Spring 2019

A Necessity For Social And Emotional Learning In Kindergarten The Teaching Of Self-Regulation Through Literacy

Kirsten M. Pinkerton

A NECESSITY FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN KINDERGARTEN

The Teaching of Self-Regulation Through Literacy

by

Kirsten M. Pinkerton

A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in Literacy Education.

Hamline University

Saint Paul, Minnesota

May 2019

Capstone Project Facilitators: Patty Born & Vivian Johnson
Content Experts: Kirk Diment & Jenny Heyer
Peer Reviewers: Brenna Balkus & Lindsey Patterson

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

A Necessity for Social and Emotional Learning

Kindergarten - "A Year of Beginnings"

As a kindergarten teacher since 2016, I have discovered the start of each year is full of beginnings for kindergarten students: a new school, new teachers, new books, new math tools, new friends, and new expectations. Throughout the school year my goal is to support my kindergarten students in learning to be a friend and a student. In my kindergarten classroom, students learn what it looks like to listen to stories quietly, what it means to work in small groups or independently, what it feels like to be proud when an activity is finished, and what it is like to overcome challenges. In my experience, kindergarten is an essential year in a child's life. Sabey, Charlton, Pyle, Lignugaris-Kraft, and Ross (2017) illustrate that kindergarten is the first experience of school for many students. A child's kindergarten experience can impact their view towards school and learning; it introduces behavioral and cognitive skills, and increases social skill demands.

I have discovered that many students are coming to kindergarten ill-prepared to socially interact with one another or learn the expectations of being a student. Zigler, Gilliam, and Jones (2006) estimate 30-40% of kindergarten students arrive without the social, emotional, and language skills needed to initially succeed in school. Sabey, et al. (2017) share similar findings, they express "many children struggle in kindergarten because they are unprepared to meet the social, emotional, and behavioral demands of the school context" (p. 512). In my experience students are struggling to make friends, to read and understand each other's emotions, to share toys with one another or work cooperatively on an activity, and have difficulty listening to someone talk and respond to

them appropriately. Without a basis of social and emotional skills, it is very difficult for students to focus on academic skills in school (CASEL, 2018). These observations have led me to explore: *How can kindergarten teachers begin the year using a text set to teach the social and emotional learning skill of?*

The purpose of this capstone project is to explore and create a literacy text set unit to explicitly instruct the social and emotional learning skill of self-regulation in a general education kindergarten classroom. At this stage in the project, social and emotional learning and text sets will be defined. Payton, et al. (2008) defines social and emotional learning as

> the process through which adults and children acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to recognize and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, demonstrate caring and concerns for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations effectively. (p. 4)

A text set is defined by Nichols (2009) as "a collection of sources of information that have a commonality; that is, they explore a shared topic, issue or big idea" (p. 34). The long term goal of this project is to create text set units for the social and emotional learning skills of self-regulation, empathy, and cooperation. This project will focus solely on creating a text set unit for self-regulation.

The remainder of Chapter One will outline my research question, the purpose of my capstone project, and how I came to develop a strong interest in social and emotional learning (SEL). My teaching experience and school committee involvement will be shared. These pieces will paint a picture of my teaching environment and the personal

challenges I face with my students everyday. Finally, the impact this curriculum project can have on other teachers and their kindergarten students will be presented. These key pieces will help provide the foundation to my literature review and a clear explanation of my project plan. To begin, a description of the changes in kindergarten academics will be shared.

Increase in Kindergarten Academics

Over the past 15 years, according to Bierman, Greenberg, and Abenavoli (2016) the end of the year goals of kindergarten have become increasingly academic. Logue (2007) shares that kindergarten was traditionally a learning environment where students learned the social skills needed to participate in a group. Currently, kindergarten students are expected to come to kindergarten with "prerequisite skills for early literacy and math and the social maturity to comply with school routines" (Logue, 2007, p. 37). Goldstein (2007) expresses this transformation in expectations happened due to the passing of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001, which was changed to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015.

Cohen (as cited by Sloan, 2012) shares that caregivers and educators want children to be lifelong learners who love, work, and are responsible members of society, but states these pieces of education are very difficult to fulfill when NCLB has narrowed the focus to academics and neglected social and emotional learning. Bassok, et al. (2016) convey even though passing the NCLB Act did not require assessments in kindergarten, it still put pressure on primary teachers to guarantee success by the end of third grade. This has led to the developmentally appropriate practices of exploration and play being set aside to increase academics and test preparation. With the increase in academics, less

time is spent practicing social skills. Ray and Smith (2010) remind us that not all children are socially competent and able to participate in a classroom community without additional support and social skill instruction. With the arrival of ill-prepared students to be a part of a group, there is a growing need for social and emotional skill instruction in kindergarten.

The Need for Student Social Skills

I have always had a passion for teaching children and knew teaching was my calling from a very young age. In the spring of 2015, a kindergarten teaching position opened up at my school for the following year. With degrees in both elementary and early childhood education and a long-time dream to teach kindergarten, applying for the position was a no brainer. My kindergarten teacher continues to remain in my memories today. She shared her excitement for learning and taught me to be curious. My goal is to do the same for my kindergarten students - engage and excite them about learning.

In the beginning of my kindergarten teaching career in 2016, my class consisted of 23 students with a broad spectrum of academic and social abilities. Many of my students did not know how to interact with one another. Some were able to share and work together, while others were not. About half of my students were struggling to listen and follow directions. With preschool attendance on the rise, more defined expectations for pre-kindergarten programs, and the abundance of knowledge on the benefits of early education, I expected the students coming into kindergarten to have a stronger foundation in social, emotional, and school skills. Darling-Hammond (2010) explains

Many children do not have the kind of experiences at home or in a preschool

setting that enable them to develop the communication and interaction

skills, motor development, cognitive skills, and social-emotional skills that enable

them to be independent learners when they arrive in school. (p. 33)

This research suggests that even students who have attended preschool may not

demonstrate the SEL skills needed for success in kindergarten. To my surprise, many of

my kindergarten students were demonstrating a deficit in their social and emotional

abilities. I knew we would be practicing these skills in kindergarten, but did not realize

how many challenges my students would be facing when it came to forming friendships

and playing together.

I am currently in my fourth year of teaching in a suburb of a metropolitan area in

Minnesota. This is my third year teaching kindergarten in an early learning center. An

early learning center is a school designed for birth through kindergarten education. Our

early learning center has fifteen sections of kindergarten with 22 - 26 students in each

classroom. At the end of the year, the students will be split and sent to their home

elementary school for first through fifth grades. Our center also hosts birth through pre-

kindergarten and parenting classes.

Being a part of an early learning center allows for the environment to be very age

and developmentally appropriate. For example, most elementary schools in our district

use the Responsive Classroom (2018) CARES (cooperation, assertion, responsibility,

empathy, and self-control) model for expectations. In 2015, our school's Positive

Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS): Culture and Climate team decided to focus

on three of the competencies cooperation, empathy, and self-control - rather than all five.

The reason to reduce the focus and concentrate on cooperation, empathy, and self-

control was to provide a strong foundation to begin students' learning in SEL. To create

this foundation, we practice these expectations through a school poem and song with actions in our kindergarten classrooms. The repetitive practice and kinesthetic engagement has led students to know and live these expectations in- and outside of school. In addition, because of our small staff size, we are able to have the same paraprofessionals for small group literacy and math instruction and work with one specialist teacher allowing students to form strong relationships with three or four adults rather than eight to ten. Our specialist teachers teach all of the following content areas: science, technology, art, music, and physical education. These strong relationships lead to a safe and comfortable learning environment for our students.

Even with the integration of the Responsive Classroom (2018) CARES model, I have continued to see an increased number of behavioral problems among my students. For example, two boys wrestled on the ground because they both wanted to put away a bin of manipulatives even though a third student was asked to put it away. I have worked with girls on focusing only on themselves and not worrying about others actions or activities. My students have been guided through exercises of bumping into each other and saying "excuse me" to teach students that if someone accidently bumps you, it does not mean they purposely were trying to hit or hurt you. All of these incidences interfere with academic teaching and learning. My instruction is often paused to help students resolve problems or reset so they can get their work done.

From the beginning, I was struggling to manage my students' behaviors and I assumed it was because of my inexperience as a teacher. However, through conversations with my mentor teacher, a veteran kindergarten teacher of nineteen years, and my team members we discovered we were all struggling with similar behavioral problems and the

lack of competent social skills at the beginning of kindergarten. My struggles lead to direct involvement in my school community working to help other teachers experiencing these same challenges.

In 2017, I joined my school's PBIS: Culture and Climate team in hopes to help manage student behavior in our school. The PBIS: Culture and Climate team is a committee consisting of four classroom teachers, one specialist teacher, our principal, and our student services assistant. Together we focus on school-wide behavior systems and expectations. Our team goal is to proactively manage students' behaviors. We have been working on identifying the expected behaviors in each area of the school: cafeteria, playground, hallways, bathrooms, bus, and classrooms. In addition to these school-wide expectations, our student services assistant teaches one - fifteen minute social and emotional lesson a week to each classroom. The teachers have supplemental resources available to support the weekly SEL lesson.

Even with these pieces in place, I am still experiencing challenges with my students' social interactions and a need for more explicit social and emotional instruction. My students are in need of appropriate behavior demonstrations, scaffolded practice, and time to practice independently. My goal through my research is to better understand social and emotional learning, what skills should be taught in kindergarten, and the best practices to teach them. My plan is to create a literacy text set unit to teach the needed social skills of self-regulation in the beginning of the kindergarten school year. The creation of a text set will allow students repeated exposure in a variety of text formats and practice opportunities of SEL skills through book characters and guided personal interactions.

Upon completion of the literature review for this capstone, I will develop a better understanding of SEL in order to impact my students' social and emotional skills as well as share my findings with other kindergarten teachers. Presented next will be ideas of how other teachers and their students will be impacted by this capstone project.

Impacting Other Teachers and Students

The goal of this research is to create a literacy text set unit focusing on self-regulation that can be used in kindergarten classrooms to increase student success. Through the use of this text set, teachers will facilitate explicit self-regulation instruction in the classroom. Teachers will model appropriate behavior to students, provide scaffolded practice, and allow independent practice time with feedback and coaching from their teacher.

The SEL skill of self-regulation will be taught from the beginning of the school year as a teacher sets up his/her classroom routines and expectations. The desire is to use literacy instruction to decrease negative student behaviors and peer conflicts by adding explicit social and emotional instruction into kindergarten classrooms. The goal is that after reading this capstone project, teachers will have a better understanding of social and emotional learning, kindergarten appropriate SEL skills, age appropriate expectations, developmental growth patterns of SEL skills, and how SEL impacts learning. With a deeper understanding of SEL, the discussion will then lead to how literacy text sets can be used to teach SEL. Reducing student conflicts and behaviors will allow teachers to spend more time instructing and focusing on individual student needs.

With the completion of this capstone project, my plan is to share my research findings and text set unit with my PBIS: Culture and Climate team. From there, our team

may discuss modifications to our school-wide expectation matrix and our social and emotional learning year-long curriculum. As a team, we may decide to share my research findings and this unit at a staff meeting. This capstone project could be used by teachers at my school to supplement the provided SEL curriculum.

In summary, Chapter One outlines my research question: *How can kindergarten teachers begin the year using a text set to teach the social and emotional learning skill of self-regulation?* This topic is significant to me and my teaching because I have discovered my kindergarten students are facing many social and emotional challenges in the classroom. They are struggling to interact and play with one another due to a lack of social and emotional skills. The purpose of this research and capstone project is to create a literacy text set unit to explicitly instruct the social and emotional learning skills of self-regulation in a general education kindergarten classroom.

Capstone Project Outline

Chapter Two, the literature review, will summarize social and emotional learning and its five components. It will provide an overview of developmentally appropriate social skills to be taught in kindergarten as well as age appropriate expectations of those skills. Self-regulation will be defined in detail and kindergarten appropriate expectations will be presented. The research will elaborate why SEL is needed in schools and the impacts SEL has on learning. Lastly, the incorporation of literacy and SEL in the classroom through the use of text sets will be discussed. This will lead to Chapter Three, in which an outline and design description of the unit project will be shared. Finally, Chapter Four will provide a detailed description and reflection of this project.

CHAPTER TWO

Social and Emotional Learning Literature Review

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is an essential piece of education and participation in the real world (CASEL, 2018). Social and emotional learning, according to the Collaborative for Academics, Social and Emotional Learning association (CASEL) (2013), "involves the processes of developing social and emotional competencies in children" (p. 9). Social and emotional learning is used in all aspects of life. It is used when forming relationships, having conversations, completing activities, and collaborating with others.

This chapter will begin by defining social and emotional learning and the five competencies of social success. Next, developmentally appropriate social skills for kindergarten students will be discussed. Then the review of literature will focus specifically on self-regulation and developmental stages a child goes through, followed by kindergarten appropriate self-regulation. Lastly, SEL impacts on learning and the ways literacy instruction can be incorporated into SEL will be discussed. The literature review of these themes will help guide the development of the thesis project question: *How can kindergarten teachers begin the year using a text set to teach the social and emotional learning skill of self-regulation?* To begin, SEL will be defined and explained in detail providing a foundation of knowledge to this capstone.

Defining Social and Emotional Learning

Social and emotional learning (SEL) success is important in order to achieve academic and social goals. SEL, as explained by Payton, et al. (2008),

is the process through which adults and children acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to recognize and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, demonstrate caring and concerns for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations effectively. (p. 4)

It is clear from this definition that social and emotional skills are needed by all people to interact and communicate effectively with others. Socially skilled people can self-manage, initiate, and maintain positive relationships with teachers and peers. In addition, SEL competency is needed in the world beyond school. Flook, Repetti, and Ullman (2005), reported that socially skilled people are able to navigate the expectations of school environments and non-school environments (e.g. sporting events, parks, playgrounds, restaurants, etc.).

Although these skills seem intuitive, researchers Kramer, Caldarella, Christensen, and Shatzer (2010), discovered that as many as 20% of students struggle with emotional and behavioral problems. In addition, young students with emotional and behavioral problems often struggle with academics and mental health. Logue (2007) notes that the negative impacts of poorly developed SEL can be offset with the implementation of SEL curriculums in schools. SEL instruction can teach the skills needed to work successfully and cooperatively with peers. Students learn to control their impulses, use words rather than aggression to express frustrations, and stay attentive for an allotted amount of time. These skills are not only essential in school, but also for everyday life. Social skills are used for communication with friends, coworkers, and supervisors. People must be able to cooperate with others and express their frustrations respectfully in a work setting

(Glosky, 2018). If people are unable to do this, challenges and conflicts often arise. These communication interactions outline the need for relationship skills; this is one SEL competency.

Five Competencies of Social and Emotional Learning

According to CASEL (2018) there are five groups of SEL skills that need to be taught and understood in order for people to succeed in life. They are: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. The definitions of the five competencies are provided by CASEL (2018).

Self-awareness. Self-awareness is the ability to accurately assess one's feelings, interests, values, and strengths in order to be self-confident. People who possess self-awareness are able to recognize how emotions and thoughts affect their behaviors. They can identify an accurate perception of one's self and define their self-efficacy. Self-aware people are confident, optimistic, and have a growth mindset.

Self-management. Self-management is the ability to regulate one's own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. It includes controlling impulses, persevering through challenges, and setting and monitoring growth towards personal goals. Self-managed people can manage stress and motivate one's self in order to complete a task or reach a goal.

Social awareness. Social awareness is the ability to empathize and take the perspectives of others. When people are socially aware they are tolerant of others and able to communicate and socialize with those who are different from themselves.

Relationship skills. Relationship skills are the ability to establish and maintain positive and healthy relationships. Relationships are based on cooperation, social pressure

resistance, and conflict resolution skills. People who acquire strong relationship skills can communicate clearly and listen attentively to others. They also seek and offer help when needed.

   Responsible decision making. Responsible decision making is the ability to make decisions based on ethics, safety, and social norms. Responsible decision makers are aware of the consequences of their actions. Figure 1 in the Appendix notes the importance of additional researchers for each competency.

   Johns, Crowley, and Guetzloe (2005) suggest social and emotional competencies are critical and allow people to manage the social environment around them. When a person is able to manage the social environment they are able to succeed. Glosky (2018) explains that research shows that teaching students to manage their emotions, resolve conflicts, and make responsible decisions is equally as important as academic content. These social and emotional competencies are important, because they are used by schools to guide learning.

   The Minnesota Department of Education uses the CASEL competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making) to describe primary grade SEL skills. These goals are to be mastered between the years of kindergarten and third grade. The learning goals are provided by Minnesota's Department of Education and can be viewed in the Appendix. The learning goals in Figure 2 guide the SEL skills for primary grade level students. Teachers have the capability to use these goals to guide age appropriate instruction. The next section will provide an overview on social and emotional skills that are age appropriate for kindergarten students.

Social and Emotional Learning Skills Needed for Kindergarten

SEL is essential for all ages of children, but is especially important for preschool and kindergarten students. Ashford and Bernard (2011) explain that kindergarten is the first formal school setting for many students. It is a year to teach students the purpose of school, impact their attitudes towards learning, introduce cognitive and behavior skills, and teach appropriate social interactions. According to King and Boardman (2006) there are many social and emotional skills that kindergarteners need to portray before entering kindergarten:

- Manage their owns belongings

- Use the toilet on their own

- Wash and dry their own hands

- Follow rules and routines

- Persevere to finish a task

- Cooperate and take turns with others

- Express their feelings

- Ask questions when they need help

- Try new things

- Accept feedback from adults on learning and behavior

These skills fall into the following categories for early learners: personal independence, attitude towards learning, social communication, social interaction with peers, and behavior. Figure 1 outlines these SEL skills for early learners (King & Broadman, 2006).

Figure 1. SEL Skills for Early Learners

SEL Categories for Early Learners	SEL Skill Examples
Personal Independence	- Manage own belongings - Use the toilet on his/her own - Wash and dry own hands
Attitude Towards Learning	- Persevere to finish a task - Try new things
Social Communication	- Express feelings - Ask questions when help is needed - Accept feedback from adults
Social Interactions with Peers	- Cooperate with others - Take turns
Behavior	Follow rules and routines

These SEL skill examples show the traits that are needed for a successful year in kindergarten. Students who struggle with these skills as they enter kindergarten often have a more difficult time adjusting to the routines and expectations, building friendships, and forming a positive relationship with their teacher - all key pieces to a successful kindergarten year (King & Broadman, 2006). To follow, each early learning SEL category is described in detail.

Personal independence. As stated by King and Boardman (2006), personal independence is defined as the ability to take care of one's own needs; such as going to the bathroom alone, washing and drying hands, and managing belongings [carrying, keeping track of, putting away, etc.]. Bronson, Tivnan, and Seppanen (1995) express personal independence is needed in kindergarten because supervision is decreased as the year progresses and routines are mastered. Supervision is reduced to create a stronger

emphasis on autonomy and accommodate larger class sizes. For example, by the end of the year a teacher can likely instruct a small group while students work independently.

Attitude towards learning. A critical aspect of school is having a positive attitude towards learning. Teachers are a key factor in this attitude which leads to motivated student learning. They have the ability to create excited and curious learners. Teachers can do this by exciting and motivating student learning. "If they [students] believe they are capable as learners and are motivated learners who find learning to be fun, they will go to the effort to acquire the academic content" (Blair & Diamond, 2008, p. 908). Educators can teach students to believe and motivate oneself through the formation of trusting and caring relationships. For best attitudes towards learning, an environment with these relationships are crucial. CASEL (2013) agrees, when strong supportive relationships are formed learning becomes challenging, engaging, and meaningful. Supportive relationships among teachers and students positively impact students' attitudes towards school and learning. With kindergarten being the majority of students first school experience, it is critical to create positive attitudes toward learning. Positive school experiences propel future engagement in learning.

Social communication. Social communication is the ability to interact and communicate effectively with others. King and Broadman (2006) further define social communication skills as students' ability to ask for help, use manners such as "please and thank you", talk to familiar adults including sharing his/her feelings, and the ability to sit and listen to an adult for five minutes. These skills are needed in kindergarten to try challenging or new activities, be kind to others, cooperate and share with peers, get assistance when needed, and participate in read alouds and lesson activities.

Social interaction with peers. Social interaction with peers is often seen as the most important social skill for early learners by parents (King & Broadman, 2006). Skills that fall into this category include: helping others, joining group activities, sharing learning tools and toys, communicating effectively with other children, and showing emotional concern. These skills are needed in kindergarten to form and maintain friendships with peers and be apart of the classroom community.

Behavior. Behavior is defined as the way in which one acts independently and towards others. King and Broadman (2006) state that it is crucial for a child to follow an adult's request and to accept a correction on his/her behavior. In order to succeed in kindergarten, students must be able to modify their behavior as needed. Johns, et al. (2005) explain that when teachers provide behavior feedback it is pivotal for teachers to use that moment as a teaching opportunity rather than a punitive moment. When "teaching moments" are used, students have the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and reduce the chance of getting in trouble for that behavior again.

It is key for children to develop appropriate social skills prior to kindergarten. The highlighted skills of personal independence, attitude towards learning, social communication, social interactions with peers, and behavior were described in detail for young learners. Children who demonstrate these skills are more likely to successfully transition into kindergarten. The department of education in the state of Minnesota recognizes kindergarten as an important year of development in a child's life. The kindergarten year guides the child's behavior, affects mental health, and impacts their ability to succeed academically. The next section of this paper will outline the Minnesota Social and Emotional Development Domain of the Early Childhood Indicators of

Progress (ECIPs). These indicators help teachers outline expectations for developmentally appropriate social skills in order to increase students' success levels.

Social and Emotional Learning and Early Childhood Indicators of Progress

The Minnesota Social and Emotional Development Domain of the ECIPs (2017) states three components - self and emotional awareness, self-management, and social understanding and relationships. The ECIP Social and Emotional Development Domain also contains all five of the CASEL social competencies. Figure 2 aligns the Minnesota ECIP Components and the CASEL competencies.

Figure 2. Minnesota ECIP Components and the CASEL Competencies

ECIP Components	CASEL SEL Competencies
Self and Emotional Awareness	Self Awareness
Self-Management	Self-Management
	Responsible Decision Making
Social Understanding and Relationships	Social Awareness
	Relationships Skills

Figure 2 displays the ECIP component Self-Management which includes CASEL's responsible decision making and self-management competency. The ECIP component Social Understanding and Relationships includes CASEL's social awareness and relationship skills competency. Lastly, the ECIP component Self and Emotional Awareness is analogous to CASEL's self awareness. Each ECIP component will be examined more deeply.

Self and emotional awareness. The ECIP component Self and Emotional Awareness focuses on three subcomponents: confidence, self-awareness, and emotions. Confidence emphasizes the willingness to express one's own ideas and seek help if needed. Confident students demonstrate independence by completing self-directed activities as well as tolerate and accept constructive feedback. Self-awareness indicates the child has an understanding of his/her personality as well as personal strengths and limitations. A self-aware child displays a growing interest in the similarities and differences between him/herself and peers. The emotional component is the ability to understand the cause and effect of one's own emotions and anticipate other's emotions based on reactions to a situation. A child who demonstrates confidence, self-awareness, and emotions is ready for kindergarten. These skills are important because they demonstrate that the child is capable of identifying one's self and connecting emotions to situations.

Self-Management. The ECIP component Self-Management focuses on a child's management of thinking, emotions, and behavior. A child who is managing his/her thinking is capable of sustaining on a task for at least five minutes. In addition, a child has a clear understanding of expectations based on different environments. For example, the child understands the library is a quiet setting, whereas the playground is a loud one. A child who is managing his/her emotions independently asks for assistance when needed. The child is able to verbalize feelings, needs, opinions, and ideas in order to get his/her needs met. A child who is managing his/her behavior is able to control impulses. For example, the child can resist touching materials on his/her table while directions are

given. Students who are able to self-manage their attention, emotions, body control, and think before they act are able to succeed in kindergarten.

   Social understanding and relationships. The ECIP component Social Understanding and Relationships emphasize social responsiveness, building relationships, and social skills. Social responsiveness is the ability to read and understand other's complex feelings [e.g. embarrassment, pride, and frustration] and respond to them appropriately. Friendships can be formed when a child is able to understand, connect, and respond appropriately to other's feelings. Additionally at this age the child is not egocentric, rather he/she is beginning to appreciate and understand a peer's perspective. This understanding allows for positive interactions between peers.

   The building of relationships in kindergarten takes place during play, learning activities, and conversations. The child is able to initiate play and ask to join or invite a peer to play through the use of social skills. Social skills are needed when conversing with peers and trying to solve problems independently. If students are unable to they seek help from a trusted adult. Trusted adults help kindergarteners form and maintain peer friendships through the understanding of emotions and perspectives. Figure 3 in the Appendix outlines the appropriate skills for kindergarten students based on the ECIP Social and Emotional Development Domain Components.

   The ECIP components of self and emotional awareness, self-management, and social understanding and relationships are an important piece of SEL because they outline the developmentally age appropriate expectations for kindergarten students. This outline is beneficial to educators when planning and utilizing best practices. By implementing these ECIP skills, students become more likely to succeed in kindergarten.

In this portion of the literature review social and emotional learning was explained. The five social and emotional competencies - self awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, social awareness, and relationship skills - were defined. These competencies were accompanied by kindergarten specific social and emotional skills. One of those SEL skills was self-management, which will be referred to as self-regulation in the remainder of the literature review. In the next portion, self-regulation will be explained in great detail.

Defining Self-regulation

Teaching social skills is very important for all ages, especially in young children. One of the necessary social skills for success in interactions with others and everyday tasks is self-management. To review, CASEL (2013) defines self-management as "the ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations" (p. 9). Researchers use many different terms interchangeably with self-management, a few are as follows: self-regulation, self-control, impulse control, emotional regulation and anger control. In this paper self-regulation will be the term used to represent this concept. Self-regulation is defined by Bronson (2000) as the ability to control external behaviors and cognitive systems. Controlling external behaviors is the ability to comply with adult requests, control behaviors, and adapt emotions. Cognitive system control is the ability to control attention, monitor thinking and problem solving, and engage in independent learning.

In order to self-regulate children must use prior knowledge and senses to evaluate their surroundings. Florez (2011) states when experiencing things children have an emotional or physical reaction. During self-regulation children must take those reactions

and communicate them with another body system. As described by Kuypers (2011), self-regulation incorporates more than one body system and set of skills. A person not only has to transfer the information to another body system, but when one system is not processing correctly then the other systems are negatively affected. In order to successfully self-regulate, all three critical neurological systems [sensory processing, executive functioning, and emotional regulation] must be combined and working together. An explanation of the three critical neurological systems follow.

Sensory processing. Sensory processing is described as taking in information and organizing it so it can be retrieved and purposefully used again. Kuypers (2011) writes that when students monitor and organize large amounts of information the brain is able to remember and not become overwhelmed.

Executive functioning. Executive functions are the processes that involve conscious control of thoughts and actions. The executive functioning skills related to self-regulation are shared by Kuypers (2011): shifting attention from one activity to another, multitasking, adding and retrieving information from memory [working memory], weighing options [flexible thinking], internalizing speech, making plans to reach a desired goal, and controlling impulses. When students' executive functioning skills work properly they are able to overcome the challenges they face, such as when asked to stop an incomplete activity to start the next lesson.

Emotional regulation. Emotional regulation is the ability to control emotions in order to reach a goal. The functions of emotional control include "monitoring, evaluating, and modifying the intensity and timing of the emotional response" (Kuypers, 2011, p. 6). To accompany Kuypers' definition, Silkenbeumer, Schiller, and Kartner (2018) explain

there are three levels of development in emotional regulation. As the child develops he/she will progress through the following levels by increasing their emotional regulation. The following levels of emotional regulation are provided by Silkenbeumer, et al. (2018).

Level 1, caregivers do all of the emotional regulating by using emotional talk in order to teach children awareness of their inner feelings. Teachers do this by telling students phrases such as, "I see that you are sad and crying because your tower got knocked over."

Level 2 (co-regulation), caregivers provide prompts to help children self-regulate their own feelings. They also help build a repertoire of strategies for coping with emotions. Teachers co-regulate with students by prompting them with phrases like, "I see that you are crying. What happened? Let's calm down by taking five deep breaths."

Level 3, caregivers coach children by using metacognitive prompts to guide their coping strategies and change their behavior. Teachers support students through these difficult feelings with statements like, "Remember what it felt like when you got pushed down on the playground? How do you think it made your friend feel when you pushed him/her down?"

These levels display the progression children go through as they learn to emotionally regulate themselves. In the optimal learning environment, caregivers and teachers provide support that matches the child's development for the highest level of success.

As stated previously, in order to successfully self-regulate all three critical neurological systems must be combined and working together (Kuypers, 2011). Blair and

Diamond (2008) explain that children must translate what they experience into information in order to regulate thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. If children are unable to regulate the information processed then challenges occur and academic success is difficult. An example is provided by Florez (2011), when students are experiencing emotions of anxiety they often withdraw from the activity, which affects engagement in learning and cognitive development. One could interpret the cause of anxiety as an information processing overload, whereas the anxiety can be related to the inability to emotionally regulate oneself. In turn, this affects learning due to improperly working executive functions.

In addition to looking at the critical nervous systems when studying a child's social and emotional skills, it is important to take into account the developmental stages. The next section will outline the developmental stages of self-regulation from prenatal to preschool. According to Kuypers (2011) this is important because to support and help children grow, caregivers and teachers must identify their developmental needs and begin instructing at that level.

Developmental Stages of Self-regulation

Self-regulation develops gradually over time just like learning to read. Children learn the foundational self-regulation skills in the first five years of life (Blair, 2002). Before babies are even born they begin to regulate their sensory motor responses and arousal.The developmental stages of self-regulation from Kopp (1982) are Neurophysiological Modulation, Sensorimotor Modulation, Control, Self-Control, and Self-regulation. Each developmental stage will be discussed chronologically.

Neurophysiological modulation. In the Neurophysiological Modulation phase, young infants, birth to three months, begin to organize their movements by repeating their behavior (e.g. moving thumb to mouth in order to self soothe). Even in the most basic level of development, children learn through repetition.

Sensorimotor modulation. The Sensorimotor Modulation stage occurs in three to nine month old babies when they begin to participate in voluntary motor acts (e.g. reach and grasp for an item) and are able to change the response if an event occurs. For example, if the object moves they are able to move their attention to where the object has relocated.

Control. By the time children are beginning to comply with caregivers they are entering the Control phase. This phase occurs between 12 and 18 months of age. Children are beginning to "show awareness of social or task demands that have been defined by caregivers, and to initiate, maintain, modulate, or cease physical acts, communication, and emotional signals accordingly" (Kopp, 1982, p. 204).

Self-control. The Self-Control stage of development typically begins about 24 months of age. Children are able to behave appropriately to social norms and caregivers' expectations even when supervision is not present. Children can also modify their own behavior based on prior experiences. This means they are able to remember the outcome or reaction from a previous situation and choose whether or not to do something based on the way they felt. Even though students have the capability to call upon their prior knowledge, their ability to adapt to a new setting is limited.

Self-regulation. Beginning at age three, children are able to comply with caregivers' requests and delay an activity by oneself or someone's instructions. They are

able to monitor their own behavior based on caregivers' expectations, even when the caregiver is not present. When a child turns four-years old they are able to do more complex self-regulations; they are able to anticipate appropriate responses and can modify their responses to a different situation or setting.

Kopp (1982) concurs that it is important for caregivers and educators to understand the stages of development for self-regulation to support and teach children. It is crucial to know your students and their personal developmental levels. Not all children's self-regulation stages will align with their chronological age. Children struggle to move into the next stage of self-regulation without mastering the previous stage. This being said, caregivers and teachers may need to adjust their approaches to incorporate skills from previous developmental stages. Figure 3 is a summary of Kopp's developmental stages of self-regulation (1982).

Figure 3. Developmental Stages of Self-regulation

Developmental Phase	Approximate Age	Characteristics
	Prenatal	• Able to regulate arousal and sensory motor responses
Neurophysiological modulation	Birth - 3 months	• Begin to regulate movements in organized patterns (e.g. sucking their thumb)
Sensorimotor modulation	3 - 9 + months	• Start to participate in voluntary movements as well as change response to an event (e.g. reach and grasp a toy)
Control	12 - 18 + months	• Able to show awareness of social and task demands that have been defined by a caregiver in order to initiate, maintain or cease actions, communicate, or emotional reactions
Self-control	24+ months	• Able to behave according to social norms and caregivers expectations when immediate supervision is not present • Able to modify behavior based on prior experiences, however, students have limited ability to adapt actions to a new setting
Self-regulation	36+ months	• Able to comply with requests, delay an activity either by self or others instructions • Able to monitor own behavior based on caregivers' expectations even when the caregiver is not supervising. • Able to anticipate appropriate responses as well as modify responses based on new setting

Internalization of Self-regulation. Bronson (2000) indicates that once children

routinely self-regulate independently, with no reminders or assistance, they have

internalized self-regulation. This means the child has developed strategies to process the

intake of information and learned ways to respond appropriately. He/she understands that too much positive or negative energy makes the completion of a task difficult.

It is not only important to know the stages of self-regulation development, but also to know which stages your students are in. Florez (2011) stresses that it is essential to hold developmentally appropriate expectations for children when learning self-regulation. These skills are learned gradually and do not become proficient immediately. Expecting children to demonstrate self-regulation skills outside of their appropriate level can negatively impact their development as well as cause inappropriate punishment (Florez, 2011). She expresses it is not developmentally appropriate to punish a young child for the inability to sustain attention for an extended period of time or calm his/her body quickly when upset. When punishment happens it leads to child frustration and does not help him/her develop self-regulation skills. What the child needs is more age appropriate expectations and time to practice. The next section of this paper will specifically look at developmentally appropriate skills of self-regulation for kindergarten students.

Kindergarten Appropriate Self-regulation

According to early childhood indicators of progress from the state of Minnesota (2017), the following self-regulation skills should be displayed by the time students enter kindergarten:

- Demonstrating independence

- Sustaining attention

- Complying and following rules

- Regulating one's emotions

- Controlling impulses

- Seeking help when needed

These skills are needed for success in kindergarten. One self-regulation focus in kindergarten, as suggested by Blair and Diamond (2008) is to "maximize control and minimize emotional reactivity" (p. 903). Students who are able to control their bodies and emotions can focus and actively engage in learning. Each self-regulation skill will be looked at in more detail below.

Independence and sustained attention. An important social and emotional skill of kindergarten is the ability to act independently. Kuypers (2011) claims a child is unable to act independently without the ability to regulate him/herself physically and emotionally. Students who demonstrate independent regulation are able to direct their attention appropriately, face challenges, use language to engage others and ask for help. Students who are are still working on these independent skills receive support from teachers. The support is gradually released over time as students begin to act independently (Florez, 2011).

According to the early childhood indicators of progress from the state of Minnesota, kindergarten students at the beginning of the school year should be able to keep their attention on a given task, with no reminders from a teacher or caregiver, for at least five minutes. In addition, students should be able to attempt a challenging task on their own. If unable to do the task, the child should display the skills to ask for help, such as raising his/her hand, asking a neighbor, or walking up to the teacher for assistance. Blair and Diamond (2008) state these skills are essential for kindergarten academic and social success and without these skills negative feelings can quickly develop about school. When negative feelings develop, students often do not want to go or engage in activities.

Complies and follows rules. When ready for kindergarten, as expressed by Blair and Diamond (2008), students display an increased understanding of how to follow rules and regulate behaviors. In order to comply and follow directions, students must be able to communicate their wants, needs, and thoughts verbally. Teachers have a difficult time understanding the needs of students if they do not advocate and express themselves. When students are struggling to express themselves they may find a different way to convey their wants and needs. This expression is often done through misbehavior and inability to follow rules. When students are able to comply and follow rules they form strong relationships with their teacher leading to fewer frustrations.

Emotional regulation. According to Silkenbeumer, et al. (2018) self-regulation of emotions is a central development task of preschool. During preschool, students learn to control and handle their emotions in positive ways. Learning emotional regulation often takes place when students must wait their turn or recieve a delayed response to their

wants or needs. These delayed responses teach children appropriate ways to cope with their emotions. Kuypers (2011) stresses in order for students to reach their goals, both academic and social, they must be able to regulate their emotions to display appropriate behavior. When appropriate behavior is displayed, activities can be completed and positive interactions with peers may occur.

Emotional regulation, as expressed by Florez (2011), is also a key piece in forming friendships in kindergarten. This means to form friendships, students must know how to take turns in a conversation, put aside their own thoughts to ask a peer a question, or set aside nerves to ask another child to play even though they are uncomfortable. When students are able to regulate both their positive and negative emotions they are able to achieve goals, display appropriate behavior, and interact with peers to form friendships.

Impulse control. Impulse control is defined by Bronson (2000) as the ability to adjust one's levels of alertness to manage his/her behavior or emotions. Students with impulse control, resist inappropriate habits and can adjust their behaviors to match their environment (Blair & Diamond, 2008). In other words, students with well-developed impulse control are able to refrain from temptations and distractions. According to Kopp (1982) examples of impulse control include taking turns and sharing rather than reaching over to a peer and taking a toy back. These skills lead to better interactions with peers.

Students regulate their behavior to have conversations with peers, form friendships, and interact positively with their teachers (Blair & Diamond, 2008). In kindergarten, students need to regulate their behavior to form successful friendships and

for their peers to feel comfortable. For example, when a student is acting out, other students may feel uncomfortable by his/her behavior and not want to play with that child.

Seeks help when needed. Kindergarten students need to have the skills to ask for help when needed. Florez (2011) shares that knowing when and asking for help is an essential piece of self-regulation and school success. Students may seek out either peers or teachers for assistance. Difficult tasks and social interactions can be made easier or resolved more quickly when students seek assistance. Due to the increase focus on autonomy and larger class sizes in kindergarten, seeking help independently is necessary for success (King & Broadman, 2006).

With mastery of demonstrating independence, sustaining attention, complying and following rules, regulating one's emotions, controlling impulses, and seeking help when needed, students are ready for success in kindergarten. Success in kindergarten is essential as it is many students' first experience with school. Kindergarten sets the stage for the many years of schooling to come; with this strong foundation of self-regulation students are able to succeed socially and academically.

In this portion of the literature review self-regulation was looked at in detail. An overview of how the central nervous systems interact in the human body were discussed. The stages of development (from prenatal to kindergarten-aged students) for self-regulation were shared. Lastly, the self-regulation skills for a successful year in kindergarten were outlined. In the next portion of this paper, the impacts self-regulation has on learning will be discussed. Afterwards, the teaching technique of literacy text sets will be examined for SEL instruction.

Social and Emotional Learning Impacts on Learning

Social and emotional learning has many positive impacts on students. CASEL (2018) sees improvements in mental health, stress management, social skills, academic achievement, and cognitive skills in schools that incorporate SEL programs. Ashdown and Bernard (2012) share that these positive outcomes can be seen in children as early as preschool. Those impacts on learning struggle to exist without the creation of positive relationships. Glosky (2018) suggests students learn best in environments where supportive relationships exist between students and teachers. Teachers have the opportunity to model appropriate social interactions for students through their relationships. Selimovic, Selimovic, and Opic (2018) includes that teachers also increase students' social competences through advice, conversations, coordination, guidance of students, and motivation. One way teachers guide and motivate students is to help them explore new social and academic opportunities. For example, a teacher may encourage a student to get involved by joining a new club or sport.

Docksai (2010) explains that SEL is a way of looking at education through a relationship lens; it is designed to help students build positive relationships. Students who are socially and emotionally competent are able to form positive relationships and are more likely to succeed academically (DiPerna & Elliott, 2002). Simonsen, et al. (2012) contributes that academics are not the only area of improvement from SEL; schools have seen growth in students' daily social interactions, school safety, behavior problems, and daily life.

CASEL (2013) stresses that the development of social and emotional competencies are crucial in everyday life. Strong social and emotional skills are essential

when it comes to interactions with others, academic achievement, and maintaining a job (Jones, Greenberg, & Crowley, 2015). The long-term positive effects of these skills are what leads to success in high school, college, and the workforce.

Glosky (2018) states that teaching students to manage their emotions, solve conflicts, and make responsible decisions are equally as important as academics. These skills are what lead to academic and social success. A study conducted by Durack, Dymnicki, Taylor, Weissberg, and Schellinger (2011) demonstrates schools that teach SEL routinely experience higher academics, fewer behavior problems, and stronger relationships between adults and students. Jones, et. al (2015) agree that strong social and emotional skills are clear indicators of career, personal relationship, and professional relationship success. With that being said, an important piece of schooling should be SEL instruction to increase chances of future success. In the next section, the specific impacts self-regulation has on learning will be shared.

Self-regulation Impacts on Learning

In order to succeed in school, as stated by Simonsen, et al. (2012), students must be able to do a wide range of social skills such as listen, follow directions, work in groups, and request assistance when needed. These skills require the ability to self-regulate. When students are able to self-regulate, learning is positively impacted.

King and Boardman (2006) state that learning is negatively affected by noncompliant and uncontrolled behaviors. When students are noncompliant they may resist or refuse to participate in the activity or lesson. It is very difficult to learn when active participation is not occuring. Uncontrolled behaviors such as tapping of pencils or spinning, can be distracting to the learner or others in the classroom. These uncontrolled

behaviors, if unneeded by the student to concentrate, can make it difficult to learn new material. The inability to regulate one's behavior or impulses are not the only negative effects students who struggle with self-regulation experience.

Poor social skills often develop from the inability to self-regulate. Johns, et al. (2005) add that students who have poor social skills miss out on learning opportunities, both independently and in groups. Students with poor social skills often have difficulties cooperating with others on group projects or activities. These difficulties lead to lower self concepts of intelligence and social interactions, which in turn may lead to social isolation and loneliness (Johns et al., 2005).

An important piece of self-regulation is the ability to emotionally regulate. Graziano, et al. (2006) verify that children have higher test scores, fewer behavior problems, and better relationships with their teacher when they are able to emotionally regulate. People who are able to emotionally regulate can complete a task and express their frustrations appropriately. In contrast, Graziano, et al. (2006) explain that students who are incompetent in regulating their emotions have a very difficult time completing cognitive processes, such as working memory, attention, and planning - all essential pieces of learning. These challenges affect relationships with peers and teachers making their interactions often negative causing students to fall behind in learning. Difficulties with emotional-regulation also lead to being less productive and accurate on class work (Graziano, et. al, 2006). For school success, it is crucial students are able to regulate one's emotions.

Learning is impacted by the inability to comply with requests, self-regulate uncontrolled behaviors, impulses, and emotions. Students often miss out on learning

opportunities and peer interactions when they struggle to regulate one's self. Students' self-regulation in social settings cannot grow without the opportunities and time to practice interacting and working with others. To follow, the discussion will be narrowed to how SEL impacts learning at the kindergarten grade level.

Social and Emotional Learning Impacts on Kindergarten Learning

SEL in kindergarten has just as many impacts on learning and future outcomes as it does in the older grades, if not more. Jones, et. al (2015) identified significant associations between SEL skills in kindergarten and the outcomes for young adults in education success, employment, criminal activity, substance abuse, and mental health. Kindergarten students with low SEL skills were more likely to experience mental health difficulties and were involved in criminal activity and substance abuse. In contrast, kindergarten students with strong SEL skills were more successful in education and employment. This being said, it is essential to begin building strong SEL skills from an early age.

Bierman, Greenberg, and Abenavoli (2016) explain that it is not only kindergarten teachers' responsibility to teach appropriate SEL skills, but also caregivers and preschool teachers. When a partnership is built between parents and teachers, students are more likely to succeed. All SEL skills have an impact on kindergarten learning, but a main impact on learning is the ability to self-regulate.

Self-regulation Impacts on Kindergarten Success

Blair (2002) explains that children learn the foundational self-regulation skills in the first five years of life. Parents and early childhood teachers have the very important job of helping young children regulate their thinking and behavior prior to arriving in

kindergarten. Kindergarten teachers need students to be able to follow directions and pay attention when they arrive at the beginning of the year. These basic social skills are key for kindergarten teachers in order to begin teaching routines and expectations of school.

Blair and Diamond (2008) discovered that when learning environments promoted self-regulation, school readiness was fostered and early school failure was reduced. The ability to self-regulate takes place when executive function skills are developed. As previously stated in this chapter, executive functions are the processes that involve conscious control of thoughts and actions. Kuypers (2011) shares some examples of executive function tasks: shifting attention from one activity to another, multitasking, adding and retrieving information from memory, flexibly thinking, internalizing speech, making plans to reach a desired goal, and controlling impulses. Blair and Diamond's (2008) findings also noticed when strong executive functions existed at the preschool and kindergarten age, there were positive associations with math knowledge, letter recognition, and phonemic awareness. Students who performed higher on executive function tasks were able to adjust easily to their kindergarten classroom and teacher.

As previously stated, the emotional-regulation piece of self-regulation is crucial. Graziano, et al. (2006) presents "children with better emotion regulation skills are better equipped to handle the qualitative shift in the learning environment that occurs during kindergarten compared to children with poor emotional regulation skills" (p. 16). He explains that this occurs because the students are able to use their executive functions for learning without emotional disruptions. Emotional-regulation fosters positive relationships. The key relationships in kindergarten are between teachers, parents, and students. Graziano, et al. (2006) reveals when teacher-student relationships are typically

positive and centered around support they lead to continued growth in independence and motivation to learn. When kindergarten students are able to emotionally-regulate they are able to succeed by growing independently in both social and academic skills.

Even though there is an abundance of research on how important social and emotional learning is for all students, especially beginning learners, there will always be students who struggle with SEL skills at the beginning of kindergarten. The next section of this paper will outline the challenges teachers face when teaching SEL and share the idea of incorporating literacy into SEL instruction in kindergarten.

Incorporation of Literacy Instruction into Social and Emotional Learning

Pirzada (2018) shares the frustration that many educators experience, teachers find it difficult to set aside time to explicitly instruct social and emotional skills due to increased time on academics. Teachers do not need to experience these frustrations, rather SEL can be taught through literacy. Zhang (2011) verifies that SEL skills do not need to be taught independently. She shares that there are programs that include SEL skills in literature instruction. DeGeorge (1998) also confirms that using stories to teach SEL skills can positively impact friendships for students. Doyle and Bramwell (2006) include that books with social and emotional content model to children how adults and students cooperate to solve problems. This portion of the the literature review will discuss how the literacy teaching strategy of text sets can be used to instruct social and emotional learning.

Text Sets

A text set is defined by Nichols (2009) as, "a collection of sources of information that have a commonality; that is, they explore a shared topic, issue or big idea" (p. 34).

Text sets do not exclusively incorporate written texts, some include other media such as videos, images, and songs. Text sets that include these items are referred to as multimodal text sets.

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) specifically call for the use of text sets or thematic literacy sets in classrooms (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2018). Strachn (2014) conveys the primary goal of the CCSS is to expand student learning; this can be done by using a variety of text forms and genres during instruction. Forms of written text include dramas, poems, stories, folktales, biographies, autobiographies, nonfiction, and informational such as directions and recipes. These text forms can be used when teaching children of all ages. The CCSS suggests introducing a variety of text forms to children even at the young age of kindergarten (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2018). The benefits of using a variety of texts in a thematic set or text set will be discussed.

Benefits of Text Sets

There are many benefits of using a variety of texts in the formation of a text set to teach social and emotional skills. Text sets are typically used in the classroom during interactive read-alouds (IRA) (Strachan, 2014). According to Wiseman (2010), "An interactive read-aloud consists of a teacher selecting a book that meets students' interests as well as their social and developmental levels, modeling fluent reading, and encouraging students to contribute in active ways" (p. 432). IRAs will be looked at in more detail in Chapter Three. Students not only gain literacy skills through text set read alouds, but also social and emotional skills.

Increase in literacy skills. Strachan (2014) suggests that text set texts are often read aloud to students to introduce challenging themes, concepts, and vocabulary. These

are things that students may not encounter in their own reading, because read aloud texts are more difficult than the students' reading level. Teachers also have the opportunity to model skills strong readers do, such as rereading for understanding, using context and picture clues, making connections to other texts, and identifying disconnects in the text. The modeling of these skills teaches students how to persevere through challenges while reading.

Increase of student understanding. Strachan (2014) reports that text sets allow students to hear the same content multiple times giving more chances to learn the new content, vocabulary, and ideas. She also explains that using a variety of multimodal texts to teach a skill or topic captures all individual learning styles in the class allowing for better understanding. One common strategy used is the introduction of different genre texts on a topic. Gelzheiser, Hallgren-Flynn, Connors, and Scanlon (2014) state student understanding is often increased by the use of both fiction and nonfiction texts when introducing a concept. The incorporation of multi-genre texts allow for the identification of similarities and differences between texts. Students' knowledge deepens when analysis is conducted between texts.

Increase world awareness. Text sets increase awareness of the world. As previously stated, the CCSS initiative is to provide students with many forms of texts that are centered around one thematic unit (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2018). The use of text sets provides multiple viewpoints and perspectives on a topic or theme. This guides student to broaden their understanding of others making them more aware of the world around them. Strachan (2014) also suggests introducing students to relevant texts they may see in their homes or community. By showing students newspapers, magazines,

recipes, brochures, etc. their understanding of their home and community can grow. Students learning through text sets are able to view topics from different perspectives allowing for a broader view of the world and their community.

Increased student engagement. Strachan (2014) highlights that student engagement often increases through the use of multimodal text sets. Students are excited to read and view new texts rather than a textbook. Students also know that they will be learning about a specific topic repeatedly, allowing them more time to learn the content. Extended time spent on a topic can reduce feelings of anxiety and stress making it easier to learn which in turn increases engagement. By giving students multiple media forms to learn from, students are more likely to be engaged and interested in the content.

Learning from characters. Flippo (2008) expresses books can be used as an example to display appropriate social behaviors and interactions to children. Children are able to make connections to appropriate and inappropriate behavior based on the actions of a character in the story. Students make these connections through emotional reactions while the story is being read. Doyle and Bramwell (2006) share that our attention, learning, memory, and decision-making is directly related to emotions. They reveal that when students make emotional connections to the characters, students are more likely to learn and remember the characters' actions and the consequences.

Teachable moments. Teachable moments can happen in two ways during literacy instruction. First, students can learn by relating to their own mistakes during the lesson and secondly, students can learn from the characters in stories and their mistakes. According to Johns, et. al (2005) using behavior problems or mistakes as "teachable moments" is essential. For example, if a student is talking during an interactive read

aloud, they should not be punished for talking rather they should be reminded of the expectations and have time to practice again. They express that when students are given the opportunity to learn from their own mistakes and time to practice, they are less likely to repeat that behavior. Secondly, students can also learn and process through the actions of characters in stories when teachers use the character's actions and choices as teachable moments (Flippo, 2008). For example, a teacher may prompt students to discuss the actions of a character and reasonings behind them. The class may also discuss alternative choices that the character could have made for a better outcome. Doyle and Bramwell (2006) explain when content is discussed and analyzed, students often have an easier time internalizing it and learning from it. When teachers use these two types of teachable moments in their classroom literacy instruction is positively affected.

Dialogues with students. Dialogic reading often takes place in a small group, where the teacher and students have dialogues throughout the repeated readings of a story (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006). They reveal that when social skills are practiced in a small group students are able to practice in an authentic environment, this increases the chances of those social skills being transferred to other situations. In addition, the small group lesson format provides a safe place for students to comfortably try new reading and social skills.

During the reading and conversations, children must regulate their learning by asking the teacher and their peers questions to construct meaning. Students also have to use their conversation self-regulation skills [turn taking, listening to others, use of appropriate language, and patience] while being apart of the group lesson. Doyle and Bramwell (2006) share that dialogic reading lessons allow for students to become better

listeners, increase their confidence in sharing individual thoughts, and form stronger relationships.

Connections to other content areas. Pirzada (2018) shares that SEL can be connected to other content areas other than literacy. The SEL skill of "being resilient" is needed in math and science as well as all areas of life. She shares how nonfiction texts about Thomas Edison, Martin Luther King Jr., Amelia Earhart, or Rosa Parks demonstrate the challenges people face, even people who are well known and succeeded or make a difference in the world. Pirzada (2018) also provides an example for the incorporation of science and SEL. She proposes when teaching the biology of the brain to include discussions on growth mindset and teaching the importance of individual goal setting. These incorporations not only increase content knowledge but also teach students important SEL skills.

Use of relevant content. Pirzada (2018) argues when students are engaged in current and relatable topics, they are able to reinforce their own personal goals and motivations. For example, reading a newspaper article about someone who won the science fair may inspire a student to try a new strategy or method to reach their own goals. This relevant relationship connection can lead to positive growth in the responsive decision making competency.

In conclusion, social and emotional learning is very important to student success. Students who are socially competent in kindergarten are more likely to succeed academically and socially. Whereas students who struggle with social skills often have a more difficult time in both areas. Educators who support and instruct appropriate social and emotional skills in literacy, facilitate greater success in students. Doyle and Bramwell

(2006) stress that teachers do not need to sacrifice teaching SEL due to the increased requirement for academics. They explain that SEL instruction will positively affect academics as students grow. The integration of SEL and literacy can take place with the use of text sets, which positively impacts both academic and social skills. When text sets are used, students are often more engaged and connected to the content leading to stronger learning (Strachan, 2014; Pirzada, 2018).

Throughout Chapter Two, a broad explanation of social and emotional learning and the five competencies were shared. The developmentally appropriate social and emotional skills for kindergarten students were also addressed. The SEL focus was then narrowed to kindergarten specific self-regulation. Next the impacts of SEL on learning were shared. Lastly, the use of literacy text sets to enhance SEL skills were presented. All of these topic areas helped to answer the research question: *How can kindergarten teachers begin the year using a text set to teach the social and emotional learning skill of self-regulation?* Chapter Three will present an outline of the unit design project that was developed. Looking ahead, Chapter Four will provide a detailed description of the project created and a reflection on the journey.

CHAPTER THREE

The Unit Design

As expressed in Chapters One and Two, social and emotional learning (SEL) is essential to student success in school and the future (CASEL, 2018). SEL became a passion of mine when I realized many students were struggling to positively interact with their peers. As a kindergarten teacher since 2016, I have witnessed students facing many challenges such as forming friendships, interpreting one another's feelings, and cooperatively playing together because of ill-developed social skills and the inability to regulate oneself. When students struggle socially and emotionally, it is very difficult for them to focus on learning. These personal challenges led me to my research question: *How can kindergarten teachers begin the year using a text set to teach the social and emotional learning skill of self-regulation?*

Chapter Three outlines how my project supports the incorporation of literacy into SEL instruction. This is accompanied by a detailed explanation of the unit project and it's timeline. The supporting research and framework of the project is presented. Lastly, the educational setting in which the capstone project takes place and the intended audience is described.

Project Overview

My capstone project was to design a literacy text set unit to teach the social and emotional learning (SEL) skill of self-regulation. To review, self-regulation is defined by Bronson (2000) as the ability to control external behaviors and cognitive systems. In Chapter Two, self-regulation and text sets were explained in detail; a text set is "a collection of sources of information that have a commonality" (Nichols, 2009, p. 34).

When selecting books for a SEL text set, Daunic, et. al (2013) suggest the following criteria:

- Content that is developmentally appropriate for the students

- Incorporation of culturally and ethnically diverse content and characters

- Contains a clear SEL topic and is relatable to students

- If applicable, illustrations that support the SEL topic

I chose to focus on the skill of self-regulation because a strong need for more explicit instruction of SEL skills was identified in my kindergarten students. These lessons were developed, implemented into kindergarten classrooms, and then revised based on teacher feedback. After the completion of the degree, thorough feedback will be collected and revisions will be made to the lesson plans. In addition, formal lesson plans and activities will be created for the Empathy and Cooperation Text Set Units. The texts for the additional units can be found in the Appendix of the Self-regulation Text Set Unit. Self-regulation, empathy, and cooperation were chosen because they are the overarching SEL skills focused on at my school. These three SEL skills will form the basis of a kindergarten SEL curriculum.

The completed Self-regulation Text Set Unit consists of 13 multimodal texts. Each text is accompanied by a formal lesson plan. There are two lesson plans for each of the following self-regulation subskills: Demonstrates Independence, Sustains Attention, Complies and Follows Rules, Impulse Control, and Seeks Help When Needed. There are three lessons for the subskill Regulates One's Emotions; one broad lesson of emotions and two lessons specifically focusing on coping with anger and anxious feelings. The majority of the texts are physical picture books. The digital texts can be accessed through

the hyperlinks provided and website URLs in the lesson plans. Each lesson plan guides the teacher through an interactive read aloud (IRA) or interactive viewing of the text and is followed by activities to do with the class. The lesson plans can be accessed through a Google Document and the activities through a Google Slide Presentation. Both the lesson plans and activities were saved in a Google Drive folder for online access. For my personal classroom use, the lesson plans were printed and placed in a binder. The binder was placed in an SEL basket with the companion texts for the Self-regulation Text Set Unit.

The worldviews, or beliefs, that guided this project are Constructivism or Social Constructivism and Transformative (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Creswell and Creswell (2018) state, "social constructivists believe that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work" (p. 8). This worldview guided the capstone project because the focus is on human engagement with their world and construct meaning. One topic emphasized in this project is how humans interact with one another and create meaning of those interactions. The SEL skill of self-regulation is needed to interact successfully with others and the world. In addition, this capstone also addressed the transformative worldview, which is defined by Mertens (as cited by Creswell & Creswell, 2018) as "research that intertwines politics and political change and confronts social oppression" (p. 9). This worldview guided the capstone project because the goal is to positively transform student interactions. The increase in positive interactions will lead to academic and social success. The SEL unit project will change the lives of the participants by increasing their social and emotional skills and ability to positively interact with others.

Project Description

The implementation of this project will begin in the Fall of 2019. The Self-regulation Text Set Unit can be implemented immediately from the beginning of the school year while a kindergarten teacher teaches routines and expectations in the classroom. The unit provides multimodal texts that teach the SEL skill of self-regulation. Each text is accompanied by a formal lesson plan. The lessons were based on Wiggins and McTighe's *Understanding by Design (UbD)* (2011) lesson plan model. The lesson plan was modified to meet the needs of kindergarten students and designed as an age-appropriate mini lesson.

The *UbD* format was chosen because of personal familiarity and the primary goal of the lesson plan. The primary goal, as stated by Wiggins and McTighe's (2011), is "developing and deepening student understanding - the ability to make meaning of learning via 'big ideas' and to transfer learning" (p. 3). This goal aligns very closely with my own teaching philosophy. As a teacher my goal has always been to expand student learning, not for the purpose of standardized tests but rather the pure joy of building curiosity, lifelong learners, and setting all children up for success. Through the use of the Self-regulation Text Set Unit, students' SEL skills will positively affect peer interactions, academics, classroom behaviors, and teacher-student relationships. Each lesson includes the following pieces of the *UbD* lesson plan.

In stage one of *UbD,* the lesson included an established goal and a transfer of learning. Based on the lesson template this was called the "Learning Target." This learning target was written in kid-friendly language ["I can…"] so the students can easily state and remember what was learned.

In stage two of *UbD*, pieces of evaluative criteria and performance tasks were used. Each lesson incorporates pre-established criteria that demonstrate the students' success. Performance tasks were created for each lesson to formatively assess student learning. The use of self-assessments were used to allow students the opportunity to reflect on their individual learning and growth. Due to the repeated exposure of self-regulation over the course of the text set, students have many opportunities to learn and practice the skills until they are demonstrating mastery.

Stage three of the *UbD outlines a learning plan.* The learning plan includes an Interactive Read Aloud (IRA) or viewing of a text. The IRA turn and talk moments were pre-identified throughout the reading or viewing to allow for class discussions, learning points to be shared, and the teaching of a literacy skill. A turn and talk occurs when the teacher pauses reading or the viewing of a text to ask a question or prompt thinking. The students then turn to a partner and share their ideas and thoughts. Once finished, the teacher regathers the class' attention and may continue on with the lesson or call on a few students to share their ideas before continuing. This allows for teachers to check understanding and become aware of student questions or disconnects.

Below is the shortened version of the modified *UbD* lesson plan template that was used in this unit project. The extended version of the lesson plan template can be accessed in the Appendix, Figure 4. The original *UbD* template can be accessed at the Center for Teaching and Learning at Vanderbilt University (2018).

Figure 4. Modified *UbD* Lesson Plan

SEL Lesson Plan	
SEL Skill:	
Materials Needed:	
Learning Target:	Established SEL Goal:
	Literacy Skill:
	Transfer (May include SEL and Literacy Learning Targets): I can…
Interactive Read Aloud Guide	
Stopping page!	Prompts/Questions
Interactive Read Aloud Follow-Up and Activity	
Learning Plan: The lesson plan will often include Interactive Read Aloud turn and talk discussion points.	I Do:
	We Do:
	You Do:
Learning Evidence:	Reflection on Learning Target:
	Formative Assessment:
	Evaluative Criteria:

The lessons incorporated the gradual release model [I do, We do, You do] to practice social and emotional skills. The gradual release model takes place during the reading of the text or after the completion of the text. This modeling strategy demonstrates appropriate social skills, teacher guided practice, and time for individual practice with provided support from the teacher. The use of the gradual release model provides a safe environment for students to try new skills. Once students are provided time to practice independently, the learning target is revisited and students self-reflect on the lesson content. Self-reflections provide the teacher with an understanding of how each individual student feels about their mastery of the content.

Interactive Read Alouds

As previously stated, the teaching strategy of interactive read alouds (IRAs) was incorporated into all of the SEL lessons in this capstone project. An interactive read aloud, as defined by Wiseman (2010), consists "of a teacher selecting a book that meets students' interests as well as their social and developmental levels, modeling fluent reading, and encouraging students to contribute in active ways" (p. 432). IRAs provide many learning opportunities for beginning readers to understand how to read, analyze, and think out loud during a story through teacher and peer modeling. Wiseman (2010) states during an interactive read aloud a teacher will model reading strategies and use think-alouds to demonstrate more advanced understanding.

For example, teachers use think-alouds to prompt students' thoughts on how to interpret and understand text. Think-alouds take place when teachers model their interpretation of the text through sharing their thinking verbally and visually with students. Think-aloud demonstrations teach students how to analyze and expand their

understanding of text. While reading, Barrentine states (1996), teachers may also ask questions to help students construct meaning of the text. In addition, teachers engage students through discussions, questions, analysis, and role-play (Wiseman, 2010).

The IRA reading strategy was selected, because it helps expand students' literacy as well as social and emotional skills through interactions with book characters and their classmates. An important SEL skill needed for IRAs is self-regulation. Doyle and Bramwell (2006) emphasize that students must practice self-regulation when sustaining attention, listening, and conversing with a peer. Students must regulate their body to listen attentively to the story, the teacher's think-alouds, and to understand the turn and talk conversations. When students are digging deeper, asking questions, and analyzing text, then teachers have provided them with the skills to be successful in the future. These IRAs supply students with academic, social, and life skill success.

Research Framework

SEL instruction is important and needed in all schools. The CASEL Foundation (2018) stresses that SEL instruction is essential and it prepares students for better success in school and the real world. Ashford and Bernard (2012), and Bronson (2000) explain that SEL instruction should begin as early as preschool. They explain that best practices for SEL instruction include explicit instruction, storytelling through books, and time to practice with support from teachers. CASEL (2018) explains with the incorporation of these SEL strategies schools experience improvements in mental health, stress management, social skills, academic achievement, and cognitive skills.

Pirzada (2018) shares that many teachers feel there is not enough time to include SEL instruction in the day. This is due to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and the

increased time spent on academics (Goldstein, 2007). The increased time spent on academics rather than SEL and school skills was discussed in Chapter One. Researchers (Zhang, 2011; Flippo, 2008) have found benefits to teaching SEL through other content areas, most often literacy. Zhang (2011) and Flippo (2008) express that the use of literature can benefit students when learning SEL skills. They explain that students can learn appropriate behaviors and interactions through the characters in stories. Flippo (2008) also suggests that when teachers use characters' actions in stories as "teachable moments", students are able to learn from the mistakes and choices the characters have made.

Gelzheiser, et al. (2014) and Strachan (2014) share the benefits of using thematic text units to teach skills in the primary grades. They discuss that deeper understanding is gained by repeated exposure from text sets. In this case, the SEL skill of self-regulation will be taught through multimodal text sets. According to the researchers there are many benefits to using text sets to teach SEL, such as increase in literacy skills, student understanding, student engagement (Strachan, 2014), world awareness (Gelzheiser, 2014), and dialogue practice (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006). The benefits of using text sets were elaborately discussed in Chapter Two. This research confirms that SEL skills can develop through text sets and IRA interactions.

Setting: District and Building

At the time of project completion, I was teaching in a suburb of a metropolitan area in the state of Minnesota. The school district covers seven cities. There are two high schools, three middle schools, six elementary schools, and two early learning centers. According to the district's website, during the 2017-2018 school year there were

approximately 11,200 students enrolled in kindergarten through twelfth grade. 63.3% of the students were White/Caucasian, 10.6% Black, 8.5% Hispanic, 11.5% Asian, 5.6% two or more categories, 0.4% Native American, and 0.1% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Nearly 29% of students were eligible for free or reduced lunch prices, 10% receive special education services, and 5% speak English as a second language.

I teach in an early learning center; an environment designed for birth through kindergarten education. In the 2018-2019 school year, there were 15 sections of kindergarten with 22-26 students per section. In addition, the building houses an assortment of early childhood classes from birth through prekindergarten. The kindergarten level staff consists of 15 homeroom teachers, three specialist teachers (teachers of art, science, music, technology, and physical education), two special education teachers, one literacy intervention teacher, one student services assistant, and additional part-time support staff (English Language Learners, Speech, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Reading Core, etc.). With the inclusion of our instructional, special education, and lunch/recess support paraprofessionals, the kindergarten staff totals 60 people.

Kindergarten is not a grade level formally assessed by the state's comprehensive assessments, although it is important to note our district's proficiency percentages on the reading exam for grades three through five. According to the Minnesota Department of Education website (2018), in 2015 70.7% of students were proficient. In 2016 69.8% were proficient, followed by 69.9% in 2017. In 2018, there was a dip in reading proficiency with 68.2% of students proficient. The 2018 score was the lowest score since 2014, when 68.0% were proficient. These scores demonstrate that our district's

comprehensive assessments proficiency rate is relatively consistent, but displays room for continued improvement.

Intended Audience

The primary audience of this project was kindergarten or primary grade level teachers. The chosen texts were age-appropriate for primary learners, kindergarten through second grade. Teachers would need to modify their current SEL teaching strategies to incorporate this new text set unit for self-regulation. With the creation of the Self-regulation Text Set Unit, teachers in my building have access to the texts and printed copy of the materials. Additional educators will benefit from these teaching materials with online access through Google Drive.

The long-term goal of this project is to positively impact the learners in the classroom. After the completion of my Masters of Arts Literacy Education degree, formative assessments and feedback from teachers will be used to gain a qualitative understanding of the success of the unit. The gathered feedback will be used to make revisions to strengthen the lesson plans that accompany each text.

Budget

In order to create the Self-regulation Text Set Unit a teacher or school would need to spend approximately $150.00 to purchase the text materials. These materials could be purchased by an individual teacher or shared between a grade level team or school staff. Figure 5 in the Appendix provides the Self-regulation Text Set Unit titles, author's name, and ISBN number that accompanies each text.

Timeline

In September of 2018, the capstone project began with the creation of the guiding research question: *How can kindergarten teachers begin the year using a text set to teach the social and emotional learning skill of self-regulation?* During the months of September through November, Chapters One through Three were written. Chapter Two absorbed the majority of the time. After eight weeks of research reading, analyzing, and synthesizing, the bulk of the research knowledge was gathered. The resources were collected through the databases provided by Hamline University. The International Literacy Association's publication *The Reading Teacher Journal* was also used to collect additional literacy specific resources. These databases provided over 40 resources to help support this capstone project.

In January of 2019, the collection of texts for the Self-regulation Text Set Unit began. It took one month to research, collect, and analyze the texts to determine if they would fit the subskills of self-regulation. The texts were collected with the support and assistance of my school librarian, colleagues, SEL blogs, and SEL Twitter accounts. The collection of these texts were more difficult than anticipated as there were few titles teaching the subskills of self-regulation (Demonstrates Independence, Sustains Attention, Complies and Follows Rules, Regulates One's Emotions, Controls Impulses, Seeks Help When Needed) in a school setting. Finding texts for the subskill of Seeks Help When Needed was the most difficult. In total, 13 multimodal texts were selected for the unit.

During the collection of self-regulation texts, the empathy and cooperation texts were also gathered. The list of texts can be viewed in the Self-regulation Text Set Unit Appendix. The lesson plans were written and the accompanied Google Slides were

created throughout the month of February. During March, the lesson plans were revised based on feedback received from my content advisors. In addition, revision to Chapters One through Three continued as well as the drafting of Chapter Four. For the month of April, final revisions were made and the capstone was completed by May 1, 2019.

Chapter Three provided an overview of the capstone project while focusing on the guiding research question: *How can kindergarten teachers begin the year using a text set to teach the social and emotional learning skill of self-regulation?* SEL became a passion of mine, when I realized how many students were struggling to positively interact with their peers. Through my teaching experience I have identified a need for explicit SEL instruction in kindergarten. Many students have not arrived with the skills needed to succeed socially and academically. The Self-regulation Text Set Unit allows for additional social skill practice and the imbedding of literacy skills in SEL instruction. The project description was outlined with a completion timeline. The guiding research and lesson plan design were discussed and the rationale for modifying the *UbD* lesson plan was shared. Overall, Chapter Three provides a thorough overview of this capstone project.

Chapter Four will provide a personal reflection of the creation of the Self-regulation Text Set Unit and the journey that was taken to complete it. Chapter Four examines the key learning outcomes of the literature review and text set unit creation. The way in which the Self-regulation Text Set Unit will be used will be presented. This is followed by the way in which the research and text set unit will benefit the teaching profession. The possible implications and limitations will be examined. Lastly, Chapter

Four will conclude with future plans and next steps for this capstone's topic of social and

emotional learning.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion

As a kindergarten teacher since 2016, I have realized many students struggle to positively interact with their peers. I have seen many challenges among students with forming friendships, interpreting one another's feelings, and cooperatively playing together due to ill-developed social and emotional skills. Through my experiences, I identified a need for explicit social and emotional learning (SEL) instruction in kindergarten because many students are not arriving with the skills needed to succeed socially and academically. These observations led me to explore my guiding research question: *How can kindergarten teachers begin the year using a text set to teach the social and emotional learning skill of self-regulation?*

The research question and rationale were identified in Chapter One. In Chapter Two, recent and relevant research was reviewed and analyzed to form a thorough literature review. This literature guided the creation of the Self-regulation Text Set and accompanied lesson plans. In Chapter Three, a detailed explanation of the Self-regulation Text Set Unit and the timeline of completion was discussed. Chapter Four examines the key learning outcomes of the literature review and text set unit creation, use, and presentation. The benefits of the development of the text set unit to the teaching profession will be discussed. Afterwards, the project's possible implications and limitations will be examined. Lastly, Chapter Four will conclude with future plans and next steps for this capstone's topic of SEL.

Key Learning Outcomes

Throughout the capstone research and project, I developed a deeper understanding of SEL, how important SEL is for kindergarten students, and have grown as a teaching professional. I have greatly enhanced my teaching of social and emotional learning (SEL) content and social interaction support for my students. My strengthened knowledge base will help my students develop their self-regulation skills in kindergarten. As a teaching professional, my research and analytical skills developed through my work along with a strong ability to write technically.

During my review of research, I quickly learned that SEL is a very broad topic with many essential areas, such as the SEL competencies, how SEL skills develop, and how teachers and parents can support children in successful development. Synthesizing and narrowing the research was difficult due to the shear volume of publications available, but the real challenge was the lack of kindergarten-specific research. These challenges were overcome with the identification of early childhood SEL researchers such as Bronson, Ashford, and Bernard. Bronson spent the majority of her time focusing on the development of self-regulation and building self-regulation in young students. She became one of the leading experts in my literature review. Learning about SEL and how to teach it to young students were not the only skills evolved during this capstone, I have also developed skills in research and the technical writing process. With these skills, I am able to confidently analyze additional research material and synthesize the content to share with colleagues and coworkers. My improved technical writing is important for communicating complex materials with ease and clarity, and will continue to be invaluable as my career in education continues.

Project Description

The final product of the Self-regulation Text Set Unit will be used in my classroom in the fall of 2019. I plan to use these interactive read alouds (IRAs) and viewings of the texts when my classroom routines and expectations are initially taught. These lesson plans will help strengthen my students' self-regulation skills of Demonstrates Independence, Sustains Attention, Complies and Follows Rules, Regulates One's Emotions, Controls Impulses, and Seeks Help When Needed. As the research suggests, these skills will improve communication and interactions between peers. The positive improvements in social interactions will lead to academic success.

These lesson plans not only support teaching routines and expectations at the beginning of the school year, but can also be used when revisiting and reteaching SEL skills after calendar and holiday breaks in the school year. Additionally, a teacher can use these texts and lesson plans to reteach expected SEL skills when reinforcement is needed in small groups or individually with students.

The Self-regulation Text Set Unit will be made available to the kindergarten teachers in my school and other schools through online access. As previously stated, these materials were designed to be used at the beginning of the school year, but can be used when needed throughout the year to reteaching the skills of self-regulation. The sharing of the self-regulation research and text set unit with colleagues and educators can positively benefit the teaching profession. Additional contributions to the teaching profession follow.

Teacher Profession Benefits

The abundance of research supporting this unit provides a strong basis of knowledge for educators working with primary students. The research presented by Bronson, Ashford, Bernard, and many others can help educators better understand what self-regulation is, how it develops in young children, and appropriate expectations for kindergarten students. Teachers can better support their students' self-regulation development through acquiring this knowledge. Teachers will learn that SEL skills are best taught through literature and identification of teachable moments (Zhang, 2011; Flippo, 2008). Certain methods of teaching SEL may be new to some teachers. Gelzheiser, et al. (2014) and Strachan (2014) explain that students are more likely to grasp concepts when multiple teaching opportunities are provided. This repeated exposure can take place with the use of text sets. The research synthesized in this capstone project is not the only contribution to the teaching world; the Self-regulation Text Set Unit and lesson plans can also positively impact others.

The Self-regulation Text Set Unit can benefit teachers' instruction by providing ready-to-use teaching materials that will foster the SEL skill of self-regulation in kindergarten students. It can also strengthen all primary grade level students' SEL skills if used in other classrooms. The Self-regulation Text Set Unit has the potential to enhance other educators' instruction and students' development such as special education students, school counselors' small groups, English language learners, and Early Childhood students. These improvements of SEL instruction and student development can take place in other grade levels and settings with the implementation of the Self-regulation Text Set Unit.

The possible implications of using the Self-regulation Text Set Unit is the improvement in student social skills, specifically the ability to self-regulate. From the use of the Self-regulation Text Set Unit, students' interactions with peers and adults will become more positive through the growth and development of their social skills and ability to self-regulate. With more positive interactions taking place in the classroom, student morale and self confidence will increase. A secondary implication of using the Self-regulation Text Set Unit is the improvement in academic learning. The improvement in academic learning will occur due to the increased time students are able to stay on task due to a decrease in interrupted instruction. With improved student social skills, teachers will need to intervene in student conflicts and step away from teaching less due to students enhanced ability to solve problems on their own. Throughout the lessons students will learn to advocate for themselves and ask for help when needed. When students know how to ask for help teachers are more aware of student needs and when additional intervention or instruction is needed. In addition, with the incorporation of literacy standards into SEL lessons, students will have increased exposure to essential skills.

Limitations

Throughout the literature review and the creation of the Self-regulation Text Set Unit various limitations were identified. Early on while collecting research for the literature review, I discovered that SEL is a broad subject in academia and has only become a prevalent topic of discussion in the past 10-15 years. I also would only be researching and creating a text set for one SEL skill, self-regulation, rather than the initial three SEL skills selected - self-regulation, empathy, and cooperation. This reduction of

content was due to the limited amount of time to complete the capstone project. The reduction to the Self-regulation Text Set Unit limits the amount of content and teaching materials created and currently available to myself and other teachers.

While creating the Self-regulation Text Set Unit and lesson plans I ran into a few challenges concerning read aloud texts. The first obstacle was the limited number of texts available to teach the selected self-regulation subskills of Demonstrates Independence, Sustains Attention, Complies and Follows Rules, Regulates One's Emotions, Controls Impulses, and Seeks Help When Needed. Many pieces of literature that were analyzed were above kindergarten content level or only vaguely discussed an SEL skill. The most challenging self-regulation subskill to find texts for was Seeking Help When Needed. Throughout the text collection stage, it became prevalent that there is a shortage of literature teaching SEL skills available to educators and parents. This leads me to the idea of working with my students to create our own SEL stories to teach the skills we are practicing.

Gaining approval to use multimodal texts from various online resources was another identified limitation. Strachan (2014) explains that students gain a better understanding due to increased engagement when multimodal texts are used during instruction. Many online resources did not respond when they were contacted about using their videos, animated stories, or songs. Even after repeated requests, only two companies We Do Listen Foundation and Jack Hartmann agreed to allow access to reference their digital materials. These access permissions limited my selection of multimodal texts that could be accompanied in the lesson plans.

A final limitation was funding. The Self-regulation Text Set Unit costs about $150.00 to create. This can be difficult as educational spending is always a limitation. One way to reduce costs is to share the text set within a school or group of teachers.

Next Steps in Research

Following the completion of the degree, the Empathy and Cooperation Text Set Units will be completed. Some additional research will be needed to include the best teaching strategies for empathy and cooperation. This additional content will be added to the literature review. The creation of the remaining text set units will complete the SEL curriculum. Each text will be accompanied by a detailed lesson plan outlining an Interactive Read Aloud or viewing of the text and class activities. Additional original SEL stories will be created with my students to address any gaps in literature.

I would recommend that when collecting additional research for the SEL skills of empathy and cooperation that the researcher begin his/her literature review with the CASEL Foundation and the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs). This will provide a broad overview of these SEL skills and age appropriate expectations. I recommend these empathy-specific researchers: King, Boardman, Doyle, and Bramwell as well as these cooperation-specific researchers: King, Boardman, and Crowley. Beginning with these researchers will make for an easier time while sifting through the broad content of SEL.

In conclusion, the capstone project answers my guiding research question: *How can kindergarten teachers begin the year using a text set to teach the social and emotional learning skill of self-regulation?* Chapter Four highlighted my growth as both an educator and a learner throughout the capstone process. My key learning outcomes as

an educator, researcher, and technical writer were shared. An overview of my project and plan for implementation in the Fall of 2019 were presented. The teaching profession benefits of increased teacher knowledge and strategies with ready to use lesson plans were explained. Then the implications of increased explicit teacher SEL instruction and improved student interactions were shared. The challenges and limitations I experienced during the capstone process were also addressed. Lastly, I presented the next steps that would be taken to complete my SEL curriculum.

Throughout the capstone process, I have gained an abundance of knowledge and my hope is to share this knowledge with readers through the literature review and the implementation of the Self-regulation Text Set Unit. The Self-regulation Text Set Unit lesson plans designed for this capstone project incorporate the teaching of social and emotional learning skills through literacy instruction. With this additional instruction, my goal is to positively transform student interactions by improving their ability to self-regulate, and successfully interact with one another socially and emotionally. The increase in positive interactions will lead to social and academic success in- and outside of my kindergarten classroom.

REFERENCE LIST

Ashford, D. M. & Bernard, M. E. (2011). Can explicit instruction in social and emotional
learning skills benefit the social-emotional development, well-being, and
academic achievement of young children? *Early Childhood Education Journal*,
39, 397-405. doi:10.1007/s10643-011-0481-x

Barrentine, S. J. (1996). Engaging with reading through interactive read-alouds.
International Reading Association, 50, 36-43. Retrieved from
http://www.jstor.org/stable/20201705

Bassok, D., Latham, S. & Rorem A. (2016) Is kindergarten the new first grade? *AERO
Open, 1*(4), 1-31. doi:10.1177/2332858415616358

Bierman, K. L., Greenberg, & M. T., Abenavoli, R. (2016). *Promoting social and
emotional Learning in preschool: Programs and practices that work.* Edna
Bennet Pierce Prevention Research Center, Pennsylvania State University.
Retrieved from https://casel.org/prek-resources/

Blair, C. (2002). School Readiness: Integrating cognition and emotions in a
neurobiological conceptualization of children's functioning at school entry.
American Psychologist, 57,(2), 111-127. doi: 10.1037//0003-066X.57.2.111

Blair, C., & Diamond, A. (2008). Biological processes in prevention and intervention:
The promotion of self-regulation as a means of preventing school failure.
Development and Psychopathology, 20(3), 899-911.
doi:10.1017/S0954579408000436

Bronson, M. (2000). *Self-regulation in early childhood: Nature and nurture.* New York,
NY: The Guilford Press.

Bronson, M., Tivnan, T. & Seppanen, P. (1995). Relations between teacher and

 Classroom activity variables and the classroom behaviors of prekindergarten

 children in chapter 1 funded programs. *Journal of Applied Developmental*

 Psychology. 16(2), 252-283. doi:0193397395900357

Collaborative for Academics, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (2018). *Core*

 SEL Competencies. Retrieved from https://casel.org/core-competencies/#

Collaborative for Academics, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (2013). 2013

 CASEL guide: effective social and emotional learning programs. 3-75. Retrieved

 from https://casel.org/preschool-and-elementary-edition-casel-guide/

Creswell, J. W. & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative,*

 and mixed methods approaches (5th ed.)*.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE

 Publications.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). *The flat world of education: How America's commitment*

 to equity will determine our future. New York, NY, Teachers College Press

Daunic, A., Corbett, N., Smith, S., Barnes, T., Santiago-Poventud, L., Chalfant,

 P.,…Gleaton, J. (2013). Brief report: Integrating social-emotional learning with

 literacy instruction:an intervention for children at risk for emotional and

 behavioral disorders. *Behavioral Disorders, 39*(1)*,* 43-51. doi:

 10.1177/019874291303900106

DeGeorge, K. (1998). Friendship and stories: Using children's literature to teach

 friendship skills to children with learning disabilities. *Intervention in School and*

 Clinic, 33(3), 157-162. doi: 10.1177/105345129803300304

DiPerna, J. & Elliott, S. (2002) Promoting academic enablers to improve student

achievement: an introduction to the mini-series. *School Psychology Review, 31*(3), 293-297. Accession Number: 507739108

Docksai, R. (2010, May-June). Teaching Social Skills. *The Futurist, 44*(3), 12-13. Accession Number: 48924519

Doyle, B. G., & Bramwell, W. (2006). Promoting emergent literacy and social-emotional learning through dialogic reading. *The Reading Teacher, 59*(6), 554-564. doi: 10.1598/RT.59.6.5

Durlak, J. A., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., Weissberg, R. P., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: Ameta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development, 82*(1), 405-432. doi:10.1111/j.l467-8624.2010.01564.

Flippo, R. F. (2008). The development of social skills, reading, and literacy motivation of pre-school and kindergarten children: A good fit?. *Journal of Reading Education, 33*(2), 5-10. Accession Number: 508026066

Flook, L., Repetti, R. & Ullman, J. (2005). Classroom social experiences as predictors of academic performance. *Developmental Psychology. 41*(2), 319-327. doi: 10.1037/0012-1649.41.2.319

Florez, I. R. (2011). Developing young children's self-regulation through everyday experiences. *YC Young Children, 66*(4), 46-51. Retrieved from https://tinyurl.com/y6mv6484

Gelzheiser, L., Hallgren-Flynn, L., Connors, M. & Scanlon, D. (2014). Reading thematically related texts to develop knowledge and comprehension. *The Reading Teacher, 68*(1), 53-63. doi:10.1002/trtr.1271

Goldstein, L. (2007). Beyond the DAP versus standards dilemma: Examining the

 unforgiving complexity of kindergarten teaching in the United States. *Early*

 Childhood Research Quarterly, *22*(1), 39-54. doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2006.08.001

Glosky, A. (2018, October 1). Teaching students to manage emotions provides them with

 the skills to become future workplace leaders. Retrieved from

 http://tinyurl.com/yyby47px

Graziano, P. A., Reavis, R. D., & Keane, S. P. (2007). The role of emotion regulation in

 children's early academic success. *Journal of School Psychology, 45*(1), 3-19.

 doi:10.1016/j.jsp.2006.09.002

Johns, B. H., Crowley, E. P. & Guetzloe, E. (2005). The central role of teaching social

 skills. *Focus on Exceptional Children, 37*(8), 1-8. Accession Number:

 507980935

Jones, D. E., Greenberg, M., & Crowley, M. (2015). Early social-emotional functioning

 and public health: the relationship between kindergarten social competence and

 future wellness. *American Journal of Public Health*, *105*(11), 2283-2290. doi:

 10.2105/AJPH.2015.302630

King, P. & Boardman, M. (2006). What personal/social skills are important for young

 children commencing kindergarten? *Australian Journal of Early Childhood,*

 31(3), 15-21. doi: 10.1177/183693910603100304

Kopp, C. B. (1982). Antecedents of self-regulation: A developmental perspective.

 Developmental Psychology, 18(2), 199-214. doi:10.1037//0012-1649.18.2.19

Kramer, T. J., Caldarella, P., Christensen, L., & Shatzer, R. H. (2010). Social and

 emotional learning in the kindergarten classroom: Evaluation of the strong start

curriculum. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 37*(4), 303-309.

doi:10.1007/s10643-009-0354-8

Kuypers, L. M. (2011). Chapter 1 get ready… understanding the curriculum. In Horich,

S. Editior (Ed.) *The Zones of Regulation.* (pp. 1 - 10). San Jose, CA: Social

Thinking Publishing.

Logue, M. E. (2007). Early childhood learning standards: Tools for promoting social and

academic success in kindergarten. *Children & Schools, 29*(1), 35-43. doi:

10.1093/cs/29.1.35

Minnesota Department of Education, (2017). Early Childhood Indicators of Progress.

Retrieved from https://education.mn.gov/mde/dse/early/ind/

Minnesota Department of Education. (2018). Minnesota Report Card. Retrieved from

http://rc.education.state.mn.us/#mySchool/p--3

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGACBP) & Council of

Chief State School Officers (CCSSC). (2018). Common Core State Standards.

Washington, DC: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices,

Council for Chief State School

Nichols, M. (2009) Expanding comprehension with multigenre text sets. New York:

Scholastic.

Payton, J., Weissberg, R. P., Durlak, J. A., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., Schellinger,

K. B., & Pachan, M. (2008). The positive impact of social and emotional learning

for Kindergarten to eighth-grade students: Findings from three scientific reviews

Chicago, IL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. Retrieved from www.casel.org

Pirzada, C. (2018, June 18). 3 tips to incorporating social-emotional learning into everyday literacy instruction. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/y47g8pe7

Ray, K., & Smith, M. C. (2010). The kindergarten child: What teachers and administrators need to know to promote academic success in all children. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 38*(1), 5-18. doi:10.1007/s10643-010-0383-3

Responsive Classroom. (2018). *Principles & Practices*. Retrieved from https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/about/principles-practices/

Sabey, C. V., Charlton, C. T., Pyle, D.,Lignugaris-Kraft, B., & Ross, S. W. (2017). A review of classwide or universal social, emotional, behavioral programs for students in kindergarten. *Review of Educational Research, 87*(3), 512-543. doi: 10.3102/0034654316689307

Selimovic, Z., Selimovic, H., & Opic, S. (2018). Development of social skills among elementary school children. *International Journal of Cognitive Research in Science, Engineering & Education (IJCRSEE), 6*(1), 17-30. doi: 10.5937/ijcrsee1801017S

Silkenbeumer, J. R., Schiller, E., & Kärtner, J. (2018). Co- and self-regulation of emotions in the preschool setting. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 44*, 72-81. doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2018.02.014

Simonsen, B., Myers, D., Everett, S., Sugai, G., Spencer, R., & LaBreck, C. (2012). Explicitly teaching social skills schoolwide. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 47*(5), 259-266. doi:10.1177/1053451211430121

Sloan, W. (2012, July) What is the purpose of education? *54*(7). Retrieved from

>   http://tinyurl.com/7tef69e

Strachan, S. L. (2014). Expanding the range of text types used in the primary grades. *The*

>   *Reading Teacher, 68*(4), 303-311. doi:10.1002/trtr.1302

Vanderbilt University. (2018) *Understanding By Design*. Retrieved from

>   https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/understanding-by-design/

Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (2011). *The understanding by design guide to creating*

>   *higher-quality units*. Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and

>   Curriculum Development (ASCD).

Wiseman, A. (2010). Interactive read alouds: teachers and students constructing

>   knowledge and literacy together. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 38, 431-

>   438. doi: 10.1007/s10643-010-0426-9

Zhang, K. C. (2011). Let's have fun! Teaching social skills through stories,

>   telecommunications, and activities. *International Journal of Special Education,*

>   *26*(2), 70-78. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ937176

Zingler, E., Gilliam, W., & Jones, S. (2006). *A vision for universal preschool education.*
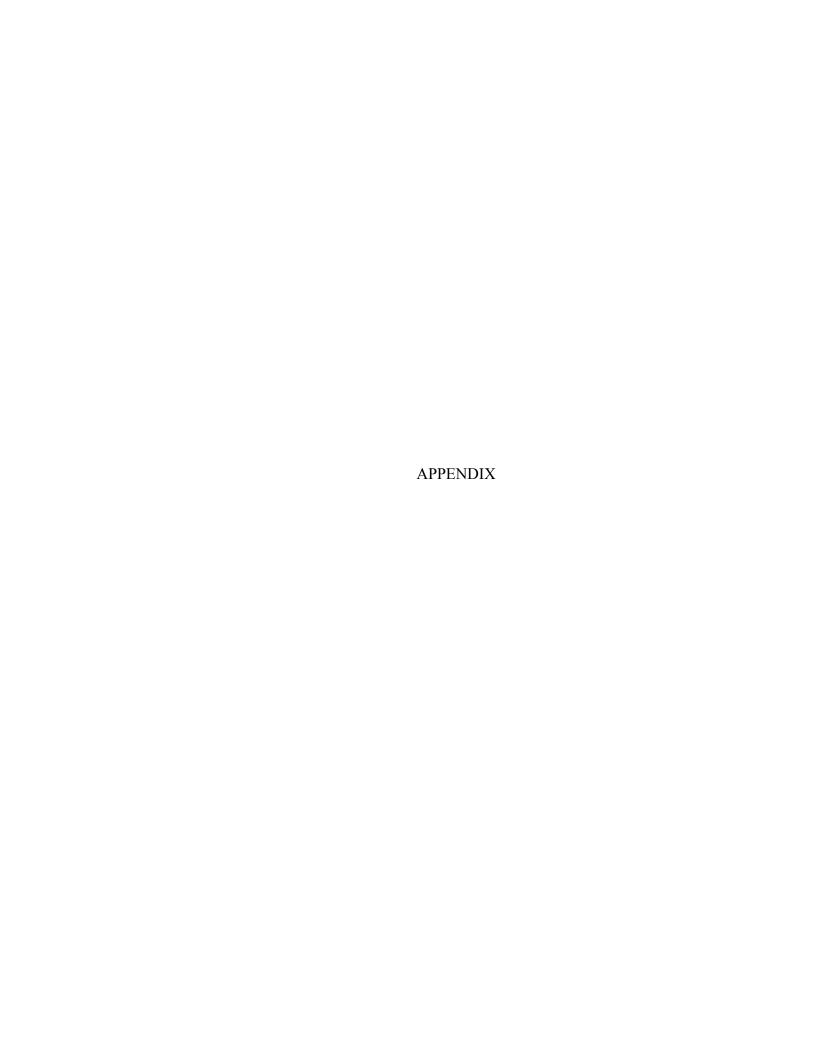
>   New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

APPENDIX

Figure 1. Components of SEL

Skill	CASEL definition	Importance of noted by other authors
Self-awareness	Self-awareness is the ability to accurately assess one's feelings, interests, values and strengths in order to be self-confident.	Johns, Crowley & Guetzloe (2005) King & Boardman (2006)
Self-management / Self-regulation	Self management is the ability to regulate one's own emotions, thoughts, and behavior effectively in different situations.	Blair & Diamond (2008) Bronson (2000) Florez (2011) Glosky (2018) Graziano, Reavis & Keane (2007) Kopp (1982) Kuypers (2011) Silkenbeumer, Schiller & Kartner (2018)
Social Awareness	Social awareness is the ability to empathize and take the perspectives of others as well as appreciate similarities and differences among peers.	Johns, Crowley & Guetzloe (2005) King & Boardman (2006) Selimovic, Selimovic, & Opic (2018)
Relationship skills	Relationship skills are defined as establishing and maintaining positive and healthy relationships based on cooperation, resisting social pressures, managing and resolving interpersonal skills and conflicts.	Doyle & Bramwell (2006) Glosky (2018) King & Boardman (2006)
Responsible decision making	Responsible decision making is the ability to make decisions based on ethical beliefs, safety concerns, and appropriate social norms.	Blair & Diamond (2008) Johns, Crowley & Guetzloe (2005) Payton, et al. (2008)

Figure 2. SEL Competency Learning Goals

SEL Competencies	Learning Goals
Self-awareness	- Demonstrates an awareness and understanding of own emotions - Demonstrates awareness of personal strengths, challenges, aspirations, cultural, linguistic, and community assets - Demonstrates awareness of personal rights and responsibilities
Self-management	- Demonstrates the skills to manage and express their emotions, thoughts, impulses, and stress in effective ways - Demonstrates the skills to set, monitor, adapt, achieve, and evaluate goals
Social Awareness	- Demonstrates awareness of and empathy for individuals, their emotions, experiences, and perspectives through a cross-cultural lens - Demonstrates awareness and respect of groups and their cultures, languages, identities, traditions, values, and histories - Demonstrates awareness of how individuals and groups cooperate towards achieving common goals and ideals - Demonstrates awareness of external supports and when supports are needed
Relationship Skills	- Demonstrates a range of communication and social skills to interact effectively - Cultivates constructive relationships with others - Identifies and demonstrates approaches to addressing interpersonal conflicts
Responsible Decision Making	- Considers ethical standards, social and community norms and safety concerns in making decisions - Applies and evaluates decision-making skills to engage in a variety of situations

Figure 3. Minnesota ECIP Social and Emotional Development Domains

Social and Emotional Development Domain Components	Subcomponents	Kindergarten Appropriate Skills
Self and Emotional Awareness	Confidence: Child demonstrates confidence through being capable, experimenting, making mistakes and moving on.	● Increase confidence and willingness to express opinion and ideas ● Engages in independent and self-directed activities ● Tolerates constructive criticism or feedback, manages setbacks and seeks help when needed
	Self-Awareness: Child demonstrates an understanding and appreciation for uniqueness in family, community, and culture/world.	● Increasing accurate understanding of own strengths, preferences, limitations, and personal traits ● Demonstrates growing interest and awareness in similarities and differences between self and others
	Emotions: Child demonstrates understanding of own and other's emotions. Awareness of emotions being reactions and behaviors.	● Demonstrates and describes an understanding of cause and effect around own emotional reactions ● Exhibits growing understanding and anticipation of others' emotional reactions to situations
Self-Management	Managing Thinking: Child is capable of managing attention and thoughts.	● Able to sustain attention and persistence for at least 5 minutes on task of interest ● Talks through simple tasks and conflicts, seeks help if needed
	Managing emotions and behaviors: Child manages emotions, impulses, behavior from others and independently.	● Increasing verbal expression of feelings, needs, opinions, and desires ● Increasing demonstration of understand of changing expectations of behavior and emotion expression based on setting ● Increasing ability to manage challenging feelings and behaviors with necessary assistance

		• Increasing ability to stop and think before acting
Social Understanding and Relationships	Social responsiveness: Child notices and responds to others and their emotions.	• Appropriately labels complex emotions in others (e.g. embarrassment, pride, jealousy) • Appropriately responds to others emotions • Demonstrates appreciation and understanding of peer's perspectives
	Building relationships: Child builds and sustains relationships with others.	• Builds friendships through play, learning, and conversations • Uses trusted adult for support in unfamiliar settings (e.g. park, grocery store)
	Social skills: Child responds to and interacts with others in meaningful way.	• Increasing ability to initiate and engage in positive interactions with adults and peers • Solves problems with others, appropriate seeks help when needed

Figure 4. Modified *UbD* Lesson Plan Template for SEL

SEL Lesson Plan	
SEL Skill:	
Materials Needed:	
Learning Target:	Established SEL Goal:
	Literacy Skill:
	Transfer (May include SEL and Literacy Learning Targets): I can…
Interactive Read Aloud Guide	
Stopping page!	Prompts/Questions

| **Interactive Read Aloud** **Follow-Up and Activity** ||

Learning Plan: The lesson plan will often include Interactive Read Aloud turn and talk discussion points.	I Do:
	We Do:
	You Do:

Learning Evidence:	Reflection on Learning Target:
	Formative Assessment:
	Evaluative Criteria:

Figure 5. Self-regulation Texts

Book Title	Author	ISBN Number
All By Myself	Mercer Mayer	978-0307119384
"I'll Do It!"	Brian Moses	978-0750221375
Whole Body Listening Larry at School!	Elizabeth Sautter	978-1936943326
Monkey Needs To Listen	Sue Graves	978-1445147178
Train Your Dragon to Accept No	Steve Herman	978-1948040174
The Way I Feel	Janan Cain	978-1884734717
Wemberly Worried	Kevin Henkes	978-0061857768
What Were You Thinking?	Bryan Smith	978-1934490969
Just Be Nice...and Not Too Rough! (Pooh Series)	Eleanor Fremont	978-0307100115
Back to Front and Upside Down!	Claire Alexander	978-0802854148
Giraffe Asks For Help	Nyasha M. Chikowore	978-1433829468