Embedding Social And Emotional Learning Into Literacy Instruction

Summer Wood
Hamline University
EMBEDDING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING INTO LITERACY INSTRUCTION

By
Summer Wood

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Dr. Jennifer Carlson, Primary Advisor
Mandy Mattke, Content Reviewer
Angie Elliott, Peer Reviewer
Abstract


The author inquired, “How can social and emotional learning be embedded into literacy instruction at the 5th grade level?” This led the author to research the five competencies of social and emotional learning: self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making, and how each of these can be implemented throughout all academic areas. The teacher plays a crucial role in the social and emotional learning of children. The author created a curriculum that embeds each of the five competencies of social and emotional learning into both morning meeting activities and into literacy lessons.
Dedication

Sam ~ Thank you for your love and encouragement, shoulder to cry on, and your ability to always make me smile.

Mom, Dad, and Zachary ~ Thank you for always believing in me, especially when I was struggling. And for reading to me every night as I was growing up. I love you.

Jennifer, Mandy, and Angie ~ Thank you for pushing me to become a better writer and for sharing your love of SEL with me.
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Chapter One

Introduction

I Quit


This is a typical day for many students, but one of my former students in particular stands out. “Trouble,” they told me. “He’s a tough kid,” I heard. “Good luck,” they said. I made it my goal for the year to try to break this stigma about him. I wanted to get through to him; to show him what I knew was buried deep inside. There were many sleepless nights, thinking and researching what I could do to help him. Teaching math, reading, and writing wasn’t enough; it wasn’t the whole story for him. One day in particular stands out to me, for it will forever change my life.

Smirks came from the back of the room, a few giggles, then “BAM” his desk was tipped over and with a slam of the door, he was out of the room. I followed behind into the hallway where I knelt next to him and just hugged him. I did not tell him that it was going to be okay, I did not get upset with him; I simply let him cry. After a few deep breaths, he said, “Why do you care so much?” How could I even begin to explain this to him? That I knew exactly how he felt? That I too, struggled? That I too, wanted to ‘drop out’ of elementary school.

My Story

Elementary school: the years of coloring, “getting to know you” activities, parties, projects, and best of all, recess! It seems like a dream to most; children socializing and working together. Wrong. My memories from elementary school mostly consist of tears. By first grade we weren’t new to this reading and writing nonsense anymore; we were expected to know sight
words already! **A nightmare.** I clearly was not ready and my parents refused to let me stay home every day, so I begrudgingly went to school. The expectation that I can actually hold a pencil and write my thoughts on paper was crazy! I handled this about as well as a fish out of water. I could feel the tears welling up. “Hold them back,” I thought, “I’m a big girl.” But the dam opened and the flood of tears came pouring out. This continued not just throughout that day, but throughout the next couple of months, yes, months.

Mrs. Mitchell, my saint of a teacher, held my hand, encouraged me, and walked me to the classroom every morning. “Why don’t you choose a best friend to read with? Reading together is so much more fun,” she explained. “I can do this,” I thought to myself. My new best friend, Ryan, can read to me, and when I get to second grade maybe, just maybe, there will not be any reading involved. Boy, was I ever wrong! The reading continued to get harder and my anxiety continued to become more prevalent. To say that I struggled was an understatement. My parents and brother read to me each night and patiently spent hours upon hours working through my homework with me. I wanted to learn how to read, why did it have to be so difficult? I had stomach aches almost daily, trying to convince my parents that school just was not for me.

I waited and waited, reading did not get easier, but I kept trudging along through elementary school and soon enough I was in middle school. No longer a little kid; the expectations were much higher and the teachers suddenly seemed more intimidating.

All but one, Mrs. Carroll. She had such a welcoming demeanor, with a smile so true it made your heart melt and her soft gentle voice reminded me of my own mother’s voice. She read aloud to us almost daily. I loved the voices that she would use. I felt as though I were a character in one of the books we read, whether I was with Philip trapped on a barren island in *The Cay* (1969) or that I was friends with Mary, sad and lonely until our adventures began in *The
Secret Garden (1911). When Mrs. Carroll read it was as if reading was a treat; it was joyful. My struggles in the world around me vanished.

Unfortunately, she also had us read to ourselves daily; I could not indulge myself in a book when I had to do the reading. I began having panic attacks; what if I do not know a word? What if I mess up? What if I do not understand what I am reading? I struggled so much trying to comprehend the words that I could not engross myself in the story.

Then there was writing, if I could not read alone, how was I supposed to write words? We had to write several papers that year. In between tears, a lot of encouraging words, and helpful ideas from my family I completed every assignment. When it came time to present our papers in front of the class I have never been so thankful to have Mrs. Carroll as I was that day. I remember it like it was yesterday; I set my textbook up on my desk, trying to hide behind it hoping she would not call on me. I was nearly hyperventilating thinking about reading, let alone reading MY writing in front of the class! When suddenly, she skipped over me and went on to the next person. No one asked why, but I am sure my tears and slumping down in my chair were probably giveaways.

Mrs. Carroll started something on that fall day in sixth grade that would continue through the remainder of middle school. She let me bring a friend to her classroom during lunch and read my paper to the two of them. Anna was the chosen one. She accompanied me for lunch, she never laughed or judged me as I stood, bright red faced, shaking hands, and read my paper with a trembling voice. I did it! I actually read in front of someone. The world did not stop turning, no confetti fell from the sky, but I was still alive and I even felt a smile stretch across my face.
Once I entered high school I was no longer a cute little girl that struggled to read. I had to “grow up” and prepare for college. Then came Mr. Harold, towering over me at six foot six inches. Mr. Harold was my 9th grade language arts teacher; there was no sympathy or backing down in his class. He was the first teacher that forced me to read in front of the class. Luckily, or so I thought, I was allowed to use notecards and face the chalkboard with my back to the class. I stood shaking, nearly convulsing, in front of the class breathless. The tears began pouring down my face, “You’re fine; start talking,” was all he said. As I started talking I dropped my note cards because my hands were shaking so badly. “Pick them up; we’re waiting” he announced. At that time I despised him and every suggestion he made.

Thankfully, the following year, Mrs. Nichols revived me. Her words of encouragement and genuine interest in me allowed me to trust her. She gave me multiple book recommendations, not only that year, but even now, twelve years later. She taught me to use my voice in my writing and what a lovely thing it is to be different. She motivated me to want to become the best that I could be. I was special to her even if I was anxious and a struggling reader.

My challenges were not easy or short lived, but they have shaped me into the teacher that I am today. The constant encouragement that I received from my family has helped me to be a cheerleader for my students. Mrs. Mitchell, Mrs. Carroll, and Mrs. Nichols allowed me to be myself and take my time. They gave me motivation and confidence to try, even when it was challenging. Even Mr. Harold helped shape me; he showed me how important having, or not having, respect for a teacher can be and that empathy is crucial in order to connect with students. I learned that the more passionate my teachers were, the more willing and excited I was to learn. I now remind myself of this every day as I enter my classroom door. With each smile and
embrace that I give to a student in need I am hoping to be their safety net if they fall and their cheerleader when they rise.

Now What?

I have been teaching in a suburb of Minneapolis for the past five years. There are six elementary schools in the district, all of which have a language immersion option in addition to the English track. Four schools are Spanish immersion schools, two are Chinese immersion schools that have English embedded at each grade level. I am currently teaching English at one of the Chinese immersion schools that consists of nearly 900 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. It is a highly affluent community. The district prides themselves on being top in the state and among top in the nation. The average student is considered to be struggling and in need of interventions. It’s students like the “tough kid” that keep my spark for teaching alive.

Behaviors like his are rare in my school, however, anxiety is very prevalent. The everyday stress and pressure that these students receive beginning at a young age is astonishing. Many of my students seek outside therapy support for these reasons. I began to see a higher need to learn social and emotional learning strategies to directly apply to my classroom. This has made me question my role in teaching.

I decided to join my district’s health committee three years ago. At that time, we began adding social emotional learning (SEL) objectives in the health curriculum to be implemented. This sparked my interest in SEL. What was SEL? How can I teach this? I had been pondering, questioning, and reflecting upon how teachers can meet the needs of the whole child if time is only spent on academics. I found my classroom community crumbling. It felt as though we were walking on eggshells, not sure when the next student would be too nervous or anxious to continue with the given task. After learning the basics of social emotional learning, ‘mindful
minutes’ were implemented in the classroom if students or I were feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or unable to focus. There was a drastic difference in the calmness of the classroom atmosphere. A trend had begun, students would most often ask for a mindful minute before read to self time. This led to my question: **How can social emotional learning be embedded into literacy instruction at the 5th grade level?** Since my district does not have an SEL curriculum, I have decided to create one in hopes that other classrooms and as many students as possible will be supported.

**Looking Ahead**

Chapter two, the literature review, will outline the current research on social emotional learning, the teacher’s role, components of responsive classroom, and what affect embedding SEL into core subjects has on students. This will lead to chapter three, the methodology and description used to design the curriculum project that was developed. Finally, chapter four will provide a detailed description of the project that was created as well as reflections from the journey.
Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

Classroom community is an essential component of the elementary classroom and affects student learning. This chapter will provide an overview of the current research as well as research on social emotional learning (SEL). The purpose of this capstone is to provide an overview of each competency and provide examples of implementation. Greater in-depth study on each competency is warranted, however this capstone provides a survey of materials to initiate SEL.

This chapter will begin by defining SEL as well as focusing on each of the five competencies. Secondly, it will explore the role and impact of the teacher in the process of implementing SEL and its effect on student learning. Next, a brief overview of Responsive Classroom will review the components of the program, specifically building classroom community. Fourth, the chapter will examine the overlying theme of SEL embedded into academics, specifically literacy and how teachers can implement this. Finally, a synthesis of the findings from prominent researchers. The literature review of these five sections will together, help to guide the development of the capstone question, *How can social emotional learning be embedded into literacy instruction at the 5th grade level?*

What is SEL?

Social Emotional Learning has been defined by many researchers in the field. A definition of SEL stated by the Committee for Children (2017) is, “Social-emotional learning is recognizing and managing emotions, having empathy for others, maintaining cooperative
relationships, and making responsible decisions.” CASEL (2013), the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, based out of Chicago, Illinois, defines SEL as:

“Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.” (p. 4)

The primary purposes of SEL are understanding the awareness and management of emotions in one’s self, building empathy for others in order to cultivate positive relationships, and generating decisions responsibly.

Students’ ability to integrate these skills and behaviors in their daily life in order to adequately and ethically work through challenges is enhanced with SEL according to CASEL (2013) and can provide the tools to help lead to success in many areas, such as school, employment, and in everyday life (Weissberg, 2016). The five different competencies that can lead to that success are: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Each is described below.

**Self-Awareness**

Knowing one’s self is the first step to successful social and emotional learning. CASEL (2013) defines self awareness as, “The ability to accurately recognize one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one’s strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a “growth mindset” (p. 9). The five components of self-awareness as acknowledged by CASEL include:

1. Identifying emotions
2. Accurate self-perception
3. Recognizing strengths
4. Self-confidence
5. Self-efficacy

Self-awareness encompasses learning the ability to precisely evaluate one’s own feelings, interests, beliefs, values, and strengths. This becomes increasingly more important for children to learn as they begin elementary school (Denham & Brown, 2010). When a child feels confident in themselves while focusing on a specific skill in academics, they will be more apt to find more opportunities to perform the skill, which in turn, will continue to grow their competency in that area (Denham & Brown, 2010). This can affect a student’s self-esteem. When self-esteem is affected in different domains, academic success could be helped or hindered (Denham & Brown, 2010). Students will have a sufficient sense of their self-awareness when they are able to accurately identify strengths, areas of development, emotions, and perceptions of themselves.

**Self-Management**

Once accurate awareness is met, students are able to begin managing their behaviors linked to the emotions and thoughts. “The ability to successfully regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals” (CASEL, 2013, p. 9). The six components of self-management as acknowledged by CASEL include:

1. Impulse control
2. Stress management
3. Self-discipline
4. Self-motivation

5. Goal-setting

6. Organizational skills

This competency of SEL includes a wide range of abilities, such as being able to properly manage emotions and feelings, as well as adjusting them in order to help cope with situations rather than interfere with the situation. Self-management is the ability to ‘put yourself in someone else’s shoes’, looking at a situation through another perspective, learning to understand and empathize with others (Denham & Brown, 2010). Students will learn to acknowledge and welcome others’ similarities and differences. Students are able to respond appropriately once they learn this process (Florez, 2011). Once a child begins to show growth in regulating their behavior, the projected academic growth was greater as well, regardless of the school, gender, and other background information (Denham & Brown, 2010).

Many skills taught in SEL programs, such as, controlling anger, anxiety, fear and more will help students use coping strategies, such as self-talk. This leads to fewer students being bullied and victimized (Smith & Low, 2013). Such skills helps students to be aware of their own feelings and choose an acceptable response.

Social Awareness

An awareness of others helps to create a safe and welcoming environment. CASEL (2013) defines social awareness as, “The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports” (p. 9). The four components of social awareness as acknowledged by CASEL include:

1. Perspective-taking
2. Empathy

3. Appreciating diversity

4. Respect for others

Understanding one’s own and others’ emotions and behaviors are a critical component that guide social interactions (Denham, S. A., & Brown, C, 2010). This is important because it leads to a positive classroom community with social relationships and may impact academic achievement. Students may be more likely to take risks without feeling afraid in front of their peers.

**Relationship Skills**

Taking risks in a learning environment leads to more trusting collaboration. “The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed” (CASEL, 2013, p. 9). The four components of relationship skills as acknowledged by CASEL include:

1. Communication
2. Social engagement
3. Relationship-building
4. Teamwork

There are a variety of skills that are critical for building positive relationships. Denham and Brown (2010) list some of these skills, including: “making positive overtures to play with others, initiating and maintaining conversation, cooperating, listening, taking turns, seeking help, and practicing friendship skills” (p. 657). To add to this list, learning assertive skills, conflict
resolution, and negotiation skills are developed (Denham & Brown) when students engage in meaningful relationships. The skills involved in this form of collaboration are used throughout an individual's entire life.

**Responsible Decision-Making**

Teaching decision making and making good choices can be a challenge, thus the six elements of responsible decision making as proposed by CASEL (2013) become an essential part of SEL curriculum and can be taught at a young age. “The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others” (CASEL, 2013, p. 9). The six components of responsible decision-making as acknowledged by CASEL include:

1. Identifying problems
2. Analyzing situations
3. Solving problems
4. Evaluating
5. Reflecting
6. Ethical responsibility

Responsible decision making often comes once the other four competencies have been taught and reached a level of mastery. Denham and Brown (2010) explain that in order to solve differences amongst peers, children must learn to identify and solve social problems, analyze situations involving socialization, and set goals pertaining to positive social interactions. In addition, making ethical decisions that positively impact the wellbeing of others within the community is a large component of responsible decision making (Denham, & Brown, 2010).
**What is the Teacher’s Role?**

The teacher’s knowledge of SEL, as well as pedagogy, plays a direct role on children’s SEL competence (Waajid, Garner, & Owen, 2013). Goleman explains that the brain’s system for learning changes depending on the level of anxiety or boredom that a student is feeling. Anxiety minimizes the learning, whereas boredom will not activate the systems to the level they should (2006). When students learn to regulate their thinking and any anxious feelings, they are more apt to persevere when a challenge is presented. This allows students more opportunities to practice and achieve the goal. (Florez, 2011) When students are highly motivated with minimal stress, they will do their best. On the other hand, when students are highly stressed and not motivated, they will not perform as highly. This is something that psychologists have known for a century, but has not taken precedence in schools (Goleman, 2006).

Building a caring and trusting relationship is time well spent according to Noddings (2012), this can reduce the level of anxiety in students. Teachers will sometimes lecture students rather than listen to them, assuming that we know best. By listening, we will better understand the needs of others (Noddings, 2012). Mraz and Hertz (2015) explain, “There is nothing more meaningful to a fellow human than to be truly seen and truly heard, and that is what is at the heart of the best instruction” (p. 16). Noddings expressed that when teachers listen, emotional and cognitive learning is taking place (2012).

Carol Dweck, a world renowned psychologist at Stanford University, states, “The great teachers believe in the growth of the intellect and talent, and they are fascinated with the process of learning” (p. 194). She explains that there are two forms of mindsets: fixed and growth. A fixed mindset is “believing your qualities are carved in stone” (p. 6) and feeling the need to constantly prove yourself. A growth mindset, on the other hand, is “the belief that your basic
qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts” (p. 7). These mindsets can fluctuate depending on the subject area or activity. Teachers that love to learn themselves often have a growth mindset in their classroom. By creating a positive, nurturing classroom environment, teachers can help to instill a growth mindset in students. This causes students to love learning, be challenged, and work hard for themselves. Igniting a fire in each child’s mind to learn and truly believing that every student is capable of learning is critical for teachers to achieve.

**What is Responsive Classroom?**

Responsive Classroom is a research-based approach to K-8 teaching that focuses on the strong link between academic success and social-emotional learning (SEL). The connection between SEL and Responsive Classroom is the focus on classroom community and on each individual child. There are four domains of RC:

1. Engaging academics
2. Positive community
3. Effective management
4. Developmental awareness

Each of the four domains enhances SEL in the classroom, however this section will focus specifically on the positive community realm. The Responsive Classroom website (2017) states, “Adults nurture a sense of belonging, significance, and emotional safety so that students feel comfortable taking risks and working with a variety of peers.” Building a positive classroom climate affects students outcomes academically, behaviorally, and socially (Weissberg, 2016).

Responsive Classroom offers activities and lessons teachers can implement with students. Some of these are morning meetings, community building games, communication strategies, and the use of common language in classrooms. In the book, *The First Six Weeks of School* (Denton
& Kriete, 2000), a daily agenda is available for primary, intermediate, and secondary classrooms for the first six weeks of the school year. The goal is building a safe and nurturing classroom community. Social and emotional skills are enhanced throughout this process that will allow students to thrive throughout the school year.

**Implementing SEL into Core Academics**

The success that one has in school can be predicted by social emotional learning, such as confidence, curiosity, and self-control, rather than the academic facts that a child knows (Goleman, 1996). Denham and Brown state, “Self-perceived academic competence and academic success are, in fact, likely to influence each other bidirectionally” (2010). When students can focus on achieving a goal through confidence, concentration, and motivation, they will be more productive (Goleman, 1996).

Many studies have been done to test the difference in academic growth as well as social growth between students with exposure to SEL programs and students that have not participated in a SEL program. A meta-analysis was done that involved more than 270,000 students. An 11 percentile point gain in academic performance was made with students participating in evidence-based SEL programs in addition to students’ ability to regulate emotions and improvement of classroom behavior (CASEL, 2013). An important piece of education is missing when we do not teach SEL in schools (Taylor & Kilgus, 2014). When students are aware of their emotions and are able to control them, it creates a positive classroom environment that will lead to more success in both reading and math (Waajid, Garner, & Owen, 2013).

Many states, such as Illinois, Kansas, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia have created standards that have acknowledged and support teaching social skills in schools. Some other states have guidelines for teachers to follow. Forty-two states, along with four territories have
adopted Common Core State Standards. There are not explicit SEL standards, however, many of the language arts standards give teachers the freedom to incorporate lessons on emotional, relationship, and communication skills through literature (Zakrzewski, 2014). CASEL (2017) explains that SEL can be implemented in many forms. Often, this happens through direct instruction, and is most effective when integrated in both academic instruction and classroom management strategies daily. Positive relationships, work ethic, appropriate behaviors, and more students engagement are formed (CASEL, 2017).

Zakrzewski (2014) explains that empathy can be developed through reading literature. SEL helps to build an greater emotion vocabulary, therefore allowing students to identify the feelings of book characters. Inspecting fictional characters’ emotions and lives creates a less threatening situation for students to compare and contrast their own lives with (Zakrzewski, 2014). Teachers can implement this in a variety of ways, one example is a double-entry journal. Students can analyze how book characters’ emotions affect the world around them. Students can then reflect on their emotional experiences (Zakrzewski, 2014).

CASEL’s District Resource Guide (2017) offers examples of strategies that promote SEL including, but not limited to project based learning, cooperative learning, student self-assessment, and peer tutoring. When implementing SEL strategies, teachers should promote practices that allow students to: build awareness of themselves, nurture effective communication, work cooperatively, develop empathy, control their stress and impulses, foster conflict resolution, and cultivate diverse appreciation (CASEL, 2017).

**Summary**

Throughout this chapter, social and emotional learning as well as each of the five competencies were defined. The teacher’s role and the benefits of embedding SEL in the
classroom followed this in addition to what Responsive Classroom is and how it appears in the classroom. Finally, the research stated how to implement SEL into core academic subject areas. These are all helping to answer the question, *How can social emotional learning be embedded into literacy instruction at the 5th grade level?* This will lead to chapter three, the methodology and description used to design the curriculum project that was developed. Looking ahead, chapter four will provide a detailed description of the project that was created as well as reflections from the journey.
Chapter Three
Methods

Introduction

As stated in both chapters one and two, social and emotional learning is the foundation for learning. This chapter will outline the methodology for the project along with the setting, demographics, and participants in the study. I chose to develop a curriculum because the school district that I am currently teaching in does not have one for Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). I found a need for this among both staff and students. It is designed to help other teachers feel confident teaching the skills as well as helping students to achieve the SEL skills to better understand themselves.

Carol Dweck and Daniel Goleman are two among many researchers that support teaching SEL in the classroom beginning at a young age. Daniel Goleman, author of Emotional Intelligence (2005) states, “Because of neuroplasticity the brain shapes itself according to repeated experiences, so my argument is, hey we should be teaching kids regularly, over time, in a systematic way, self-awareness, self-management, empathy, and social skills” (Big Think, 2012). Their research has helped guide the question: How can social emotional learning be embedded into literacy instruction at the 5th grade level?

Setting

School District

The current school district that I am teaching in is a highly affluent community in the suburbs of Minneapolis. The district prides themselves on being the top in the state and among top in the nation, they consider themselves ‘world class’.

There are six elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. The six
elementary schools each offer a language immersion option in addition to the traditional English program at each grade level, beginning in kindergarten. Four of the six schools are Spanish immersion with many teachers from Latin America and Spain. The remaining two elementary schools are Chinese immersion. Here, many of the immersion teachers are native to China and Taiwan.

There were 10,223 students enrolled in the district for the 2016-2017 school year. Nearly 85.8% of students were White/Caucasian, 3.3% Black, 3.6% Hispanic, 6.8% Asian, and .5% American Indian. Roughly 1.7% of students received ELL support, 10.8% received special education services, 6.8% of students were enrolled in free or reduced lunch, and .1% of students were homeless.

**Building**

The elementary school that the curriculum is implemented encompasses kindergarten through 5th grade, and is one of the Chinese immersion schools. Among the teachers, over 25% of staff have attained their Bachelor's degree and nearly 73% of the staff have continued their education and hold master’s degree. The average years of teaching experience vary and are as followed: 5.6% of teachers are in their first three years, 40% of teachers range from 3-10 years, and 54.4% of the teachers have been teaching for over 10 years.

There were 839 students currently enrolled in the 2016-2017 school year. Of the 839 students, 72.6% were Caucasian, 3.5% Black, 2.5% Hispanic, 21.1% Asian, and .4% American Indian. The needs among students vary and are as follows: 1.9% of the students received ELL support, 8.9% received special education (not speech) support, 7.6% were enrolled in the free or reduced lunch option, and no one in the school was reported homeless.
5th Grade Participants

This year there will be approximately 25 students: 13 boys and 12 girls. Four students have an Individualized Education Program (IEP); two students have autism, and all four students have learning disorders. This support looks different for each student. Each of them are removed from the classroom to work in a small group setting one or two times per day for math and reading support with a special education teacher. In addition, a special education paraprofessional pushes into the classroom for an hour during the math lesson and 45 minutes during reading and writing to offer extra support. Two students receive Developmental Adaptive Physical Education (DAPE), twice a week for 30 minutes outside of the traditional physical education time. The occupational therapist works with two students from the classroom once a week for 20 minutes and offers suggestions that I can work on with the students throughout the week. Three students receive both math and reading Response to Intervention (RtI) support. They work with another teacher in a small group setting three times per week for 30 minutes. Four students receive therapy outside of school for anxiety. Five other students are in the high potential program at school. They are pulled once a week for an hour to work on various higher level thinking tasks that consist of mostly project based learning. Implementation of the social and emotional curriculum will happen during morning meeting and an hour long literacy block. During this time all students from the classroom will be present.

Implementation/ Project Description

The implementation of this curriculum will begin in the fall of 2017, however, it will continue each fall with new students. The district encourages that teachers use Responsive Classroom routines and protocols as highlighted in *The First Six Weeks of School* (2000).
The curriculum begins by giving a student survey (Appendix A) to each student. This is not graded and serves as the pre-assessment and the post-assessment. This will help to inform and plan specific curriculum development lessons.

The curriculum provides book titles, activities, and a literacy lesson for each competency. Since social and emotional learning does not take place only during literacy, the decision was made to implement activities during morning meeting. This is a critical time to build a positive community. Each of the five competencies are taught in consecutive order, however, each teacher can spend more time building skills on a desired competency. The chart below provides a brief overview of the curriculum. Each lesson is offered in full detail in Appendix B.

Overview of SEL curriculum:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Book Titles</th>
<th>Morning Meeting Activity</th>
<th>Optional Continued Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>* Stoplight activity</td>
<td>* Continue self check-ins</td>
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<td>ADDITIONAL BOOK OPTIONS:</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Spaghetti in a Hot Dog Bun by Dismondy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Today I Feel Silly: And Other Moods that Make My Day by Jamie Lee Curtis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Emotional Learning and Literacy Curriculum Guide</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>* Dot by Peter Reynolds</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>* Amazing Grace by Mary Hoffman</td>
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<tr>
<td>* How Are You Peeling? by Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Self-management**

| * My Mouth is a Volcano by Julia Cook (attached lesson) |
| * Wilma Jean the Worry Machine by Julia Cook           |
| * Personal Space Camp by Julia Cook                     |
| * Grow Happy by Jon Lasser and Sage Foster-Lasser       |
| * Ahn’s Anger by Gail Silver                            |
| * Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda by Lauren Alderfer        |

**Social Awareness**

| * The Invisible Boy by Trudy Ludwig (attached lesson) |
| * Eve Bunting- any!                                     |
| * Those Shoes by                                       |

**Additional Book Options:**

- * Wilma Jean the Worry Machine by Julia Cook
- * Personal Space Camp by Julia Cook
- * Grow Happy by Jon Lasser and Sage Foster-Lasser
- * Ahn’s Anger by Gail Silver
- * Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda by Lauren Alderfer

**Social Awareness Options:**

- * Affirmations
- * Hopes and Dreams/goal setting

**Self-management Options:**

- * Yes! Because...And...
- * Creating a calming space in classroom
  - * pipe cleaners

**Social Awareness Options:**

- * Affirmations
- * skin tone markers, crayons, etc.
- * diverse books available in classroom
### Relationship skills

* Last Stop on Market Street by Matt de la Pena
* Name Jar by Yangsook Choi

**ADDITIONAL BOOK OPTIONS:**

* Each Kindness by Jacqueline Woodson
* Recess Queen by Alexis O’Neill
* Wonder by R. J. Palacio (Chapter Book)

- Silent drawing
- Collaborative learning
- Peer tutoring

### Responsible Decision Making

* Mr. Peabody’s Apples by Madonna (attached lesson)

**ADDITIONAL BOOK OPTIONS:**

* The Hundred Dresses by Eleanor Estes (Chapter book)
* The Shortcut by Donald Crews

- Conflict Resolution
- Student self-assessments
- Project based learning

---

**Morning Meeting and SEL**

The activities for each competency will be integrated during morning meeting because this is a time where personal and social growth is nurtured, relationships are fostered, and
community is built. The activity for each competency should be implemented multiple times throughout the school year to ensure full exposure and advancement from each student.

**Activities.** Many of these activities were introduced to me by the Institute for Social Emotional Learning (IFSEL), based in California. I was able to attend two professional learning conferences where a binder full of activities was given. The teachers at the conferences tried many activities, that were then implemented into the classroom. The specific activities chosen for the curriculum development were adapted to meet the needs of the demographic that is being taught. Each activity will take 5-20 minutes to complete.

**Literacy and SEL**

The literacy aspect of the SEL curriculum will take place during the language arts time frame. At the 5th grade level, the district I currently teach in requires 120 minutes of language arts each day. The curriculum provides a ‘before reading’ activity, one read aloud book with turn and talk opportunities, and one ‘after reading’ lesson for each of the five competencies. An additional list of books is provided for teachers to continue read alouds and meaningful whole class discussions. Each of the SEL literacy lessons will take approximately 30-45 minutes.

**Timeline**

Since SEL is an ongoing method of teaching embedding into daily routine, this should be an ongoing curriculum through the school year. The timeline for implementing this curriculum is one competency every other month of the school year with a continuation of the activities on a regular basis. Teacher discretion can be used to alter this timeline. The student survey should be given prior to beginning the activities and literacy lessons, presumably at the beginning of the year, as a pre-assessment. The student survey should be given again at the end of the school year, once completing the provided lessons, as a post-assessment. An example survey is shown
in Appendix A. Teachers may alter this to better meet the needs of the students.

**Summary**

This chapter has outlined the demographics that will be affected by the implementation of the curriculum. The demographics were broken down into the school district and more specifically to the classroom that the curriculum will be piloted in. An overview of the curriculum was provided as well as a timeline for each of the activities and literacy lessons that meet the five social and emotional learning competencies.

Chapter four will provide a brief overview of the findings from the literature review. Limitations, implications, and plans for the future will be addressed in the chapter as well.
Chapter Four

Conclusions

Introduction

As an educator, I strive to teach the whole child; understanding that academic intelligence is important, but not the only aspect of learning. Through various experiences and extensive research, it has been enlightening to learn the impact that social and emotional learning has on children. With the knowledge gained during the capstone journey in combination with knowledge from courses in the Literacy Education Program at Hamline University, I have been able to answer the question, “How can social emotional learning be embedded into literacy instruction at the 5th grade level?” This final chapter will review the key findings from the research that led to the development of the curriculum, along with implications, limitations, and possible future research.

Key Findings

As the research began, there were many different possibilities of ways that it could lead. Beginning with the basics, what is social emotional learning (SEL), was the first step. This is divided into five competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. As each of these skills are learned and integrated into students’ daily lives they can work ethically and effectively when a challenge is presented (CASEL, 2013). Students are more aware and able to manage their emotions through SEL lessons. More positive relationships are cultivated through the understanding and practice of empathy and the respect of differences. All of these skills are proven to lead to more success in school, careers, and everyday life (Weissberg, 2016).
The research then led to how the teacher impacts students SEL understanding of themselves. It was discovered that the teacher, in combination with Responsive Classroom, play a critical role in the environment of the classroom. Building a positive and caring classroom community is time well spent (Noddings, 2012). Once trust has developed between a teacher and students, being vulnerable becomes less intimidating. Listening is important to the emotional and cognitive learning that is taking place in children (Noddings, 2012). Teachers are able to instill a passion and love of learning in students.

Finally, I questioned how SEL could be implemented during core academic time and the impact this may cause. It was unanimous among prominent researchers that the success students have in school is often times directly correlated to their social emotional learning. With SEL lessons students are able to feel more in control of their emotions, leading to a more positive classroom environment, which then leads to more success academically (Waajid, Garner, & Owen, 2013).

**Trials and Tribulations**

The capstone writing process has not come without struggles and successes. Though most of the struggles ended with success and a new found level of confidence. The obstacles of finding balance and learning to write both narrative and academically have been the most challenging. It was discovered that narrative writing came much easier; speaking from the heart with such passion was seamless. However, transferring to a different lens, writing as a researcher pushed limits that were unknown. Learning to take new knowledge and rewrite stretched both my confidence and growth as a writer. The thought of being able to help students on a new level in the coming school year has been my focus throughout the entire process. It was helpful to begin designing the curriculum by creating the overview. This was altered
countless times before the final decision of each activity and children’s book was made. Once this was complete, the activities were designed. Each activity was familiar, so the struggle of adapting them to meet the needs of the demographic was surprisingly challenging to rewrite. After the activities were complete, the literacy lessons fell into place. There have been many difficulties and accomplishments throughout the course of action.

Possible Implications and Limitations

The extensive research and thought put into the creation of the curriculum leads me to believe that the implementation will be a success. An implication that I foresee happening is teachers helping with student achievement both emotionally and academically. More students will be able to manage emotions and become more resilient, leading them to excel in academics and relationship skills.

Although confidence is high in the effectiveness of the curriculum, there are possible limitations. First, the lack of time; there are high demands of teachers attempting to fit a wide variety of learning into each day. Thankfully, the curriculum is able to easily be embedded into daily routines. Another limitation found is the fact that this curriculum was written for a group of students whom have not been met. Teacher discretion will be critical during the implementation stage. Since this will be ongoing each year, modifications will need to be made in order to best meet the needs of the current students.

Future Plans

In the midst of researching social emotional learning, several more topics and extensions of SEL were discovered. Daniel Goleman’s idea of emotional intelligence aligns with SEL very well. He separates emotional intelligence into four categories: self- awareness, self-
management, empathy, and relationship management or social skills (1995). This is an area of study that I would like to research further.

As more research was being read about self-management, Zones of Regulation (2011) caught my eye. The special education department in my current school district uses this program. It is a cognitive and behavioral approach that teaches students to self-regulate by categorizing emotions into four zones. It is a future goal to learn more about the Zones of Regulation and combine strategies from both SEL and Zones.

As a master scholar, I am looking forward to sharing my learnings with other teachers. As a member of the SEL team at school, I plan to present many of the activities at staff meetings and offer the curriculum to my fellow 5th grade teachers. This will be an ongoing learning tool each year for my future students.

Conclusion

With the conclusion of this capstone project, I look forward to seeing my work come to life in the classroom this school year. As an educator, it excites me to see my students learn and grow throughout the year. I plan to encourage every child along the way, helping them to rise again when they fall and being there to celebrate every success together. Through this curriculum I am hoping to instill a love of literacy and social emotional skills to last a lifetime.
References


Big Think. (April, 23, 2012). *Daniel Goleman introduces emotional intelligence.* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y7m9eNoB3NU


Bruni, L. (2015). *The impact of teaching of social emotional skills on student and teacher perception of school success.* Retrieved from ProQuest LLC.


Appendix A
**Student Survey**

Please be honest when answering these questions. There is no right or wrong answer, reflect on yourself and your actions as you answer each statement. Thank you for helping!

**NAME:** _________________________

**DATE:** ______________

These questions pertain to how you behave in school. Please check the one box that best describes you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all like me</th>
<th>Sometimes like me</th>
<th>Mostly like me</th>
<th>Always like me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I can wait patiently in line.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I can wait for my turn to talk in class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I can easily calm down when feeling excited or upset.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

These questions pertain to how you feel you can do your schoolwork. Please check the one box that best describes you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all like me</th>
<th>Sometimes like me</th>
<th>Mostly like me</th>
<th>Always like me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I can learn everything taught in school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I can do difficult homework if I try.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I can always learn more</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These questions pertain to how you do your schoolwork. Please check the one box that best describes you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all like me</th>
<th>Sometimes like me</th>
<th>Mostly like me</th>
<th>Always like me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>If I solve a problem incorrectly, I try again a different way until it’s correct.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>When I don’t do well on a test, I work harder the next time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I put forth my best effort on my schoolwork.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

These questions pertain to how you feel about school. Please check the one box that best describes you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all like me</th>
<th>Sometimes like me</th>
<th>Mostly like me</th>
<th>Always like me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I do my schoolwork because I enjoy it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I do my schoolwork because it is fun to learn new things.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I do my schoolwork because it interests me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you!

*adapted from Child Trends*
Appendix B
Social and Emotional Learning Curriculum Guide

By: Summer Wood

*photo: CASEL, 2017
• 11% improvement in **academic achievement**.
• 9% improvement in **attitudes** about self, others, and school
• 23% improvement in **social and emotional skills**
• 9% improvement in school and classroom **behavior**

• **9% decrease in conduct problems**, such as classroom misbehavior and aggression
• 10% decrease in **emotional distress**, such as anxiety and depression

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*CASEL, 2017*
Overview of SEL curriculum:

Each competency should be taught in consecutive order every other month with a continuation of the activities and lessons on a regular basis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Book Titles</th>
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<th>Optional Continued Learning</th>
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</thead>
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<td>* Stoplight activity</td>
<td>* Continue self check-ins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>ADDITIONAL BOOK OPTIONS:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>* Spaghetti in a Hot Dog Bun by Dismondy</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Dot by Peter Reynolds</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Amazing Grace by Mary Hoffman</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* How Are You Peeling? by Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Self-Management          | * My Mouth is a Volcano by Julia Cook  
|                         | (attached lesson)                      |
|                         | ADDITIONAL BOOK OPTIONS:              |
|                         | * Wilma Jean the Worry Machine by Julia Cook |
|                         | * Personal Space Camp by Julia Cook    |
|                         | * Grow Happy by Jon Lasser and Sage Foster-Lasser |
|                         | * Ahn’s Anger by Gail Silver          |
|                         | * Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda by Lauren Alderfer |
| Social Awareness        | * The Invisible Boy by Trudy Ludwig (attached lesson) |
|                         | ADDITIONAL BOOK OPTIONS:              |
|                         | * Eve Bunting- any!                   |
|                         | * Those Shoes by Maribeth Boelts and Noah Z. Jones |
|                         | * Last Stop on Market Street by Matt de la Pena |
|                         | * Name Jar by Yangsook Choi           |
| Relationship Skills     | * Thank You Mr. Falker by Patricia Polacco |
|                         | * Silent drawing                      |
|                         | * Collaborative learning              |

* Yes! Because..And..

* Hopes and Dreams/goal setting
  * Creating a calming space in classroom
  * pipe cleaners

* Affirmations

* skin tone markers, crayons, etc.
  * diverse books available in classroom
### (attached lesson)

**ADDITIONAL BOOK OPTIONS:**

- *Each Kindness* by Jacqueline Woodson
- *Recess Queen* by Alexis O’Neill
- *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio (Chapter Book)

### Responsible Decision Making

- *Mr. Peabody’s Apples* by Madonna (attached lesson)

**ADDITIONAL BOOK OPTIONS:**

- *The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes (Chapter book)
- *The Shortcut* by Donald Crews

**Conflict Resolution**

- *Peer tutoring*
- *student self-assessments*
- *project based learning*
Self- Awareness

The ability to accurately recognize one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one’s strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a “growth mindset.”

- Identifying emotions
- Accurate self-perception
- Recognizing strengths
- Self-confidence
- Self-efficacy

*CASEL, 2017*
**Stoplight Activity**

**Self-Awareness Activity**

**Materials needed:**
- Green, yellow, and red construction paper circles (see photo for example)
- List of prepared statements (see below)

**Teacher prep:**
1. Pre-cut enough green, yellow, and red circles for each student in your classroom.
2. Have statements available (use attached or create own).

**Duration:** approximately 20 minutes

**Directions:**
1. Students will stand in a circle in a common place in the classroom.
2. Give each student one green, one yellow, and one red paper circle.
3. Explain to students that they will:
   a. Turn with his or her back to the center of the circle
   b. Hear a statement
   c. Choose the stoplight circle that best identifies how they are feeling about the given statement
   d. When directed, silently turn to face classmates holding the identified stoplight circle
   e. Silently observe what other classmates have chosen.
4. The teacher will ask for 3-4 volunteers to explain why they chose that color.
5. This continues for each of the statements read.
6. Collect the stop light colors.

**Bonus:** Teacher and students may have a conversation after the activity about what was observed and how these observations can continue to help build classroom community by respecting others feelings.
Example stoplight statements read by teacher:

- My teacher gives me a high five.
- A new student says hello to me in the hallway.
- A friend hugs me.
- At recess, a friend tackles me to the ground.
- A peer chews with their mouth open.
- An unknown kindergartener skips down the hall and gives me a big hug.
- My teacher tells me congratulations after a presentation.
- My friend passes me a note during class.
- A friend talks badly about another student behind their back.

* Adapted from Institute of SEL
Self Check-In*
Self-Awareness Activity

Materials needed:
- Electronic device OR
- Paper
- Coloring supplies
- Optional: ruler

Teacher prep:
- This can be done on paper or on an electronic device, use teacher discretion.
- Depending on the level of your students, decide if it will be a 1-10 scale or 1-5 scale.

Duration: approximately 20-30 minutes to create the check in chart, then 1-5 minutes each time after.

Directions to create a self-check in chart:
1. Students will think of a topic that is meaningful to them. Give suggestions if needed (animals, foods, Pokemon Characters, villains and super heroes, etc.)
2. On their paper or electronic device, students will draw a chart.
3. Label 1-5 or 1-10 and the corresponding topic idea.

Directions for daily check in:
1. Have students take out their chart at a designated time (beginning of the day and the end of the day are optimal).
2. In a journal, have students write the date and the number or symbol for how they are currently feeling.
3. If time permits, have a few students share aloud to class or turn and talk to a partner.

* Adapted from IFSEL
An example of a self check-in:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How</th>
<th>are</th>
<th>you</th>
<th>feeling</th>
<th>today</th>
<th>??</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tick</td>
<td>mosquito</td>
<td>spider</td>
<td>moth</td>
<td>fly</td>
<td>bumble bee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beginning of the day:
“I feel like a bumblebee because I have been non stop busy all morning. I feel like I’m buzzing from place to place.”

End of the day:
“I feel like a dragonfly. I did really well on my math test and our teacher gave us extra time to play outside. I’m really happy!”
**Ish by Peter Reynolds**  
**Self- Awareness Literacy Lesson**

**Title:** *Ish*  
**Author:** Peter H. Reynolds  
**Illustrator:** Peter H. Reynolds

**Duration:** approximately 25 minutes

**Pre-lesson planning:**
* Create partnerships of students to be turn and talk partners during reading.  
* Review “turn and talk” rules with class.  
  - Students need to sit eye to eye, knee to knee while talking.  
  - They should only talk with one another about the given question.  
  - Once finished, students will turn towards the teacher and signal they are ready to continue listening to the book.  
* Have blank paper available for each child for the after reading activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gather students together in a common reading area. “This is a story about a boy that loves to draw. Through his frustrations, he is a hero to someone special. As you listen, see if you have any connections to how Ramon is feeling.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>During Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Have students sit in a common area of the classroom next to their partner while they listen to the story.  
  
  Stop after the author writes, “Anything. Anywhere.”  
  Say: “Think in your head about something that you love to do. Anywhere, anytime.”  
  
  Stop after the author writes, “I’m done.”  
  Ask: “Have you ever felt frustrated with your work? What did it feel like inside? What did you do?” Give a minute to think, then students will turn and talk with their reading partner. Call on two to three partners to share.  
  
  Stop after the author writes, “And Ramon lived ishfully ever after.”  
  Ask: “Who is someone that admires you? How have they helped you to think differently or ishly?” Think, then turn and talk. Call on two to three partners to share. |

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<th>After Reading</th>
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| * Students will think about an emotion that they often feel.  
* Then at their desk, they will draw that emotion and attach “ish” to it. For example, a student may draw a nervous picture and explain “I feel
nervous-ish, when I ride roller coasters.”
* The class can go on a gallery walk around the room and look at their peers “ish” emotions.
Self-Management

The ability to successfully regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.

- Impulse control
- Stress management
- Self-discipline
- Self-motivation
- Goal-setting
- Organizational skills

*CASEL, 2017*
Yes! Because… And… *

Self-Management Activity

Materials needed:
- Common area for students to sit.

Teacher prep:
- Think of an idea to “invent” ahead of time.
- Optional: Ask a student or teacher to role play the activity prior to class participating.

Duration: approximately 10-15 minutes

Directions:
1. Students sit in a circle.
2. Think of an idea that students pretend to invent, have students think in their head of 2-3 ideas that they would like to add to the invention to make it better.
3. Explain to students that everyone’s idea will be accepted and affirmed.
4. Tell the class your idea (example, “We are creating a backpack.”)
5. Have a volunteer begin by sharing their idea, but NOT explaining why. (example, “I think it should include a homework machine.”)
6. Then cue everyone in the class to loudly say, “YES!”
7. The student to the left continues by saying “because…” and explaining why they believe it’s a good idea. Then, they add an idea of their own “and it should include…”
8. The class shouts, “YES!” to this idea, and the activity continues around the circle until everyone has had a turn to explain the idea of a classmate and give their idea.

* Adapted from IFSEL
**My Mouth is a Volcano** by Julia Cook  
*Self-Management Literacy Lesson*

**Title:** *My Mouth is a Volcano*  
**Author:** Julia Cook  
**Illustrator:** Carrie Hartman

**Duration:** approximately 40 minutes

**Pre-lesson planning:**
* Make copies of the blank body outline for each student (see below).
* Create partnerships of students to be turn and talk partners during reading.
* Review “turn and talk” rules with class.
  - Students need to sit eye to eye, knee to knee while talking.
  - They should only talk with one another about the given question.
  - Once finished, students will turn towards the teacher and signal they are ready to continue listening to the book.

**Before Reading**

- *Ask students to think to themselves about different emotions that they feel. Ask them to think about what happens to their body when they feel happy? Sad? Angry? Nervous? Excited? Etc. For each emotion, ask for a couple volunteers to describe what happens to their body.*

- *Give each student a blank body outline template. Provide students about 10 minutes to write or draw their emotions within the body template.*

- *Optional: color code emotions. For example, blue are all of the emotions and feelings that are sad. Green are the emotions and feelings that are happy. Red are the emotions and feelings that are mad.*

**During Reading**

- Stop after page 9.  
  Ask: “Louis felt like he was waiting 62 years for his teacher to call on him. What does waiting feel like for you? In school? At home? How does your body and mind feel?” Give a minute to think, then students will turn and talk with their reading partner. Call on two to three partners to share.

- Stop after page 15.  
  Ask: “When you have a connection what could you do instead of blurt?” Think, then turn and talk. Call on two to three partners to
<table>
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<th>Share.</th>
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| Stop after page 25.  
Ask: “How does it feel for you to be interrupted? What do you do? What can you do to help remember not to interrupt in the future.” Think, then turn and talk. Call on two to three partners to share. |
| Stop after page 29.  
Ask: “What do you think Louis’ mom meant when she said ‘only if you make it work’?” Think, then turn and talk. Call on two to three partners to share. |
| After Reading  
* Direct students to review the emotions that they wrote within the body template.  
* Students will choose an emotion or a color that they want to journal about.  
* Display questions for students to see as they write (below).  
* After describing the emotion, students will make an action plan of how to manage it better in school. |
**Journaling questions:**

- What emotion did you choose to write about?

- Why did you choose this emotion?

- How does your body feel when this emotion is taking place? Does your body temperature change? Are your muscles working differently? What about your facial expression?

- When you feel this emotion, what is your first instinct? What do you typically do?

- What can you do to control your body, words, and emotions when this happens?

- How will you remember to do this?
Social- Awareness

The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

- Perspective-taking
- Empathy
- Appreciating diversity
- Respect for others

*CASEL, 2017*
Affirmations
Social- Awareness Activity

Materials needed:
- Post-it notes
- Pencils
- Optional: paper cape/ construction paper

Teacher prep:
- Option to have students make a paper cape for themselves using large construction paper.

Duration: approximately 10-15 minutes

Directions:
1. Ask students to think of the last time someone complimented them. Try to direct them away from comments about appearance and clothing and towards intangible qualities such as acts of kindness.

2. Ask students to think to themselves about peers in the classroom that they would like to acknowledge for an action or quality. Remind them to stay positive in the affirmations and to stay away from physical appearance compliments.
   a. Offer examples of how to begin an affirmation.
      i. - Thank you for …
      ii. - In ____ subject, you taught me ____.
      iii. - You are …
      iv. - I am thankful for you because …
      v. - I noticed that you …
      vi. - I appreciated when you …

3. Give students time to write post-it note affirmations. These can be written anonymously.

4. Delivering the post-its can be done in a variety of ways:
   a. Students stick the note to the paper cape.
   b. Students stick the note to their peers arm, back, leg, etc.
   c. Students stick the note to their peers desk/ carpet spot.

5. Optional to have students read the notes to themselves or have another classmate read the notes out loud for the class to hear the good qualities of each other.

6. Remind students that affirmations can be done at any time and to anyone.

* Adapted from Institute for SEL
### The Invisible Boy by Trudy Ludwig

**Social-Awareness Literacy Lesson**

**Title:** The Invisible Boy  
**Author:** Trudy Ludwig  
**Illustrator:** Patrice Barton

**Duration:** approximately 40 minutes

**Pre-lesson planning:**  
* Teach students how to use padlet or prepare one large poster paper and markers.  
* Create partnerships of students to be turn and talk partners during reading.  
* Review “turn and talk” rules with class.  
  - Students need to sit eye to eye, knee to knee while talking.  
  - They should only talk with one another about the given question.  
  - Once finished, students will turn towards the teacher and signal they are ready to continue listening to the book.

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<tr>
<th>Before Reading</th>
<th>Question Poster:</th>
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<td>* If this is done on an iPad, have students log on to the class padlet. The teacher begins by writing, “What does it mean to be invisible?” Students will answer this question or write their own question related to this. Students then can answer their teacher or their peer’s question.</td>
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<td>* If this is done on poster paper, the teacher still begins by writing the question “What does it mean to be invisible?” Each student will have a marker and will write their response or question of their own.</td>
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| During Reading | Stop after the author writes, “Let’s play ball!”  
Ask: “Think to yourself, what is recess like for you? Are there team games? What do you notice?” After a moment, have students turn and talk. Call on two to three partners to share. |

|               | Stop after the author writes, “…or feeling invisible.”  
Ask: “When was a time that you have felt different than others? Do you think it is worse to be laughed at or feel invisible? Why?” Think, then turn and talk. Call on two to three partners to share. |

|               | Stop after the author writes, “…invisible after all.”  
Ask: “Why was Brian invisible? Why is he no longer invisible?” Think, then turn and talk. Call on two to three partners to share. |

| After Reading | * Explain that students will be divided into small groups to create an
action plan for someone that is feeling invisible or someone that notices an “invisible” student.
* Divide students into 5 groups.
* Assign each group a different location (playground, lunch room, specials, hallways, and classroom).
* Each group will make an action plan for a student feeling invisible, and another action plan of what to do if they notice an invisible student.
* This can be written, draw, or both. It needs to be multi-stepped and in as much detail as possible.
* Once each group has completed their action plan, they will present it to the class. The teacher should display this as a reminder.
Relationship Skills

The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.

- Communication
- Social engagement
- Relationship-building
- Teamwork

* CASEL, 2017
Silent Drawing*
Relationship Skills Activity

Materials needed:
- Drawing paper
- Crayons for each group

Teacher prep:
- Partner students prior to beginning activity
- In a black marker, draw 2-4 marks (dots, zig-zag, swirl, lines, etc.) on the paper for students to add to (example below).
- Make copies of drawing paper, 1 per group.

Duration: approximately 25 minutes (This can be shortened or lengthened to meet the demands of students.)

Directions:
1. Explain to students that this activity will help gain understanding of themselves and others by using non-verbal communication.
2. Brainstorm with students ways of communicating without using words.
3. Show students the drawing paper and explain that with their partner, they will have 15 minutes (adaptable) to design a drawing together.
4. The goal is to build off of each other’s art, take turns, and communicate while being silent.
5. Give students time to find a successful working area in the classroom with their partner, coloring supplies, and paper.
6. Once the time is completed have students hold up their drawings. You may do a gallery walk around the classroom to see each group’s artwork.
7. Come together as a class to reflect on the activity. Example questions are listed below.

* Adapted from Institute for SEL
Optional Reflection Questions:

- How did you feel about this exercise at the start? In the middle? At the end?
- What frustrated you?
- What surprised you?
- What would you do the same if we did this activity again? What would you change?
- Was working silent easier or harder than you expected? Why?
- What did you notice about yourself while doing this activity?

* Adapted from Institute for SEL
**Thank You Mr. Falker** by Patricia Polacco  
**Relationship Skills Literacy Lesson**

**Title:** Thank You Mr. Falker  
**Author:** Patricia Polacco  
**Illustrator:** Patricia Polacco

**Duration:** approximately 40 minutes

**Pre-lesson planning:**
- Have one paper plate per student.  
- Create partnerships of students to be turn and talk partners during reading.  
- Review “turn and talk” rules with class.  
  - Students need to sit eye to eye, knee to knee while talking.  
  - They should only talk with one another about the given question.  
  - Once finished, students will turn towards the teacher and signal they are ready to continue listening to the book.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before Reading</th>
<th>During Reading</th>
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</table>
| * Partner students together.  
  * Give each student a paper plate.  
  * Students will glue the plates so they overlap in the middle (see example below).  
  * Provide students with a list of questions (below).  
  * Allow students to work together on completing their Venn Diagram for about 10-15 minutes.  
  * If time permits, students can present their similarities and differences to the class.  |
| Stop after the author writes, “Soon she was going to learn to read.” Ask: “What do you think Trisha’s family meant when they said you have to chase it through the pages of the book? What knowledge do you want to chase?” Give a minute to think, then students will turn and talk with their reading partner. Call on two to three partners to share.  
Stop after the author writes, “Stop!... fault with her?” Ask: “What is Mr. Falker doing? Why? Have you ever felt different than others? When?” Think, then turn and talk. Call on two to three partners to share.  
Stop after the author writes, “And Tricia began to believe them.” Ask: “She started to believe her peers. How can words be powerful in good ways and in bad ways?” Think, then turn and talk. Call on two to three partners to share. |
| After Reading | * Explain to students that there are many people in their personal community willing to help them. Have students make a web to brainstorm everyone that they can think of that is available to help if needed.  
* Then, students will choose one person of a different age than them to complete the venn diagram questions with as homework. |

Stop after the author writes, “…she was happy, so very happy.”
Ask: “Trisha worked really hard to learn to read. What is something you have worked really hard to learn? Who helped you along the way?” Think, then turn and talk. Call on two to three partners to share.
Example plate venn diagram:

Example questions to connect through similarities and differences:

Section 1:
- Where were you born?
- How many siblings do you have?
- What is your favorite food?
- What is your favorite activity to do outside?
- Where would you like to travel?
- What makes you really happy?

Section 2:
- Who is your role model and what is their impact in your life?
- What is a goal of yours for the future?
- What type of music or animal inspires you?

Section 3:
- How would you change in the world if you could?
- What is something that challenges you, but you keep working at it?
- What is something I do not know about you?

* Adapted from Institute for SEL
Responsible Decision Making

The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.

- Identifying problems
- Analyzing situations
- Solving problems
- Evaluating
- Reflecting
- Ethical responsibility

*CASEL, 2017*
Conflict Resolution
Responsible Decision Making Activity

Materials needed:
- Scenario cards (see below)
- Conflict Resolution Steps (see below)

Teacher prep:
- Divide students into groups of five prior to the activity.

Duration: approximately 30 minutes.

Directions:
1. Ask students, “Who has ever had a conflict with another person?” “Who has ever resolved the conflict?” “Think to yourself about different ways that you have solved these conflicts. Maybe with a sibling? A friend? A parent? A teacher?” Give students a couple minutes to think to themselves.
2. Explain that you will review Conflict Resolution steps as a class.
3. Display the Conflict Resolution steps for everyone to see. Have a conversation about what they notice compared to how they have solved conflicts in their lives.
4. Explain that students will be practicing the right way to solve conflicts.
5. Divide students into the predetermined groups and give one scenario card.
6. Ask students to work together to create a short skit that involves all members of the group and practices the conflict resolution steps. Explain that the scenarios might involve bully and while performing the skit, it should be taken lightly.
7. Give about 10 minutes for students to plan their skit.
8. Each group will take turns by reading the given scenario, then presenting the skit.
9. Gather as a whole group to discuss how these skills can impact them at school, home, and in other activities.
10. Display the conflict resolution steps in the classroom.

* Adapted from Institute for SEL
Conflict Resolution Steps

If someone approaches you about a conflict…

1. Actively listen to the story. (Each person takes a turn speaking and listening.)
   a. Look at the person speaking
   b. Nod head
   c. Do not interrupt.

2. Empathize.
   a. “It sounds like you are feeling…”

3. Restate the story back.
   a. “I heard you say … Is this correct?”


5. Make a decision for the next steps.

6. Check back in later that day or the following day if necessary.

* Adapted from Institute for SEL
Conflict Resolution Steps

If you are being bullied...

1. Use an assertive voice and state only what is necessary.
   - Examples: “NO!” “Do not touch/hit/kick me!”

2. Leave the situation.

3. Find a trusted adult and explain the problem.

If you witness someone being bullied…

1. Interrupt the action.
   - You can stand up to the bully using an assertive voice or
   - You can go to the person being bullied.

2. Compliment the person being bullied.

3. Invite them away from the current area.
   - Continue to play with them or
   - Find a trusted adult to talk to.
## Conflict Resolution Skit Scenarios

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<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You are riding the bus to school. A couple students start taking pictures of others on their school iPad and laughing.</td>
<td>At lunch, a peer bumps into your friend while cutting in line for the third day in a row. The person that cut laughs, says “Whoops, I’m sorry!” and turns around. Your friend isn’t hurt, but frustrated.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At recess, you’re playing kickball. A peer asks to join. Your whole team laughs and tells him to join the other team because he’s so bad.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your friend said they didn’t want to be your partner.</td>
<td>A friend tells you that two students from another class were making fun of her on the bus. She explains that this has been happening for the past month. She hoped it would go away, but it hasn’t.</td>
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<td>You see a kid from your class sitting alone on the playground and appears to be crying. He is not a friend, but he was in your class last year.</td>
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Mr. Peabody’s Apples by Madonna
Responsible Decision Making Literacy Lesson

Title: *Mr. Peabody’s Apples*
Author: Madonna
Illustrator: Madonna

Duration: approximately 40 minutes

Pre-lesson planning:
* Create partnerships of students to be turn and talk partners during reading.
* Review “turn and talk” rules with class.
  - Students need to sit eye to eye, knee to knee while talking.
  - They should only talk with one another about the given question.
  - Once finished, students will turn towards the teacher, read to continue listening to the book.
* A piece of heart shaped paper for each child.
* Copy the story map worksheet for each child.

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<th>Before Reading</th>
<th>During Reading</th>
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| * Give each student a blank piece of paper shaped like a heart.  
* Have students think of a time they were sad or mad.  
  Offer suggestions: Your brother teased you. You were not chosen for kickball at recess. Your sister and her friends laughed at you. Etc.  
* Each student will then crumple the paper heart as much as they want. They may call the paper names and tease the paper. They can step on it. Give a few minutes for students to laugh and tease the paper.  
* Then, in a serious tone, ask students to turn their paper heart back to its original state. Explain that there should not be any wrinkles or tears at all. Give one to two minutes for students to attempt this. If students say it is impossible or too hard, encourage them to keep trying.  
* Ask students to apologize to their paper.  
* Gather together and ask students how this activity could be translated into their own life? Have a group discussion about how hurtful words cannot be taken back no matter how hard someone tries. | Stop after page 9. “Think about someone that you admire and everyone in the community likes.”  
Stop after page 13. “How do you think Billy is feeling? Tommy? Mr. Peabody?” Give a minute to think, then students will turn and talk with their reading partner. Call on two to three partners to share.  
Stop after page 21. “Have you ever had to apologize for something you
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| * Students will return to their desk with a pencil.  
* Review story elements as a whole group.  
* Then, give each student a story map (below).  
* Students will complete the worksheet individually or with their reading partner.  
* Once everyone is finished, allow time for students to share the solution they wrote about. |
### Story Map

*Mr. Peabody’s Apples* by Madonna

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<th>Characters</th>
<th>Setting</th>
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<th>Problem</th>
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What is at least one other possible solution to the problem? Write at least four complete sentences.

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