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The Use of a Culturally Responsive Text Set for Reinforcing Self-Regulation in Primary, Trauma-Affected Somali Students

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THE USE OF A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEXT SET FOR
REINFORCING SELF-REGULATION IN PRIMARY, TRAUMA-AFFECTED
SOMALI STUDENTS

By
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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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DEDICATION PAGE

To my husband, Eric, for your incredible support and love. You sacrificed many weekends of fun so that I could focus on my schoolwork. You gave me space to get my work done, and also encouraged me to continue when things got tough. I love you for all of the big and small ways you show me that you care.

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To my family, thank you for supporting me throughout my learning from an early age all the way through today. Thank you for instilling in me a love of literacy, life-long learning, and curiosity.

To my students, thank you for inspiring me each day. Each day I try to learn more and do better for you.

To my colleagues, current and past, thank you for trusting in me and being open to my suggestions and ideas. I hope that you find this text set to be beneficial to you and your students.
We should be in awe of what burdens students carry, instead of judging how they carry them.

-Anonymous
Special thanks to Leah M. Kuypers for writing the Zones of Regulation Curriculum, which has changed the way I think about talking about and teaching emotional regulation. Thank you for reviewing my work and for supporting the development of this project.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In Chapter One, I will describe my journey in exploring social and emotional learning. First, I will describe my purpose in being an educator. Next, I will describe my experience with different methods of social emotional learning. Then, I will detail my current role and the challenges I face in reaching my students. Finally, I will explain how I arrived at my current research question: *How can the use of a culturally responsive and trauma-sensitive text set reinforce self-regulation in primary Somali students?*

Purpose

My reason for becoming a teacher had little to do with academic content and everything to do with the social and emotional content. I cared that my students could successfully add, subtract, read, identify the states, and describe the characteristics of a mammal. However, my ultimate goal in teaching my students was to help them grow into caring human beings. I wanted them to grow in their character just as much as they did in their learning. When teaching, I wanted to reach the whole child. It wasn’t enough for me to only teach students the required state curriculum. It is my wish for the students exiting my classroom to be bright, well-rounded, caring people who want to make a difference in their world. In my opinion, the people who make the biggest difference in the world have both academic knowledge and a will to change the world for the better.
My Journey with Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Seventeen years ago, I completed my student teaching practicum in two different settings in the rural Midwest. Both approached social and emotional learning in very different ways. The first practicum was a preschool. The school encouraged families to volunteer a set number of hours. The teachers placed a high emphasis on teaching manners to students. Daily, the teachers, parents, and students would eat breakfast and lunch together as they practiced manners. The students would set the table, with the guidance of teachers. The students, families, and teachers would sit together at the long classroom tables for the family-style meals. The teachers would model how to politely ask someone to pass the juice or hand someone a napkin. Students practiced saying “thank you” as they received a bowl of food. All members of the community helped clear their places and the rest of the table.

I remember thinking the shared meals were a welcoming part of the day for all involved. Additionally, it gave the students time to practice manners in an authentic setting. It was easy enough for teachers to do every day because meals were built into their daily schedule. However, I wondered how to standardize the expectations among the different preschool teachers. Also, I wondered if there were other social and emotional skills, such as resolving conflict, that the students could be explicitly taught during the day.

**SEL Curriculum.** My second student teaching practicum was in a K-12 school teaching Kindergarten. This school provided all teaching staff with a bound booklet of fourteen social skills lessons and resources. The first four lessons taught school-wide expectations in common areas through whole school assemblies at the beginning of the
school year. The remaining ten lessons were introduced by the principal in a whole school assembly, then reinforced through scripted classroom lessons and activities. The lessons included how to stand up for yourself, how to follow instructions, how to get the teacher’s attention, how to introduce yourself, and how to apologize.

The teachers appreciated having scripted lessons and resources along with a common set of expectations for social behavior. However, there were challenges to implementation. The teachers needed to find an extra 20 minutes in their day to teach the lessons. The lessons were not differentiated for the range of needs in a K-12 school. A Kindergartener was receiving the same lesson as a senior in high school. Secondly, the lessons were pieced together from different social skills curriculum with different purposes. The lessons did not have any connection to or review of previously learned social skills because they scattered. Finally, the students were practicing the skills out of context, which might have prevented transfer of the skill to real life situations. I wondered what was the best way for students to learn social and emotional skills as I prepared to teach in my own classroom.

**Using Literature.** My first teaching position was in a Lutheran school in the Midwest sixteen years ago. It was expected that teachers speak to the students regularly about character and behavior. All of the students were Lutheran in faith, regular church-goers as monitored by weekly attendance, 98% white students, 0% students of Limited English Proficiency, and 0% of students receiving Free and Reduced Lunch. I quickly stocked my budding classroom library with children’s literature of problem-solving, friendship, and character education titles. I made connections of the texts to weekly Bible verses. It was easy to pull from the selected texts to read and discuss the message
with students. When I would have 5 minutes of down time, we would read one of the
selected titles. Most of the time, the character lessons I taught were only reinforcing their
current behaviors. After six years, I began to long for working with students who came
from challenging backgrounds and needed a positive influence in their lives.

**Tiers of Support.** In 2008, I began teaching at a K-12 charter school in the
Midwest. At this school, the demographics were 63.8% Asian students, 23.7% Black
students, and 11.2% Hispanic/Latino students. 42% of students were English Language
learners, 9.1% of students were Special Education students, 81.7% were Free/Reduced
Price lunch, and 6.6% of students were homeless. In my first year at the charter school,
the school provided training in Responsive Classroom, a framework for educating the
whole child. It changed my entire way of thinking about education. This framework
opened my eyes to ways to seamlessly integrate social and emotional skills with
academics. I began linking children’s literature titles to our Morning Meetings to teach
students our expectations. I was so excited about this that I created a document for staff,
linking behavior traits with appropriate books. The books provided a way for my class to
dialogue about challenges and expectations, but I wondered if there were additional ways
I could be supporting my students’ development and explicitly teaching social and
emotional skills.

Years later at the charter school, a teacher proposed that our school should
become a Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (P.B.I.S.) school. I jumped at the
chance to be a part of our school’s cohort team. I went through three years of extensive
training with our cohort to learn how to build positive relationships, teach expectations,
reinforce expectations, and implement a positive school climate for children and adults.
When I went through the training, I learned more about exclusionary practices in behavior, and how they are not an effective deterrent to negative behaviors.

In our school PBIS team, we set up tiered levels of support for our 800 students. In Tier One, our team provided scripted lessons of common area expectations to each section of the school (primary, intermediate, middle school, and high school). The students moved through the stations at the bathroom, lunchroom, office, hallway, playground, bus, computer lab, and gym. Different staff members read from the script and had students offer additional ideas for expectations at each station. It was helpful for students to practice the expectations in the actual setting, but there were still limitations. Staff noticed that two days of station teaching was not enough to keep behavior expectations fresh in students’ minds throughout the whole year. I wondered how we could revisit expectations and skills on a more frequent basis while not taking away from academic content time.

In Tier Two, our school focused on 15% of the 800 students who had difficulties following the taught expectations. Our team looked at the behavior referral data and selected students who needed additional support and teaching to meet the expectations of the school. Each team member picked ten students to mentor through the Check in Check Out intervention. We were responsible for selecting behavior or social skills goals with the students, identifying rewards for the students, greeting our students in the morning, providing tracking sheets to our students, and collecting the sheets at the end of the day to tally points. Most of the students who were part of the mentoring intervention improved immensely and soon began to thrive in school, both academically and socially.
About 30% of the students in Tier Two did not respond successfully to the intervention, so the P.B.I.S. team provided Tier Three Support. In Tier Three, the students would receive individualized behavior contracts which detailed teaching goals, student supports, rewards, and consequences. The students would also be referred and connected to wraparound supports, such as counseling, family support, and social skill groups.

A fraction of the Tier Three students had difficulties controlling emotions and reactions to frustration. In response, our school trained fifteen staff members, including myself, in Crisis Prevention Intervention (C.P.I.). The C.P.I. team was available to teachers at the call of a walkie-talkie to de-escalate angry, fighting, upset, disruptive, or dangerous students. We would receive calls about every other day for a different student in crisis. Some of the team members were excited about the adrenaline rush of a call and the possibility of getting physical. I, however, avoided the physical holds on students. My specialty was verbally deescalating students, setting limits, and walking and talking with students until they calmed down. I noticed that staff aggressiveness and force did little to move students in a crisis, and students gravitated toward calm, empathetic staff who they had relationships with.

In our school’s three-tiered plan, we met the behavioral, social, and emotional needs of the majority of our students. Visitors to our school often praised our warm, inclusive school climate. However, a small number of students earned multiple suspensions and consequences with little to no change in behavior. I wondered what more could be done for those students and if we had been complete in teaching the expectations of the school.
**Students with Trauma**

This school year, I began a new position at a Midwest Somali charter school, which was undergoing a full turnaround, as mandated by their authorizer. I was hired as the Director of School Culture, charged with turning the academic and behavioral culture around. Our charter school of 300 K-8 students consists of 100% Black students, 98.6% of students were English Language learners, 6.8% of students were Special Education, and 100% of students receiving Free or Reduced Lunch. The mobility of students index in one year ranges from 21% on the low end to 55% on the high end.

I easily realized it would be a challenge to build a positive culture in this school. I relied on my experience with Responsive Classroom and P.B.I.S to design supportive training for the returning staff. In summer workshop, teachers were trained in the practices of Responsive Classroom, including the daily Morning Meeting, interactive modeling of behaviors, Take a Break procedures, and usage of Buddy Room for frequent and persistent behaviors. Staff also received training in the P.B.I.S. framework, including the three tiers of support, major and minor behaviors, building relationships, teaching expectations, and rewarding students.

School staff also received three trainings in supporting students of trauma, specifically Somali students. This was all new information for me. I tried to wrap my brain around integrating my knowledge of the Somali people along with the P.B.I.S. framework and trauma-informed practices. How would this all fit together cohesively?

I created 40 daily scripted mini-lessons on expectations for common areas and social skills based on weekly themes. These lessons were to be taught by classroom teachers during the protected Morning Meeting time. At first, teachers praised the
scripted lessons for their ease of preparation and usage. But as the days of school wore on, I noticed less and less teachers teaching the daily lessons. Some of the feedback that I heard was that the lessons felt like “another thing to do” in an already packed schedule. Some teachers felt like the lessons were not developmentally appropriate for their students. As less daily teaching occurred, I noticed the number and severity of behavior referrals escalating.

In early September, I began to realize that the behaviors of some of the students was extreme, more than I could have ever expected. The behavior team navigated daily fights between boys, between girls, and even mixed gender fist fights. Around fifteen students in different grades would run around the building and even outside when triggered. Kindergarten students visited the behavior room, only to stand on the desks, throw chairs, and scream. One Kindergarten student smashed my personal computer in a fit of rage. Students threw anything that wasn’t anchored down- tables, pencils, paper, books, computers, raisins, rice, and chairs. A handful of students would just cry inconsolably for no apparent reason until they would grow tired or fall asleep. Teachers would receive verbal and email threats from students, or were subjected to the physical effects of a student’s rage. Students who I had been friendly with hours before would come to the behavior room with glazed eyes, unresponsive to any prompt from staff.

As students filled out reflection sheets in the behavior room, I probed deeper into the cause of their behavior. Some students were not able to give a reason for their behavior. Some students stated that they couldn’t control what they were doing. I got a glimpse into some student’s reasons when I met with parents. Still, some students shared their pain with me. Some children had absent mothers or fathers. Some children
described late nights at the daycare until 9 or 10 o’clock. One student worried about his brother during open heart surgery. When I asked about an 8th grader’s home life, a veteran teacher told me, “You don’t want to know.”

The teachers also were affected as they carried the emotional burdens of their students. Some teachers had frequent absences, even before they had accrued them. Our principal was left scrounging for any sub he could find. Teachers would come to me crying about the out of control day that they had. I heard sweet, calm teachers screaming at the tops of their lungs through the walls. While I was assisting one class with behavior, their teacher yelled out, “I can’t do this! I just can’t do this anymore!” and left her stunned class in the room.

I was beginning to feel like I would need additional resources to reach our students. I found myself raising my voice in response to their raised voices. I lost my cool more in the first month than I had in my fifteen years of teaching. I became frustrated as students continually argued with every request, no matter how simple. I noticed I became more rigid and authoritative to try to be strong. As my response to behaviors shifted towards the negative, I felt a further disconnect with who I wanted to be to students. I didn’t want to demand respect and yell. I came to this school to bring a sense of peace to a chaotic school, and now my raised voice was adding to the chaos.

As I reflected on my current state and options, I recalled our staff training before the start of the year on trauma. I wondered if the extreme behaviors that I was seeing was a manifestation of the trauma. At the encouragement of other colleagues, I explored the Zones of Regulation curriculum by Leah M. Kuypers. The curriculum was student-friendly, with pictures and graphics. As angry students came to me in the behavior room,
I began to try out some of the lessons with the students. When the students were calm, I walked them through the four different emotional zones: blue, green, yellow, and red.

I could see the students’ faces relax as I told them that their anger was normal. We worked together to pick out and try strategies to calm down. Each lesson we would build their toolbox of strategies. I was so excited by the success with the students who had behavioral issues that I decided to implement the curriculum schoolwide. In January of 2018, all K-8 students began the curriculum in their daily Morning Meetings. I noticed that our school developed a common language for talking about emotions and regulation. Students were encouraged to take walks, breathe, and try other strategies. However, I still noticed that some students still struggled with emotional regulation.

I wondered if students had enough exposure to the concepts and vocabulary in the Zones of Regulation curriculum. I pondered how to intervene early with the primary students so they could be successful in school. I wondered what more I could do to help my students regulate their behavior. One day, I was working with a student and pointed to the pictures from the Zones of Regulation Curriculum. I said, “I think this is you. You are in the yellow zone.” The student stared at the picture and said, “That doesn’t look like me,” not able to see the emotion behind the black and white drawing of a person. I wondered how I could relate this curriculum to the lives of my students.

These wonderings led me to my current research question: How can the use of a culturally responsive and trauma-sensitive text set reinforce self-regulation in primary Somali students?
Chapter Summary

In Chapter One, I focused on my purpose in becoming a teacher. Next, I focused on my professional journey with social and emotional learning. I learned about using a curriculum and using literature to teach social and emotional learning. Next I was exposed to a three-tiered model of support. Then I explored the needs of my current students with behavior.

In Chapter Two, I will review the professional literature that is relevant to my research question. First, I will define trauma, explain how it affects students, especially refugee students. Next, I will explain what culturally responsive practices are and how they can be applied in the classroom with Somali students. I will detail effective ways to intervene successfully with students of trauma. Thirdly, I will describe social and emotional learning (SEL) and the competencies involved in successful SEL. Then I will explain components of successful SEL lessons. Fourth, I will define emotional self-regulation and ways to successfully teach it to students. Finally, I will explain texts sets, the benefits of using text sets, and why they can be used with social and emotional learning.

In Chapter Three, I will describe the project, provide a rationale for the framework, and identify the audience for the project. I will also describe the timeline for creating the text set, the process for developing the text set, and the important curricular elements.

In Chapter Four, I will reflect on the project. I will review key understandings of the literature, the quad text set framework, and possible assessment of the project. I will close with possible limitations and implications of implementation of the project.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Currently in education, it has become more apparent how imperative it is to teach the whole child instead of only teaching academics. Students are bringing emotional worries and trauma to school with them and it affects the learning environment in different ways. Teachers need to be prepared to support students. This needs to happen before the student can even begin to think about learning. Exploring the research on these topics is important to better understand our students and our challenge. Throughout this chapter, the literature will be reviewed to answer the question: How can the use of a culturally responsive and trauma-sensitive text set reinforce self-regulation in primary Somali students?

This chapter will explore five subtopics in relation to this question: trauma-informed practices, culturally responsive teaching, social and emotional learning, teaching self-regulation, and text sets. The first section of this chapter will define trauma-informed practices in schools. I will define the hallmarks and prevalence of trauma in an education setting. Next, I will explain how trauma affects brain development and school performance. Finally, I will explore suggestions for practical applications of trauma-informed care. This is important to meet the specific needs of Somali students who have experienced trauma or generational trauma.

The second section of this chapter will explore culturally responsive practices for Somali students. First, I will define culturally responsive practices. Next, I will explore methods of teaching in a culturally responsive manner. This is important for students to feel connected to their learning.
The third section of this chapter will define and detail the five competencies of social and emotional learning (SEL). The second subsection will describe the benefits of SEL in the classroom. Thirdly, key components of SEL lessons and implementation will be explored. Social and emotional learning is important to my question because the students will be learning an emotional skill of emotional self-regulation.

The fourth section of the literature review will explore teaching of self-regulation of emotions. First, I will define the components of self-regulation. Then I will explore successful strategies for explicitly teaching self-regulation to students. Emotional self-regulation is an important skill that many students of trauma are missing.

The final section of Chapter Two will explore how to use text sets in social and emotional learning. First, I will define text sets. Next, I will describe a framework for creating text sets. Finally, I will describe why text sets should be used to teach social and emotional learning skills. These findings will be essential to learning how to use text sets to teach self-regulation skills in primary Somali students.

**Trauma-Informed Practices**

Every day, schools greet their students as they arrive. Students exit their buses and enter the school, hauling their backpacks full of books and homework. Teachers quickly begin checking off completed homework and easing students into the routines of the day. But do schools also notice the invisible pain that students carry into the classroom? Do teachers realize the widespread effects of trauma and the pervasiveness of trauma? In this section, I will define what trauma is and give statistics on the prevalence of trauma. In the second segment, I will report on the devastating effects of
trauma on brain development and school performance. Finally, I will give practical applications for trauma-informed practices in the school.

**Defining Trauma.** All individuals experience some type of stress. Some stress that comes from excitement is positive, such as going on a first date, waiting to open birthday presents, or a child having to choose which toy they want to play with. However, trauma is an extreme form of stress that can cause ripple effects in many areas of a child’s life (Plumb, Bush, & Kersevich, 2016, p. 38). “Psychological trauma may be defined and comprehended as the effects of overwhelming and extraordinary experiences that leave their victims in a state of helplessness” (Doucet & Rovers, 2010, p. 94). Trauma is caused by adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) (Plumb et al., 2016, p. 37).

Some examples of ACEs are divorce, accidents, death in the family, abuse, painful medical procedures, natural disaster, war, exposure to violence, and poverty. The same traumatic incident will affect two individuals in unique ways, due to stages of development. “The very same traumatic experience will affect a toddler and a first-grader very differently, and thus, different interventions will be required” (Walkley & Cox, 2013, p. 124). The symptoms of trauma are increased by the number of ACEs or the intensity of the ACEs (Sullivan & Simonson, 2016, p. 505). After reviewing the literature, there are discrepancies on how to categorize trauma. Some researchers believe that trauma can be classified into categories, while some believe there is a trauma continuum. Some researchers believe that poverty and refugee status adds further trauma to a person’s life.

According to Plumb et al. (2016), “there are three distinct types of trauma: acute, chronic, and complex” (p.39). Acute trauma is a result of a single negative occurrence. A
death in the family or a fire in the house could initiate acute trauma. Chronic trauma occurs when there have been, “repeated exposure to assaults on the mind or body” (Plumb et al., 2016, p. 39). This can happen after multiple beatings or prolonged bullying. Finally, complex trauma occurs when the individual has been subjected to extensive chronic trauma at the hands of their caregiver.

In Doucet & Rovers (2009) the trauma categories are grouped by how the individual resiliency to trauma: “those who were ‘numb’, ‘victims’, ‘fighters’ and ‘those who made it’ (p. 95). Withdrawing emotionally is a common response for the survivors who were categorized as “numb” or “victims”. The “fighters” responded emotionally and with opposition. Finally, “those who made it” showed resilience after trauma in establishing financial stability (Doucet & Rivers, 2009, p. 95).

According to Walkley & Cox (2013), trauma can be processed through a continuum (p.123). On the low end of the spectrum would be the normal, positive stress that all individuals experience. This type of stress helps to build coping mechanisms and resiliency. On the high end of the spectrum would be traumatic stress, “which can be defined by its unpredictability and the feelings of horror and helplessness it elicits” (Walkley & Cox, 2013, p.123).

If students live in poverty or have a refugee status, that further increases their risk of trauma. According to Blitz, Anderson, and Saastamoinen (2016), if students live in poverty, they have the added stresses of money worries, unsafe houses, inconsistent child care, environmental stressors, and family stressors (p. 522, p.524). This is particularly concerning to my research, as 100% of our school’s students receive free or reduced price lunch, according to our school data.
Refugee status may also cause trauma in students. Approximately 67% of the families at my school are refugees or immigrants. Refugees have three key time periods in which they can experience trauma. The first period is called “preflight traumas”, and refers to the traumas experienced prior to leaving their home country. These traumas may include war, rape, violence, death of a family member, hunger, or other negative experiences. (Sullivan & Simonson, 2016, p. 505). “In one small study of the preflight experiences of 100 refugee youth between the ages of 12 and 18 in the United Kingdom, 86% of the youth had witnessed or experienced violence, with an average of 4.8 violent incidents reported per child” (Sullivan & Simonson, 2016, p. 505). Surveyed children also reported being raped, imprisoned, or needing to hide (Sullivan & Simonson, 2016, p. 506). The second time period that refugees can experience trauma is during their journey to a new country, which can involve death, violence, separation, trials, hunger, and war. The third and final time period when refugees can experience trauma is after relocating to a new country. Learning a new language, finding financial stability, and acculturating to a new culture can cause more trauma (Sullivan & Simonson, 2016, p. 506). “Given these experiences, psychological distress is widespread in this population” (Sullivan & Simonson, 2016, p. 506).

Prevalence of Trauma. The prevalence of trauma may be more widespread than educators may perceive. One study by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention claims that childhood trauma affects two-thirds of Americans, and as many as 20 million children in the United States have been exposed to traumatic circumstances (Plumb et al., 2016, p. 38). Surveys have revealed that, “between 55 and 90 percent of people
experience at least one traumatic event, with an average of five traumatic events per lifetime” (Plumb et al., 2016, p. 41)

What is most disturbing is that trauma can be indirectly passed from an individual who has experienced trauma to one who has not, further increasing the number of traumatized individuals. Mothers and fathers can pass their trauma to their children, even if the child has not experienced the trauma. This is referred to as generational trauma. Generational trauma may also be referred to as, “intergenerational, transgenerational, or secondary trauma” (Doucet & Rovers, 2009, p. 94). Refugees have increased risk of intergenerational trauma (Sullivan & Simonson, 2016, p. 505). This is relevant to my research, as many of our school’s Somali students, families, and staff are refugees.

The intergenerational trauma can be transferred through four direct and indirect methods:

(a) the vicarious identification of children with their parents’ suffering at similar stages of chronological development (b) the intuitive responsibility assumed by children to compensate in various ways for their parents suffering, (c) the particular patterns of parenting demonstrated by survivors toward their offspring, and (d) the styles of communication between parents and their children concerning traumatic experiences the parents had endured” (Doucet & Rivers, 2009, p. 96).

Trauma may also be transferred from student to the teachers or the school organizational structure. This is due to staff not feeling properly trained to handle students with trauma. “Even when they are not the primary targets of traumatic experiences, school personnel can take on the emotional burden as secondary recipients
of the trauma and stress their students carry” (Blitz et al., 2016, p. 523). In a study done by Blitz et al., (2016), the researchers surveyed teachers to identify teacher perception of trauma and student behaviors. Teachers communicated that they carry a high emotional burden, worrying about the students in trauma that they serve and feeling uncertain about how to help them. The staff absorbed some of the anxiety that their students in trauma displayed.

Some staff reported that they felt abused and threatened by students. The teachers also expressed fear about their safety and the safety of the school due to the increase in violence. Teachers also expressed frustration at the lack of control they had in completing lessons due to the number of student disruptions (Blitz et al., 2016, p. 534). Secondary trauma can appear in school staff as, “intrusive negative thoughts, avoidance of stimuli that represent stress or disturbance, negative cognitions and mood, hyperarousal and reactivity, i.e., being distractible or “on edge”, and/or feeling hopeless about the possibility for change” (Blitz et al. 2016, p. 523).

Additionally, the stress from the student and family trauma can lead to organizational dysfunction in schools. In organizations, there are parallel processes, “where staff members take on the trauma of the people served in the organization to such an extent that the functioning of the organization reflects a form of collective secondary trauma” (Blitz et al., 2016, p. 535). When this happens, organizations may try to regain control through strict policies and expectations, including exclusionary practices. This can be counterintuitive to supporting students with trauma.
Symptoms of Trauma.

While researchers disagree on how to categorize trauma, there is a clear consensus that the effects of trauma are devastating. Trauma can affect all aspects of an individual’s life. In students, it can mainly manifest in brain development and school performance issues. According to Plumb et al. (2016), trauma interferes with a student’s ability to perform academically because trauma changes the physical structure and chemistry of the brain (p. 38). If trauma is experienced during crucial brain development years (birth through age 6), then parts of the central nervous system and brain can be negatively impacted. The limbic system is one vulnerable piece of the brain. It regulates emotions, the heartbeat, balance, and controls the fight or flight response. If the limbic system is damaged from trauma, the child will have difficulties with responding to stress, discerning social cues, breathing, waking, sleeping, and relaxing (p.39). The midbrain, which is part of the brain stem, is also vulnerable to trauma. If the midbrain is damaged by trauma, the child may have troubles with, “motor function, coordination, and spatial awareness” (Plumb et al., 2016, p.39). Finally, the cerebral cortex, which is responsible for the highest orders of thinking, is also vulnerable to trauma. If the cerebral cortex is damaged, children will have issues with higher order thinking, planning, communication, and problem solving (Plumb et al., 2016, p. 39).

According to Walkley & Cox (2013), the changes in brain development are the cause of children who are constantly in fight, flight, or freeze mode (p.123). Since the children affected by trauma have troubles with communication and regulating emotions, their most expressed emotion may be anger (p. 123). Students who have experienced trauma are more likely to be mislabeled with other diagnoses, such as attention deficit
disorder, conduct disorder, and oppositional-defiant disorder (p. 124). According to Dods (2015), symptoms of trauma can be shown through externalized or internalized behavior. Trauma can be, “accompanied by feelings of intense fear, horror, terror, and helplessness and can lead to post-traumatic stress, characterized by intrusive thoughts, avoidance behavior, hyperarousal, and/or changes in mood and cognition” (Dods, 2015, p. 114).

These changes to brain structure, brain chemistry, impulse control, emotional regulation, and cognition can be oppositional to learning in the classroom. The more often that the child’s brain is operating in flight, flight, or freeze mode, the more likely that the hyperarousal mode will become normal to the child (Plumb et al., 2016, p. 40). A child who has experienced trauma will find it difficult to learn because their brain lives permanently in the hyperarousal/survival mode. “The child’s brain gets stuck in survival mode, and the child cannot discriminate between safe and unsafe environments due to the unpredictable nature of the traumatizing events (Plumb et al., 2016, p. 40). When a brain is affected by trauma, it is focused on survival, not on learning.

In Dods’s (2015) qualitative study of three high school students living with trauma, three common themes emerged in their experiences. Firstly, the three students were aware of their anxiety that they carried through classes, and reported, “always being on edge” (p.126). Secondly, the three students were looking to regain control through different methods. One student displayed control through performing well on academic work. Another student tried to control situations with authority figures. The third student controlled her anxiety in school by choosing to leave school (Dods, 2015, p. 126). Lastly, the students needed their peers to help cope.
In this section, we learned that trauma has devastating effects on many aspects of a child’s life, including brain structure, brain chemistry, impulse control, emotional regulation, and cognition. Those effects negatively impact a student’s academic experience. In the next subsection, the components of trauma-informed interventions will be reviewed.

**Trauma-Informed Interventions.** In this section, the components of trauma-informed interventions will be reviewed. First, the setting of the intervention will be discussed. Next, students who are affected by trauma will share what they need from their caregivers. Third, frameworks for working with trauma-informed students will be explained. Finally, challenges to implementation will be discussed.

There are some logistics that need to be considered when developing a trauma-informed intervention. Where the intervention is delivered is important to consider. The school is a logical setting to deliver the interventions to students. “The most efficient way to make trauma-sensitive education and complementary research-based interventions available to all students in America is through the public school system because the vast majority (90%) of students attend public school” (Plumb et al., 2016, p. 43).

The school is a logical setting for the intervention for refugee students, as well. The school is an extension of the larger community in which the refugees live. Secondly, since refugees have a pattern of setting in groups, then small group interventions in school are, “practical and affordable” (Sullivan & Simonson, 2016, p. 508). Finally, delivering the intervention in the school setting can reduce barriers to receiving the intervention, and it can also reduce the stigma with receiving the intervention (Sullivan & Simonson, 2016, p. 508).
Hearing from the students affected by trauma is important to learn what is needed to heal. In the study done by Dods (2015), the three different students who experienced trauma described their needs from the school, and there were three common threads in their stories. One was a need for teacher support. All the students wanted to connect with their teachers, but expressed that they did not know how to do that. While the students did not get into specifics about what that required from their teacher, they wanted to be able to feel the support and see that their teacher cared enough about them to reach out (Dods, 2015, p. 128). The second need of the students was to see caring behavior from the adults in the school. The students craved small gestures of caring, such as greeting them by name in the morning, smiling at the student, giving the student food, or just asking if the student was okay (Dods, 2015, pp. 128). Finally, the students wanted their teachers to be able to relate to them outside of the classroom. One student stressed the importance of, “looking past behaviours such a smoking or swearing in order to connect with the person behind the behavior” (Dods, 2015, p. 128). The students also wanted their teachers to notice when there was a significant change in behavior.

The themes described by the students above are echoed in the guides for creating trauma-informed schools. In trauma-informed schools, there are five key components. “(1) training faculty and staff on the impact and prevalence of trauma; (2) adopting a school-wide perspective shift; (3) creating healing relationships among staff, caregivers, and students; (4) maximizing caregiver capacity; and (5) facilitating student empowerment and resiliency” (Plumb et al., 2016, p. 47). One framework that can be used to facilitate resiliency in students is the use of frameworks.
One framework for creating trauma-informed interventions is ARC (Attachment, self-regulation, and competency) (Plumb et al., 2016, p. 43). ARC has three components to a successful intervention, “(1) building secure attachments between child and caregiver(s), (2) enhancing self-regulatory capacities, and (3) increasing competencies across multiple domains” (Plumb et al., 2016, p. 43). This can be done through Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). “It addresses emotional literacy and problem solving, two of the most recommended resiliency-building capacities for treating childhood trauma and ACEs through supportive relationships (Plumb et al., 2016, p. 45).

There are challenges to implementing successful trauma-informed interventions. These challenges include resistance to change, untrained staff, identifying needs, and determining the intent of the behaviors. When looking at change in an organization, the staff may be resistant to changing attitudes and beliefs about behavior for two reasons. One reason is that the new way goes against the traditional way of doing business at the school (Walkley & Cox, 2013, p. 124). Another reason is that some staff feel adapting to students’ needs may appear to “be soft” (p. 124).

A second challenge with implementation is that staff may not know how to address the needs of students with trauma. One way to address this is to provide professional development and coaching on trauma and its effects (p. 124). Another challenge in implementing trauma-informed interventions is deciphering the needs and histories of the students and families. One way to address this is to use surveys and interviews to develop individual student profiles and family profiles. Lastly, one challenge to implementing successful trauma-informed interventions is determining the
intention of student behaviors (Walkley & Cox, 2013, p.125). One way to counteract this is to have students process their thoughts both in written form and orally.

In the next section, I will explore culturally responsive practices. I will define characteristics of culturally responsive practices. I will also describe the importance of student processing of culturally responsive literature.

**Culturally Responsive Practices**

In studying the literature on culturally responsive education, two patterns emerged. One pattern is connecting the learning completed in class with the students’ background in some way. Another idea that was present in the literature was allowing for reflection of the content, although reflection changes according to the setting. In this section, I will give an overview of both patterns. First, I will describe how multiple studies of culturally relevant literature included connections with students’ background and experiences, and how that can be approached in multiple ways. Secondly, I will describe how teachers use reflection to promote changes in their students.

**Connection to Background and Experiences.** In considering the research on culturally relevant teaching, almost all of the reviewed articles described creating a connection between the content and students’ background and experiences. Connecting the academic content with the cultures of the students in class is a way to affirm the identities of students and open dialogue among the student, home, and school. “In a culturally responsive classroom, children are individually empowered as the teacher validates the personal cultures of the students in the classroom so they may be able to authentically participate in the curriculum” (Schrodt, Fain, & Hasty, 2015, p. 590). Connecting with a student to boost academic achievement and affirm culture also allows
teachers to recognize the experiences and language from home as an asset that belongs to the students.

In the Somali culture, this becomes more challenging and thus even more essential, due to the historical context of education for Somali refugees. “They have far more challenges, such as critically low levels of schooling and chronic post-traumatic stress” (Gichiru, 2014, p. 67). When teachers make the effort to find success through providing culturally relevant materials for all of their students, they send the message that all are valued and welcome in the classroom.

In Schrodt et al. (2015), the teacher connects academic content with familiar experiences in the form of the “Family Backpack Project” (p. 590). The teacher cultivated text sets around the demographics of students in her classroom. The students read each book and discussed it daily for a week. Each unit consisted of four books, or four weeks. At the end of each unit, the student would select a book to bring home and process with their families in their Family Backpack. The students would return the backpack to school after a week, and discussed the book of choice in a literature circle. Finally, the teacher would hold a whole group discussion of the learning (Schrodt et al., 2015, p. 591).

The Family Backpack strategy is a concrete and structured way for culturally responsive children’s literature to enter the homes of all families. It encourages the discussion of what might be challenging topics (race, adoption, family structure, gender, etc.) in the safety of the home environment. It also allows for the students to discuss the issues in the language they feel most comfortable and proficient in, and in their culturally preferred dialogue style.
In Verden (2012), she describes how the use of culturally responsive literature can build a caring and supportive environment for students.

One strategic support that promotes the feeling of well-being and safety in the classroom is the use of literature. Literature can help students to understand their situations and problems more fully through reading or hearing about others who face similar circumstances and sometimes overcome them (p. 620).

In Verden’s (2012) study, she spent 15 weeks with students who had been identified to have difficulties with behavior. The students had a structured read-aloud time four days a week over the 15 weeks. The literature chosen met the interests and emotional needs of the students, as identified by the author. After the read aloud, the students participated in scripted discussion questions and a self-selected journal prompt (p. 621). This technique proved to be beneficial for the students through reflection in their journals. The students made connections from the characters in their books to their own lives. The students were also able to adapt their behavior to more positive choices as a result of their read aloud experiences. “On several occasions, participants were able to stop and think about a situation in light of a story or an experience that we had read about and independently change their own behavior in response” (Verden, 2012, p. 626).

In working with Somali students, teachers in Gichiru’s (2014) study spoke of the importance of connecting literature to students’ lives. “I had some Somalia books. They had pictures of camels at the back…their eyes [Somali children] and whole world lit up. You could just tell it when they saw something from home that was familiar” (p. 72). Gichiru researched the varying experiences of teachers who worked with Somali students and captured it in the form of responding to questions. Teachers in Gichiru’s (2014)
study also mentioned the importance of creating, “teachable moments around culture” (p. 72). They accomplished this through, “spending time demystifying, clarifying, and expanding the students’ repertoire on various social and cultural issues that were likely to be misunderstood by students (Gichiru, 2014, p. 72).

What was missing from the literature is how to connect cultural relevant teaching with the interest and cultural needs of students in a School Wide Positive Behavior System (SWPBS). In Parson’s 2017 work, she identifies six culturally responsive practices with SWPBS. The practices include the, “validation of others’ cultures”, “cultural relevance”, and “cultural validity” (p. 55). In the article, it defines the practices, but does not offer concrete examples of what the practices would look like in schools. In order to research my question, I will need to explore this issue further.

Identifying the cultural background and interests of your students is imperative to select culturally relevant literature that can impact students in profound ways. In the next section, I will describe how different teachers processed the selected culturally responsive literature with their students in different settings using different methods.

**Processing of Culturally Relevant literature.** One theme that was common across the literature was the discussion or processing of the literature after the student read it. In this section, I will describe the different methods used across the literature. In Schrodt et al. (2015), students processed the text in four ways. They were asked questions during class read alouds, co-created journals with their families, discussed the book in teacher-led literature circles, and participated in whole-group discussions.

Perhaps what was most insightful was the formatting of the journals done with families. The authors analyzed the 84 entries from families, coded the texts, and four
different responses to text emerged: “Retelling the Text, Interacting with Family in Response, Demonstrating Self-Directed Emergent Writing, and Extending the Text” (Schrodt et al., 2015, p. 593). Analyzing the responses to text showed evidence that the teacher selected culturally relevant literature for her class. “When families and cultures are considered in text selections, the responses clearly demonstrate interactions among the reader(s), the text, the purpose, all situated with one’s culture and point of view” (Schrodt et al., 2015, p. 596).

Parents who were interviewed about the Family Backpack program spoke highly of the chance for students to see themselves in literature and the results. “The voices speak loudly in honor of families and culture. When teachers can weave culture and literacy together, families experience power, acceptance and academic achievement” (Schrodt et al., 2015, p. 597).

In Verden’s (2012) research, students also processed the culturally relevant read-alouds through writing. Students chose a journal writing prompt after each reading to establish connections between the main characters and their life experiences. An additional benefit to the usage of the culturally relevant materials is that students were more motivated to complete the after-reading tasks.

The students began to relish the follow-up activities to the literature that was read aloud, and many particularly enjoyed the group discussions around the characters’ problems, while others preferred the personal journal entries where they were able to relate to issues that the characters had and discuss their own outcomes (Verden, 2012, p. 623).
The teacher was able to use the student journal entries as a springboard to deeper conversations with students.

Without the literature to make the connection, it is unclear if there would have been opportunities for him to think about these feelings and to feel safe enough to relay them in an appropriate fashion in the school environment...Knowing that Omar felt this way enabled his teacher to have discussions with him (Verden, 2012, p. 624).

In Gichiru’s (2014) work, the teachers used verbal techniques to deepen the understanding of texts and issues. One teacher accomplished this through requiring all students in his middle school English class to ask at least one question about the material each day. “He avoided building a culture of silence by bearing in mind that his students did not necessarily understand the words he was using in his literacy classes” (Gichiru, 2014, p. 71). While I can appreciate the teacher’s reluctance to assume silence equals comprehension, I disagree with forcing students to ask a question every day. It can take away from the supportive feel of the classroom when students are pressured into creating a question, even when they may not care about the answer.

Processing the culturally relevant classroom materials is essential for student comprehension and enhancing a student’s character. It can be done orally or written, but teachers should ensure that all responses are voluntarily and fit the cultural dynamics of the student.

In my research, I noticed a theme of connecting literature and materials with student experiences and background. Teachers accomplished this through selecting books that appealed to student interests and demographics, sending culturally relevant
material home in backpacks to families. What was missing is concrete methods of how to connect the teaching of behavior to culturally relevant practices. Another theme I noticed in the research was the practice of processing the culturally relevant materials after reading. Some teachers preferred usage of a written journal. Other teachers preferred oral discussions. The format changed according to the activity and setting.

In the next section, I will explore social and emotional learning (SEL). I will define and detail the importance of making time for social and emotional learning in the classroom. In the section subsection, I will detail the benefits SEL in the classroom. Thirdly, I will detail ways in which teachers can successfully teach SEL in the classroom.

**Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)**

In this section on social emotional learning (SEL), I will detail the history of social emotional learning and its five core competencies. Next, I will detail the benefits of teaching social and emotional learning in the classroom. Finally, I will explore successful methods of teaching social and emotional learning in the classroom.

**History of SEL.** The social and emotional learning (SEL) movement in schools began in the mid-1990’s with the publication of Gardner’s *Multiple Intelligences* (1993) and Goleman’s *Emotional Intelligence* (1995). Interest in educating the whole child prevails today, with social and emotional learning techniques applied in approximately fifteen percent of secondary schools and two-thirds of primary schools (Oberle, Domitrovich, Meyers, & Weissberg, 2016, p. 279).

SEL is so important that both countries and states are now developing and requiring usage of SEL standards. Australia rolled out KidsMatter, a social and emotional learning framework, to 2000 schools (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 279). Singapore is
also in the process of developing and implementing SEL standards. In the United States, Illinois requires every district to have an implementation plan for integrating SEL (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011, p. 420). New York is also developing standards for social and emotional learning. In pursuit of researching and developing social and emotional learning best practices, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) was created in 1994. The goals of CASEL are to, “advance the science of SEL, expand effective SEL practice, and improve federal and state policies that support the implementation of SEL programming” (Oberle et al., 2016, p.280).

**Five Core Competencies of SEL.** SEL focuses on cognitions, behavior, and emotions (Zins & Elias, 2007, p. 234). “In simple terms, social and emotional learning (SEL) is the capacity to recognize and manage emotions, solve problems effectively, and establish positive relationships with others, competencies that are clearly essential for all students” (Zins & Elias, 2007, p. 234). CASEL has outlined five core competencies that underpin all social and emotional learning. They are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making skills (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 280).

These five core competencies are, “taught most effectively within a caring, supportive, and well-managed learning environments” (Zins & Elias, 2007, p. 238). The need for these competencies is imperative. In a recent sample of students in grades six through twelve, “only 29%-45% of surveyed students reported that they had social competencies such as empathy, decision making, and conflict resolution skills, and only
29% indicated that their school provided a caring, encouraging environment” (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 405).

Self-awareness involves numerous key markers of success. It includes realizing how thoughts, feelings, and actions influence each other (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 280). Self-awareness also includes awareness of your own strengths and limitations, and development of goals for the future (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 280). It also involves a person’s ability to name emotions and thoughts and see how they influence one’s behavior choices (Oberle et al., 2016, p.280).

The second core SEL competency, self-management, involves successful regulation of behaviors, emotions, and thoughts (Oberle et al., 2016, p.280). Management of stress, impulses, and motivation all fall under self-management (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 280). Self-management also includes making progress on social and academic goals (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 280).

The third core competency of social awareness involves empathy for others. It includes, “the ability to take the perspective of others – including those who come from a different background and culture” (Oberle et al., 2016, p.280). It includes respecting ethical and social norms. Finally, social awareness is the ability to locate resources and help in the larger support circles of community, family, and school (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 280).

The fourth core competency of SEL, relationship skills, includes solving conflict successfully (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 280). It involves clear expression of one’s needs as well as listening carefully to others (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 280). Relationship skills include all of the tools necessary to create and sustain positive relationships with others
(Oberle et al., 2016, p. 280). Finally, it involves negotiation, cooperation, and the ability to locate help when needed (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 280).

The fifth and final SEL competency, responsible decision-making skills, allows children to evaluate their own social interactions and behavior (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 280). When students are proficient in responsible decision-making skills, they are able to weigh, “safety concerns, ethical standards, social and behavioural norms, consequences, and the well-being of self and others” (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 280) into their decisions.

**Need for SEL in schools.** The setting for social emotional learning is often the schools, as that is where children spend the majority of their time. The need for SEL is at the forefront of most administrators’ minds, with schools attempting to meet the challenge of meeting the needs of culturally diverse students at multiple ability levels. SEL has the unique ability to manage the risks that many children from difficult backgrounds bring to school. “In other words, children may acquire risk processes, such as school failure, involvement with anti-social peers, or family poverty that make it more likely that they will develop problem behaviors” (Zins & Elias, 2007, p. 239). Implementing these core competencies of SEL helps schools manage the problems from a preventative standpoint and increase resiliency in students.

Preventing negative life-changing behaviors is a key focus of social and emotional learning. “The focus of most SEL programs is universal prevention and promotion – that is, preventing behavior problems by promoting social and emotional competence – rather than direct intervention” (Zins & Elias, 2007, p. 235). According to Blum & Libbey, as cited in Durlak et al., (2011), there are numerous students who are not proficient in the SEL competencies, and their connection to school decreases as they
progress through their education (p.405). “This lack of connection negatively affects their academic performance, behavior, and health” (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 405).

Students who lack the key SEL competencies and a connection to their school face high risks of disengagement, high dropout rates, and exposure to risky behavior. The percentage of high school students who are disengaged is as high as 40%-60% (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 405). The National Center for Education Statistics (2002), as cited in Zins & Elias (2007) claim that, “among the major reasons cited for dropping out of school several involve social and emotional factors: not getting along with teachers or peers (35.0% and 20.1%, respectively), feeling left out (23.2%), and not feeling safe (12.1%)” (p. 233-234). These students at risk of dropping out also face high risk of dangerous behaviors. “Approximately 30% of high school students engage in multiple high-risk behaviors (e.g. substance use, sex, violence, depression, attempted suicide) that interfere with school performance and jeopardize their potential for life success” (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 405).

**Benefits of SEL.** Fortunately, there are many benefits to the successful integration of social and emotional learning in school, including short-term student outcomes and long-term student outcomes. Benefits also include improvements in attitudes, behaviors, and performance. There are also benefits for teachers who are implementing SEL in their classrooms.

Current findings document that SEL programs yielded significant positive effects on targeted social-emotional competencies and attitudes about self, others, and school. They also enhanced students’ behavioral adjustment in the form of increased prosocial behaviors and reduced conduct and internalizing problems,
and improved academic performance on achievement tests and grades (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 417).

The short-term student outcomes for a social and emotional learning program are promising. One benefit is increased social and emotional skills (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 278). Another benefit is, “positive attitudes toward self, others and tasks” (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 278). Students who participate in social and emotional learning can see an increase in positive relationships and social behaviors along with a reduction in emotional distress (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 278). Finally, students who receive SEL can expect increased academic outcomes (Oberle et al., 2016, p.278).

The long-term benefits for SEL are also appealing. According to Oberle et al. (2016), “greater social and emotional competence was linked to increased chances to enter college, career success, better mental health, engaged citizenship, and a lower risk of sexually transmitted infections in adulthood” (p. 285). Students may even experience higher competencies in managing stress even six to eighteen months after the SEL program ends (Oberle et al., 2016, p.285).

There are specific positive outcomes related to attitudes. Students in SEL programs may expect an increase in self-efficacy and greater understanding of behavior consequences (Zins & Elias, 2007, p. 241). Their attitudes toward school and learning increase, as they develop a bond to their school community and feel more respect and trust for teachers (Zins & Elias, 2007, p. 241). Internally, students in a SEL program will see stronger academic motivation and goals, improved management of school stress, and an increase in ethical values (Zins & Elias, 2007, p. 241).
Teachers and students can also expect to see positive changes in behavior after a social and emotional learning program. One outcome is an increase in prosocial behavior (Zins & Elias, 2007, p. 241. Schools may also see fewer instances of aggressive, disruptive, and violent behavior (Zins & Elias, 2007, p. 241). Another outcome is schools will assign fewer suspensions and see increased attendance. Schools will also see a decrease in risky behaviors (smoking, drugs, sex, alcohol) and an increase in involvement in extracurricular activities (Zins & Elias, 2007, p. 241). In the classroom, teachers may notice students developing their own way of learning, smoother transitions, more participation, increased engagement and effort, and increased reading at home (Zins & Elias, 2007, p. 241).

The increase in academic performance outcomes from usage of an SEL program may be the most appealing to schools. “Students who received SEL programming in addition to the regular educational classroom curriculum showed improved academic outcomes compared with those who did not receive any additional SEL in their classroom (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 281). In the study done by Durlak et al. (2011), schools with an SEL program saw an increase of eleven percentile points on achievement tests (p.405). Schools can expect increased math, language, and social studies skills (Zins & Elias, 2007, p. 241). They could also see increases in phonological awareness and problem solving (Zins & Elias, 2007, p. 241).

There are also benefits to the teachers who teach SEL to students. Teachers who taught SEL spent less time managing classroom behaviors and reported an increase in self-efficacy (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 281). SEL teachers also reported, “lower stress levels, higher job satisfaction, and higher teaching efficacy” (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 281).
Finally, teachers who relied on social and emotional learning did not need to use punitive and exclusionary practices (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 281).

**Methods of Teaching SEL.** There are three key practices to consider when teaching social and emotional learning in the school setting. First of all, the lessons should follow the SAFE framework, which was created especially for SEL lessons. Secondly, the social and emotional learning lesson should be integrated within the school day and not stand alone. Thirdly, the lessons should connect to literature.

**SAFE framework.** When designing effective social and emotional lessons for students, the SAFE framework is recommended. SAFE stands for sequenced, active, focused, and explicit (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 408). “There is broad agreement that programs are likely to be effective if they use a sequenced step-by-step training approach, use active forms of learning, focus sufficient time of skill development, and have explicit learning goals” Durlak et al., 2011, p. 408). Also, staff who follow the SAFE framework have fewer implementation problems (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 408).

To ensure that lessons are sequenced, educators should break skills into small, sequential steps. Creating a scope and sequence of lesson plans of expected behaviors can help students link the smaller skills together. “New behaviors and more complicated skills usually need to be broken down into smaller steps and sequentially mastered, suggesting the benefit of a coordinated sequence of activities that links the learning steps and provides youth with opportunities to connect these steps” (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 408). When students can visualize the road map, they can complete the journey more successfully.
When designing active lessons, students should be able to practice the skill in a supportive setting. Examples of interactive activities include modeling, role-playing, and coaching from both teachers and peers (Durlak et al. 2011, p. 418). Adult modeling of the expected behaviors is also a necessary piece. “Effective classroom-level SEL involved teaching and modeling social-emotional competence, fostering social skills in interpersonal situations with students, and providing continuous and consistent opportunities to build, advance, and practice social-emotional skills safely” (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 285).

To ensure that SEL lessons are focused, administrations and teachers need to designate ample time for the learning objectives to be mastered. “Sufficient time and attention must also be devoted to any task for learning to occur (Focus). Therefore, teachers must set aside time primarily for skill development (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 408).

Finally, effective SEL lessons need to be explicit in nature. Teachers and staff can accomplish this by creating clearly stating the material to be mastered. “Clear and specific learning objectives over general ones are preferred because it is important that youth know what they are expected to learn “(Durlak et al., 2011, p. 408).

Utilizing the SAFE framework will ensure that SEL outcomes will be maximized for students. When implementing lessons within the SAFE framework, schools may expect higher growth on six SEL outcomes (skills, attitudes social behavior, conduct problems, emotional distress, and academic performance) (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 414). “Programs following all four recommended training procedures (i.e., coded as SAFE) produced significant effects in all six outcomes, whereas programs not coded as SADE
achieved significant effects in only three areas (i.e., attitudes, conduct problems, and academic performance” (Durlak et al., 2011, p.414).

**Integrated.** Adding a SEL curriculum to the daily schedule may be difficult for most schools, as every minute of the day is filled with academic subjects (Zins & Elias, 2007, p. 248). Additionally, manufactured curriculum may not address the cultural needs of the students. For SEL lessons to be most effective, they should be integrated into the classroom and academics. According to the study done by Durlak et al. (2011), “The most common strategy (53% of interventions) involved classroom-based interventions administered by regular classroom teachers” (p. 409). Durlak et al. (2011) also noticed that the highest gains in all six SEL outcomes (SEL skills, attitudes, positive social behavior, conduct problems, emotional distress, and academic performance) was by universal interventions provided by classroom teachers (p. 413). “This result suggests that these interventions can be incorporated into routine educational practices and do not require outside personnel for their delivery” (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 417).

Weaving social and emotional learning with an academic subject is key to ensure multiple positive outcomes for students. “SEL and academic skills develop in interrelation with each other. By using strategies and programmes that integrated SEL into educational practices, multiple skills can be practiced and developed simultaneously, lessening the time pressure of additional programmes in the school context” (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 283). Using universal integrated SEL and academics can lead to, “increased attention, motivation, and socially competent behavior; reductions in aggressive and disruptive behavior” (Daunic et al., 2013, p.44).
One way to integrate academics and SEL is through the use of literacy. The discussion of characters and emotions lends itself to opportunities to explore character motivations, emotions, and behaviors (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 285). Self-regulation and reading comprehension are linked through shared usage of executive functioning skills. “The same EF skills that are associated with the self-regulation of emotions and behavior are also involved in the comprehension of oral and written language” (Daunic et al., 2013, p. 44). Both self-regulation and comprehension use emotional control, working memory, self-talk, and problem solving (Daunic et al., 2013, p. 44).

In Daunic et al.’s study (2013) Teachers found integrating literacy with SEL to have two positive effects on their students. First, the students found the reading of storybooks to be engaging. Secondly, teachers found integrating SEL with storybook reading to be easy to incorporate (p. 48). In conclusion, “integrating SEL and literacy can lead to improvements in self-regulation that should enhance positive social and academic development” (Daunic et al., 2013, p. 49).

In this section, I explored social and emotional literacy teaching practices. First, I defined SEL and detailed the benefits of social and emotional learning for students. Next, I explored the SAFE framework for creating SEL lessons. Finally, I discussed the integration of SEL with academics, specifically with the usage of storybooks.

In the next section, I will explore the SEL skill of self-regulation, a skill that students of trauma can have difficulty managing. I will define emotional self-regulation. Then I will explore methods for teaching emotional self-regulation in students.
Self-Regulation of Emotions

In this section, I will describe and define emotional self-regulation. Then, I will explore a curriculum for teaching self-regulation, The Zones of Regulation. Next, I will describe the five steps of self-regulation. Finally, I will explain three strategies for successful teaching of self-regulation.

**Defining self-regulation.** Self-regulation can be an important strategy for students when they are working on challenging, new, or even boring tasks. “Self-regulated learning involves the deliberate use of metacognitive strategies, such as planning and self-monitoring as well as motivation and emotion control strategies that keep students focused on goals” (Randi, 2009, p. 55). Self-regulation strategies can be used with preschool students all the way to college students (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 6). Self-regulation has its roots in social cognitive theory. In social cognitive theory, students receive models and support for learning through authentic interactions with adults (Randi, 2009, p. 55).

According to Johnson and Johnson (1999), “self-regulation requires students to stop, think about what they are doing, compare their behavior to a criterion, record the results of their comparison, and receive reinforcement for their behavior if it meets the criterion” (p. 7). Self-monitoring of behavior includes all the steps of self-regulation, but it does not include reinforcement (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 7).

**Zones of Regulation.** In 2011, a curriculum specifically designed to help teach self-regulation was published. The Zones of Regulation is a curriculum designed by Leah M. Kuypers (2011). Its purpose is to teach students self-regulation skills in different situations. It is influenced by other programs, including, “the work of Williams
and Shellenberger’s *The Alert Program®* on sensory self-regulation, Kari Dunn Buron and Mitzi Curtis’ work in the area of emotional-regulation and executive functioning, *The Incredible 5 Point Scale*, Simon Baron Cohen’s Systemizing Theory and Ross Greene’s *Explosive Child*” (Social Thinking and the Zones of Regulation: The Journey Continues, 2017).

In the words of the author, Kuypers (2011), “From my direct observation, it appeared that many of the methods being used to curb behavior, such as point sheets, level systems, and time-outs, did not address the core issue – building underlying skills” (p. 6). In this curriculum, there are 18 lessons that teachers can use to teach students about emotions, emotional zones, triggers, and strategies for moving to different zones.

The curriculum uses color-coded four zones to categorize emotions and states of alertness. The four zones are blue, green, yellow, and red. The blue zone represents a lower energy state, with students often feeling sad, tired, sick, depressed, or slow-moving (Kuypers, p. 9). The green zone represents an optimal state for learning. Students in the green zone are feeling happy, calm, focused, or ready to learn (Kuypers, p. 9). The yellow zone represents an increased energy state, where students may feel anxious, worried, silly, wiggly, or frustrated (Kuypers, p. 9). The final zone is the red zone, marked by increased energy. Students in the red zone can experience anger, yelling, kicking, or an out of control feeling (Kuypers, p. 9). “The Zones can be explained much as we would explain traffic signs. Red means stop. Yellow is a warning to slow down and be cautious. Blue is like a rest area off the freeway, a place where we can stop, take a break, and get re-energized. Green means we’re good to go” (Katz, 2012, p.7). In moving
through the lessons, the students learn to recognize signs of the zones in themselves as well as signs of the zones in other people.

Students also explore triggers that move them into other zones. They are asked to think about what makes them anxious and mad. Students brainstorm lists of potential triggers that might escalate them into the yellow or red zones.

In addition, students are taught by the teachers how to take ownership of different strategies to move into another, more optimal zone for the situation. Students are taught alerting strategies, which may help them move from blue zone into green zone. This may include taking a walk, getting a drink, breathing, and talking to someone. Students are also taught sensory supports, which can help them if they are agitated, overwhelmed, or craving sensory input. They can try sitting on a different seat, listening to music, eating something crunchy, or turning on different lights. Also, students are taught calming strategies, which can help them when they are very mad, frustrated, silly, or feeling out of control. The calming strategies can be taking a walk, using breathing exercises, taking a break, and listening to music.

Students are taught the different strategies for altering and managing zones. The ownership for using the strategies is increasingly placed on the students, with the goal of the students building a “toolbox” of strategies. Each student uses a different set of strategies based on what works best for them in each Zone.

The Zones of Regulation curriculum can be very useful to students of trauma, because they often struggle with emotional regulation. Students of trauma are often in a fight or flight stage, and they need strategies for calming. If students are familiar with the Zones of Regulation curriculum, they could recognize the signs and symptoms of
dysregulation more quickly. If they had a premade and well-rehearsed toolbox of successful calming strategies, they could access the strategies quickly and return to a calm state. Students could also feel more control of their emotions, as they apply the correct strategy more frequently.

**Five Steps of Self-Regulation.** According to Johnson and Johnson (1999), there is a sequence of five steps that a student takes during self-regulation of behavior (p.7). The first step is self-observation, or “looking at one’s own behavior given a predetermined criterion” (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 7). The second step of student self-regulation is self-assessment, or using self-questioning to decide if they have performed a behavior (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 7). The third step of self-regulation of behavior is self-recording, where a student records on a private sheet if the behavior was or was not performed (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 7). The fourth step of self-regulation is self-determination of reinforcement, where students select their reward from a pre-determined list of rewards (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 7). The rewards could include receiving a sticker or small treat, extra time on the computer or activity of choice, or a short break. The final step of self-regulation is self-administration of reinforcement, or when a student gives him or herself a small reward for performing the desired behavior (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 7).

While Johnson and Johnson’s five steps of regulation are thorough, there are some limitations. One problem is that students may not be able to generalize the behavior change over multiple settings. One way to overcome this is to teach the behavior in the setting where you’d like the behavior to occur (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 6). Another limitation with the five steps is that, “self-regulation is most widely used
during independent seatwork” (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 7). Students in today’s classrooms are asked to do a number of collaborative tasks, and focus on seatwork and worksheets is reduced. Finally, I have concerns with the amount of external motivation used in these five steps. If students are dependent on external rewards every time they complete a desired behavior, how are they supposed to build intrinsic motivation?

Today, some classrooms utilize flexible seating, in which students can choose the location and seating in the classroom which matches the task. The five steps of self-regulation may not be as effective in such a collaborative classroom. It seems as if the five steps of self-regulation would best be used in a traditional classroom during seatwork, and the external rewards should be faded over time, as not to diminish intrinsic motivation in students.

**Strategies for Teaching Self-regulation.** There are four strategies for teaching self-regulation to students. One is target behavior monitoring, the second is self-instruction. The third strategy is goal setting, and the final is through curriculum embedded character analysis.

**Target Behavior Modeling.** In target behavior modeling, the teacher should teach the procedure to students using direct instruction, using modeling and guided practice (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 8). The first step of target behavior modeling is to collect initial data on the student’s current level of performance (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 7). Then, the teacher teaches students the sequence of five steps of self-regulation using a behavior (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p.7). The teacher should model using a tone to cue self-assessment of behavior, with students watching the teacher model the behavior (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 7). Next, the students practice self-monitoring of a
behavior daily, and graph their data (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 8). When students are able to successfully graph their data, the teacher should introduce positive self-talk to reinforce the behavior, such as, “I did a nice job getting my work done” (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 8). Teachers should continue to collect data on the performance of their students, change target behaviors according to student needs, and review the self-recorded data with students on a weekly basis (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 8).

This teaching method is recommended for more seatwork situations, which is contradictory to the philosophy of many modern schools. Secondly, the use of an auditory tone during classroom instruction does not strike me as authentic practice, especially in the practice of regulating emotions.

**Self-instruction.** Self-instruction is when the child uses language to regulate their behavior, and it is also known as self-talk (Menzies & Lane, 2011, p. 185). Self-talk, or self-instruction may be used by students rehearse the steps to a skill, or to provide self-encouragement (Menzies & Lane, 2011, p. 185). “These skills can be applied to a variety of situations: students can use them to (a) define a problem and decide how to approach it, (b) increase attention to a task, (c) choose a strategy to tackle a problem, (d) evaluate work to find mistakes, (e) cope with difficult situations, or (f) use affirming statements to acknowledge one’s accomplishments” (Menzies & Lane, 2011, p. 185).

When utilizing the self-instruction method, the lesson should follow the gradual release of instruction model (Menzies & Lane). This allows the children to see a successful model from an adult, allow for guided practice, and give the student a chance to practice the skill independently.
**Goal setting.** Goal setting is also a successful method for teaching self-regulation to students. The first step in goal setting is deciding on the goal (Menzie & Lane, 2011, p. 186). The goal should be not too difficult for the student, but also not too easy to attain. The next step in goal setting is agreeing upon a timeline for the goal (Menzie & Lane, 2011, p. 186). If the timeline is longer, smaller short-term goals may be created. Finally, the last step in goal setting is to monitor the student’s progress toward the goal and offer coaching along the way (Menzie & Lane, 2011, p. 186).

**Curriculum embedded character analysis.** Students may also learn self-regulation through literature in the usage of curriculum embedded character analysis. “Learning through literary characters is one example of how children learn implicitly through models provided in the environment” (Randi, 2009, p. 55). In Randi’s (2009) study, they looked for, “models of self-regulated learning within the existing curriculum”, and found that the texts utilized themes of, “self-reliance, independence, resiliency, persistence, courage, and survival” (p. 56). In Randi’s (2009) approach, “Students are led to experience self-regulated learning vicariously through literature and to learn self-management strategies inductively through an analysis of literary characters exemplifying personal traits that are characteristic of self-regulated learners” (p. 56).

This strategy of teaching self-regulation proves to be one of the easiest to implement in many ways. Teachers are already using character analysis in their classrooms using a curriculum or texts. Students are already analyzing characters for certain traits. The students can then apply the self-regulation strategies learned from the characters to familiar situations. “The curriculum-embedded approach for teaching self-regulation through literary analysis enabled students to learn strategies from literary
models and then transfer those strategies to their own lives” (Randi, 2009, p. 57). The underlying message of self-regulation may need to be made more explicit through questioning and prompts.

Summary of Self-regulation

In this section on self-regulation, first self-regulation was defined. Secondly, the Zones of Regulation Curriculum was explored. Thirdly, five steps of self-regulation were detailed. Finally, strategies for teaching self-regulation were explained. In the next section, text sets will be explored as a means to teach the skill of self-regulation through literature.

First, I will define text sets and its history. Next, I will describe the primary benefit of text sets, which is providing students with mirrors and windows to the world. Then, I will discuss why texts sets is a successful tool for social and emotional learning. Finally, I will describe a framework for building text sets.

Text Sets

In this final section of Chapter Two, I will explore the use of text sets to teach social and emotional skills to students. First, I will define text sets and the history. Then, I will describe a framework that can assist in building text sets. Finally, I will describe why texts is a successful practice in social and emotional learning.

Definition and History of Text Sets. According to Lent (2012), texts sets are “a collection of materials…composed of diverse resources on a specific subject matter, genre, or theme” (p. 148). They are usually a collection of books, websites, or visual materials, and they are not accompanied by a teaching guide (Freeman, 2011). The texts can take many forms, in order to deliver the content effectively and meet the needs of the
students. The texts could be picture books, charts, videos, pictures, tweets, songs, podcasts, and other nontraditional versions of texts (Tracy, Menickelli, & Scales, 2016). (For additional text choices, please see Table 1).

Text sets originate from the belief that wide reading is beneficial to students. According to the 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment Report, ‘In all countries, students who enjoy reading the most perform significantly better than students who enjoy reading the least’ (p. 13). Wide reading is the practice of reading for longer amounts of time across many different genres of text. J.A. Hartman and Hartman (1994), suggested four different alternatives to the single text: (a) companion texts, which are a part of a series of texts (b) complementary texts, which have a similar theme, (c) synoptic texts, which tells the main story in a different way, and (d) conflicting texts, which tell a different perspective on the same theme.

Text sets have been used more frequently since the adoption of the Common Core State Standards. Text sets allow teachers to explore a topic with the depth and breadth that is required of the standards. “Text sets offer students an entryway into deeper understandings of information and encourage them to evaluate the information they encounter” (Tracy et al., 2017, p.528). Text sets allow students to, “look across texts and build both general and disciplinary knowledge” (Lupo et al., 2018, p. 434).

**Mirrors and Windows.** Perhaps the strongest reason for using text sets is to expose students to different perspectives. “When students must read and synthesize across texts, they begin to see there may be conflicting information, different interpretation of events, and changing perceptions over time” (Tracy et al., 2017, p.528).
The use of multiple texts to teach concepts gives students access to mirrors and windows on the world.

Students should be exposed to diverse texts. However, “for most students in the United States, the literature they encounter in school consists mainly of White, middle class representations” (Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor, 2014, p. 28). Adding to the problem is the fact that the diverse texts students read in the classroom often do not match reality (Tschida et al., 2014).

When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part (Bishop, 1990, p. 557)

When a book, or text, is serving as a mirror, then “readers see something of themselves in the text” (Tschida et al., 2014, p. 29). Their experiences are important and validated. Through providing multiple texts on one subject or theme, text sets can provide multiple perspectives from different cultures. When there are multiple texts, more than one group can have their perspective validated. Through reading different perspectives in a text set, the majority can be questioned. “For if all children see are reflections of themselves, they will grow up with an exaggerated sense of their own importance and value in the world – a dangerous ethnocentrism” (Tschida et al., 2014, p. 29).

In addition to giving students mirrors on their own experience, text sets can provide windows into other people’s experiences. “Books must also act as windows, allowing for a vicarious experience to supersede the limits of the readers’ own lives and
identities and spend time observing those of others” (Tschida et al., 2014, p. 29). In this way, text sets may allow readers to meet others who have alternative viewpoints and lifestyles.

Exposing students to windows and mirrors allows students to learn social and emotional concepts, as well. “Literature functions as a major socializing agent. It tells students who and what their society and culture values, what kinds of behaviors are acceptable and appropriate, and what it means to be a decent human being” (Bishop, 1990, p. 561). When students are exposed to windows and mirrors through text, it can be a powerful message. “Images and representations in literature (or lack of them) shape children’s beliefs about who is good and who is bad, who counts and who does not, and whose experiences are deemed more important than others” (Tschida et al., 2014, p. 30).

**Text Sets Support Social and Emotional Learning.** Text sets are a successful strategy for social and emotional learning. It increases the emotion vocabulary for students. It also allows students to use characters as models for behavior. Finally, text sets bridge gaps in knowledge and deepen students’ understanding.

The use of text sets increases student awareness of emotion words and meanings. “Emotion vocabulary is an overlapping area between social-emotional learning and emergent literacy” (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006, p. 558). The students learn the vocabulary words through readings of a story. Students have repeated interactions with the emotion vocabulary throughout the multiple readings over different texts. Finally, students get to relate the emotion words to their real life through watching characters use strategies.

In text sets, students can use characters in the story as models of prosocial behavior. “Books with social-emotional content present models of adults and children
solving problems and interacting, and they have the potential to connect children emotionally with the experiences of the characters” (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006, p. 558). Students can learn new strategies for managing emotions and solving problems through literary characters.

In the use of text sets, students can bridge gaps of knowledge by accessing content that is at their intellectual level. Students can select the text resource from the text set that is at their developmental level, whether it be a complex or simple text (Freedman, 2011). If students are not yet reading, they can still access visual texts to gain content knowledge (Freedman, 2011). Students can use the multiple texts to deepen their understanding. By expanding the amount of information that is available to students, teachers increase student interest and connections, which can deepen the learning (Freedman, 2011).

Quad Text Set Framework. Lupo et al. (2018) developed a framework for building text sets that take into account the volume of reading, text difficulty, motivation, and background knowledge. The quad text set is a framework that is built off of four types of texts: “one that is a challenging on- or above-grade-level text (the target text) and three other texts that build the background knowledge and motivation needed to comprehend the target text” (Lupo et al., 2018, p. 436).

In building the text set, the target text should be a difficult text in regards to language and knowledge (Lupo et al., 2018). “Then, we suggest choosing three types of texts to build background knowledge and increase motivation, to assist in understanding the target text: visual or video text(s), informational text(s), and accessible text(s) (from young adult fiction, nonfiction articles, or popular culture” (Lupo et al., 2018, p. 436).
The sequence in which students are introduced to the different texts in the text set is also an important consideration. “We found that interspersing supporting texts between chunks of or repeated readings of the target text to provide timely and targeted background knowledge helped students” (Lupo et al., 2018, p. 436). (See Appendix A for a visual of the quad text framework).

There are additional benefits in using the quad text set framework with students. Teachers provided feedback to Lupo et al. about the framework. “Our framework has helped their students build relevant content knowledge and identify the themes of challenging texts” (Lupo et al., 2018, p. 441). Using the quad text set framework also increases time on text and motivation (Lupo et al., 2018). Finally, the quad text set, “has changed how they viewed incorporating challenging texts into their curriculum, especially for struggling readers” (Lupo et al., 2018, 441).

**Summary of Text Sets** In this section, I defined text sets and explored its origin. Next, I explained how text sets expose students to mirrors and windows and disrupt the single story. Then, I described three reasons why the use of text sets is a successful social and emotional learning strategy. Finally, I explained how to use the Quad Text Set Framework to build a successful text set. In the next section, I will summarize the key findings in Chapter Two.

**Conclusion**

This chapter explored the topics of culturally responsive practices, trauma-informed practices, social and emotional literacy, emotional self-regulation, and the use of text sets. Some key findings emerged in the literature responding to the question:

*How can the use of a culturally responsive and trauma-sensitive text set reinforce self-*
regulation in primary Somali students? The key findings include meeting the specific needs of our student population and integration within classroom academics through text sets.

In order for a curriculum to have successful outcomes, the needs of the student population need to be considered. In my school setting, there are cultural needs that my students have. The students need to feel that the academic materials match their background and experience. They also need to be able to process the literature after reading.

The text sets also need to address the fact that my students are bringing trauma to school with them. Because their limbic system has been damaged, the students may have trouble with regulating emotions. This is a skill that needs to be taught to students of trauma. One of the most effective ways of teaching self-regulation is through literature, using text sets.

I am choosing to focus on primary students because early intervention is key to providing students the tools they need to be successful in school. “Intervention should begin as early as possible with young children who may be at risk…due to poverty, developmental delays and/or disabilities” (Flynn, 2011, p.8).

Finally, the use of text sets is an engaging, effective method by which to deliver a universal, integrated boost in background knowledge. Students can learn key emotion vocabulary through text sets and gain helpful emotion regulation strategies from characters in the readings.

In chapter three, I will put these recommendations to use, as I build a text set to meet the needs of my students. I will explore finding culturally responsive texts that
explore emotions and self-regulation strategies to use with primary students. Then, I will use the Quad Framework to plan a cohesive text set. Finally, I will house the lessons and books in a teacher-friendly location.

CHAPTER THREE

Project Description

In Chapter Two, I explored the literature behind my research question: How can the use of a culturally responsive and trauma-sensitive text set reinforce self-regulation in primary Somali students? In exploring the literature, I identified five topics that pertained to my question. The topics were culturally responsive practices, trauma-informed practices, social and emotional learning (SEL), emotional self-regulation, and text sets. In Chapter Three, I will describe the project, provide a rationale for the framework, and identify the audience for the project. I will also describe the timeline for creating the text set, the process for developing the text set, and the important curricular elements.

Description

The project is a culturally responsive and trauma-sensitive text set focused on emotional regulation. The texts are to be used in primary classrooms (K-3). The texts use literature to teach the social and emotional content, and the texts are aligned to the key concepts in the Zones of Regulation Curriculum (Kuypers, 2011). The texts selected include culturally responsive texts, with stories that feature Somali characters. It will also include texts that give the students a window to another perspective.

The text set is stored in a Google Drive folder for ease of access for teachers. The folder contains a suggested alignment of resources, grouped by topic, as well as an
annotated bibliography of the books. The physical copies of the books and lessons are stored in a plastic tote in my office, which teachers can check out to use with their students. The books are labeled with a color-coded sticker, so that teachers can easily spot a resource that meets their needs.

Rationale

In this project, I am using the quad text set framework (Lupo et al., 2018) to build the text set. The reason why the quad text set framework was chosen is because it includes the target text and 3 additional types of text: informational, visual, and accessible. The target text will be The Zones of Regulation Curriculum (Kuypers, 2011). The additional texts are at least three other types of texts (listed in Table 1) that help to increase background knowledge and motivation (Lupo et al., 2018).

The quad text set framework was selected because teachers had positive feedback about the results. They reported that it helped students increase content knowledge, it increased the time on text, and it was motivating for struggling readers (Lupo et al., 2018).

Audience

The audience of the project is focused on the primary staff at my Midwest Somali Charter School. There are seven primary teachers, including one kindergarten teacher, two first grade teachers, two second grade teachers, and two third grade teachers. All of the teachers are white. Six teachers are female, and one is male. Six out of the seven teachers are veterans at the school, having taught at the school for two or more years. In grades K-3 at my school, there are 115 students. The population consists of 100% Black students. All of the students have an East African cultural background. 98.6% of
students are currently English Language learners, with 100% of students being current or exited English Language Learners in our English Language Learning program. 6.8% of students are Special Education, and 100% of the students are receiving Free or Reduced Lunch. The average class size in the primary grades is 16 students.

I focused on the primary students of the school because I wanted to intervene early. If students are taught how to regulate their emotions upon entering our school, then the students will have greater self-control throughout their academic career. They will have fewer discipline referrals if they are able to recognize and control their emotions.

Timeline

The project was completed during the 2017-2018 school year. The focus of the question and the research was completed in September – December 2017. The text set was completed in the winter and spring of the 2017-2018 school year. Culturally relevant literature was gathered and reviewed in December 2017 – January 2018. The different texts were categorized in February 2018. The texts were aligned to the key concepts in the Zones of Regulation curriculum in February 2018. The annotated bibliography was built in March – May 2018. The text set was placed in a Google Drive folder in May of 2018. The complete text set on emotional self-regulation is ready to be implemented with students in the 2018-2019 school year.

Curriculum Development Process

The first step in the curriculum development process was to identify key materials and a sequence of texts. I looked on diverse books websites, Amazon.com, and in local book stores. I searched for culturally responsive literature in which the character
displayed emotional self-regulation skills. After collecting 40-50 texts, I narrowed the texts down to the most important lessons in emotional self-regulation that are connected to the lessons in the Zones of Regulation curriculum (Kuypers, 2011). After the texts were pared down, I aligned them to key concepts in the Zones of Regulation curriculum (Kuypers, 2011). The nine key concepts are emotions, red zone, yellow zone, blue zone, green zone, different perspectives, sensory support tools, calming tools, and thinking tools. The final texts were used to create an annotated bibliography for the users.

**Curriculum Elements**

There are a number of curriculum elements that are present in my project. Outside of the lesson is a bibliography (See Appendix D) and alignment of resources (See Appendix C). Inside of the texts, there is a connection to mirrors and windows.

For the entire curriculum, there is a bibliography to collect all of the titles used. The bibliography will be in APA formatting. There is also an alignment of resources, so teachers can see how all of the selected texts connect to the nine key concepts in the Zones of Regulation curriculum (Kuypers, 2011).

The selection of the texts includes texts that are both mirrors and windows. Our students will see their own experience reflected in the stories. They will also see outside perspectives presented in texts.

The annotated bibliography includes the APA citation for the text. It begins with a label of the genre, how it fits into the quad text set framework, and what key concept of the curriculum it aligns to. It also includes a short summary of the text. Finally, it includes a statement of why it was selected for the text set.
The resource alignment and annotated bibliography are housed in the school’s Google Drive. This allows every teacher to access the lesson material at the same time. I also keep physical copies of the texts and lesson materials in my office if teachers would like to check out a physical copy. The nine key concepts each have a color code. Texts that focus on emotions are labeled with purple tape on the spine and cover of the text. Blue Zone resources are labeled with blue tape. Yellow Zone resources are labeled with yellow tape. Red Zone resources are labeled with red tape. Green tape indicates a Green Zone resource. Texts that cover different perspectives are labeled with orange tape. Each of the different tools receive a different color label. Sensory Supports are labeled with pink, Calming Tools are labeled with silver, and Thinking Tools are labeled with black tape. All of the texts are physically kept in a clear plastic tote so that teachers can easily find the color resource that they need.

**Conclusion**

In Chapter Three, I described the project, which is a culturally-responsive set of texts to teach self-regulation skills to primary Somali students, linked to the Zones of Regulation curriculum (Kuypers, 2011). I provided a rationale for the quad text set framework. I also identified the audience for the project. I detailed the timeline for creating the curriculum. Finally, I described the process for developing the curriculum and the important curricular elements.

In Chapter Four, I will reflect on the creation of a text set for teacher usage that benefits students’ self-regulation. Key understandings from the literature review, rationale for the project model, assessments, and implications and limitations are explained.
CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion

Introduction

Throughout my sixteen years of teaching in three different school settings, I have seen the need for students to acquire social and emotional skills. Particularly, I see the urgent need for students of trauma to learn self-regulation skills. My professional experiences with social and emotional learning and the knowledge of literacy learned in the Hamline University Master’s in Literacy Education Program has led me to my guiding question, “How can the use of a culturally responsive and trauma-sensitive text set reinforce self-regulation in primary Somali students?” for my capstone project. The most current research on trauma-informed instruction, culturally responsive teaching, social and emotional learning, self-regulation of emotions, and text sets was reviewed. For my project, I created a culturally responsive and trauma-sensitive text set to support the teaching of the Zones of Regulation Curriculum (Kuypers, 2011). This fourth chapter describes the key understandings from the literature review, the quad text set model, assessment, possible limitations of the text set, and implications.

Key Understandings

In the Literature Review in Chapter Two, I reviewed five key topics that related to my underlying question, “How can the use of a culturally responsive and trauma-sensitive text set reinforce self-regulation in primary Somali students?” I explored trauma-informed instruction, culturally responsive teaching, social and emotional learning, self-regulation, and text sets. In reviewing all five topics, there were key findings that emerged.
In the research on trauma-informed instruction, I learned that my Somali students faced higher incidences of trauma due to their refugee status. 67% of our students can claim refugee students. Therefore they will have greater exposure to trauma through their pre-flight and post-flight experiences (Sullivan & Simonson, 2016). This high percentage further indicates the need for a universal intervention for our Somali student population. Another key finding from the trauma research is that students who have been exposed to incidences of trauma from birth to age six will likely experience changes in the brain (Plumb et al., 2016). The most devastating effects of trauma are on the limbic system, which helps to regulate emotions. When synthesizing the key learnings from trauma-informed instruction, at least 67% of our students could have difficulty with emotional regulation.

In the research on culturally-responsive practices, I had two key learnings. One was the importance of ensuring that the curriculum reflected the students’ background and experiences. Connecting the academic content with the cultures of the students in class is a way to affirm the identities of students and open dialogue among the student, home, and school. Another key learning is that in most effective studies, students were responding to culturally responsive literature through discussion, writing, or sharing. Because of these new learnings, I began to think about how to add culturally responsive literature seamlessly to the curriculum of my Somali students.

The third topic that I researched was social and emotional learning. CASEL has outlined five core competencies that underpin all social and emotional learning. They are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making skills (Oberle et al., 2016, p. 280). Another key finding in the research is
that social and emotional learning and academics should be integrated in order to be most effective. Durlak et al. (2011) also noticed that the highest gains in all six SEL outcomes (SEL skills, attitudes, positive social behavior, conduct problems, emotional distress, and academic performance) was by universal interventions provided by classroom teachers (p. 413). An effective way to blend academics and social and emotional learning is through literacy. Because of these new learnings, I began to think about using literature in a different way. Children’s books could be used to deliver social and emotional content without adding additional lessons or content blocks to the school day.

The fourth topic that I researched was self-regulation. The biggest learning that I had in self-regulation was the usage of the Zones of Regulation curriculum to teach students how to regulate their own behavior. In the words of the Kuypers (2011), “From my direct observation, it appeared that many of the methods being used to curb behavior, such as point sheets, level systems, and time-outs, did not address the core issue – building underlying skills” (p. 6). Another key learning is that children’s literature can help to serve as models for children who are learning how to regulate emotions. This is another example of how social and emotional learning can be embedded in academics. “The curriculum-embedded approach for teaching self-regulation through literary analysis enabled students to learn strategies from literary models and then transfer those strategies to their own lives” (Randi, 2009, p. 57). After researching self-regulation, I began to think about how could I use an already successful curriculum (Zones of Regulation) and add supplemental, culturally responsive models through characters in children’s literature.
The final topic that I researched was text sets. One reason why text sets is an important culturally responsive tool is because it exposes students to mirrors and windows – texts that reflect the life they know, and texts that show them different cultures and experiences. The most important learning of the text set research is the usage of the quad text set model. It requires the usage of a target text, which in this project is the Zones of Regulation (Kuypers, 2011) curriculum. “Then, we suggest choosing three types of texts to build background knowledge and increase motivation, to assist in understanding the target text: visual or video text(s), informational text(s), and accessible text(s) (from young adult fiction, nonfiction articles, or popular culture” (Lupo et al., 2018, p. 436).

All of the learnings in the Literature Review in Chapter Two led me to create my current project which answers my question, “How can the use of culturally responsive and trauma-sensitive text sets reinforce self-regulation in primary Somali students?” My project is a text set built around the lessons of The Zones of Regulation (Kuypers, 2011). The text set reinforces emotion vocabulary presented in the lessons and gives students models of appropriate self-regulation strategies using children from the Somali culture and other cultures.

**Quad Text Set Model**

The quad text set model was designed by Lupo et al. (2018). The quad text set is a framework that is built off of four types of texts: “one that is a challenging on- or above-grade-level text (the target text) and three other texts that build the background knowledge and motivation needed to comprehend the target text” (Lupo et al., 2018, p. 436).
In a quad text set, the target text should be a difficult text in regards to language and knowledge (Lupo et al., 2018). In this project, the target text is the Zones of Regulation (Kuypers, 2011) curriculum. “Then, we suggest choosing three types of texts to build background knowledge and increase motivation, to assist in understanding the target text: visual or video text(s), informational text(s), and accessible text(s) (from young adult fiction, nonfiction articles, or popular culture” (Lupo et al., 2018, p. 436).

In building the text set, many texts were considered prior to the text selection. I researched texts using key words on the Amazon website. I also browsed diverse book lists on the Lee and Low Blog. I also went to book stores, both used and new, and spent time browsing books. Some texts were helpful in their teaching and reinforcing of self-regulation of emotions, but they were left out of the final text set because they featured cartoon characters, animals, or characters of the white, dominant culture. I wanted to provide students with more mirrors to their culture than windows, because the reality is that Somali children often see more windows than mirrors.

In the text set, there are all three kinds of the supplemental texts – visual texts, informational texts, and accessible texts. I provided visuals in the form of emotion posters, videos, and clips of movies. There are informational texts about basic emotions, animal emotions, and biographies. There are accessible texts in the form of board books, bilingual books, choose your own adventure picture books, and poems.

**Assessment**

There are many ways of assessing the effectiveness of this text set. The text set can be assessed informally and formally. In informal assessment, administration could observe usage of the text sets with students and take notes. Teachers can share anecdotal
information about students using presented strategies and vocabulary. Teachers can use informal assessment tips in the Zones of Regulation (Kuypers, 2011) curriculum to see if students understood the material. Teachers can use quick checks for understanding or questioning after reading a text to gauge comprehension.

Formally, there are also ways one can assess effectiveness of the text set. I can have both teachers and students fill out surveys on self-regulation knowledge prior to the implementation of the text set and after implementation to see growth. I can also track changes in behavior referrals after the implementation of the text set. Also, I can look at students with the most need in their behavior intervention tracking and IEP behavior goal performance.

**Possible Limitations**

The biggest struggle that I found in creating a culturally-responsive text set about self-regulation for primary Somali students was locating books that taught self-regulation featuring Somali characters. It was very easy for me to find books that taught self-regulation strategies. I found hundreds of books that had clear visuals and useful self-regulation strategies, but most of them featured white main characters. On the other hand, I was able to find books with Somali characters. This proved to be more challenging, as the sheer number of children’s books with Somali characters is limited. When I did find a book with a Somali child, often times the Somali character was not the main character, but featured as a friend, or a character who did not speak. Another issue that I had is that the books that contained Somali characters often had a religious message, teaching about Muslim holidays. The more that I looked at different book
websites and retailers to search for texts, the more I wondered if Somali children and self-regulation strategies were mutually exclusive topics.

I began thinking about creating texts with my own students to help solve this dilemma. I thought that I could create a visual of the Zones of Regulation (see Appendix B), replacing the sketches of emotions with photographs of my own students acting out the emotion. I also thought it would be encouraging for students to see someone they know (either a student or staff member) acting out a calming breathing strategy in a video. I would love to have different students and staff members go through their toolbox of strategies in video. Unfortunately, due to the public nature of this work and student privacy, I did not include my own students in this text set. However, in order to make this text set complete, I would like to add my students as models of self-regulation in the future.

When students are exposed to the text set, there can be two limitations. One is attendance and the other is fidelity of implementation. If students are frequently absent to school, they could miss key lessons. The concepts in the texts and in the Zones of Regulation (Kuypers, 2011) curriculum build on each other. If students are late to school, they will miss the Morning Meeting time in which the texts will be read. Also, teachers may use the text set and curriculum with varying degrees of fidelity. Some teachers might cover every lesson, reinforce it with the text set, and prompt students throughout the day to use their strategies. Other teachers might teach just a few lessons from the curriculum, one text from the text set, and never prompt students to use strategies during the day. A student’s experience with social and emotional learning might be very different, depending on which class they are in.
**Implications of Implementation**

This text set is for the upcoming 2018- 2019 school year. The project will be shared with all primary (K-3) teachers at my school. It will also be shared with all other teachers at the school who want to reinforce the Zones of Regulation (Kuypers, 2011) curriculum in their classroom. Looking ahead, I would like to add additional texts for intermediate and middle school students, as I feel they would also benefit from extra time with the vocabulary and strategies in the curriculum. I would also like to add a larger variety of texts so that students use many different genres to come to a solid understanding of self-regulation.

After experiencing both the target text of the Zones of Regulation (Kuypers, 2011) and the supplemental texts in the text set, the students will have highly developed knowledge of emotions, physical signs of the emotions in themselves and others, and self-regulation strategies. These skills will be present in the students’ abilities to name emotional states and to self-regulate. It will also positively affect the way that students recognize emotions in their peers. Through successfully regulating their own emotions, the students will be able to apply more focus to academics, becoming a more well-rounded individual.

**Conclusion**

In Chapter Four, I reviewed key understandings of the literature, the quad text set framework, assessment, possible limitations, and implications of implementation. This project was a winding, steep hill of a journey. It began with reflecting on my fifteen years in the classroom and the needs of my current students. After I formed a question, I found that my question changed often as I focused in on the needs of my students and
what I found in the research. I became lost in the woods of research for a bit, as I wanted to include all of the important variables in my students’ lives, and wanted to consider many different ways of incorporating literature. Just when it began to feel like I had too many topics to research, I really listened to the research and the distractions fell away. I examined many quality resources to build my text set, and now I am ready to share with my students and our teachers.

I am very proud of the work I have done on the text set. After going through the capstone process, I feel confident that I can identify research-based solutions to any future educational problem that I encounter. Through the usage of the Zones of Regulation (Kuypers, 2011) curriculum and the additional exposure of the text set, our students will grow in their emotional self-regulation knowledge and strategy usage. I’m excited to see my students be successful both emotionally and academically.


Heart and Mind Teaching. (2017). *Things that bug me; triggers that annoy or anger us; angry, temper*. Retrieved from https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Things-that-bug-me-triggers-that-annoy-or-anger-us-angry-temper-2843993


BIBLIOGRAPHY


Table 1 - Potential Text Possibilities

Retrieved from:

doi:10.1002/jaal.613

- Newspapers
- Picture books
- Novels
- Poems
- Coffee table books
- Cartoons
- Graphic organizers
- Charts, graphs, and data
- Field guides
- Brochures
- Postcards
- Timelines
- Public service announcements
- Paintings (picture of the day)
- Galleries (gallery walk)
- Exhibits (student showcase)
- Websites
- Virtual field trips
- Videos
- Artifacts and primary sources
- Pictures
- Tweets
- Blogs
- Song lyrics
- Podcasts
- Digital essays
Appendix A- A Visual of The Quad Text Set Framework,
Retrieved from:
Appendix B- Visual of the Zones of Regulation,

Retrieved from:

## Alignment to Zones Topics

### Ch. 3 Resources (p. 23 - 99)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zones Topic</th>
<th>Quad Text Set Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue Zone (Blue Label)</td>
<td>Ayeeyo’s Golden Rule, What’s Your Spaghetti?, I’m New Here, When Elephants Cry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow Zone (Yellow Label)</td>
<td>The Very Frustrated Monster, I Can Handle It, Video: <em>Animal Rejoins the Muppets at Anger Management: “In Control…”</em>, Activity: <em>Things that bug me; triggers that annoy or anger angry, temper</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Zone (Green Label)</td>
<td>Mae Among the Stars, What If..., I Am Enough, Malala’s Magic Pencil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Zone (Red Label)</td>
<td>Sam’s Pet Temper, Even Superheroes Have Bad Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different Perspectives (Orange Label)</td>
<td>You Can Control Your Voice: Loud or Quiet?, What if Everybody Did That?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Ch. 4 Resources (p. 102-134)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zones Topic</th>
<th>Quad Text Set Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensory Support Tools (Pink Label)</td>
<td>Good Morning Yoga &lt;br&gt;Video: <a href="#">The Sensory Room: Helping Students with Autism Focus &amp; Learn</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calming Tools (Silver Label)</td>
<td>Meditate With Me &lt;br&gt;Sam Learns to Breathe &lt;br&gt;I Can Do That &lt;br&gt;Video: <a href="#">Controlling Anger</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking Tools (Black Label)</td>
<td>Bubble Gum Brain &lt;br&gt;Mind Bubbles &lt;br&gt;Video: <a href="#">Size of the Problem Video</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Genre:** Nonfiction Biography Picture Book  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Accessible Text  
**Zones Topic:** Green Zone  
**Summary:** This story is based on the true story of Mae Jemison, the first African American woman in space. It begins with Mae as a young girl, working on an assignment about her future profession. Mae decides that she is going to see the earth from a different view. She takes great steps to realize her dream, including reading books at the library and creating a space room in her house. Her teacher and classmates are confused by her dream, and this makes Mae sad. Her parents refocus her, and she eventually realizes her dream of becoming an astronaut.

This story was chosen for the text set because it depicts a strong, determined, female character of color in the green zone. Children will root for her as they follow her up and down journey to realize her dream. This book could also be used to address the blue zone when others fail to see the value of Mae's dream. A final reason for choosing this book is the author, Roda Ahmed, was born in Somali, which is something my students can identify with.

**Genre:** Non-fiction Board Book  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Visual Text  
**Zones Topic:** Emotions  
**Summary:** This book goes through basic human emotions (happy, sad, angry, surprised and silly). It has the reader practice making a face that shows that emotion, and then locate a baby who is making that face. The book contains simple, predictive texts and images of many babies. At the end of the book, there is a mirror for readers to practice making faces that show emotions.

This book was selected for this text set because it introduces students to the basic vocabulary of different emotions. It allows students to begin making connections to emotional expression that is common across cultures. It also is both a mirror and window into different cultures, as the babies in the story are from different ethnicities and genders.

**Genre:** Fiction Picture Book  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Accessible Text  
**Zones Topic:** Red Zone  
**Summary:** This fictional story communicates that everyone has bad days - even superheroes. Eight superheroes, Beastie, Zing, Thrash, Laserman, Magnifique, Screecher, Typhoon, and Icky, struggle with making the right choices. Bad days could be caused by being sad, being mad, or not getting their way. The story explores possible bad choices that the superheroes could make when they are upset (shrieking, kicking, and throwing things). The superheroes could be destructive, but they choose not to. Instead, they use their powers for good.  

This story was selected because it shows that your actions are a choice. It also emphasizes that it’s okay to be upset, angry, and cry, but then we move on with our day. This book features superheroes of different ethnicities and genders. It could be a nice introduction to choosing other actions than destructive behavior during a red zone moment.

**Genre:** Fiction Picture Book  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Accessible Text  
**Zones Topic:** Green Zone  
**Summary:** The main character, a vibrant, young black girl with purple hair, is determined to create art, no matter what stands in her way. She goes through different scenarios of what could happen to stop her, including losing her supplies, her room, and even light. No matter what happens in her world, she comes up with a way to continue to create art. The story ends with an image of her apartment at night, and the readers can see other community members staying up late to create their art.

This text was selected because the young girl is an excellent model of persistence and not allowing others to take away her expression. It could be used to discuss obstacles to the learning environment and how to keep learning through it all. It was also selected because the main character is a young, black female, shining a mirror onto my students’ lives.

**Genre:** Fiction Picture Book  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Accessible Text  
**Zones Topic:** Red Zone  

**Summary:** Sam finds his new pet, his temper, at the school playground one day while he is frustrated with waiting. The temper clears the playground with its yelling, pinching, and pushing. Sam is happy that he can play all by himself on the playground. He brings the temper home with him, expecting more fun. At dinner, his temper gets him into trouble. He tries to get leave the temper the next day, but it follows him to school and really causes problems. Sam begins to have more and more problems with his temper. He tries strategies that he saw the adults in his life try, such as counting, saying the alphabet backwards, and breathing. Eventually, Sam is proud that he is able to control his temper.

This book was chosen for the text set because it shows that everyone struggles with anger sometimes - parents, babies, kids, and teachers. It has a positive message in that at the end, the boy has pride in his self-regulation skills.

**Genre:** Fiction Picture Book  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Accessible Text  
**Zones Topic:** Green Zone  
**Summary:** The main character in this book is a vibrant, African American girl. She takes pride in herself, as she compares herself to trees, time, the sun, and other fixtures in her life. One page, she is laying in her pajamas, happily reading. She talks about how there might be days that she feel sad, or other days when she does not come in first. But, in the end, she is enough.

This book was selected because it shows a strong, black, female character taking joy in herself and learning. It models positive self-talk and the importance of supporting others in tough times. One of the final illustrations in the book shows girls of many different ethnicities standing together and smiling on top of the world. One of the characters is wearing a hijab with a t-shirt and jeans. I thought that this would be an empowering book, especially for the female Somali students. It would serve as both a mirror into their own culture and a window into other cultures.

**Genre:** Video  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Video Text  
**Zones Topic:** Emotions  
**Summary:** This YouTube video is 2:51 long. It begins by asking the viewer what color zone are they in, and uses a popular movie, Inside Out, to reference the color zones. It introduces each zone, the emotions found in each zone, and follows it with a short clip from the movie. At the end, it again asks what zone the viewer is in.

This was chosen because it is short and connects to pop culture. This visual representation of the zones will help students process the feelings behind the zones. Most of the characters are from the dominant white culture, so this will serve as a window into other cultures for my students.

**Genre:** Nonfiction Picture Book  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Informational Text  
**Zones Topic:** Blue Zone  
**Summary:** This begins with Spaghetti Sam teaching the reader about stress and how it affects the body. It compares stiff, uncooked spaghetti with the way your body reacts under stress. Spaghetti Sam then describes overcooked spaghetti, and compares it being bored and tired. Third, he describes spaghetti that is cooked “just right”, and compares it to being ready to learn. Spaghetti Sam ends by giving some tools for when you feel uncooked or overcooked.

This book was selected for the text set because it describes what your body may feel like in the yellow, blue, and green zones. It details with words and pictures the effect that stress has on your body. Students of trauma often carry stress in different ways. The kids in the book showing the strategies are of different ethnicities. The book has many helpful tools for the students to try self-regulating their zones.

**Genre:** Video  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Video Text  
**Zones Topic:** Sensory Support Tools  
**Summary:** This YouTube video is 3:04 long. It shows a sensory room from an elementary school. The students are trying out different tools, such as bouncing on ball chairs, swinging, punching a bag, breathing, and meditating. As the students work, the teachers narrate about the research and importance of meeting your sensory needs. The teachers discuss the valuable role of the sensory room in getting students back and ready to learn. The teachers describe the different stations in the room, the purpose for each station, and how each student has their own needs. The video ends with a student describing how the sensory room makes him feel.

This video was selected for my students because we are lucky to have access to a sensory room in our building. It does not have the same materials, but the function is the same. About 25 of our students visit the room regularly, and it is open for all students. This video was selected because it shows that everyone needs different tools for different reasons, and that’s appropriate.

**Genre:** PowerPoint  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Visual Text  
**Zones Topic:** Emotions  
**Summary:** This PowerPoint is an interactive way for classes to learn about emotions, zone colors, and taking perspectives. Each slide gives a statement about a child’s situation along with a picture. Then it asks, “How might they be feeling?” The slides give 4 different choices inside of Zones colors. There are 24 slides, and the final slide gives possible answers.

These slides were chosen for the text set because it allows students to think about how others might be feeling in a certain situation. It also introduces them to many different words for emotions. It also puts the emotions into the different color zones by color-coding the answers. This resource could be used in partner pairs first, and then students check their answer with the whole class to see if they were accurate.

**Genre:** Nonfiction Picture Book  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Visual Text  
**Zones Topic:** Sensory Support Tools  
**Summary:** This story leads children through yoga poses in the morning. On the left side of the page, it gives detailed steps for the reader. On the right side of the page, it gives a simple statement about the purpose or the pose. Towards the end of the book, there is a detailed “good morning yoga flow”, with pose names and how to do the pose. The final page takes readers through a visualization of how they want to feel today.

This book was selected for the text set because it details how students can wake themselves up with a yoga flow in the morning. It gives students simple, detailed, and visual references for how to self-regulate. Finally, there are different ethnicities of children modeling the poses. This book is the answer for sleepy, sad mornings with students.

**Genre:** Nonfiction Picture Book  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Informational Text  
**Zones Topic:** Calming Tools  
**Summary:** The main characters, five baby animals, lead the reader through different ways to relax. A kitten teaches the reader how to tense and release muscles. The elephant, bear, piglet, and bunny teach the reader how to breathe in and out, relaxing the whole body. The animals add a glitter jar, and show how to shake it to relax. The animals go through different emotions and have the reader show the emotions with their face and then the whole body. Finally, the animals combine breathing with listening for sounds. On the final pages, the reader can read 4 steps to meditate.

This book was chosen for the text set because it gives the students simple ways to use meditation to calm themselves. It also gives visual representations of the skill for the readers to see. Finally, it tells them that this calm place they’ve created is just one breath away, which encourages the students to self-regulate.

**Genre:** Nonfiction Picture Book  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Informational Text  
**Zones Topic:** Emotions  
**Summary:** According to the author’s note at the beginning of the book, this book is, “a guide to helping kids understand the connection between sensations (what the heck are those?) and feelings so that they can get better at figuring out what they need”. The book contains a note to parents and teachers about how to use this book to teach children emotion vocabulary, how to connect feelings to sensations, and how to practice the skills. The book begins with a boy telling the reader how the body tells you many things. It talks about how those sensations are always changing. The boy describes the moment when he realized the sensations in his body and feelings were connected. The boy goes through different scenarios with emotions and describes how he made himself feel better. He ends by describing the process that he goes through - listening to his body and naming the feeling. All of this takes practice, but it helps him meet his needs.

This book was selected for the text set because it helps to make the connection between sensations and emotions clear for readers. It could also be helpful for teachers who are new to social and emotional learning, in that it gives emotion vocabulary to focus on and practical ways to use this book with students. Finally, the “let’s practice” feature at the bottom of most pages is another way for teachers to rehearse self-regulation tools with students.

**Genre:** Fiction Picture Book  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Accessible Text  
**Zones Topic:** Calming Tools  
**Summary:** This story takes us through Sam’s day, and his journey with self-regulation tools. He wakes up and takes a scary trip to his school with his mother. He begins his school day with Morning Meeting, discussing emotions. Sam notices that his classmates prefer different activities. His yoga teacher joins his class in the afternoon, and Sam is excited to let the stresses of his day fall away. Sam notices all of his feelings drift away as they practice standing and stretching. Sam returns home and does his normal nighttime activities. While in bed, Sam becomes anxious because he cannot find his Stegosaurus. He looks everywhere, but can’t find it. He remembers to breathe, and soon he is asleep.

This story was selected for the text set because it shows how a boy escapes the stresses of his day by doing yoga and breathing. He models self-regulation at the end of the text by breathing himself to sleep. The boy is a good model for learning and attempting self-regulation tools.

**Genre:** Fiction Picture Book  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Accessible Text  
**Zones Topic:** Yellow Zone  
**Summary:** This story is part of the WorryWoo series. This story is about a monster named Twitch, who has a day where nothing goes right. Before school, his alarm doesn’t go off, he trips and bumps his head, his favorite breakfast food is gone, he locks himself out of the house, and he is late for the bus. At school, all of the events of the morning are in his head as he sits in class. He taps his feet, bounces, and feels the pressure. Everything at school feels off. During a singing competition, he earns third, begins crying, and his friends run away. While outside of the school, he notices a squirrel taking life’s frustrations in stride. Twitch decides to change. The next day, his morning goes well, and he apologizes to his friends. He takes pride in coming in third place, and shares his ribbon with the squirrel.

This book was chosen for the text set because children can identify with days where everything go wrong. Twitch models breathing techniques and reframing to turn his attitude and day around. He repairs the wrongs that he did to make things positive.
Heart and Mind Teaching. (2017). *Things that bug me; triggers that annoy or anger us; angry, temper.* Retrieved from https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Things-that-bug-me-triggers-that-annoy-or-anger-us-angry-temper-2843993

**Genre:** PowerPoint  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Visual Text  
**Zones Topic:** Yellow Zone  
**Summary:** This PowerPoint is an interactive resource where students can spend time in groups talking about specific situations. They will sort them into 2 categories: “Bugs me” or “Does not bug me”. They will begin to see that different people have different triggers and tolerances.

This text was selected for the text set because students will practice identifying triggers. They will also practice perspective taking as they realize that different people are triggered by different events. This is also helpful because students will begin to learn about what triggers their classmates, and they can consciously choose to avoid the triggers for the benefit of their friends.

**Genre:** Poetry  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Accessible Text  
**Zones Topic:** Emotions  
**Summary:** This text is an anthology of poetry with expressive illustrations. The poems and illustrations span the gamut of human emotion, and feature adults and children from all cultures.

This text was chosen for this text set because it shows people from all cultures showing different emotions. All zones are represented in the poetry and illustrations. Students will see mirrors into their own culture as well as windows into many other cultures. They will begin to realize the situations that affect all people’s emotions.

**Genre:** Nonfiction Board Book  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Informational Text  
**Zones Topic:** Emotions  
**Summary:** This story is the true story of a baby hippo named Fiona in the Cincinnati Zoo. The book features large, expressive photographs with simple print about Fiona’s emotions. This book explores the range of emotions that a baby hippo may face.

This story was selected for the text set because it is a disruptive text. It allows children to ponder the thought that animals also feel emotions, too. It is informational, but it also allows children to explore how animal facial expressions mirror the facial expressions of people.

**Genre:** Fiction Picture Book  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Accessible Text  
**Zones Topic:** Different Perspectives  

**Summary:** This text was selected for the text set because it allows children to consider the consequences of their choices if everybody did the same choice. It explores the choices of feeding zoo animals, zooming through a supermarket, and littering. It shows the choices of bathing once a year, shouting out during a story, splashing at the pool, and misbehaving on the bus. At the end of the story, it explores everyone doing a positive action.

This story was chosen for the text set because it prompts children to think outside of themselves about why rules were created. The illustrations show the effect of everyone making the bad choice. The illustrations also feature people of different ethnicities. It allows the student to experience both windows to the world and mirrors to their own culture.

**Genre:** Nonfiction Picture Book  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Informational Text  
**Zones Topic:** Thinking Tools  
**Summary:** This book is an introduction to mindfulness for children. It explains that thoughts are like bubbles, and different people can be thinking and feeling different things at different times. All of this can be overwhelming and confusing, but the reader is assured that thoughts are like soap bubbles that appear and disappear. One way that children can manage these bubbles is through breath work. Focusing on your breath in and out will help the bubbles to go away. At the end of the story, it gives readers the tool of SNAP: “Stop and breathe, Notice mind bubbles, Allow the bubbles to be there, and Practice again”. It also includes a 3-minutes Mindful Breathing Practice.

This book was chosen for the text set because it gives children a specific tool to address intrusive thoughts. It allows students to remain in the green zone by acknowledging thoughts, letting them pass, and breathing to calm the mind.

**Genre:** Curriculum  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Challenging Target Text  
**Zones Topic:** All  
**Summary:** This text provides a clear road-map for self-regulation for student. In Chapter One, teachers are given the research and the background behind self-regulation and the Zones of Regulation. In Chapter Two, teachers learn how to seamlessly integrate the Zones of Regulation lesson using standards, sequencing, student grouping, and assessment. In Chapter Three, the students are introduced to emotion vocabulary, the four zones, identifying the Zones in themselves, and taking the perspectives of others. In Chapter Four, the students explore different tools for sensory support, calming, and thinking. In Chapter Five, the Students become fluent in identifying their favorite tools and when to use them. In the final chapter, the teachers are introduced to frequently asked questions and writing IEP’s around self-regulation.  

This was selected for the text set as the target text because it is a research-based curriculum specifically designed to teach students self-regulation skills and tools. It features multiple tools and thinking strategies, and it stresses that different students need different tools.

**Genre:** Nonfiction Picture Book  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Informational Text  
**Zones Topic:** Calming Tools  

**Summary:** This book is a positive self-regulation book for children. The beginning of the book goes through what it feels like when your body is out of control and fidgety. The book also reviews what your body feels like when it is angry. The book closes with strategies that children can use to calm themselves down. Some of the strategies include chair push-ups, drinking water, weighted blankets, gum, and fidgets.

This text was chosen for the text set because it provides three benefits for our students. First, it describes sensations and links the sensations to emotions. Secondly, it gives a number of calming tools for our students to try. Thirdly, the illustrations depict students of all ethnicities modeling calming tools.

**Genre:** Video  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Video Text  
**Zones Topic:** Yellow Zone  
**Summary:** This YouTube video is 1:21 long. It shows Animal, the drummer from the Muppets, at an anger management meeting. He is repeating his mantra, “In Control” in a calm voice. The Muppets come to the meeting and try to convince Animal to come back to the band. They mention the word, “drum”, and Animal becomes visibly excited. The anger management group leader tells the band not to mention the word, “drum”, because it is Animal’s trigger. The Muppets do not listen, and still say the word, which triggers the group leader.

This humorous, visual representation of being triggered was selected for the text set for two reasons. First, it uses pop culture, which could be engaging and comprehensible for our students. Some students may have some prior knowledge of Animal and his behavior. Secondly, this shows how people are trying to be in control of their emotions, but outside circumstances can trigger different Zones.

**Genre:** Nonfiction Bilingual Board Book  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Accessible Text  
**Zones Topic:** Emotions  
**Summary:** This text is a bilingual board book. It contains simple illustrations featuring different cultures. The content is all about different emotions. It first states in English, and the Somali translation is underneath. The emotion words in both languages are bolded for the reader.

This text was selected for the text set for three reasons. Most importantly, it makes input comprehensible for English Language Learners, because it includes both English and Somali (first language) translations. Secondly, because the emotion vocabulary is bolded, the students can make connections between English emotion words and Somali emotion words. Finally, the illustrations give our students both mirrors and windows into culture.

**Genre:** Choose Your Own Adventure  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Accessible Text  
**Zones Topic:** Different Perspectives  
**Summary:** This story begins with explaining the concept behind a “Choose Your Own Adventure” premise. Then, it introduces the scenario of a young girl, Haneen, being overly excited at the library. Will she be quiet or loud? The readers have to first decide if Haneen is going to loud and excited about her book or if she will whisper. Readers can turn to the page that corresponds with their choice. Depending on the choice, you can see how Haneen’s mother and the library patrons react to her choice. At the end of the story, there are reflection questions for the reader.

This book was selected for the text set for three reasons. First, it allows students to see the potential consequences of different choices, and they can begin to see how everything relates. It gives them a number of times to make the right decision. When they choose the correct choice, the character is rewarded in some way. Secondly, the illustrations and words really emphasize how our choices affect those around us. Finally, the main character and her mother are wearing hijabs, which gives the students a mirror to their own experience.

**Genre:** Fiction Picture Book  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Accessible Text  
**Zones Topic:** Blue Zone  

**Summary:** This is the story of Yasmeen, a ten year old Somali girl on her birthday. She wishes for a hijab, but instead she is surprised with a move to America. They say their goodbyes, and her grandmother, or ayeeyo, tells her that people always respond to those who are humble and kind. Yasmeen and her family stay at a shelter their first night, and she is nervous about beginning school in a new country. At school, the students make fun of Yasmeen, pointing out her clothes and her food that smells different. Yasmeen repeats her grandma’s mantra to herself as she cries. The rest of the week, the students in her school continue to harass her, calling her a terrorist and pulling on her hijab. She does not want to return to school, but she keeps remembering her ayeeyo’s rules. The next day, Yasmeen puts a smile on her face and talks to 2 students. They respond well to her friendliness. Her 4th grade year ends well, and Yasmeen remembers her grandma’s advice and makes new friends.

This story was selected for the text set because it features the journey of a female Somali refugee. She deals with hardships and sorrows, and manages to thrive, maintaining a positive attitude. The text offers a mirror to many of our students’ culture, and it provides a model for moving out of the blue zone.

**Genre:** Nonfiction  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Informational Text  
**Zones Topic:** Blue Zone  
**Summary:** This short chapter book explores the emotions of elephants. The first chapter describes Raju, an elephant who was chained up and beaten. When he was rescued, tears rolled down his face. Chapter Two explores why humans cry. Raju might have cried because he was so happy. Another elephant, Zhuang Zhuang, cried after his mother did not bond with him after birth. In Chapter Three, we learn how elephants use sound to communicate with other elephants. In Chapter Four, the book describes other signs of sadness and ways that elephants comfort each other. In Chapter Five, the book explores the different opinions around elephant emotions. In Chapter Six, the final chapter, the book details how elephants react when a member of their herd dies.

This book was selected to be part of this text set for two reasons. The first reason is that it contains true knowledge about the human body and the sensations of sadness. Secondly, it serves as a disruptive text, in that it prompts students to think about emotions in a different way. Perhaps they had not considered previously that animals could have emotions.

**Genre:** Fiction Picture Book  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Accessible Text  
**Zones Topic:** Blue Zone  
**Summary:** This is the story of three young immigrants who are beginning school in America. The three children are from Somalia, Guatemala, and Korea. The three children have a rough time adjusting to the new language and new ways of doing things. Their teacher and classmates help them become thriving members of the class.

This story was selected for the text set because it is a story that many of our students can relate to. They can see a young Somali girl face uncertainty and scary experiences, and my students can remember when they experienced similar circumstances. The young immigrants in this story can serve as authentic models for emotional adjustment for my students.

**Genre:** Poster  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Visual Text  
**Zones Topic:** Emotions  
**Summary:** This set of posters includes 18 different emotions and their physical sensations. Included in the resource are 18 color posters and 18 black and white posters. In each poster, there is an emotion at the top of the resource. Throughout each poster, there are detailed descriptions of each body sensation with an arrow pointing to the affected area of the body.

This resource was selected for the text set for two reasons. The main reason is that it makes the connection between emotions and body sensations explicitly clear. The second reason is that it shows children of all ethnicities experiencing both positive and negative emotions.

**Genre:** Video  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Video Text  
**Zones Topic:** Thinking Tools  
**Summary:** This YouTube video is 4:35 long. It features a panda as a main character. He explains the differences between little, medium, and large problem definitions and examples. Next, he connects the size of the problem with an appropriately sized reaction. Finally, he connects the size of the reaction to unexpected or expected thoughts from other people.

This video was chosen for the text set because it talks about 3 key concepts in the Zones of Regulation (Kuypers, 2011). It describes the size of the problem, reaction, and unexpected vs. expected behaviors. It explains these concepts in a visual and simple way that helps students comprehend the concepts.

https://youtu.be/QxSKKtUdAjU

**Genre:** Video  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Video Text  
**Zones Topic:** Red Zone  
**Summary:** This YouTube video is 5:10 long. It features the rabbit children’s book character of Howard B. Wigglebottom. Howard describes how he wants to be a ninja bunny. He is stuck in his room for an all-day time out because he can’t control his anger. He reflects on his day. He remembers starting off the day happy. Howard was very hungry waiting for lunch. He cut to the front of the line. His friends were unhappy, and he had to go to the end of the line. Howard got mad that the person in front of him took the last chocolate milk, so he kicked it out of his hand and made a huge mess. He had to clean up the mess while everyone ate. He tried to attack his friend, but slipped in the mess. He had to go to the principal’s office. Back at home, he is visited by his friend, Allie. She tells Howard how to listen to her tummy and manage her anger. They practice the skill together for a few weeks. He realizes that he is being successful controlling his anger.

This video was selected for the text set because it shows that students can learn self-regulation techniques from other students. It also stresses the value of practicing the different techniques until you master them. Finally, it shows that everyone gets frustrated at different times in their lives.

**Genre:** Fiction picture book  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Accessible Text  
**Zones Topic:** Yellow Zone  
**Summary:** This story is about the boy, Sebastien, who deals with his problems and emotions. He shows readers how to handle it when your friend is mad at you. He shows four strategies for when adults don’t listen. He also shows different ways to handle it when his sister bothers him and also when he loses things. At the end of the story, he revisits all of the emotions that he was feeling, and he restates his mantra that he can handle it. There is also a place for the reader to draw themselves with the words “I can handle ANYTHING!” underneath the drawing.

This story was chosen for the text set because Sebastien is great model for self-regulation. For each scenario, he gives four different options that students may choose to solve their problem. It models perseverance and problem-solving skills.

**Genre:** Nonfiction Picture Book  
**Type of resource in Quad Text Set:** Informational Text  
**Zones Topic:** Green Zone  
**Summary:** This book is inspired by the true story of Malala Yousafzai. This shows Malala growing up in Pakistan. She makes a wish for a magic pencil. She would use her pencil to erase some problems around her, to sleep an extra hour, and give people what they want. As she gets older, she realizes the power of her education and working hard, even when things are difficult.

This book was chosen for the text set for two reasons. The main reason is that it shows a girl determined to stay in the green zone and learn, even though things around her are less than ideal. Secondly, she is wearing a hijab, so many of my students can see themselves in her experiences.