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Running Head: CULTIVATING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLNESS: A COURSE FOR
PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

Cultivating Social and Emotional Wellness in Teachers and Students Through SEL and
Mindfulness-Based Interventions: A Course for Pre-Service Teachers

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May 2020

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Acknowledgements

I would like to first acknowledge my advisor and teacher, Nancy Waring. Nancy's support, encouragement and guidance were the foundation of my experience at Lesley University. I would also like to acknowledge my own students and district administration for giving me the opportunities to apply the knowledge that I have gained while in the Mindfulness Studies Program. Finally, I would like to acknowledge my children. It was because of their love, support and guidance that I was able to persevere and accomplish this endeavor. With gratitude and love, thank you Brie, Nick and Ben.

CULTIVATING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLNESS IN TEACHERS AND STUDENTS THROUGH SEL AND MINDFULNESS BASED INTERVENTIONS: A COURSE FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

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Abstract

In a time when more and more children are being diagnosed with mental health disorders and many teachers are leaving the field of education, there is a movement for social and emotional wellness in education. Policy makers and school administrations are acknowledging the need for social emotional learning but are challenged with the logistics of implementing the learning. In addition, the teachers do not feel that they are equipped to implement and teach social and emotional learning in their classrooms. This creative thesis course addresses this need. The course will help prepare preservice teachers to create a socially and emotionally healthy learning environment as well as preparing them to cultivate CASEL's five SEL competencies in themselves and their students.

The course includes understanding mindfulness and mindfulness-based interventions and how they support the cultivation of CASEL's five SEL competencies. It begins with personal cultivation and moves toward strategies for cultivation in future students. This course is the missing link between theory and application.

Keywords: Mindfulness, mindfulness-based interventions, social emotional learning competencies, education, pre-service teacher curriculum

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A Review of the Literature

Today 46% of teachers leave the profession within their first 5 years of teaching. For those who stay, 25% to 30% report extreme daily stress and dissatisfaction with their job (as cited by Roeser, Skinner, Beers and Jennings, 2012 p. 168). Future educators need the tools to support their personal social and emotional wellness in order to provide support and the best learning environment for their students. In a time when the Center for Disease Control and Prevention states that the number of children in the United States who are diagnosed with a mental disorder such as ADHD, anxiety and behavior disorders continues to increase, future educators need tools to help support the needs of their students and strategies to teach their students so the students can learn to support themselves. The education system as it is, is not supporting and in some ways is taking a toll on the mental health and well-being of both the teachers and the students.

What is missing? I believe the answer is training to prepare teachers for the social and emotional demands of the profession. Social and emotional learning (SEL) programs that include mindfulness-based interventions have been found to support the development of social and emotional competencies for both teachers and students. Although there are mindfulness and SEL training opportunities for current educators, they may not be aware of the potential benefits and outcomes of these trainings or the trainings may not be accessible to them. Often educators who do seek out SEL professional development and mindfulness training, do so to “fix the problem,” whether it be personal or for a student. Professional development in these areas is more effective when a more preventative approach is taken. I believe this approach includes mandated requirements in which all pre-service teachers must take a course that includes SEL and

mindfulness-based interventions. In order to adequately prepare pre-service teachers for the personal and professional demands they will encounter, they must be given the tools to do so. Social and emotional learning and mindfulness-based interventions are the tools needed.

Social-Emotional Learning

In order to provide the most optimal learning experience, we must first address the human component of learning. Learning is an interpersonal experience, and all participants of the experience bring their social and emotional wellness into the learning process. It is through social emotional learning that we can improve social and emotional health and therefore improve the learning experience.

According to Lawlor (2016),

Social emotional learning, or SEL, encompasses the processes through which individuals attain and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to identify and manage their emotions; understand another's perspective and show empathy for others; set and achieve positive goals; and make responsible decisions. (p.66)

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, CASEL, is a leader in efforts to promote SEL world-wide. Lawlor (2016) explains, CASEL has identified five interrelated sets of affective, and behavioral competencies that are central to SEL: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. The first two competencies are related to one's emotional capabilities. Self-awareness refers to the ability to recognize one's feelings and thoughts and how they affect one's behavior.

Self-management refers to the ability to regulate one's thoughts, feelings and behaviors. The next two competencies are related to one's social capabilities. Social awareness refers to the ability to have empathy and compassion for others that come from diverse backgrounds as well as understanding social norms for behavior. Relationship skills refers to the ability to create and maintain healthy relationships through communication skills, cooperation and conflict resolution skills. The last competency, responsible decision making, refers to the ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social behavior while taking into consideration safety, ethics, social norms and the well-being of self and others. The foundation for all five competencies is awareness and it is through mindfulness-based interventions, MBI's, that this awareness can be developed.

Mindfulness and Mindfulness-Based Interventions

Jon Kabat-Zinn has defined mindfulness as a way of 'paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally in a way that nurtures greater awareness, clarity and acceptance of present-moment reality,' (as cited by Hyland, 2009 p. 125). Kabat-Zinn is known to have brought mindfulness to the West and created the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Program, otherwise known as MBSR. According to Haydon, Alter, Hawkins, & Theado (2019), the purpose of MBSR is to change our relationship with stressful thoughts and events. They explain that the core components of the program include stress reduction techniques such as the use of a body scan, calm breathing, intentional focus on the present moment, guided imagery, and nonjudgmental observation of experiences.

According to Lomas, Medina, Ivztan, Rupprecht and Eiroa-Orosa (2017), the term “mindfulness” can refer to a state or quality of mind and a form of meditation that enables one to cultivate this state of mind. They explained that the state or quality of mind can be divided into three components, intention, attention and attitude. The meditation focuses on self-regulation of attention and awareness, with the goal of improving voluntary control of mental processes. This voluntary control allows an openness to awareness which generates a shift in perspective, removing us from the personal narrative that we have created about an experience to being able to stand back and witness the experience. It is this awareness that allows us to cultivate the social emotional competencies.

Integration of Mindfulness-Based Interventions and Social and Emotional Learning

Mindfulness-based interventions can deepen the development of social emotional competencies. According to Greenberg (2014), understanding the theoretical and empirical linkages between mindfulness and SEL is valuable. Greenberg created a conceptual framework that illustrates how mindful awareness supports each of the five SEL competencies. He explains that self-awareness is supported by emotional awareness and understanding of the nature of mind. It is through mindfulness practices that foster stillness, calm, and reflection that the necessary conditions for self-exploration are created resulting in self-awareness. When our self-awareness is strong, we can cultivate self-management.

Greenberg (2014) explains that through mindfulness practices we develop a more reflective versus reactive approach to our responses. Within a more reflective state we are better able to handle difficult emotions and persevere towards our goals. Zaslow and Lyons (2012)

describe mindfulness as an active process to attend to the present moment which requires the ability to control attention and exercise executive functions. It is the executive functions that are necessary for self-regulation, cognitive flexibility, planning and problem solving. They explain that mindfulness may promote a “top-down” process, executive functions, while lessening “bottom-up” processes, such as anxiety and stress. Developing executive functions, develops the ability to control or inhibit behaviors during challenging experiences and plan how to best respond. This illustrates the cultivation of self-awareness and self-management which are both necessary to foster social awareness.

According to CASEL, Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, “Social awareness is the ability to take the perspective of others, express empathy, value diversity, and understand social and ethical norms of behavior,” (CASEL, n.d.). The focused attention of mindfulness facilitates attunement to oneself as well as others. This awareness creates the ability to see other’s perspectives, which is part of cultivating empathy and compassion for others. Loving-kindness is a mindfulness practice that evokes care and compassion towards the self and others according to Fredrickson, et al. (2008). Csaszar et al. (2018), explains how mindfulness practices improve awareness of one’s emotional states and regulation, while loving-kindness meditation is focused on the cultivation of positive emotion toward others. The practice begins with thoughts of love, warmth, kindness and compassion for oneself and then expands to include loved ones, then neutral people followed by people that the person has difficulty and ends with all beings. This practice brings the awareness that all beings need love, kindness and compassion. Cultivation of social awareness is a foundation for good relationship skills.

CASEL (2013) explains that relationship skills include the abilities to form and maintain positive relationships, work collaboratively with others, and resolve conflicts peacefully. Not only do these skills require empathy and compassion, they also require effective communication. Effective communication, according to Greenberg (2014), begins with effective listening. He explains that without hearing others, we are not able to have thoughtful or meaningful dialogue. The skill of listening is often not taught but can be cultivated through mindfulness practices. Mindfulness brings attention to the present moment, cultivating the ability to focus on what the person is saying. Mindfulness also includes non-judgment, which allows for an openness while listening. While effectively listening with empathy and without judgement, a person is able to respond effectively instead of reacting in defensive or attacking ways. The ability to cultivate non-judgment through mindfulness practices also helps to facilitate responsible decision-making.

Responsible decision-making, according to CASEL (2013), includes making ethical and constructive choices about behavior. Greenberg (2014) explains that the ability to observe without judgement eliminates bias from the decision-making process and allows the person to make ethical choices based on awareness and caring. The choices are founded in compassion instead of pro-self-orientation. Responsible decision-making also extends beyond our interactions with each other, it includes our interactions with all living beings and the planet that connects us all. The awareness that is cultivated through mindfulness practices brings to our attention the effects of our behaviors and choices on all living beings.

Mindful awareness is the foundation of the five SEL competencies and the cultivation of the five competencies is the foundation needed for optimal learning to take place. Optimal learning begins with a teacher that is socially and emotionally competent.

SEL and Mindfulness-Based Interventions for Teachers

Choosing to become a teacher is a decision that is often made with the heart and a desire to help others. Although teachers may be excited to teach the content, the underlying intention is to make a difference in the lives of our students. It is understood however, that in order to become a teacher you must first complete courses based on pedagogy, the content you will teach and developmental stages of your students. These courses prepare you for a generic version of what a typical classroom will look like, and do not take into consideration the individuality and human component of the teacher or his or her students. The human component consists of relationships, emotions, life experiences, and varying ability levels. It is this human component, as well as the effects of the education system and physical learning environment that pre-service teachers are not prepared for that create the many variables that a teacher faces each day. The number of variables that teachers face can have a direct correlation to the amount of stress they experience.

Teachers are required to plan and facilitate engaging lessons that meet the needs of all their students along with cultivating good relationships and providing a safe and welcoming learning environment. When teachers are experiencing stress their ability to perform these tasks is limited. Teachers' stressors include: diversity of student abilities, student social and emotional difficulties, importance of standardized testing, lack of support through the system or from parents, increase in curriculum and clerical work, increase in committee responsibilities outside of the school day, the solitude of the position, and not being able to take an unscheduled break to address these challenges. Research has shown that cultivating SEL competencies and using mindfulness-based interventions can address these challenges.

Research shows that cultivating SEL competencies in the classroom needs to begin with the teacher's competencies. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) explain that teachers that are socially and emotionally competent create supportive relationships with their students, design lessons that build on student strengths and abilities, establish and implement behavioral guidelines that promote intrinsic motivation, coach students through conflict, encourage cooperation among students and act as a role model for respect and appropriate communication. They are also better equipped to successfully implement social and emotional programs for their students. Teachers lacking social and emotional competence have difficulty managing the social and emotional challenges within the classroom and students show lower levels of motivation and on-task behavior. It is for this reason that SEL and mindfulness-based interventions need to be a component in our teacher preparation programs.

Dorman (2015) was very familiar with the research that suggested that building teachers' social-emotional competence, including mindfulness practices, helped to improve teachers' overall effectiveness and well-being by giving them the tools needed to respond to the unique stressors of teachers. Dorman noticed that although the research supported this, there were not many opportunities to develop these competencies. She conducted a three-year action research project of integrating mindfulness and contemplative practices into her pre-service and master's level education classes as a way of developing social-emotional competence in her students.

Dorman (2015) used the five competencies developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making, as well as the five elements of "Engaged Teaching," cultivating an open heart, engaging the self-observer, being present, establishing respectful

boundaries and developing emotional capacity, to frame her mindfulness daily practice with her students called “Silence and Centering.”

Over the three years of implementing a four-minute mindfulness practice, Dorman had 149 teacher education students participate in her study. Data was collected through an open-ended survey focusing on their individual experiences with the practice. Through coding the results into themes, Dorman concluded that 79% of the students had a positive experience, 17% expressed a neutral experience and only 4% responded negatively. The positive experiences were expressed as an increase in self-compassion and a reduction in judgment, an aide to help focus their mind on the class, and an increase in social awareness. Overall, the data showed that there were three areas that were well-nurtured, self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness skills. How powerful four minutes can be. This data supports the need to address the social and emotional competencies of the teacher in order to create an optimal learning environment.

The importance of creating an optimal learning environment and teaching effectively, is most often the main intention of the teacher. Teachers understand the need for addressing the social and emotional needs of their students, however, Schonert-Reichl (2017) explains the importance of social and emotional competence in the teacher before attempting to teach social and emotional learning to their students. She stated, “Stress in the classroom is contagious – simply put, stressed-out teachers tend to have stressed-out students,” (p. 137). She shares that if we don’t accurately understand the teachers’ well-being and how they influence students’ social emotional learning (SEL), we cannot fully know how to promote SEL in the classroom. She believes that the learning context, the students’ SEL and the teachers’ SEL are interrelated, each dimension influences the other. In a study done by Schonert-Reichl (2017), they found that

higher levels of self-reported burnout in the classroom teachers could significantly predict higher morning cortisol levels in students. It was the first study to show that teachers' occupational stress is linked to students' physiological stress regulation.

There is an increased awareness of students' social and emotional competence and the need for SEL, however, according to Schonert-Reichl (2017), for teachers to successfully promote SEL with their students, teachers' own social and emotional competence and well-being appear to play a crucial role. She explains that teachers with high social and emotional competence also demonstrate prosocial values such as deep respect for their colleagues, students and students' families and they care about how their decisions affect the well-being of others. The well-being of the teacher is reflected in their classroom behavior and interactions with their students.

Schonert-Reichl (2017) asks, "How can we best prepare teachers to effectively teach students from diverse backgrounds and create the conditions for optimal teaching and learning?" (p. 145). She explains that we must prepare preservice teachers with the skills, dispositions and knowledge they need to foster the success of all their students, as well as what social and emotional skills and competencies teachers need to best promote students' SEL. According to Schonert-Reichl, preservice teachers are getting limited preparation in the area of student SEL. They are given courses to address child development, but these courses are usually delivered from a psychology point of view, not an educational point of view. There are some universities that are adding an SEL component to their methods courses but there is no direct instruction on the meaning, the effects and ways to acquire the competencies.

Schonert-Reichl (2017) states:

We must recognize and promote SEL as a necessary part of teacher training. Indeed, given the importance of teachers' own social-emotional well-being for implementing SEL programs and practices, preservice teacher education shouldn't just give teacher candidates knowledge about students' SEL; it should also give them tools and strategies to build their own social and emotional competence. Such an approach would help integrate SEL into the fabric of K-12 education and create a generation of students who have acquired the social and emotional competencies they need for their adult roles as citizens, employees, parents and volunteers. (p. 149)

It has been found that mindfulness-based interventions help to cultivate the five social-emotional competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making. Roeser, Skinner, Beers and Jennings (2012) state that teacher educators and professional development specialists have identified three key domains that teachers need to be successful: subject-matter or content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge concerning how and when to teach the content and developmental knowledge concerning how and when to teach content to students. Roeser et al. suggest there is a fourth domain that they refer to as "habits of mind." These habits include gathering data through all the senses, being aware of and reflecting on experiences in a nonjudgmental manner, to be flexible when problem solving, to regulate emotion while being resilient and to attend to others with empathy and compassion.

They believe that cultivating mindfulness and these habits of mind improves teachers' health and well-being along with leading to greater occupational engagement and satisfaction, leading to lower rates of absenteeism, burnout, health care use and leaving the profession because of stress and burnout. Cultivating these habits of mind also improves relationships with students, creating and maintaining emotionally supportive classroom climates in which all students can learn.

Rupprecht, Paulus and Walack (2017), identified that being able to cope with the demands of the teaching profession and successful learning outcomes requires teachers to have the ability for self-regulation. They explained that self-regulation skills include self-efficacy and emotional regulation. Since Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction, also known as MBSR, has been shown to improve self-efficacy and emotional regulation, they decided to conduct a pilot study with 32 teachers from publicly funded schools to see if MBSR could help teachers acquire stronger self-regulation skills. The study took place in Hamburg, Germany in 2011 and 2012 with an intervention group of 18 teachers and a waitlist group of 14 teachers. They used both quantitative measurement through survey questionnaires as well as qualitative measurement through teachers' narratives about the changes they had observed. Although the sample size was small and was self-selected, the results were positive. The MBSR program seemed to improve self-regulation abilities. According to the results of their study, teachers improved significantly on measures of stress and health, coping abilities, emotion regulation and self-efficacy from the intervention.

Jennings et al. (2017) also integrated mindfulness-based interventions and SEL through a study on the efficacy of the professional development program, Cultivating Awareness and

Resilience in Education, otherwise known as CARE for Teachers. Their study was designed to expand on the research that has already been done by having a larger, more randomized sample group. There were 224 teachers that were selected from 36 different schools in inner city schools located in New York City. After the randomization of participants from each school, 118 teachers were assigned to receive the CARE for Teachers program and 106 teachers were assigned to the wait-list group. The data was collected through self-report measures, student achievement and classroom observations.

The results of the study showed that teachers experienced higher levels of adaptive emotional regulation and mindfulness, allowing them to be aware of their physical reactions to stress and cognitively reappraise their situation resulting in emotional regulation. The findings also found improvements in classroom interactions between the teacher and students, summarizing that when teachers are practicing mindfulness, they have improved emotional regulation and coping skills which then leads to reductions in stress, burnout and distress which supports classroom interactions and student learning.

Zimmerman (2018) also addressed the resilience of the teacher through the cultivation of mindfulness. He saw mindfulness as a method of strengthening resilience in the face of stress, tension and vulnerability can help to prepare the novice teacher for the journey of learning how to teach. He suggests that since mindfulness has been shown to be a beneficial metacognitive strategy for practicing teachers, novice teachers would benefit from beginning their careers with the habits of mind cultivated through mindfulness.

Zimmerman (2018) describes the framework of mindfulness to include in-the-moment awareness and nonjudgmental acceptance. He explains that it is the in-the-moment awareness that allows the teacher to navigate the multidimensionality of the classroom, to notice and respond to student thinking and feeling and to be aware of the filtering effect of one's own beliefs. Zimmerman also argues that nonjudgmental acceptance of one's inner experience can build the resilience of novice teachers by helping them to accept that the stress, vulnerability and tension that they are experiencing is part of the journey.

Zimmerman (2018) states:

Since tension and vulnerability are almost inevitable elements of a novice teacher's experience, the practice of mindfulness-the invitation to be nonjudgmental of judgmental thoughts- may increase novice teachers' resilience, improve their wellbeing, and strengthen their resolve to continue along the path of professional development, thus buffering them against emotional exhaustion and burnout. (p.65)

If it is understood that these are the needs of the teacher and when these needs are met it also creates an optimal learning environment, then why aren't these needs being addressed in teacher preparation programs. Garner, Bender and Fedor (2018) stated, "An important goal of preservice education programs is to prepare professionals who will enjoy their work and experience long-term commitment to the profession as well as provide high-quality academic instruction," (p. 2). Garner et al. conducted a quantitative study of eighty-seven preservice teachers. Participants were randomly assigned to either the intervention group or control group.

The intervention group participated in a six-week mindfulness-based practice (MBP) and social emotional learning (SEL) intervention. The control group participated in the mindfulness meditation training only.

The results of the study illustrated an increase in mindfulness for both groups but increased more significantly for the MBP and SEL intervention participants. Garner et al. concluded that participating in a MBP program infused with SEL content can positively impact preservice teachers' ability to perceive, understand, use, as well as regulate emotions. They also suggested that a proactive approach that allows for training before students take on a formal classroom role may offer an opportunity to develop emotion-related skills that can facilitate teacher resilience. When the teacher has embodied mindfulness practices and cultivated strong social-emotional competencies, they are not only more healthy and better teachers, but they are more prepared to address the social-emotional competencies of their students through teaching SEL and mindfulness-based interventions.

SEL and Mindfulness-Based Interventions for Students

For optimal learning to occur, students are required to be present, listen to and focus on instruction, follow directions and complete tasks while also demonstrating respect, responsibility, collaboration and good citizenship. When students are stressed, they are not capable of performing these tasks to the best of their ability. The stressors for the students include increased demands in achievement that is often not developmentally appropriate, stressors from home such as poverty, violence, high expectation, overbooked extra-curricular

activities, lack of guidance, lack of sleep, nutrition, stressed parents, social acceptance, and stressed teachers.

These stressors and demands are resulting in an increase in mental health disorders. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 9.4% of children, ages 2-17, are diagnosed with ADHD, 7.4%, ages 3-17, are diagnosed with a behavior problem, 7.1%, ages 3-17, are diagnosed with anxiety and 3.2%, ages 3-17, are diagnosed with depression. Schools play a central role in the lives of children, their families and the community, (Greenberg, 2010). With the majority of the children enrolled in schools and with children spending a significant amount of time at school, schools have the opportunity to deliver social and emotional wellbeing programs to the majority of children (Bannirchelvam, Bell & Costello, 2017). Having a universal school-based program that cultivates mindfulness and the five social-emotional competencies, allows most children to receive the mental health education that they need to live healthy and successful lives. These programs need to be supported from the top-down, to provide the environment, materials and training necessary for implementation. The programs also work from the bottom-up as the growth is focused on individually, then on the classroom, the school, the district and the community. In the center of both models you will find the teacher. The teacher must be prepared to address the needs of his or her students.

Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor and Schellinger (2011) point out that educators, policy makers and the public believe that our educational systems should graduate students who are proficient in core academic subjects, able to work well with others from diverse backgrounds in socially and emotionally skilled ways, practice healthy behaviors, and behave responsibly and respectfully. This outcome does not result from only the teaching of the essential academic skills,

teachers must also address the holistic needs of their students. Social-emotional learning combined with mindfulness-based interventions have been found to support these needs as they cultivate the social-emotional competencies and promote resilience in children. According to Taylor, Oberle, Durlak and Weissberg (2017), SEL interventions have been effective in promoting social and emotional competencies, resulting in enhanced social and academic adjustment and the reduced levels of conduct problems and emotional distress.

Durlak et al. (2011) attempted to perform a systematic, nonbiased, representative meta-analysis of published and unpublished studies of SEL school-based universal interventions. Their sample consisted of 213 studies that involved 270, 034 students. Almost half of the studies employed randomized designs, 56% were elementary school students, 31% were middle school students and 13% were high school students. Their findings documented that SEL programs yielded significant positive effects on targeted social-emotional competencies and attitudes about self, others and school. They found an increase in prosocial behaviors and a reduction in conduct and internalizing problems and an increase in academic performance on achievement tests resulting in an 11-percentile gain. Durlak et al. explained that the reasons for the increase in academic achievement is because the students are more self-aware and confident, are better able to manage their stress, are better at problem-solving skills and making responsible decisions, all of which are indicators of success.

In response to this study, Taylor, Oberle, Durlak and Weissberg (2017) conducted a extension meta-analysis to include the follow-up effects of school-based universal SEL interventions. This study focused only on studies that included follow-up assessments at 6 months or more postintervention. They reviewed 82 school based universal SEL interventions

involving 97,406 kindergarten to high school students. Follow-up outcomes were collected 6 months to 18 years postintervention. Taylor et al.'s findings were that students that had participated in SEL interventions continued to demonstrate significant positive benefits. They found benefits affecting both positive and negative indicators of wellbeing with different student populations, from different racial groups and socioeconomic statuses. They also found that these interventions were related to improving future social relationships, increasing high school graduation rates and college attendance and reducing later negative outcomes such as arrests or the presence of clinical disorders. The long-term positive effects discussed in this review support the need to cultivate the social-emotional competencies in our students.

As with teachers, the cultivation of the social-emotional competencies can be supported and extended with mindfulness-based interventions. David (2009) explains that mindfulness is the baseline for awareness. It is the focus of open, non-judgmental, attention that allows self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and decision making to evolve. Mindfulness allows us to calm the emotional part of our brain so that the thinking part of our brain can make decisions more clearly. The present moment awareness of the physical, emotional and cognitive experience allows us to respond versus react. Teaching our youth how to focus their attention can be the first step in developing their social-emotional competencies.

According to a study done by Flook, Goldberg, Pinger and Davidson (2014) self-regulation provides a foundation for school readiness. Self-regulation involves modifying feelings, thoughts and behavior. They explain that attention and executive functioning play a key role in self-regulation and the development of the prefrontal cortical regions, while the elasticity and rapid rate of brain growth in the childhood years, makes early childhood an opportune time

to develop such skills. Mindfulness training enhances attention and executive function by bringing awareness to a particular attentional object. The object of attention can be both internal, such as breath, thoughts or emotions, or external from external stimuli. According to Flook et al. (2014), “Mindfulness training entails noticing when the mind has wandered from its object of attention, monitoring, and returning attention back to the chosen object, shifting and cognitive flexibility. Training increases the ability to maintain engagement of self-regulatory neural circuits resulting in improved sustained attention and emotion,” (p. 45).

Flook et al. (2014) conducted a study of seven classrooms, from six different elementary schools within a public-school district. Participants were randomly selected by classroom to either a mindfulness-based Kindness Curriculum intervention or a wait-list group. Between-group analyses indicated that students that participated in the Kindness Curriculum training showed larger gains in teacher-reported social competence as compared to the control group. The results were still notable three months after the intervention and included higher measures of cognitive flexibility, specifically delay of gratification. The study shows the promise of incorporating mindfulness-based training into early childhood education curriculum as a universal preventive approach.

Viglas and Perlman (2018) also found that self-regulation and emotional competence are significant predictors of school success. They explained that the healthy development of children’s self-regulation is supported through the interaction of all the elements in their environment, including a developmentally appropriate classroom. They hypothesized that developmentally appropriate programs that are introduced in kindergarten might contribute to children’s overall school success.

Viglas and Perlman (2018) conducted a randomized study of kindergarten classrooms in Ontario, Canada that consisted of 127 children that were ages 3 years, 9 months and 6 years, 5 months. In Ontario, they have Junior Kindergarten and Senior Kindergarten in the same classroom referred to as “splits.” They chose to implement a developmentally appropriate Mindful Schools program consisting of 18 twenty-minute lessons, delivered three times a week, over a six-week period. The lessons provided a good balance of external and internal mindful awareness. Overall, they found the brief mindfulness-based intervention to be effective. Classrooms that received the intervention demonstrated significantly stronger self-regulation skills than the control group at post-test. They also found that children that received the intervention program improved more in teacher ratings of their prosocial behavior when compared to the children in the classrooms that did not receive the program. They scored higher in the areas of consideration, caring, and were more willing to share and being kind to younger children. They concluded that age-appropriate mindfulness-based programs can be beneficial in helping to prepare children’s self-regulation and prosocial behaviors needed to be successful in school.

After transitioning into the school setting, children continue to experience many other transitions along the way. These transitions can be challenging without the proper tools to navigate them.

According to Schonert-Reichl and Lawlor (2010):

Transitions should not only be thought as “risk-promoting” or “vulnerability inducing” times in child development- transitions may also be thought as

“windows of opportunity”- times in the life cycle in which positive development can be cultivated and fostered through opportunities provided to the individual in his or her environment that promote success and serve as protective factors that move that person onward and upward to a pathway filled with competence and success. (p. 138)

Pre- and early adolescence is another challenging transition in the human life cycle. However, late childhood years, just before puberty, are a time of considerable synaptic overproductions in the prefrontal cortex which sets the stage for advances in executive functions. Schonert-Reichl and Lawlor (2010) conducted a study to examine the effectiveness of the Mindful Education program on pre- and early adolescents’ optimism, self-concept, positive affect and social-emotional functioning in school. They chose this age range, between the ages of 9 and 12 years, due to the fundamental changes that occur during this time period including cognitive, physical and social and emotional changes. A total of 246 4th-7th grade students participated in the study. There were 139 students in the intervention group that received the Mindful Education program and 107 students that were part of the control group. There were 12 classroom teachers, six were selected to implement the program and six were selected to serve as the wait-list control group. The Mindful Education program consisted of 10 lessons that were covered over a 10-week period of time. The results of this study showed significant improvement in the areas of Attention and Concentration and Social and Emotional Competence with the students that received the Mindful Education program as compared to those who did not.

Schonert-Reichel et al. (2015) also conducted a study with older elementary age students, in response to the increased attention to the school-based promotion of students’ social and

emotional competence. This increase in attention is a result of educators, parents, policy makers and other agencies looking for solutions to the persistent challenges students are facing such as, school bullying, lack of academic motivation, school dropout and mental health problems. They argued that today's schools are facing increased pressure to improve academic performance, while also addressing the needs of the students' social-emotional needs, while given less resources. They decided to examine how a classroom based SEL program that incorporates mindfulness practices might promote children's cognitive control abilities and regulation of stress, wellbeing, and prosocial competencies.

The study consisted of 100 4th and 5th grade students, taught by four participating teachers. The teachers implemented the MindUP mindfulness-based education SEL program that consists of 12 lessons taught once a week. Along with the lessons, the students are to participate in a three minutes mindfulness meditation practice, three times a day. The results of the study showed positive behavioral and cognitive change in children. The improvement in executive functioning tasks requiring response inhibition, working memory and cognitive flexibility was significant. They also suggested a possibility that the three times daily mindfulness practices could have led to increased inhibitory control and a decrease in aggression. Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015) summarized that the findings demonstrate that giving children SEL training with mindfulness-based interventions may represent a value-added component to the regular school curriculum that can result in multiple benefits.

Although the research suggests that our children's wellbeing and success can be improved through SEL programs and mindfulness-based interventions, teachers are not prepared to implement these programs. Jennings and Greenberg (2009) explain that teachers rarely receive

and are not required to take courses on social and emotional development in childhood. They hypothesize that this knowledge is needed to better understand the developmental process of social emotional competence. Understanding the different needs of students at different ages helps teachers to understand the relationships between emotion, cognition and behavior.

The studies that I have included within this review all discussed the fidelity of the implementation or the teachers' preparedness to teach the lessons. In some of the studies the teachers were given minimal training, but this does not guarantee the teacher has a true understanding of the concepts and principals that are being taught. Cultivating social-emotional competencies is necessary for our students' wellbeing and success. We need to make sure that our future educators are prepared to teach them in an authentic and meaningful way.

Universal Teacher Preparation – The Missing Piece

Teachers enter the field of education filled with the excitement, hope and intention that they will be able to make a difference in the lives of their students. They believe that if they put forth enough time and effort that they will be able to succeed in this intention. They put forth extraordinary effort and work nights, weekends and during their "summers off," and yet feel like they are coming up short. Although all fifty states and the District of Columbia address some area of teachers' social and emotional competencies in their certification requirements, according to (Schonert-Reichl., 2017), they are not adequately prepared for the challenges they face on a day to day basis. According to a study done by Schonert-Reichl et al. (2017), the certification requirements of most states include the competencies of social-awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making. There were only a few states that addressed the competencies of

self-awareness and self-management. This means that only a few states require that teachers learn the skills needed to identify their feelings, strengths and weaknesses, or the skills needed to control and appropriately express their feelings and manage stress.

Schonert-Reichl et al. (2017) also found that more than half of all states had certification requirements that focused on the promotion of students' social and emotional competencies. However, most states were concerned with teachers having the skills to enhance their students' abilities to make constructive and respectful choices, establish and maintain healthy relationships, and regulate their thoughts, emotions and behaviors. They stated that less attention was given to the competencies of self-awareness and social awareness. This results in teachers not being prepared with the knowledge and skills to help their students cultivate the abilities of identifying their feelings, strengths and weaknesses or empathize and have compassion for others.

In the second phase of their study, Schonert-Reichl et al. (2017) focused on how the state level requirements, in the United States, aligned with the required coursework that pre-service teachers must take in their teacher preparation programs. Their study revealed that the District of Columbia had the only program that required courses that addressed four out of the five teachers' SEL competencies. Among the fifty states, the maximum number of teachers' SEL competencies that were in addressed in their teacher preparation programs was three out of five. Of the five teachers' SEL competencies, the most commonly addressed by the majority of the teacher preparation programs were responsible decision-making, relationship skills and social awareness. The most commonly absent were self-awareness and self-management. This shows that most pre-service teacher preparation programs are not preparing pre-service teachers with the ability

to identify their feelings, strengths and weaknesses or how to control or appropriately express their feelings. A teacher that has not cultivated these competencies not only can negatively affect themselves but also can also negatively affect their students.

The study done by Schonert-Reichl et al. (2017) also looked at the required courses in teacher preparation programs in the United States, address the promotion of students' SEL competencies and found that only Utah and the District of Columbia addressed just one of the five student SEL competencies, relationship skills. We cannot expect our teachers to be prepared to teach and cultivate the SEL competencies with their students, if we do not prepare them to do so.

Our educational systems are consistently in the process of changing to keep up with the ever-changing needs of our students. As educators, we can no longer solely focus on delivering content or teaching isolated skills. The world that we live in is changing at a record pace and the jobs that exist today may not exist in the next five years. The pace in which change is happening is extremely difficult to keep up with, resulting in people feeling overwhelmed and inadequate. The education system, primarily the teachers, is feeling the pressures of meeting these new expectations that come from future employers, the administration, the desires of the parents and most importantly the needs of their students. The students are dealing with the natural change of growth as well as the demands of their education, home environments, their local communities and the global communities. It is not healthy or effective to be living with this amount of stress in our lives.

Conclusion

The missing piece in addressing this stress and creating balance in the lives of our teachers and students, is to cultivate the five social-emotional competencies through social-emotional learning and mindfulness-based interventions. As an educator of 29 years, I know that my purpose extends beyond delivering academic material, I must first address the needs of my students. Nine years ago, after cultivating my own mindfulness practice, I realized what a gift it would be if children could learn this awareness at a younger age, allowing them to live a healthier social and emotional life. I also realized the importance of the teacher being socially and emotionally well in order to support the needs of his or her students. I propose that the best way to meet the needs of teachers and students is to require pre-service teachers to take a course in social-emotional learning and mindfulness-based interventions. Cultivation of Social and Emotional Wellness: A Course for Pre-service Teachers focuses first on cultivating the five SEL competencies of the teacher, and then prepares the teacher to help his or her students cultivate the five SEL competencies for themselves.

As cited in *Mindfulness in the Classroom: Mindful Principles for Social and Emotional Learning* by Mussey (2019), Tupac Shakur once said, “I’m not sayin I’m gonna change the world, but I guarantee that I will spark the brain that will,” (p. 15). If this course can plant the seeds in pre-service teachers, and they can plant those seeds in their future students, the possibilities are endless.

Cultivation of Social and Emotional Wellness: A Course for Pre-Service Teachers

Course Description

This course is designed to inform pre-service teachers of the importance of cultivating CASEL's five social emotional learning (SEL) competencies through mindfulness practices for themselves and their future students. The first half of the course will focus on cultivating the SEL competencies of the teacher through the understanding of what mindfulness is and its correlation to social emotional wellness while also creating a personal mindfulness practice.

The second half of the course will focus on cultivating CASEL's SEL competencies in our students, using mindfulness-based interventions as a foundation. This course is based on the assumption that social and emotional wellness is the foundation for optimal teaching and learning outcomes.

Course Learning Objectives

Students who complete this course successfully will be able to:

- Develop a thorough understanding of CASEL's five social emotional learning (SEL) competencies and explain their influence on teachers' and students' well-being and optimal learning experiences.
- Develop a thorough understanding and create a personal practice using Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBI's) while being able to explain the correlations between MBI's and the SEL competencies.
- Read and analyze research based on the effects of SEL and MBI's in the field of education.
- Demonstrate learning through written essays and the creation of lesson plans.

Required Texts

Jennings, P.A., & Siegel, D.J. (2015). *Mindfulness for teachers: Simple skills for peace and productivity in the classroom*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company.

Schonert-Reichl, K. A. and Roeser, R. W. (Ed.). (2017). *Handbook of mindfulness in education*. Springer.

Rechtschaffen, D.J. (2014). *The way of mindful education: Cultivating well-being in teachers and students*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.

Readings and Assignments

Each week students will be required to read and analyze selected readings and sometimes watch selected videos. They will then choose from one of the given writing prompts to write a written response, unless otherwise stated on the syllabus. Written responses will be a minimum of 250 words. This should be done to prepare for class. Readings and videos will be discussed and expanded upon in class.

Personal Practice Journal

Each week students will be required to engage in a formal personal mindfulness practice. The practices and activities will be introduced and practiced during class each week and it will then be required that they choose a practice and engage in it at least 5 times per week for homework. Students will also be introduced to informal mindfulness practices and activities. It is encouraged, but not required, that students make time practice these also.

Although it is a requirement to keep a personal practice journal, this will not be turned in. This journal will be beneficial when writing the personal reflection essays. There will be prompts given each week to guide responses.

Major Assignments: Descriptions

Personal Practice Reflection Essays (2):

Students are required to submit two personal practice reflection essays, 2-3 pages, using the notes from their personal practice journal to express their thoughts and experiences regarding the cultivation of their mindfulness practice.

Mid-Term Essay:

Drawing from readings, videos, class discussions and personal experiences, students will write a 5-7-page paper based on a topic of choice that has been addressed in class. The paper should include both personal reflection and content from the course.

Final Project:

Drawing from readings, videos, class discussions and optional resources, students will create and present a 30 to 45-minute lesson cultivating one of CASEL's five SEL competencies using a mindfulness-based intervention. A detailed lesson plan that follows the given components will be required along with the video-taped lesson.

Class Participation

Class participation will include attendance in class and at the half day retreat, engagement in class discussions and submission of work on time. It will also include engaging in a personal mindfulness practice at home as part of the homework that is to be completed.

Course Grading

Class Participation and Weekly Written Responses: 30 points

Reflection Essays (2): 10 points

Mid-Term Essay: 25 points

Final Project: 35 points

Class Schedule of Topics, Readings and Assignments

Week 1 – What is Mindfulness?

Text(s):

What is Mindfulness? – Jennings, p. 1-24

Research, Articles and Video:

Siegel, D.J., Siegel, M.W., and Parker, S.C. (2016). Internal education and the roots of resilience: Relationships and reflection as the new R's of education. *Handbook of Mindfulness in Education*, 47-63.

Mindfulness Academy Scandinavia. (2015, April 6). *Mindfulness – An Introduction with Jon Kabat-Zinn* [Video]. YouTube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xexCXhXDkzpw>

Writing Response Prompts:

Define mindfulness as you currently understand it, using the readings and video to support your answer.

How does Siegel's wheel of awareness help to explain the process of paying attention?

Practice:

Formal:

Focused Attention – Jennings, p. 19 (audio available in course content)

Informal:

Setting Intention – Jennings, p. 22

Three Breaths – Jennings, p. 24

Practice Journal:

What were your insights and observations while practicing this week, both formally and informally?

Why did you decide to become a teacher? What do you predict to be your greatest challenge as you begin your teaching career?

Assignments(s) due:

Writing Response - Week 1

Week 2 – Self-Awareness

Text(s):

The Emotional Art of Teaching – Jennings, p. 25-50

Research, Articles and Video:

Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M.T. (2009). A prosocial classroom: Teacher social and emotional competence in relation to student outcomes. *Review of Educational Research, 79*, (1), 491-525.

Lawlor, M. S., (2016). Mindfulness and social emotional learning (SEL): A conceptual framework. *Handbook of Mindfulness in Education, 65-77*.

Writing Response Prompts:

Explain how cultivating a mindfulness awareness practice can help to cultivate CASEL's five SEL competencies.

How do you see the teacher's emotional experience effecting the learning environment and his or her students' learning?

On page 27, Jennings refers to a quote by Viktor Frankl, "Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom." What are your thoughts regarding this quote and how does it relate to the teaching profession?

Practice:

Formal:

Sitting Meditation (audio provided in course content)
Mindful Movement (audio provided in course content)

Informal:

Setting Intention – Jennings, p. 22
Three Breaths – Jennings, p. 24

Practice Journal:

What were your insights or observations while practicing this week, both formally and informally?

Emotional Awareness Journaling – While noticing an emotion, pleasant or unpleasant, Take a moment to write down what is happening in the moment, what, if any, physical sensations you are experiencing, what emotions you are feeling, and what thoughts are accompanying those emotions. There is an Emotional Awareness template, found in the course content, that you can choose to use for this entry.

Assignments(s) due:

Writing Response – Week 2

Week 3 – Self-Management and Unpleasant Emotions

Text(s):

Understanding Your Negative Emotions – Jennings, p. 51-82

Research, Articles and Video:

Taylor, C., Harrison, J., Haimovitz, K., Oberle, E., Thompson, K., Schonert-Reichl, K., & Roeser, R.W. (2015). Examining ways that a mindfulness-based intervention Reduces stress in public school teachers: A mixed-methods study. *Mindfulness*, 7(1), DOI 10.1007/s12671-015-0425-4.

Roeser, R.W., Schonert-Reichl, K.A., Jha, A., Cullen, M., Wallace, L., Wilensky, R., E., Oberle, Thomson, K., Taylor, C., & Harrison, J. (2013). Mindfulness training and reductions in teacher stress and burnout: Results from two randomized, waitlist-control field trials. *Journal of Educational Psychology*. 105(3), 787-804.

Writing Response Prompts:

In your own words, describe the effects of our negative emotions and how the stress response works.

Choose one of the research studies to summarize and analyze, include your own thoughts and connections.

How does understanding your negative emotions support the cultivation of CASEL's five SEL competencies?

Practice:

Formal:

Body Scan (audio provided in course content)

Sitting Meditation (audio provided in course content)

Informal:

PRO (Pause-Relax-Open)

Practice Journal:

Emotional Awareness Journaling – While noticing an emotion, pleasant or unpleasant, Take a moment to write down what is happening in the moment, what, if any, physical sensations you are experiencing, what emotions you are feeling, and what thoughts are accompanying those emotions. There is an Emotional Awareness template, found in the course content, that you can choose to use for this entry.

In reflection, do you notice any “scripts” that are reoccurring for you?

Continue to journal about any insights or observations regarding your formal and informal practice.

Assignments(s) due:

Written Response – Week 3

Week 4– Self-Management and Pleasant Emotions

Text(s):

The Power of Positivity – Jennings p. 83-109

Research, Articles and Video:

Demirci, I., & Eksi, H. (2018). Keep Calm and Be Happy: A Mixed Method Study from Character Strengths to Well-Being. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice, 18*(2), 279–330.

TEDx Talks. (2011, June 30). *TEDx Bloomington – Shawn Achor – “The Happiness Advantage: Linking Positive Brains to Performance”* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXY__kBVq1M

Writing Response Prompts:

After examining Fredrickson’s theory of Broaden and Build, how can we apply this to our work as teachers?

How does practicing mindfulness help to cultivate positivity?

After reading Demirci & Eksi’s article, what surprised you or affirmed your understanding of happiness and positive emotions?

How does Shawn Achor’s “Happiness Advantage” relate to what you know about mindful awareness?

How does understanding your positive emotions support the cultivation of CASEL’s five SEL competencies?

Practice:

Formal:

Sitting Meditation (audio found in course content)
Generating and Savoring Positivity – Jennings p. 107

Informal:

Choose one moment that you repeat each day, such as brushing your teeth or drinking a cup of coffee or tea and bring awareness to what you are doing and only what you are doing. If your mind begins to wander to other thoughts, gently without judgment, bring it back to what you are doing.

Practice Journal:

Pleasant Moment Calendar – Using the template found in the course content, take time each day to reflect on at least one pleasant moment through the lens of emotional awareness.

Continue to journal about any insights or observations regarding your formal and informal practice.

Assignments(s) due:

Written Response – Week 4

Personal Reflection #1

Week 5 – Social Awareness

Text(s):

The Heart of Teaching – Jennings, p. 110-136

Research, Articles and Video:

Csaszar, I. E., Curry, J. R., & Lastrapes, R. E. (2018). Effects of loving kindness meditation on student teachers' reported levels of stress and empathy. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 45(4), 93+.

Action for Happiness. (2016, August 11). *Self-Compassion with Dr. Kristin Neff* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rUMF5R7DoOA>

Writing Response Prompts:

In reflecting upon Dr. Kristin Neff's discussion on self-compassion, how does self-compassion relate to be our best self for others?

Using the self-care assessment on pgs. 130-131, how well do you care for yourself? What areas can you improve on?

Explain the role of empathy and compassion in the classroom. Where does self-compassion come into play?

How does practicing mindfulness in self-compassion and compassion for others support CASEL's SEL competencies?

Practice:

Formal:

Sitting Meditation (audio found in course content)

Loving-Kindness Meditation (audio available in course content)

G.R.A.C.E. – Jennings pp. 128-129

Informal:

Create a daily time to unplug from your devices.

Practice Journal:

Write a letter of loving-kindness to yourself. Try to step out of the experience of "being" yourself and instead to "see" yourself from a best friend's point of view. What would "best friend you" say to "living in this moment you"?

Continue to journal about any insights or observations regarding your formal and informal practice.

Assignments(s) due:

Written Response – Week 5

Week 6– Relationship Skills

Text(s):

Orchestrating Classroom Dynamics – Jennings, p. 137-180

Research, Articles and Video:

Dorman, E. (2015). Building teachers' social-emotional competence through mindfulness practices. *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue*, 17(1 & 2), 103-119.

Schonert-Reichl, K. (2017). Social and emotional learning and teachers. *The Future of Children*, 27(1), 136-155.

Writing Response Prompts:

What do you believe are the components necessary to provide the most optimal learning experience for your students?

How does having a personal mindfulness practice and being a mindful teacher effect your students and their ability to learn?

How does practicing mindfulness support the SEL competencies of relationship skills and responsible decision-making?

Practice:

Formal:

Sitting Meditation (audio found in course content)

Mindful Communication – Listening and Speaking (guidelines available in course content)

Withitness – Jennings p. 174

Wait Time – Jennings p. 175

Informal:

Choose a previous informal practice.

Practice Journal:

What was your experience when practicing mindful communication? How did it feel physically, emotionally or intellectually? Did the other person's experience change your experience?

Continue to journal about any insights or observations regarding your formal and informal practice.

Assignments(s) due:

Written Response – Week 6

Half Day Silent Retreat

Taking place on a Saturday from 8:30 am to 1:30 pm. Information to follow.

Week 7 – Responsible Decision-Making

Text(s):

Mindfulness and School Transformation – Jennings, p. 181-206

Research, Articles and Video:

Jennings, P. A., Brown, J. L., Frank, J. L., Doyle, S., Oh, Y., Davis, R., ... Greenberg, M. T. (2017). Impacts of the CARE for teachers' program on teachers' social and emotional competence and classroom interactions. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 109*(7), 1010–1028.

Writing Response Prompts:

There will be no writing prompts this week to allow time to work on Mid-Term Paper.

Practice:

Formal:

Sitting Meditation (audio found in course content)
Body Scan (audio found in course content)
Mindful Movement (audio found in course content)

Informal:

Practice of your choice

Practice Journal:

Continue to journal about any insights or observations regarding your formal and informal practice.

Assignments(s) due:

Mid-Term Paper Due

Week 8 – Mindfulness and Social Emotional Learning in the Classroom and Lesson Components

Text(s):

Part III – The Mindful Classroom – Rechtschaffen, p. 89-149

Research and Articles:

Jones, S. M., Barnes, S. P., Bailey, R. & Doolittle, E. J. (2009). Promoting Social and Emotional Competencies in Elementary School. *The Future of Children*, 27(1), 49-72.

Yeager, D. S. (2017). Social and Emotional Learning Programs for Adolescents. *The Future of Children*, 27(1), 73-94.

Writing Response Prompts:

1. Rechtschaffen refers to the qualities of a mindful teacher, which qualities do you feel are most important and how does your personal practice support them?
2. In creating a mindful learning environment, all students must feel safe and a sense of belonging. From your reading, what components would you include in your classroom and how would they support this goal?
3. How do you see mindfulness and SEL in an elementary setting versus a secondary setting? What might be the same? What might be different?

Practice:

Engage in a formal practice at least 5 times this week using previously taught practices or an App of your choice. Continue to choose an informal practice to participate in this week.

Practice Journal:

Continue to journal about any insights or observations regarding your formal and informal practice.

Assignments(s) due:

1. Written Response – Week 8
2. Review the Components of Lesson Plan and description of Final Project in the syllabus. Come prepared to ask questions and discuss next week.

Week 9 – Student Self-Awareness/Embodiment and Focused Attention

Text(s):

Mindful Education Curriculum – Rechtschaffen p. 137-207.

Research and Articles:

Risoto, A. M., Lopez, A. P., & Rodrigues, C. N. (2017). Influence of self-esteem in children attending 6th grade according to the gender variable. *MLS-Educational Research, 1*(1), 85-100.

Writing Response Prompts:

1. How can understanding the connection between our body's physical reactions and our experiences help children? What are some ways we can teach them to have awareness of their physical experiences?
2. We expect our students to pay attention and we ask them to pay attention, but we rarely teach them how to pay attention. Choose one of the "Attention Lessons" from your reading, how might you adapt that lesson toward your grade level?
3. After reading Risoto et. al's article, what is the relationship between self-awareness and self-esteem? What role does the teacher play and what role does the child's self-awareness play in developing self-esteem?

Practice:

Engage in a formal practice at least 5 times this week using previously taught practices or an App of your choice. Continue to choose an informal practice to participate in this week.

Practice Journal:

Continue to journal about any insights or observations regarding your formal and informal practice.

Assignments(s) due:

Written Response – Week 9

Week 10 – Student Self-Management/Heartfulness and Emotional Awareness

Text(s):

Mindfulness Training to Promote Self-Regulation in Youth – Schonert-Reichl & Roeser p. 295-311.

Mindful Education Curriculum – Rechtschaffen p. 208-235.

Writing Response Prompts:

1. How would you describe the relationship between mindfulness and self-regulation? How did the Inner Kids program promote self-regulation in children?
2. Rechtschaffen talks about the ability to witness our emotions. Explain how this helps to cultivate self-management.
3. What is the relationship between gratitude and our emotions?

Practice:

Engage in a formal practice at least 5 times this week using previously taught practices or an App of your choice. Continue to choose an informal practice to participate in this week.

Practice Journal:

Continue to journal about any insights or observations regarding your formal and informal practice.

Assignments(s) due:

Written Response – Week 10

Week 11 – Student Social-Awareness/Empathy and Compassion

Text(s):

Promoting Caring: Mindfulness- and Compassion-Based Contemplative Training for Educators and Students – Schonert-Reichl & Roeser p. 285-294.

Research and Articles:

Stringer, K. (2020). Teaching Students Compassion and Empathy Alongside Literacy. *Education Digest*, 85(3), 45

Writing Response Prompts:

1. How do mindfulness-based trainings help to cultivate social-awareness? How do compassion-based trainings differ from mindfulness-based trainings? How can they be useful in cultivating this competency in our students?
2. Riley's EL Curriculum embeds social emotional learning throughout the school day? How does this curriculum use literacy to cultivate social awareness, empathy and compassion?

Practice:

Engage in a formal practice at least 5 times this week using previously taught practices or an App of your choice. Continue to choose an informal practice to participate in this week.

Practice Journal:

Continue to journal about any insights or observations regarding your formal and informal practice.

Assignments(s) due:

Written Response – Week 11

Week 12 – Student Relationship Skills/Mindful Communication

Text(s):

Mindful Education Curriculum – Rechtschaffen p. 236-244

Research and Articles:

Heydenberk, W., & Heydenberk, R. (2007). More than Manners: Conflict Resolution in Primary Level Classrooms. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 35(2), 119–126.

Foody, M. and Samara, M. (2018). Considering mindfulness in school-based anti-bullying programmes. *Journal of New Approaches in Educational Research*, 7(1), p. 3-9.

Writing Response Prompts:

1. Rechtschaffen introduces mindful communication. Practice this with a partner, taking turns being the speaker and listener. What was the experience like? Did you notice any physical sensations? Were you able to keep focused attention? Did it evoke any emotions?
2. How does the cultivation of self-awareness and self-management help to support conflict resolution, as discussed with the Peace Program and the Check-in strategy?

What are your thoughts on this strategy and the other strategies used with the K-1 students?

3. In a world of increasing mental health disorders in our youth, we can't help but notice the increase in violence both towards our youth and from our youth. How does Foody and Samara compare anti-bullying programs to mindfulness programs in addressing this problem?

Practice:

Engage in a formal practice at least 5 times this week using previously taught practices or an App of your choice. Continue to choose an informal practice to participate in this week.

Practice Journal:

Continue to journal about any insights or observations regarding your formal and informal practice.

Assignments(s) due:

Written Response – Week 12

Self-Reflection #2

Week 13 – Student Responsible Decision-Making Skills/Awareness of Interdependence

Text(s):

Interconnection Lessons – Rechtschaffen p. 245-260

Research and Articles:

Barrable, A. (2019). Refocusing environmental education in the early years: A brief introduction to a pedagogy for connection. *Education Sciences*, 9.

Lozada, M., D'Adamo, P., & Carro, N. (2014). Plasticity of altruistic behavior in children. *Journal of Moral Education*, 43(1), 75–88.

Writing Response Prompts:

1. How does cultivating self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship skills effect a child's ability to make good and responsible decisions for the benefit of themselves and others?
2. Rechtschaffen discusses how our increased awareness naturally results in the awareness of our interconnectedness. Explain how this would work?

3. Barrable discusses the importance of Environmental Education and incorporating mindfulness into the pedagogy. How does mindfulness help our children to be, and grow up to be, environmentally responsible?
4. How does mindfulness-based interventions and SEL align with the article on the plasticity of altruistic behavior in children?

Practice:

Engage in a formal practice at least 5 times this week using previously taught practices or an App of your choice. Continue to choose an informal practice to participate in this week.

Practice Journal:

Continue to journal about any insights or observations regarding your formal and informal practice.

Assignments(s) due:

Written Response – Week 13

Week 14 – Integrating Mindfulness Within the Existing Curriculum/Sharing Mindfulness with Community

Text(s):

Integration – Rechtschaffen, p.261-273

Research, Articles and Videos:

TEDx Talks. (2013, October 15). TEDx Amsterdam – Amy Burke – “*Mindfulness in Education, Learning from the Inside Out*” [Video]. YouTube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2i2B44sLVCM&t=566s>

TEDx Talks. (2013, February 14). TEDx White Chapel – Richard Burnett – “*Mindfulness in Schools*” [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6mlk6xD_xAQ

TEDx Talks. (2018, January 10). TEDx Lehigh River – Kira Willey – “*Bite-Sized Mindfulness: An Easy Way for Kids to be Happy and Healthy*” [Video]. YouTube.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOIIDmMK_zM&t=7s

Practice:

Engage in a formal practice at least 5 times this week using previously taught practices or an App of your choice. Continue to choose an informal practice to participate in this week.

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Practice Journal:

Continue to journal about any insights or observations regarding your formal and informal practice.

Assignments(s) due:

Work on Final Project, no additional assignments

Week 15 – Reflection

There are no additional readings or written assignments due this week. Students will have an opportunity to share their personal and professional experiences with their classmates.

Assignments(s) due:

Final Project

Half Day Retreat

Students are required to participate in a half day silent retreat. This will be an opportunity to experience a variety of mindfulness practices, including guided meditations, mindful movements and walking meditation. It will also be a practice of noble silence, which within itself is a mindfulness practice. This retreat will be the culmination of the first half of the course, where the students began to cultivate their own personal mindfulness practice. The retreat will be a summative experience incorporating what they have learned thus far.

Students will be asked to bring a yoga mat, blanket or towel, walking shoes, a light snack or lunch, their Personal Practice Journal and wear layered clothing. They can also bring a pillow for comfort and a cushion for sitting.

Retreat Schedule

- 8:30 am - 9:00 am - Walking Meditation
- 9:00 am – 9:30 am – Body Scan Meditation
- 9:30 am – 10:00 am – Mindful Movement
- 10:00 am – 10:30 am – Guided Sitting Meditation
- 10:30 am – 11:00 am – Mindful Journal Writing
- 11:00 am – 11:30 am – Walking Meditation
- 11:30 am – 12:00 pm – Guided Sitting Meditation

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12:00 pm – 12:45 pm – Mindful Eating and Lunch

12:45 pm – 1:30 pm – Class Discussion – This will be an opportunity for students to reflect on and share about their experience.

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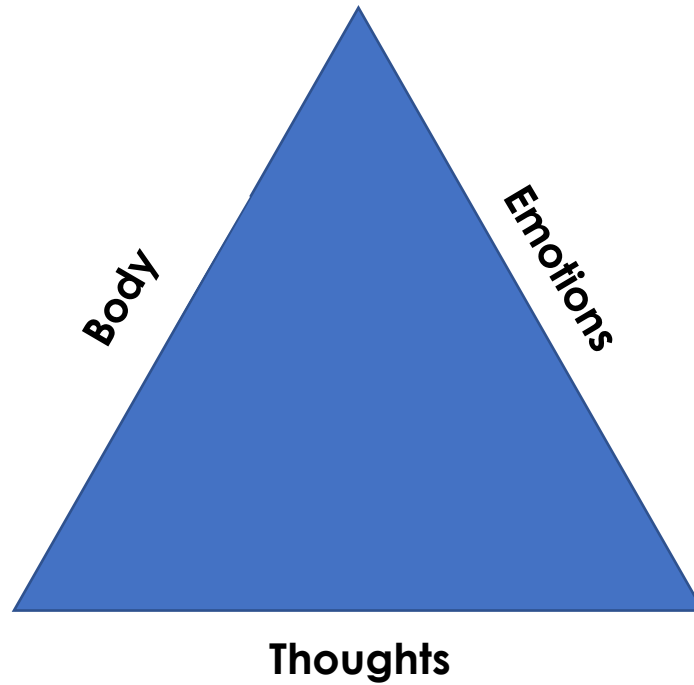
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Appendix A

“Awareness Triangle” Practice

“Awareness Triangle” Practice



What is happening?	Physical Experience	Emotional Experience	Thoughts	Reflection

Examples of Physical Experiences/Body Sensations:

Achy	Light	Pounding	Tingly
Contracted	Numb	Shaky	Warm
Cold	Nauseous	Strong	Weak
Heavy	Painful	Sweaty	Loose
Jittery	Prickly	Throbbing	Dry

Examples of Thoughts:

- Why can't I relax?
- Everyone is counting on me.
- I have to keep going.
- Why does this keep happening to me?
- I can't let anyone down.
- I'll never get this done.

Examples of Emotional Experiences:

Anger	Boredom	Loneliness	Delight
Grief	Compassion	Panic	Anxious
Fear	Joy	Overwhelmed	Apathy
Nervousness	Happiness	Shame	Bravery
Humiliation	Despair	Surprise	Curiosity

Appendix B

Comprehensive Lesson Plan Components

Comprehensive lesson plans required as a part of the final project, must include:

- Title
- Time Frame
- Objective(s)
- Standard(s) Addressed
- Vocabulary Presented
- Materials Needed
- Preparation Necessary (if applicable)
- Warm-up/Check-in
- New Lesson
- Experiential Practice
- Sharing/Reflection
- Journaling/Activity
- Integration in daily life
- Closing Mindful Moment

Appendix C

SEL and Mindfulness Picture Books

Neuroscience for Children

Rosie's Brain, Lynda Ryden

Your Fantastic Elastic Brain, JoAnn Deak Ph. D.

The Great Brain Book: An Inside Look at the Inside of Your Head, HP Newquist, Keith Kasnot, et al.

Mindfulness for Children

Puppy Mind, Andrew Jordan Nance

Alphabreaths, Christopher Willard and Daniel Rechtschaffen

Master of Mindfulness: How to Be Your Own Superhero in Times of Stress, Laurie Grossman

Some Days I Flip My Lid, Kellie Bailey

Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda, Lauren Alderfer

What Does It Mean to Be Present?, Rana Diorio and Eliza Wheeler

ABC Mindful Me, Christiane Engel

A World of Pausabilities: An Exercise in Mindfulness, Frank J. Sileo

Listening to My Body, Gabi Garcia

Listening to My Heart, Gabi Garcia

Moody Cow Meditates, Kerry Lee MacLean

Self-Awareness

Too Perfect, Trudy Ludwig

Amazing Grace, Mary Hoffman

The Name Jar, Yangsook Choi

Today I Feel Silly & Other Moods That Make My Day, Jamie Lee Curtis

The Blind Men and the Elephant, Karen Backstein

How Are You Peeling?, Freymann and Elffers

Paddington's – Things I Feel, Michael Bond

I Like Myself, Karen Beaumont

Growing Up Is Hard, Dr. Laura Schlessinger

Yesterday I Had the Blues, Jeron Ashford Frame

Elmer, David McKee

A Bad Case of Stripes, David Shannon

I Just Forgot, Mercer Mayer

Some Things Are Scary, Florence Parry Heide

The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes, Mark Pett and Gary Rubinstein

Self-Management

Baditude, Julia Cook

My Mouth Is A Volcano, Julia Cook

Angry Octopus, Lori Lite

Emily's Blue Period, Cathleen Daly

Manners at School, Carrie Finn

Excuse Me!, Cathy Drinkwater Better

Do unto Otters, Laurie Keller

What to Do With A Problem, Kobi Yamada

No! David, David Shannon

Knuffle Bunny Free, Mo Willems

Wilma Jean The Worry Machine, Julia Cook

What to Do When Mistakes Make You Quake: A Kid's Guide To Accepting Imperfection, Claire E.B. Freeland

What to Do When You Worry Too Much: A Kid's Guide To Overcoming Anxiety, Dawn Huebner

Cool Down and Work Through Anger, Cheri J. Meiners

An Angel for Solomon Singer, Cynthia Rylant

Wemberly Worried, Kevin Henkes

When I Feel Angry, Cornelia Maude Spelman

Social Awareness

Better Than You, Trudy Ludwig

The Invisible Boy, Trudy Ludwig

Big Al, Andrew Clements

Teammates, Peter Golenbock

The Great Kapok Tree, Lynne Cherry

The Lorax, Dr. Suess

My Buddy, Audrey Osofsky

Susan Laughs, Jeanne Willis

Stand in My Shoes, Bob Sornson

Last Stop on Market Street, Matt de la Pena

Chester's Way, Kevin Henkes

Relationship Skills

The Sandwich Swap, Queen Rania

The Crayon Box That Talked, Shane DeRolf

My Secret Bully, Trudy Ludwig
Just Kidding, Trudy Ludwig
Rosie & Michael, Judith Viorst
Chrysanthemum, Kevin Henkes
Thank You, Mr. Falker, Patricia Polacco
A Bargain for Frances, Russell Hoban
The Hating Book, Charlotte Zolotow
Stick and Stone, Beth Ferry
A Chair for My Mother, Vera Williams
On Mother's Lap, Ann Herbert Scott
Should I Share My Ice Cream?, Mo Willems
Mean Jean the Recess Queen, Alexis O'Neill
How to Be A Friend, Laurie Krasny Brown
Enemy Pie, Derek Munson

Decision-Making

Confessions Of A Former Bully, Trudy Ludwig
Trouble Talk, Trudy Ludwig
Sorry!, Trudy Ludwig
If I Only Had A Green Nose, Max Lucado
Courage, Bernard Waber
The Story of Ferdinand, Munro Leaf
No Excuses!, Dr. Wayne W. Dyer
Unstoppable Me!, Dr. Wayne W. Dyer
Incredible You!, Dr. Wayne W. Dyer
Inch and Miles – The Journey to Success, Coach John Wooden
The Children's Book of Virtues, William J. Bennett

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The 7 Habits of Happy Kids, Sean Covey

Stand Tall Molly Lou Melon, Patty Lovell

The Berenstain Bears Trick or Treat, Stan and Jan Berenstain