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This dissertation, DEVELOPING SELF-REGULATION BEHAVIORAL STRATEGIES FOR FIFTH-GRADE STUDENTS THROUGH THE MINDFULNESS YOGA SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING FOCUS – MYSELF INTERVENTION, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the School of Education, Concordia University Irvine.

Belinda Dunnick Karge, Ph.D.
Committee Chair

Annick Draghi, Ed.D.
Committee Member

Kaylie Gomez, Ed.D.
Committee Member

The Dissertation Committee, the Dean, and Executive Director of the Doctor of Education Program of the School of Education, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty.

Kent Schlichtemeier, Ph.D.
Dean

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Executive Director

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Marilyn Hande
Candidate's Name

Marilyn Hande
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[redacted]
Address

May 20, 2021
Date

marilyn.hande@eagles.cui.edu
Phone Number or E-mail address

[redacted]
City/State/Zip

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Marilyn Hande	Marilyn Hande
Candidate's Name	Signature of Candidate
[redacted]	May 20, 2021
	Date
marilyn.hande@eagles.cui.edu	[redacted]
Phone Number or E-mail address	City/State/Zip

VITAE

Marilyn Hande

ADDRESS 1530 Concordia West
Irvine, CA 92612
marilyn.hande@eagles.cui.edu

EDUCATION

Ed.D.	2021	Concordia University, Irvine CA Educational Leadership
M.A.	2016	Concordia University, Irvine, CA Educational Administration
M.A.	1999	California State University, Los Angeles Reading Specialist
	1996	Mount Saint Mary's University, Los Angeles Multiple-Subject Teaching Credential
B.A.	1992	California State University, Northridge Liberal Studies

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2012-Present	Lead Transitional Kindergarten Teacher Glendale Unified School District
2018-Present	Facilitator Mindfulness Yoga Social-Emotional Learning Focus: MYSELF
2019-2020	Presenter Doctorate of Education Dissertation Poster Session Association of California School Administrators Region 17 Annual Conference, Irvine CA
2009-2019	Panel Member, Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) Glendale Unified School District
2017	Expert Practitioner, Professional Learning Modules California Department of Education, Early Instruction and Support Division: California Preschool Instructional Network (CPIN) Transitional Kindergarten Online Video Instruction
2014	Presenter Los Angeles County Office of Education Transitional Kindergarten Implementation Conference
2013-2016	Transitional Kindergarten Learning Lab Classroom Site for the Los Angeles County Office of Education Early Childhood Education Professional Learning Community (ECEPLC)
2013-2017	Learning Leader, Common Core State Standards Glendale Unified School District
2013-2018	Mentor Teacher, University of Southern California Glendale Unified School District

DEVELOPING SELF-REGULATION BEHAVIORAL STRATEGIES FOR FIFTH-GRADE THROUGH THE MINDFULNESS YOGA SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING FOCUS – MYSELF INTERVENTION

by

Marilyn Hande

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of
Requirements for the
Degree of
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School of Education
Concordia University Irvine

ABSTRACT

For the past decade, research has indicated that working through social-emotional issues productively within a specific curriculum has a very positive effect on classroom behavior, learning, and achievement (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010; Sklad, Diekstra, Ritter, Ben, & Gravesteijn, 2012). Combining mindfulness within a social-emotional curriculum has been shown to develop emotional balance, improve attention and concentration, and reduce anxiety (de la Fuente-Arias, 2010; Salvador, & Franco, 2010; Goleman & Davidson, 2017; Schoeberlein David, & Sheth, 2012). This mixed-methods study investigated the effects of the Mindfulness Yoga Social-Emotional Learning Focus: MYSELF Intervention (Hande, 2020) on the development of self-regulation strategies for fifth-grade students through a mindfulness intervention. The intervention group received 35 minutes of the MYSELF Intervention activities two days a week during an eight-week period. A pre/post survey was administered. Survey scores for the intervention group were compared to determine the results of the intervention. Quantitative measures included student pre and post survey. Qualitative measures included teacher pre and post semi-structured interviews and researcher journal reflections. The researchers expected the results to have increased in the post-survey after the intervention was completed. Although the effect was not statistically significant, the intervention provided indicated that students and teachers were using the mindfulness strategies to support their well-being.

Keywords: intervention, mindfulness, self-regulation, and social-emotional learning.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I owe special thanks to Dr. Elena Rojas, my principal, who so graciously provided me the opportunity to conduct this study on our elementary school campus. To Mary and Collin, thank you for having me partake in the learning experience of your students. You are making an impact!

My personal cheerleader and amazing husband, John Hande, thank you for being such a blessing to me throughout this whole process and for the sacrifices that you had to make because I needed to work on my dissertation. Your words of encouragement and motivation kept me going.

A special thank you to my fellow cohort members. This journey has been an amazing time for me because of all of you. I look forward to sharing our future successes together.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Magda and Hermel, who always wanted the best possible education for their daughter. And to my loving husband, John, who always encourages and believes in me.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Social-emotional learning in students evolved during the last twenty-five years from being exemplified by students' demonstration of proper social etiquette, involving manners and gestures, to a focus on their thoughts, feelings, and actions (Durlak et al., 2010; Goleman, 1995, 2013; Sklad, Diekstra, Ritter, Ben, & Gravesteijn, 2012; Taylor, Oberle, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2017; Weissberg, 2019; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). Social-emotional learning has developed into a specific curriculum genre of its own; research has indicated that students who participate in such curriculums not only develop further mentally and emotionally, but academically (Dusenbury, Calins, Domitrovich, & Weissberg, 2015; Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Eggum, 2010; Weissberg, 2019; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Wallberg, 2004). These curriculums focus on the students' development of social-emotional skills as defined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) to include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2013; CASEL 2017; CASEL 2019). These curriculums were developed by educational researchers, teachers, policy makers, educational research institutions, and for-profit and non-profit organizations. They were developed, tested, marketed, and sold to school districts and individual schools nationwide (i.e., Connect with Kids, MindUp, Open Circle, PATHS, Positive Action, Second, Step, We Have Skills!).

The introduction and implementation of the specific social-emotional skills have been noted by educational researchers, and many of the programs have been studied for their evidence-based effectiveness to be used as intervention models (Corbett & Redding, 2017; Dusensbury et al., 2015; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Taylor et al., 2017; Weissberg, 2019). The research demonstrated that social-emotional learning not only

increased positive student social behaviors, it also influenced their outlook on themselves and their increased tendency to develop into responsible, productive adults who contribute to the well-being of society (CASEL, 2013; CASEL, 2017; CASEL 2019; Durlak et al., 2010; Heckman & Kautz 2012; Taylor et al., 2017). These evidence-based research studies have also shown that students' well-being and productivity were based on non-cognitive abilities such as caring, curiosity, effort, empathy, and motivation (Dusensbury et al., 2015; Durlak et al., 2010; Eisenberg et al., 2010; Taylor et al., 2017). These findings correlated with the core competencies of the CASEL framework for social-emotional learning (CASEL, 2013; CASEL, 2017; CASEL 2019) that are the baseline for the development of the guidelines and practices for the intervention curriculums that are used in public schools nationwide.

Social-emotional learning curriculums are not mandated by federal law, although thirty-five states do require social-emotional learning to be taught within their school districts: Alabama, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin (National Association of State Boards of Education, State Policy Database of School Health, 2020). School district fiscal resource allocations tend to flow toward educational achievement and test score improvements rather than to social-emotional curriculum purchases. The result is that any given curriculum's intervention success on the students' social-emotional learning levels is difficult to measure (Belfield, Bowden, Klapp, Levin, Shand, & Zander, 2015). Still, students' positive development of social-emotional learning levels through attending school have been documented through evidence-based research (CASEL, 2013;

CASEL 2017; CASEL 2019; Durlak et al., 2010; Taylor et al., 2017; Weissberg, 2019; Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Wahlberg, 2007a).

Although social-emotional learning has been shown to develop the non-cognitive abilities discussed earlier, evidence-based research is limited in determining the advancement of the students' long-term cognitive abilities and skills (Levin, 2012). As educators develop students' academic competencies to help them become productive, proactive contributors to society and the workforce, attention also needs to remain focused on developing students' emotional abilities to interact, contribute to, and work with one another to move our nation's cultural, relational, and technical achievements forward. Promoting evidence-based social emotional intervention practices is one way to make this happen.

One curriculum, which focuses on social-emotional learning, and that has been utilized in developing skills for social and academic success is *MindUp*™. According to its theoretical framework, *MindUp*™ Kindergarten through Grade 8 programs focused on the development of students' social-emotional competence and self-regulation in three key concepts: skills for learning and empathy (i.e., listening attentively, taking others' perspective, disagreeing respectfully), managing emotions (i.e., calming down, managing frustration and anxiety, handling put-downs), and problem-solving (i.e., seeking help, dealing with gossip, and dealing with peer pressure). (Oberle, Schonert-Reichl, & Lawlor, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

Lack of self-regulation of student's social-emotional skills is one of the most critical issues facing elementary school education in the twenty-first century (Merrell & Gueldner, 2010; Schonert-Reichl & Hymel, 2007). When conflicts arise, children are ill equipped to handle social problems and peer interaction appropriately at school – within the classroom, during

recess, and while eating lunch. Self-regulation support programs can promote a solid foundation in skills needed for social, emotional, and behavioral success during the elementary school years. According to Haggerty and Cummings (2006), proactive factors including social and emotional competence skills develop strong bonds to positive socializing influences, healthy beliefs, and clear standards.

Purpose of the Study

Past research indicated that teaching social-emotional skills has a potential long-term positive effect on academic achievement (Elias, Gara, Schyyler, Branden-Muller, & Sayette, 1991). For elementary school students, programs that taught social-emotional competence in the context of the broader school environment, including parent involvement, were the most effective (Greenberg, Weissberg, O'Brien, Zins, Fredericks, Resnik, & Elias, 2003). Improving development of social-emotional competencies in school-based settings was an essential step toward preparing the children today for their future success. The students' understanding of the complexities of social-emotional learning resulted in their developing into the positively social interacting, responsible, and contributing adults of tomorrow.

The intent of this study was to provide information that will drive students' social-emotional interactions towards effective engagement, motivation, and understanding of the choices that they make and how those choices result in the consequences they receive.

The purpose of this research study was to understand if the social-emotional learning and mindfulness skills learned in the intervention classes improved the fifth-grade students' behavior and well-being in the context of the classroom environment.

In the research, the social-emotional development skills for fifth-grade students was defined as the ability to identify and understand one's own feelings, to read and comprehend

emotional states in others, to manage strong emotions and their expression in a constructive manner, to regulate one's own behavior, to develop empathy for others, and to establish and maintain relationships (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004).

Researchers have reported that parent-child interactions, specifically stimulating and responsive parenting practices, were important influences on a child's academic development (Christian, Morrison, & Bryant, 1998). Mindfulness skills, for the purpose of this study, focused on how fifth grade students' (ages ten to eleven) exposure to mindfulness activities supports their executive functions. Past research indicated that teachers needed to act as role models (Elias & Brune-Butler, 1999). This contrasted with typical roles where people who were put in an expert role, like teachers, often felt that they needed to have all of the answers, which limited their personal and professional growth and their student's learning (Patti & Tobin, 2003).

Teachers needed to model behaviors that included showing students that they did not need to have all of the answers, and that the focused pursuit of knowledge, failure, and even confusion, is part of the learning process. Dweck (2006) described this as a "growth mindset" that allowed a student to develop intelligence and abilities over time. Dweck defined "growth mindset" as a state when individuals (i.e., students) view personal qualities such as intelligence, abilities and talents as malleable. "It is based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts" (Dweck, 2006, p.7). This contrasted with those with a "fixed mindset" who see qualities like intelligence as innate or inherited. People with a growth mindset challenge themselves; they are not afraid of making mistakes or moving out of their comfort zones. Fixed mindset people were described as preoccupied with the outcome (i.e., final grade) instead of focusing on the process and experience (Dweck, 2006). Concerning social-emotional learning, Dweck saw that teachers were too often put in an expert role by their

students, where they often felt that they needed to have all of the answers. This has the potential to limit their students' growth and learning. Teachers needed to model behaviors that included showing students that you do not have to have all of the answers, and that the pursuit of knowledge, failure, and even confusion, was part of the learning process (Dweck, 2006). The researcher used various qualitative and quantitative data collecting methods with the fifth-grade students in relation to their behavior and well-being. The fifth-grade students experienced mindfulness skills through direct instruction and modeling from the researcher.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the research:

1. How does the MYSELF intervention influence student behavior in the fifth-grade classroom?
2. How does the MYSELF intervention support students' well-being in the fifth-grade classroom?
3. How has the implementation of the MYSELF intervention affected the classrooms according to the teachers?
4. How do teacher trainings on the MYSELF intervention support teachers' well-being?

Theoretical Framework

The foundation of this research study was based on the conceptual framework of Daniel Goleman's *Emotional Intelligence* (1995) and Howard Gardner's *Multiple Intelligences* (2006) while concurrently being guided by the Grounded Theory Framework. Together, these two theories on intelligences and competencies helped frame the social and emotional learning model because they both explored the understanding of oneself, managing one's emotions and being empathetic. Exploring the social and emotional competencies of Goleman and Gardner provides educators opportunities that can help children develop healthy behaviors by promoting social and

emotional competencies to prevent them from engaging in maladaptive and unhealthy behaviors. It also provided the educator the distinctions that self-regulation can be divided into regulating students' behavior, emotions, and learning.

Interest in social-emotional learning developed in the mid-1990s with the publication of Goleman's *Emotional Intelligence* (1995). Goleman (1995) defined emotional intelligence as a human skill which includes how an individual handles their own feelings, and how well one empathizes and gets along with other people. He proposed that individuals are born with general emotion intelligence that determines their potential for learning emotional competencies. Goleman believed that children who are better able to manage their emotions and empathize with others will pay better attention, take in, and retain information better. Goleman considered that emotional competence is a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work or school. He regarded our emotional intelligences determiner potential for learning the practical skills that are based on its five elements of competency: self-awareness, motivation, self-regulation, empathy, and adeptness in relationships (Goleman, 1995). Goleman's work built on Gardner's model of multiple intelligence, by further exploring the concepts of "intrapersonal" and "interpersonal" intelligences. In Gardner's theory, self-awareness and self-regulation are the intrapersonal abilities, and empathy and social skills are the interpersonal abilities. It is important to note that Goleman is a co-founder of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) which was established in 1994 a social-emotional learning research, policy, and practices center. Goleman, in collaboration with organizational consultant and *Schools That Learn* (2012) author Peter Senge, has written *The Triple Focus* (2014) which incorporates the CASEL key competencies of social-emotional learning with teaching the skillsets of self, others, and the larger concepts of systems of thinking

within which children operate. Goleman's and CASEL's practices provided the conceptual framework used as a theoretical backing for this researcher's current study.

Gardner (1983) defined human cognitive competence as a set of abilities, talents or mental skills called "intelligences." Gardner considered that human beings are known to have different kinds of intelligences that reflect different ways of interacting with the world and people. Gardner's multiple intelligence theory sought to describe how the human mind operates on the contents of the world and how individuals use their intelligences to solve problems. This is important in studying social and emotional learning because according to Gardner, intelligence is a set of skills that makes it possible for a person to solve problems in life and is the potential for finding or creating solutions for problems (Gardner, 2006). Additionally, Gardner believed it necessary for children to explore and develop their *intrapersonal intelligence* which encompasses having an understanding of yourself, knowing who you are, what you can do, and how you react to things. This leads children to explore and develop their *interpersonal intelligence* which includes having the ability to understand other people (Gardner, 2011).

Significance of the Study

Along with extending the research on Gardner and Goleman's theories, this study also extended the current research on *MindUp*™ (2011). Although studies have been completed on the effects of *MindUp* (de Carvalho, Marques-Pinto, & Maroco, 2017; Lawlor, 2007; Lawlor, 2016; Maloney, Lawlor, Schonert-Reichl & Whitehead, 2017; Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010; Schonert-Reichl, Oberle, Lawlor, Abbott, Thompson, Oberlander, & Diamond, 2015), the number of these studies are few and limited.

According to its theoretical framework, *MindUp* kindergarten through grade 8 programs focus on the development of students social-emotional competence and self-regulation in three

key concepts: skills for learning and empathy (i.e., listening attentively, taking others' perspective, disagreeing respectively), managing emotions (i.e., calming down, managing frustration and anxiety, handling put-downs), and problem-solving (seeking help, dealing with gossip and peer pressure) (Diamond, & Lee, 2011). Schonert-Reichl and Lawlor (2010) conducted a study of twelve elementary classrooms, where students were aged nine to fourteen. Six classrooms were randomized to receive a mindfulness-based intervention program (on which the *MindUp*™ program is based), and six were part of a control group. The intervention included ten lessons and three times daily practice of mindfulness meditation, including quieting the mind and focusing on breathing, mindful attention, managing negative emotions and negative thinking, and acknowledgment of the self and others. Their main research question was whether participation in a mindfulness training education program affected students' optimism, self-concept, positive affect and social-emotional functioning in school. Measurement instruments included demographic information, school and general self-concept subscales, positive and negative emotions subscales, and social and emotional competence reports from teachers, individual students, and peers. Their findings showed that students exposed to the mindfulness training education program experienced significant improvements in social and emotional competence and attention and concentration (Schonert-Reichl and Lawlor, 2010). *MindUp*™ is one of the first programs that provided explicit instruction on a combination of both social-emotional learning and mindful awareness practices (The Hawn Foundation, 2011).

CASEL is a non-profit organization of educators and researchers that have defined the field of social-emotional learning through providing research, practice, policy, and identifying evidenced based social-emotional programs to support high-quality social-emotional learning in educational settings. The Fetzer Institute held a meeting in 1994 to promote mental health

prevention efforts in the school environment. The educators, psychologists, and interested individuals who attended helped develop the framework initially known as the Collaborative to Advance Social Emotional Learning initiative, now known as CASEL as shown in Figure 2.1.

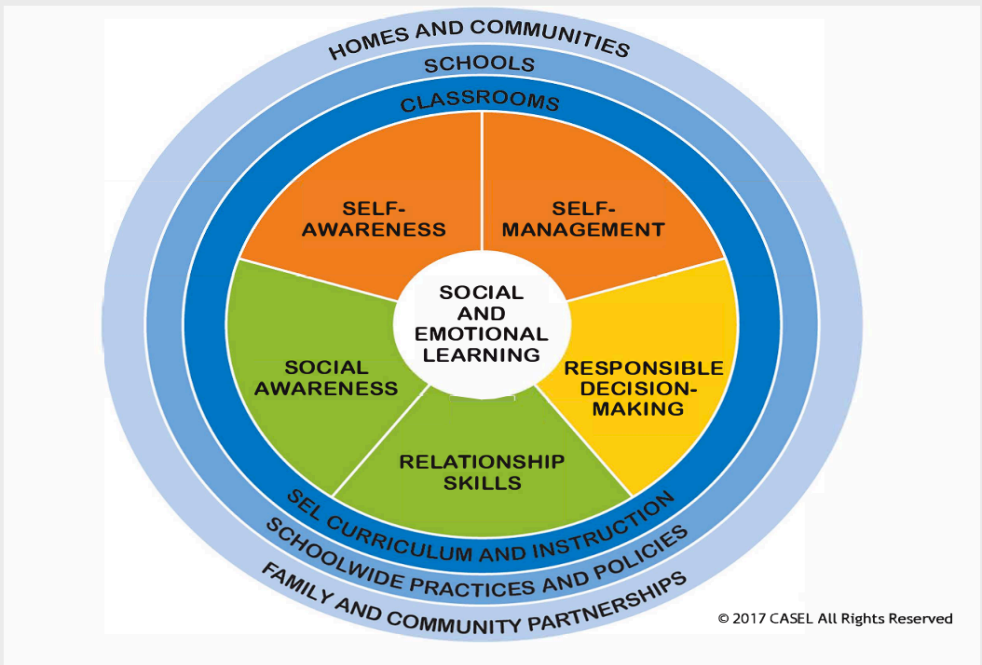

Figure 1. 1. CASEL Framework Wheel

CASEL is currently leading the promotion of evidence-based research and best practices of SEL (Amen, 2019; DePaoli, Atwell, & Bridgeland, 2017; Hoerr, 2020). CASEL strives to advance the science of SEL, uses scientific evidence to develop effective school practices, distribute information, enhance training opportunities, and collaborate with professionals to develop effective practices for SEL teaching (Amen, 2019; DePaoli, Atwell, & Bridgeland, 2017; Hoerr, 2020).

CASEL has identified *MindUp*™ as effective, although the outcome research is still ongoing (CASEL, 2019). The school-based, teacher led program consists of fifteen lessons informed by research in cognitive developmental neuroscience (Diamond, 2012), mindfulness and contemplative science (Roeser & Zelazo, 2012), social-emotional learning (Greenberg,

Domitrovich, & Bumbarger, 2001), and positive psychology (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). In each lesson, students learn about a new key concept and have opportunities to practice skills related to the concepts. The *MindUp*™ curriculum has three different age-appropriate versions corresponding with different grade level spans: grades Pre-K to 2, 3-5, and 6-8. Lessons in each version are general, not specific, and may be used repeatedly throughout each grade level span. Although this program has been implemented successfully in many schools and classrooms of different age groups, two studies that have evaluated only the grade 3-8 version have been conducted thus far to empirically support the program.

Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015) were the first to evaluate the *MindUp*™ in classrooms of combined fourth and fifth grade students within a public school district near a middle-class community in Western Canada. Students were randomly assigned to either the *MindUp*™ program or a regular social responsibility program (a control group). The *MindUp*™ program consisted of twelve lessons taught by the classroom teacher once-a-week, with each lesson lasting forty to fifty minutes. The program contained three-minute core mindfulness practice with focusing on breathing and attentive listening to a single resonant sound. The program was implemented three times a day, every day. Participants were aged nine to ten and totaled ninety-nine students. Teachers were encouraged to generalize the curriculum-based skills throughout the day. The purpose of the study was to examine whether the *MindUp*™ program would lead to improvements in executive function, stress regulation, social-emotional competence, and school achievement. Findings from the study indicated that students in the *MindUp*™ program showed significant changes at post-test. These changes included improved cognitive and emotional control, reports of greater empathy and perspective taking, reduced symptoms of depression, peer-rated aggression, and being rated as more prosocial by their peers (Schonert-Reichl et al,

2015). Although the study used a rigorous design with multiple sources of data (e.g., teacher and self-reports; cortisol levels) and a comparison group, the sample is limited to a specific age range and relatively small sample. Thus, generalizability of the *MindUp*™ program to other age groups is limited.

This study also extends the current research on the *Mindful Schools K-5 Elementary School Curriculum* (Mindful Schools, 2011). There are two levels with separate instructional manuals within the *Mindful Schools K-12 Curriculum* series (the *Elementary* and the *Adolescent Curriculums*) and each is suited to the child's developmental age. The *Mindful Schools* programs focus on the development of students' social-emotional and mindfulness competencies and self-regulation skills using five key concepts: skills for listening, focusing on breathing, taking tests, developing empathy, and resolving conflicts. *Mindful Schools K-5* is made up of sixteen lessons and includes additional supplementary lessons that can be used to extend the program. Lessons are taught two times a week for eight weeks and last approximately fifteen minutes. Each lesson is followed by a five to ten-minute activity, which may include journal writing, completing a self-reflections worksheet, or a class discussion. Having guided classroom discussions after each mindfulness intervention session helps the students understand the complexities of their feelings and reactions so they can be ready to apply, learn, and deal with their emotions and problems responsibly. As students learn the basics of each lesson, they (and their classroom teacher) are encouraged to integrate the mindfulness practices into their daily classroom routine. The *Mindful Schools K-12 Curriculum* is designed to be implemented throughout the students' other daily school-based activities (i.e., homeroom, physical education, clubs) and other interactive opportunities that further engage students and reinforce their mindfulness and social-emotional skills (Mindful Schools, 2011).

There is another well-known and widely used social-emotional learning curriculum used in elementary schools. The *Second Step* series has six levels each with their own separate instructional manuals (*Second Step K, Second Step 1, Second Step 2, Second Step 3, Second Step 4, and Second Step 5)* and each is suited to the child's developmental age. The *Second Step* programs focus on the development of the students' social-emotional competence, and self-regulations skills using four key concepts: skills for learning, empathy, emotion management, and problem-solving (Committee for Children, 2012). Teaching the social-emotional and self-regulation skills need not be confined to the academic lessons in the classroom. The curricula are highly structured and partially scripted. Lessons are taught once a week and last for approximately thirty-five to forty minutes. Each lesson is followed by a five-to-ten-minute activity. The curriculum that is designed for the student age group of this study, *Second Step 5*, is made up of twenty-two lessons divided into three units, covering topics such as recognizing ones' own and others' feelings, handling anger and anxiety, dealing with peer pressure, and role-play activities. *Second Step 5* contains a facilitator's notebook that includes: the twenty-two lessons, colorful posters, a DVD, getting started cards, home link activities, and student handouts. *Second Step 5* also relies on interactive student activities, videos, and guided classroom discussions to help students understand the complexities of their feelings and reactions so that they can be ready to learn and deal with emotions and problems responsibly. Each lesson provides students plenty of opportunities to practice skills and participate in discussions. The videos for every lesson dramatize scenarios that fifth-graders encounter in school. Additionally, there are three animated music videos to further engage the students and reinforce their skills (Committee for Children, 2012).

Definition of Terms

This section defines a list of common terms referenced throughout this research study central to the development of mindfulness-based interventions that facilitate social and emotional development.

Active Listening: Being deeply engaged in and attentive to what the person is saying. The goal is to truly understand the person's perspective (regardless of whether you agree) and to communicate that understanding back to the person so that they can confirm the accuracy of your understanding (Boston University, 2016).

California State Department of Education (CDE): State public education agency developing and implementing the best ways to teach social-emotional learning in California schools (CDE, 2018).

Children's Mental Health Act of 2003: Passed by the state of Illinois, becoming the first state to require school-based education plans to incorporate social and emotional development standards (State of Illinois, Public Act 93-0495, 2003).

Coherence: The shared depth of people both individually and collectively of understanding about the purpose and nature of the work (Fullan & Quinn, 2016).

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL): A group of researchers, educators, policymakers, and child advocates articulating and promoting developmentally appropriate intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies based on the best science and educational practice (CASEL, 2017).

Collective Capacity Building: The increased ability of educators at all levels of the system to make the instructional changes required to raise the bar and close the gap for all students (Fullan & Quinn, 2016).

Everyday Speech: A social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum using speech-language pathology techniques with the integrated technology of social learning platforms of online video and web games to teach social skills (Everyday Speech, 2019).

Evidenced-Based Intervention: Practices or programs that have been peer-reviewed, documented as empirical evidence of effectiveness. They use a continuum of integrated policies, strategies, activities, and services whose effectiveness has been proven or informed by research and evaluation (American Institutes for Research, 2018).

Growth Mindset: The belief that with practice, perseverance, and effort, people have limitless potential to learn and grow. They tackle challenges with aplomb, unconcerned with making mistakes, or being embarrassed, focusing instead on the process of growth (Dweck, 2006).

Mindfulness: Awareness, cultivated by paying attention in a sustained and particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally (Kabat-Zinn, 1994).

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR): Created in 1979 as a standardized eight-week course focusing on the beneficial effects of mindfulness on the stress levels and symptom management of patients in a medical setting. It is currently taught world-wide in corporate, educational, and non-profit settings (Kabat-Zinn, 2016).

Mindful Learning: Continuous creation of new categories, openness to new information, and an implicit awareness of more than one perspective (Langer, 1997).

Mindful Listening: Includes both nonverbal and verbal responses, consistent encouragement for the person to express themselves, expand upon what they are saying, and clarifying what they have said (Langer, 1997).

Mindful Schools: An online self-paced mindfulness training program (mindfulschools.org) with courses in mindfulness in education, mindfulness research and neuroscience, and the Mindfulness in Schools K-12 curriculum (Mindful Schools, 2011).

MindUp™ Curriculum: A classroom-based social and emotional learning program (SEL) designed to enhance self-awareness, social awareness, attention, self-regulation, problem solving, and pro-social behavior (The Hawn Foundation, 2011).

MYSELF Intervention: Mindfulness Yoga Social-Emotional Learning Focus intervention designed to enhance self-awareness, self-regulation, and social awareness through mindfulness strategies, yoga activities, and social interactions (Hande, 2020).

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS): A multi-tiered framework (universal, targeted, individualized) to make schools more effective places. It establishes a social culture and the behavior supports needed to improve social, emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes for all students (PBIS, 2019).

Relationship Skills: Communicating clearly, listening well, cooperating with others, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed (CASEL, 2017).

Responsible Decision-Making: Making constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety, and social norms (CASEL, 2017).

Second Step Curriculum: A school-based prevention curriculum for children in grades K-5 designed to promote social competence, reduce social-emotional problems, and prevent aggression over time by focusing on increasing prosocial behavior (Committee for Children, 2012).

Self-Awareness: Knowing one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a growth mindset (CASEL, 2017).

Self-Determination Theory: People are driven by three innate and universal psychological needs – autonomy, competence, and relatedness – and that personal well-being is a direct function of these needs (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Self-Efficacy: The degree to which an individual is confident that he or she can perform a specific task or accomplish a specific goal (Bandura, 1997).

Self-Management: Effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself to set and achieve goals (CASEL, 2017).

Self-Regulated Learning (SRL): Learning that is guided by metacognition (thinking about thinking), strategic action (planning, monitoring, and evaluating personal progress against a standard), and motivation and behavior to be an active participant in his or her own learning process (Zimmerman, 1989).

Social Awareness: Understanding the perspectives of others and empathizing with them, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures (CASEL, 2017).

Social Constructivist Theory: Characterizes knowledge as the sets of beliefs or mental models people use to interpret actions and events in the world (Vygotsky, 1931).

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): The process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2017).

Social and Emotional Learning Competencies: Based on the CASEL framework they include: Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. See specific definitions under each competency (CASEL, 2017).

Social and Emotional Learning Guidelines (Principles): Developed by California intended to inform and support strong SEL practice across the state based on the collective experience of the contributors (CDE, 2018).

Systems Thinking: Understanding, recognizing, and managing complexity and interdependency as it relates to change, and helping people deal more effectively with the forces that shape the consequences of their actions (Senge, 2012).

Limitations

This research study was subject to a number of limitations beyond the control of the researcher and the limited scope of the sample. The school studied was a public elementary school located in Southern California. The conclusions drawn from the study may not be generalized to other public schools that implement social and emotional and mindfulness learning programs in their fifth-grade classroom programs. With personal interaction between the researcher-interviewer and interviewees, there is an opportunity to observe non-verbal behaviors, body language cues, and the ability to follow-up for clarification of the answers given.

In following Centers for Disease Control and Infection (CDC) and state health guidelines due to COVID-19, all research for this study was conducted through the use of Zoom sessions and Google Forms. However, these observations and answers may not be generalized to the other fifth-grade public school classrooms that implement social and emotional and mindfulness learning programs. When each public elementary school fifth-grade classroom implements a social and emotional and mindfulness learning program, the programs may be different so actual

implementation support (district, principal, teacher, student, and parent) may be different from school to school.

Delimitations

This research was subject to the choices made by the researcher that asset the boundaries for this study. Approval was received from the school principal and fifth-grade teachers and parents. The researcher also was familiarized with the school culture and the students. The fifth-grade classrooms selected have the following characteristics:

(a) commitment to making the mindfulness intervention program a priority by creating a safe, supportive, and engaging environment that promotes mindfulness; (b) integrating mindfulness practices into daily classroom practices and interactions; and (c) teacher engagement for the development and support of the mindfulness intervention program.

Summary

This chapter introduced the research study for this dissertation as a whole, presented an overview of the background of the study and problem statement, described the purpose of the study, stated the research question and study significance, presented a theoretical perspective, and defined the conceptual definitions used during the course of this dissertation research. Chapter 2 reviews the literature of social-emotional learning and mindfulness interventions, focusing on their implementations in the K-12 public school setting. Chapter 3 describes the data collection process and *MYSELF* Program sample lessons that were used for this research study. Chapter 4 defines the methods that were used in this research study, the research design and site, participant information, sampling procedures, instrumentation, reliability, validity, data analysis, and ethical issues. Chapter 5 discusses the findings for this study. Chapter 6 provides a

discussion summary of the findings of the study, its implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

There is a wide array of research-supported academic and social-emotional learning benefits associated with using mindfulness-based learning interventions in the classroom, such as improved attention and self-regulation (Durlak et al., 2010; Haggerty & Cummings, 2006; Sklad, et al., 2012). Previous theoretical arguments articulated why mindfulness should be used in the classroom (Dweck, 2006; Goleman, 1995; Langer, 2016), and provided distinct neuroscientific explanations for how and why mindfulness leads to these benefits (Diamond, 2012; Greenberg, et al., 2003; Levin, 2012; Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005; Roeser & Zelazo, 2012; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). What follows is a literature review that examines the background, theory and benefits of social-emotional mindfulness-based interventions in the classroom, and the varying levels of implementation of mindfulness-based classroom intervention practices that exist. This includes a discussion of equity in social-emotional learning interventions, coherence in social-emotional learning interventions, capacity in social-emotional learning interventions, social-emotional learning and mindfulness, social-emotional learning cognitive framework, Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, Bandura's social learning theory, Zimmerman's self-regulated learning theory, Ryan and Deci's self-determination theory, social-emotional learning interventions using constructivist and social learning theories, mindfulness-based interventions, mindfulness-based interventions with children, and breathing interventions with children.

Social-Emotional Learning Interventions Background

A large body of research indicated that social and emotional competencies, such as collaboration and self-management, have important roles in students' success, both in and out of school (Fullan, 2010; Fullan & Quinn, 2016; Senge, 2012). Proficiency in these competencies

enhanced academic achievement and attainment (Durlak et al., 2011; Osher, Kidron, Brackett, Dymnicki, Jones, & Weissberg, 2016; Taylor, Oberle, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2017); improved students' attitudes and behaviors toward themselves and others (Durlak et al., 2011; Jones, Bailey, Brush, & Kahn, 2018; Yeager, 2017); and positively impacted later-life outcomes, such as earnings (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017; National Research Council, 2012). As a result, educators and policymakers are increasingly interested in helping students develop these competencies – a process known as social and emotional learning (SEL).

The importance of evidenced-based SEL interventions gained importance as a result of the passage of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015. ESSA provided opportunities for state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) to integrate SEL into schools' instructional activities and out-of-school time (OST) programs. At least three funding streams within ESSA supported SEL through explicit lessons on social and emotional competencies, incorporating instruction for SEL into academic curricula, and creating classroom environments and schoolwide climates favorable to SEL. Although ESSA does not explicitly reference SEL, its policy language includes calls for improving school conditions for student learning; enhancing peer interactions; providing a well-rounded education; and incorporating programs and activities that promote volunteerism, community involvement, or instructional practices for developing relationship-building skills (ESSA, 2015). These are all related to SEL.

The three funding streams provide for states, local agencies, districts, and schools opportunities to incorporate SEL initiatives into efforts to support students and enhance school improvement. Each funding stream has its financial support distributed either through formula funds or through competitive grants. The three funding streams (ESSA, 2015) include: *Title I:*

Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged which authorizes education spending between 2017 and 2020 in the form of formula grants to states. This funding stream provides three opportunities to incorporate SEL into school operations: (1) schoolwide assistance programs, (2) targeted assistance programs, and (3) school support and improvement activities. The second funding stream, *Title II: Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers, Principals, or Other School Leaders* authorizes funding to support the preparation, training, and recruitment of educators at all levels of the school system. States may consider utilizing Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction funds to support their educators by building their capacity to provide instruction that promotes students' social and emotional competencies. States may also apply for Supporting Effective Educator Development and School Leader Recruitment and Support grants to provide SEL-related professional development. The third funding stream, *Title IV: 21st Century Schools* authorizes funding to support a variety of programs aimed at improving the educational opportunities of students. These may be sought in three subareas: (1) Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants, (2) Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and (3) Part F: National. For example, some Title IV, Part B funds cover the delivery of academic and nonacademic supports explicitly offered outside the regular school day (ESSA, 2015). However, many of the ESSA funding streams require education leaders at the state and local levels to demonstrate that selected interventions meet the evidence standards of the associated funding stream and are aligned to local needs as identified through a needs assessment.

The U. S. Department of Education (ED) published non-regulatory guidance in 2016 to assist education leaders in understanding the policy regulations in selecting evidence-based interventions, as defined by ESSA (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). However, this

definition is limited in both its scope and the amount of detail provided. "Evidenced-based" is a powerful tool to identify ways to address educational problems and build on knowledge that works. ESSA emphasizes the use of evidence-based activities, strategies, and interventions (collectively referred to as "interventions"). ESSA defines an evidence-based intervention as being supported by "*strong evidence* from at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study; *moderate evidence* from at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study; or *promising evidence* from at least one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias; or *demonstrates a rationale* based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other *relevant outcomes*; and includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention" (ESSA, Section 8101(21)(A), 2016).

Even before statewide ESSA plans were enacted, educators across the United States were exploring new approaches to SEL. Results from a national survey of school principals suggested that large majorities of principals agreed that it was important to address SEL and had a plan for doing so, but many principals expressed a need to learn more about research-based SEL strategies. Moreover, relatively few principals reported taking concrete steps to adopt evidence-based programs (DePaoli, Atwell, & Bridgeland, 2017). Several resources have been developed to help educators identify SEL interventions to implement in their local contexts (CASEL, 2013; CASEL, 2015; CASEL, 2017; CASEL 2019; Durlak et al., 2011; Durlak et al., 2010; Jones et al., 2018; Taylor et al., 2017). These resources help educators sift through a wide range of available interventions, synthesizes the research base on SEL interventions with respect to the ESSA evidence-based standards, and provides for unfiltered information they receive from curriculum

vendors and other sources, in order to ensure that they are truly identifying evidence-based approaches. Although these resources can be extremely helpful to educators seeking the adopt SEL interventions that are grounded in high-quality research, they do not address all of the steps that educators typically need to carry out to ensure high-quality implementation and promote positive outcomes. The five steps that education leaders should carry out to promote effective implementation of interventions (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). These are steps for promoting effective investments of federal funds, and they include (1) identify local needs; (2) select relevant, evidence-based interventions; (3) plan for implementation; (4) implement; and (5) examine and reflect (ESSA, Non-regulatory Guidance, 2016). A crucial first step is a local needs assessment that helps identify strengths and weaknesses, which in turn can help educators determine which SEL interventions will best meet each school's needs. Some ESSA funding streams require educators to conduct a needs assessment to ensure that school improvement efforts and the evidence-based interventions used to support those efforts are designed to meet the needs of the local community (Chiefs for Change and Results for America, 2018; U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Even in the absence of ESSA requirements, selecting SEL interventions based on high-quality, relevant data can be beneficial. Most educators have access to a wide range of data that could inform a decision about what SEL interventions to adopt, but it can be challenging to make sense of these data and to synthesize the information into a coherent narrative that will inform decisions. Focusing on evidence-based SEL interventions provides support for educators on assessing local SEL needs and using those needs assessments to integrate SEL into school practices and improvement efforts, and to help leverage federal ESSA funds to support SEL.

An important first step in planning for the selection and implementation of SEL interventions involves identifying the specific student and school needs that these interventions are intended to address. A needs assessment is a systematic practice for assessing strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement within an organization (Corbett & Redding, 2017). It often includes an analysis of student and school characteristics and performance, available local resources, and constraining or enabling conditions influencing the implementation of existing or new initiatives. There are three overarching considerations to consider when developing a local school needs assessment and identifying SEL improvement strategies: equity, coherence, and capacity (CASEL, 2013; CASEL, 2015; CASEL 2017; CASEL, 2019).

Equity in Social-Emotional Learning Interventions

Across the United States, state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) have leveraged opportunities to address system level sources of inequality. Many SEAs and LEAs have established equity plans that guide local practice and decision-making. A needs assessment should be aligned with any equity plans that SEAs or LEAs have established or are developing.

Regardless of whether a SEA or LEA has developed an explicit equity plan, decisions about SEL interventions should be informed by equity-related considerations that are relevant in that particular local school's context. Students from historically underserved groups are more likely than their more-advantaged peers to face challenging school and neighborhood environments that can limit learning opportunities. These include actions that are under schools' control, such as inequitable use of exclusionary discipline practices (e.g., suspensions) or inequities in student access to high-quality, rigorous coursework (Kostyo, Cardichon, & Darling-

Hammond, 2018). Students might also be affected by biases that adults bring to the school or classroom or by conditions in the community that schools are less able to influence.

Education leaders can use the needs assessment process to identify potential sources of inequity and develop plans to address them. SEL intervention programs and practices can support school district and state equity goals, through leaders also need to keep in mind the limitations inherent in the use of SEL data and programs to promote equity. SEL assessments, (i.e., Devereux, Hello Insight, Positive Action, WCSD, ZooU) for instance, may not be culturally appropriate for all students, which could result in scores that do not accurately reflect these students' competencies. Students from traditionally underserved groups often lack access to SEL-supportive environments and activities, and in many cases, they tend to perform more poorly than their more-advantaged counterparts on assessments of social and emotional competencies (Hough, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2017). Education leaders need to explore the reasons for these disparities, which could include a combination of assessment bias and differences in educational opportunities. Analyses of data from a needs-assessment should seek to identify and understand these inequities and should be used to inform decisions about SEL intervention programs that can address them.

Educational leaders can access several resources to support their equity work (i.e., California Department of Education School Dashboard for indicators including achievement, chronic absenteeism, graduation, suspension). Some leaders might have access to equity experts (e.g., from local universities) who can serve as thought partners throughout the needs-assessment process, providing guidance on how to adapt SEL intervention programs that meet the needs of all students. Community-based organizations that represent different constituencies also could be asked to provide input at different stages in the needs-assessment process. The Learning

Policy Institute has provided several reports and briefs related to the promotion of equity, including one focused on SEL (Learning Policy Institute, 2018). Viewing decisions about SEL through an equity leans can help leaders determine whether some students are benefiting more than others from new SEL intervention programs and can shed light on possible remedies.

Coherence in Social-Emotional Learning Interventions

Research on school reform has suggested that the coherence of concurrent improvement efforts is an important component of effective reform implementation (Fullan, 2010; Fullan & Kirtman, 2019; Fullan & Quinn, 2016; Newmann, Smith, Allensworth, & Bryk, 2001; Senge, 2012). The same principle can be applied in the SEL context, where there exists a variety of ways that schools might choose to engage in SEL. Students' social and emotional development can be promoted through stand-alone curricula or practices that are explicitly designed to enhance learning of one or more social or emotional competencies, integration of SEL-promoting practices into academic instruction or other activities, or efforts to improve schoolwide climate and culture (Dusenbury, et.al., 2015). Decision-makers should consider strategies to promote a coherent approach to enacting SEL interventions; this could include the adoption of a framework or set of best practices that underlies all SEL activity (Stillman, Stillman, Martinez, Freedman, Jensen, & Leet, 2018) and the use of a common set of data from a needs assessment to inform decisions about all aspects of SEL in a school. Additionally, decision-makers should help educators understand how SEL can reinforce–rather than detract from–other SEA and LEA goals, such as the need to ensure that students meet academic content standards (Johnson & Wiener, 2017).

In the same way that chosen SEL interventions and practices should enhance rather than detract from the cohesiveness of the many initiatives and strategies that local communities

implement for school improvement, SEAs and LEAs should consider how their practices and data sources may overlap or integrate with other planned needs assessments or evaluations. Where possible, any newly identified assessment practices should complement, not duplicate, efforts in place. In developing SEL interventions, engaging or collaborating with colleagues outside the SEL realm (i.e., academic curriculum developers) to review the planned practices will help in cultivating a collaborative culture that will focus on establishing coherence.

Capacity in Social Emotional-Learning Interventions

Educational leaders need to be mindful that enacting SEL intervention activities and strategies depends on the local resources and capacity. For example, implementing all of the recommended SEL data collection and analyses may be beyond the expertise or availability of the local school staff. In addition, conducting a needs assessment may place an additional burden on already-limited local resources, including staff time, staff expertise, and SEA, LEA, or district funding. Consequently, educational leaders who are interested in adopting an SEL intervention for their school should review and focus on the activities that are most relevant to the specific SEL competencies that they want their students to achieve. Capacity building involves the knowledge and skills necessary to create a culture of collaborative learning structures focusing on effective practices, resources, and clarity (Brackett, 2019; Couros, 2015; Covey, 2008; Duckworth, 2016; Fullan & Quinn, 2016; Tavenner, 2019).

SEL intervention collaborative capacity building involves school districts and school sites considering where existing or new partnerships (i.e., a County Department of Education, a Regional Educational Laboratory, or an external research partner) may increase the local capacity to implement the necessary SEL data collection and analysis strategies. Educational leaders need to identify current capacities and what is feasible in the short term, given the level

of current resources and capacity (Covey, 2008; Fullan, 2010; Fullan & Kirtman, 2019; Fullan & Quinn, 2016; Sinek, 2009; Sinek, Mead & Docker, 2017; Sinek, 2017; Sinek, 2019).

Over time, as additional SEL resources become available, educational leaders can further build their capacity as how to identify local SEL needs; how to prioritize needs for selecting SEL interventions; and how to implement, monitor, and evaluate SEL interventions once they are selected.

Social-Emotional Learning and Mindfulness

When determining what social-emotional learning can be like maintaining moment-to-moment attention in a non-evaluative manner, Brown and Ryan (2003) indicated that the clarity of perception of one's own emotional state improves through training in mindfulness techniques. It is known that a direct relationship exists between training with mindfulness techniques and attention, clarity and emotional repair dimensions (de la Fuente-Arias, Salvador, & Franco, 2010), as well as emotional regulation (Ramos, Hernandez, & Blanca, 2009). Along the same lines, Davidson (2010) conducted studies with expert Buddhist monks in mindfulness by demonstrating the importance that mindfulness has when it comes to modifying emotional states voluntarily and has directly correlated this attention capacity and emotional regulation (Davidson, 2012). Davidson has also demonstrated how training in mindfulness helps people develop more positive and adaptive emotional profiles (Goleman & Davidson, 2017). According to Schoeberlein David and Sheth (2012), the implementation of mindfulness techniques with teachers has been shown to improve receptivity to student requirements, promote emotional balance, contribute to stress management, favor personal relationships, improve the classroom climate, and contribute to general well-being. The same author also found that when students work with mindfulness, it favors their willingness to learn, fosters academic performance,

reinforces attention and concentration, reduces anxiety about exams, improves participation in the classroom, promotes impulse control, provides tools to help reduce stress, improves emotional learning, promotes prosocial behavior, and supports holistic wellness (Goleman, 2013; Schoeberlein David & Sheth, 2012). Daniel J. Siegel (2010) calls this "interpersonal neurobiology" and sees it as a "mindsight" trilogy connecting our relationships, minds, and brains "to develop our awareness, and the capacity to see the mind itself - our own mind as well as the minds of others - in what we might call our seventh sense" (pg. 91). Moreover, mixed social emotional learning and mindfulness intervention such as that implemented by Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015), typically find the improvements described in their paper, namely: greater empathy, better emotional control, increased peer acceptance, higher mindfulness competence, and even better cognitive and stress control (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015).

The underlying process that explains how mindfulness achieves such advantages for social emotional learning and to enhance some of its components (CASEL, 2015; CASEL, 2017; CASEL, 2019) is still being debated. Ramos et al., (2009) explained that training in mindfulness involves exposure to negative emotions that favor habituation to them. Vallejo Pareja (2006) indicated that people can change tendencies of automatic response to certain emotional experiences thanks to training in mindfulness, which allows people to respond with other new and more positive behavioral repertories as a result of quiet reflection. As supported by A. Holen and H. Eifring (2007), perhaps the continuous practice of such full consciousness would prepare us against adversity, while reducing tension, fears and worries through the progressive disengagement of thoughts, sensations, and emotions. This would thus result in a very useful and effective emotional self-regulation mechanism. Shapiro, Carlson, Astin, & Freedman (2006) indicated that mindfulness techniques make users more adaptable, flexible, and suitable for the

context by developing the re-perceiving mechanism to facilitate reactivity patterns. This is achieved by the fact that the impact allows us to see the current situation as it is at the present time, which helps us to act accordingly by avoiding the thoughts, emotions and maladaptive behavior that we were used to before developing our full consciousness (Shapiro et al., 2006).

School-based intervention programs that do not use mindfulness-based approaches aimed at helping students achieve greater social, emotional, and academic success have been established. Social-Emotional Learning and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports programs (PBIS) are two examples. Social emotional learning programs develop the acknowledgement and management of emotions through skills intended to develop healthy relationships, confront difficult situations, and bolster motivation to academic success (Schonert-Reichl & Hymel, 2007). PBIS is a comprehensive three-tier program consisting of primary (school wide), secondary (classroom level), and tertiary (individual) interventions. PBIS interventions are aimed at reducing or preventing school-wide problem behaviors, with individualized interventions for students who do not respond to the broader prevention and reduction strategies (Sugai & Horner, 2006). Social emotional learning and PBIS programs, however, differ from those of mindfulness-based programs in an important and fundamental way. Social emotional learning and PBIS programs teach skills "from the outside in." That is, students learn through psychoeducation, behavioral skills, and a positive school environment to self-manage their emotions to reduce risky behaviors and improve academic performance. Alternatively, mindfulness-based approaches teach students "from the inside out" to cultivate self-management of attention and increase self-awareness by focusing on intrapsychic experiences such as thoughts, emotional states, breathing, and other bodily sensations (Semple, Lee, Rosa, & Miller, 2010). The ultimate aim of most school-based mindfulness programs are to

increase awareness of the influence of thoughts and emotions on speech and behaviors, and thereby enhance the likelihood of making more skillful or appropriate choices (Semple & Lee, 2014).

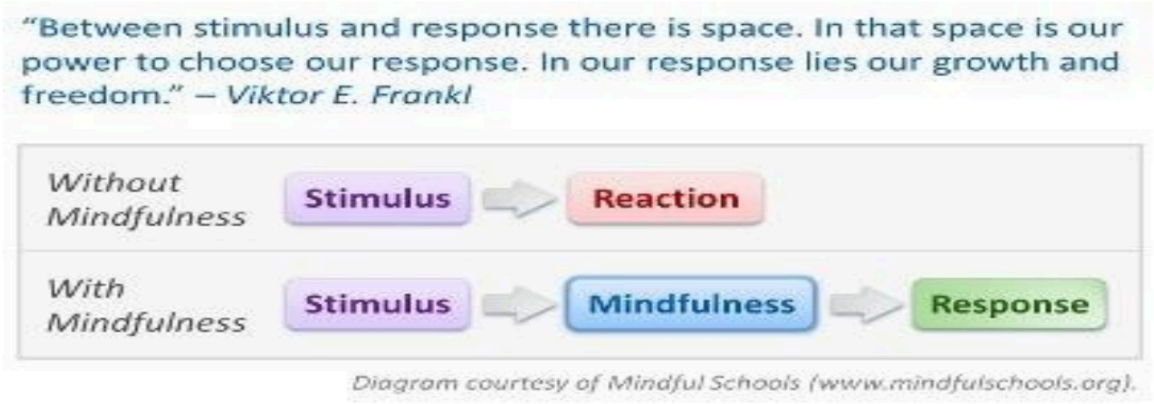

Figure 2. 1. Mindfulness Diagram

Mindfulness has been defined as a nonjudgmental, non-elaborative awareness of the present moment, an awareness that allows for acknowledgement and acceptance of feelings, thoughts, and sensations as they arise (Bishop et al., 2004). Holzel (2011) suggested that the benefits of mindfulness could be attributed to two distinct but interrelated components. The first is a regulation of attention focused on immediate experience, while the second involves "approaching one's experiences with an orientation of curiosity, openness, and acceptance, regardless of their valence and desirability" (p. 538).

A report by the Garrison Institute (2005) suggested that many schools adopt mindfulness approaches (i.e., breathing, body scans, walking) because the techniques are easy to learn and may help students become more responsive, calm, and focused while experiencing less stress and distractions. This report suggested that mindful classrooms might create more positive learning environments in which students are "primed" to pay attention, and consequently, are better prepared to learn. At the time, however, only a few small studies had evaluated school-based

mindfulness programs. During the past few years, dissemination of mindfulness-based programs into K-12 schools has been remarkably rapid. It is difficult to determine how many schools are using any of the wide range of practices described as "mindfulness" or how many children might be influenced by these practices. A cursory Google search yielded more than 35.9 million results for "mindfulness and schools" (Google Search, February, 2021).

Social-emotional learning and mindfulness programs for adults have been shown to produce neurological, physiological, cognitive, affective, and behavioral benefits (Ivanovski & Malhi, 2007; Hoffman, Sawyer, Witt, & Oh, 2010). Mindfulness may produce a host of short- and long-term positive outcomes for children and adolescents as well. At present, however, the evidence base for this is limited and inconclusive. After reviewing child and adolescent mindfulness research, Greenberg & Harris (2012) concluded that "the enthusiasm for promoting such practices outweighs the current evidence supporting them" (p. 161). The first published meta-analysis on the effects of mindfulness training in youth (Zoogman, Goldberg, Hoyt, & Miller, 2015) found mindfulness to be generally helpful and superior to a variety of control conditions. This meta-analysis included twenty studies with sample sizes ranging from 4 to 246 participants. Thirteen of these studies were randomized controlled trials (RCT). Several recent studies have reported reductions in stress and improvements in well-being (Lee, Semple, Rosa, & Miller, 2008; van de Weijer-Bergsma, Langenberg, Brandsma, Oort, & Bogels, 2012) and reductions in depressive symptoms (Raes, Griffith, Gucht, & Williams, 2013) immediately after the intervention and at the 6-month follow-ups. Not all studies, however, have demonstrated the superiority of mindfulness over other approaches. Britton, Lepp, Niles, Rocha, Fisher, and Gold (2014) conducted a randomized control trial that compared mindfulness meditation with an active intervention to improve mental health for middle school students. The authors found that

although both interventions produced benefits, no significance between-group differences were found. The authors suggested that many novel activities might produce comparable benefits (i.e., breathing awareness; awareness of thoughts, feelings, and sensations; and body sweeps).

Although social emotional learning and mindfulness training for children and adolescents seems to be a promising approach, significantly more research is needed to examine its effectiveness with different populations and in different settings, its mechanisms of change, the specific components needed for successful school-based implementation, and possible concerns or reasons for their use (Johnson, Burke, Brinkman, & Wade, 2016, 2017; Shankland & Rosset, 2017).

Social-Emotional Learning Cognitive Framework

Social emotional learning interventions are highly interpersonal activities. Pioneers in the field of social-emotional learning are psychologists Lev Vygotsky and Albert Bandura, Barry Zimmerman, and Deci and Ryan with their social learning theories. All have theorized that social interaction is a key process of learning and development.

Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory

The major theme of Vygotsky's theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. Vygotsky's (1931) social constructionist theory argues that all cognitive functions originate in (and must therefore be explained as products of) social interactions and that learning did not simply comprise the assimilation and accommodation of new knowledge by learners; it was the process by which learners were integrated into a knowledge community. "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (inter-psychological) and then inside the child (intra-psychological). This applies equally to

voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All of the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57).

A second aspect of Vygotsky's theory is the idea that the potential for cognitive development depends upon the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): a level of development attained when children engage in social behavior. Full development of the ZPD depends upon full social interaction. The range of skill that can be developed with adult guidance or peer collaboration exceeds what can be attained alone (Vygotsky, 1978).

The third aspect of Vygotsky's theory involves the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO). This refers to anyone who has a better understanding or a higher ability level than the learner, with respect to a particular task, process, or concept (Vygotsky, 1931). Although the implication is that the MKO is a teacher or an older adult, this is not necessarily the case. Many times, a child's peers or an adult's child may be the individual with more knowledge or experience. With today's digital education programs, the MKO may not be a person at all. It may be a smartphone or a computer. The key to MKOs is that they must have (or be programed with) more knowledge about the topic being learned than the learner does.

Vygotsky's concepts of ZPD and MKO play a vital role in the strategies educators use to conduct social-emotional learning interventions in the classroom. ZPD and MKO form the basis of collaborative learning and support the use of peer models in the learning environment. The teacher-student relationship also facilitates students' learning through direct instruction and modeling. In addition, Vygotsky's theory emphasized the importance of early language skills in shaping cognitive development. During social interaction, the external communication heard between peers is social speech. For example, conversations on the playground, problem-solving

during play, and peer dialogue that occurs during class lineup. Vygotsky defined private speech as the self-talk heard aloud, yet not intended for others (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky believed these externalized thoughts are a form of self-regulation as children learn to communicate internally. This early presence of social-emotional learning, as discussed by Vygotsky, contributes to the rationale for inclusion as a component of an effective social-emotional intervention program.

Bandura's Social Learning Theory

The social learning theory of Bandura emphasizes the importance of observing and modeling the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. Bandura states "Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action" (Bandura, 1977, p. 22). Social learning theory explains human behavior in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences (Bandura, 1977). The component processes underlying observational learning are: (1) Attention, including modeled events (distinctiveness, affective valance, complexity, prevalence, and functional value) and observer characteristics (sensory capacities, arousal level, perceptual set, and past reinforcement); (2) retention, including symbolic coding, cognitive organization, symbolic rehearsal, and motor rehearsal); (3) *motor reproduction*, including physical capabilities, self-observation of reproduction, and accuracy of feedback; and (4) *motivation*, including external, vicarious, and self-reinforcement (Bandura, 1977).

Social learning theory has been applied extensively to the understanding of aggression (Bandura, 1973) and psychological disorders, particularly in the context of behavior modification (Bandura, 1969). It is also the theoretical foundation for the technique of behavioral modeling which is widely used in training programs. In recent years, Bandura focused his work on the concept of self-efficacy in a variety of contexts (Bandura, 1997). Because it encompasses attention, memory and motivation, social learning theory spans both cognitive and behavioral frameworks. Bandura's work is related to Vygotsky's social constructivist theory which also emphasizes the central role of social learning.

Zimmerman's Self-Regulated Learning Theory

Expanding on Vygotsky's and Bandura's work, Zimmerman (1989) developed the modern self-regulated learning (SRL) theory framework that includes behavioral, cognitive, emotional, metacognitive, and motivational aspects of learning. Zimmerman's SRL model contains three phases: forethought, performance, and self-reflection. *Forethought* is the preparation step for SRL. It is an indicator of the difference between SRLs and non-SRLs because most non-SRLs begin their learning without this forethought (think ahead) phase. The SRL learner analyses a task prior to learning something new, and the most important part of this step involves goal setting. A novice learner might even start setting a learning goal, but in many cases, it is not followed by a specific plan. Therefore, strategic planning should be done when setting a learning goal. At this initial phase, the learner should also have self-motivation beliefs (how they will motivate themselves) about their efficacy and expected learning outcome (Zimmerman, 2002).

The performance phase is the main step. This is an actual learning phase which Zimmerman states has many people thinking that it is "learning". However, this is just one of

the phases in the SRL process. At this step, the learner manages their own learning through the self-control process. Self-control is when the learner develops the strategies that they selected during the strategic planning step of the *Forethought* phase. The self-control process is then combined with self-observation. When learning something, the self-regulated learner monitors their own learning (i.e., self-journaling). The reasons for doing this is that it provides feedback for the self-control process, so the learner can redevelop or modify their learning strategies (Zimmerman, 2002).

The last phase is *Self-reflection*. Learning is not over until this phase is complete. As in the *Forethought* phase, the *Self-reflection* step consists of two aspects: cognitive (self-judgment) and affective (self-reaction). The self-judgment process includes self-evaluation which involves the cause analysis, such as thinking about what caused the success of failure of the learning. With the self-evaluation and analysis, the SRL is able to diagnose whether they have achieved their learning goal or not, and importantly, to measure their self-satisfaction level (Zimmerman, 2002). Zimmerman and Bandura later collaborated on a study of the effects of self-regulation on writing achievement (Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994).

Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory

Expanding on the concepts of self-regulation, Deci and Ryan (1985) developed self-determination theory (SDT) focusing on universal psychological needs, life goals, motivation, and the impact of social environments on motivation. It is the study of what moves us to act. SDT examines what moves us to grow and includes three core needs that enable that growth: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. *Competence* is the need to experience our behaviors as effectively enacted, to feel like we have done a good job. *Autonomy* is the need to experience behavior as voluntary and reflectively self-endorsed, to feel like we have control over what we

do. *Relatedness* is the need to interact, be connected to, and experience caring for others, to have meaningful relationships and interactions with other people. SDT focuses on two types of motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic. An extrinsic reward is tangible-like a student receiving a good grade. An intrinsic reward is intangible and felt internal, like a student getting a sense of recognition through praise from her teacher. It is important to understand this distinction because it is easy to confuse intrinsic motivation with intrinsic rewards. Motivation always relates to the behavior or activity, and rewards are always an outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

SEL Interventions Using Social Constructivist and Social Learning Theories

Implications of both the social constructivist and social learning theories for use with social-emotional learning interventions may include that students engage in SEL activities by listening to a teacher's instructions as well as observing the teacher and their peers practicing such behaviors (e.g., perspective-taking). The role of peer modeling is very important as students learn from watching their fellow peers and can also see what works for their peers in different social contexts (Bandura, 1977). Thus, to promote a successful SEL intervention program (i.e., *Second Step*) it is ideal to have lessons taught and engaged in by teachers (i.e., verbal instruction, live modeling) while also providing the opportunity for peers to learn SEL intervention practices from each other (i.e., peer modeling) within the classroom, or, as Vygotsky states, "through others we become ourselves" (Vygotsky, 1931, 1997c, p. 105). SRL within SEL interventions allows students to put cognitively together everything they learn and reflect on their experience, learning what works for them and what should be altered or replaced with the new strategy (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

SRL strategies complement and enhance SEL through students taking responsibly for their own learning, and applying it to their own actions (Zimmerman, 2002). This realization on

the part of the student leads to the desired outcome of SEL interventions: teaching you to become responsible for your own behaviors.

Executive Function as a Self-Regulation Behavioral Strategy

Executive function (EF) skills play an important role in children's cognitive and social functioning (Anderson, 2002; Best, 2010; Brackett, 2019; Clark, Prior, & Kinsella, 2002; Delis, Kaplan, & Kramer, 2001; Denckla, 2007; Diamond, 2013; Jacobson, Williford, & Pianta, 2011). These skills develop through childhood, concurrently with a number of developmental transitions and challenges (i.e., social interactions, focusing in class, homework, staying organized). EF is an overarching term describing those processes required for purposeful, goal-directed activity and socially appropriate conduct (Anderson, 2002; Collins & Koechlin, 2012; Denckla, 1994; Diamond, 2013; Lezak, 1993; Stuss, 1992). There are multiple theories and conceptualizations (Barkley, 1994; D'Esposito & Postle, 2015; Denckla, 1994; Leslie, 1995; Norman & Shallice, 1986) regarding the component skills which make up EF, but most definitions consider EF processes to be multi-dimensional in nature and to include a variety of correlated but distinct skills such as attention control, cognitive flexibility, self-regulation, inhibition, strategic planning, and impulse control (Bebe & Gozal, 2002; Chaddock, Pontifex, Hillman, & Kramer, 2011; Eisenberg & Berman, 2010; Maguire, 2019; Reader, Harris, Schuerholz, & Denckla, 1994; Siegel, 2014; Siegel & Bryson, 2011; Siegel & Bryson, 2015; Siegel & Bryson, 2018; Siegel & Bryson, 2020) which support learning, academic achievement, and behavioral competence.

Executive Function skills have also been characterized as falling into a hot-cool continuum, relative to the setting and level of affective demand in which the specific skills are operating, with potentially differing neural substrates for hot versus cool EF (Blair & Raver, 2014; Diamond, 2012; Miyake & Friedman, 2012; Peterson & Welsh, 2014; Posner & Rothbart,

2007; Zelazo & Muller, 2002). Brain-based research has evolved to emphasize how the brain learns naturally and is based on the actual structure and function of the of the brain at varying developmental stages (Sousa, 2011). Known as "educational neuroscience" it allows for brain-friendly techniques and experiences to be used to create effective EF techniques. EF skills develop through childhood and into young adulthood, concurrent with the development of neural synapses, myelination of brain regions, and recruitment and consolidation of neural networks (Miller, Barnes, & Beaver, 2011; Riccio & Gomes, 2013; Shea & Morgan, 1979; Siegel, 2014; Siegel, 2018; Siegel & Bryson, 2011; Siegel & Bryson, 2020; Stevens, Skudlarski, Pearlson, & Calhoun, 2009; Tau & Peterson, 2010). Poor EF skills put children at risk for ineffective interactions with the environment, leading to significant and lasting cognitive, academic, and social difficulties (Tapert, Baratta, Abrantes, & Brown, 2002; Clark, 2002; Ellis, Rothbart, & Posner, 2004). Early executive control predicts children's level of social problems, with later EF predictive of a variety of psychosocial outcomes in adolescents (Ellis et al., 2004; Galambos, MacDonald, Naphtali, Cogen, & de Frias, 2005; Giancola & Mezzich, 2000; Santor, Ingram, & Kusumakar, 2003).

Although the components of EF appear to play an important role in children's academic and social functioning across childhood, there is little work investigating the role of specific aspects of the developmental context on children's EF skills. Early and continuing experiences shape brain development (Awh & Jonides, 2001; Best, et al., 2009; Blair & Raver, 2014; Johnson, 2011) and childhood experiences such as classroom interactions moderate the relation between demographic or cognitive risk and academic and social outcomes (Borman & Kimble, 2005; Hamre & Pianta, 2005). Both material scaffolding and effective classroom teaching have been shown to support children's developmental regulation of behavior and affects (Hughes &

Ensor, 2009; Klingberg, 2014; Miller & Cohen, 2001; Rimm-Kaufman, 2005). However, there are few studies specifically examining contextual influences on EF beyond early childhood (Best, 2010; Chen, 2005; Prencipe, Kesek, Cohen, Lamm, & Zalazo, 2011) and few which examine the relation of competent EF to children's ability to successfully navigate the elementary school transition to middle school (Jacobson, et al., 2011).

Social-emotional intervention strategies aimed at developing EF capacities depend on a comprehensive approach to targeting the problem. Three key questions have been identified in determining specific executive function deficits (Delis, et al., 2001; Denckla, 2007; Diamond & Lee, 2011; McCloskey & Perkins, 2013; McCloskey, Perkins, & Van Diviner, 2009). First, it is important to identify whether the deficit that the child is experiencing is due to a lack of use or whether it is a manifestation of brain dysfunction. Children with executive function deficits typically have disabilities resulting in an inconsistent demonstration of knowledge. A second question identified is: Are the neural networks associated with the child's specific executive function deficits fixedly damaged, or is the deficit the result of under usage? If the student is presenting with a deficit in functioning due to a lack or use of these neuronal networks, it is plausible to suggest that the proper intervention could strengthen these networks and develop function capabilities.

The last question identified by McCloskey et al. (2009) is to consider whether the deficit is a manifestation of improper usage of already developed neuronal networks or whether it stems from the underdevelopment of these networks due to a delay in the natural progression of the individual. The answer to this question would help to guide the individual further in developing a target intervention strategy. However, a child with deficits due to misuse neuronal networks would benefit from some behavioral modification strategies; a child with the latter concern

would require more lengthy intervention and support (Delis et al., 2001; Denckla, 2007; Diamond & Lee, 2011; McCloskey & Perkins, 2013; McCloskey et al., 2009).

Another key concept when developing EF interventions is the idea that the goal is to assist the child with external control and to develop simultaneously his or her ability to establish control internally (Diamond & Lee, 2011; McCloskey & Perkins, 2013; McCloskey et al., 2009). This would suggest that the interventionist must initially model external cues to teach the child how to make efficient use of his or her EF. Using a scaffolded approach to learning, the interventionist could slowly begin to minimize the external cues provided and support the child as this becomes a more independent process. This also is effective in mindfulness training, as it requires the child to participate in various activities designed to increase focus and awareness (Greenberg & Harris, 2012; Perry-Parish, Copeland-Linder, Webb, & Sibinga, 2016; Schonert-Reich et al., 2015). As the child learns this skill within the intervention strategy environment, under the guidance of the interventionist, it would be appropriate to facilitate the generalized use of these EF strategies and to foster the independent use of these EF strategies by the child in order to maintain the goal of the social-emotional learning intervention process.

Assessments of EF have been centered primarily on the Symbol System area (Diamond & Lee, 2011; McCloskey & Perkins, 2003; McCloskey et al., 2009). As a result, identification of generalizable strengths and weaknesses among the child's EF is limited and not always appropriate. Assessments of EF capacities include: the Wisconsin Card Sorting Test (Heaton, Chelune, Talley, Kay, & Curtiss, 1993), the Rey Complex Figure (Meyers & Meyers, 1995), the Behavioral Rating Inventory of Executive Function (Gioia, Isquith, Guy, & Kenworthy, 2000), the Delis-Kaplan Executive Functions Scale (Delis, et al., 2001), and the NEPSY (NEuroPSYchological) (Korkman, Kirk, & Kemp, 2007). Another limit to these assessments is

that the results are not directly related to academic skill development (Diamond & Lee, 2011; Hughes & Ensor, 2009; McCloskey et al., 2009). This poses a problem for the development of intervention strategies: the results of these evaluations are not necessarily a direct link to the students' abilities because they are restricted to one area of EF (Denckla, 2007; Diamond & Lee, 2011; McCloskey et al., 2009).

EF skills play an important part in successful cognitive and social functioning (Hughes, White, Sharpen, & Dunn, 2000; Murphy, Shepard, Eisenberg, & Fabes, 2004) and likely become critically important during the stages of early adolescence when children experience a number of simultaneous transitions and challenges before their EF has reached the level of adult competence (Bailey, 2007; Riggs & Greenberg, 2009; Siegel, 2014; Siegel 2018; Siegel & Bryson, 2020; Tseng, Gau, & Lou, 2011). One such challenging transition involves the change in school setting from elementary into middle school, often at sixth grade, which occurs for many children in the midst of the significant cognitive and physiological changes of puberty (Anderson, 2002; Blair, 2010; Casey, Getz, & Galvan, 2008; Simmons, Burgeson, Carlton-Ford, & Blyth, 1987). This school transition requires significant cognitive and behavioral adjustment as it often involves not only a physical change of location, but changes in school perspective and instructional formats, increases in the number of teachers, decreases in perceived teacher support, increases in class size, changes in peer networks, and increased expectations for individual responsibility, and often increased exposure to the potential for delinquent behavior (Akos, Queen, & Lineberry, 2005; Eccles, 2004; Rudolph, Lambert, Clark, & Kurlakowsky, 2001; Simmons & Blyth, 1987; Steinberg, 2005). Each of these new challenges places increasing demands on the child's developing EF skills, as the increased workload, class changes, and larger peer groups require greater self-regulation and working memory than were

required in an elementary school setting (Ackerman, Beier, & Boyle, 2005; Chooi & Thompson, 2012; Cools & D'Esposito, 2011; Harter, Whitesell, & Kowalski, 1992). The changes in expectations and responsibilities at sixth grade are more apparent for those students who make a school transition than for those who remain in an extended elementary school; thus, self-regulation and EF skills may play more of a role in their academic and social competence (Crone & Dahl, 2012; Duckworth & Seligman, 2005; Ernst, 2014; Rudolph et al., 2001; Siegel, 2018; Siegel & Bryson, 2011; Siegel & Bryson, 2015; Siegel & Bryson, 2018; Siegel & Bryson, 2020).

Mindfulness-Based Interventions

In addition to a growing interest in SEL, there has also been a large increase in the awareness of secular mindfulness activities (e.g., attention training, yoga) as methods to support wellness of children's emotional and physical health (Greenberg & Harris, 2012; Hattie & Zierer, 2018; Jennings, 2015). Mindfulness can be simply defined as paying attention in the present moment, on purpose and without judgment (Kabat-Zinn, 2003), and the simple act of noticing things (Langer, 2014). The *MindUp*™ curriculum refers to mindful awareness as "attending to the here and now…in a considerate, non-judgmental way" (The Hawn Foundation, 2011). The *MindUP* intervention program is "a comprehensive, classroom-tested, evidence-based curriculum framed around fifteen easily implemented lessons that foster social and emotional awareness, enhance psychological well-being, and promote academic success" (*MindUP* Curriculum Grades 3-5, p. 6).

Research shows adults benefited from mindfulness for promoting health, and reduced anxiety and depression (Arias, Steinberg, Banga, & Trestman, 2006; Finucane & Mercer, 2006).

Figure 3. 1. Mindfulness May Increase Mental Performance at work. Reprinted from KeyStepMedia.com by M. Lippincott, February 7, 2018

The development of educational programs for children incorporating mindfulness training have grown as well in an effort to prevent mental illness and foster prosocial behavior and resilience (Greenberg & Harris, 2012). However, compared to SEL intervention programs in general, there is a relative lack of empirical evidence documenting the benefits of mindfulness-based interventions in school settings for children.

Although there is little research in this area of mindfulness, several small meta-analyses have been conducted. The first examined mindfulness interventions for children and youth under 18 years of age and included only 20 peer-reviewed articles that met the inclusion criteria for the study (Zoogman et al., 2015). Findings suggested that mindfulness interventions provide benefits over-active control comparison groups with youth overall being the most effective in addressing symptoms of psychopathology in respect to specific outcomes. The second meta-analysis by Zenner, Herrnleben-Kurtz, and Walach (2014), focused specifically on school-based

mindfulness interventions and included 24 studies, of which only 13 were published. Zenner et al. (2014) also found mindfulness interventions to be beneficial for children and youth ranging from grades 1-12 (ages 6 to 19), specifically in relation to improving cognitive performance (e.g., attention, creativity, grades) and developing resilience to stress. Although promising, methodological limitations (e.g., heterogeneous methods) of the research on mindfulness-based interventions make conclusions and generalizations to the larger population difficult (Greenberg & Harris, 2012). Furthermore, much of the research has focused on reducing symptoms such as depression, stress, and anxiety (Biegel, Brown, Shapiro & Schubert, 2009). Whereas research focused on how mindfulness-based interventions may increase mental well-being in children and youth is lacking.

Much of mindfulness research has been directed at adult populations with emerging research showing promising results in children and adolescents (Volanen et al., 2016). Mindfulness interventions have been effective elements of adult treatments for anxiety disorders (Semple, Reid, & Miller, 2005). In adults, mindfulness interventions have resulted in increased awareness, promoted reflection, self-regulation, and empathy (Siegel, 2010b; Siegel & Bryson, 2018). Furthermore, mindfulness practices have been found to improve regulation of stress in adults and symptoms of anxiety and depression (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015; Volanen et al., 2016). The emphasis on approaching and accepting internal experiences are believed to lead to reduced distress and pain in response to stress because less effort is spent on avoiding uncomfortable or undesirable experiences. Moreover, increased self-reflection allows individuals to create psychological distance and identify other appropriate responses. These mindfulness-based interventions with adults have produced behavioral changes in as little as two weeks (Zelazo & Lyons, 2012).

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) is widely implemented in clinical settings to reduce stress among adults with chronic health conditions. The MBSR program is eight to ten weeks of group lessons. The content focuses on mindfulness meditation practice, body scans, gentle yoga, breathing exercises, and discussions about personal experiences with mindfulness techniques (Perry-Parish et al., 2016; Zelazo & Lyons, 2012). MBSR exercises are designed to train attention and reflective processes, which in turn, increases positive coping and cognitive changes and decreases the trigger of an automatic emotional reaction or evaluation. The focus of the exercises was on changing the content in which these internal experiences occur (Perry-Parish et al., 2016). Since the introduction of MBSR, other therapies have emerged that have a mindfulness intervention-based emphasis.

Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) is an experimental learning intervention where the clinician helps the individual change the context in which the internal responses happen (Perry-Parish et al., 2016). Group sessions are held weekly and include formal and informal practices. Formal practices include body scans, sitting meditation, and walking meditation. Informal activities are when the participant brings in mindfulness awareness to daily activities. Thoughts and feelings are considered as experiences or events rather than facts (Perry-Parish et al., 2016). MBCT includes psychoeducation and exercises specific to depression, but content can be adapted for other mental health concerns. A focus on treatment is on balance for change and mindful acceptance. Given the success of adult trials and the emerging research on children, it appears that with developmentally appropriate practices, mindfulness-based interventions focused on children with self-regulation issues would be beneficial and efficient (Burke, 2010; Greenberg & Harris, 2012; Perry-Parish et al., 2016).

Mindfulness-Based Interventions with Children

Mindfulness exercises for adults have been adapted for use with children to create a developmentally appropriate way to train the core facets of mindfulness (Zelazo & Lyons, 2012). Children have a shorter attention span and limited self-regulation. Typically, mindfulness activities for children occur in small groups and are shorter in length when they are introduced, and increase in duration as children progress through the intervention (Zoogman et al., 2012). Additionally, activities are physically and sensory involved (Perry-Parish et al., 2016; Zenner et al., 2014). Instructors may use props or metaphors to help children understand the goals of mindfulness exercises (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015; Zelazo & Lyons, 2012).

Mindfulness activities for children include body scans, breathing exercises and meditation and are most effective when they find the activities creative and relatable (Semple et al., 2005). To help children understand the notion of a body scan and breathing exercises props may be used to engage the students. For a body scan, the instructor could use a hula-hoop and demonstrate how to scan their bodies. The children would be instructed to use an imaginary hula-hoop. As the hula-hoop passes over their body, the children are told to focus on how that part of the body feels (Perry-Parish et al., 2016). To help children focus on their breathing, they will be instructed to find a comfortable place on the carpet and put a stuffed animal on their stomach. They will be told to rock their stuffed animal to sleep with slow, gentle breaths. As children focus their attention on the sensations, this may lay the foundation for their development of a more sophisticated mindfulness awareness of their emotions and thoughts (Jennings, 2015; Siegel & Bryson, 2011; Siegel & Bryson, 2018; Siegel & Bryson, 2020; Zelazo & Lyons, 2012).

The emerging research has demonstrated that mindfulness activities are beneficial and well accepted by children. A teacher implemented six-week mindfulness-based intervention

program in an urban school setting showed improvements in psychological symptoms, coping behaviors, self-hostility, and reduced post-traumatic stress symptoms (Perry-Parish et al., 2016). Another mindfulness-based intervention study done in a school setting with teacher-referred anxious children indicated improvements in at least one area of academic functioning, internalizing problems, or externalizing problems. The children that participated in the group experience expressed that they enjoyed the activities and were able to incorporate the mindfulness applications in their everyday life (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015; Semple et al., 2005).

Mindfulness competencies and social-emotional development have also been linked to learning and academic achievement and increasing viewed as a target for school-based interventions (Durlak et al., 2011; Eisenberg et al., 2010b; Mraz & Hertz, 2015; Taylor et al., 2017; Zins & Elias, 2007b). A growing body of evidence has found numerous social and emotional factors, including emotion regulation, effortful control, social and self-awareness, self-management, relationships skills, and decision-making, to be directly and indirectly related to academic performance, school engagement, and externalizing and internalizing behaviors (Brackett & Rivers, 2014; Denham & Brown, 2010; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2017; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1997). Social-emotional competencies are positively related to academic success, greater impulse control, better concentration, and attention in school, whereas a lack of social-emotional skills is linked to academic, social, and behavioral problems (Amen, 2019; Brackett & Rivers, 2014; Denham & Brown, 2010; Eisenberg et al., 2010a; Ricci, 2013; Siegel, 2014; Siegel & Bryson, 2011; Siegel & Bryson, 2015; Siegel & Bryson, 2018; Siegel & Bryson, 2020). For example, an inverse relationship between emotional regulation and effortful control has been found with externalizing behavior problems in pre-school age children

through adolescence (Eiden, Edwards, & Leonard 2007; Eisenberg, Smith, Sadovsky, & Spinrad 2004; Gardner, 2006). Conversely, students who exhibit greater ability to self-regulate are more likely to demonstrate better ability to concentrate and pay attention in school and exhibit better impulse control and fewer externalizing behaviors, leading to improved success in school (Eigsti, Zayas, Mischel, Shoda, Ayduk, Dadlani, Davidson, & Casey, 2006; Eisenberg et al., 2010b; Eisenberg, VanSchyndel & Hofer, 2015; Gardner, 2006; Mischel et al., 1989).

The increased prevalence of stress, anxiety, mental health problems and other social, emotional, and behavioral risk factors, along with the increase in knowledge of the impact of these factors on learning and achievement, has prompted schools to begin to more explicitly attend to students' social and emotional functioning through both curricula and ancillary programs (Delahooke, 2017; Durlak et al., 2011; Greenland, 2016; Taylor et al., 2017; Zins & Elias, 2007b). Indeed, for students to succeed in school, it seems ever more apparent that schools need to provide strong social and emotional components and support students' well-being in in addition to providing strong academic curriculum and instruction (Eigsti et al., 2006; Eisenberg et al., 2010; Elias et al., 1991; Taylor et al., 2017; Zenner, Herrnleben-Kurz, & Walach, 2014; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004).

As schools have implemented ways to support students' overall well-being, one approach receiving growing interest is the use of mindfulness practices. Mindfulness, commonly defined as "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, nonjudgmentally" (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p. 4), has become mainstream and practiced by high profile stars and athletes as a means of improving health, well-being, and athletic performance. Free lessons in mindfulness are given as perks at companies like Google (Walton, 2014), and meditation was an integral part of the Seattle Seahawks training regimen (Roenigk, 2013).

While mindfulness seems to be a popular trend being adopted by individuals, it is also beginning to be considered in various areas of public policy, including education policy. Over the past decade, interest in mindfulness has grown and mindfulness-based approaches to improve health and well-being, particularly with adults, has spread across fields, including psychology, healthcare, neuroscience, and business. This increased interest in mindfulness is due, at least in part, to a significant and growing body of evidence pointing to positive effects of mindfulness training on cognitive processes. Evidence suggested that mindfulness practice improves performance on a variety of measures of self-regulation (Chambers, Lo, & Allen, 2008; Heeren, Van Broeck, & Philippot, 2009) and emotional regulation (Finucane & Mercer, 2006; Specca Carlson, Goodey, & Angen, 2000), as well as enhancing cognitive functions such as attention, working memory, and some executive functions (Chiesa, Calati, & Serretti, 2011), all of which are important to success in school. Mindfulness interventions have been found to alter brain structure and function, including increased blood flow to and thickening of the cerebral cortex (Davidson, 2012) and increased gray matter concentration in the areas of the brain involved with emotion regulation, learning, and memory (Holzel, 2011; Siegel, 2014; Siegel & Bryson, 2018). A meta-analysis of twenty-one neuroimaging studies found consistent differences between mediators and non-mediators in eight regions of the brain key to meta-awareness, body awareness, memory, and self and emotion regulation (Fox et al., 2014).

Additionally, mindfulness has been found to be effective in the treatment of a myriad of health, social, and psychological problems. Numerous studies and meta-analyses have been conducted investigating the use of mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) in medicine, with mindfulness training and practice was found to help patients with chronic conditions manage pain (Cramer, Haller, Lauche, & Dobos, 2012; Veehof, Oskam, Schreurs, & Bohlmeijer, 2011),

fibromyalgia (Lauche, Cramer, Dobos, Langhorst, & Schmidt, 2013), and reduced stress in breast cancer patients (Zainal, Booth, & Huppert, 2013). Additionally, syntheses and meta-analyses have found positive effects of MBIs in treating individuals with mental health diagnoses, such as anxiety (deVibe, Bjorndal, Tipton, Hammerstrom, & Kowalski, 2012; Vollestad, Nielsen, & Nielsen, 2012), psychiatric disorders (Chiesa et al., 2011), psychosis (Khoury, Lecomte, Gaudiano, & Paquin, 2013), personal development and quality of life (deVibe et al., 2012), as well as stress in healthy people (Cheisa & Serretti, 2009) including university students (Regehr, Glancy, & Pitts, 2013). Indeed, the use of mindfulness has greatly expanded into various fields to aid in the treatment of a vast array of conditions as well as to more generally enhance health and well-being.

While the vast majority of research on mindfulness has historically focused on adults, the increase in promising research based on the diverse application of MBIs with adults and the growing popularity of mindfulness with the general public has naturally led to the extension of mindfulness to the application with children (Zenner et al., 2014). It has been argued that children could benefit from mindfulness in ways similar to adults (Davis, 2012; Fodor & Hooker, 2008), and initial reviews suggest that MBIs are feasible with children and adolescents with adaptations (Burke, 2010; Zelazo & Lyons, 2012). Mindfulness-based interventions have been adapted from adult interventions or developed specifically for children and youth for a range of clinical conditions as well as more generally to enhance health and well-being, and applications for use in schools have been developed and implemented (Siegel, 2010b).

The use of MBIs is on the rise in schools across the United States as more and more schools have begun implementing various mindfulness-based programs and integrating

mindfulness into the curricula (e.g., *MindUp*™, The Inner Resilience Program, South Burlington Wellness and Resilience Program, Mindful Schools, Learning to Breathe, Mindfulness In Schools Project, Still Quiet Place, Stressed Teens, and Wellness Works in Schools). Moreover, efforts to promote mindfulness practices are being included in state educational policy and program initiatives. The state of California, following the lead of Illinois, and in consultation with CASEL, has developed Social and Emotional Learning Guiding Principles (2018) that "are designed to build on the implicit and explicit social-emotional learning practices already happening in many schools to promote the intentional use of evidence and research-based practices to guide decision-making" (California Social and Emotional Learning Guiding Principles, 2018, p. 1).

Although the use of MBIs appears to be on the rise in schools, it is unclear whether mindfulness-based approaches do indeed impact academic, emotional, and behavioral outcomes in students. While there is a growing body of studies of MBIs on a range of cognitive, social, and psychological outcomes, including working memory, attention, academic skills, social skills, and emotional regulation (Duncan & Magnuson, 2011; Eisenberg et al., 2010; Greenberg et al., 2001; Meiklejohn, et al., 2012; Semple et al., 2010) few studies have synthesized this literature using systematic and quantitative methods and few have focused specifically on school-based interventions (Durlak et al., 2011; Payton, Wardlaw, Graczyk, Bloodworth, Tompsett, & Weissberg, 2000; Schonert-Reichl & Hymel, 2007; Schonert-Reichi et al., 2017). As schools develop practices to try to more effectively and efficiently improve student outcomes, it is important that researchers and practitioners have access to evidence of effects of MBIs to make informed decisions rather than rely on anecdotal evidence and follow popular trends. This information is critical as schools must make important academic, curricular, and budgetary

decisions. If a particular psychosocial intervention has large positive effects, than the use of academic time and school resources may be warranted to implement such a program during the school day; however, if the effects are minimal or adverse, then the use of academic time and limited school resources may not be worth those costs (Lee et al., 2008; Mendleson, Greenberg, Dariotis, Gould, Rhoades, & Leaf, 2010; Parker, Kupersmidt, Mathis, Scull, & Sims, 2014; Schonert-Reichl,et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2017).

Breathing Interventions with Children

The concept of therapeutic breathing techniques (TBT) and mindfulness have long been practiced in Eastern spiritual traditions of yoga for personal improvement. Educators and educational institutions have recently begun to explore their secular applications in learning environments (Gibbs, 2017; Larson, El Ramahi, Conn, Estes, & Ghibellini, 2010; Peck, Kehler, Bray, & Theodore 2005; Stueck & Gloeckner, 2005; Telles, Puthige, Maharana, & Nagendra, 2007).

Over the past decade, a body of literature has emerged supporting the efficacy of mindfulness-based treatment approaches (Leland, 2015; Napper-Owen, 2006; Weare, 2013; Willis & Dinehart, 2014). Mindfulness often refers to specific practices emphasizing single-pointed concentration and attention on the present moment that is characterized by nonjudgmental observation of experience (Broderick & Jennings, 2012; Siegel, 2010b). For the purpose of this research study, the researcher made a distinction between mindfulness and TBT as TBT underscores breath modulation with therapeutic benefits as the principal element of the intervention. Central to therapeutic breathing techniques is the method of rhythmic attentive breathing. Therapeutic breathing is a largely unexplored aspect of research in education. Using the techniques of yoga, TBT has become a focus of considerable research devoted to its health

outcomes (Grossman, Niemann, Schmidt, & Walach, 2004). In a 2005 meta-review, Richard Brown and Patricia Gerbarg reported that yoga deep breathing was extremely effective in addressing depression, anxiety, and stress-related disorders. In this study, the researcher examined the potential relationship between TBT and its effects on developing self-regulation behavioral strategies in fifth grade through a social-emotional and mindfulness intervention.

In the yoga tradition, breath control exercises emphasize slow and deep breathing. Deep breathing has been shown to increase the body's overall circulation by releasing tension and increasing levels of blood and oxygen throughout the entire body (Brosnan 1982; Lalvani, 1997); (Saoji, Raghavendra, Rajesh, & Manjunath, 2018). The central automatic nervous system, which is the body's regulatory system for involuntary activity, such as heartbeat and respiration, responds favorably to increased levels of oxygen. The central nervous system is divided into two subsystems known as the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, respectively. Deep breathing exercises influence both these subsystems by deactivating the sympathetic system and activating the parasympathetic system (Carlson, 1998; Seamon & Kenrick, 1994). The result is a sense of calmness, emotional balance, and increased concentration (Brosnan, 1982). Breathing exercises train children to center and calm themselves (Mendelson et al., 2010).

The two breathing techniques of deep breathing and alternate nostril breathing purport to provide therapeutic benefits for memory and brain cells (Telles, Puthige, Maharana, & Nagendra, 2007). Deep breathing exercise stimulated slow, deep, and rhythmic breathing, which resulted in increasing the amount of oxygen in the blood stream, thereby improving blood circulation. Well-oxygenated and well-circulated blood invigorates all body cells, including the brain cells. The second technique, alternate nostril breathing, activated the balance between the dominances of the brain's left and right hemispheres. The nasal passages are cross-connected with the two

hemispheres of the brain. Therefore, alternate nostril breathing not only improved the balance between the right and left brains, but also calmed the mind by optimizing the analytical left brain and the creative right brain (Telles et al., 2007).

Calm breathing is thought to help focus the mind and regulate the autonomic nervous system, which results in mental relaxation. Mind-body techniques facilitate attention skills, which help with the performance in school. Improved coping skills can guide feelings of discomfort in stressful situations. A study that involved teaching relaxation techniques to fifty children with behavioral problems found reduced symptoms of inattention and hyperactivity when compared to the control group on the Parent Child Behavior Checklist (Goldbeck & Schmid, 2003). Additionally, a more relaxed mind promotes self-control, attention and concentration, self-efficacy, body awareness, and stress reduction (Nardo & Reynolds, 2002).

Yoga programs in elementary schools that incorporate balancing, bending, and stretching exercises have been a growing area of research (Berger, Silver, & Stein, 2009; Clance, Mitchell, & Engleman, 1980; Daniel, 2018), but few have specifically examined the effect of breathing on academic performance. While there is some empirical evidence to support the efficacy of breathing exercises for behavior modification (Peck et al., 2005; Steiner, Sidhu, Pop, Frenette, & Perrin, 2012), there is an absence of research about the effect of breathing exercises on direct measures of educational achievement. One exception is Gupta, Sinha, Pribesh, and Maira (2014), who examined the connection between therapeutic breathing exercises and educational outcomes for third graders. Statistically controlling for academic differences that preceded the intervention, the researchers found that students who engaged in TBT breathing scored higher on the end of year English test than those who did not engage in the intervention. This study suggested that TBT holds promise for improving educational outcomes. The students in the

Gupta et al. (2014) study were randomly assigned to the treatment and control groups. Thus, both groups largely started at the same place in terms of pretest group means. However, that study did not examine how the therapeutic breathing exercises might address the most at-risk, school-aged population, namely, the low achievers. The gap between low and high achieving students often predates the start of elementary school (Jencks & Phillips, 1998). On average, the gap persists from one grade level to the next (Chatterji, 2006). The cumulative effect over several academic years leads to a widening of the gap between the low and the high achievers. Typically, school-based problems such as academic underachievement are often related to impulsivity, inattention, and hyperactivity in the classroom (Faraone, Biederman, Lehman, Spencer, Norman, Seidman…, & Tsuang, 1993). Low achievers in fifth grade are highly more likely to drop out of school and over the course of their lifetimes, they earn just a fraction of the earnings of students with a high school or post-secondary degree (Blair & Diamond, 2008).

The use of therapeutic breathing exercises offers a potentially cost-effective intervention that elementary students can practice at school (i.e., P.E. and health classes) and at home. Training for a mindfulness intervention framework for the involved professionals (i.e., teacher credentialing, physical education preparation, and health and wellness programs) can be provided via online resources through video links, without school districts and schools accruing any recurring cost. There also are minimum or no additional costs for materials, printing, or travel.

Summary

This literature review presents how current evidence-based research show that mindfulness-based social-emotional learning school interventions for elementary students increases their self-regulation skills (Diamond, 2013; Durlak et al., 2010; Haggerty & Cummings, 2006; Sklad et al., 2012; Taylor et al., 2017; Zenner et al., 2014). Social learning theory and its implications for social-emotional learning were also examined (Vygorsky, 1931; Bandura, 1977; Zimmerman, 1989; Deci and Ryan, 1985).

The literature explored what school-based mindfulness interventions are, their equity issues, coherence of instruction, capacity for development, and collaboration for effective implementation. It also discussed how they have been used with students, and which outcome variables relating to anxiety, executive function, self-regulation, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship building, and responsible decision-making were measured for students after engaging in mindfulness-based practices and social-emotional learning interventions.

Mindfulness skills were also discussed within a "growth mindset" context (Boaler, 2019; Dweck, 2006; Langer, 2016; Siegel, 2010b; Siegel & Bryson, 2020) and how developing these skills improve social- emotional and mindfulness self-regulation behavioral skills for elementary students, through combining them with evidenced-based intervention strategies (Brown & Ryan, 2003; de la Fuente-Arias et al., 2010; Davidson, 2010; Ramos et al., 2009; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015).

CHAPTER 3: MYSELF Intervention Program

Introduction

This chapter begins with a discussion on the design and framework of the researcher's Mindfulness Yoga Social Emotional Learning Focus (MYSELF) Program. Included is a description of the mindfulness and compassion lessons that are taught to help children focus their attention on their thoughts and feelings.

Next, based on the research findings, is a pre-research study PowerPoint presentation transcript conceptualizing the research prior to its implementation. A guided mindfulness lesson experience for educators to use with their students is also provided.

The MYSELF Intervention incorporates the concept of social and emotional learning (SEL) which is still fairly new, with research only beginning in the late 1900's. The MYSELF Intervention is based on SEL research developed from developmental resilience – an individual's ability to successfully cope with adversity, stress, and risk factors. Developmental resilience is cognitive and behavioral and had been thought to be mostly innate until research showed it could be taught (Catalano, Mazza, Harachi, Abbott, & Haggerty, 2003; Diamond & Lee, 2011; McCloskey et al., 2009). Developmental resilience can be acquired through systemic and effective instruction from parents, peers, and educators. The goal of many SEL programs is to help develop the resilience children will need in order to cope with difficult situations (Whitcomb & Parisi-Damico, 2016).

The MYSELF Intervention also incorporates emotional intelligence (EI). Ronen Habib, in his TEDx Talk, "Emotional Intelligence: The Skills Our Students Deserve" (2015) shares the importance of developing adolescent mental health. Habib discussed that EI is "the ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, to label these emotions appropriately, and to use

emotional information to guide thinking, and ultimately behavior" (TED, 2015). EI is also highly influenced by SEL. EI includes self-awareness, motivation and passion, empathy, social skills, and self-regulation (Goleman, 1995). "The influencers of today's workforce – social media, technology, and entertainment companies (i.e., FANG: Facebook, Amazon, Netflix, and Google) are looking for employees that embrace effective intrapersonal and interpersonal traits of collaboration, creativity, focus, and perseverance. They even offer classes for their employees in order to teach these skills that are highly influenced by SEL and EI development. It is important that as educators we do our best to prepare our students for these endless opportunities, as well as the hardships that come with growing up (Johnson & Wiener, 2017). SEL programs educate students about both the good and the bad emotions and give students the tools utilize them in a positive and productive manner" (TED, 2015).

An essential component of the MYSELF Intervention includes the four main competencies that SEL strives to develop: (1) awareness of self and others; (2) positive attitudes and values; (3) responsible decision-making; and (4) social interaction skills (Payton, et al., 2000). *Awareness of self and others* focuses on identifying and regulation of feelings, developing a sense of self, and perspective-taking. *Positive attitudes and values* focus on personal and social responsibility and respect for others. *Responsible decision-making* helps develop skills for problem identification and solving, analysis of social norms, and adaptive and flexible goal setting. *Social interaction skills* include active listening, expressive interactive communication, skills for cooperation, negotiation, ability to refuse in an effective manner, and how to ask for help (Payton et al., 2000). Each of these skills begin with being able to identify and regulate one's own emotions, which is the core of many SEL programs for elementary school-aged children. SEL comes with extensive benefits that influence the student's academic

success, interpersonal skills, personal responsibility, and behaviors. Currently, there is no research-based downside or negative consequences that students experience when these skills are taught and supported (Merrell & Gueldner, 2010). It is however essential that SEL is taught in an organized and structured manner.

The MYSELF Intervention Design

The MYSELF Intervention was designed to align with the core social and emotional competencies within the CASEL SEL framework: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2017) as shown in Figure 4.1. (p. 59).

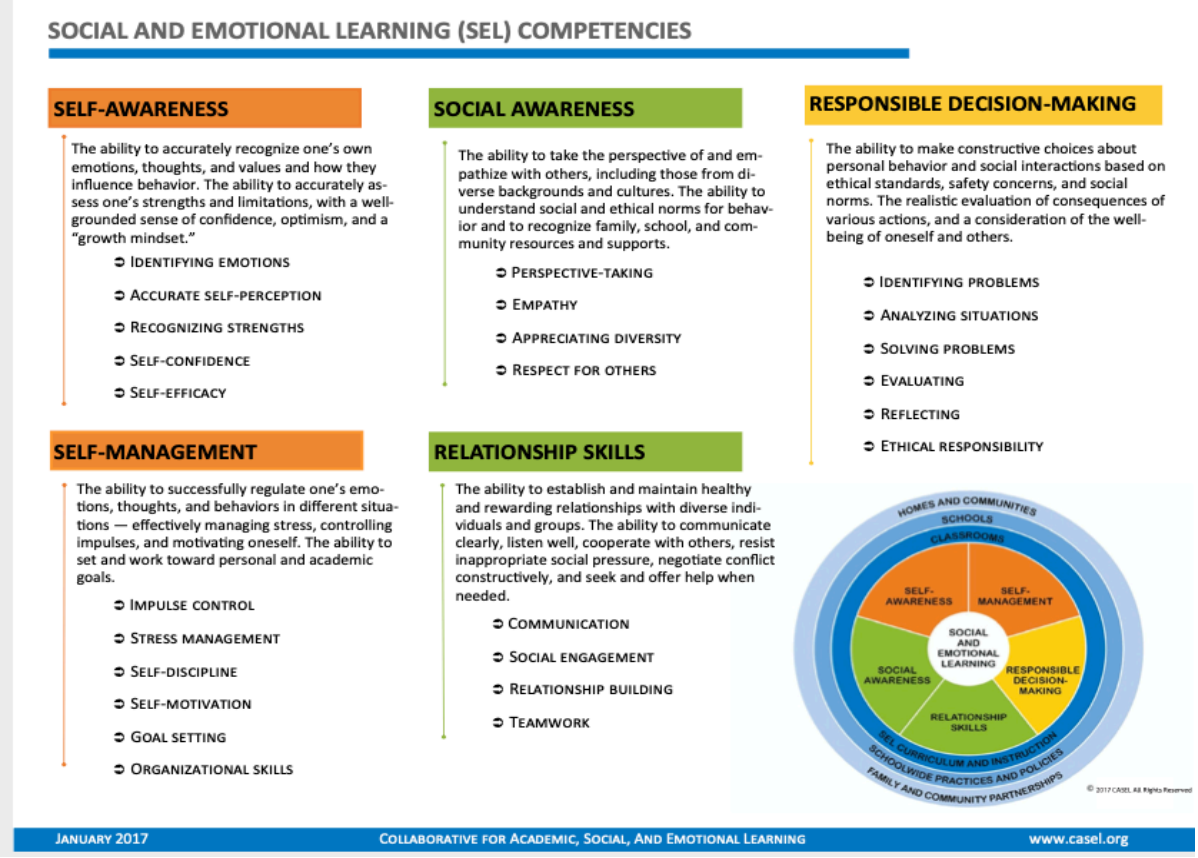

Figure 4. 1. CASEL Framework Wheel and Five Core Competencies, 2017. Reprinted from CASE.org

The MYSELF Intervention specifically addresses the interconnecting of what Daniel Goleman (a co-founder of CASEL) and Richard Davidson call "the next steps of attention and empathic concern" (2017, p. 281). It is a program that furthers the student's emotional and mindfulness competencies and is an example of what the authors envision as one of the "programs in focusing attention and kindness one day being part of the standard offerings for all children" (2017, p. 281). The MYSELF Intervention embodies the concepts of mindfulness within the core SEL competencies to shape student's self-development. This is achieved through student's individual personal development of self-awareness through active listening, social interaction with others, and establishing a community connection.

The MYSELF Intervention Lessons Design Framework

Mindfulness and compassion learning in a school-based mindfulness intervention have been shown to effectively address student's anxiety and depression, as well as to help them build coping skills and positive mindsets. The researcher focused on lessons that promote mindfulness and compassion in the intervention. Mindfulness activities based on developing attention, purpose, and presence (Kabat-Zinn, 1994) are inclusive of the operationalized definition of Bishop et al. (2004) that consists of the self-regulation of attention as to being maintained on the immediate experience, allowing for increased recognition of mental events in the present moment; and as an orientation toward experience in the present moment that is characterized by curiosity, openness, and acceptance.

The lessons were based on a set of social-emotional skills that enable children to focus attention on thoughts, feelings, or sensation-perceptions that arise moment to moment, and to do so in a cognitively non-elaborative, or emotionally non-reactive way. Compassion includes the perceptual and social-cognitive processes, empathy, and emotion regulation in the face of others'

distress, and prosocial motives, intentions and actions (Eisenberg, Van Schyndel, & Hofer, 2015; Kahle, Miller, Lopez, & Hasting, 2015; Taylor, Eisenberg, & Spinrad, 2015).

The lessons concentrated on teaching compassion as having four distinctive aspects as defined by Jinpa & Weiss (2013): (1) a cognitive aspect - an awareness of suffering, (2) an emotional aspect - an empathic concern in which one is moved by perceived suffering, (3) an intentional aspect - a wish to see that suffering alleviated, and (4) a behavioral aspect - a readiness to help to relieve suffering. The lessons underscored that basic compassion is seen as a capacity that is intrinsic to students but requires socialization and education to fully develop (Goetz, Keltner, & Simon-Thomas, 2010).

The first MYSELF lesson began with "Introduction to Mindfulness", focusing on the student learning objectives of (1) describing how mindfulness can help with their emotions, (2) identifying different emotions in discussion scenarios, (3) giving examples of what it means to be "present" and take notice of the details arounds them – becoming active listeners, and (4) exploring their thinking of their own self-concept of themselves. The overall goal was that students will understand that being mindful will help them manage their emotions both at school and at home. This lesson aligns with CASEL's social-emotional learning principles of self-awareness and self-management (CASEL, 2013; CASEL 2015; CASEL 2017; CASEL, 2019).

Unit One – Sample (Virtual) Lesson Three: Compassion part 1

The Educator used the following procedures in the teaching of mindfulness social-emotional lesson on Compassion. As these lessons were being taught through a Zoom platform the following materials should be gathered in preparation for this lesson: a chime singing bowl, a charged laptop, a CD playing relaxing music in the background.

The objective of this lesson was for the students to learn about their brain and how to handle negative thoughts or worries, so that they can learn how to show compassion to others and to themselves. The lesson began with the students being welcomed by the Educator as they enter the Zoom classroom. The Educator then say to the students, "We will begin our time together with some deep breathes inhaling through your nose and exhaling through your mouth as we begin our mindful moment. You may close your eyes or gently look down away from the screen, put your hands on your heart, belly or resting in your lap whichever feels most comfortable for you." During the mindful moment, the Educator repeated the phrase inhale through you nose, and exhale through your mouth. After 2-3 minutes the Educator rang the chime and asked the students to open their eyes and look at the screen when they were ready.

The Educator shared her screen and asked students to give a rose (something good that happened today) or a thorn (something not so good) this allowed the class to celebrate the joys or empathize the lows with their peer and permitted the Educator to check-in on the students. The Educator stated that today we are going to brainstorm ideas on what Compassion means. The students gave ideas and the Educator wrote it down on her Google slide. Moreover, the following slide asked what Compassion looked like (give an example). This slide took a little longer for the students to articulate, so the Educator gave some prompts such as "when you see someone carrying groceries and you hold the door open for them" or "when someone doesn't know how to do an assignment and even though you are busy, you still take time to explain it to them." After their brainstorming discussion, the Educator asked the students to think about a recent time that they have shown compassion to others or how others have shown compassion to them. The Educator allowed time for students to think and share verbally or in the chat. Then the Educator asked students how they felt when showing compassion or given compassion from

others. The Educator continued that showing kindness to others sometimes comes easier than showing compassion to yourself. That as humans we tend to judge ourselves harder than we do others. This happens when we are feeling frustrated, when we have an expectation of what things should be like, but it doesn't turn out the way we thought. We blame ourselves, have negative thoughts, and begin to have a "judging mind" that makes it hard for a person to move forward. The Educator gave an example to help the students understand. Example, "If your little sister or brother is learning how to count, but is frustrated and says, "I can't do this!", or "I'm too dumb to learn this stuff!", "What would you tell them?" students shared that they would point out all the things that their sibling could do, that they would tell them that it's hard, but they can do it, that they are not dumb and with practice it will get easier. The Educator stated that she noticed that students knew what their sibling was saying about themselves was untrue and everyone reassured their sibling with loving kind words to encourage them to keep going. When our "judging mind" begins to creep up within us, we need to remember that this is a negative thought and not the truth. We need to show ourselves the same Self-Compassion that we do for others. One way to do this is through positive affirmations.

At this time, the Educator did yoga exercises using positive affirmations as they moved through the poses inhaling and exhaling deep breathes. The Educator asked the students to stand up and make sure that they had enough room to move around safely. The Educator went through six yoga poses as follows: (1) mountain pose, (2) tree pose, (3) cherry picking pose, (4) cloud movement pose, (5) shake/wiggle pose, and (6) freeze pose. Throughout each of the poses the Educator would say positive affirmation "I am enough", "I am strong", "I do my best", and "I am loved".

As this lesson comes to an end, the Educator asked the students what they learned and closed the lesson with a mindful moment. As we began the lesson, we shall end the lesson with our mindful moment, so put your hand over you heart or on your lap, close your eyes or gently look down away from the screen. The Educator told the students to inhale through their nose and exhale out through their mouth as they took deep breathes. The Educator said as the students are doing their mindful breathing, "I am safe", "My mistakes show I am growing", "I am enough", and "I am loved." Be kind until we meet again tomorrow.

Unit One – Sample (Virtual) Lesson Four: Self-Compassion part 2

The Educator continued the lesson on self-compassion. The lesson began with the Educator welcoming the students into her Zoom classroom. A CD of relaxing music played in the background. The Educator began with reminding the students to get in a comfortable position with their hands in their lap or on their heart whichever they prefer and to close their eyes as they start their mindful moment of deep breathing. The Educator concluded the mindful moment with ringing of the chime. After the mindful moment, the Educator summarized what was learned about self-compassion the day before. The Educator shared her screen and asked students to give a rose (something good that happened today) or a thorn (something not so good) this allowed the class to celebrate the joys or empathize the lows with their peer and permitted the Educator to check-in on the students. Next, the Educator explained that today we will learn how yoga laughter will help us with self-compassion. When we are having a hard day, it is difficult to be kind to ourselves, but when we use laughter, it moves our diaphragm up and down and floods our body with fresh oxygen. Laughter releases endorphins from your brain cells

which makes you feel good and since the body doesn't know the difference between a real laughter and purposeful laughter, we don't need a reason to laugh.

The Educator invited the class to stand up and to check their surrounding so that they are able to move around safely for our yoga exercises. This yoga exercise was inspired by Zoom Laughter Yoga Session with Celeste Greene https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tVZtQAjQJP8. The first thing the Educator asked the students to do is to swing their arms and to smile at their neighbor. The more eye contact we make the funnier and real your laughter becomes. We will get the same health benefits if it a real laugh or not as our body doesn't know the difference. The Educator proceeds to say that as they swing the arms up to take a deep breath and as they bring their arms down to laugh. We will do this ten times. Next the Educator will have the students do a playful clapping exercise. When clapping to the left, Educator chants HEHEHEHE, and when clapping to the right, Educator chants HAHAHAHA. Then she invites the students to do same and to try to make eye contact (which is a little hard through Zoom) as they laugh. After ten times the Educator asks the students swing their arms up again and take a deep breath and to release their laughter out. Next, the Educator asked the students to go back to their seats and asks how they feel. Moreover, the Educator asked the students if they have seen any funny Tik Tok videos. Of course, this topic has energized the group with sharing, laughing, and keeping them engaged. If time permits share one of the videos (if appropriate) to do with the class. In this lesson the Educator had extra time, so played on her screen the baby shark video and students danced along and laughed as they were doing it. Lastly, the Educator reminded the students that they already have the foundation to help themselves feel better because they know how to take a deep breath and laugh (and now we learned that you don't need a reason to laugh because your body can't tell the difference). The Educator asked the students how they can

practice self-compassion and how does yoga laughter help them. The Educator shared with the class that as you practice self-compassion you will begin to notice your "judging mind" or critical thoughts which are different from your feelings. If you are angry or upset acknowledge it and breath. It's like the movie "Inside Out" we need to acknowledge all our feelings to be whole. However, when our thoughts are negative like "I am dumb" or "I'll never learn how to…" then that is when you practice your positive affirmations or yoga laughter to help you turn off that negative self-talk and move on.

The lesson concluded with a mindful moment. The Educator asked students to sit up straight, find a comfortable position and take some deep breathes. As we inhaled through our nose and exhale through our mouth say, "I am joyful", "I am loved", "I am strong", and "I am enough." "Until we meet again next week. Be kind."

Unit One – Sample (Virtual) Lesson Five: Mindful Art – Handprint Mandala

The Educator used the following procedures in the teaching of mindfulness social-emotional lesson on Mindful Art. As these lessons were taught through a Zoom platform the following materials should be gathered in preparation for this lesson: a chime singing bowl, a charged laptop, white paper, scissors, colored pencils, and a CD playing relaxing music in the background.

The Educator welcomed the students to Zoom class and reminded them that today we will be doing mindful art so to make sure that they have their colored pencils and white paper before we start our meeting. Once most students are settled and have their materials the Educator begins the session with a 2-3 minute mindful moment. The Educator asked the students to gently look down or close their eyes, sit up straight in the chair, and rest your hands

on your heart, belly, or lap whichever feels comfortable to them. During the mindful moment the Educator said to the students to inhale through their nose and exhale through their mouth until the Educator rang the singing bowl.

The Educator asked the students to open their eyes when they are ready and to take their white piece of paper out. The Educator shared her screen and asked students to give a rose (something good that happened today) or a thorn (something not so good) this allowed the class to celebrate the joys or empathize the lows with their peer and permitted the Educator to check-in on the students. The Educator told and modeled for the students how to fold the white paper…the wide way…not the long way…the fat way… "hamburger style". Next, the Educator directed the students to cut the half piece of paper on the fold and then to trace their hand on both half sheets. The Educator also modeled the steps as she screenshares the process to the class. Next, the Educator asked the kids to think of a positive word to write in the middle of their handprint that they would like to be mindful of throughout the day. An example of this is the word "peace, happy, ease, positive, joyful, kind, strong, etc." then give some quiet time for the students to come up with their own word or use one of the words that the Educator shared and to circle their word once they have picked one. The students shared their special word and why they chose it, and the Educator shared her special word and why the Educator chose it.

Secondly the Educator screenshared so that the students can see her Google slide with pictures of mandala art. Educator asked the students if they have ever seen pictures like this before? Art helps mind stay focus to the present and one of the reasons we use mandala art in mindfulness is that it allows you express to yourself through the strokes you use. The strokes students could use can be wiggle lines, curly looped lines, straight lines or zigzag lines and there is no wrong way to do it.

Next, the Educator stopped sharing her Google slide and models mandala art on her handprint paper using the different strokes. Then the Educator asked the students to join in when they are ready to do their handprint art. During this time the students quietly worked and on occasion the Educator said, “When I am doing a zigzag line I inhale when I get to the top and exhale when I come back down and I like to do this for curly looped lines too.”, “When I am doing art my body feels more relaxed” or “my brain feels rested.” After 10 mins. asked the students to wrap up what they are doing, so that they could do the next step and we can return and finish afterwards. The Educator had the students write around their handprint different fill in the blank phrases with the word that they had chosen for them to say later throughout their day. The phrases the students write down are as follows: I am in _____., I am filled with _____., I am at _____ with myself., and I can give _____ to others.

Once the students finished writing their fill in the blank phrases, they could go back and do the art and if they are done, they can begin to color their handprint. As the groups came to a close, like always the lesson concludes with a mindful moment. The Educator asked students to sit up straight, find a comfortable position and take some deep breathes. As we inhaled through our nose and exhaled through our mouth say, “I am joyful”, “I am loved”, “I am strong”, and “I am enough.” “Until we meet again next week. Be kind.”

Unit Two – Sample (Virtual) Lesson One: Perspective Taking

The Educator used the following procedures in the teaching of mindfulness social-emotional lesson on Perspective Taking. As these lessons were being taught through a Zoom platform the following materials should be gathered in preparation for this lesson: a chime singing bowl, a charged laptop, a CD playing relaxing music in the background. Also, prior to

this lesson the Educator has made some scenarios that have occurred during class time that has caused frustration with classroom management. This enhanced the objective of perspective taking by keeping it pertinent to the students' real life as well as giving them an opportunity to see the scenario from different perspective.

The Educator began the lesson with welcoming the students into her Zoom classroom. Once everyone has entered the Educator rings her chime to start their mindful moment. The Educator began with asking the students to get in a comfortable sitting position, close their eyes or gently look down away from the screen, and to place their hands on their heart, belly or lap while they take some deep breaths. Mindful Moment lasts for approximately 2-3 minutes and once time is completed the Educator rings the singing bowl. The Educator shared her screen and asked students to give a rose (something good that happened today) or a thorn (something not so good) this allowed the class to celebrate the joys or empathize the lows with their peer and permitted the Educator to check-in on the students.

The Educator shared her screen and asked students to give a rose (something good that happened today) or a thorn (something not so good) this allowed the class to celebrate the joys or empathize the lows with their peer and permitted the Educator to check-in on the students.

The Educator began the conversation with today we are going to talk about Perspective Taking. Can anyone share what Perspective Taking means? Once some students have shared the Educator shared that Perspective Taking is being able to understand or feel the other person's viewpoint. We can do this by taking a mindful pause to think if we were in that situation or scenario how would we feel? Today we are going to look at some scenarios and you will tell me how the person may be feeling?

Scenario #1: You got up early to make yourself breakfast, but you forgot your spoon, so you went back to the kitchen to get one. In the meantime, your Mom just finished doing the laundry and placed it down on the table in your room not seeing that you left your bowl of cereal, so everything spilled over the clean clothes. How do you feel? How do you think Mom feels?

Scenario #2: Your brother is so excited to show you a picture that he drew, but on his way towards you steps on your cell phone and the screen cracks. How do you feel? How do you think your brother feels?

Scenario #3: Your teacher shares the schedule for the week in Google Classroom. Paul messages the teacher that he doesn't know where he needs to be at 10am. How do you think the teacher feels? How about Paul?

Scenario #4: Your science teacher says that tomorrow all the science teachers have a training, so you will need to go to your Art teacher instead during science time. The new posted schedule for tomorrow is in Google Classroom, so you don't forget. A few students go to science instead of art and message the teacher where is everybody? How do you think the student's feel? How do you think the Teacher feels?

In the scenarios we just discussed could any of the characters have used a mindful pause to stop and think? Today we took some time to be in other characters shoes and we understand that everyone has their own viewpoint or way of seeing the same situation. Taking a moment to understand another person's viewpoint helps us to communicate even when we don't agree.

After their discussion, the Educator asked the students that they are going to be doing their yoga exercises, so to make sure that they have room to move around safely. The Educator asked the students to remember to take deep breaths as they went through yoga poses as follows:

(1) neck stretches, (2) shoulder rolls, (3) wrist stretches, (4) mountain, (5) sunrise/sunset, and (6) tree pose. The Educator does about 3-5 sets of each of the yoga poses depending on time.

Lastly, the Educator asked the students to return back to their seats as we are coming to the end of our time. The Educator summarized what they learned today about Empathy and concludes the lesson with a mindful moment. The Educator asked students to close their eyes or gently look down away from the screen, sit up straight, and place their hands on their heart or on their lap whichever feels most comfortable to them. The Educator said inhale through your nose and give out a sigh as you exhale through your mouth. As we inhaled through our nose and exhale through our mouth say, "I am joyful", "I am loved", "I am strong", and "I am enough." "Until we meet again next week. Be kind."

Unit Two – Sample (Virtual) Lesson Two: Mindful Drinking

The Educator used the following procedures in the teaching of mindfulness social-emotional lesson on Mindful Drinking. The objective of this lesson is to help students with paying attention/focus through sensory. As these lessons are being taught through a Zoom platform the following materials should be gathered in preparation for this lesson: a chime singing bowl, a charged laptop, a CD playing relaxing music in the background, and something to drink and preferably not water. The Educator welcomed the students into her Zoom classroom and reminds them to bring something to drink, like orange juice, hot chocolate, shake, fruit juice or even a soda, if they don't have anything else. Once everyone is back with their drink the Educator began the session with a mindful moment. The Educator asked the students to sit up straight, close their eyes or look gently down away from the screen, and put their hands in a comfortable position for them. The Educator rang the chime to begin the mindful moment

which will last for about 2-3 minutes. The ringing of the bowl let the students know that we are done with our mindful moment and are ready to transition with our lesson of Mindful Drinking.

The Educator began the lesson by sharing that although we all know how to drink, we often do this automatically or we are rushing and not taking the time to pay attention, so today we will learn how to drink mindfully. The Educator did a round robin of questions beginning with asking everyone what they brought to drink. Then the Educator told everyone to touch their cup. Does it feel warm? Cold? Hot? and asked them to smell their drink and describe the smell to us. The Educator encouraged them to close their eyes, if that helped them concentrate. Furthermore, the Educator asked the students to notice the color of their drink and just share what they noticed with the group verbally or in the chat. Finally, as they tasted their drink to pay attention of how it feels as you swallow your drink and how it feels to your body.

The Educator allowed time for kids to enjoy their drink slowly and allow students to talk freely in regard to mindful drinking. The Educator did some gentle sit stretches for yoga time as follows: (1) neck stretches, (2) shoulder rolls, and (3) wrist movement.

The Educator finished the lesson with reminding the students that we sometimes go about our day in autopilot that we forget to take the time to enjoy those little things that we do so automatically. When we take the time to pause and slow down, we can truly pay attention to what is going on around us.

The Educator allowed students to put aside their drinks if they did not finish, so that we can close our meeting with a mindful moment. The Educator asked the students to stand up (as we have been sitting for a while), closed their eyes or gently look down away from the screen, and to put their hands on their belly, heart or by their side whichever feels comfortable to them before the Educator rang the chime. For about 2-3 minutes the Educator will say to the students

to inhale through their nose and exhale through their mouth and repeat the positive affirmations, “I am beautiful”, “I am loved”, “I am strong”, “I am safe”, and “I am enough.” The lesson ends with the Educator ringing the chime.

Unit Two – Sample (Virtual) Lesson Three: Mindful Eating

The Educator used the following procedures in the teaching of mindfulness social-emotional lesson on Mindful Eating. The objective of this lesson is to help students with paying attention/focus through sensory. As these lessons are being taught through a Zoom platform the following materials should be gathered in preparation for this lesson: a chime singing bowl, a charged laptop, a CD playing relaxing music in the background, and something to eat. The Educator welcomed the students into her Zoom classroom and reminded them to bring something to eat, preferably something that they can feel/hold like a sandwich. This lesson does not need to follow the mindful drinking and can be repeated at different times of the year.

The Educator allowed time for students who did not bring something to eat to go get it as she welcomes the students into her Zoom classroom. Once everyone has pretty much arrived the Educator began the meeting with a mindful moment. The Educator told the students to get in a comfortable position, close your eyes or rest them gently down away from the screen, and their hands can be on their belly, heart or in their lap whatever feels comfortable for them. The mindful moment lasted for about 2-3 minutes, during which time the Educator leads the students to inhale through their nose and to exhale through their mouth, it ended when the Educator rang the chime.

The Educator began the mindful eating lesson by asking the students what they brought today to eat. After students have shared, the Educator asked the students to smell and touch their

food, so that they can describe their food to us. The Educator helps students to articulate what it their food could feel like with words such as moist, soft, sticky, hard, dry, and juicy. The Educator then proceeded to have the students take a bit of their food and experience how it feels to chew it and how it goes down as the swallow their food. The Educator encouraged them to take another bit slowly and to close their eyes if they would like to focus more on the sensation mindfully eating. The Educator asked how does the food feel in their mouth compared to when they were holding it? Does it feel the same? Different? Next, the Educator allowed students to share how they felt with the mindful eating experience. Lastly, the Educator gave students time eat and talk freely before doing some yoga sit stretches: (1) neck stretches, (2) shoulder rolls, and (3) wrist movements.

The Educator then asked the students if they haven't finished eating, to put it aside so that they can close their meeting with a mindful moment. The Educator told the students to stand up (as we have been sitting a while), close their eyes or gently look down away from the screen, and to put the hands by their side, on their belly or on their heart whichever feels comfortable to them. During the mindful moment the Educator said to inhale through their nose and exhale through their mouth and to repeat the positive affirmations, "I am kind", "I am loved,", "I am learning", and "I am safe."

Unit One – Sample (In-Person) Lesson One: Introduction to Mindfulness

The following materials should be gathered in preparation for the face-to-face lesson: 38 chairs set up in a circle, a chime singing bowl, chart paper, nerf-ball, YouTube Video, *Why Do We Lose Control of Our Emotions?*, the MYSELF *Self-Concept Worksheet* for each student

participant, the MYSELF *Reflection Journal* for each student participant, a CD of relaxing music to be played during students' journal writing quiet time.

As an introduction before starting the lesson (ten minutes), the Educator charted the expectations of students during the breathing circle time, so that all students will know and understand the norms of how to act responsibly. The students will then be asked, "What does it mean to be present?" After the students share their answers, the Educator explained that today we are going to focus on the present moment, that sometimes our brain can be so busy thinking of the past or the future that we do not pay attention to what is happening right now, and that the present is a gift. The Educator then shared with the students that she will be using a chime to help them be mindful of when they are focused on the present moment, and it will also anchor them when their mind becomes distracted.

In beginning the lesson (three to five minutes) using belly breathing, the Educator asked the students to sit up tall with their feet flat on the floor, and place one hand on their lap and one hand on their belly, with their eyes closed for extra focus. Students were then asked to take a deep breath in through their nose, and to exhale though their mouth. They were reminded to continue breathing until they hear the chime ring. The students were then asked to share what they heard, how focused or distracted they were, and how they felt.

Next, for the circle time activity (ten minutes), the Educator explained that mindfulness not only helps our brain focus on what is happening in the present, but also helps us with managing our emotions. The Educator then explained that today we will play an emotion game. The students will be given a prompt and then passed the nerf-ball. The student who catches it will answer the prompt. When the Educator says, "stop and listen", the student who is holding the ball needs to wait to hear what the new prompt will be before answering. The game is over

when every student has had one turn. The prompts that the Educator used during this activity include: "One way I like to help others is…, Something I'm really good at…, I feel brave when…, I feel confident when…, The best compliment I've ever received is…, One thing that makes me special is…, How I can tell if someone is feeling worried is…, How I can tell if someone is really excited is."

The students were then given time (fifteen minutes) to write and reflect on their activity and experience. The Educator then asked the students to write in their MYSELF *Reflection Journals* using the prompt, "What did you learn about today?" The students also completed the MYSELF *Self-Concept Worksheet*. During this time, a CD of relaxing music played.

Completing the lesson, the students watched the YouTube video, *"Why Do We Lose Control of Our Emotions?"* sharing their thoughts after viewing. To promote a school-to-home connection, each student left the lesson with the *All About Me Worksheet.*

Unit One – Sample (In-Person) Lesson Two: The Active Listening Lesson

The Educator used the following procedures in the teaching of the mindfulness social-emotional lesson on active listening. The following materials were gathered in preparation for this lesson: 38 chairs set up in a circle, a chime singing bowl, MindUp chart of the brain, and YouTube video, *Listening with Your Whole Body* (Everyday Speech, 2019). This lesson was derived from the *MindUp* Curriculum (The Hawn Foundation, 2011). This lesson meets the social-emotional standard of using communication and social skills to interact effectively with others (CASEL, 2017; CASEL, 2019).

The objective of this lesson will be for the students to learn about their brain and how to handle their emotions using a calming strategy of deep breathing. The lesson began with the students being welcomed into the classroom and as they enter the Educator will greet each of them with a handshake. The Educator said to the students, "Today we are going to learn about our brain and how it helps us learn". To demonstrate, the students pretended that their wrist is their brain stem, their thumb folded into their palm is the limbic system, and their four fingers represent the prefrontal cortex. The Educator then used the model of her hand and fist to explain to the students how the brain functions: "The wrist is like the brain stem that helps with breathing, eating and sleeping. The limbic system (the folded thumb) is where your emotions (anger, fear, sad, happy) are and it also keeps you safe (flight, fight, or freeze). The prefrontal cortex (the folded fingers over the thumb) is your smart part – where your reasoning is. This is the part that helps you with making decisions, problem-solving, and keeping your emotions in check. Sometimes when you have too much of an UPSET of an emotion, your prefrontal cortex is not able to keep it down, and that is when you feel an outburst or a tantrum, and it is called flipping your lid. To help us when we have those BIG emotions, today we are going to learn about focusing on how our breathing can help calm us down."

The Educator then lead the students through a guided practice. The Educator asked the students to put their hand on their lap, heart, or stomach whichever feels more comfortable to them and to close their eyes. The entire class focused on their breathing for one minute. The Educator then asked the class, "What did you hear?" The students then shared their responses, which may include: they hear themselves breathing, others breathing, giggling, or they heard the ticking of the classroom wall clock. The Educator then shared what she noticed during the one-minute breathing exercise, which may include that at the beginning of the

exercise it was still noisy, but as the minute was coming to an end, the class was quieting down. After sharing, the students practiced the exercise one more time, taking deep breaths, and this time, all of the students heard the ticking of the classroom wall clock.

The Educator then showed students the social skill video, "Listening with Your Whole Body". After viewing the video, the students discussed the scenario presented on active listening.

In conclusion and to check for understanding, the Educator asked the students to turn to their neighbor and share with them what they learned today. Some possible learning points may include: about being present, taking deep breaths to calm down, and using their whole body to listen.

Unit One – Sample (In-Person) Lesson Three: The Feelings Lesson

The Educator used the following procedures in the teaching of the social-emotional lesson on feelings. This lesson will meet the social-emotional standard of helping students access that place inside full of feelings, emotions, and thoughts (CASEL, 2017; CASEL 2019).

The objectives of this lesson will be for the students to be able to practice observing their feelings and be able to use mindful drawing to express their feelings. The following materials were gathered in preparation for the lesson: a chime, hand cymbal, or singing bowl with a sustained tone to be used during mindfulness lessons and routines; chart paper; a class set of the *Mindfulness: A Home Inside Worksheet*; and a set of *Mindfulness: Guide to Feeling Cards*. The lesson began with the Educator asking the students to think about turtles. Some prompting questions that the Educator asked included: "What do you think about turtles? How do they move? What do they have on their back?" The students' answers included: "They move slowly.

They have a shell on their back that is like a home. They can always go into their shell for quiet or protection." The Educator then said to the students, "Today you are going to learn about mindfulness from turtles. The students were then asked to predict why and how turtles can teach about mindfulness, with the Educator writing down their responses on the chart paper. Expanding on the student predictions, the Educator distributed and discussed the *Mindfulness: A Home Inside Worksheet*, which the students will complete. Next, the Educator explained and modeled to the students that first they will move like turtles and then curl into their shells like turtles. The students then moved slowly, mindfully like turtles around the room. When they heard the chime, the Educator asked them to curl into their shell in stillness for a short time. The Educator then asked the students what they are thinking or feelingas they are curled into their shell. After hearing several student responses, the Educator will explain: "Mindfulness can be a time when we go within, inside our shell, and observe our thoughts, feelings, and emotions. We all have our own home of feelings, inside." The Educator then explained to the students that they will be repeating the process several times: "Each time I ring the chime, you are going to curl in and determine your thoughts, feelings, or emotions that you may be experiencing." To help the students verbalize their experiences, the Educator may use prompts that may include: "What are your feelings? What are some examples of feelings? What emotions do you experience?" After the students completed this several times (three or four times), the Educator will have them sit in a circle, asking them to verbally share what they observed, using the prompt: "What thoughts, feelings, or emotions did you sense?" The Educator listed their responses on the chart paper. Next, the Educator conducted a guided practice with the students using the feelings and emotions they shared to draw their own shell, mindfully coloring each part of the shell with different feelings together, and then have a chance

to finish individually. The Educator modeled using the *Mindfulness: A Home Inside Worksheet*, how the students will color in one section at a time to express a certain feeling. After receiving their worksheet, each student chose which color they would like to use to express different feelings and emotions. The Educator asked the students to focus on drawing mindfully – one section at a time, slowly and carefully. Next, using the *Mindfulness: Guide to Feelings Cards*, the Educator picked a feeling and asked the students to pick one part of their shell to draw in, and the color they would like to represent that feeling. After allowing several minutes for the students to color (five to seven minutes), the Educator called on a student to choose a new feeling, and then ask the students to choose a new section and color. The students repeated this process until half of the turtle shells are colored in. The students then had independent working time, during which they can finish their shells on their own. The Educator explained that the students should choose a new feeling for each section, with a color to go with it. Next, the Educator encouraged the students to write words or short poems to correspond with their feelings either inside the shell section or on the back of their worksheet. While the students completed their shell, the Educator circulated around the room and asked individual students to explain their drawing choices, and asked "Why did you choose this color? Which emotion is this section showing? "Finally, in closing, the Educator had the students return to the circle with their pictures. The students held up their pictures and looked around at each other's pictures. The Educator asked the students to share any reflections that they have about this exercise. To elicit responses, the Educator used these prompts: "What did you notice during the turtle movement and stillness, or while drawing? Did you discover any new feelings? What was it like to connect colors to feelings and emotions? Looking around at your classmates' pictures, how are they the

same and how are they different?" The Educator then asked the students if they can be used as a display on a class "feelings" wall in the Mindfulness Room to reference in the future.

Table 1. 1

MYSELF Intervention

Unit One: Mindfulness and Self Awareness & Management	Unit Two: Mindfulness and Social Awareness	Unit Three: Mindfulness and Relationship Skills
Lesson 1: Introduction to Mindfulness & Emotions	Lesson 1: Empathy	Lesson 1: Goal Setting
Lesson 2: The Feeling Lesson	Lesson 2: Perspective Taking	Lesson 2: Active Listening
Lesson 3: Resilience/Growth Mindset	Lesson 3: Gratitude	Lesson 3: How to Agree to Disagree
Lesson 4: Self-Compassion	Lesson 4: Loving Kindness	

A Pre-Research Study PowerPoint Conceptualization

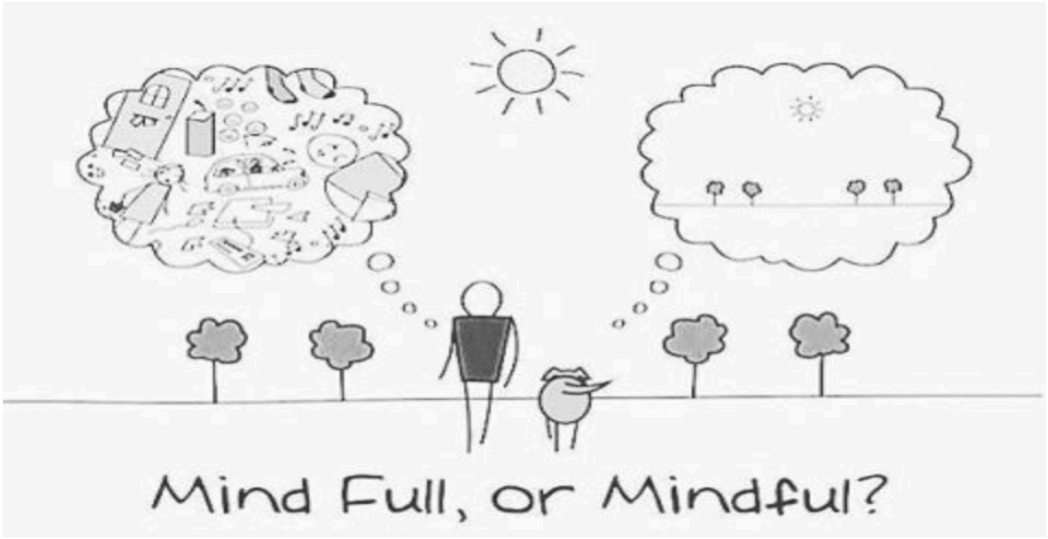

Figure 5. 1. Mind Full, or Mindful?

To conceptualize this research study prior to its implementation, the researcher designed a PowerPoint presentation, "Mindfulness and Social-Emotional Learning: The Missing Piece in Reaching the Whole Child", that provides an overview of the importance in designing a social-emotional and mindfulness intervention program. The following is the presentation's transcript. What is mindfulness? Mindfulness is defined as "paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in a particular way, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally" (Kabat-Zinn, 2012, p. 1). This leads to an important distinction that needs to be made between being a person who is "mindful" or a person who has a "mindfull". A *mindful* person is focused, centered, and attentive. A *mindfull* person is filled things that are affecting their lives at all times. It can lead to scattered, impulsive, unprocessed thinking that can lead to unintended consequences of action. Your body is always present (it is where you are all the time), is your mind? There are only three states of mind that you can be in: past, present, or future. While you can always be

mentally aware of what has happened to you in the past and be thinking about what may happen to you in the future, operating without mindfulness promotes a stimulus-response reaction. Operating within mindfulness adds the awareness of personal attention in the present moment and promotes a stimulus-mindfulness-response reaction.

This leads to how a person benefits from mindfulness with improvements in self-regulation, social problem solving, emotional awareness, cognitive abilities (executive function), and improved academics. As a result of these improvements, a person reduces impulsive behavior, lowers stress, reduces anxiety and depression, and insomnia symptoms.

The positive benefits of mindfulness can lead to powerful impacts within children's academic achievement. In a mindfulness and test-taking study, Mrazek, Franklin, Phillips, Baird, and Schooler (2013) found that with students at the University of California, Santa Barbara, there was a sixteen-percentile point boost on Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) with those who received a mindfulness exercise prior to taking the test. In another study on mindfulness and children, a Mindful Schools research study with the University of California, Davis and the Oakland Unified School District (2010-2012), found significant increases in the behavioral improvement within six weeks of the children who received a mindfulness-based intervention that included paying attention, calming and self-control, self-care and participation, and showing care for others.

Neuropsychologist Donald Hebb stated that "neurons that fire together wire together" (1949). In her ground-breaking video, neuroscientist Sara Lazar discusses how meditation can reshape our brains (TEDx Talk, Cambridge, 2011). Let's watch together and then discuss in your groups. One of the important aspects in developing mindfulness in children (and for adults) is breathing, a calming breathing that helps focus and center the child in the present

moment. Here are five calming breathing exercises that can be used with students on a daily basis. First, the *shark fin*. While sitting, close your eyes. Place your thumbs on your forehead with your fingers pointing to the sky like a shark fin. Move your hand slowly down from the forehead to your chest, keeping these s-words in mind: sit straight, still, silent, soft breathing, and shut eyes. Next, breathe in and out a few more times. Now, open your eyes and notice how you feel. Second, the *hand trace*. Sit quietly and take a few slow, deep breaths. Stretch out your fingers on one hand. With your other hand, slowly trace around your thumb. Breathe in as you trace up one side of the thumb and breathe out as you trace down the other side. Do the same for the other four fingers, tracing up and breathing in, tracing down and breathing out. Switch hands and do it again. This time, pause slightly at the top and bottom of each finger. Now, think about which method you prefer today: with or without any pause. Third, the *figure eight*. Trace the figure eight with your eyes. Trace up and over the top left, down the left side, along the bottom and up through the center again. Then trace the right side up, and over the top right, down the right side, along the bottom and up again through the center. Notice how your eyes feel. Now, trace the left side again, then right, left, right, left. Trace the left side counterclockwise and trace the right side clockwise. Do not stop in the center while tracing. Keep your eyes moving, continually tracing through the center and around the eight, left and right. Relax, blink, and breathe abdominally. Move your eyes, tracing around the eight as if watching a small train moving along the figure eight. Trace at a comfortable speed, not extremely slow, but not fast. Movement and relaxation is the goal. Drawing the figure eight activates and integrates the left and right brain hemispheres, gets the eyes moving, shifting, and relaxes and brings full mobility to the neck. Fourth, is *mountain climbing*. Put up one hand, palm facing out and fingers spread apart. Place the index finger of your other hand at the base of your thumb and breathe in while

you move your finger up one side of your thumb. Move your finger down the other side of your thumb and breathe out. Do the same thing with the remaining four fingers and take deep breaths in and out as you move your finger. After you've reached the second side of your pinky finger, you'll have done five complete deep breaths. Your students can do this in pairs. Have them spread their hand out and use your finger to trace their hand and do deep breaths. Or you can do the opposite: spread your hand out and have them use their finger and trace yours. The students can do deep breaths together. Fifth, is the *square technique*. Start at the bottom right of the square. Breathe in for four counts as you trace the first side of the square. Hold your breath for four counts as you trace the second side of the square. Breathe out for four counts as you trace the third side of the square. Next, hold your breath for four counts as you trace the final side of the square. You have just completed one deep breath!

Dr. Becky Bailey, in her book, *Conscious Discipline*™ (2015), developed four calming breathing exercises that can be used with students on a daily basis. First, there is the *balloon*, where you place your hands on the top of your head and interface your fingers. Breathe in through your nose as you raise your arms, inflating an imaginary balloon. Release the air in the balloon by pursing your lips, exhaling slowly, lowering your arms, and making a "pbpbpbpb" sound. Next, there is the *S.T.A.R. – Smile, Take a deep breath, And Relax*. This is belly breathing, where the tummy goes out when the air goes in, and the tummy in when the air goes out. This also helps children learn to exhale slower than they inhale. This is followed by the *pretzel*. This is done by standing up and crossing your ankles. Now, cross your right wrist over left, turning your hands so your thumbs are facing the floor, putting your palms together and interfacing your fingers. Bend your elbows out and gently turn your hands down toward your body until they rest on the center of your chest. Now, put your tongue on the roof of your

mouth. Relax and breathe. Finally, there is the *drain*. Extending your arms out, pretend that your arms are faucets. Now, tighten your arm, shoulder, and face muscles. Exhale slowly, making a "sssshhh" sound and release all your muscles, draining out all of the stress. The most important aspect of the teacher-student interaction is the relationship between the teacher and the student. "It is teachers who have created positive teacher student relationships that are more likely to have the above average effects on student achievement" (Hattie, 2009, p. 126). Hatte and Zierer (2017) developed a Barometer of Influence that reads from left to right, "reverse effects", "developmental effects", "teacher effects", and "zone of desired effects." Hattie and Zierer (2017) showed that the following teacher skills developed stronger relationships: listening skills, empathy, mutual respect, caring, and positive regard for the students.

Summary

This chapter presented a discussion of the development, design, and framework of the researcher's Mindfulness Yoga Social Emotional Learning Focus (MYSELF) Intervention. It included a description of mindfulness and compassion lessons that are taught to help children focus their attention on their thoughts and feelings.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used in this research study. The chapter begins with an overview of the research design. Then a description of the setting and participants. Next, a discussion of the sampling procedures, instrumentation, and measures. Also in this chapter is a consideration of the reliability and validity of this research study. Next, the data collection and data analysis are addressed by the researcher. This is followed by presenting the ethical issues. Finally, this chapter discusses the limitations of the instruments.

Research Design

Pre-Research Study Introductory Session

During the summer, the researcher worked at various Middle Schools for summer school and realized that transitioning from an Elementary School site, where you have one teacher all day, and entering a middle school campus can be daunting for fifth-grade students. They are getting acquainted with the different subject periods & teachers, familiarizing themselves with the campus and the social peer interactions, and at the same time going through hormonal adolescent changes. The researcher noticed that students lacked the necessary mindfulness social-emotional tools to support themselves through their emotional regulation during this stage of their development.

Moreover, as students transitioned into middle school, they wanted to be seen as more independent. Hence, peers/friends became the focus and an essential part of their lives than parents/family.

Having a primary background, the researcher knew that Elementary students in the primary grades received more SEL curriculum than in the upper grades. Mostly because social

skills are one of the foundational skills primary teachers teach. As students get older, there is a shift that focus on less instruction on social skills and more teaching on content areas. Seeing a need in this area, the researcher felt that her expertise would better serve in supporting fifth-graders as they transition into middle school. Thus, the researcher decided to begin her research study at her elementary school site because of her fifth-grade teachers' acquaintance. She had worked with them before on different school committees.

Pilot Study Overview

The researcher began a pilot study before beginning her research study. This pilot study was conducted face-to-face before the COVID-19 pandemic had reached the United States. During this time, the researcher wanted to get familiar with the overall schedule, timeframe, and how the Social Emotional Learning Focus intervention (it was not called MYSELF yet) would work with the students in fifth-grade. After she finished teaching and when all her Transitional Kindergarten (TK) students had gone home, the researcher determined that she would use her prep time to do the intervention in the fifth-grade teacher's classrooms. During that school year, there were three fifth-grade teachers, and the original plan was for the researcher to go to each of the teacher's classrooms for half an hour on the same day. However, this became overwhelming for the researcher and the teachers because sometimes the class discussions would carry over, and the researcher would not get to the next class in time, so the teachers didn't know how much time to wait or to move on to the next subject. Thus, the researcher gave each teacher a day in the afternoon, and the time was adjusted to 45 minutes to an hour, depending on the lesson. This change helped in the intervention design. The intervention was designed with the ability that the structure was fluid so that some weeks the researcher would go into the teacher's classroom and other weeks the students would come into her classroom. This allowed the researcher to create a

peaceful mindfulness environment with serene music playing in the background, chairs in a circle formation, and dim lights when they entered her room. When the researcher taught in the student's classroom, the intervention began with mindfulness breathing and lessons from social-emotional learning literature books on empathy, kindness, compassion, etc., with discussion to follow afterward. When the students met in the researcher's classroom, the researcher began with a mindfulness breathing exercise and lessons with social-emotional scenarios or team-building listening activities with discussions to follow. No matter which room they were in, all interventions ended with a mindfulness breathing exercise before the students continued their next subject. The researcher learned from conducting this pilot study that the upper-grade classrooms were too small for the large group of students to conduct circle discussions or team building activities, which were among the favorite activities that students appreciated doing. Thus, the researcher offered to redo one of the empty classrooms so that all teachers could be provided a space to teach mindfulness and social-emotional learning (SEL) activities for their students. The pilot ended when the researcher had a personal family crisis and had to take some time off. Then COVID-19 pandemic ultimately interrupted the school year, and everyone had to teach from home (see Appendix J).

COVID-19 was a global pandemic that took longer than anyone could have imagined. Educators found themselves thrust into learning a new technologic platform, creating and teaching their lessons online, and supporting their students virtually entirely. This heightened teacher stress and student uncertainty of when they would return to normal-to return to school again. During this time, the researcher realized that she could no longer use the pilot study lessons and would have to create everything from scratch as we were not returning to face-to-face instruction. Moreover, seeing a need for students to feel connected to each other as a school

community, the researcher offered to teach after her Zoom class a schoolwide Mindfulness Monday. Coincidently, offering the Mindfulness Monday sessions helped the researcher to create the MYSELF intervention.

MYSELF Implementation

The researcher designed the MYSELF intervention after the COVID-19 pandemic. Since mindfulness was a prominent component of the intervention, the researcher was already gnawing with the idea of changing the name to include mindfulness into it. However, when everything became virtual, the researcher realized that providing mindfulness and social-emotional learning activities was not enough to keep students' attention and to support their well-being online. Thus, the researcher incorporated yoga into the intervention, and the Mindfulness Yoga Social-Emotional Learning Focus (MYSELF) was conceived.

The MYSELF intervention was designed in a structured format to have a consistent routine for the students to feel comfortable in the class. The MYSELF intervention lessons would begin with a mindfulness breathing exercise. Then the researcher would take a social-emotional check-in of the students by asking them to share a rose (something good) or a thorn (something not so good). This check-in allowed the researcher and the other peers to celebrate with the students rose or empathize with their thorn. This also helped the researcher to follow up with the classroom teacher if there was anything of concern. Next, the researcher did some yoga exercises that were conducive to virtual learning. Afterward, the researcher taught the different mindfulness strategies or social-emotional lessons that would lead to class discussions. The researcher reviewed any work that was assigned and concluded the session with a mindfulness breathing exercise.

MYSELF Constrictions

Due to COVID-19 not letting up and now heading into the new school year, the district restructured the virtual Elementary schedule to have a sense of uniformity along all grades TK-5th to keep it concise for the parents and teachers. Unfortunately, this did not allow for much wiggle room of when to offer the MYSELF intervention. The researcher could no longer go into the teacher's class through zoom. She was also teaching her class, and the district had established a designated time for P.E., Mindfulness, Yoga, and Visual & Performing Arts. Therefore, the best time allotted was between two breaks and for about 35 minutes at the most.

Setting and Participants

The research took place at a XYZ Elementary School in a school district located in Southern California, whose mission centers on providing a safe environment that fosters life-long leaders for its TK through fifth-grade students. The XYZ school is in an urban city neighborhood, with a total population of 557 students. English Language Learners make up 50.2% of the student population, and 76% of them receive free or reduced lunch. The students spoke ten different languages, with Armenian and Spanish being the two most prevalent languages other than English.

The participants for this study were two general education fifth-grade teachers with three to seven years of teaching experience and 68 fifth-grade students from two classrooms. Class size in fifth-grade is roughly 36 students per teacher, which is slightly higher than the average of 27.97 (CalEdFacts Average Class Size, 2018). The classrooms did not have a social-emotional learning curriculum implemented at the time of this research study. The teachers in each school taught at this particular school for at least two consecutive years. The teachers recruited as participants were offered to join the MYSELF intervention Zoom class at their leisure.

Recruitment and Selection Process

The researcher distributed a "Welcome" letter in a parent group email for both, fifth-grade classes (see Appendix A). Included in the letter was the information of the day, time, and the duration of the MYSELF intervention. The researcher described the scope of the lessons and the benefits it would provide their child. The researcher concluded her Welcome Letter by providing the parents with her school email address and school phone number and telling the parents that she is thrilled to be a part of their child's journey this year as she watches them learn, grow, and have a fantastic time in fifth-grade.

Before beginning the actual research study, the researcher made a video of herself for the fifth-grade teachers to present at the XYZ Elementary School's Back-To-School Zoom Night. Due to the pandemic, this was the first time the teachers and the researcher experienced a virtual Back-To-School Night. The researcher did not attend the fifth-grade teacher's Back-To-School as she had done in the pilot because she was also having her Back-To-School night that same evening. The video was created as an overview of the research project to the fifth-grade students' parents. During this video presentation, the researcher emphasized how much she looked forward to working with them, their child, and the fifth-grade teachers as a team. The researcher shared her professional teaching background. This included discussing how she has been teaching in the primary grades, Transitional Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and First-grade at the school for twenty-three years. She has also taught summer school English and English Language Development at the school district's middle schools. After establishing her professional background and specific experiences, the researcher stated that she was currently working towards her doctorate from these positive experiences (Ed.D.) Degree in Education through Concordia University, Irvine. The researcher then discussed that her research study's

focus was on how developing social skills in our fifth-grade students would better prepare them for middle school. The researcher then shared the specifics of her research study. For example, the study's purpose was to teach their children how to listen carefully, focus their attention, show care for others, learn how to calm down, and solve problems with others positively. The researcher emphasized that by working together as a team, they could help their child be as ready as possible for middle school, so learning academic and social-emotional skills would be just as important. To accomplish this, the researcher asked parents for their permission to collect their child's work that they would do in her class for her research study; and that it would remain confidential. A Google form link of the parent consent form was sent to the parents through their teacher's ClassDojo messaging and sent as a parent group email before the research study began.

As this was our first back to school night doing it virtually, the feedback from the fifth-grade teachers was that their presentation moved quickly since everyone was muted, few questions were asked of them regarding fifth-grade expectations, no one had questions after watching the researcher's video and that they seemed agreeable. All students in both fifth-grade classes were invited to attend the MYSELF intervention but would follow the intervention at different intervals during the school year because between both classrooms there was a total of 68 students. After the IRB approval, one group began in the fall/winter season, and the second group started in the winter/spring season. Parents who said no to participating in the research study or did not return a consent form were eliminated from the research. However, they were still welcomed to join the MYSELF intervention or continue to watch the asynchronous P.E., Mindfulness, Yoga, Visual & Performing Arts videos offered by the district during this time slot. The fall/winter selection of which students would attend the first group consisted of those who turned in their consent forms first to fill up the space allotted (17) from each teacher’s class.

All student participants in the fifth-grade class were offered an 8-week MYSELF (mindfulness yoga social-emotional learning focus) live instruction two days a week while the district offered the asynchronous videos on P.E., Mindfulness, Yoga, and Visual and Performing Arts. The researcher attended the fifth-grade teacher's classroom and explained how their parents received a parent consent form and that they were also receiving a student assent form. Regardless of participating in the research study, all fifth-grade students were provided mindfulness yoga social-emotional learning instruction. The researcher explained that she was going to school and needed to collect student work data to help with her research. The researcher assured the students during class how she would maintain the confidentiality of the study.

TIMELINE	CLASS GROUP A:	CLASS GROUP B:	Teacher Participants
Recruitment Phase:	Parent Consent Form Signed Student Assent Form Signed	Remaining students from fifth-grade class not participating in the study	Consent Form Signed
Baseline Data	1). Student Mindfulness Pre-Survey	1). Student Mindfulness Pre-Survey	1). Teacher Pre-Interview
Beginning Intervention Phase: (8-week study)	1). Student Self-Reflection		1). Ongoing teacher consult on student learning and teacher well-being 2). One Teacher training
End Intervention Phase:	1). Student MYSELF Post-Survey	**The 8-week MYSELF intervention begins	1). Teacher Post-Interview

Figure 6. 1. MYSELF Intervention Study Timeline

Confidentiality

All the names of the students were removed and replaced with a pseudonym code. The researcher assigned each student a unique number. All electronic data collected was stored in a file on the researcher's personal laptop computer with a secure password.

All teacher participants recruited were voluntary. And they were interested in providing an SEL and mindfulness intervention for their students. All teachers were assigned an identification number to replace their names. The teacher participants were given the Zoom link to the class and offered the option to join the MYSELF intervention at any time.

Instrumentation and Measures

The methodology of this study was a mixed methods approach. This study explored if the MYSELF intervention was helpful to students and teachers in the classroom and their well-being. A mixed-methods quantitative and qualitative data analysis provided a better picture of the data revealed and allowed the researcher to look at the study from a different lens (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This research study's relative instrumentation was done as a mixed-method design to collect both quantitative and qualitative simultaneously before and after the intervention.

The instrumentation used to measure the MYSELF intervention social and emotional learning and mindfulness skills of fifth-grade students was implemented before the beginning of the intervention and then again after the intervention finished. To evaluate the improvement of student's social skills, the researcher utilized three data collection tools: a student pre- and post-survey, a semi-structured teacher pre and post-survey interview, and the researcher's observation reflections during this study to assist in addressing the following research questions:

1. How does the MYSELF intervention influence student behavior in the fifth-grade classroom?

2. How does the MYSELF intervention support students' well-being in the fifth-grade class?

3. How has the implementation of the MYSELF intervention affected the classrooms according to the teachers?

4. How do teacher trainings on the MYSELF intervention support teachers' well-being?

Student Mindfulness Pre-Survey

The Student Mindfulness Pre-Survey was sent to the students as a Google form prior to the start of the intervention. Each student was given a pseudonym code for confidentiality that only the researcher and student participant knew. The pre-survey consists of 16-Likert scale questions to collect quantitative data and one open-ended question, "What do you know about Mindfulness?" The survey was done in a Google form. The researcher entered the fifth-grade teacher's Zoom classroom and withdrew a small group into a breakout session to explain how to connect to Google link form and be present if there were any questions when completing the survey. It took less than 15 minutes to complete (see Appendix D).

Student MYSELF Intervention Post-Survey

At the end of the 8-weeks MYSELF: Mindfulness Yoga Social-Emotional Learning Focus Intervention each student was given a post-survey that was sent as a Google form. The survey consisted of 35-Likert scale and two open-ended questions on what MYSELF lessons did they share with their family or friends and any thoughts they had about the intervention (see Appendix E).

Teacher Pre/Post Semi-structured Interview

This semi-structured interview was designed with open-ended questions to collective qualitative data from the teacher. The researcher conducted individual teacher pre-interview

sessions through a Zoom meeting or phone call to follow the COVID-19 state guidelines of social distancing. This allowed the researcher to discuss the social-emotional learning and mindfulness intervention, expectations, requirements of the teacher participants. Both teachers were asked the same questions, which included, but were not limited to: What is important about self-regulation? What does emotional and behavioral self-regulation look like for a fifth grader? What is your understanding of mindfulness? How do you see it used in the classroom? At the end of the study, the researcher will be asked the same questions, which include, but are not limited to: What have you learned throughout the implementation of the MYSELF intervention? What part of the MYSELF intervention did you find the most helpful? The researcher organized data in a Google form and the interview itself (see Appendix F and G).

Researcher's Observational Reflections

The researcher's observational notes/reflections were taken during the interventions. The researcher's notes from the observations reflected teacher and student interactions throughout the various segments of this study. This was done during private moments to reflect as an implementer (see Appendix H).

Reliability

Instruments that have high reliability provide more consistent results. In determining the instruments' reliability, the researcher was inspired by the researcher's instruments due to teaching remotely: Bonillo's study (2017) on developing social-emotional competencies. Her instruments aligned best to answer the research study's question.

Bonillo's Pre-Teacher Survey applied to this study for the Teacher's Pre-Interview questions (What is the importance of self-regulation? How does a child develop emotional and behavioral self-regulation? What does emotional and behavioral self-regulation look like for a

fifth-grade student? What is the relationship between self-regulation and academic success? How does emotional and behavioral self-regulation impact social interactions with adults and peers?) Also, on the Teacher Interview Questions #6, 7, 8 and 10 came from Kathryn Marie Wagner's study on Learning and Leading Neuro-educator Focus (University of Portland School of Education, Doctorate Dissertation, 2016). This helped the researcher to better grasp the fifth-grade teacher's understanding of self-regulation and mindfulness and provide support.

Validity

The researcher, determining the validity of the research, used three strategies. The Researcher's Lens was used for "corroborating evidence through triangulation of multiple data sources" (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p. 260) using pre/post surveys, observations, and interviews. The Participant's Lens used both "prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field" (p. 262) to build relationships and check for misinformation and distortion from the study's participants (students and teachers). Finally, the Reader's or Reviewer's Lens provided the researcher the opportunity of "generating a rich, thick description" (pg. 263) of writing in detail, interconnecting ideas, and reviewing the data for helpful descriptions during the data analysis. The researcher also implemented Gibbs' process (2012), which states that it is good to give a descriptive account of what happened during the research, and to "tell us about the story, not the research- what you really did" (Gibbs, 2012).

The researcher was cautious in using the validation strategy involving the *Participant's Lens* of "member checking or seeking participant feedback" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 261). From qualitative research readings (Hays, 2003; Maxwell, 2013; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), the researcher understood the process of member checking. In seeking participant feedback, the

researcher was cautious that it did result in “collaborating with participants” (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p. 262) and that the process was done correctly.

The construct validity of the instruments indicated by how accurately the instrument measured the outcome or skills that it claimed to measure. In determining the validity of the instruments, the researcher used three strategies. The multi-method strategy was used for “triangulation in data collection and data analysis” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 331) using surveys. Participant language and verbatim accounts were used to obtain “literal statements from participants and quotations from documents” (p. 330) from the surveys and interviews. Finally, identifying and reporting negative or discrepant data was used to enhance the validity of the researcher’s analysis techniques through patterns found in the data of the surveys and interviews.

Data Collection

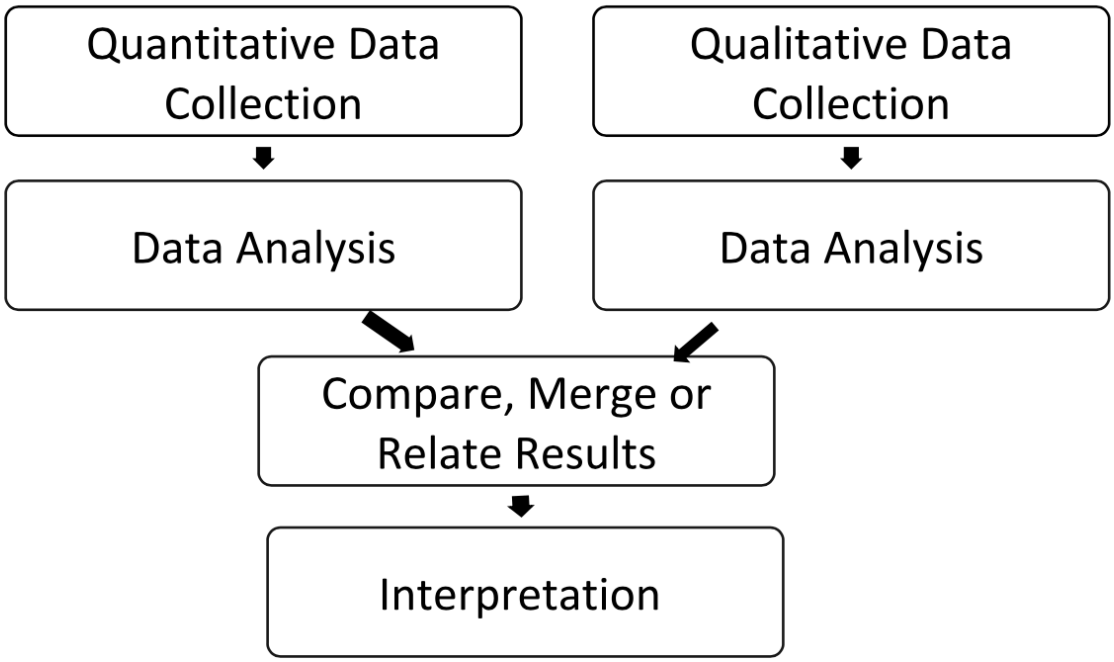

Figure 7. 1. Mixed Methods Convergent Parallel Research Design

Quantitative Data

The quantitative data gathered for this research through online forms. The Student SEL & Mindfulness Pre-Survey, the Student MYSELF intervention Post-Survey, and the Teacher Pre/Post Interview. The researcher administered the student survey before the MYSELF intervention planned (seven-week period interval). The student pre-survey had 16-Likert scale questions, and the student post-survey had 35-Likert scale questions.

Qualitative Data

This researcher administered the qualitative data through online forms, student reflections, semi-structured pre-post teacher interviews, and researcher's observations. The

student reflections were collected throughout the intervention. The teacher administered the pre-survey a week before the intervention started (this was at the seven-week interval period). The teachers choose to participate via Zoom together for the interview. The researcher's post-teacher interview was followed up one week after the social-emotional and mindfulness intervention session had ended with each teacher individually to determine the intervention program's lasting effects. All of the teachers were asked the same questions, which included: What have you learned throughout the implementation of the social-emotional, and mindfulness intervention process in your classroom? How have the self-regulation interventions improved your students academically? How did the MYSELF intervention strengthen your students' social skills? (See Appendix F and G for all of the interview questions).

Table 2. 1

Quantitative and Qualitative Instruments and Measures

Research Questions	Instruments and Measures
1. How does the MYSELF intervention influence student behavior in the fifth-grade classroom?	Student Pre/Post Survey (Quantitative Measure)
2. How does the MYSELF intervention support students' well-being in the fifth-grade class?	Student Pre/Post Survey (Quantitative Measure)
3. How has the implementation of the MYSELF intervention affected the classrooms according to the teachers?	Teacher Pre/Post Interview (Qualitative Measure) Researcher Reflections (Qualitative Measure)
4. How do teacher trainings on the MYSELF intervention support teachers' well-being?	Teacher Pre/Post Interview (Qualitative Measure) Researcher Observation (Qualitative Measure)

In mid-September of 2020, the researcher went into the fifth-grade Zoom classrooms during their science or social studies block and Friday Fundays before beginning the MYSELF intervention to establish a connection and an on-going student-teacher relationship. At times, the researcher assisted the teachers by being a co-host in their zoom class.

The students took the pre-survey in their fifth-grade teacher's zoom classroom. The researcher then went to the teacher's zoom classroom to pull students who were absent into a breakout room to complete the pre-survey before implementing the intervention sessions. After the MYSELF intervention was over, the students took the post-survey in the researcher's zoom classroom on the last day. The researcher then went into the teacher's zoom classroom to pull students who were absent into a breakout room to complete the post-student survey.

Data Analysis

The data analysis included using statistics to summarize the data, describe patterns, relationships, and connections. Analyzing procedures included an overall means paired t-test. The data structure collected from the students and teachers and their responses to the survey questions collected from these individuals provided the variables. The variables were analyzed on the basis of being categorical or numerical variables. The categorical variables were the groupings of students and teachers based on gender (female, male, girl, boy). The numerical variables include the number of student and teacher participants (26 students and 2 teachers). The numerical values will be analyzed by using two statistics – the mean (the average value) and the spread (the distance of data from the mean). The data findings were converted into frequency tables and graphs for a visual presentation.

The procedural steps in this data analysis included:

- Developing the procedure itself.
- Coding and entering the data.
- Verifying the entry of the data.
- Preparing the data for analysis.
- Conducting the analysis (described above).
- Developing tables, graphs, figures, and narrative summaries to display the researcher's data.

The analysis of the data examined the emergence of recurring themes. The information was coded to determine emerging patterns and themes. The research compared and contrasted the recurring themes between the perceptions of the teachers and students. The themes that kept

emerging were student-teacher relationship, distance learning ("Zoom Fatigue"), trauma, and home-to-school connections.

RQ 1: How does the MYSELF intervention influence student behavior in the fifth-grade classroom? and RQ 2: How does the MYSELF intervention support students' well-being in the fifth-grade class? The researcher utilized a quantitative analysis from the student pre and post surveys. The researcher did frequency tables and graphs for each survey question analyzed and then an overall means paired sample t-test analysis of the behavioral data questions used to answer research question 1. The same process was done for research question 2 using the well-being data questions and using overall means paired sample t-test analysis.

RQ3: How has the implementation of the MYSELF intervention affected the classrooms according to the teachers? and RQ4: How do teacher trainings on the MYSELF intervention support teachers' well-being? The researcher used a qualitative analysis from the teacher's pre and post interviews. The researcher coded the teacher's interview responses into categories of student behavior, student well-being, implementation of the MYSELF intervention and its affects in their classroom, and teacher's well-being & self-care. The categories of implementation of the MYSELF intervention and teacher well-being were used to support RQ3 and RQ4.

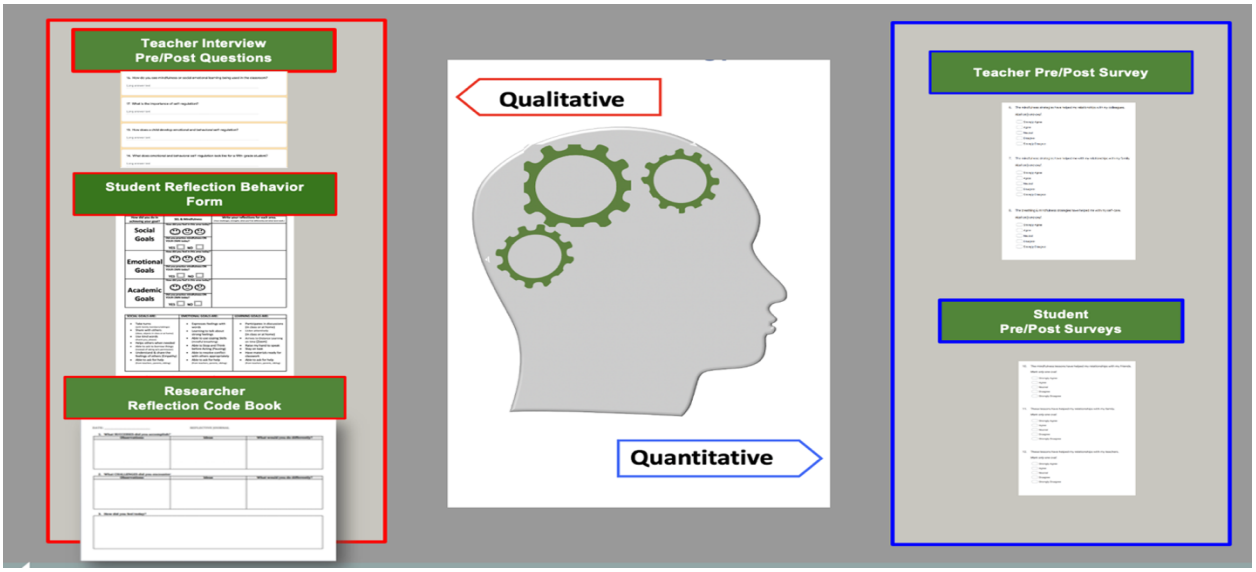

Figure 8. 1. Methodology Display Chart

Ethical Issues

The researcher was a contracted licensed elementary school teacher who has taught at the school site for 180 days annually for 22 years. The researcher felt it was essential to do the online training offered by MindfulSchool.org and for a nominal fee to be certificated in mindfulness fundamentals and mindfulness essentials. During the process, the researcher also designed a mindfulness room at her school site to use upper-grade teachers (3rd – 5th) and their students as they have limited space in their classrooms. Moreover, the mindfulness room is also available for staff to have a quiet place for themselves or guided meditation lead by the researcher.

Before initiating the actual research study, the school principal was consulted for approval, and required by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was obtained. This letter specified the process, requirements, and selection criteria for the participant sample. The informed parent consent form established the process, conditions, and selection criteria distributed via an electronic Google form to all parent of student participants in the fifth-grade

classrooms. Parents who decided not to have their child participate in the research study had the option to attend the MYSELF or take the asynchronous district P.E., Mindfulness, Yoga, and Visual & Performing Arts offered simultaneously as the live zoom MYSELF intervention sessions. Students who participated in the MYSELF intervention were able to withdraw at any time with no consequences.

Limitations of Instruments

Several factors limited the instruments. The data collection depended on reminding the students to complete reflection and work assignments. Also, the researcher had to make several follow-up sessions on the students who were absent during the Zoom MYSELF classroom or their fifth-grade teacher's Zoom classroom to complete pre/post student surveys. Moreover, because social-emotional learning is subjective, the data could be affected by the differences in the various participants and skew the results of the surveys. Other limitations may include the limited amount of time spent in the Zoom teacher's classrooms for the researcher to observe the overall success or lack of success integrating the MYSELF strategies practiced in the zoom classroom or the students' everyday life.

Summary

Chapter 4 described the methodology used in the research study and how the researcher proceeded to the actual research outcomes. The chapter began with a discussion of the quantitative research design. Next was a description of the setting and participants. This was followed by a discussion of the research questions and their relevance to the study. Next, sampling procedures and the instrumentation and measures were discussed. These were followed by the considerations of reliability and validity, data collection, and data analysis.

Finally, the ethical issues were presented, and the limitations of the instruments were discussed. The next chapter presents the details of the data analysis and findings.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

This study sought to learn how the MYSELF student intervention benefited teachers and students, particularly with regards to supporting their well-being. Specifically, the current study asks: 1) How does the MYSELF student intervention targeting social emotional learning and mindfulness behavioral skills influence student behavior in the fifth-grade classroom? 2) How does the MYSELF student intervention targeting social emotional learning and mindfulness behavioral skills support students' well-being in the fifth-grade classroom? 3) How has the implementation of the MYSELF intervention affected the classrooms according to the teachers? and 4) How do teacher trainings on the MYSELF intervention's social emotional learning and mindfulness behavioral skills support teachers' well-being? The study employed a mixed methods design consisting of surveys, student observations, and teacher interviews.

Participants

The participants came from XYZ Elementary School in an urban area of Southern California. They represented students from two fifth grade classrooms and included the two fifth grade teachers for this study. Figure 9. 1 displays the Demographics of the 26 students and the two teacher participants by ethnicity (n=28). As illustrated in Figure 9. 1, 12 (43%) participants identified as Armenian (White), 9 (32%) undisclosed, 3 (11%) European American (White), 3 (11%) Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1 (3%) as African American/Black. As seen on Table 3. 1 the gender of participants is the same amount of females and males for students and teachers in the MYSELF intervention.

Table 3. 1

Gender of Participants

Participants	Student	Teacher	%
Male	13	1	50%
Female	13	1	50%

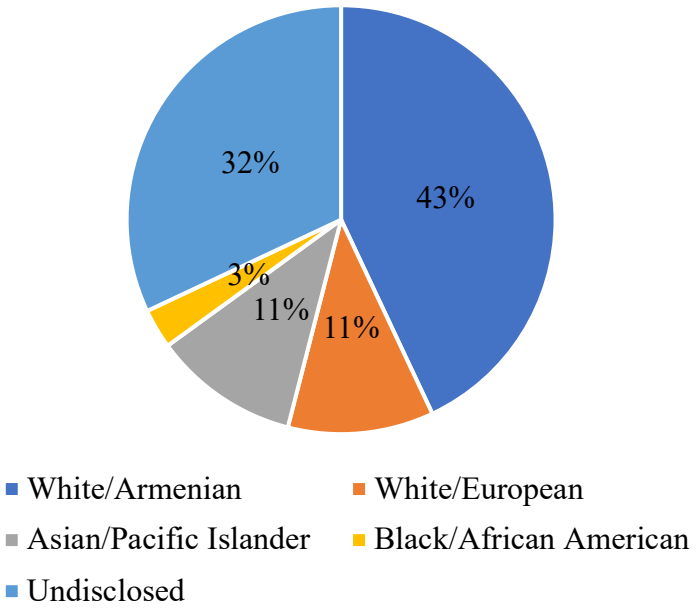

Figure 9. 1. Demographic of Participants

Students

The original data collected was from 31 students. However, five students who were absent when the pre-survey intervention was administered, were removed from the data set, making the total number of surveys to be analyzed 26 (M age = 10.08, SD = .27). For the purposes of this study, only students who completed the pre and post intervention surveys were included. Coincidently, of these 26 students 13 were males and 13 were females.

Teachers

Two teachers participated in the study (1 male, 1 female; Age Range: 28-37, *M* Age = 32.5). Both teachers identified as European/American, Caucasian. Both teacher participants were employed in XYZ Elementary School and possessed a multiple subject credential. Teacher One has taught Kindergarten, Sixth and Fifth grade while Teacher Two has taught Transitional Kindergarten, Kindergarten, Second, and Fifth grade. Teacher One has taught for five years at the same XYZ School site and Teacher Two has taught for 10 years and eight of those years at XYZ Elementary School. Additionally, when asked, "What is the role and responsibilities of the teacher, both in and out of the classroom?" Teacher One shared, "The teacher guides the student almost like a tour guide as students travel through their learning." Likewise, Teacher Two shared, "The teacher is responsible for providing a safe and secure learning environment. I feel that the teacher should establish trust between them and their students." The researcher gathered that building a strong teacher-student relationship was important for establishing a classroom community.

Survey Data

Student surveys were given prior to starting the intervention and after completing the intervention. The survey included eighteen questions that the students could choose from as their responses. Survey options were arranged on a five-point scale, almost always, frequently, sometimes, once in a while, and almost never. Three questions, *What distracts you the most? When are you the most distracted?* and *What is your goal for better social skills and well-being?* asked students to choose from a selection of answers and then to rank their responses from first choice to third choice with first choice being the most distracting or better well-being. The last

question on the survey was an open-ended question asking students, *What they knew about Mindfulness?* and *If they had any questions?*

The researcher coded selected questions from the student survey into two themes: behavior (Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, and Q9) and well-being (Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, and Q14) responses. Overall pre- and post- scores of each of these themes were computed using the average scores on questions within this theme.

Researcher Question One: Behavioral

Research question one asked whether there would be a difference on the student's behavior in class after attending the MYSELF intervention. The researcher used the selected behavior questions from the behavior theme and computed an overall average of the student's pre and post survey responses on the behavior questions. The researcher then ran a paired sample t-test to determine if there was a mean difference between the pre and post student surveys behavior scores.

Myself Survey Behavior Responses Descriptive Statistics

When students were asked, *Did you carefully listen and tune-in to your friend or sibling when you two were talking*? in the pre-survey 10 students responded "Almost Always" compared to 13 in the post-survey. In the categories of "Frequently" and "Sometimes", in the pre-survey there were 16 responses versus 11 responses in the post-survey. While no students responded "Once in a While" or "Almost Never" in the pre-survey, there was 1 response in each of these categories in the post-survey (See Table 4. 1).

Table 4. 1

Did You Carefully Listen and Tune-in to Your Friend or Sibling When You Two were Talking?

Student Participant Response	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey	%
Almost Always	10	13	44%
Frequently	11	7	35%
Sometimes	5	4	17%
Once in a While	0	1	2%
Almost Never	0	1	2%
Total	26	26	100%

n=26

The students were asked, *Did you carefully listen and tune-in to your parent when you two were talking*? Eighteen students said "Almost Always" or "Frequently" in the pre-survey compared to 23 students in the post-survey. While 7 students said "Sometimes" or "Once in a While" in the pre-survey, there were 3 responses total in these categories in the post-survey. Finally, 1 student in the pre-survey said "Almost Never" while no students gave this response in the post-survey (See Table 5. 1).

Table 5. 1

Did You Carefully Listen and Tune-in to Your Parent When You Two were Talking?

Student Participant Response	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey	%
Almost Always	12	15	52%
Frequently	6	8	27%
Sometimes	3	2	9.5%
Once in a While	4	1	9.5%
Almost Never	1	0	2%
Total	26	26	100%

n=26

When students were asked, *did you carefully listen and tune-in to your teacher when he/she is talking to the whole class*? the pre-survey verified that 15 students said "Almost Always" while 17 students gave the same response in the post-survey. In the category of "Frequently", there were 9 responses in the pre-survey and 5 in the post-survey. For the "Sometimes" category, there were 2 responses in the pre-survey and 4 in the post-survey (Figure 10. 1).

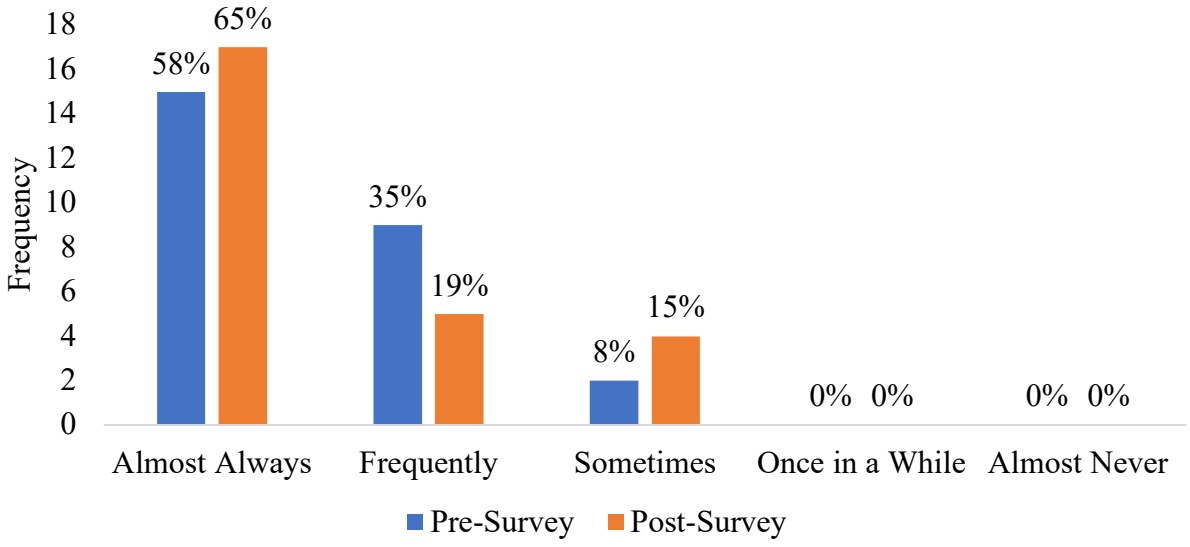

Figure 10. 1. Did You Carefully Listen and Tune-in to Your Teacher When He/She is Talking to the Whole Class?

In Figure 11. 1, data for the question *Did you carefully follow oral or written directions?* revealed that 22 students said "Almost Always" or "Frequently" in the pre-survey compared to 23 students in the post-survey. While four students said "Sometimes" and zero responded "Once in a While" in the pre-survey compared to three said that in the "Sometimes" and one in the "Once in a While" for the post-survey.

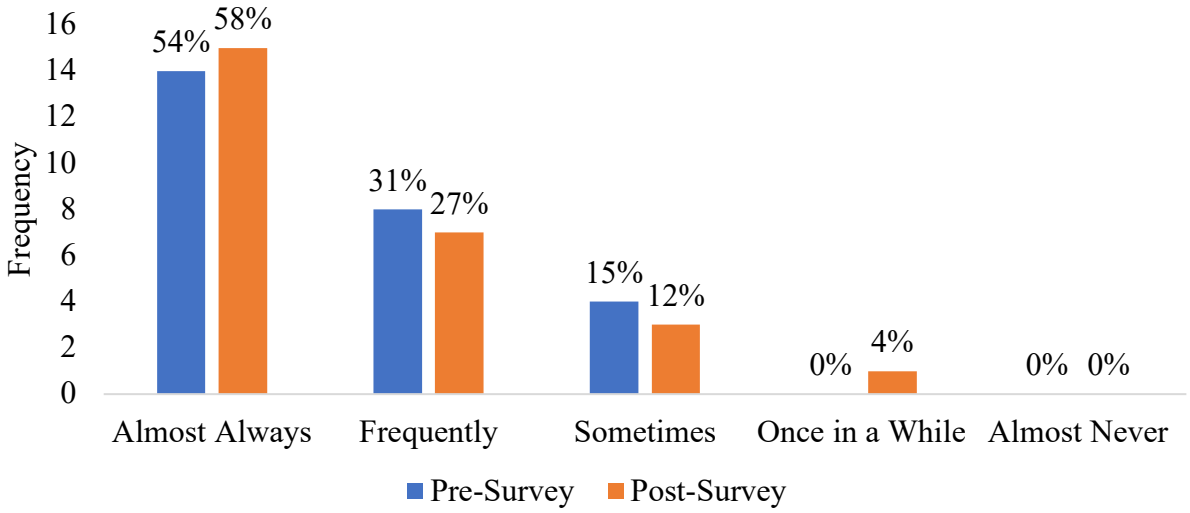

Figure 11. 1. Did You Carefully Follow Orally or Written Directions?

Table 6. 1 detailed the student response for the question *Did you interrupt others?* It shows that 18 students answered "Almost Never" or "Once in a While" in the pre-survey whereas 21 students said that in the post-survey. In the categories of "Sometimes" and "Frequently", in the pre-survey there were 7 responses versus 5 responses in the post-survey.

Table 6. 1

Did You Interrupt Others?

Student Participant Response	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey	%
Almost Always	1	0	2%
Frequently	1	0	2%
Sometimes	6	5	21%
Once in a While	3	5	15%
Almost Never	15	16	60%
Total	26	26	100%

n=26

Table 7. 1 reported responses for the question *Did you have a hard time staying on task or get easily distracted?* 3 students responded, “Almost Always” and “Frequently” in the pre-survey while 2 in the post-survey. 18 students said, “Sometimes” and “Once in a while” in the pre-survey, but in the post-survey 16 gave the same response. The answer “Almost Never” was given by 5 students in the pre-survey compared to 8 responses in the post-survey.

Table 7. 1

Did You Have a Hard Time Staying on Task or Get Easily Distracted?

Student Participant Response	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey	%
Almost Always	2	1	6%
Frequently	1	1	4%
Sometimes	9	10	36%
Once in a While	9	6	29%
Almost Never	5	8	25%
Total	26	26	100%

n=26

The majority of the students reported that they managed their emotions “Frequently” (33%), followed by “Sometimes” (29%), next by “Almost Always” (20%). Few students reported “Almost Never” (8%) when managing their emotions (Table 8. 1).

Table 8. 1

Did You Manage Your Emotions (i.e., Anxious, Angry, Frustration, Sadness)?

Student Participant Response	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey	%
Almost Always	7	3	20%
Frequently	7	10	33%
Sometimes	6	9	29%
Once in a While	4	1	10%
Almost Never	2	2	8%
Total	26	25*	100%

**Note* one student did not answer this question in the post-survey.

After completing the intervention, student showed growth in responding to others who bothered them. Compared to 8% of students' pre-intervention, 23% of students reported "Almost Always" in letting others know when they are doing something that bothered them after completing the intervention. Surprisingly, there was also an increase student report of "Almost Never" responding when someone is bothering them. Before the intervention 12% of students reported "Almost Never" and after the intervention 19% reported "Almost Never" (Figure 12. 1).

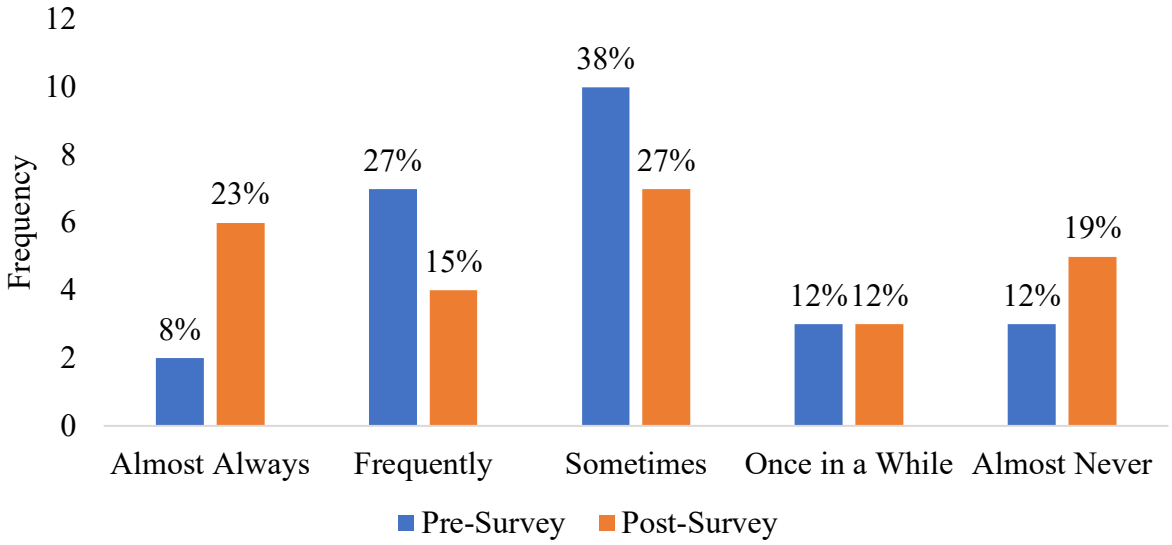

Figure 12. 1. Did You Let Others Know When They are Doing Something That Bothered You?

For the question *What distracts you the most?* Students were allowed to rank up to 3 choices. Among first choices, "My thoughts" and "Technology" tied for the most responses with six. Next, "Noises", "My thoughts", and "Technology" tied for the most responses with five as their second choice. While among the third choice, "Family" and "Other" tied as the most common response for what distract you the most (n=6) (Figure 13. 1).

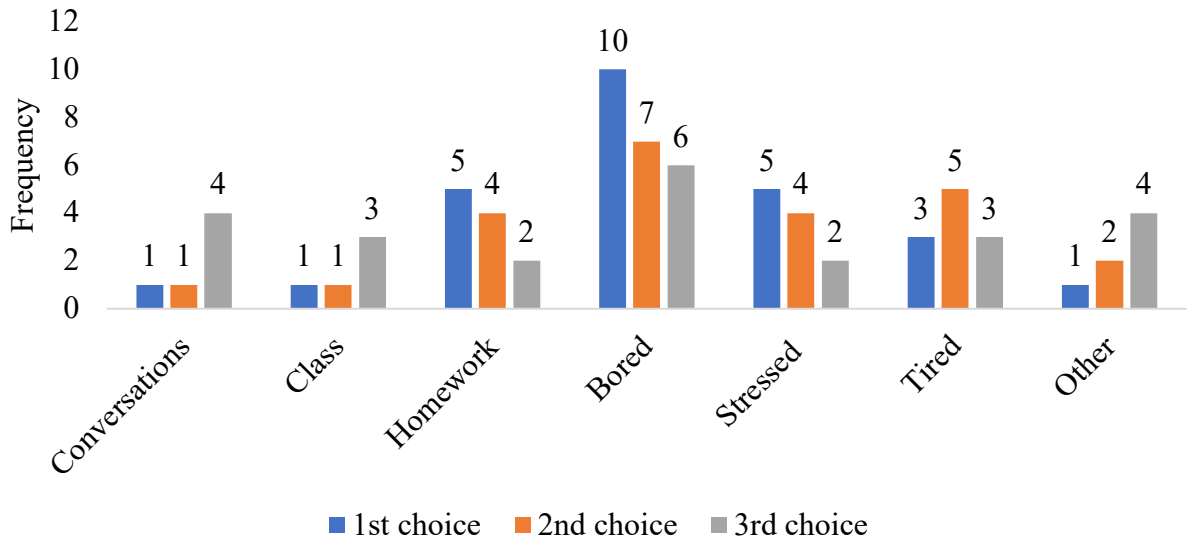

Figure 13. 1. When Are You Most Distracted? Ranking

Among all choices, "Anytime I'm bored" had the most responses with 23. "When I'm tired", "stressed or overwhelmed", or "Doing homework" were ranked as a secondary reason for being distracted (n=11). The least distraction mentioned was "During class" (n=5) (Figure 14. 1).

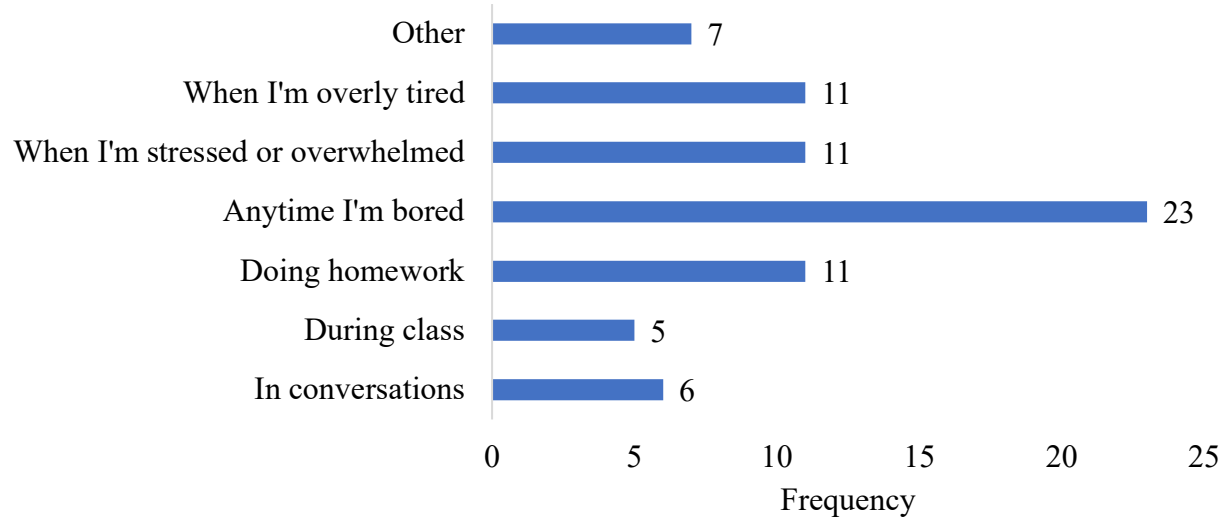

Figure 14. 1. Top Distraction Cause

Data Analysis

Overall Mindfulness Scores

Overall mindfulness behaviors were calculated via an average on performance of mindfulness behavior questions (see Table 9. 1).

Table 9. 1

Behavioral Survey Questions

Q2. How often did you carefully listen to your friend or sibling when you two were talking?
Q3. How often did you carefully listen to your parents when you two were talking?
Q4. How often did you carefully listen to your teacher when he/she was talking to the whole class?
Q5. How often did you carefully follow oral or written directions?
Q6. How often did you interrupt others?
Q7. How often did you have a hard time staying on task?
Q8. How often did you manage your emotions?
Q9. How often did you let others know when they were doing something that bothered you?
Q10. What distracts you the most?
Q11. When do find yourself most distracted?
Q12. What do you know about Mindfulness? And do you have any questions?

Paired Sample t-Test

A paired samples t-test was conducted to explore if students' responses differ in the pre- and post-survey in regard to the question, *Did you carefully listen and tune-in to your parents when you two were talking?* Statistical t-tests have been identified as a frequently used statistical analysis technique. According to Kim (2015), a t-test can be performed to compare two groups dependent on each other. A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare the average frequency of mindfulness behaviors before and after an 8-week mindfulness intervention. There was not a significant difference in the behavior scores pre (M = 3.50, SD = .42) and post (M = 3.45, SD = 0.48) conditions; t (25) =.53, p = 0.60 (Figure 15. 1).

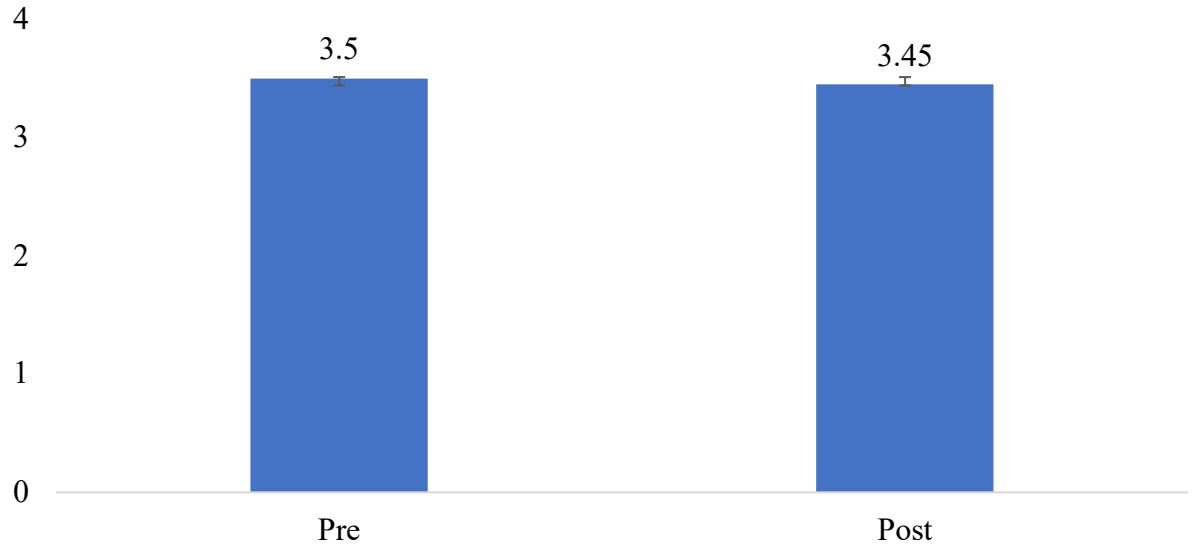

Figure 15. 1. Mindfulness Behavior Mean Pre and Post Behavior Score

Qualitative Student Responses for Mindfulness Behavior

Students who attended the MYSELF intervention stated during the intervention time that they enjoyed, had fun, or liked participating in the intervention. One student (#546) shared, "I didn't want to come because I had a lot of homework, but now I'm glad I did." Another student (#553) stated, "I enjoy talking to everyone before the class starts…I'll miss this when it's over."

This suggests that the mindfulness lessons were engaging and the social interaction between students was impactful in the continuum of building their social skills.

The students were asked to share during the MYSELF intervention if they had used the skills learned in the core in class. Student #553 shared, “I used the hand breathing exercise when we were taking a test to calm myself down…my brain, so I could focus on answering the test.” And (#452) said, “me too, I like the hand breathing one because no one can see that you’re doing it (on Zoom) and it helps me when I’m stressed out.” This suggested that the strategies taught in intervention transferred into the student’s area of need.

Multiple students expressed that the intervention positively impacted their lives. “Doing the laughter yoga was fun and we learned that laughing was good for our brain.” reported (#548) and (#545) stated, “I like when we close our eyes and just breathe because it’s the first time, I stop… it helps me relax, but in class I don’t close my eyes... I just do the breathing and try to focus on what the teacher is saying.” Another student stated, “The mindfulness activities teach us to pause and focus on what we are doing right now and sometimes I use it in class when I’m getting bored.” This indicated to the researcher that the MYSELF intervention was making a positive impact on the students (Table 10. 1).

Table 10. 1

Positive Impact of the Intervention

Student Code	Belief Shared
S#447	"The mindfulness activities teach us to pause and focus on what we are doing right now and sometimes I use it in class when I'm getting bored."
S#452	"I use the S.T.A.R. (Smile Take a deep breath And Release) with my brother because he is so annoying, and it helps me not get angry with him."
S#545	"I like when we close our eyes and just breathe because it's the first time, I stop…it helps me relax, but in class I don't close my eyes."
S#546	"I didn't want to come because I had a lot of homework, but now I'm glad I did."
S#548	"…doing the laughter yoga was fun and we learned that laughing was good for our brain."
S#553	"I used the hand breathing exercise when we were taking a test to calm myself down…my brain, so I could focus on answering the test."
S#553	I enjoy talking to everyone before the class starts…I'll miss this when it's over."
S#556	"I do the breathing exercises with my little sister because it would help her when she has a temper tantrum."

Qualitative Teacher Responses for Mindfulness Student Behavior-Pre-Intervention

Prior to the MYSELF intervention, both teachers had a basic understanding of what Mindfulness was through personal experiences or anecdotes. Teacher 1 mentioned how mindfulness is a connection between the body and the mind. While Teacher 2 said that it is being aware of oneself.

Table 11. 1

Teacher Understanding of Mindfulness

	Question 11: *What is your understanding of Mindfulness?*
Teacher 1	Being in-tune with your mind and body.
Teacher 2	My understanding of mindfulness is being aware of one's self and their mindset.

When asked about their first impressions with any previous experience using an SEL curriculum, only one of the 5th grade teachers shared that they had experience using an SEL curriculum (*Second Step*), but at a lower grade level. Both teachers stated to the researcher that there was no separate SEL curriculum in fifth grade besides any online resources that they find or what is integrated in their Language Arts curriculum. When the researcher probed the teachers regarding how a child develops self-regulation, both teachers expressed that having adults modeling behaviors and starting at an early age is important. Moreover, teachers shared that when fifth graders are taught to pause and think, which is a mindfulness strategy, and have learned to regulate their emotions, there is less meltdowns or outburst to disrupt their learning (Table 12. 1).

Table 12. 1

Teacher Discussion of Self-Regulation

Question 19: *What were your first impressions of SEL strategies or Mindfulness self-regulation strategies? (for teachers who have had previous experience with SEL curriculum*	
Teacher 1	n/a
Teacher 2	I found these strategies were helpful to my students when I was teaching TK. A handful of students has separation anxiety, and these strategies allowed the students to calm their body and emotions down and enabled them to have a positive school day.
Question 22: *How does a child develop emotional and behavioral self-regulation*	
Teacher 1	Needs to be fostered and modeled from a young age - infancy. Promoted during childhood and teenage years.
Teacher 2	A child develops emotional and behavioral self-regulation through modeling of adults and their peers.
Question 23*: What does emotional and behavioral self-regulation look like for a fifth-grade student?*	
Teacher 1	Not having a meltdown when they don't get their way. Not punching someone who cuts them in the lunch line. Not getting angry when they don't get called on.
Teacher 2	Emotional and behavioral self-regulation for a fifth-grade student would entail the students to stop and think before they act. They need remove themselves from a controversial situation and address the problem when they are clear-minded and calm. This is important because it can de-escalate disagreements and any arguments.

The teachers shared that when the students' emotions aren't regulated and lack social skills to get along with their peers it interferes with their learning in the classroom. For example, one teacher mentioned to the researcher that when there is a social problem in the playground, it carries over into the classroom, so academic success is not taking place until the social emotional element is resolved. The researcher found that the connection between family and school is important in all grades, but in fifth grade they are building upon the skills already learned. Thus,

reinforcement of skills learned from previous years and what is newly learned in the classroom is important for families to work on at home (Table 13. 1).

Table 13. 1

Discussion on Academic Success and Family Connection

Question 24*: What is the relationship between self-regulation and academic success?*	
Teacher 1	When they don't let their emotions get the best of them, they can stay more focused on the task at hand.
Teacher 2	Self-regulation is the basis of a growth mindset and a fixed mindset. With a growth mindset academic success is more abundant versus having a fixed mindset where academic success is harder to achieve.
Question 26*: How is the importance of family-teacher connectedness help support students' social emotional well-being?*	
Teacher 1	Family is a big component of everything we do. The skills we teach in the classroom must be reinforced at home.
Teacher 2	It is important for teacher and parents to communicate and be on the same team. We are all working together for the benefit of the student and it is important to have a united front instead of a divided one.

Qualitative Teacher Responses for Student Mindfulness Behavior Post-Intervention

Teachers noticed that the students who attended the MYSELF intervention were more likely to problem solve independently than before the intervention. For example, teachers noted that students used to ask the teacher for assistance with their technology issues before even trying to figure it out on their own. After the MYSELF intervention, students would try to fix their Wi-Fi by refreshing the page or reconnecting before interrupting the class. Also, teachers remarked that students who attended the MYSELF intervention became more responsive to turning on their cameras and participating in class. For example, students seemed comfortable in sharing the strategies learned in the MYSELF intervention with their peers during the core classes. Additionally, teachers noted that the students who attended the MYSELF intervention

were more eager and willing to engage with peers about what they learned compared to the students who did not attend and only watched the District mindfulness videos (Table14. 1).

Table 14. 1

Lessons Learned

Question 7: *What have you learned through the implementation of the social emotional and mindfulness intervention process in your classroom?*	
Teacher 1	My students really need SEL help, and I don't always know how to give it to them. What I am seeing is that some of my students do not know how to process the difficult things going on around them, they bottle up their emotions inside and cannot regulate.
Teacher 2	I have learned that students struggled with attending another class that is not with their regular teacher. Students felt that they didn't need to attend something that was not graded or part of their grade. Students who attended the mindfulness sessions would return to my class and share some strategies they learned with their peers.
Question 10: *How did the self-regulation intervention improve your students academically?(i.e., Following directions, problem-solving, staying on task, asking questions)?*	
Teacher 1	The students who were the most engaged with the self-regulation intervention showed increased ability to listen to others (both the teacher and their peers) and to stay on task working independently. It assisted them building their self-advocacy problem solving skills when nobody was around to fix problems - for example, wifi too slow, camera not working, Google docs crashing. It helped them to focus on their work and to persevere with difficult assignments when the teacher was unable to help.
Teacher 2	Students were more responsible when following directions and staying on task.
Question 11: What types of learning opportunities were created through the usage of social emotional learning and mindfulness self-regulation that you did not anticipate?	
Teacher 1	Students felt more comfortable expressing themselves and working with their peers.
Teacher 2	Students who attended the mindfulness class were more aware and knowledgeable of self-regulation strategies versus those who did not attend and were on their own to watch mindfulness videos. Students who participated in the mindfulness class also were eager to share what they learned with their peers.

After the MYSELF intervention, teachers noted that students benefited from the mindfulness strategies that they learned because kids at this developmental stage are still

learning how to regulate their emotions and feelings. Moreover, teachers shared that students became more responsive in turning on their cameras and participating in class. Teacher Two noticed that students exhibited more confidence in sharing with their peers during class (Table 15. 1).

Table 15. 1

Teacher Experience with Mindfulness

Question 14: *Can you give an example or a story that helps show how mindfulness can help with teaching?*	
Teacher 1	I have several students who are high strung and have anxiety in the virtual classroom and mindfulness has helped them to understand and start to regulate the feels and stressors that they experience. they are young and do not naturally know what to do when they feel this way and they need it to be taught and modeled to them.
Teacher 2	I recently introduced a new math topic to my students, Coordinate Grids. Having never taught these lessons virtually, I knew it would be a challenge. I prepared myself with giving myself a pep talk that it was OKAY if they didn't understand right away and made sure I took a few calming breaths before, during, and after the lesson. I made plans if/when the lesson was a bust that I would have a back-up plan. The lesson was brutal, but my patience was key when presenting the lesson. Even if the questions were repeated by the students, I knew that they all would benefit from hearing it again. By the end of the second day of the lesson, I saw a change in my students, the lightbulb had gone off, and they were understanding it.
Question 25: *Is there anything else you think is important in understanding your experience with the social emotional learning and mindfulness intervention conducted in your classroom? or your own experience in the process as the teacher?*	
Teacher 1	even with all of the hectic situations we've encountered due to covid and wars in home countries the stability this has brought to my students should be very beneficial. 2020 was a year of trauma and concern on the minds of ten year olds.
Teacher 2	I felt that the entire experience was very beneficial to my students. I noticed students become more comfortable with turning on and keeping their cameras on. They were more responsive when I requested cameras on and participation.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked whether there would be a difference on the student's well-being in class after attending the MYSELF intervention. Selected well-being questions from the well-being theme were used to calculate an overall average of the student's pre and post survey responses on the well-being questions. A paired sample t-test was then conducted using this overall average to determine if there was a mean difference between the pre and post student surveys well-being scores.

MYSELF Survey of Well-Being Responses Descriptive Statistics

When students were asked, *Were you able to calm yourself down when someone was making you upset*? The same number of student's responded "Almost Always" in the pre and post survey the same (n=6). Eleven students responded "Frequently" in the pre-survey while 10 said that in the post-survey. In the pre-survey there were 3 students who responded "Sometimes", versus 6 responses in the post-survey. While 4 students responded "Once in a While" in the pre-survey, there were 3 responses in the post-survey. In the category of "Almost Never" 2 students respond in the pre-survey compared to 1 response in the post-survey (Table 16. 1).

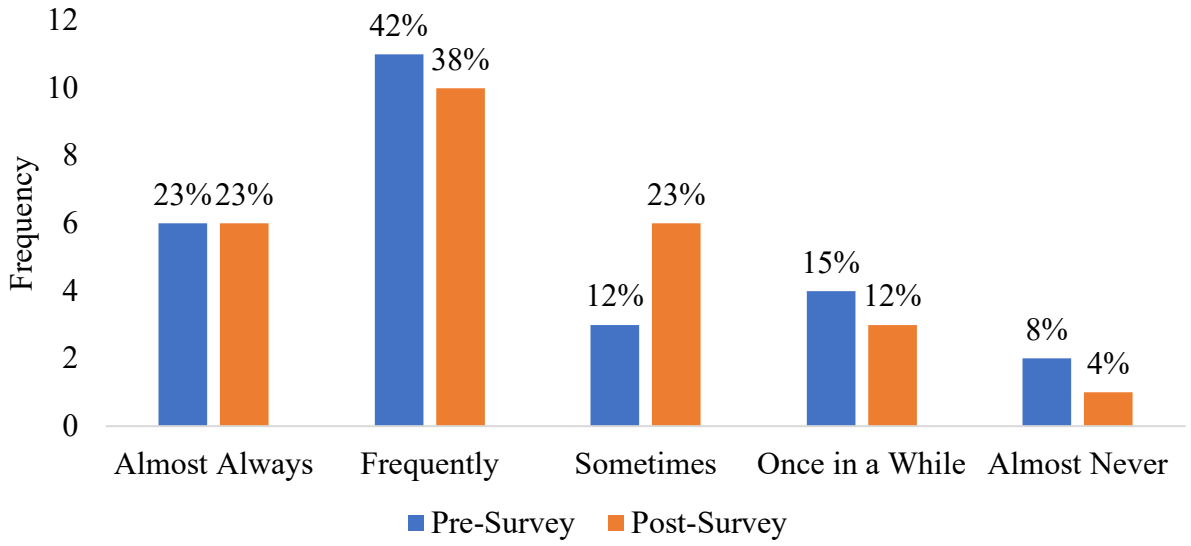

Figure 16. 1. Were You Able to Calm Yourself Down When Someone Was Making You Upset?

Table 16. 1

Were You Able to Calm Yourself Down When Someone Was Making You Upset?

Student Participant Response	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey	%
Almost Always	6	6	23%
Frequently	11	10	40%
Sometimes	3	6	17%
Once in a While	4	3	13%
Almost Never	2	1	6%
Total	26	26	100%

n=26

Table 17. 1 details the student response for the question *Did you give your family member a compliment?* It shows that 1 student answered "Almost Never" or "Once in a While" in the pre-survey as well as in the post-survey. In the categories of "Sometimes" and "Frequently", in the pre-survey there were 18 responses versus 16 responses in the post-survey. The student responses increased by 2 more students responding "Almost Always" in the post-survey (*n*=8) than in the pre-survey (*n*=6).

Table 17. 1

Did You Give Your Family Member a Compliment?

Student Participant Response	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey	%
Almost Always	6	8	27%
Frequently	13	8	40%
Sometimes	5	8	25%%
Once in a While	1	1	4%
Almost Never	1	1	4%
Total	26	26	100%

n=26

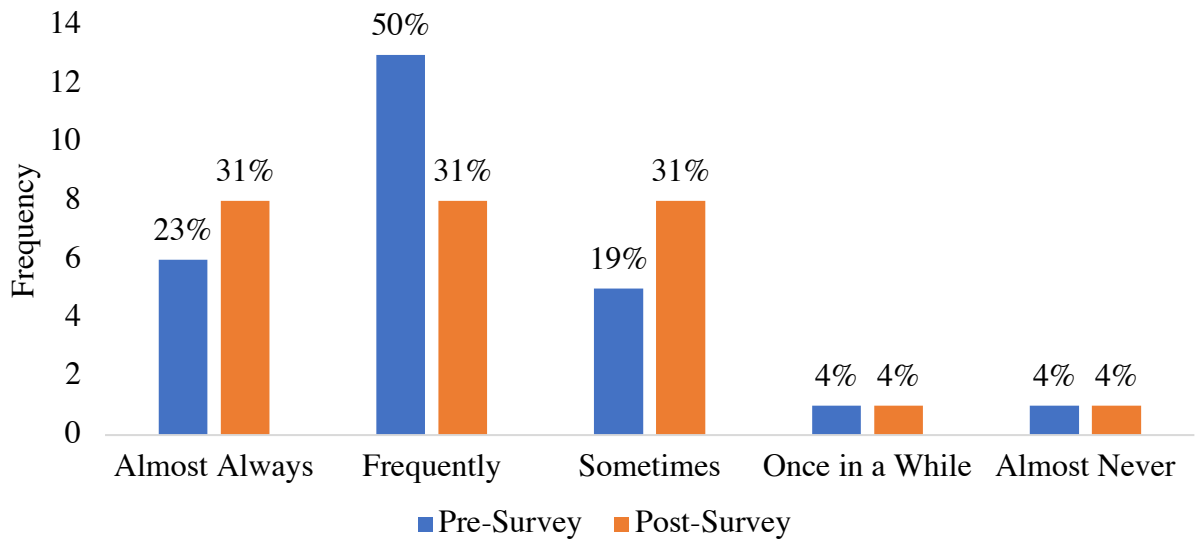

Figure 17. 1. Did You Give Your Family Member a Compliment?

In Figure 18. 1, data for the question *Did your family member compliment you?* revealed that 15 students said "Almost Always" or "Frequently" in the pre-survey compared to 16 students in the post-survey. While 8 students said "Sometimes" and 3 responded "Once in a While" in the pre-survey compared to 4 said that in the "Sometimes" and 3 in the "Once in a While" for the post-survey. They increased from 0 to 3 in the "Almost Never" category. The

majority of the students reported that their teachers complimented them “Sometimes” (29%), followed by “Almost Always”, “Frequently”, “Once in a While”, and “Almost Never” at (18%) (see Table 18. 1).

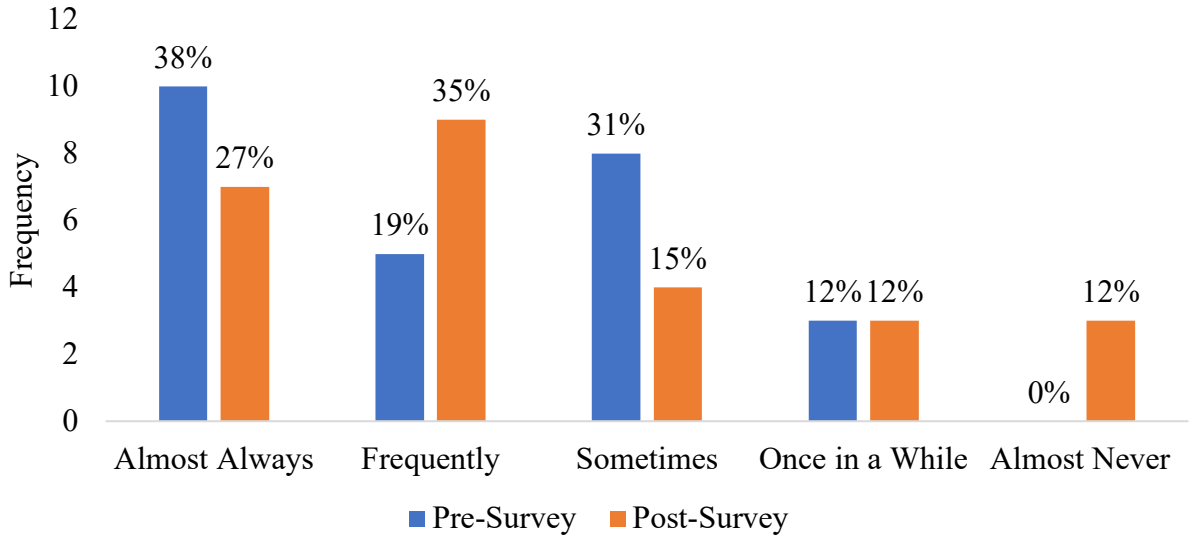

Figure 18. 1. Did Your Family Member Compliment You?

Table 18. 1

Did Your Teachers Compliment You?

Student Participant Response	Pre-Survey	Post-Survey	%
Almost Always	6	3	18%
Frequently	3	6	18%
Sometimes	8	7	29%
Once in a While	4	5	18%
Almost Never	4	5	18%
Total	25*	26	100%

**Note* one student did not answer this question in the pre-survey

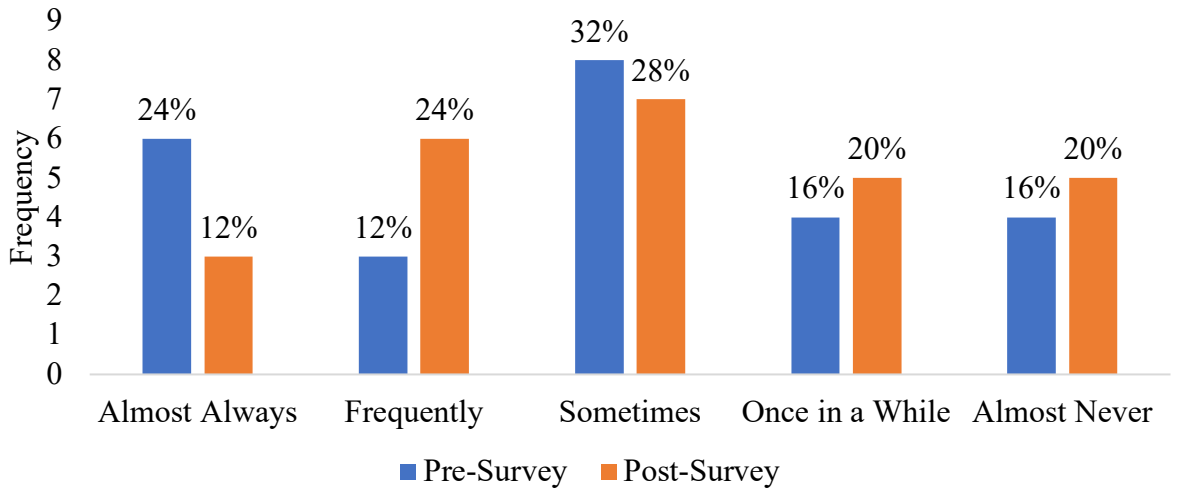

Figure 19. 1. Did Your Teachers Compliment You?

For the question *What is your goal for better social skills and well-being?* Students were allowed to rank up to 3 choices. Among first choices, "School Success" and "Pay Attention" tied for the most responses with seven. Next, "Less Stressed" and "Complete Goals" tied for the most responses with seven as their second choice. While among the third choice, "School Success" was the most common response for the goal of better social skills and well-being (n=5) (Figure 20. 1).

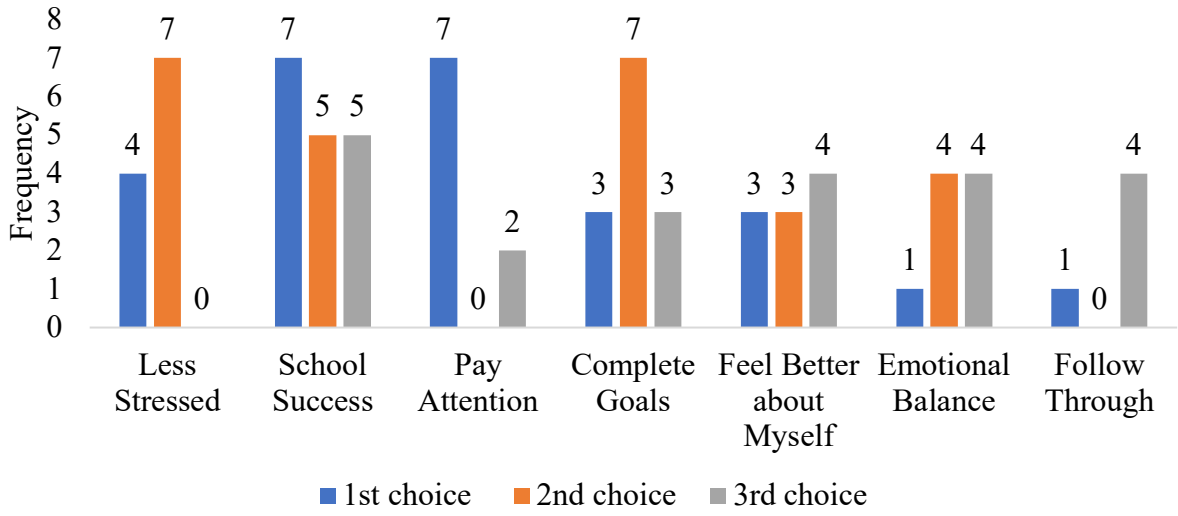

Figure 20. 1. Social Skills and Well-being Ranking

Among all choices, “School Success” had the most responses with 17. Next, 13 mentioned “Complete Goals”, 11 said “Less Stressed”, 10 “Feel Better about Myself,” 9 reported “Emotional Balance” and “Pay Attention,” 5 “Follow Through,” and 3 “Other (Figure 21. 1).

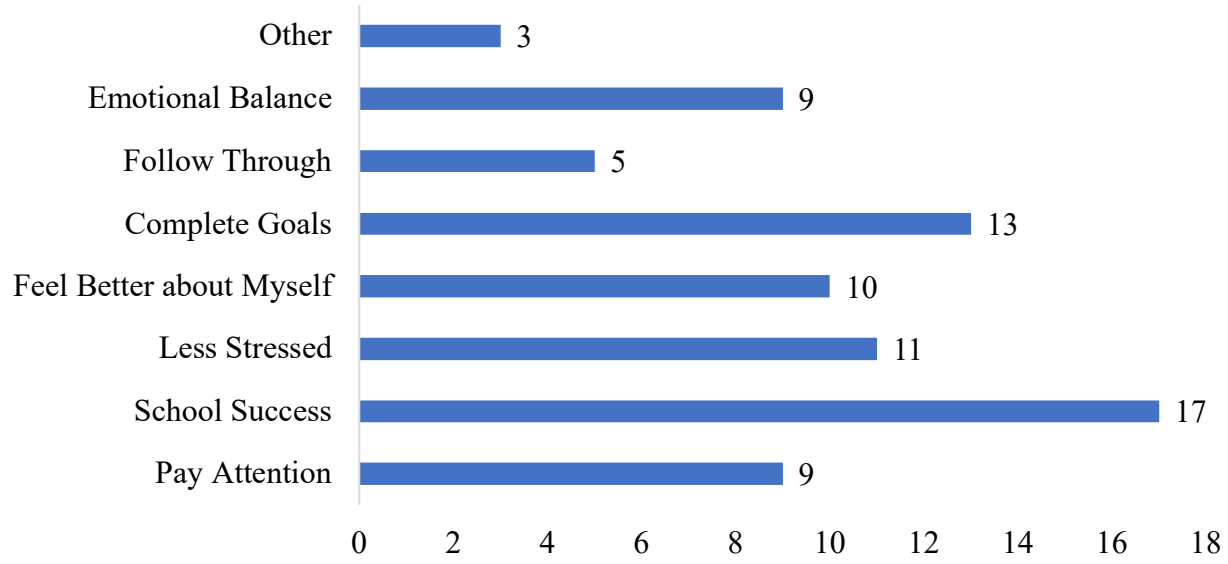

Figure 21. 1. Top Social Skills and Well-being Goal

Data Analysis

Overall Mindfulness Student Well-being

Overall mindfulness social skills and well-being were calculated via an average on performance of mindfulness well-being questions (see Table 19. 1).

Table 19. 1

Well-Being Survey Questions

Q13. *Were able to calm yourself down when someone was making you upset?*
Q14. *Did you give your family member a compliment?*
Q15. *Did your family member compliment you?*
Q16. *Did your teachers compliment you?*
Q17. *What is your goal for better social skills and well-being?*

Paired Sample *t*-Test

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare the average frequency of mindfulness well-being before and after an 8-week mindfulness intervention. There was not a significant difference in the well-being scores pre (M = 3.53, SD = .64) and post (M = 3.47, SD = 0.79) conditions; t (25) =.35, p = 0.73 (Figure 22. 1).

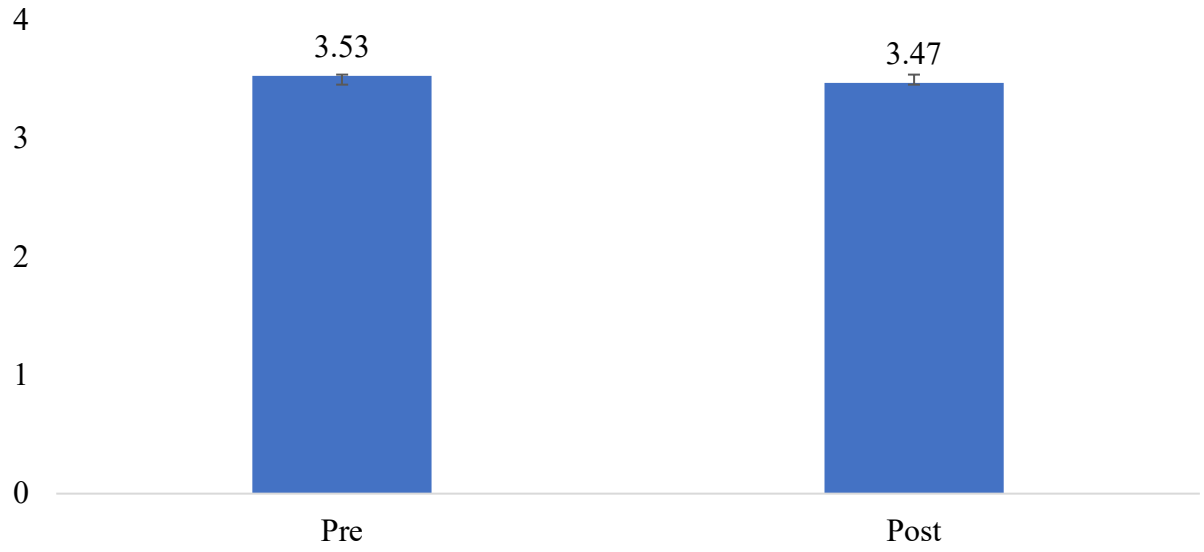

Figure 22. 1. Overall Mindfulness Well-being Scores

Qualitative Student Responses for Mindfulness Well-being

Contrary to the quantitative statistical results, in the qualitative portion students expressed using the coping strategies learned from the MYSELF intervention in their everyday life. One student expressed (#452) "I use the S.T.A.R (Smile Take a deep breath And Release) with my brother because he is so annoying and it helps me not get angry with him." Another student stated that she would do breathing exercises with her little sister because it would help her sister when she was having a temper tantrum. This indicated to the researcher that students are using the strategies in real live situations (see Table 20. 1).

Qualitative Teacher Responses for Mindfulness Well-being on Students Pre-Intervention

Teachers felt that self-regulation was important for fifth graders to learn and acquire the skills necessary for them to be able to control their emotions and behaviors. Teacher One described that having self-regulation would deter student's physical aggression and emotional outburst.

Table 20. 1

Self-Regulation

Question 21: *What is the importance of self-regulation?*	
Teacher 1	Control themselves and their emotions. Increasingly important in our day and age to keep your emotions under control and not "outburst."
Teacher 2	The importance of self-regulation is to understand that there is a consequence for certain actions, and self-regulating enables the person/student to reassess any situation and make the best choice possible.
Question 23: What does emotional and behavioral self-regulation look like for a fifth-grade student?	
Teacher 1	Not having a meltdown when they don't get their way. Not punching someone who cuts them in the lunch line. Not getting angry when they don't get called on
Teacher 2	My goal for my students is for them to be self-aware and understand how their mind works and how they can approach or deal with a challenge they are faced with. With mindfulness come growth mind set and I feel that students need this more than ever before.

Qualitative Teacher Response on Student's Well-Being Post-Intervention

Once the MYSELF intervention was completed, Teacher One acknowledged that "my students really need SEL help, and I don't always know how to give it to them. What I am seeing is that some of my students do not know how to process the difficult things going on around them, they bottle up their emotions inside, and cannot regulate." This supported the students

comments how using the breathing strategies has helped them when being upset, annoyed or needing to calm down (Table 21. 1).

Table 21. 1

Lessons Learned from Implementation of MYSELF Intervention

Question 7: What have you learned through the implementation of the social emotional and mindfulness intervention process in your classroom?	
Teacher 1	My students really need SEL help, and I don't always know how to give it to them. What I am seeing is that some of my students do not know how to process the difficult things going on around them, they bottle up their emotions inside and cannot regulate.
Teacher 2	I have learned that students struggled with attending another class that is not with their regular teacher. Students felt that they didn't need to attend something that was not graded or part of their grade. Students who attended the mindfulness sessions would return to my class and share some strategies they learned with their peers.

When asked what strategies did you find your students were most engaged in? Teacher One shared that activities that had a high-level of social interaction amongst their peers were the most attended by students. Teacher Two shared that the yoga and mindfulness deep breathing exercises were the strategies students would like to take part in during class for brain break activities. Both teachers indicated that the MYSELF intervention was useful to build on the student's social skills when they have to work with others and mindfulness helped them have a better understanding of themselves. (Table 22. 1).

Table 22. 1

Student Engagement and Social Skills

Question 8: What strategies did you find your students were most engaged in? What strategies did you find to be ineffective, if any?	
Teacher 1	Highest engagement is Fun Friday because they get to see their peers. They were more engaged in discussion style as opposed to direct instruction, they are more engaged in videos like mystery science, and games like Kahoot.
Teacher 2	Most students were engaged in the deep breathing and yoga poses to help get their brain juices flowing. They would suggest strategies we could do as a whole group to take a brain break.
Question 9: How did the self-regulation interventions assisted in your students' social skills? (i.e., Getting along with others, collaborating w/peers at groups, attentively listening, less disruptive)	
Teacher 1	The self-regulation skills are important and helpful for my students because they have forgotten social skills due to the extended COVID situation. They have forgotten how to work with others and how to listen attentively, and this intervention has assisted them with those skills that they are no longer regularly using.
Teacher 2	The first group of students who attended the mindfulness class already had high self-regulation and awareness of their social emotional skills. Being in the class they received more background and had a deeper understanding of themselves.

The researcher was pleased to hear what the teachers hoped to achieve by incorporating SEL and mindfulness into their classrooms. Teacher Two stated, "my goal was for my students is for them to self-aware and understand how their mind works and how they can approach or deal with a challenge they are faced with." Teacher One shared how every year he has 2-3 students who have symptoms of depression or severe anger management issues…and hopes that by incorporating social emotional learning and mindfulness in the classroom this will support his students (Table 23. 1).

Table 23. 1

Teacher's Aspirations for MYSELF Skills in theClassroom

Question 23: What do you hope to achieve by incorporating social emotional learning and mindfulness self-regulation skills in your classroom?	
Teacher 1	Continued assistance for students who struggle with self-regulation. every year I have 2-3 students who have symptoms of depression, and every year I have 2-3 students with severe anger management issues.... I think these skills will really help those students.
Teacher 2	My goal for my students is for them to be self-aware and understand how their mind works and how they can approach or deal with a challenge they are faced with. With mindfulness come growth mindset and I feel that students need this more than ever before.

In Table 24. 1, Teachers expressed how the MYSELF intervention was beneficial to the students in the class. For the 2020-21 school year, students have been learning remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and for this reason Teacher One shared that it supported the students with any trauma or emotional concerns that they may be having. Teacher Two expressed how the student were more willing to turn on their cameras and participate during the core class.

Table 24. 1

Additional Teacher Thoughts on MYSELF Experience

Question 25: *Is there anything else you think is important in understanding your experience with the social emotional learning and mindfulness intervention conducted in your classroom? or your own experience in the process as the teacher?*	
Teacher 1	Even with all of the hectic situations we've encountered due to COVID-19 and wars in home countries the stability this has brought to my students should be very beneficial. 2020 was a year of trauma and concern on the minds of ten-year-olds.
Teacher 2	I felt that the entire experience was very beneficial to my students. I noticed students become more comfortable with turning on and keeping their cameras on. They were more responsive when I requested cameras on and participation.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked whether the implementation of the MYSELF intervention affected the classrooms according to the teachers. Prior to the implementation of the MYSELF intervention, when asked if there were any special qualities that teachers needed to teach a social emotional learning or mindfulness lesson both teachers felt that they had to understand it themselves and be aware of their own wellness before they could do the lessons on students. When asked how they saw SEL being used in the classroom, Teacher Two provided examples of using stories and closed listening activities while Teacher One thought that SEL needed to begin at an early age, so that the grades could build upon the student's knowledge of SEL. Both teachers saw mindfulness as a strategy to help students focus, calm down, and problem solve (Table 25. 1).

Table 25. 1

Perceived Skills Needed to Teach Mindfulness

Question 15: *Are there any special qualities you think a teacher needs to teach a social emotional learning or mindfulness lesson with children?*	
Teacher 1	Teacher has to understand it themselves.
Teacher 2	Yes, a teacher needs to be aware of their own social and emotion wellness before they can project their lesson on students.
Question 20: *How do you see mindfulness or social emotional learning being used in the classroom?*	
Teacher 1	Needs to start young. Teach them how to calm themselves, self-regulate, work with others.... from Kinder. Build on it as they get older.
Teacher 2	I see social emotional learning being used through stories and close listening activities
Question 12: *How do you see Mindfulness being used in the classroom?*	
Teacher 1	Helping students to focus and calm themselves.
Teacher 2	I can see mindfulness being used during a difficult or challenging task where students need to reset their focus and remember strategies to problem solve. They should not give up when they are being challenged. They should look at the problem/challenge from other perspectives.

Qualitative Teacher Response

How Teachers felt about Implementation of MYSELF Post-Intervention

After the MYSELF intervention, teachers were asked what they learned from the process, what types of learning opportunities were created because of the MYSELF intervention, and what did they find most helpful as a teacher. Teacher One noticed that students really needed SEL support to process their emotions and did not anticipate how much more comfortable the students felt about expressing themselves and working with their peers after the MYSELF intervention. Furthermore, Teacher One revealed that what was the most helpful as a teacher was the students being able to problem solve and to stay calm. Teacher Two reported that students

struggled in attending other classes that were not their core class, but those that did attend enjoyed sharing mindfulness strategies learned with their peers and using the breathing exercises when faced with a challenging lesson (Table 26. 1).

Table 26. 1

Teacher Discovery from the MYSELF Implementation

Question 7: *What have you learned through the implementation of the social emotional and mindfulness intervention process in your classroom?*	
Teacher 1	My students really need SEL help and I don't always know how to give it to them. What I am seeing is that some of my students do not know how to process the difficult things going on around them, they bottle up their emotions inside and cannot regulate.
Teacher 2	I have learned that students struggled with attending another class that is not with their regular teacher. Students felt that they didn't need to attend something that was not graded or part of their grade. Students who attended the mindfulness sessions would return to my class and share some strategies they learned with their peers.
Question 11: What types of learning opportunities were created through the usage of social emotional learning and mindfulness self-regulation that you did not anticipate?	
Teacher 1	Students felt more comfortable expressing themselves and working with their peers.
Teacher 2	Students who attended the mindfulness class were more aware and knowledgeable of self-regulation strategies versus those who did not attend and were on their own to watch mindfulness videos. Students who participated in the mindfulness class also were eager to share what they learned with their peers.
Question 13: *What part of mindfulness do you find the most helpful as a teacher? (Please describe a specific example or situation that you use in the classroom).*	
Teacher 1	problem solving skills and peer socialization skills, ability to work through problems and difference and to stay calm and focused.
Teacher 2	I found the breathing strategies were very helpful especially when the students faced challenging problems in lessons. Taking deep breaths helped them refocus and try problem solving another way. Also yoga, stretching, and breathing helped them rejuvenate their brain function while they were taking a long test.

Both teachers stated that they would continue with the mindfulness process in their classroom. However, when asked if they felt comfortable in implementing social emotional learning and mindfulness skills in the classroom on a Likert scale, with 1 being Not at All Comfortable and 5 being Very Comfortable, both teachers selected 3. Moreover, Teacher Two said, “In regard to how comfortable I would feel continuing to implement SEL and mindfulness, I would feel a " 5, Very Comfortable" if someone were with me co-teaching. Otherwise, I would be between a 2 and 3” (Figure 23. 1).

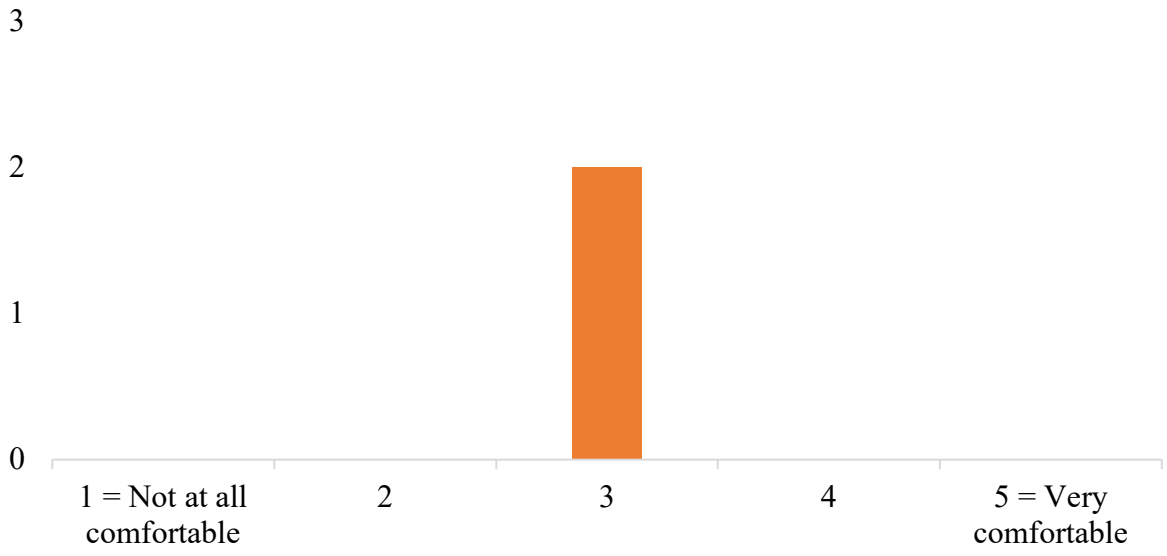

Figure 23. 1. Level of Teacher Comfort Implementing Mindfulness and SEL in the Classroom

Furthermore, when asked what other support they would need to continue SEL and mindfulness skills in the classroom, Teacher One shared needing a model of how to teach others the skills as they knew how to do mindfulness for themselves, but not comfortable yet on how to instruct others. Similarly, Teacher Two shared that if someone was supporting them by co-teaching with the SEL and mindfulness lessons they would feel more comfortable (Table 27. 1).

Table 27. 1

Teacher Discussion on Teacher Support Needed

Question 20: What other support do you need to continue social emotional learning and mindfulness skills in your classroom?	
Teacher 1	I do not know how to teach mindfulness, only how to do it myself, I would need some sort of model of how to instruct others / plan how to teach someone the skills.
Teacher 2	I would like the continued support of virtual Face-to-Face because students can actually ask questions and have a discussion on the topic versus just watching a pre-recorded video where they cannot ask/answer questions. As a teacher, I prefer having a discussion with a live person regarding mindfulness. In regard to how comfortable I would feel continuing to implement SEL and mindfulness, I would feel a " 5, Very Comfortable" if someone were with me co-teaching. Otherwise, I would be between and "2 and 3"

Research Question 4

Qualitative Teacher Response: Pre-Intervention

Research question four inquired how teacher trainings on the MYSELF intervention social emotional learning and mindfulness behavioral skills supported teachers' well-being. According to data collected, both teachers indicated that mindfulness is a skill and a trait that can be fostered through practice. Likewise, teachers shared that practicing mindfulness constantly creates for cultivation of developing a mindfulness skill awareness. Teacher One stated, "Same way they learn how to play piano. They study, concentrate, reflect, and improve on the skill." This indicated that mindfulness was seen as a habit that needs to be formed through time and practice (Table 28. 1).

Table 28. 1

Teacher Discussion on Mindfulness Practice

Question 13*: Do you believe mindfulness can be cultivated or is it an inherent trait?*	
Teacher 1	Probably a little of both, probably a lot to do with parenting (cultivation) but also their environment, but just like everything else, skills and practices can be learned.
Teacher 2	I feel that mindfulness is a bit of both. A person has some inherent traits that need to be developed.
Question 14*: How can a person develop more mindfulness (if pervious answer is a cultivation belief)?*	
Teacher 1	Same way they learn how to play piano. They study, concentrate, reflect, and improve on the skill.
Teacher 2	A person can develop more mindfulness through the teachings and modeling of those around them and also through continued practice.

Researcher investigated what mindfulness strategies teachers were using to support their self-care prior to the intervention. Teachers responded to not taking care of their well-being as they were stressed with too much work and not enough time. When probed further regarding any experience they had with mindfulness, teachers shared that they tried using apps or breathing techniques (Table 29. 1).

Table 29. 1

Teacher Discussion on Self-Care

Question 16: *What do you do for your own teacher well-being or self-care?*	
Teacher 1	NOT ENOUGH. I am way too stressed out. My stress progressively rises over the school year, reaching a peak during state testing and staying that way until the last report card is mailed out on the last day of school.
Teacher 2	Lately...nothing.
Question 17: *Please describe any experiences you may have had with meditation or mindful awareness practices? And, How did these experiences make you feel?*	
Teacher 1	Have tried using apps and YouTube videos to calm my body and clear my mind. Very good at thinking about nothing...until I get distracted by my own thoughts.
Teacher 2	Taking deep breaths and having a focus point are helpful with calming the mind and body in any given situation. These practices helped me find clarity and relax.

Additionally, Teacher Two was familiar with using an SEL curriculum (*Second Step*) when teaching at a younger grade level. Also, Teacher Two stated, "Emotional and behavioral self-regulation impacts social interactions with adults and peers because they may lack communication skills in a social setting." This suggested that learning social skills is important, as it impacts how one communicates with others as adults (Table 30. 1).

Table 30. 1

Social Interactions and Self-Regulation

Question 18: *Have you heard, used, or been introduced to social emotional learning or mindfulness (i.e., Second Step, RULER, MindUp, PATHS, etc.)?*	
Teacher 1	No.
Teacher 2	Yes
Question 25: *How does emotional and behavioral self-regulation impact social interactions with adults and peers?*	
Teacher 1	No response given
Teacher 2	Emotional and behavioral self-regulation impacts social interactions with adults and peers because they may lack communication skills in a social setting.

Qualitative Teacher Response: Post-Intervention

Following the completion of the MYSELF intervention, both teachers were able to better define mindfulness as staying in the present moment. When asked to give an example of how mindfulness can help with teaching, Teacher One revealed that the mindfulness has helped students virtually by providing tools to understand their stressors and begin to self-regulate. Similarly, Teacher Two also highlighted the tools the intervention provided to manage stress. However, Teacher Two pointed out the utility of the mindfulness breathing tools for use of the teachers. They described how challenging a new math concept was to teach virtually and how the breathing tools helped them overcome the difficulty of the lesson for the students. Specifically, they described how using the breathing strategies alleviated their stress during the process on teaching a challenging lesson already. Both teachers stated that the mindfulness strategies helped them with their interaction with colleagues. Teacher One described how mindfulness helped check their response to situations that were out of their control. Similarly, Teacher Two

discussed how taking deep breathes and pausing before responding has helped in situations where if lead by emotions aggravate the issue at hand (Table 31. 1).

Table 31. 1

Teacher Understanding of Mindfulness Post-Intervention

Question 12: *How would you define mindfulness now that you have participated in the intervention program?*	
Teacher 1	Staying in the present and being able to focus on the task at hand and not the worries of the past or future.
Teacher 2	Mindfulness is being present in the moment and not focusing on past events or worrying about future events.
Question 14: *Can you give an example or a story that helps show how mindfulness can help with teaching?*	
Teacher 1	I have several students who are high strung and have anxiety in the virtual classroom and mindfulness has helped them to understand and start to regulate the feels and stressors that they experience. they are young and do not naturally know what to do when they feel this way and they need it to be taught and modeled to them.
Teacher 2	I recently introduced a new math topic to my students, Coordinate Grids. Having never taught these lessons virtually, I knew it would be a challenge. So, I prepared myself with giving myself a pep talk that it was OKAY if they didn't understand right away and made sure I took a few calming breaths before, during, and after the lesson. I made plans if/when the lesson was a bust that I would have a back-up plan. The lesson was brutal but my patience was key when presenting the lesson. Even if the questions were repeated by the students, I knew that they all would benefit from hearing it again. By the end of the second day of the lesson, I saw a change in my students, the lightbulb had gone off, and they were understanding it.
Question 15: *Did the social emotional learning and mindfulness intervention help you with your interaction with colleagues? Students' parents? (Please describe an example or situation)*	
Teacher 1	I think it has helped me to not get stressed out at work when working with others and dealing with school bureaucracy that is outside my control and also is insane.
Teacher 2	YES!! Definitely! On occasion when a colleague oversteps their boundaries, I took deep breaths and chose not to respond immediately because if I wasn't in the correct mindset, I would have said things based on emotion and would probably have made it worse. Once I let go of the frustration, I was able to calmly discuss the situation and solve the problem.

After the MYSELF intervention, both teachers stated that they have been practicing mindfulness on their own a few times a week or daily and would continue to do so. Both teachers described taking care of their physical and mental health, for example, through walking, drinking more fluids and taking vitamins. When asked what advice you would give a future teacher incorporating an SEL and mindfulness program into their classroom, both teachers expressed the importance of taking care of their well-being first before instructing others (Table 32. 1).

Table 32. 1

Discussion on Teacher Self-Care

Question 16: *Have you practiced mindfulness on your own as part of your self-care?*	
Teacher 1	Yes, Ms. Hande has taught me some of the breathing techniques as well as some of the mindfulness yoga poses and I have tried a few.
Teacher 2	Yes
Question 17: Do you see yourself continuing with mindfulness in the future as part of your self-care?	
Teacher 1	I will likely continue to model it and practice it in the classroom as I have seen that some of my students really do need it as they lives are way too stressful for being ten.
Teacher 2	Yes.
Question 18: *How often do you practice mindfulness? (if you answered that you use mindfulness as your self-care?)*	
Teacher 1	probably a few times a week.
Teacher 2	I practice mindfulness daily.
Question 19: *What else do you do to maintain your self-care?*	
Teacher 1	Try very hard to focus on things within my ability to control and not get overwhelmed by things I have no control over (no matter how stupid those things are). Also, sarcasm is a healthy coping mechanism. Also, I regularly walk at work with coworkers and at home after work to clear my mind and relax.
Teacher 2	I take vitamins, drink fluids, walk when I can.
Question 24: *What advice could you give to a future teacher that hopes to incorporate social emotional learning and mindfulness into his/her classroom?*	
Teacher 1	you have to help yourself before you can help others!!!!!! put your own mask on before putting masks on for others around you. if you don't take care of yourself first, you won't be able to help those around you who need it.
Teacher 2	Mindfulness starts with you (the teacher) first. Self-care is important as well as self-reflection. One must understand their own mindfulness before they can project it to others.

Summary

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to understand if 1) the student's behavior was influenced by the MYSELF intervention; 2) the student's well-being was supported by the MYSELF intervention; 3) the teacher's noticed a difference in their classroom with the implementation of the MYSELF intervention; and 4) did the teacher trainings of the MYSELF intervention support teachers' well-being. The total number of participants in this study was 26 students, and 2 teachers.

For Research Question 1, How does the MYSELF intervention influence student behavior in the fifth-grade classroom? and Research Question 3, How did the implementation of the MYSELF intervention affect the classroom according to the teachers? Analysis of the pre and post student surveys, teacher interviews, and researchers notes found that although there was no academic significant findings the teachers did notice student participation in class increase and their ability to problem solve.

For Research Question 2, How does the MYSELF intervention support students' well-being? and Research Question 4, How did the teacher trainings of the MYSELF intervention support teachers' well-being? Students shared that they were using the strategies taught in the intervention when they had a test, or facing an emotional challenge (i.e., annoying brother) at home. Teachers emphasized that giving the students social skills and mindfulness tools during distance learning and COVID-19 pandemic was needed at this time. Teachers shared that the trainings were useful for their own well-being but did not feel comfortable yet to teach mindfulness social-emotional skill activities in class without more guidance or co-teaching with another teacher who was familiar with the content. Findings, also showed, that the teachers were using the mindfulness strategies learned for their own self-care.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

This study investigated the development of behavioral self-regulation strategies in fifth-grade students through a social-emotional learning mindfulness-based yoga intervention (MBYI) designed by the Researcher, Mindfulness Yoga Social-Emotional Learning Focus: MYSELF (Hande, 2020). At the time of this research project, the school was operating only online learning due to the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). This study's primary purpose was to understand how fifth-grade students (nine and ten-year-old) in their final year of elementary school responded to a mindfulness intervention. If any, the curriculum's effects and how to adjust to suit better this population's needs, the transitional student from elementary to middle school. This study's implication may prove relevant not only to educators working with transitional elementary-to-secondary students but also to educators who wish to implement a mindfulness curriculum with any elementary school students.

Summary of the Study

The evolving development of mindfulness in elementary school (Armstrong, 2019; Brackett & Rivers, 2014; Daniel, 2018; Gibbs, 2017; Johnson et al., 2017; Lawlor, 2016) indicates that students in all grade levels are receiving mindfulness and social-emotional skills to help them cope with their own specific needs and circumstances. This study examined how mindfulness impacts a small group of fifth-graders transitioning to middle school. It sought to understand their experiences with the MYSELF intervention. It focused on what aspects of the MYSELF were explicitly relevant to the students and how the MYSELF intervention and other elements can be changed or modified to increase its effectiveness. Although this study's participants attended a small, urban elementary school, the findings were likely relevant for

educators looking to understand how students transitioning from elementary to middle school may respond to a mindfulness and social skills curriculum intervention.

Further, this study contributed to the growing literature examining the effects of mindfulness on children. Though many qualitative and quantitative studies have been done (Biegel et al., 2009; Britton et al., 2014; Greenberg & Harris, 2012; Johnson et al., 2017; Lawlor, 2007; Leland, 2015; Mendelson, et al., 2010; Parker et al., 2014; Perry-Parish et al., 2016), few examine mindfulness from an online learning perspective (Carter, Rice, Yang, & Jackson, 2020). And there were even fewer that directly focused on the transition of students from elementary to middle school. The researcher hoped to make mindfulness an essential component of social-emotional learning interventions and development efforts within elementary schools by adding to this research.

In this Discussion Chapter, the researcher related the findings' interpretation based on the data analysis presented in Chapter 5. Common elements between the students' experiences and factors contributing to these were explored and connected to current research in the field. These broad interpretations of student group-level data then segued into implications for the field of mindfulness and social-emotional learning that derived from this study and specific suggestions for practitioners curious to learn more about mindfulness with students transitioning from elementary to middle school. Included in this study was an account of the strengths and limitations. The Chapter concluded with a discussion of future directions for research in mindfulness with student transitions from elementary to middle school.

Interpretation of the Findings

This study sought to investigate how a mindfulness-based yoga intervention (MBYI) can effect the self-regulation behaviors of fifth-grade students. At the group-level, several conclusions were made, based on both group-level and patterns seen between individual data. Interpretations and connections to current mindfulness intervention research were made regarding experiences, response to the MYSELF intervention, adjustments to the MYSELF intervention, and the factors that impacted student experiences.

The findings were organized by each of the research questions. The quantitative and qualitative findings were combined to tackle the main questions that lead this study. The themes that emerged from the student responses included student-teacher relationship, distance learning ("Zoom Fatigue"), trauma, and home-to-school connections.

Research Question 1: How does the MYSELF intervention influence student behavior in the fifth-grade classroom?

The most important aspect of the teacher-student interaction is the bond created between teacher and students within the walls of their classroom. According to John Hattie's (2009) research, "It is teachers who have created positive teacher student relationships that are more likely to have the above average effects on student achievement."

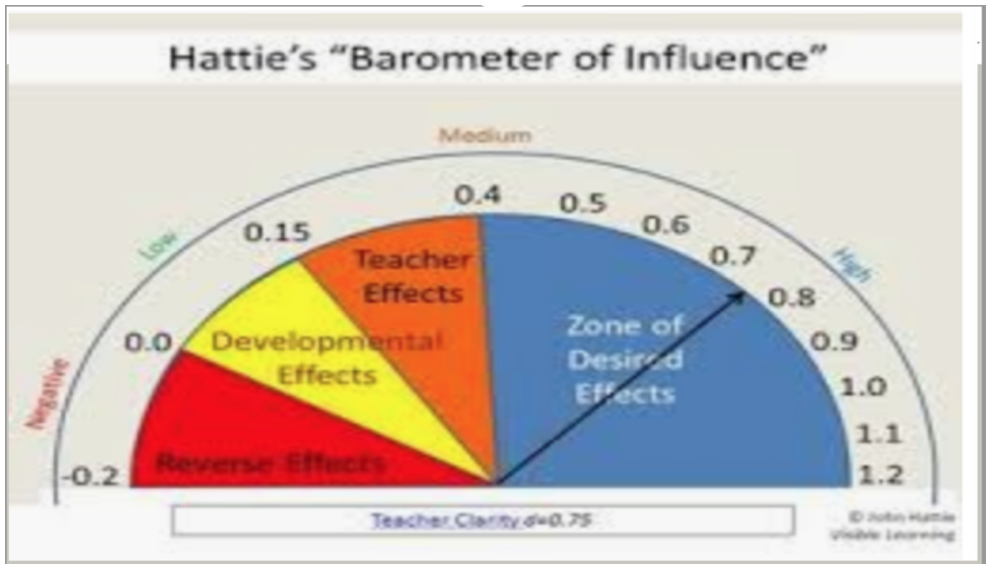

Figure 24. 1. Barometer of Influence. Hattie, J. (2009). Visible Learning, pg. 19.

Hattie and Zierer (2017) developed a Barometer of Influence that reads from left to right, "reverse effects," "developmental effects," and "zone of desired effects." Hattie and Zierer (2017) showed that the following teacher skills developed stronger relationships: listening skills, empathy, mutual respect, caring, and positive regard.

The student pre-and post-survey results about listening to their teachers, parents, or friend/sibling generated a higher response in both the pre-and post-survey when it came to listening to their parents. Also, slight growth was seen in the post-survey when listening to teachers. Although there was no statistically significant difference between the pre-and-post-student surveys, this showed the researcher that students had a strong desire to listen to their parents at this stage in their development. Moreover, as the students were in class longer, they developed a better teacher-student relationship. This may be due to establishing an individual relationship with their teacher, more student engagement, teacher interactive online lessons using Nearpod, Kahoot, Zoom polls, Homework Help, and Friday Fundays. One of the teachers had "eat lunch with a friend": Students go into online breakrooms and have lunch or a snack with

each other. Another teacher did interactive science lessons, discussions, and experiments for both classes. "Student engagement and commitment is built through discussion of the learning intentions, success criteria, and tasks" (Fisher, Frey, & Hattie, 2016, p.47). The two teachers provided more online social games with art lessons and non-instructional interactive activities to supplement their daily class assignments. This resulted in friendly competitions developing between the two teachers: "How many students wore their spirit shirts today?" "Whose class had the most students solve the daily poll question? "Which class has the most points?" These developed into engaging, interactive content lessons made for a stronger teacher-student relationship and connected with the students even on Zoom. All of these could have contributed to the increase in the post-survey tests on listening to their teacher.

The teachers also indicated that most students were problem-solving more, staying on task, and experiencing fewer interruptions. The students were also participating more with their cameras turned on. This was an ongoing classroom problem as many students did not want to turn their cameras on and would only use their computer microphones, muting themselves on and off. The increase in visual participation could be attributed to the students feeling more comfortable by being in the MYSELF intervention as a small cohort amongst themselves and had to have their cameras on while they were participating in the yoga, mindful breathing and social-emotional intervention lessons, so that the researcher could observe correct yoga positions and establish a connection with them. The student's comfort and familiarity within their small cohort could have transferred to their classroom, and their sense of belonging was stronger once they did the MYSELF intervention in a small group. One of the teachers stated that she noticed that the students who participated in MYSELF enjoyed sharing mindful breathing and yoga strategies with the rest of the class as a brain break activity. Having this familiarity with the

students and each other in the short time that intervention was conducted, the researcher believes created a closer bond to feel comfortable to lead a mindfulness activity in the core class. "It has long been known that one of the most fundamental insights from educational research is that a positive teacher-student relationship is essential for successful learning" (Hattie & Zierer, 2018, p. 132). From the qualitative perspective, both teachers indicated that they noticed more students participating.

On the student survey question, "Did you have a hard time staying on task, or do you get easily distracted?" Although fewer students said, "almost always" in the post-survey than the pre-survey, this could be because the students felt the stress and pressure of being online for school for a more extended period, resulting in "Zoom fatigue." The students were sent online mindfulness assignments to complete weekly. Some students would email them right back with nothing written on them. The researcher asked their teachers if they had the same problem with their assignments, and they said, "Yes, it is a problem that we constantly are dealing with." When the researcher asked the intervention group, "Why do students turn in assignments right back with nothing completed?" Student #546 shared this response:

> It's not that we're trying to be pranksters, or that we're trying to hide the work from our parents so that they don't see the work that we need to do. It's just that we want it off our plates. It's just too much. Seeing all of those assignments is just too overwhelming. And to just get it off my plate, I just return it back. I know that the teacher is eventually going to return it back to me and maybe at that time I might be ready to do it.

S#546's experience is how he is dealing with the pressure of doing assignments during COVID-19 and online. The researcher thanked S#546 for his honesty and candor.

On a scale of using distractions, many students equated being distracted with being bored. This suggests that the students see boredom in the classroom as a distraction. There is little research that connects that boredom and distraction are the students' perspectives.

Research Question 2: How does the MYSELF student support students' well-being in the fifth-grade classroom?

This study indicated that there was a connection between student's well-being and a home-to-school connection. One of the quantitative questions was, "Were you able to calm yourself down when someone was making you upset?" Surprisingly, there was a decrease in the post-survey where it was thought there would be an increase since the students had the MYSELF intervention. One explanation could be that during this time, there was an ongoing war in the students' home country (Azerbaijan, an Armenian province, was in a territorial conflict with Turkey). The students were concerned about uncles, brothers, cousins, grandparents, or friends living there or going back to fight in the war. Additionally, not only was the COVID-19 pandemic ongoing, but the students were also becoming aware of others who they know who had the coronavirus. It was not an incident that was far away seen on the nightly news. It was now closer to home. Relatives and friends were getting sick. These may have resulted in increased stressors that the MYSELF calming strategies may have decreased. However, the qualitative data indicates that the students did express how they used the different breathing strategies with their families and classmates. Zooming also played an important role. Because online Zooming was in the home environment, their primary interpersonal interactions were with their family members. The students shared that they showed their immediate family members the yoga poses and breathing strategies and why it will help to use them. The students would use them with their younger siblings and their parents.

The students also indicated that they would use the breathing strategies during class time while taking a test. Teachers shared that the students were more engaged with the social activities and were using mindfulness during their brain breaks. Teachers also expressed that although it was for a limited amount of time, the intervention was beneficial during this COVID-19 timeframe, and it was better than not having the intervention at all.

The researcher discovered that there was a generalization between school and home. For example, when students shared using the STAR breathing technique with their siblings, this demonstrated a connection between home and school, allowing the researcher to generalize between the classroom and other environments. So, with a war in their home country, a presidential election and social injustice in the United States, "Zoom fatigue," and personal trauma dealing with the coronavirus- all possibilities contributing to their stress factors, this could be the reason why the pre and the post showed a slight decrease. "During traumatic circumstances, such as a pandemic, the need to make online educational opportunities easy to access takes on new importance because many learners might not be in an emotional state to focus on learning. However, learners under duress may also find it more difficult than usual to be self-directed" (Carter, Rice, Yang, & Jackson, 2020, p. 322). However, the students still had the MYSELF strategies that they could refer to and use.

In the quantitative question on complements, the students were more complementary to their family. This was difficult for the students to understand, and the researcher had to explain what the word "complement" means during the pre-survey. However, once the lessons were taught in the MYSELF intervention with gratitude and showing kindness lessons, one of the assignments was to complement someone and be specific about the complement.

Having had the experience of giving a complement, and seeing the person's reaction to receiving it, may have led to a slight increase in the post-survey of the students' understanding of complements as no student during the post-survey asked what the term means. The students also wrote thank-you cards to doctors and nurses, gratitude cards to the soldiers in their homeland, and additional cards to their teachers, family members and others that they care for. All of these activities could have been factors resulting in the slight increase of their understanding.

The quantitative question, "What is your goal for better social skills and well-being?" resulted with the students overall selecting 'school success' as their first choice. This was followed by 'complete goals', 'less stress', and 'feel better about myself'. Students also indicated that they wanted their families to be proud of them, and that they wanted to feel good about themselves. The students indicated that one of the ways they could do this was by their achievement in school. Regarding their responses of 'complete goals', 'less stress', and 'feel better about themselves', the researcher had implemented lessons on following directions, and provided scenarios on classroom online learning situations. One scenario involved the students receiving a written plan of the class schedule for the day with a substitute: "What would you do if you woke up late? Where would you go at 8:00 a.m.?" Some students said, "I'll message my teacher." Some students responded, "But she's not going to be there. She's going to be in a meeting and won't be able to answer you." The researcher asked, "So what can we do?" One of the students responded, "I would stop, take a breath, and then go back and check the agenda and look at the schedule." The researcher asked the students, "Do you think this is a good idea?" Every student agreed it was a good idea and we all looked at the schedule.

Then we figured out where "Suzy", the student, needed to be at that time. The researcher also did "backward planning" to help the students with homework assignments and take

advantage of their teacher's homework help. Regarding 'feeling less stress' and 'feeling better about myself', the researcher did strategies on "self-talk" and how to stop the negative self-talk and use positive self-affirmations to support the development of students' self-confidence. Students also expressed that they liked the various breathing strategies offered to them because they could choose which ones they would prefer using. Most of the students liked doing the hand-breathing exercise because they could do it on their own. Other students appreciated that we were live, and being together allowed them to talk with each other and those students that they normally would not get a chance to talk to other than in the classroom. This strengthened their social skills and connection with each other. The researcher also was very aware that these students were doing what no other students have had to deal with. Learning using an online-only platform for an entire school year. The researcher at each intervention session always reminded and encouraged them by saying, "No one in the history of learning had to do all of it on-line. You are your own superheroes." The researcher's underlying finding was that we expect nine and ten-year-old's to manage their time with online learning. With face-to-face classroom instruction, their teacher would give them directives in how to manage their time: "We're going to recess now", "When we come back, we're going to open our math books." The teacher is right there to guide you and to keep you on task. That cannot be done right now. We expect the students to put their video cameras on and find the Zoom link to do their assignments. The researcher found that this was difficult for the students because they are still at the age where they need some guidance.

Research Question 3: How has the implementation of the MYSELF intervention affected the classrooms according to the teachers?

"The diagnoses of depression and anxiety are more common with increased age and behavior problems are more common among children aged 6-11 years than children younger or older." (Ghandour, et al., 2019). With the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers and students were forced to attend school remotely, and the trauma associated with it has shown an increase in stress and anxiety in our children. The factors of being isolated from their peers and the challenge of learning remotely and without the support and scaffolding of a teacher create an added pressure on students to do more work independently and manage their time which does not come naturally for nine and ten years old at this stage. Parents were also feeling overwhelmed with distance learning because they are now being asked to play a more active role in school on top of all the other roles that they already do. Moreover, if the household had more than one child to support with their schooling, parents spent most of their time with the younger child as they needed more help with logging in and keeping up with the teacher remotely than their older child. This added an extra layer of stress on our fifth graders as they wanted to help out their families by showing that they could handle their own schooling remotely. Prior to COVID-19, teachers were physically able to prompt and guide students as they monitored their school lessons or assignments throughout their day, but now that responsibility has shifted dramatically because of remote learning. Even though the teachers would verbally repeat, post assignments, send reminders and offer online help hours, fifth graders had to read their schedule, log into scheduled Zoom meetings, actively pay attention to what is being taught in the lessons, and pace themselves to ensure that assignments were posted on time and completed independently.

Both teachers recognized that their students needed social-emotional learning support to process their emotions. One teacher shared how helpful it was that the students could problem-solve and stay calm during this time of online learning and uncertainty with COVID-19. It helped make learning as normal and fun as possible for the students. When asked what type of learning opportunities through the intervention, the teachers expressed that their students felt more comfortable expressing themselves and working with their peers. They also said that their students enjoyed the live mindfulness classes because they could see the students returning to the classroom and being more engaged, wanting to participate, and share what they had learned. This was the complete opposite of their students' responses to the school district's online mindfulness videos. The researcher had asked the students, "If we did this again, would you like it to be live or watch a video?" All of the students indicated that they liked the live sessions because they got to interact with their peers, ask questions immediately, receive immediate feedback on how they were doing, and enjoyed being in small groups where they could engage with each other. When asked what part of the mindfulness intervention was most helpful to them, the teachers found that the breathing strategies were useful when facing challenging problems in class. Peer socialization skills and the ability to work through issues and stay calm and focus was another response from a teacher. However, although they liked and found the MYSELF mindfulness intervention helpful, both teachers selected a 3, right in the middle, on a five-point Likert scale. They felt comfortable regarding themselves in knowing what to do with the intervention strategies and breathing practices. Still, they did not feel comfortable yet teaching it themselves unless someone was co-teaching with them and guiding them along the way. Continued modeling of the intervention strategies and practices was essential for them to see. They were comfortable more than before but not comfortable enough to do it on their own.

Research Question 4: How do teacher trainings on the MYSELF intervention support teachers' well-being?

The teachers indicated that it was a great support because with online learning using Zoom, the teachers are in their own bubble and experience isolation from their peers and colleagues. There is not a feeling of connection. There were very few teachers teaching in their classrooms at the school site. The researcher noted that this lack of collegiality hindered the teacher-to-teacher relationships that are usually apparent on-site during the school year. The teachers indicated that being able to Zoom together, chit-chat, and catch up to see how they were doing was needed and was an excellent way to vent. Before COVID-19, teachers could go to each other's classrooms and say, "How was your day?", "Guess what happened to me?" At this time of this study, these teachers were unable to do this.

An important conclusive finding from this study is that the researcher developed a strong collegial collaboration with the teachers. Talking to them and finding out what was happening in their classrooms allowed the researcher to formulate scenarios that complement and support what they were doing in the classroom. Going to the classrooms and joining the students for Friday Fundays, playing the games with them helped establish the connection with both the students and teachers. The researcher would also help the teachers with their testing and placing their students in online breakout rooms. These interactive and interpersonal strategies made for a stronger connection and less isolation.

Regarding teacher's self-care, the pre-survey indicated that they had less time for self-care. This could be due to having to become familiar with their new classes and technology online routines. Also, teachers were more accessible online through Class Dojo messaging, district email, and Google classrooms, and it blurred the line of work and home life. "Creating a

clear and consistent messaging to students and family. Be clear about when you are not available, especially given that students' and parents' emails can arrive at all hours. Don't feel compelled to reply to emails immediately. Even if you are working from home, you can still set official work hours" (Pate, 2020, p. 6). The post-survey results indicated that teachers' mindfulness breathing techniques and support were taking place. They were walking more and walking with their co-workers. One of the teachers was teaching from his classroom, and the daily walking around the school helped him clear his mind, so he was more mentally alert and aware. Another teacher shared how she was doing a lesson on Zoom for the first time and found it challenging. "Do your best to keep fear and panic at bay and support healing and well-being by modeling calm behavior and emoting positively and optimistically" (Pate, 2020, p. 3). She designed a backup plan where she did a lot of breathing and pausing to give her the patience needed. So that when she taught the lesson, she was in the right mindset to do it. She also started taking vitamins and walking more.

The teachers also stated that their colleagues' interactions also influenced their self-care and helped them realize that certain things were beyond their control, that they could let them go, and not let it bother them. One teacher cited an example when she was bothered by what a co-worker was doing. She realized at that moment not to address it because it would make things worse. She used the moment to take the time to breathe and experience a mindful moment and decided to address the issue at a later time when she was in a better space.

The teacher responses indicated that the mindfulness intervention supported self-care and well-being. It also helped the students' well-being, even though it did not show a significant difference in the results. From what the students expressed and shared regarding their learning

The researcher determined that the mindfulness intervention was working and that it positively affected the students and the teachers.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study that must be considered in conjunction with the promising results. First, this study featured a small sample size, with uneven numbers of participants in the intervention group. This disparity was largely based on some of the initial challenges of conducting the study online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The second limitation of this study was the irregular student attendance because the researcher conducted the MYSELF interventions. As mentioned, this study was conducted during the height of the COVID-19 global pandemic. County education requirements were for online learning only. Each of the intervention sessions was conducted via Zoom. After their regular Zoom classroom sessions, the student participants had to individually enter themselves into the Zoom meeting to participate in each session. Throughout this study, session attendance and completion of each lesson varied between the participants. Some had regular attendance and completion; some were sporadic. This may result from their tiredness of the daily online learning ("Zoom Fatigue"), which resulted in the students' lack of consistency with their self-reporting and the learning sessions. At-home learning expectations also were not known by the researcher, for example, "Was the student monitored daily by an adult during the school day?"

A third limitation was the unknown effects of the recent war between Armenians and Azerbaijan that was ongoing during this study. Many of the students in this study were of Armenian descent and expressed how deeply emotional this situation was for themselves and their families.

A fourth limitation in this study was the amount of time the MYSELF intervention had to take place. The amount of time allotted to perform the intervention affected the amount of data collected. Although the experimental group demonstrated an increase in both self-efficacy and self-regulation, the average growth could have been more significant in both areas if the intervention period was longer. The sample size of this study was relatively small. A larger number of participants would have led to more data collected and analyzed.

The fifth limitation to this study was the mindfulness intervention participants' location, which affected their timeliness and attendance. Each student was at home remotely or in a learning pod with their own internet connectivity. The interventions were conducted online via Zoom sessions after their second break, and right before their lunch break. A few times, participants arrived five or more minutes late or did not attend at all. To create an incentive for the students' regular participation, the researcher provided all students a MYSELF participation certificate and the top five students from each teacher's class a $5 McDonald's gift card.

The sixth limitation to this study was students' capabilities in understanding a word in the survey that was necessary to conduct the research. Specifically, the term "complement" presented difficulty for them to know in the pre-survey. Additionally, this study's internal validity limitations as the students' self-reported assessments of the MYSELF program are susceptible to bias by the participants (Heppner, Wampold, & Kivlighan, 2008). Lastly, the researcher bias could have impacted the results as the primary investigator implemented the MYSELF program and had predetermined expectations of the students' outcomes.

Unintended Instructional Support

The researcher discovered that in a small part, this research has encouraged other instructional support staff to deliver mindfulness lessons to classes. When the COVID-19 pandemic first struck, the district board had invited the researcher to share her best practice with them while in remote learning. The researcher demonstrated to the school board that she offered a voluntary half-hour Mindfulness Monday session on zoom for her TK-5th Elementary School. This later presented itself for the researcher to give her input as a panelist on a Social Emotional Learning Committee for a teacher Professional Development at the beginning of the school year. The researcher provided everyone in the District PD with many social-emotional learning and mindfulness activities for distance learning. Currently, the teachers are still teaching remotely, with the possibility of returning after spring break. In the meantime, P.E. teachers are sending out mindfulness videos for the students to use on their own time from the resources that the researcher provided earlier in the year. Therefore, even though the researcher is working with 5th graders only, the research study has touched others to use mindfulness.

Implications for Practice

Based on the findings and what the researcher has learned with this study, a mindfulness intervention can be made stronger by the teachers working collaboratively to include planning time together. Since the researcher had done a pilot study before COVID-19 face-to-face, she felt that the MYSELF intervention could be done either face-to-face or online via Zoom. However, the MYSELF intervention would be made stronger by incorporating it within the core class. This study was set up after the core class was done, the students joined the MYSELF teacher (the researcher) for their social-emotional learning time. A more substantial practice could include a

teacher joining the Zoom class to do the social-emotional learning class for a longer duration, resulting in everyone partaking in it at the same time.

The MYSELF intervention does not need to be limited to use with fifth-grade students. This intervention could begin in Kindergarten so that students could develop a habit of mindfulness and social-emotional learning. By the time they get to fifth-grade, their practice has been on-going, and using the mindfulness strategies becomes second nature. In this eight-week study, there was a difference in the students' participation and their confidence – they wanted to show what they could do. They were willing to step up and share what they learned with their peers, taking more of a leadership role. By beginning this intervention at an earlier age when their habits are forming, then we can see that growth mindset and confidence as it builds so that when they transfer to middle school, they could use these skills and strategies.

Recommendations for Further Research

The mindfulness intervention sessions could be scheduled for a more extended session. For online sessions, this would include longer Zoom times. Currently, the time given was about 30-35 minutes. The MYSELF sessions could be done within a core class and not have the researcher work separately. Due to the uniformity of the distance learning teaching schedule, this was not possible. However, having taught the intervention both ways, separately and within the core class, the researcher feels that having a teacher join the core class is more beneficial to the students and teachers to experience together.

Having students begin as a small group of twelve in third grade, realizing that in two years they will be transitioning to middle school, gives them more time to focus, apply the skills learned and work together as group – collegiality, collaboratively – building a capacity working with each other.

This also builds the students planning ability to accomplish what they will to achieve during their transition – the execution of growth to the next level. Having the capacity to achieve the fifth-grade to middle school transition is based on the alignment of people, resources, infrastructure, and platforms. However, the students need to have the tools to synthesize all of these components. The MYSELF intervention provides these students with the ability to go from self-awareness to thinking of their goals, their futures, their expectations, what they want to achieve. The development of mindful collaboration increases mental capacity clarifying a coherence of growth that will help these students advance to middle school, achieve in high school, and thrive in adulthood.

Summary

This chapter presented a discussion of the interpretation of the findings from the data analysis collected from each research question upon completion of the MYSELF intervention. Common elements between the students' experiences were explored and connected to current research in social-emotional mindfulness interventions.

The interpretation of the data transitioned to the implementation of an online learning intervention environment. The limitations of the study were also included particularly regarding online learning pacing, monitoring, and engagement of student's participation. The implications for practice within the classroom were presented. The chapter concludes with a discussion of recommendations for future research in the area of social-emotional mindfulness interventions with students transitioning from elementary to middle school.

Conclusion

The teachers and students in this research study contributed to expanding on the work of previous researchers in the area of self-regulation, mindfulness, and teacher-student

relationships. This group of participants have been resilient in a time where much is being asked of them and likewise have shown the spirit to overcome and keep moving forward. The added stressors that have been placed on our young learners and on the educators themselves to continue teaching is admirable and really showed how the mindfulness strategies were helpful in addressing their well-being. The findings of this study revealed that the MYSELF process and intervention had a positive impact on the teachers and students.

The researcher found that in the short time that the students were in the intervention they were becoming more empowered when they returned to their classroom and willing to lead their peers in a mindfulness or yoga activity during a brain break. Teachers noticed that students from the intervention were more willing to participate with video cameras on than before and they also commented on how they interrupted less and problem-solved more. For example, with the collaboration of the teachers, the researcher had used scenarios of everyday zoom school skill situations that students had difficulty in grasping. This gave students the time to pause and think through each scenario and socially discuss with their small cohort of peers on how to handle each problem. Although growth was not seen in an academic grade, it was seen in their participation, work habits, and efforts.

The researcher found a connection between the home to school environment. Although this was not the initial hypothesis it evolved to be a vital component within this research study. The research study took place in a county that had high numbers of COVID-19 and being in the county health department's highest tier students were not able to attend school face-to-face. All district schools where this study took place were teaching remotely on Zoom. Due to having students in their own homes while the intervention was taking place, students were sharing their knowledge of mindfulness breathing and yoga poses with other family members. Distance

learning became ‘Zoom life’ with the students and their families as an integral part of social interaction.

The researcher also found that there was a need to incorporate more support for teacher well-being and coaching when implementing a mindfulness social-emotional intervention. The findings showed that teacher’s well-being improved as they went through the process of this study. They were taking more self-care and using the breathing strategies. They also felt more comfortable with the MYSELF researcher leading the intervention instruction, but not yet ready to lead it themselves.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Parent Welcome Letter

Welcome!

Dear Fifth Grade Parents,

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Mrs. Hande and I am so excited to be working with your child and the Fifth grade team!

I have been teaching in the primary grades (TK, K, 1st) at Columbus Elementary for 23 years. In the past, I have also taught summer school English/ELD at Toll MS, Roosevelt MS, and Wilson MS. Currently, I am working towards my Doctorate Degree in Education through Concordia University. The focus of my research study is on how developing social skills in our fifth grade students better prepares them for Middle School and life thereafter.

Beginning in October, I will be teaching on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:40 – 12:15 p.m. on mindfulness, yoga and social skills for 8-weeks. The social skills lessons will be on how to listen carefully, focus their attention, show care for others, learn how to calm down, set goals, how to make friends, and solve problems with others in a positive way. We want your child to be as ready as possible for Middle School, so learning both the academics and the social emotional skills will be important for them. I will also be asking for your permission to collect the work that we do for my research study. It will remain confidential and a consent form will be sent home.

I will provide you with more details as we get closer to starting and look forward to your support in completing my research study. Please email me at mhande@gusd.net or call me at home (818) 244-0271, if you have any questions.

I am thrilled to be a part of your child's journey this year! I look forward to watching them learn, grow and have a fantastic time in Fifth grade!

Sincerely,
Mrs. Hande

Appendix B: Parent Consent Form

Parental Consent Form

9/01/20

Dear Parent(s),
I will be conducting a study to determine if implementing a mindfulness yoga social-emotional learning focus intervention program improved fifth grade students' well-being, and social and academic skills. I will also be looking at student work samples, self-reflection assessment, and online surveys. This is part of my final research project for my doctoral degree at Concordia University Irvine, CA.

This is an 8-week study that is to begin in October 2020, once I have received parent permission, and continue until the end of November for the first class and offered to the second class in December to February. Everyone in fifth grade will participate in the Mindfulness Yoga Social-Emotional Learning Focus (MYSELF) intervention during school hours to help student's well-being and social skills as it will be part of their general education. However, participating in this study is voluntary and your child can opt out at any time. This study will take about 40 minutes on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:40-12:15 a.m. for 8-weeks. If your child experiences any kind of stress or anxiety from participating in this study, they will immediately be allowed to leave the study and be recommended to the school psychologist for support.

I am writing to ask permission to use the data I collect from your child during this process. Since this study will take place online, I will do my best to keep all of your information secure and confidential, safely in a computer with a password only known to me. However, I cannot guarantee it, because online hacking can occur. I will be assigning a special code to students who volunteer to be in the study to put on their work assignment, self-reflections, or assessments that come from me. This is to make sure that everything is confidential and that no one can be identified when data is reported about the study. Please example below:

Student XYZ4 shared that the **M**indfulness **Y**oga **S**ocial-**E**motional **L**earning **F**ocus (MYSELF) helped them.	Student MNO1 shared that **M**indfulness **Y**oga **S**ocial-**E**motional **L**earning **F**ocus (MYSELF) was okay.	Student HJQ3 shared that **M**indfulness **Y**oga **S**ocial-**E**motional **L**earning **F**ocus (MYSELF) it was boring.

Dr. Elena Rojas has approved this study for implementation at Columbus Elementary School, Glendale, CA. The benefits to your child for participating in this study include social skills instruction to support academic learning and social communication skills.

Adhering to the rules and regulations by the National Institutes of Health Office and Extramural Research minimizes potential risks to participants. All students will receive the mindfulness and social-emotional learning intervention, but participants may opt out at any time from the study.

Only Dr. Belinda Karas, Ph.D., my University Supervisor, and I will have access to your child's identity and to information that can be associated to your child's identity. The data and documentation will be destroyed by June 1, 2023. Use of data from your child is voluntary. You may contact me at any time regarding your child's participation. My phone number is (818) 244 – 0271 and my email is mhande@gusd.net.

Sincerely,
Marilyn Hande
TK Teacher, Mindfulness Coach, and Reading Specialist

1. Student Electronic Consent: if you agree for your student to participate in the research study, the data (student work samples & surveys), I collect from your child during this process will be used in the research.

   Mark only one oval.

   - ◯ Yes, I agree for my child to participate in the study.
   - ◯ No

2. Please write the following below: 1. your "first and last name" 2. your child's "first and last name"

Appendix C: Child Assent Form

Appendix I

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY IRVINE

APPENDIX I: CHILD ASSENT FORM

1. My name is Mrs. Hande and I am a Doctoral Student at Concordia University.

2. My professor, Dr. Karge, and I are asking you to take part in a research study because I am trying to learn more about how well mindfulness yoga and social-emotional learning will help you learn social skills and make your life easier.

3. If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do a few things over the 10 weeks. I will ask you questions about mindfulness and social-emotional learning. The questions will take about 10 minutes. I will ask you to participate in daily mindfulness and social-emotional learning activities. The activities will take about 25 minutes. Afterwards, I will ask you to think about your feelings and thoughts about the daily activities and this will take about 10 minutes.

4. I do not believe that your feelings will be hurt/upset by being in the study. If you take part in the study and feel hurt/upset at any time, you may stop being in the study.

5. I will not be using your name when I do this study. I will be assigning you a special code number. Only myself and Dr. Karge will see this information. Since this study will take place online, I will do my best to keep all of your information secure and private safely in a computer with a password only known to me, but I cannot guarantee it, because of online hacking can occur. When I write my research paper about this information, your name and any other information directly related to you will not be in it.

6. Participating in this study is voluntary, and you can decide at any time whether or not you want to be involved. This does not affect your grades, teacher's feelings will not be hurt, and no one will be upset if you decide not to participate. I will not give you any money or prizes to participate in this study, but if you participate in this study, it will teach me important ways to help other children like you in the future.

7. I am asking your parent or guardian permission for you to participate in this study, but you get to decide whether or not you want to be involved. If you decide to participate, you can stop at any time, and no one will be upset with you. You will also not get in trouble with your teachers or anyone at school if you decide to stop.

8. Please talk it over with your parents before you decide whether or not to participate. Everyone in the class will participate in the extra help from the **M**indfulness **Y**oga **S**ocial-**E**motional **L**earning **F**ocus (MYSELF) as it is part of your general education. However, participating in the study is voluntary. The questions I will ask are only about what you think. There are no right or wrong answers. Your answers will help me know how the extra help went and if it was useful to you.

9. You can ask any questions that you have about the study at any time, you can call me at (818). 244.0271.
10. Signing your name at the bottom of this page means that you agree to be in this study. You and your parents will be given a copy of this form after you have signed it.

_____
Signature of Student

_____ _____
Print Name of Student Date

Appendix D: Student Pre/Post Survey

Student Pre-Survey on Mindfulness and Social Emotional Learning

Please answer each question before going to the next question.

. Student Code #

_____

!. What is your gender?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Boy
- ◯ Girl

Over the past two weeks, how often...?

please answer the following questions by choosing one of the options

!. Did you carefully listen and tune into your friend when you two were talking

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Almost Never
- ◯ Once in a while
- ◯ Sometimes
- ◯ Frequently
- ◯ Almost Always

Did you carefully listen and tune into your parent when you two were talking

Mark only one oval.

- Almost Never
- Once in a while
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Almost Always

Did you carefully listen and tune into your teacher when he/she is talking to the whole class

Mark only one oval.

- Almost Never
- Once in a while
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Almost Always

Did you carefully follow orally or written directions

Mark only one oval.

- Almost Never
- Once in a while
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Almost Always

Did you interrupt others

Mark only one oval.

- Almost Never
- Once in a while
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Almost Always

Did you have a hard time staying on task or get easily distracted

Mark only one oval.

- Almost Never
- Once in a while
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Almost Always

Did you manage your emotions (i.e., anxious, angry, frustration, sadness)

Mark only one oval.

- Almost Never
- Once in a while
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Almost Always

Did you let others know when they are doing something that bothered you

Mark only one oval.

- Almost Never
- Once in a while
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Almost Always

Were you able to calm yourself down when someone was making you upset

Mark only one oval.

- Almost Never
- Once in a while
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Almost Always

Did you give your parent a compliment

Mark only one oval.

- Almost Never
- Once in a while
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Almost Always

Did your parent compliment you

Mark only one oval.

- Almost Never
- Once in a while
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Almost Always

Did your teachers compliment you

Mark only one oval.

- Almost Never
- Once in a while
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Almost Always

What distracts you the most?

Mark only one oval per row.

	My phone	Noises	Technology (Youtube, TicTock, Instagram, etc.)	Friends	Family	My thoughts	Other
1st Choice							
2nd Choice							
3rd Choice							

When do you find yourself most distracted?

Mark only one oval per row.

	In conversations	During class	Doing homework	Anytime I'm bored	When I'm stressed or overwhelmed	When I'm overly tired	When I had too much sugar or junk food	Other
1st Choice								
2nd Choice								
3rd Choice								

What is your goal for better social skills and well-being?

Mark only one oval per row.

	Pay attention	school success/accomplishments	less stressed	emotional balance	follow through	complete goals	feel better about myself	Othe
1st Choice								
2nd Choice								
3rd Choice								

How knowledgeable or experienced are you about Mindfulness?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not knowledgeable/experienced						Very knowledgeable/experienced

What do you know about Mindfulness? And do you have any questions?

nd of
urvey

Thank You for participating in the survey your answers are important to the research and helping me with my dissertation. I truly appreciate your time and feedback. Sincerely, Mrs. Hande

Appendix E: Student Post-Survey on MYSELF Intervention

Student Post-Survey on MYSELF Program: Mindfulness Yoga Social Emotional Learning Focus

Please answer each question before going to the next question.

1. Student Code #

_____

2. What is your gender?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Boy
- ◯ Girl

Please answer the following questions as best you can. There is no "right" or "wrong" answers, nor "good" or "bad" responses. What is important to the reseacher is your own personal experience with the program.

3. I enjoyed doing the MYSELF lessons.

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree

4. I have learned a lot in this class from the MYSELF lessons.

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

5. I like participating in the MYSELF activities.

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

6. I find the MYSELF lessons are important to my learning.

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

7. I often find myself bored in this class when we do MYSELF lessons.

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree

8. I have used the skills I learned from the MYSELF lessons in real life.

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree

9. The mindfulness lessons have helped me at home or in school.

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree

10. The mindfulness lessons have helped my relationships with my friends.

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

11. These lessons have helped my relationships with my family.

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

12. These lessons have helped my relationships with my teachers.

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

13. I feel comfortable in this class.

Mark only one oval.

- Almost Never
- Once in a while
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Almost Always

14. I can share my feelings in this class.

Mark only one oval.

- Almost Never
- Once in a while
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Almost Always

15. The teacher in this class cares about me.

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

16. The teacher in the MYSELF program cares about me.

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree

17. Since participating in this MYSELF program, I understand other people better.

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree

18. Since participating in this MYSELF program, I make better decisions.

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree

The teacher in the MYSELF program cares about me.

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Since participating in this MYSELF program, I understand other people better.

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Since participating in this MYSELF program, I make better decisions.

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

22. Since participating in the MYSELF program, I know how to resolve conflict better. *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

23. The MYSELF program helped me calm down at home or in Distance Learning school. *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

24. The MYSELF program helped me to calm down at home or out of school. *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

25. I use the breathing & mindfulness strategies at home or in Distance Learning to help me focus or listen better. *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree

26. I use the breathing & mindfulness strategies to help me resolve conflict. *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Almost Never
- ◯ Once in a while
- ◯ Sometimes
- ◯ Frequently
- ◯ Almost Always

27. I use the breathing & mindfulness strategies at home or in Distance Learning to help me relax. *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Neutral
- ◯ Diagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree

28. The MYSELF program helped me feel more connected with my classmates. *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

29. The MYSELF program helped me feel more connected with my teachers. *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

30. The MYSELF program helped me learn about my brain. *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

31. I think all students should participate in the MYSELF program lessons. *

Mark only one oval.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

32. Please write at least 3 examples that you learned from the MYSELF class: *

33. What is your favorite part of the MYSELF program? *

34. Were there any lessons or topics that you didn't like? If so, please list them and explain: *

35. Have you taught anyone else any of the lessons that you learned from MYSELF program? *

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

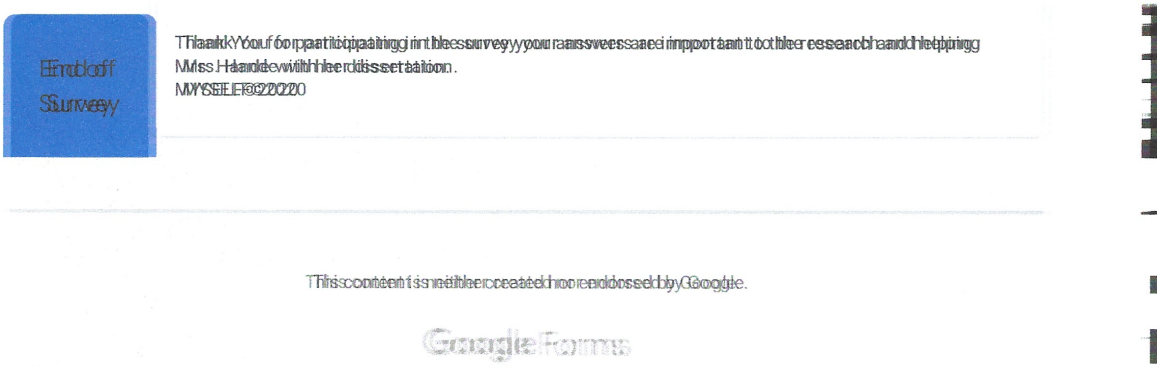
36. If you said yes to question 34, who did you mostly teach the lessons that you learned from the MYSELF program?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Parent(s) (Mom, Dad, Guardian)
- ◯ Sibling(s) (Brother, Sister)
- ◯ Other family member (cousin, grandma, grandpa, etc.)
- ◯ Friend

37. If you answered question 35, describe what lessons you taught them from the SELF program?

38. Any other thoughts that you would like to share about the MYSELF program and this class? *


End of Survey
Thank You for participating in the survey your answers are important to the research and helping Miss Handle with her dissertation.
MYSELF@2020
This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.
Google Forms

Appendix F: Teacher Consent and Pre-Interview

Teacher Pre-Interview Questions

Dear Fifth Grade Teacher Participant,

Thank you for participating in this study to determine if offering fifth grade students and teachers a mindfulness yoga social-emotional learning focus intervention is effective in supporting student's social skills and well-being. This study is being conducted by Marilyn Hande under the supervision of Dr. Belinda Karge, Dissertation Committee Chair, School of Education.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study is to understand if the mindfulness social emotional learning skills learned in the intervention classes improved the fifth-grade students' well-being and social behavior by focusing on the student, teacher, and parent experiences. The findings will be used as part of my research study and could further support students, teachers, and parents home to school connection.

DESCRIPTION: You are being asked to complete a Teacher pre-interview questions regarding your experiences with mindfulness and social-emotional learning. The interview consists of Likert-scale type questions, open-ended response questions, and demographic questions.

PARTICIPATION: Participation in this study is completely voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your participation in this research study is voluntary and your identity will remain confidential. Participants will not be identified by name in the results. Since this study will take place online, I will do my best to keep all of your information secure and confidential, safely in a computer with a password only known to me. However, I cannot guarantee it, because online hacking can occur. All data will be deleted and destroyed after data analysis has been completed in June, 2023.

DURATION: The MYSELF: Mindfulness Yoga Social-Emotional Learning Focus Intervention will take about 45 mintues daily for 10-weeks.

RISKS: A potential risk perceived by a participant may be the feeling of discomfort in expressing negative information on surveys or in the interview questions. To reduce this feeling, the participants will not be identified by names. Participants will be assured of confidentiality.

BENEFITS: This study will give information on the effectiveness of providing social-emotional learning and mindfulness intervention for fifth grade students getting ready to transition to Middle School. Also, this study provides teacher participants to contribute to their teaching profession by sharing their thoughts, ideas, concerns and experiences in the study.

Background Information

1. What is your name?

Teachers were given a code

2. What is your role at the school?

3. What is your age range?

Check all that apply.

- [ ] 18 - 24
- [ ] 25 - 34
- [ ] 35 - 44
- [ ] 45 - 54
- [ ] 55+

4. What is your gender?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Female
- ◯ Male
- ◯ Prefer not to say

5. What is your ethnic identification?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ African American
- ◯ Asian
- ◯ Hispanic/Latinx
- ◯ Native American
- ◯ Multiethnic
- ◯ Pacific Islander
- ◯ White (European, European-American, Caucasian)
- ◯ White (Middle Eastern)
- ◯ Decline to Respond
- ◯ Other

Tell me about your teaching career.

6. How long have you been teaching at this school?

7. How many years have you been teaching at this school?

8. What grades have you taught?

9. Educational Philosophy: What is the purpose of education? (please include what you think are desirable outcomes of your students' education).

10. Teacher-Student Relationship: What is the role and responsibilities of the teacher, both in and out of the classroom?

11. Teacher-Student Relationship: What strategies do you use? (Describe specific strategies you use to establish your classroom environment and teacher-student relationships).

Teacher Well-being and Perspective

12. What is your understanding of Mindfulness?

13. How do you see Mindfulness being used in the classroom?

14. Do you believe mindfulness can be cultivated or is it an inherent trait?

15. How can a person develop more mindfulness (if pervious answer is a cultivation belief)?

16. Are there any special qualities you think a teacher needs to teach a social emotional learning or mindfulness lesson with children?

17. What do you do for your own teacher well-being or self-care?

18. Please describe any experiences you may have had with meditation or mindful awareness practices? And, How did these experiences make you feel?

19. Have you heard, used, or been introduced to social emotional learning or mindfulness (i.e., SecondStep, RULER, MindUp, PATHS, etc.)?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ I don't know

20. If you answered yes to question 14, what were your first impressions of social emotional learning or mindfulness self-regulation strategies?

21. How do you see mindfulness or social emotional learning being used in the classroom?

22. What is the importance of self-regulation?

23. How does a child develop emotional and behavioral self-regulation?

24. What does emotional and behavioral self-regulation look like for a fifth-grade student?

25. What is the relationship between self-regulation and academic success?

26. How does emotional and behavioral self-regulation impact social interactions with adults and peers?

27. How is the importance of family-teacher connectedness help support students' social emotional well-being?

End of Survey

Thank You for participating in the survey and helping me with my dissertation. I truly appreciate all your time and feedback. Sincerely, Mrs. Hande
Teacher Interview Questions # 11, 12, 13, 15, and 16 came from Danette B. Bonillo's study on developing Social-Emotional Competencies that Facilitate Emotional and Behavioral Self-Regulation (Concordia University Doctorate Dissertation, 2016). Teacher Interview Questions #6, 7, 8 and 10 came from Kathryn Marie Wagner's study on Learning and Leading Neuroeducator Focus (University of Portland School of Education Doctorate Dissertation, 2016).

Appendix G: Teacher Post-Interview

Teacher Post-Interview Questions

Please answer as honestly and spontaneously as possible. There are neither 'right' nor 'wrong' answers, nor 'good' or 'bad' responses. What is important to the researcher is your own personal experience.

1. What have you learned through the implementation of the social emotional and mindfulness intervention process in your classroom?

2. What strategies did you find your students were most engaged in? What strategies did you find to be ineffective, if any?

3. How did the self-regulation interventions assisted in your students' social skills? (i.e., Getting along with others, collaborating w/peers at groups, attentively listening, less disruptive)

4. How did the self-regulation interventions improve your students academically?(i.e., Following directions, problem-solving, staying on task, asking questions)

5. What types of learning opportunities were created through the usage of social emotional learning and mindfulness self-regulation that you did not anticipate?

6. How would you define mindfulness now that you have participated in the intervention program?

7. What part of mindfulness do you find the most helpful as a teacher? (please describe a specific example or situation that you use in the classroom).

8. Can you give an example or a story that helps show how mindfulness can help with teaching?

9. Did the social emotional learning and mindfulness intervention help you with your interaction with colleagues? Students' parents? (please describe an example or situation)

10. Teacher Well-being: Have you practiced mindfulness on your own as part of your self-care?

11. Teacher Well-being: Do you see yourself continuing with mindfulness in the future as part of your self-care?

12. Teacher Well-being: If you answered question 11 as practicing mindfulness, how often do you practice?

13. Teacher Well-being: What else do you do to maintain your self-care?

Next Steps

14. What other support do you need to continue social emotional learning and mindfulness skills in your classroom?

15. How comfortable do you feel in continuing to implement social emotional learning and mindfulness self-regulation skills in your classroom?

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at All Comfortable	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Very Comfortable

16. Do you see yourself continuing with the mindfulness process in your classroom?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Maybe

17. What do you hope to achieve by incorporating social emotional learning and mindfulness self-regulation skills in your classroom?

18. What advice could you give to a future teacher that hopes to incorporate social emotional learning and mindfulness into his/her classroom?

19. Is there anything else you think is important in understanding your experience with the social emotional learning and mindfulness intervention conducted in your classroom? or your own experience in the process as the teacher?

Thank You for participating in the survey and helping me with my dissertation. I truly appreciate your time and feedback. Sincerely, Mrs. Hande

Appendix H: Researcher's Reflection Notes

Researcher Reflective Notes GROUP __	
Researcher Name:	
Date:	**_____Day of MYSELF (M**indfulness **Y**oga **S**ocial **E**motional **L**earning **F**ocus**) w/Group __** **Lesson Objective:** Students will
How Students Responded:	
Notes to self: **Challenges:** **Strengths:** **What would you do differently:** **How do I feel today?**	

Appendix I: MindUP Sample Lesson

Using MindUP in the Classroom

MindUp comprises 15 lessons arranged into four units:

Unit I: Getting Focused (Lessons 1–3)
Introduce brain physiology and the concept of mindful attention; establish daily Core Practice
Lessons: 1. How Our Brains Work, 2. Mindful Awareness, 3. Focused Awareness: The Core Practice

Unit II: Sharpening Your Senses (Lessons 4–9)
Experience the relationship between our senses, our moving bodies, and the way we think
Lessons: 4. Mindful Listening, 5. Mindful Seeing, 6. Mindful Smelling, 7. Mindful Tasting, 8. Mindful Movement I, 9. Mindful Movement II

Unit III: It's All About Attitude (Lessons 10–12)
Understand the role of our mind-set in how we learn and progress
Lessons: 10. Perspective Taking, 11. Choosing Optimism, 12. Appreciating Happy Experiences

Unit IV: Taking Action Mindfully (Lessons 13–15)
Apply mindful behaviors to our interactions with our community and the world
Lessons: 13. Expressing Gratitude, 14. Performing Acts of Kindness, 15. Taking Mindful Action in the World

The framework is designed to strengthen students' sense of social and emotional well-being while creating a cohesive, caring classroom environment. Because the concepts build on one another, you'll find it most productive to teach the lessons in sequential order.

Lesson Structure

Each lesson follows the same format:

Introduction to the Lesson Topic... identifies and explains the subject of the lesson, frames why it's important, and includes testimony from a MindUP teacher.

Linking to Brain Research... explains how each lesson relates to the neuroscience. This section provides background for you, some of which may be appropriate to share with students to help them gain a progressively more sophisticated awareness of how their brains work.

Clarify for the Class... includes guidelines for making brain research concepts accessible to students at various grade levels.

Lesson Opener

Each MindUP lesson is focused on one aspect or practice of the curriculum.

The targeted curriculum area is defined and placed in context for the teacher.

Experience of MindUP users attests to the effectiveness of the specific practice or lesson.

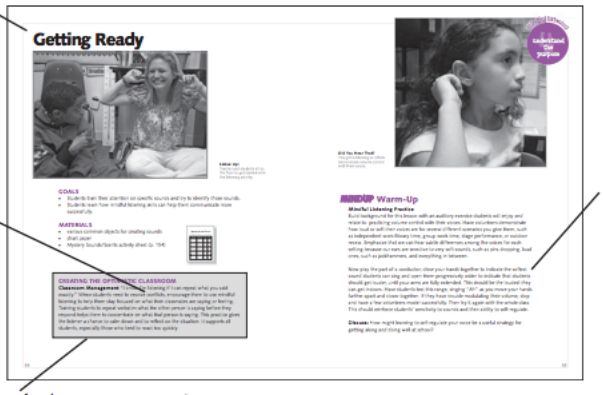
Brain research related to lesson exploration is laid out for instructor, along with supporting illustration.

Language and modeling help instructor make the brain research link understandable to students.

Getting Ready

This two-page spread offers an opportunity for preparing and front-loading the main lesson, so that students are most receptive to the language and ideas that follow.

The core lesson ties in with wider self-management and awareness skills. Materials used are basic and usually already available in the classroom or as reproducible pages.



Before each core lesson, a simple preparatory activity helps both teacher and student know what to expect from the lesson and think in advance about how it may be useful in a broader context of learning.

Suggestions for classroom management, supporting brain-based learning, and helping all language learners address common obstacles to attentiveness and full engagement with learning.

Appendix J: Pilot Study

This was followed by the presentation of the research questions on mindfulness interventions and a discussion of the instruments that were used in the pilot study (student survey, teacher survey, and the teacher questionnaire), along with their statistical descriptions and agreements.

Finally, a reflection of the pilot study focusing on the feedback from the teacher and student participants, and what the researcher will retain, revise, and add going forward with the research study is discussed.

Overview of the Pilot Study

The participants for the pilot study were 10 general education teachers with 2 to 24 years of teaching experience, 9 Concordia University Irvine cohort members as parent participants, and 9 fifth grade students from three classrooms. Each of the classrooms did not have a social emotional curriculum that was being implemented. Due to time constraints the pilot study did not do an intervention. For the pilot study, teachers similar to the teachers that will be in the research study were invited to take the teacher survey and questionnaire. Teacher participants were from different grade levels that were close to the fifth-grade teachers that will be a part of the research. These teachers did not teach the MYSELF lessons to the fifth-grade students.

The primary data sources collected and examined included a pre and post student survey, pre and post teacher questionnaire, teacher behavioral survey, student daily reflection form, and the researcher daily reflection journal code book. Artifacts included the students' activities, and the researcher's lesson plans. Time constraints did not allow for an intervention during which

the researcher would have provided the student surveys and collected the data when the collected the data when the intervention sessions were conducted after the students' regular classroom instructional day was completed. The teacher survey and questionnaire were collected online through a Google Spreadsheet and Google Form. The parent survey would have been collected through a Google Form online,

The piloting instruments were limited by several factors. The data collection depended on classroom teachers and students to voluntarily fill out the surveys. In addition, because the observation of social-emotional learning is subjective, the data may have been affected by the differences in the various participants and skewed the results of the surveys. Other limitations may include the limited amount of time spent in the classrooms, observing only three classrooms and teachers, and the overall success or lack of success integrating social-emotional skills practiced at school into the students' home life.

The MYSELF INTERVENTION Development

The Mindfulness Yoga Social Emotional Learning Focus (MYSELF) Intervention (Hande, 2020) was developed by the researcher specifically for this dissertation. The MYSELF Program™ comprises five teaching units designed to cover the five-core social-emotional learning competencies as determined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2017) as shown in figure 3.1. (p. 59).

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted. The group involved in the pilot study was comprised of five girls and four boys. The number of Hispanic students was two, while six students were

Armenian and one student was Caucasian. Three of the participants were English Language Learners. The pilot study sampling was typical of the student population at the school site where the research will be conducted. All students were from three different fifth grade classrooms.

RQ1*: How do student interventions that target social emotional learning and mindfulness behavioral skills influence student behavior in the fifth grade classroom?*

Descriptive Statistics of Student Survey

The first instrumentation that the researcher used was the student survey. The student survey was administered to nine fifth grade participants to gather information about their behavior. The survey consisted of ten questions. Students were given the choice of answering always, sometimes, or never to the questions. The students answered questions about their own behavior and how they felt the teacher viewed their behavior. For each question, a point value was assigned to each response. For question 1, 2, 7 and 8 a response of never was scored 3 points, sometimes was scored 2 points, and always was scored 1 point. These questions addressed negative behaviors. For questions 3-6, 9 and 10 a response of always was scored 3 points, sometimes was scored 2, and never was scored 1. These questions addressed positive behaviors. For each student, the sum of their responses about their teacher's perception and the sum of their responses about their perception of themselves was found. These sums are shown in the scatterplot below.

My Teacher Thinks/I Think

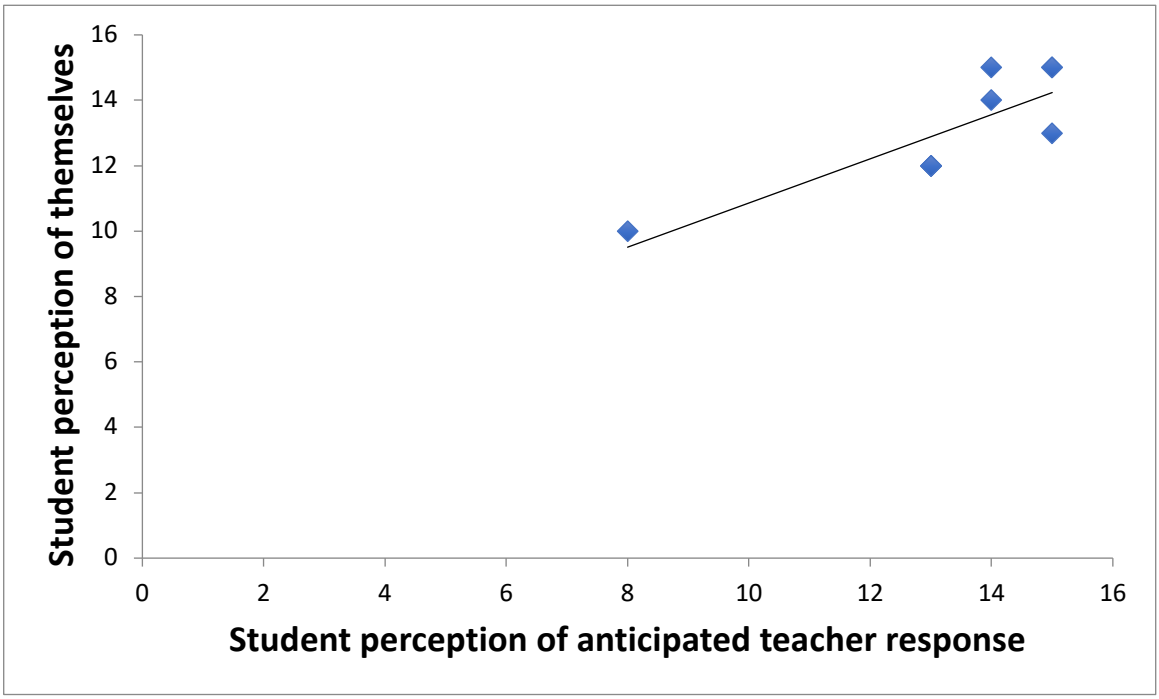


Figure 25. 1. The Correlation of Number of Student's Perception of Themselves and Perception of Anticipated Teacher Response (*n*=9).

To assess the construct of self-regulation, responsibility, empathy, respect, cooperation, and listening with attention the researcher used Shapiro (1993) on positive classroom strategies. The researcher calculated the percentage of respondents who answered always to each of the questions.

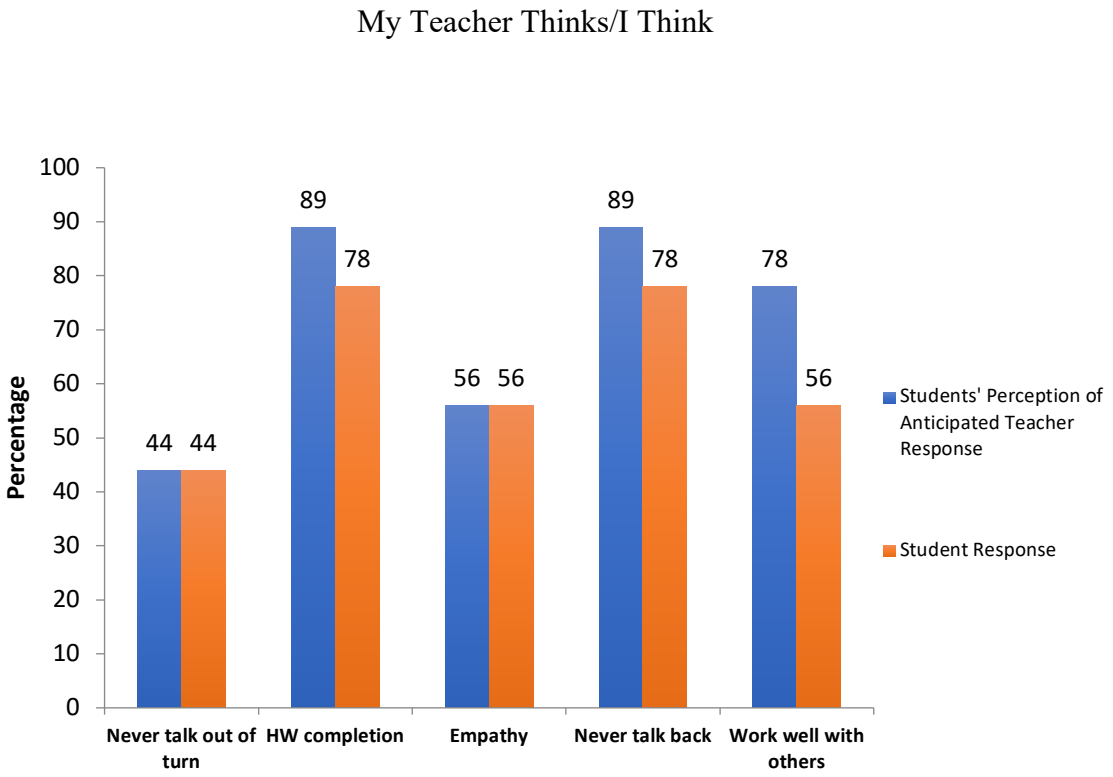


Figure 26. 1. Student Percentage Responding Always on Student Survey

Statistical Agreement of Student Survey

Questions 1 and 2, asked students how often they felt they talked out in class, 67% (6 out of the 9) gave the same response to both questions. Questions 3 and 4, asked students how often they felt that they turned work in on time, 89% (8 out of the 9) gave the same response to both questions. Questions 5 and 6, asked about empathy, 100% (all students) gave the same response to both questions. Questions 7 and 8, assessed respect and asked students if they talked back or argued, 78% (7 out of 9) gave the same response to both questions. Question 9 and 10, 78% (7 out of 9) gave the same response to both questions. Overall, there was agreement between the scores of student responses about themselves and student responses about teacher perceptions of the students.

Results of Research Question 1: *How do student interventions that target social emotional learning and mindfulness behavioral skills influence student behavior in the fifth-grade classroom?*

The pilot study is limited in addressing the influence on student behavior in the classroom without having implemented the social emotional intervention. However, the student perception of their behavior tends to agree with how they feel their teachers perceived their behavior.

This question was analyzed by running a histogram between the student perception of themselves and how they felt their teacher perceived them. General trend is that the students scored their perception of how their teacher viewed them (slightly) higher than the how they viewed themselves. One student out of the nine had a total score of eight, three students out of the nine, had a score of 13 and two of the students had a score of 14, and three students had the maximum score of 15.

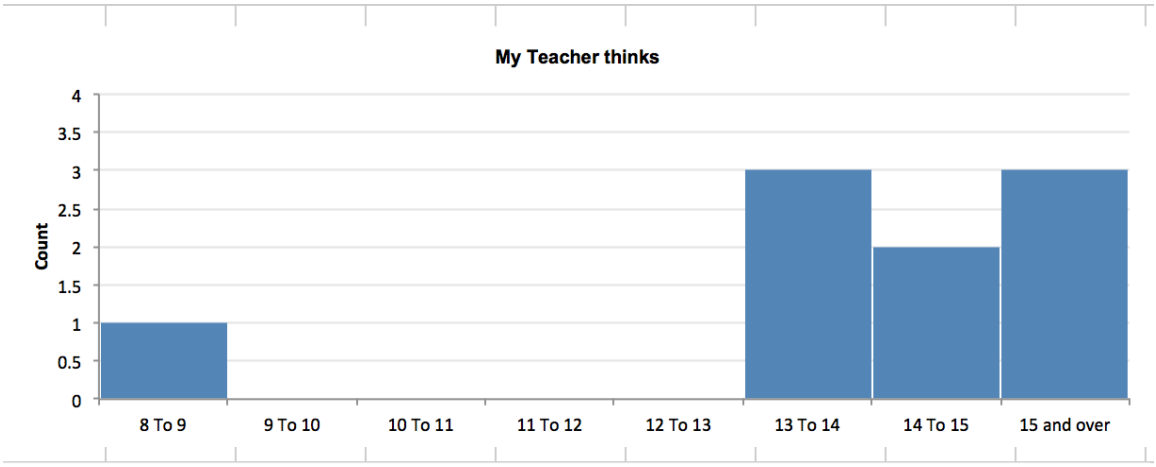


Figure 27. 1. Student Perception of Anticipated Teacher Response

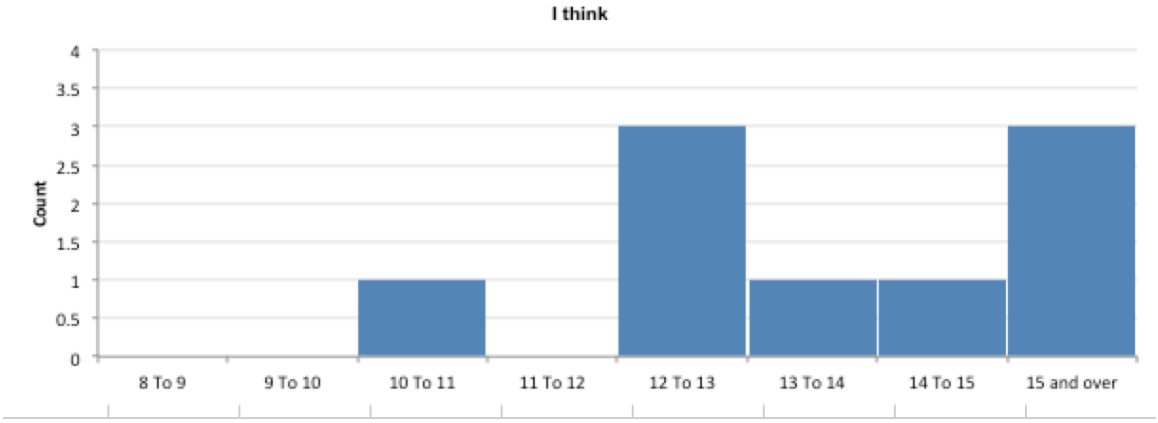


Figure 28. 1. Student Perception of Themselves

RQ2: *How has the implementation of the social emotional learning and mindfulness on self-regulation interventions affected the classrooms according to the teacher?*

Quantitative Instruments - Teacher Survey

Participants

Table 33. 1

Demographic Data of Teacher Survey

Gender	Experience	Grade Taught
Male = 0	0 - 10 years = 3	TK = 1
Female = 10	11 - 20 years = 3	K = 1
	21 - 30 years = 3	1^{st} = 2
		2^{nd} = 2
		3^{rd} = 1
		4^{th} =1
		6^{th} = 1
		$7^{th}/8^{th}$ = 1

Teacher participants came from a variety of experiences and a variety of grades. One teacher is teaching a 1^{st} / 2^{nd} grade combo. One teacher participant is teaching $3^{rd}/4^{th}$ grade combo. One teacher is teaching 7^{th} and 8^{th} grades.

Teacher Survey

The relative quantitative instrumentation for this pilot study was the pre and post-teacher survey. The pre and post-teacher survey are identical and have 11 items. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale: 0 = never, 1 = almost never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, 4 = almost always, and 5 = always.

Results of Research Question 2: *How has the implementation of the social emotional learning and mindfulness on self-regulation interventions affected the classrooms according to the teachers?*

Descriptive Statistics of Teacher Survey

Teachers responded to each question with a response between 0 and 5 inclusive, where 0 is never, 1 is almost never, 2 is sometimes, 3 is often, 4 is almost always, and 5 is always. For the questions talks backs or argues, says hurtful things, has trouble problem-solving with peers, and off task, the scale was reversed, as these questions addressed negative attributes while the other questions addressed positive attributes. For each teacher a mean score was calculated for each question. In the section of the Teacher survey on Self-regulation, the means for manages emotions effectively and listens with attention were added together.

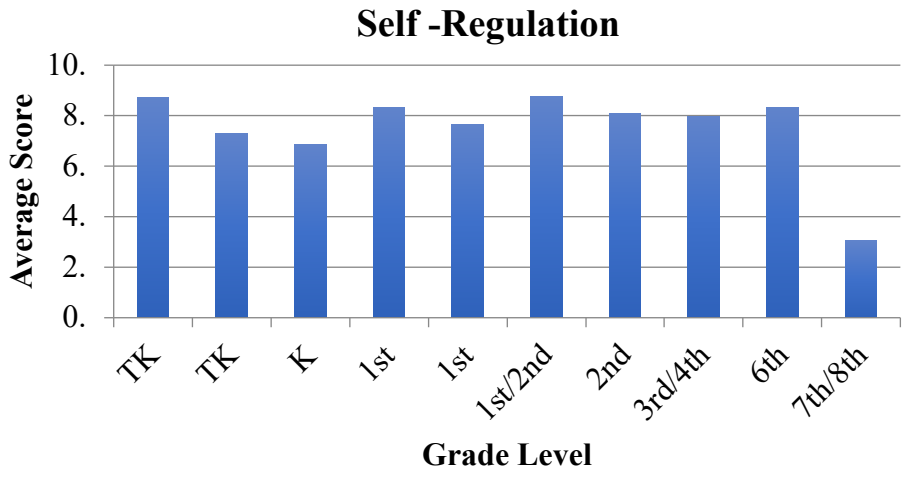


Figure 29. 1. Average Score of Teachers on Self-Regulation

For Responsibility, the means for off task, follows directions, prepared for class, and completes assignments were added together.

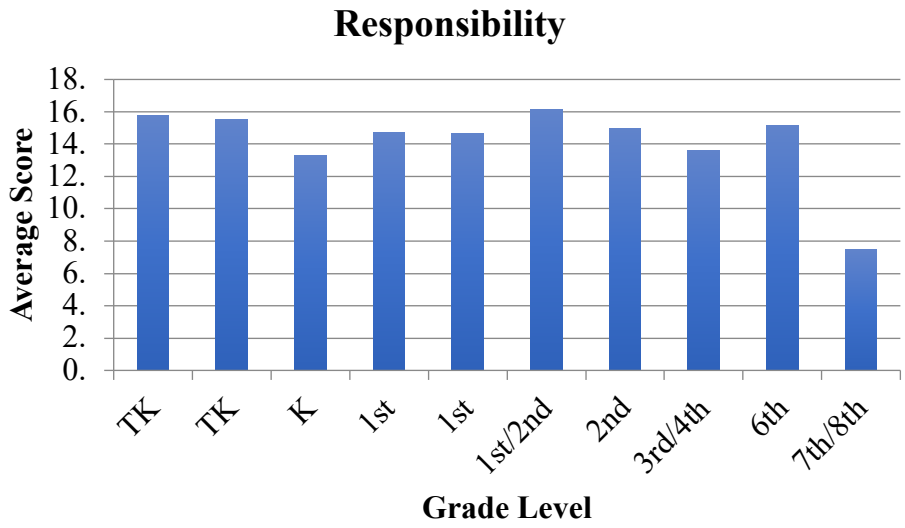


Figure 30. 1. Average Score of Teachers on Responsibility

For Empathy, the researcher used the question shows empathy.

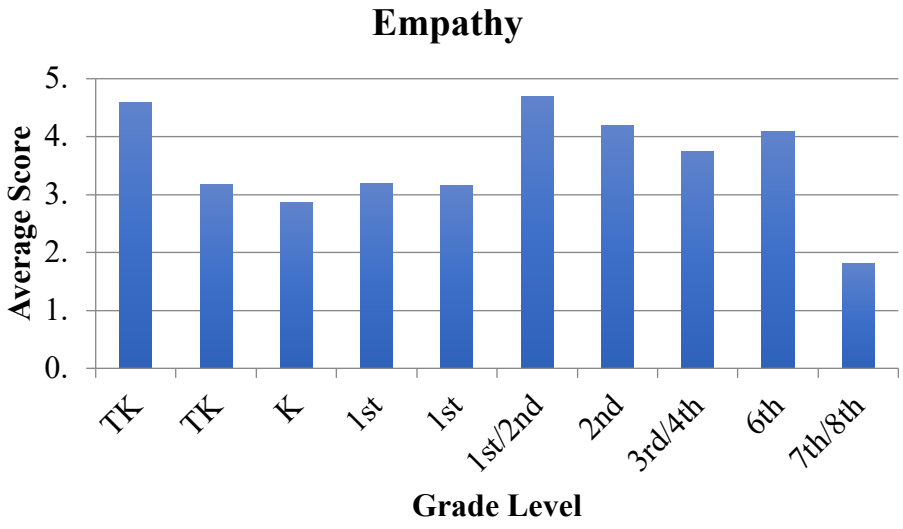


Figure 31. 1. Average Score of Teachers on Empathy

For Respect, the questions, talks back or argues and says hurtful things, were added together.

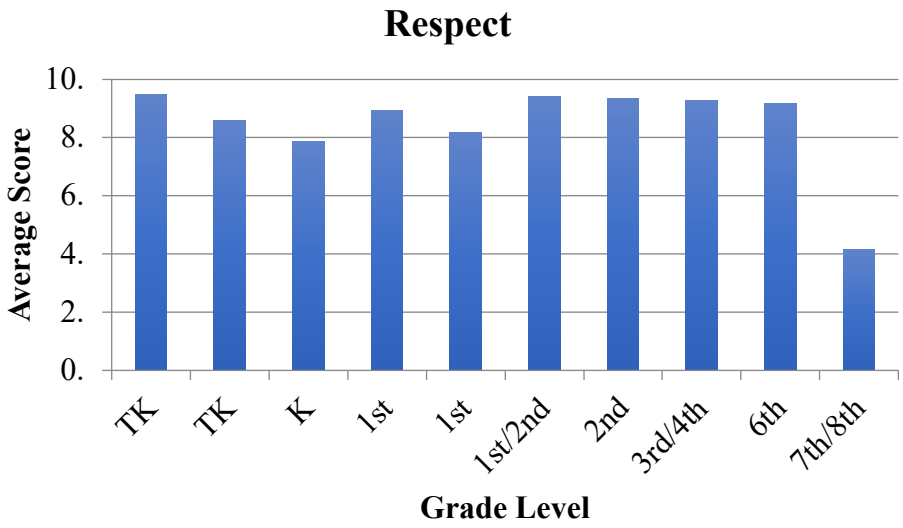


Figure 32. 1. Average Score of Teachers on Respect

For Social Peer Interaction, social problem-solving with peers and seeks help were added together.

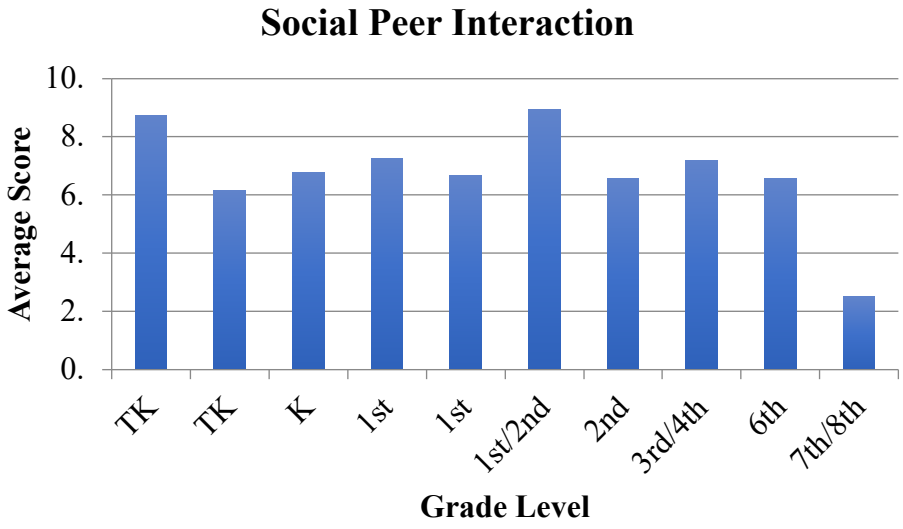


Figure 33. 1. Average Score of Teachers on Social Peer Interaction

Qualitative Instruments - Teacher Questionnaire

Participants

Teacher questionnaire was given to ten teachers from grade levels TK - 7/8thth, except for 5th grade. Nine teachers completed the questionnaire. This questionnaire was designed to measure the teacher's background, comfort, and understanding of self-regulation and mindfulness.

Table 34. 1

Demographic Statistics of Data on Teacher Questionnaire

Gender	Experience	Grade Taught
Male = 0	0 – 10 years = 3	TK = 1
Female = 9	11 – 20 years = 3	K = 1
	21 – 30 years = 3	1st = 3
		2nd = 2
		3rd = 1
		4th =1
		6th = 1
		7/8 = 1

The teacher questionnaire assessed the teacher's general background, comfort in implementing the intervention, and understanding of self-regulation, social emotional learning and mindfulness.

Table 35. 1

Demographic Statistics of Data on Teacher Questionnaire on Teacher's Background, Comfort, and Understanding of Social Emotional Learning

Concept	Construct	Procedure
Background	Questions 1 and 2	Questionnaire administered on Google form.
Comfort	Questions 3	
Understanding	Questions 4-10	

Descriptive Statistics of Qualitative -Teacher Questionnaire

When teachers were asked how comfortable they would be in implementing a social emotional learning intervention, seven out of the nine felt comfortable. These teachers who

responded to being comfortable in the implementation were also the same ones who teach TK - 4th and have taught more than 10 years.

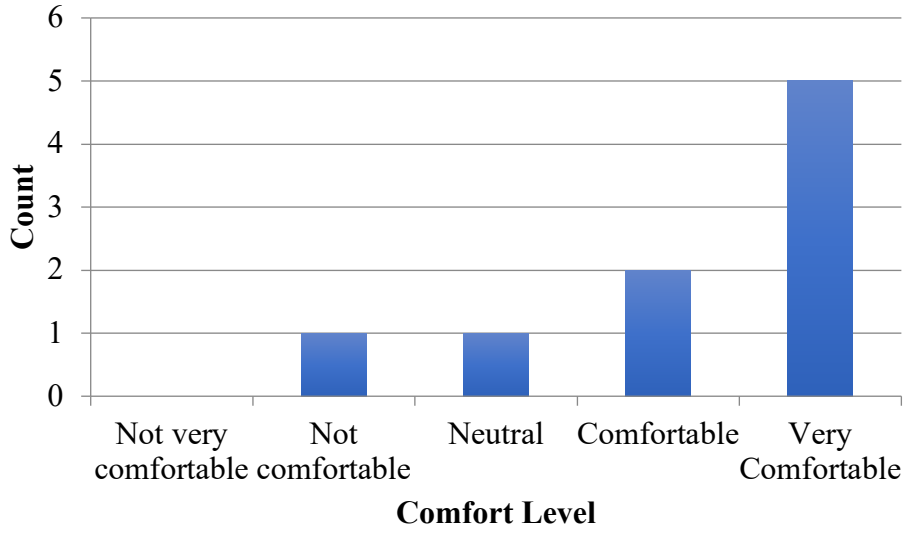


Figure 34. 1. Teacher Comfort on Implementing Intervention

In the Teacher questionnaire questions 4-10 were qualitative. The researcher will look for themes and key words in the responses to each question. Then the research will take the themes and key words and code them in an Excel spreadsheet. The researcher will tabulate the key words and themes and report the frequencies of responses containing these key words and phrases. Below are the actual responses to question 5, which would be coded and tabulated by the researcher when doing a qualitative study.

The limitation of this pilot study is that the intervention on self-regulation cannot be implemented at this time to be able to address the research question properly. However, the tool to evaluate this question will be the teacher survey. Ten teachers responded to the teacher survey out of 24 teachers who were asked to participate in the pilot study.

Reflection on Pilot Study

After developing these instruments and based on the feedback from the teacher participants the researcher found that there were not enough questions to measure Self-regulation and Listening Attentively on the student survey. The researcher added the Active Listening Self-Assessment Tool from Harvard Business School Publishing and the Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function by Psychological Assessment Resources to gather more questions to fulfill these concepts. Most of the feedback from the teacher participants who took the survey was that it helped them reflect on their student's behavior in the class and would be a good tool to use prior to doing report cards. All the teachers shared that this survey was easy to take and would be something that can be done at the beginning of the intervention and appropriate to take again at the end of the intervention. In reflecting about the teacher instrumentation, the researcher added more questions on Empathy to make sure that the themes tie back to the research question, as there was only one question in this area. Feedback from the student participants who took the survey was that it was easy to understand and took little time to complete.

The pilot study was explored through a pre-research study PowerPoint presentation transcript to conceptualize the research prior to its implementation. This included a guided mindfulness lesson experience for educators that can be used with their students.

The research questions on mindfulness interventions were presented, as is a discussion of the instruments used for the pilot study – student survey, teacher survey, and the teacher questionnaire – along with their statistical descriptions and agreements.

Finally, a reflection on the pilot study focuses on the feedback from the teacher and student participants, and what the researcher will retain, revise, and add going forward with the

research study.

Appendix K: NIH Certificate of Completion

Appendix L: CITI Program

Completion Date 29-Jun-2020
Expiration Date 29-Jun-2023
Record ID 37246293

This is to certify that:

Marilyn Hande

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME. Do not use for TransCelerate mutual recognition (see Completion Report).

Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher (Curriculum Group)
Social & Behavioral Research (Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course (Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Concordia University Irvine

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w83dbd79f-1765-4d4f-b5d6-6b1120d960a6-37246293