuals to empathize with and understand others. Bandura (1977) explained in his Social Learning Theory that exposure to different social behaviours could improve students' understanding of others. According to the previous theory, social awareness is not an automatic skill that students receive, but rather one that is learned through interaction with others. Thus, exposure to others taught students to recognize their emotional conditions and understand different perspectives. Kahn (2017) stated that students with high social awareness can contribute and collaborate effectively in group work. This shows that social awareness in SEL develops students' learning skills and emphasizes effective cooperative learning.

Relationship skills are part of SEL that improve social interaction. According to Goleman (1995), relationship management skills are a core component of emotional intelligence (EI), which utilizes communication, leadership, and conflict management. The previous theory explained that EI in a relationship involves more than just managing one's emotions internally; it also involves managing emotions interpersonally. Durlak et al. (2011) demonstrated that relationship skills in SEL can improve classroom behaviour and academic performance and reduce emotional distress. It shows that SEL relationships focus on getting along with others and reducing behavioural distractions, which leads to harmonious classrooms and stronger academic outcomes.

Responsible decision-making is one of the SEL skills that focuses on making caring and constructive choices. According to Kohlberg (1984), individuals who progressively develop sophisticated levels of moral reasoning tend to be more considerate when making decisions, taking into account fairness and empathy. It shows that to make a decision, an individual needs to consider many aspects, such as fairness and compassion. A previous

study by Livingstone et al. (2014) demonstrates that students lacking guidance in responsible decision-making require support from SEL, digital ethics, and media literacy to improve. This previous study shows that responsible decision-making in SEL empowers students to behave responsibly and consider the impact of their decisions on others.

Movie analysis is an activity where individuals write or speak their opinions about certain movies. According to Carroll (2003), movie reviews usually consist of evaluations that provide analysis, reasons for judgment, and contextual interpretation. It demonstrates that a movie review is more than just a casual opinion; it is also an informed and valuable critique for viewers and academics. A previous study by Brackett et al. (2019) found that students who participated in SEL lessons that incorporated film showed increased emotional and empathetic responses toward others. This suggests that in SEL, the film is not merely a visual entertainment but also a relatable emotional experience that can help students grow socially and emotionally. Moreover, Daunic et al. (2013) and Misra and Castillo (2022), who used a film-based approach in the context of social-emotional learning in the classroom to encompass all narrative and visual elements within the film that explicitly or implicitly illustrate these SEL competencies, particularly through the character of Enola Holmes and her interactions with other key characters.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study applied a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the application of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) theory and its components in the Netflix movie *Enola Holmes* (2020). Creswell (2013) defined qualitative research as understanding complex social phenomena or individual behaviours by conducting in-depth explorations of the context, meaning, and experiences associated with the SEL theory. Hennick et al. (2011) stated that qualitative research is most suitable for this type of qualitative research methodology, considering it in line with the researchers' decision, for it allows the researchers to understand better why and how the behaviour and discourse in the *Enola Holmes* story can be explored regarding its capacity to offer rich interpretive insights into the symbolic meanings and representations of social and emotional values embedded within the film associated with the SEL theory. Similarly, the researchers chose this approach because it is suitable for exploring social-emotional phenomena naturally and contextually within popular culture. In this case, the film is analyzed as a cultural text, examining it as a narrative and visual product that can represent character education values, as Sipe and Ghiso (2004) emphasized in their study of multimodal literacy.

### **Research Instrument**

The primary instruments in this study are the Netflix movie *Enola Holmes* (2020) and the script. The researchers aim to consider the movie as the visual and narrative context that provides the necessary context for content analysis. At the same time, the script serves as a complementary tool for analyzing the dialogues and interactions between Enola and other characters. This arrangement thoroughly examines verbal and non-verbal cues related to SEL competencies. According to Bordwell, D., & Thompson, K. (2013), character development and emotional expression in movies can be analyzed through facial expressions, gestures, and dialogue to interpret social-emotional competencies. Therefore, the researchers used those instruments for this research.

### **Data Collection**

Researchers collected data by watching the Netflix movie *Enola Holmes* (2020) for about 2 hours, 4 minutes, and 26 seconds, then taking notes on key quotes and moments that exemplified the five core SEL competencies. The researcher also discovered the script from *Enola Holmes* (2020) - Transcripts - Forever Dreaming. After watching the movie and analyzing the script, the researcher classified which scenes were included as components of SEL. Grounded on Miles and Huberman (1994), who analyzed *Enola Holmes's* subtitle to

highlight the scenes and quotes that represent moral values, this process involved discussion and observation of the script of the film, focusing on parts of the movie that revealed social interaction, as well as observing the significant scenes, dialogues, and character interactions that serve as indicators of the SEL competencies portrayed by the main character, Enola.

Furthermore, observations were repeated to ensure accurate identification, and the results were re-examined through discussions with fellow researchers to maintain the objectivity of interpretation. This approach aligns with practices in film-based qualitative studies, where visual and verbal data are treated as the primary sources for analyzing educational messages or character values (Hasson & Arnetz, 2005). The identified key codes, selected scenes, and dialogues were used to explore further how Enola's character demonstrates and navigates emotional and social learning throughout the film.

### **Data Analysis**

In analysing the data, the researcher employed thematic content analysis techniques developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This process began with familiarization with the data (transcripts and scenes), followed by open coding for each indication of SEL competencies. Then, the data was categorized into main themes corresponding to the five CASEL competencies. Next, interpretations were made of emerging patterns, such as the dominance of specific competencies, the transformation of the main character (Enola), and their relevance in an educational context. The analysis results were presented in a matrix listing competencies, indicators, dialogue excerpts, and narrative contexts. It allows readers to explicitly see the relationship between film content and social-emotional learning elements.

### **Research Validity**

Several strategies were employed within a qualitative framework to ensure the validity and reliability of the research. Credibility was maintained through triangulation of data sources, dialogue, visual expressions, and film narrative, and through inter-researcher validation (peer debriefing). Dependability was achieved by thoroughly documenting audit trails through coding documentation, analysis notes, and discussion outcomes. To guarantee confirmability, researchers regularly recorded reflective memos to evaluate potential subjective biases during interpretation. Transferability was maintained by presenting the context of scenes in detail, including quotes and detailed visual descriptions, so that readers could assess the applicability of findings in other educational contexts. This strategy aligns with the trustworthiness guidelines from Nowell et al. (2017), which recommend systematic reporting in content-based qualitative research.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

After watching the movie, taking notes, and reading the script, the researcher found that the social-emotional learning in the Netflix movie *Enola Holmes (2020)*. This research discovered that Millie Bobby Brown, as the character of Enola Holmes, presented several movie scenes, including the actions and dialogues, which encompass five components of social-emotional learning (SEL) in the framework of CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning), which give implications for education settings. Through narrative and thematic analysis of the script arranged by the researchers and with the help of a website and snippet scenes of *Enola Holmes (2020)*, the researchers present the findings from the movie, where the researcher presents the findings in a table, making it easier for the reader to know more about the social and emotional learning.

Table 4.1 Components of SEL from *Enola Holmes* (2020)

No.	Component of SEL	Scene	Dialogue	Time stamp
1	Self-awareness	Enola understands the potential within her	"I am a detective, I am a decipherer, and I am a finder of lost souls."	1:45:00
		Enola is contemplating her emotions	"I did not ask for Viscount Tewkesbury, Marquess of Basilwether in my life."	1:40:00
		Enola acknowledges her past and the impact it causes	"I never really knew my father."	0:30:00
		Enola recognizes her own fear	"Sometimes, Lord Tewkesbury, you have to dangle your legs in the water to attract the bloody sharks!"	1:00:00
		Enola figured out her needs for independence	"I was taught to watch and listen. I was taught to fight."	1:10:00
2	Self-management	Enola tries to manage her reaction during stressful moments	"No, your face is totally unmemorable!"	0:49:47
		Enola organizes her goals	"I just need to find her."	0:10:00
		Enola manages to overcome the conflict calmly	"Please don't do this to me. Let me remain happy."	0:25:00
		Enola is in charge of her own actions	"I'm not entirely an idiot, you know."	0:27:00
		Enola is determined to keep going	"I'm not finished yet!"	1:30:00
3	Social Awareness	Enola identifies Tewkesbury's struggles	"I'm not ready to die on a train."	0:28:00
		Enola recognizes the needs of others	"I have to get back to work now, Mr. Holmes."	1:35:00

		Enola realizes Tewkesbury's fears	"My life seemed to flash before me."	0:28:00
		Enola recognizes her Mother's Motivation	"I left for you...because I couldn't bear it...to have this world be your future."	2:00:00
		Enola is adjusting to the situations around her	"You have to make some noise if you want to be heard."	0:10:00
4	Relationship Skills	Enola is having effective communication with Tewkesbury	"I've come here because I've grown to like you more in your absence, and because, as it turns out, your life is still in danger."	1:45:00
		Enola helps Tewkesbury in difficult situations	"You need to disguise yourself a little."	0:35:00
		Enola is settling her problem peacefully with Sherlock	"You are being emotional. It is understandable but unnecessary."	0:45:00
		Enola believes Tewkesbury with her heart	"We'll get to London and go our separate ways."	0:40:00
		Enola creates a bond through empathy	"You really do remind me of my uncle."	0:50:00
5	Responsible decision making	Enola decides to pursue her own path	"I am a detective, I am a decipherer, and I am a finder of lost souls."	2:10:00
		Enola thinks over the result of her actions	"If he catches you, your life will be in danger."	1:43:00
		Enola makes a difficult but crucial choice	"The game is afoot."	0:40:00
		Enola thinks about the impact of her choice on others	"He's changed his ways since you claim to have known him"	1:10:00

		Enola stands for what is right	“I never molded wax roses, hemmed handkerchiefs, or strung seashells.” “I was taught to watch and listen.” “I was taught to fight.” “This is what my mother made me for.”	1:55:00
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As shown in the table above, there is evidence that the Netflix movie *Enola Holmes* (2020) has SEL aspects to learn from. Five components of SEL are present in the film: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. It can be seen in the first aspect of SEL, self-awareness. Five pieces of evidence show how Enola, the main character, displays self-awareness in the movie. One example is when Enola says, “I am a detective, I am a decipherer, and I am a finder of lost souls.” That sentence shows that she understands her purpose and potential as a detective. In the movie, she takes responsibility for her choices and realizes that her potential and values align with a sense of purpose.

The second component of SEL that is shown in the movie is self-management. It has been previously mentioned that self-management is managing the individual self. Enola said in the film, “No, your face is unmemorable.” Even though the previous dialogue is meant to be a comic relief during a stressful scene, Enola wisely utilizes the self-management component by controlling her reaction. In that scene, Enola takes a quick moment to think before reacting, demonstrating emotional and physical regulation during a situation filled with pressure.

Social awareness is an SEL component that focuses on empathy and understanding others. Enola’s mother said in the movie, “I left for you...because I couldn’t bear it...to have this world be your future.” At that moment, Enola understood her mother’s reason for abandoning her. Enola acknowledged her mother’s actions and sacrifice. She empathized with her mother’s choice and tried to understand the deeper reason behind it, even though she initially felt sad and heartbroken.

The fourth component of SEL shown in the movie is relationship skills. Relationship skills are a set of skills that focus on improving social interaction. Enola said in the film, “I’ve come here because I’ve grown to like you more in your absence, and because, as it turns out, your life is still in danger.” That dialogue shows that Enola effectively communicates with Tewkesbury about his absence in Enola’s quest. In that dialogue, Enola is honest and open about her feelings toward Tewkesbury, and they form a strong bond, strengthening their relationship through sincere communication.

The last component of SEL seen in the movie is responsible decision-making. In the film, Enola says, “I never molded wax roses, hemmed handkerchiefs, or strung seashells. I was taught to watch and listen. I was taught to fight. It is what my mother made me for.” From that statement, Enola shows that she stands for what is right. In that statement, Enola also indicates that she made an independent choice, rejecting traditional societal pressure and demonstrating responsibility for her decision-making.

## Discussion

The findings are explained earlier. It highlights how exploring the Netflix movie *Enola Holmes* (2020) through the lens of social-emotional learning (SEL) offers insights into developing an individual’s emotional intelligence and how these five components can be integrated into educational settings. The integration of SEL through movies can support students by teaching moral values. Those five components of SEL are crucial since they impact students’ academic and nonacademic performance and enhance well-rounded development, both individually and socially (Weissberg et al., 2015; Li et al., 2023).

### *Self-awareness and educational development*

Self-awareness is crucial for EFL students because it helps them understand their strengths, weaknesses, and emotional responses. When Enola acknowledges her identity and abilities through dialogue and actions, it demonstrates that students can develop a powerful sense of who they are. The first component of SEL can help EFL students understand their emotions and behavior. It aims to help them navigate their challenges and collaborate in teamwork. The previous study from Thaintheerasombat (2022) shows that students who studied with social and emotional models developed a higher level of self-awareness than students who studied with standard models. Through Enola Holmes' scene, where she expresses her feelings with self-awareness, teachers can integrate this by providing students with opportunities for journaling, group discussions, and sharing moments, helping them better understand their abilities and areas for growth in educational development. These findings align with Ori (2025), which supports the research statement that self-awareness is a part of SEL that encourages students to acknowledge their emotions, behaviour, confidence, and decision-making based on self-knowledge.

### *Self-management and academic achievement*

Another skill that EFL students must gain is academic achievement. To reach the proper outcomes, they must have good self-management. In all scenes of the movie, Enola faces several challenges, and she must carefully regulate her emotions and actions to achieve her goals, even in stressful situations. Here, it shows the importance of self-management, which includes setting goals, regulating motion, and managing time effectively to achieve them. Enola Holmes's ability to embrace challenging situations can be implemented in education, where EFL students frequently face exams, deadlines, and pressures when balancing multiple responsibilities. Teachers can incorporate self-management from Enola Holmes (2020) by teaching students time management, stress management, and goal-setting strategies.

### *Social awareness and empathy in an educational setting*

Since Enola Holmes (2020) captures the real situation of how humans frequently react to various conditions, it can be seen that she has a social awareness to help or take care of someone. Bandura (1977) explained in his Social Learning Theory that exposure to different social behaviors can improve students' understanding of others. The actions where Enola empathizes with Tewkesbury's dire situation, struggles, and emotional vulnerability exhibit notable understanding, sharing, and helping others. In EFL education, acknowledging social awareness can help students develop empathy and respect for diverse perspectives and cultural differences. Teachers can build empathy for students through multiple activities such as group projects, collaborative learning, cultural festivals, or events that highlight different social and cultural perspectives (Kahn, 2017).

### *Relationship skills and effective communication*

In the movie Enola Holmes (2020), from the first to the last scenes, she demonstrates strong interpersonal skills. Her interaction with family members and friends demonstrates how she can use her voice to resolve conflicts. This skill is a core component of emotional intelligence (EI), utilizing communication, leadership, and conflict management (Goleman, 1995). The moments when Enola connects with other people's stories and communicates with strangers demonstrate how relationships can support her in achieving goals. All the skills, like collaboration, teamwork, and handling situations, are essential for success in EFL education. Teachers can promote relationship skills through the P5 (strengthening Pancasila students' profile project) programs of the Merdeka Curriculum. It supports the findings of Durlak (2011), which demonstrate that relationship skills in SEL can improve classroom behavior and academic performance and reduce emotional distress.

### *Responsible decision-making and ethical choices*

Enola Holmes (2020) demonstrates how every action or statement can result in multiple responses from others, how she takes responsibility for decision-making, and how her mother's every move has consequences. The findings show that Enola's decision-making process, grounded in her values and independence, aligns with the research by Kohlberg (1984) and Livingstone et al. (2014). Her decision-making process, grounded in her values and commitment, can inspire EFL students in their learning process. Teachers can promote responsible decision-making by encouraging students to consider the impact and ethical implications of their actions. Students who do not submit their assignments or engage in bad behavior in school will get punished for their actions. Therefore, the fifth skill of SEL helps students think before acting, as every action can have a positive or negative impact.

## CONCLUSION

Compared to previous studies that explore SEL through music education, teachers' training, and curriculum development, this study offers a unique approach by analyzing the narrative of the Netflix movie Enola Holmes (2020). This angle expands the discourse on SEL by highlighting how fictional storytelling, specifically through accessible platforms like Netflix, can bridge the gap between theory and lived experience. The Netflix movie Enola Holmes (2020) perfectly portrays all five social-emotional learning (SEL) components. Enola's journey to meet her mother again and save Tewksbury exhibits a strong sense of self-awareness, management, emotional control, communication, empathy, and independent thinking. From SEL's perspective, this movie portrays self-awareness and educational development, self-management and academic achievement, social awareness and empathy in educational settings, relationship skills and teamwork, and responsible decision-making and personal growth. This research offers valuable and beneficial input because it provides an insightful analysis of SEL components through popular and accessible media. This study also offers a relatable and engaging method for educators, learners, parents, or even the public about the development of a character emotionally and mentally.

Even though this research offers valuable insights into SEL in the Netflix movie Enola Holmes (2020), it may have limitations. The first limitation is that the analysis is only based on one movie. This limitation may not fully represent SEL in a broader range. Thus, this research may not be able to generalize to other movies or media. The second limitation is subjectivity. This research interpretation of SEL components relies on the researchers' interpretation, which can be affected by biases or personal perspectives. This research encourages future researchers to expand this study by researching multiple television series or films across different genres and cultural backgrounds to obtain a broader understanding of how SEL is portrayed in many media. The researchers highlight that SEL instruction in engaging audio-visual content can equip educators with an alternative and dynamic strategy to cultivate students' holistic development in educational environments.

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