

A Curriculum Plan for Implementation of the New York State Social and Emotional Learning Benchmarks for Early Childhood Grade levels within a first grade classroom.

by

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A Master's Thesis/Project Capstone
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Education
Curriculum and Instruction in Inclusive Education
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Fredonia, New York

May 2019

State University of New York at Fredonia
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CERTIFICATION OF THESIS/PROJECT CAPSTONE WORK

We, the undersigned, certify that this project entitled A CURRICULUM PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW YORK STATE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING BENCHMARKS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD GRADE LEVELS WITHIN A FIRST GRADE CLASSROOM by KARA SCHANBACHER, Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science in Education, Curriculum and Instruction in Inclusive Education, is acceptable in form and content and demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by this project.



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ABSTRACT

The New York State (NYS) Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) benchmarks were first published by the New York State Department of Education in the August of 2018. Research suggests that student learning benchmarks may increase the likelihood that students will receive better instruction in SEL experience improved school connectedness, and become better learners. These SEL standards were published as a resource for voluntary implementation within New York State Schools. This Curriculum Project consists of a succinct, 40 lesson curriculum designed for first grade students, aligned with the New York State Social and Emotional Learning Benchmarks for Early Childhood Grade levels, first grade Common Core State Standards for reading and writing, and New York State Next Generation standards for reading and writing. Future research may further differentiate these lessons for students with disabilities, as well as English Language Learners (ELLs).

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Introduction

New York State educational facilities adhere to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in order to regulate the standards to which students statewide are being held academically. These state standards were designed and adopted in order to homogenize the education received by every child, and to set clear expectations to ensure that all students have the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in college, career, and life upon graduation from high school, regardless of where in New York State (NYS) they live. Common Core State Standards Initiative (2018) has defined the goals of the standards: “These standards are aligned to the expectations of colleges, workforce training programs, and employers. The standards promote equity by ensuring all students are well prepared to collaborate and compete with their peers in the United States and abroad” (p. 1).

The Dilemma of the Common Core State Standards

The implementation of these academic standards is mandatory across New York State public schools. While it is undoubtedly imperative that students be held to rigorous academic standards that prepare them to compete and thrive in both the college and career environments, it must be noted that these academic standards do not support the development of the whole child (Maxwell, Aggleton, Warwick, Yankah, Hill, & Mehmedbegovic, 2008). I believe that the state educational system also has an obligation to support students in the development of self awareness and self management skills, to help them to use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships, and to demonstrate ethical decision making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts. In doing this, students will be more efficiently supported in taking educational opportunities provided to them,

and will construct a solid foundation of a social and emotional skill set, which will support them throughout college, career, and life (New York State Department of Education, 2018).

Social and Emotional Learning Standards

This is the basis and the guiding principles of the New York State Social and Emotional Learning Standards (SEL). The Board of Regents Chancellor of New York State, Betty A. Rosa explained the impact of such supports when properly implemented:

When emphasis is placed on educating the whole child, we help our youth be successful in all parts of life – from academics to interpersonal relationships to making good life choices. Acquiring social and emotional skills will prove to be invaluable as our children grow. Now we have resources available for schools across New York to help students obtain these vital skills. Using these new social emotional learning benchmarks and frameworks, schools can implement practices to help our students reduce emotional distress, increase commitment to school, bolster academic achievement, and decrease disruptive behavior. By supporting students both on a social emotional level and an academic level, we provide students with interpersonal skills and a sense of well-being that will help them succeed academically. (As quoted in NYSED, 2018, para. 3)

Research suggests that student learning benchmarks, or standards, may increase the likelihood that students will receive better instruction in SEL, experience improved school connectedness, and become better learners (Jones & Bouffard, 2012; Osher & Kendziora, 2008). These benchmarks are currently available for implementation on only a voluntary basis for NYS schools. To date, no formal curriculum, or even classroom activities or general teaching practices for Early Childhood Grade levels have been made available to the public by NYS.

Research exists that studies potential correlation between early mental health education and positive social behavior and personal achievement (Osher, Kidron, Brackett, Dymnicki, Jones, & Weissberg, 2016). A small number of programs have been successfully implemented that address the social and emotional learning needs of elementary aged children. One program of particular interest, City Connects, is an intervention that has been implemented in schools in Massachusetts, Ohio, and NYS. City Connects provides an innovative and systematic approach to addressing out-of-school barriers to achievement and thriving in school. According to the theory behind City Connect:

Schools are a place where teachers, school staff, families, and community partners can come together to support each student. However, in many places, schools lack a system for providing this support that can serve all students (not just those at most risk) and that can connect students to a comprehensive set of services and enrichments. City Connects offers a defined practice for a counselor or school social worker to collaborate with every teacher to support every student. City Connects addresses the out-of-school factors by working with teachers in the school to identify each student's strengths and needs in academic, social-emotional, health, and family domains. (City Connects, n.d, para. 3)

Studies have been conducted to determine the effectiveness of the methods of the City Connects program. At the time of publication of research, a positive correlation was determined between students who had participated in City Connects in fourth and fifth grade, and overall higher graduation rates (Walsh, Lee-St. John, Raczek & Foley, 2015).

Elementary schools need more developed programs that strive to supplement children with information and knowledge about social and emotional health and wellness. At an age appropriate level, students should be formally supported as they:

1. Develop self-awareness and self-management skills essential to success in school and in life;
2. Use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships; and
3. Demonstrate ethical decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.(NYSESED, 2018, p. 1)

Statement of Purpose

As a Master's Candidate at the State University of New York at Fredonia, I wish to develop a curriculum that will incorporate the benchmarks and standards of the newly developed New York State SEL benchmarks. My personal interest in Social and Emotional Learning stems from my position as a first grade teacher within a district servicing a community that falls below the poverty line. In my personal experience, a child performs better academically when the whole child is supported. Therefore, it is my wish to develop a way to support the whole child, and to lay a foundation for learning, and overall student success through social and emotional education.

I will design this curriculum with the versatility to be implemented in elementary schools across NYS, whether the schools be in an urban, rural, or suburban area. Prior to the creation of this curriculum I will research best practice for addressing these topics, through published research, as well as through incorporating suggestions from school psychologists and counselors.

In order to implement this curriculum first within my own classroom, I will be using the benchmarks within each standard aligned with the Early Elementary grade levels (K-3).

The main components of the K-3 Curriculum plan would include:

Identification and management of one's emotions and behavior,

Recognition of personal qualities and external supports

Demonstrate skills related to achieving personal and academic goals

Recognition of the feelings and perspectives of others

Recognition of individual and group similarities and differences.

Using communication and social skills to interact effectively with others

Demonstrating the ability to prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways

Considering ethical, safety, and societal factors in making decisions

Application of decision-making skills to deal responsibly with daily academic and social situations.

Contributing to the well-being of one's school and community

These components were chosen as they align directly with the benchmarks. Lesson plans which align with each component of the overall curriculum will be developed to support the student in meeting these benchmarks.

As well as the NYS SELs, this program will draw from certain components of the City Connects program, by the method of identifying each student's strengths and needs in academic, social-emotional, health, and family domains in order to provide personalized, differentiated instruction to supplement the basic curriculum of the program. Chapter Two will review the existing literature pertinent to the development of this curriculum.

Review of the Literature

In the previous chapter, I asserted my opinion, based on my review of the contemporary literature, that the New York State Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) standards should be implemented at the Elementary level, and stated that I would develop a curriculum for implementation at the K-3 level. This chapter is intended to review literature pertinent to this topic via an investigation into research that has already been performed, and similar programs and curricula that have been previously developed or are currently in place.

Support for the implementation of the NYS Social and Emotional learning standards as K-3 Curriculum

Much research has been conducted in order to investigate the needs of children in regards to mental health, emotional intelligence, and social skills, and the role that these play on the development of the child (Maxwell, Aggleton, Warwick, Yankah, Hill, & Mehmedbegovic, 2008; van Vulpen, Habegar, & Simmons, 2018). In 2010, The Governor's Task Force on Early Childhood Development and Education established Kentucky's definition for school readiness that was developed in order to meet the interests and needs of all children, families and community. This vision for school readiness focused heavily on the working definition that "school readiness" translates to "the ability to engage and benefit from early learning experiences that best promotes the child's success" (p. 3). In developing this definition, the task force responsible for the development of these standards recognized five developmental areas for school readiness and success in the early elementary grades. These areas include approaches to learning, health and physical well being, language and communication development, social and emotional development, and cognitive and general knowledge. In the discussion of social and emotional development and learning, this guide asserts that "Early childhood literature has

emphasized early social and emotional competence as the foundation for all later development (Chazan-Cohen, Jerald, & Stark, 2001, p. 4, retrieved from The Governor's Task Force on Early Childhood Development and Education) and as a predictor of later success" (Kontos & Wilcox-Herzog, 1997; NAEYC & NAECS/SDE, 2002, p. 8; Peisner-Feinberg, et.al., 2001).

Furthermore, it is stated that young children's development is strongly interconnected, with outcomes in one area relying on development in other areas (Kendall, 2003, as cited in Commonwealth of Kentucky Governor's Office of Early Childhood, 2010). A strong focus of this publication was to link standards of school readiness and success at the early childhood level to overarching academic standards implemented in grades K-12. One of the most prominently discussed guiding principles for the publication was that social-emotional experiences and relationships are the foundation for child development, thus demonstrating the importance of supporting the child in the development of foundational social and emotional skills (p. 131).

Research has also been conducted in order to understand the implications of issues faced in terms of students who require greater support in their social and emotional development, and mental health and wellness, than what they are receiving at home. Van Vulpen, Habegar, and Simmons (2018) investigated the disparity between students who are developing optimally through a lens that focuses on social, emotional, and mental health and those who are not. The researchers noted that studies have shown that approximately one in five youths in schools today ("Youths," defined in the article as "school aged children") have diagnosable mental health disorders (p. 111). However, it can be identified in research that close to 70% of those students do not receive appropriate services (p. 111) Splett, Trainor, Raborn, Halliday-Boykins, Garzona, Dongo, and Weist (2018), also explored this disparity. Their research stated that though many schools have in place and follow a multi-tiered system of support for prevention and intervention

of mental health concerns of their students, many schools are slow to adopt universal healthcare screening due to concerns about their ability to meet needs of all identified (p. 351). These researchers conducted a study set out to determine the disparity that existed between students already receiving supports and students who, due to lack of screening may need/qualify for mental health supports, but who were not receiving them. The study's findings indicated that, "In a sample of 3,744 students in Grades 1 to 5 from six schools, 679 (18.1%) additional students were identified by screening, representing a 180.1% increase in students identified with behavioral risk or need for mental health interventions" (p. 356).

This disparity has a significant impact on the academic, social, and emotional well-being of these students. Van Vulpen, Habegar and Simmons (2018), referenced above, in their research findings continued to note that, while parental involvement is considered essential in ensuring that students are receiving proper services, parents often face barriers in accessing mental health care for their children. The aim of their study was to explore the specific parent perceptions of needs and barriers to school-based mental health services. This exploratory study included 607 parent and guardian respondents. Survey findings indicated that anxiety, depression, and bullying were the top emotional and behavioral issues that parents recognized as the main challenges for their children. Survey findings also showed that parents were overwhelmingly in support of schools being involved in addressing the mental health needs of students. These research findings were preceded by the assertion that, "Prior research and literature have supported the benefits of school based mental health services" (p. 104). In fact, this research cited the findings from a study that was part of a greater initiative by the Eastern Shore School Mental Health Coalition of Maryland, which was the recipient of funding from the Maryland State Department

of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (Mental Health Association of the Eastern Shore, n.d.).

The purpose of this study, which was also conducted by van Vulpen and Habegar (2018), who are both employed by the Department of Social Work at Salisbury University, was to “explore school-based mental health needs and to develop strategies to improve a system coordination for improved academic outcomes for students with behavioral health disorders” (p. 104). This exploratory study aimed to answer the following two research questions: “What are the needs identified by parents and guardians of school-age children regarding school-based mental health services?” and “What are the perceived barriers of school-based mental health services for youths in the rural counties of the Eastern Shore of Maryland” (p. 104)? Compiled findings from this study provided the researchers with insight on the needs and perceived barriers for school based mental health services from the parent perspective. The findings identified lack of parental support for the child, lack of knowledge about mental health, and limited support services in the schools as barriers that resulted in students falling through the cracks by not receiving needed services. These findings also indicated that more than 75% of parents polled agreed that schools should be involved in addressing the mental health needs of students. (p. 110). Parents and guardians were also overwhelmingly in support of curriculum-based social and emotional lessons being implemented in the classroom.

In understanding the overarching importance of social and emotional health, a question often phrased is “What responsibility does the school have in supporting social, emotional, and mental health of all of its students? Moreover, how can this support be provided?” Heath, Smith, and Young (2017) observed the limited amount of support available for children, both on a

national and international scale, due to a shortage of mental health professionals. According to their research:

In the USA, less than one third of children with mental health needs receive professional intervention (National Center for Children in Poverty [NCCP], 2014). Furthermore, youth who are initially identified with mental health disorders do not typically receive ongoing psychological treatment, nor do their families receive the support to adequately address mental health needs (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2014).

Furthermore, children who are considered at greater risk for struggling with mental health challenges are also the least likely to seek and receive services (CDC, 2013; Padilla-Frausto, et al., 2014).”

Heath, et al. observed that the populations most commonly disadvantaged in these statistics include children living in single parent homes, children in foster care, homeless children, children from transient families, children living in poverty, and children from culturally diverse backgrounds.

In assessing the data, which indicates a large percentage of youth with unmet mental health needs, the limited number of mental health professionals, and barriers which may prevent a child from seeking and obtaining services, Heath, et al. (2017) presented two strategies in order to address these issues. The first is to provide mental health services in schools, and the second, broadening the capacity of mental health care by preparing individuals who work in education to provide psychological support in schools, and ultimately the surrounding school-wide community. Heath, Smith, and Young continued to suggest education in the form of Social and

Emotional learning, which they cite (Weissberg, et al., p.17) in order to define as: “The process through which one develops the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy to others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions” (As cited in Heath, et al., p. 542). To more fully describe SEL, five interconnected core competencies are deemed necessary for children's social and emotional well being, inclusive of self awareness, self management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. One main focus of Heath, et al.'s work was the strong advocacy for the use of bibliotherapy in the implementation of a school SEL curriculum. The stated basis for bibliotherapy is anchored in principles of cognitive behavioral therapy: essentially, what we think and how we feel impacts our behavior .Hence, rather than expecting teachers to focus on merely controlling students' behavior, Heath, et al. proposed “using stories to build a strong foundation of SEL that will positively influence children's behavior” (p. 552). Furthermore, according to Heath, et. al), “Good stories hold the power to change how we think and how we feel. By helping change the way children think and feel, the behavior change is self-initiated from the inside out” (p. 559).

A Cambridge study conducted in 2008 also explored targeted behavioral and cognitive-behavioral therapy for children with identifiable emotional wellbeing and mental health needs. Conducted by Maxwell, Aggleton, Warwick, Yankah, Hill, and Mehmedbegovic (2008), the study reviewed the validity and effectiveness of existing studies and programs, which the researchers categorized in three main categories: “demonstrably effective approaches,” “promising approaches” and “approaches for which there is little or no supporting evidence” (p. 560). In conclusion, overall, the study identified 171 relevant studies, with 20 of these being candidates for inclusion in the final review. The findings suggested that, in schools, “sustained

broad-based mental health promotion programmes combined with more targeted behavioural and cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) for those children with identifiable emotional wellbeing and mental health needs, offer evidence of a demonstrably effective approach” (p. 284).

In conclusion, this literature suggests that social, emotional and mental health and well being are foundational for students’ ability to engage with and benefit from all learning experiences, and are subsequently intertwined with overall student success. Research indicates that there is a deficit, and a need for programs that promote and support the development of the whole child. Research also indicates that there is a shortage of support for students and families struggling with mental health needs. Furthermore, a large percentage of families are supportive of schools addressing the mental health needs of students and, in the implementation of curriculum-based social and emotional lessons being implemented in the classroom. Research suggests that implementing these curriculum based standards and lessons is a method by which to broaden the capacity for mental health care.

Conclusions

In accordance with the above conclusions, the purpose of this curriculum project is to design and implement curriculum lessons that utilize the New York State Social and Emotional Learning standards and benchmarks. This curriculum will be research based, in order to ensure that the lessons are effective, and promote best practice. Moreover, this curriculum will represent a broad based mental health promotion program, and will used in combination with more targeted supports for children with identifiable emotional well being and mental health needs. The following chapter will detail the methods employed in the creation of a curriculum aligned with the New York State Social and Emotional learning benchmarks for Early Childhood.

Methodology

The purpose of this curriculum project was to develop a curriculum that incorporated the benchmarks and standards of the newly developed New York State Social and Emotional learning benchmarks (NYS SELs). The completed curriculum addresses the problem that, though there is a published list of age appropriate SEL standards and benchmarks, no formal curriculum, or even classroom activities or general teaching practices for Early Childhood grade levels have been made available to the public by New York State. This curriculum intends to support students in the development of self awareness and self management skills in order to help them to use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships, and to demonstrate ethical decision making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts. The intended school of implementation for this curriculum is at a charter school in Buffalo, New York, as that is the author's place of employment. However, the curriculum was written with the intention that it be inclusive enough to implement in urban, suburban, and rural elementary schools. The author hopes that through the implementation of this curriculum, her students, and potentially other students across New York State, will have greater access to supports and resources that will help them to develop socially and emotionally. The author also hopes that this will assist students as they develop a foundation for lifelong mental health and wellness, which will support them in all aspects of their future endeavors. The following chapter will detail the methodology contributing to the creation of this Curriculum.

Conceptual Frameworks

Mental Health

For the purpose of this thesis, mental health can be defined as a person's condition, with regard to their emotional and psychological well being (MentalHealth.gov, n.d., p. 1). Mental

health affects the way that a person may think, feel, and act. Mental health is also a determining factor in the ways in which one may handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health bears effect on the psyche of every living person, from childhood, through adolescence, and for the remainder of adulthood (MentalHealth.gov, p. 1). Ways to maintain positive mental health include staying positive, connecting with others, being physically active, getting an adequate amount of sleep and nutrition, and seeking help when needed. Maintaining positive mental health allows a person to remain productive, cope with stress and negativity in a healthy way, make societal contributions and lead a meaningful life.

A long stigmatized topic, much more work is now being done in order to understand mental health, especially regarding the effects that poor mental health problems can have on varying aspects of a person's life (Johns Hopkins University, p. 1). Mental and behavioral health). Many factors may contribute to problems with mental health, including biological factors, such as genetic makeup and brain chemistry, life experiences, such as trauma and abuse, and finally, family history of mental health problems. Warning signs of suffering mental health, sometimes classified as mental illness, may include, but are not limited to: eating or sleeping too much or too little, emotionally pulling away from friends and family, having less energy, numbness, physical aches and pains, feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, hearing voices, and thoughts of self harm and suicide (MentalHealth.gov). Current statistics, cited from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine Health Library indicate that approximately 26% of Americans ages 18 and older (or about about 1 in 4 adults) suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year, that approximately 9.5% of American adults ages 18 and over will suffer from a depressive illness (major depression, bipolar disorder, or dysthymia) each year, and that many people suffer from more than one mental disorder at a given time (para. 1-3). In

particular, depressive illnesses tend to co-occur with substance abuse and anxiety disorders (para. 3) . Unfortunately most people who commit suicide have a diagnosable mental disorder (most commonly a depressive disorder or a substance abuse disorder.). Most pertinent to this thesis, statistics indicate that the symptoms of many mental health problems first occur in childhood or adolescence, including: Obsessive compulsive Disorder, Panic Disorder, General Anxiety Disorder, Social Phobia, Depression and issues pertaining to Substance Abuse and Eating Disorders (Johns Hopkins University, para. 9, Mental and behavioral health.)

Social and Emotional Learning

For the purpose of this thesis, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) can be defined as, “The process through which one develops the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy to others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions” (Weissberg (2015, p. 3). An emerging body of research is surfacing, confirming the importance of the development of these foundational skills and linking SEL to overall mental wellness. Combined, these aspects of mental health all make up a foundation imperative to the development of the whole child. At the time of the development of this curriculum, the implementation of a program that supports elementary aged students as they develop related knowledge, skills, and abilities has not been made mandatory by New York State. Nor have any formal curricula, resources, materials, or general teaching practices for voluntary implementation been provided to the general public.

Audience

The curriculum created for this project was intended to first be used with a group of 20 first graders, all aged 6 or 7, living in the city of Buffalo New York. The city of Buffalo is the

largest city in Erie County, and is made up of a population of 258,612 people (United States Census Bureau, 2010). Racial demographics of the city of Buffalo include: White: 50.4% of the population (non-Hispanic: 45.8%), Black or African American: 38.6%, Asian: 3.2% (up from 0.2% in 1970), American Indian or Alaska Native: 0.8%, Other race: 3.9%, Two or more races: 3.1%, and Hispanic or Latino of any race: 10.5% (United States Census Bureau, 2010). The average household income in Buffalo is \$32,883 per year (United States Census Bureau).

The demographics of the school at which the curriculum will be implemented are as follows: This charter school is located in an urban setting. Currently, the school provides education for Kindergarten-Grade 2, although the specifications of the charter specify that one grade level will be added to the school each year, until the school is Kindergarten-Grade 8 (L. Marszalek, head of schools, personal communication, March 2019). Each classroom contains no more than 20 students. Each classroom is taught by a Classroom teacher and a Teacher's Assistant, or co-taught by a Classroom Teacher and a Special Education teacher. At this Charter School, approximately 85% of the students are African American, 8% are Hispanic, 5% are White (non-Hispanic) 2% are Middle Eastern, and 1% is Asian/Pacific Islander. Of the 20 students in the researcher's class, 17 are African American, two are Hispanic, and one is White. Twelve of the students identify as male, and 8 of the students identify as female. Seven of the students have either an Individual Education Plan (IEP), or a 504 Behavioral Plan. Each of these 7 students has been diagnosed with a learning disability.

Procedure

During the course of developing this curriculum, the author took the following steps:

Step One: Author's Background

The researcher was born and raised in Angola, New York. She attended Lake Shore public schools for the entirety of her K-12 educational career, and graduated from high school with an Advanced Regents diploma, as well as with an additional diploma from The Academy of Business and Finance (AOBF) program in which Lake Shore takes part. Following her graduation, the researcher enrolled in the Childhood Education program at Fredonia State University, aided in part by a private scholarship. Though Fredonia State University is located in a relatively rural geographic location, the population of staff and students is more racially and culturally diverse than is the author's hometown. It was at Fredonia where the author experienced her first real first hand exposure to racial, ethnic and religious diversity. Through social experience, through a number of World and American history courses, and through her core Education courses, the author began to develop a deeper understanding of diversity within modern society, and the implications that have subsequently arisen from historical, societal constructs. The author credits Fredonia with igniting an interest in her continued passion for being a culturally responsive educator.

Step Two: Choosing a Topic

Initially, the author had intended to conduct research. Her initial inclination was to research possible links between exceptionalities in school aged children. In particular, the author was interested in researching multi-exceptionalities that included a diagnosis of giftedness in young children, co-existent with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). She was particularly intrigued by research that she had read that had been conducted in order to understand the diagnosis formerly referred to as Asperger's Syndrome, a diagnosis formally abolished under the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-5, in favor of including the symptoms

under the broadened umbrella of ASD. Although the author is still interested in such research, she eventually concluded that she could not identify a large enough gap in existing research in order to justify conducting her own study. However, she kept students with ASD very much in mind throughout the development of her SEL curriculum, ensuring opportunities for, and examples of differentiation and adaptation of the curriculum for students with varying educational needs.

Step Three: Conducting a Needs Assessment

The researcher was interested in developing a curriculum intended for a diverse population of students within the city of Buffalo. In order to establish ways to implement SEL instruction within the school and surrounding community, and to help generate her curriculum topic, she conducted a needs assessment in order to determine the types of programs that were already implemented. Via Internet research and conversations with school administrators, counselors, and curriculum coaches, the author identified that there was no formal curriculum in place rooted in SEL. Through conversations with the school counselor, she also discovered that the counselor's position at the school was part time. Furthermore the counselor stated that, outside of the services provided to students with a clearly demonstrated and specifically requested need for such services, that many students within the building had very infrequent interactions with her. The counselor expressed that, for many of the classrooms, her interactions with the students had been limited to a brief introduction by the building principal on her first day. Per request of the team of Kindergarten teachers, she had taught one mini-lesson on "bucket filling," or the act of building up one's peers through kindness, to each of the four of the Kindergarten classes. She was not asked to teach this mini-lesson to any of the first or second

grade classrooms. The school counselor also lamented the lack of mental health services accessible to service the needs of the population of the surrounding communities.

Step Four: Identify the Audience

Throughout the course of her employment at this Buffalo Charter School, the author developed a thorough understanding of the curricula in place, and the instruction and various supports provided to its students. Through research on the socio-economic statistics of the surrounding community, through conversations with fellow teachers and supporting school personnel regarding the students, and through research into the shortage of accessible, qualified Mental Health professionals in the surrounding area available to service a high volume of need, the author determined that there was a significant need to offer SEL opportunities to her students in their formative years of development. The author also determined that she could utilize the skill set and implement the instructional strategies that she had developed and learned from her own academic background while benefiting children from vulnerable populations with whom she worked on a daily basis.

Step Five: Determine Course Requirements

The author aligned the entirety of her curriculum project to the standards and benchmarks published by the New York State Education Department in the August of 2018 (NYSED, 2018). Furthermore, the author designed the curriculum in order to meet various English Language Arts (ELA) standards from both the New York State Common Core Standards, as well as the Next Generation Standards, across multiple grade levels from K-3. The author's intent for incorporating these standards was to make SEL intersectional for her students, and to concurrently reinforce and develop valuable literacy skills. The author understood that the bulk of the work for determining course requirements fell on obtaining permission from the building

principal to implement the curriculum. As a large component of the school mission of the Buffalo Charter School is rooted in bridging the gap of poverty with literacy, the author therefore deemed it valuable to align her curriculum with the themes discussed in the school mission statement. She felt that in taking this step, she could more effectively validate and defend her desire to implement her curriculum. Another component of determining course requirements included the practical necessity of finding time within the school day during which the curriculum could potentially be implemented. Keeping this in mind, the author designed each lesson to be about 20 minutes long, therefore making each lesson possible to intermittently flex into the extended school day schedule adopted by the Buffalo Charter School.

Step Six: Conduct Literature Review

The author initiated her research by utilizing the online library database of SUNY Fredonia. Specifically, by recommendation of the school librarian, the author primarily conducted her research through the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) database. By the time that the author set out to begin her thesis, she had cemented her topic of study. She began her research by searching keywords and phrases such as “social and emotional learning”, “SEL”, and “child/mental health.” She narrowed her search findings by opting to read and review examples of publications that were both empirical and peer reviewed. These publications, as well as publications pertinent to the NYS SEL standards that she found linked on the New York State Department of Education Website, served as the baseline of literature used in support of her thesis.

Step Seven: Review NYS SEL Standards and Benchmarks

The author reviewed the New York State SEL standards for voluntary implementation. (New York State Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks, 2018) She found the

standards broad enough to meet through a variety of creative means when planning aligning lessons, allowing her liberty to design a curriculum curated to her students interests and needs.

Step Eight: Use the CASEL Framework to Plan and Design a Course.

The framework chosen for this Curriculum project was the CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) framework (CASEL, n.d.). This framework was selected as it provided the framework for the NYS SEL framework published by the New York State Department of Education (NYSED, 2018). The CASEL Framework is research based, widely referenced in pertinent literature, and acclaimed by experts in the field of SEL.

Scope and Sequence

The scope and sequence for this curriculum project henceforth described are based on the following components of the CASEL Framework (CASEL, n.d.). The scope and sequence of this curriculum are composed of the following learning goals and objectives, and will be explored in greater detail. The scope and Sequence will be presented to the thesis advisor for feedback and approval.

CASEL Framework

- **Learning Goals.** The CSI recommends that states articulate what students should know and be able to do with regard to SEL (across all core competencies of SEL), including developmental benchmarks or indicators.
- **Integration/Alignment.** Educational goals for SEL should be integrated and aligned with academic standards.
- **Teacher Practices.** The CSI recommends that state working groups provide guidance for teachers regarding evidence-based approaches and teacher practices designed to support students' social and emotional development.

- **School Climate.** State working groups should include guidelines on how educators can be intentional about creating a positive learning environment.
- **Culture/Language.** The state working groups should provide guidance to ensure that learning goals, teaching practices, and approaches are culturally and linguistically appropriate and engaging for all students.
- **Implementation.** There are three parts to successful implementation: (1) evidence-based programs as well as broader guidance on SEL implementation to ensure that teachers have effective strategies and activities to support student SEL, (2) assessment tools that allow teachers to effectively monitor their students' progress, and (3) professional development strategies to ensure that teachers are equipped to successfully implement SEL.
- **Funding/Support.** Developing strategies to provide long-term funding and support for SEL implementation is critically important in order to make statewide SEL viable and sustainable. (CASEL. (n.d.). Frameworks. Retrieved from <https://casel.org/src-frameworks/>)

Step One – Learning Goals: It is by establishing learning goals that the instructor frames the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for each lesson. Each ILO is oriented towards imparting one of the core skills of optimal social and emotional development on the child. The following core skills were adopted from the NYS SEL benchmarks, and are generally homogeneous across all existing benchmarks for curriculum implementing Social and Emotional Learning:

1. Develop self-awareness and self-management skills essential to success in school and in life.

2. Use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.
3. Demonstrate ethical decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.(New York State Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks,2018)

These learning goal benchmarks serve as the foundation for the curriculum in its entirety. In this step, the instructor analyzed the knowledge and skills that the students should take away from each lesson, and the ways that knowledge supplements the child in grasping the overarching goals of the curriculum listed above. The New York State Department of Education further unpacks each benchmark into more concise learning goals (NYSED, 2018). In this step of planning for instruction, the instructor references the developmentally appropriate grade level standards (in this case, Early Elementary, K-3) aligned to each learning goal. The instructor, in this step, develops the curriculum outline by aligning each learning goal with research based, developmentally appropriate activities to model, teach, and reinforce each ILO.

Step Two – Integration and Alignment: During the lesson planning process, it is imperative that the instructor cross reference academic standards. This ensures that the lessons are comprehensive, developmentally appropriate, and aligned with research. Furthermore, this practice makes academic learning and SEL intersectional, therefore supporting the development of the whole child. In this step, the instructor examines the Common Core and Next Generation Standards for ELA in first grade. She uses these standards to plan for activities with strengthen the child's understanding of both the academic standard, as well as the SEL standard.

Step Three – Teacher Practices: A gap identified in research indicated that New York State has not yet published teacher practices to supplement the implementation of SEL standards at the early elementary level. However, some research based teaching practices that are

incorporated into the curriculum and can be utilized throughout the school day at any grade level include: teacher modeling of self-management and self-calming techniques at a developmentally appropriate level for students, the routine provision of authentic feedback, providing students with positive reinforcement for expressing emotions appropriately, modeling and discussing one's own goals with students, collaborating to set obtainable classroom goals and celebrating goal-related achievements, modeling respect and enthusiasm for diversity, modeling respectful behaviors, and modeling healthy conflict resolution skills.

Step Four – School Climate: A positive school environment creates the conditions for SEL. The Buffalo charter school at which the curriculum will be implemented has already taken great care to cultivate a healthy school climate in which SEL can thrive. Contributing factors to the positive climate include, among many examples: the adherence to a school-wide Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) program, which positively reinforces kind, responsible, and respectful behavior, community and family outreach in the form of school-sponsored activities, the provision of a balanced breakfast, lunch, and snack to each student on a daily basis, and the celebration of diversity and multiculturalism. In this step, the author addresses the ways that students may further contribute to a thriving school ecosystem through SEL, and will provide pathways through the curriculum for students to contribute to the school community.

Step Five – Culture/Language: Meeting this standard entails that the instructor practice culturally responsive educating, and the modeling of celebration of diversity. The instructor must be aware of the various cultures that make up her classroom, and use speech and activities that are supportive of cultural differences. Activities aligned with the learning goals of the curriculum

should be crafted in order to facilitate student exploration of other cultures through various mediums of literacy.

Step Six – Implementation. The implementation of the author’s SEL curriculum can be broken down into three categories: Access to evidence based programs, effective assessment tools, and pertinent professional development, which supports the educator in implementing the curriculum.

(1) Evidence-based programs provide the foundation for the entirety of the author’s SEL curriculum. The combination of the CASEL Framework for effective SEL curriculum (CASEL, n.d.) and the NYS SEL benchmarks (NYSED, 2018) and learning goals provide the outline for each of the ILOs and corresponding lesson activities. Moreover, each lesson activity is aligned with multiple research based state academic standards.

(2) Assessment should consist of a process by which data is continuously being collected, and subsequently used to inform and shape instruction. Data should indicate the knowledge and skills that the students are understanding, and the methods that are working, and areas in which students struggle or experience confusion. Data can be used in order to identify the students that qualify for additional supports, and can be further utilized in order to develop customized supports.

(3) Professional development should be used in order to further the educators’ understanding of SEL, and the understanding of the significance that the development of a social and emotional skill set has on fostering school, college, career, and life readiness. Moreover, supplementary professional development should be used in order to influence pedagogy. Prior to the development of this curriculum, the author received professional development in Restorative

Justice and Restorative Practices, and in Adverse Childhood Experiences, which aided in the development of this curriculum from a trauma sensitive approach.

Step Seven – Funding and Support: At the time of the completion of this curriculum, no funding or additional school-provided supports were being allocated towards the SEL Curriculum. All resources used were provided by the instructor. In order to facilitate long term implementation of the curriculum, best case scenario, a trained and qualified expert or team would take on the role of effective implementation of the NYS SEL curriculum, school wide.

Conclusion

The author feels that her curriculum project matched the problem. Her initial question was to determine whether there was an available curriculum implementing the New York State Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) standards at an early childhood level. When she determined that the answer was no, she then set out to research the purpose of a Social and Emotional Learning curriculum, and furthermore, successful frameworks for SEL curricula. The author was particularly intent on researching those curricula that targeted an early childhood demographic. The research that she found supported the implementation of a SEL curriculum, confirming similar curricula to be beneficial in supporting the needs of the whole child. Furthermore, the research confirmed that the skills developed through similar curricula correlated strongly with students' college, career, and life readiness upon graduation. The children that the author targeted her Curriculum towards are the authors first grade students. In the implementation of this Curriculum, the author would intend to build and support a foundational development of self awareness, self-management, social awareness, and interpersonal skills. Furthermore she has developed the curriculum in order to support students in

establishing and maintaining positive relationships, demonstrating ethical decision making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.

Results

The following section contains the curriculum overview for the implementation of the New York State Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Standards. This curriculum is intended for implementation within a first grade classroom. The curriculum is segmented into three units, with each unit corresponding to one of the three learning goals of the curriculum. Each learning goal is segmented into subsections. There are a total of 10 subsections for the three learning goals, combined. Each of the subsections represents a component of mastery for the corresponding learning goal. The lessons in this curriculum are aligned to the components of each subsection. The learning goals and subsections of this curriculum are aligned to the New York State Social and Emotional Learning benchmarks for Early Elementary grade levels (K-3). In addition to being aligned with the New York State Social and Emotional Learning Standards, each lesson is also aligned with New York State Common Core Curriculum, and to the Next Generation Standards for first grade. The lesson plans are followed by supplementary materials which coincide with the topics of the lesson.

Curriculum Overview

Framework

Curriculum Standards are designed to meet those established by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework. These standards are used for instructors of Social and Emotional Learning and consist of the following standards:

- Standard One: Learning Goals
- Standard Two: Integration/Alignment
- Standard Three: Teacher Practices
- Standard Four: School Climate
- Standard Five: Culture/Language
- Standard Six: Implementation
- Standard Seven: Funding and Support

Intended Learning Outcomes

- 1) Students will develop self-awareness and self-management skills essential to success in school and in life.
- 2) Students will use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.
- 3) Students will demonstrate ethical decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.

Learning Standards

Unit One

Goal One: Students will develop self-awareness and self-management skills essential to success in school and in life.

- A) Identify and manage one's own emotions and behavior
 - 1A.1a. Recognize and describe emotions and how they are linked to behavior.
 - 1A.1b. Demonstrate control of impulsive behavior.
- B) Recognize personal qualities and external supports
 - 1B.1a. Describe one's likes, dislikes, needs, wants, strengths, challenges, and opinions.
 - 1B.1b. Identify family, peer, school, and community strengths and supports.
- C) Demonstrate skills related to achieving personal and academic goals.
 - 1C.1a. Describe why learning is important in helping students achieve personal goals.
 - 1C.1b. Identify goals for personal behavior progress, achievement, or success.

Unit Two

Goal Two: Students will use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.

- A) Recognize the feelings and perspectives of others
 - 2A.1a. Recognize that others may experience situations differently from oneself.
 - 2A.1b. Use listening skills to identify the feelings and perspectives of others.
- B) Recognize individual and group similarities and differences
 - 2B.1a. Describe the ways that people are similar and different.
 - 2B.1b. Describe positive qualities in others.
- C) Use communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.
 - 2C.1a. Identify ways to work and play well with others.
 - 2C.1b. Demonstrate adaptability and appropriate social behavioral school.
- D) Demonstrate the ability to prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways.
 - 2D.1a. Identify problems and conflicts commonly experienced by peers.
 - 2D.1b. Identify approaches to resolving conflicts constructively.

Unit Three

Goal Three: Students will demonstrate ethical decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.

- A) Consider ethical, safety, and societal factors in making decisions.
 - 3A.1a. Explain why acts that hurt others are wrong.
 - 3A.1b. Identify social norms and safety considerations that guide behavior.
- B) Apply decision- making skills to deal responsibly with daily academic and social situations.
 - 3B.1a. Identify a range of decisions that students make at school and at home.
 - 3B.1b. Make positive choices when interacting with classmates.
- C) Contribute to the well-being of one’s school and community.
 - 3C.1a. Identify and perform roles that contribute to one’s classroom.
 - 3C.1b. Identify and perform roles that contribute to one’s family.

Common Core/Next Generation Standards:

CCSS:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1

Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.2

Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.4

Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.7

Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.9

Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.1

Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.5

With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.6

With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.8

With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1.A

Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1.B

Build on others' talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.2

Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.4

Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.5

Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

NGSS:

1R1: Develop and answer questions about key ideas and details in a text.

1R2: Identify a main topic or central idea in a text and retell important details.

1R3: Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, or pieces of information in a text.

1R4: Identify specific words that express feelings and senses.

1R7: Use illustrations and details in literary and informational texts to discuss story elements and/or topics.

1R9: Make connections between self and text (texts and other people/ world).

1W1: Write an opinion on a topic or personal experience; give two or more reasons to support that opinion.

1W4: Create a response to a text, author, theme or personal experience (e.g., poem, dramatization, artwork, or other).

1SL1: Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse peers and adults (e.g., in small and large groups and during play).

1SL4: Describe familiar people, places, things, and events with relevant details expressing ideas clearly.

1L5: Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

1L5d: Distinguish shades of meaning among verbs differing in manner (e.g., look, peek, glance, stare, glare, scowl) and adjectives differing in intensity (e.g., large, gigantic) by defining or choosing them or by acting out the meanings.

Topic Outline/Schedule**Unit One**

Week One: Learning Goal One, Subsection A, (1A.1a, 1A.1b)
Lessons 1-5

Week Two: Learning Goal One, Subsection B, (1B.1a, 1B.1b)

Lessons 6-10

Week Three: Learning Goal One, Subsection C (1C.1a, 1C.1b)

Lessons 11-15

Unit Two

Week Four: Learning Goal Two, Subsection A (2A.1a, 2A.1b)

Lessons 16-20

Week Five: Learning Goal Two, Subsection B (2B.1a, 2B.1b)

Lessons 20-25

Week Six: Learning Goal Two, Subsection C (2C.1a, 2C.1b)

Lessons 26-28

Week Seven: Learning Goal Two, Subsection D (2D.1a, 2D.1b)

Lessons 29-31

Unit Three

Week Eight: Learning Goal Three, Subsection A (3A.1a, 3A.1b)

Lessons 32-33

Week Nine: Learning Goal Three, Subsection B (3B. 1a, 3B.1b)

Lessons 34-36

Week Ten: Learning Goal Three, Subsection C (3C. 1a, 3C.1b)

In order to adapt to time constraints and to target the optimal attention span period of the intended grade level, each lesson will not exceed 20 minutes in length. In order to thoroughly address each standard, several lessons may be utilized in order to meet each standard. Each week within the curriculum will contain between two and five mini-lessons to address the target standards. These “mini-lessons” will be scaffolded to build student knowledge and understanding. Optimally, the instructor will begin the mini-lessons for each subsection at the beginning of each week, and will complete the mini-lessons for each standard by the end of each week. However, the mini-lessons are designed to be flexibly implemented, for the convenience of the instructor. Therefore, it is not necessary for the instructor to adhere strictly to the weekly plans, so long as each mini-lesson is delivered in the sequential order of the curriculum.

Unit One

Week One: Learning Goal One, Subsection A, (1A.1a, 1A.1b)

Target: Students will recognize and describe emotions and how they are linked to behavior. Students will learn to control impulsive behavior

CCSS/NGSS: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.7, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.2, 1R1, 1R2, 1R3, 1R4, 1R7

Mini-lesson One:

Materials: Mood meter class chart, Yoga GoNoodle activity, green marker, SMART Board

Procedure: (20 minutes)

- Instructor will introduce large copy of Mood Meter chart
- Students will identify the colors and emotions on each section
- Instructor will choose the “Green/Relaxed” section to talk about for the day, and will discuss how green is a color associated with calmness and relaxation
- Students will participate in a mindful, yoga GoNoodle activity
- After completing GoNoodle, students will discuss with a partner how they felt during the Yoga activity
- Instructor will have students brainstorm synonyms for “relaxed”, asking them to use other words to describe how they felt during the Yoga Activity
- Instructor will add synonyms to class Mood meter chart in Green Marker. The instructor will encourage ELL’s in class to contribute synonyms in their first language
- Students will be asked to share, in a circle, one thing that makes them feel relaxed or “green.”

Mini-lesson Two:

Materials: Mood meter class chart, *My Friend is Sad* by Mo Willems, blue marker

Procedure: (20 minutes)

- Instructor will ask students to demonstrate or “act out” what it looks like to be relaxed or “green” (review from prior lesson)
- Instructor will reference the Mood meter chart, and introduce the “Blue/Sad” section, discussing how blue is a color associated with sadness.
- Instructor will read *My Friend is Sad*.
- During and after reading, instructor will pose questions: “How is the character feeling?”,”Why is he feeling that way? Do other characters understand how he is feeling?”
- Instructor will have students brainstorm synonyms for “sad”, asking them to use other words to describe how Elephant felt in the book
- Instructor will add synonyms to class Mood meter chart in Blue Marker. The instructor will encourage ELL’s in class to contribute synonyms in their first language
- Students will be asked to share, in a circle, what makes them feel better when they feel sad or “blue”

Mini-lesson Three:

Materials: Mood meter class chart, *When Sophie Gets Angry...Really Really Angry* by Molly

Bang, red marker

Procedure: (20 minutes)

- Instructor will ask students to demonstrate or “act out” what it looks like to be sad or “blue” (Review from prior lesson)
- Instructor will reference the Mood meter chart, and introduce the “Red/Angry” section, discussing how red is a color associated with anger.
- Instructor will read *When Sophie gets Angry*
- During and after reading, instructor will pose questions: “How is the character feeling?”,”Why is she feeling that way? Do other characters understand how she is feeling?”
- Instructor will have students brainstorm synonyms for “angry”, asking them to use other words to describe how Sophie felt in the book
- Instructor will add synonyms to class Mood meter chart in Red Marker. The instructor will encourage ELL’s in class to contribute synonyms in their first language
- Students will be asked to share, in a circle, what calms them when they feel angry or “red”

Mini-lesson Four:

Materials: Mood meter class chart, *The Hello Goodbye Window* by Norton Juster, yellow marker

Procedure: (20 minutes)

- Instructor will ask students to demonstrate or “act out” what it looks like to be angry or “red” (review from prior lesson)
- Instructor will reference the Mood meter chart, and introduce the “yellow/happy” section, discussing how yellow is a color associated with happiness.
- Instructor will read *The Hello Goodbye Window*
- During and after reading, instructor will pose questions: “How is the character feeling?”,”Why is he feeling that way? Do other characters understand how he is feeling?”
- Instructor will have students brainstorm synonyms for “happy”, asking them to use other words to describe how the character felt in the book
- Instructor will add synonyms to class Mood meter chart in yellow marker. The instructor will encourage ELL’s in class to contribute synonyms in their first language
- Students will be asked to share, in a circle, what makes them feel happy.

Mini-lesson Five:

Materials: Mood meter class chart, mini mood meter charts for each student, paper

Procedure: (20 minutes)

- Instructor will ask students to close their eyes in order to remember the emotions “sad” and “angry” and to “act them out”, or demonstrate what they look like.
- Instructor will ask them to draw what their face looks like in the first box on the “My guide to feeling better” paper
- Instructor will then ask students to think of something that makes them feel better when they

feel negative emotions, drawing on discussions from prior lessons. Students will discuss with partners

-Students will write a few sentences about what makes them feel better on their “guide” paper, using the synonyms they came up with during class discussions. They will then be asked to draw what their face looks like, in the second box, after thinking of “happy things”.

-Students will be encouraged to share

-Each students’ “Guide to Feeling Better” will be taped to the inside of their desk

Week Two: Learning Goal One, Subsection B, (1B.1a, 1B.1b)

Target: Students will describe one’s likes, dislikes, needs, wants, strengths, challenges, and opinions. Students will identify family, peer, school, and community strengths and supports.

CCSS/NGSS: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1.B, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1.A, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.5,CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.1CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.5 ,1SL1,1SL4

Mini-lesson Six:

Materials: Side board, sticky notes, colored pencils

Procedure: (20 minutes)

-Instructor will section the side board into seven sections: likes, dislikes, needs, wants, strengths, challenges, and opinions

-Instructor will deliver instructions for each category. The class will complete each section at the same pace

-Each student will receive a sticky note.

-With a red colored pencil, students will write the name of one person they like, one candy they like, and one thing they like to do for fun. Each will post their sticky note in the “likes” section

-With an orange colored pencil, on a new sticky note, students will write one food they dislike, and one household chore they dislike. Each will post their sticky note in the “dislikes” section

-With a yellow colored pencil, on a new sticky note, students will write one thing they “need”, or truly can’t live without. Each will post their sticky note in the “needs” section

-With a green colored pencil, on a new sticky note, students will write one thing they “want”, and don’t already have. Each will post their sticky note in the “wants” section.

-With a blue colored pencil, on a new sticky note, students will write one “strength” they have, or something about themselves that they’re proud of. Each will post their sticky note in the “strengths” section

-With an indigo colored pencil, on a new sticky note, students will write one thing they find challenging, or would like to be better at. Each will post their note in the “challenges” section

-With a purple colored pencil, on a new sticky note, students will write one thing that they

strongly believe in (with help from teacher examples). Each will post their sticky note in the “opinions section”.

-Teacher will title the board “The Rainbow of Us!”, and will leave the board intact until further notice.

Mini-lesson Seven

Materials: *The Lemon Tree* by Katherine Graham

Procedure: (20 minutes)

-The school guidance counselor will visit the classroom, and will read *The Lemon Tree*

-The guidance counselor will lead a class discussion on support systems, in the form of peers and friends, family, school, and trusted community members.

Mini-lesson Eight:

Materials: “Support systems” template, colored pencils

Procedure: (20 minutes)

-Instructor will review the term “support” from Mini-lesson Seven, and will provide the example of “legs supporting a table”, and then of how one person can “support” another

-Students will brainstorm, and discuss with a partner, people who support them in their own lives

-Students will draw, color, and label themselves in the middle of “support systems” template

-Students will draw, color, and label three others in the “support systems” template

Mini-lesson Nine:

Materials: ‘Letter writing’ template, pencil, “Rainbow wall”, Mood meter class chart

Procedure: (20 minutes)

-Instructor will open class discussion by asking students how it feels to be supported. Students will be encouraged to consult the mood meter classroom chart to use describing, feeling words

-The instructor will phrase the question: “Wouldn’t it feel nice to thank somebody who always supports us?”

-Instructor will introduce “letter writing template”. With help from the students, the instructor will model how to write a thank you letter to a person of support.

-Instructor will make a point to use the “rainbow wall” to choose a person they like, and who provides support to her. The instructor will also make a point to reference the Mood Meter chart for help choosing describing words about how the recipient of the letter makes them feel, through their support.

-Students will assist in editing the paper

Mini-lesson Ten:

Materials: ‘Letter writing’ template, pencil, “Rainbow wall”, Mood meter class chart

Procedure: (20 minutes)

- Students will write their own thank you letter to somebody in their support system
- Students may reference their “support systems” template, the “rainbow wall, the Mood meter class chart, and the teacher example of the letter for help
- Instructor, as well as a few proficient writers within the class, will provide assistance to struggling readers and writers
- (This letter may be finished and edited during writers workshop time, if not completed during time constraints of the minilesson)

Week Three: Learning Goal One, Subsection C (1C.1a, 1C.1b)

Target: Students will describe why learning is important in helping students achieve personal goals. Students will identify goals for personal behavior progress, achievement, or success.

CCSS/NGSS: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1,CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1.A, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.2, 1R1,1R2, IR3,1R4 1R7, 1R9, 1W4

Mini-lesson Eleven:

Materials: *The Most Magnificent Thing* by Ashley Spires

Procedure: (20 minutes)

- Instructor will introduce the concept of goals, and will ask for help in defining a goal
- Instructor will read *The Most Magnificent Thing*
- Instructor will pose questions during and after reading: “Does the main character have a goal?”, “What is her goal?”, “What do you think of her goal?”, “Did she accomplish her goal?”

Mini-lesson Twelve:

Materials: Long term/short term goal cards printed on “soccer ball” paper/ Markers

Procedure: (20 minutes)

- Instructor will review the concept of goals from the day before
- Instructor will introduce the concept of “long term” and “short term” goals, and students and instructor will discuss the similarities and differences between them
- Instructor will draw two pictures of soccer goal posts on the whiteboard
- Instructor will label one “long term goal” and the other “short term goal”
- Instructor will sort students into pairs, pairing proficient readers with struggling readers
- Instructor will pass out pre-made cards to each pair, each with various examples of “long term goals” and “short term goals” (ex. “Go to college” and “Earn a good grade on tonight’s homework”)
- With a piece of tape, each pair will adhere their “goal” to the “goal post” it belongs in, and will explain why each goal was either a “long term” or a “short term” goal.

Mini-lesson Thirteen:

Materials: blank “soccer ball” paper/ Markers

Procedure: (20 minutes)

- Instructor will review the concept of “long term goals” and “short term goals” from the day before
- Instructor will introduce the days activity: “yesterday, we discussed long term goals and short term goals. We also looked at some examples of both. Today, I would like each of you to come up with one long term goal, and one short term goal. This goal should be personal, and only for you.”
- Instructor will model the creation of both a personal long term goal and a short term goal, and will discuss how to bring each to fruition. (ex. “My long term goal is to buy a house. This will take me a long time. I will have to save up money for five years, tour many different houses, and take out a loan from the bank.”, “My short term goal is to go for a run when I get home from school. I will have to make sure that my water bottle is full, that my sneakers are tied, and that I am motivated to go for my run”
- Instructor will write “buy a house”, and “go for a run today” each on a black cut out of a soccer ball, and will affix each to the “long term goal” net and the “short term goal” net on the board.
- Instructor will group students into small groups
- Students will write their own “long term” and “short term” goals on a blank soccer ball cut out, and will discuss their goals, and how to achieve them, in their small groups
- Students will place each personal goal in the appropriate “net” with a piece of tape

Mini-lesson Fourteen:

Materials: Chart paper, markers

Procedure: (20 minutes)

- Instructor will introduce the lesson for the day: “We have been talking a lot about goals in here for the past several days. I thought it would be fun to set a *class goal*, that we could all work toward together. I would also like to provide the class with a reward, if we are able to achieve our class goal.”
- Instructor will remind students that goals should be attainable and realistic, and will suggest a short term goal that can be worked toward for a week
- Instructor will suggest a possible goal (ex. “no student names on the board for misbehavior for one week”), and will ask for other suggestions for goals to work toward from the class, and will write each suggestion visibly on chart paper
- Students will vote on a goal to work toward
- Instructor will start a new chart paper, to list class suggestions for a reward. Instructor will suggest a possible reward (ex. “Teacher will bring in cookies and juice for the class”, or “No homework on Friday”) and will ask from other suggestions from class

- Students will vote on a reward
- Teacher will draw five small circles on the board, to be left up for a week. Instructor will explain “ at the end of every day that we meet the expectations of our goal, I will fill in the circle with a smiley face. Every day we do not meet the expectations of our goal, I will not fill in the circle at all. We will assess at the end of every school day whether or not we met our daily goal.”

Mini-lesson Fifteen:

Materials: “I can help my class achieve our goal by” writing prompt worksheet

Procedure: (20 minutes)

- Instructor will remind the students of the class goal and reward agreed upon the mini--lesson prior.
- Instructor will remind students that each person plays a part in helping the class achieve the goal, and as a class, students and instructor will brainstorm specific ways in which students can contribute to the success of the class. (ex. “I can be kind to my friends”, “I can get a good report from special”, “I can work hard on my assignments”)
- Instructor will introduce a worksheet with the writing prompt “I can help my class achieve our goal by...”
- Students will work individually on their sheets, discussing with students seated nearby how they can contribute to achieving the class goal. When finished, students will draw a picture of themselves to accompany their writing.
- Instructor will work with struggling writers.
- Students will be asked to present, if time constraints allow.
- Students will tape their writing prompt to the inside of their desk, to reference.

Unit Two

Learning Goal Two: Subsection A, (2A.1a, 2A.1b)

Target: Students will recognize that others may experience situations differently from themselves. Students will use listening skills to identify the feelings and perspectives of others.

CCSS/NGSS: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1,CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.2 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.7, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.9,CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.8,CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1.A,CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1.B, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.2. 1R1,1R3,1R4,1R7, 1R9,1W4, 1SL1, 1SL4,1L5:

Mini-lesson Sixteen:

Materials: Pictures of people making a variety of different facial expressions and exhibiting different body language (both drawings, and stock photos of real people)

Mood meter chart, paper, crayons

Procedure: (20 minutes)

- Instructor will introduce the lesson for the day: “Today we are going to talk about feelings, and what they may look like. I am going to show you a picture, and we are going to talk about how the person in the picture may be feeling.”
- Instructor will show the class each picture, one at a time
- Instructor will ask students several questions about each picture: “What is this person feeling? How do you know?”, “What do you look like when you feel this way? Can you demonstrate what you look like what you feel this way?”, “What is something that might make them feel this way? What makes you feel this way?”, “In what section of the Mood meter should we tape this picture?”
- Instructor will tape up each picture to the corresponding emotion section of the mood meter
- Students will be asked to choose one emotion, and to draw a “self portrait” of how they look when they display that emotion. They will be asked to label the picture with that emotion
- Instructor will walk around, deliberately pointing out both similarities and differences in the way each person expresses an emotion in their drawing (ex. “Both (one student) and (another student) are showing anger in their drawing by crossing their arms!” and “(one student) shows happiness in their picture by smiling, and (another student) shows happiness in their drawing by jumping up in the air and shouting “yay!””)
- Instructor will collect “self portraits”

Mini-lesson Seventeen:

Materials: Audio clip from “Orpheus in the Underworld Overture” by Jacques Offenbach, paper, pencils

Procedure: (20 minutes)

- The instructor will introduce the concept of the lesson for the day. “Sometimes, other people feel differently about things than we do. That is because everybody is different, and has different likes and dislikes, different goals, different fears, different ideas and different brains. Not is it only *okay* that we all feel differently than one another sometimes, but it is a *good thing*. Being different from each other is what makes us unique and special.”
- Instructor will explain that they are about to play a song for the class. The instructor will ask the students to listen carefully, and to think of one word that describes how the song makes them feel. Students will be asked to write this word down
- Students will be reminded to reference the class “Mood Meter” chart for ideas for describing words to use
- Instructor will play audio clip for students
- At the conclusion of the clip, students will sit in a circle to share their feelings on the song
- Instructor will begin the circle by discussing their own listening experience (ex. “I chose the word “excited” to describe how I felt while listening to this song, because the music was so fast and upbeat”, or “I chose the word “scared” to describe how i felt while listening to this song, because the music made me picture a battle in my head”)
- Each student will share the word they chose to describe their own listening experience, and

will explain why they chose that word

-At the conclusion of the minilesson, the instructor will reflect on how many people experienced the same situation differently, and will reinforce how that is a normal occurrence, and that differences should be celebrated

Mini-lesson Eighteen:

Materials: Several printed pictures (Pictures of: the dentist's office, a swimming pool, the inside of a grocery store, a rollercoaster, and a thunderstorm), blank paper, markers

Procedure: (20 minutes)

-Instructor will hang pictures around the room, and will review the content of each picture with the students as they are hung up. Instructor will ask students to think about how the subject of the picture makes them feel. Instructor will hang up a blank piece of paper next to each picture.

-Instructor will explain the directions: "You and a partner are going to walk around the room, from one picture to the next. When you get to each picture, I want you to discuss how that picture makes you feel, and why. If the picture makes you feel good, or happy, please put a *smiley face* on the paper next to it. If it makes you feel sad, scared, or not so good, please put a *frowny face* on the paper next to it. If the picture doesn't make you feel good or bad, please put a *middle face* on the paper next to it

-Teacher will demonstrate this, at one picture, for the class (ex. "This picture is of a roller coaster. I love all rides and roller coasters! I'm going to draw a *smiley face* on the paper next to it." Teacher will concurrently model the appropriate "smiley face" size to draw.

-Students will choose a partner

-Students will choose a marker from the marker bin

-Partners will complete a gallery walk of the pictures, labeling each picture with a face, and discussing their feelings with their partner

-Teacher will close lesson by praising students for their hard work

Mini-lesson Nineteen:

Materials: All materials from mini-lesson Eighteen

Procedure: (20 minutes)

-Instructor will remind students of the activity in which they participated the minilesson prior

-Instructor will bring each picture, and the corresponding paper, to the front board.

-Instructor will point out that each sheet has a mix of smiley faces, frowny faces, and middle faces on it

-Instructor will assure the class that this outcome was expected, and that it is good.

-Instructor will review each picture, and the class reactions to the picture

-The teacher will ask for volunteers who put a smiley face next to each picture to explain why the picture made them happy, for volunteers who put a sad face next to each picture to explain why it made them sad, and volunteers who put a middle face next to each picture to

explain why it did not make them feel happy or sad

-Instructor will close mini-lesson by praising students for sharing their feelings, and by reinforcing and celebrating the idea that differences are what make people special and unique.

Mini-lesson Twenty:

Materials: *“The Way I Feel”* by Janan Cain

Procedure: (20 minutes)

-Instructor will read *“The Way I Feel”* by Janan Cain

-Instructor will ask questions throughout the story and after the story including: “How does the boy/girl feel in this picture? How can you tell?”, “What is making them feel this way?”

-After each emotion, the instructor will ask students to demonstrate how they show that emotion. The instructor will point out and celebrate similarities and differences between how students showcase emotions.

Week Five: Learning Goal Two, Subsection B (2B.1a, 2B.1b)

Target: Students will describe the ways that people are similar and different. Students will describe positive qualities in others.

CCSS/NGSS: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.8, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1.B, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.5, 1R1, 1R3, 1R9, 1W4, 1SL1,

Mini-lesson Twenty-One:

Materials: *“Green Eggs and Ham”* by Dr. Seuss, Mood meter
Chart paper, markers

Procedure: (20 minutes)

-Instructor will read *“Green Eggs and Ham”* by Dr. Seuss

-Instructor will ask questions throughout: “How would you describe Sam? How is Sam feeling? How can we tell? How would you describe the other character? How is the other character feeling? How can we tell?”

-Instructor will draw and introduce a Venn Diagram, and will explain each section

-Instructor will tape picture of each character (“Sam I Am”, and “Other Character” above each circle of Venn Diagram. Instructor will place a picture of both characters in the middle section

-Instructor will facilitate the filling in of the Venn Diagram as a whole class, encouraging students to use Mood meter chart for varied describing words

Mini-lesson Twenty-Two:

Materials: Mood meter, Chart paper, markers

Procedure: (20 minutes)

- The instructor will introduce the phrase “Positive qualities” and will define “Positive qualities” as “characteristics, or things about you that make yourself and other people feel good”
- Instructor will provide an example: “Being funny is a positive quality, because making people laugh is fun, and everybody loves a good joke!”
- Students will be asked to brainstorm examples of positive qualities.
- Instructor will review the Venn Diagram from the previous mini-lesson
- Instructor will ask the students to find positive qualities on the Venn Diagram
- Instructor will draw a star next to the positive qualities of each character on the Venn Diagram
- Instructor will praise the work of the students, and will ask them to help create another Venn Diagram, comparing two adults who in the building (the instructor should choose two adults who are both well known, and well loved by the students for this example)
- Students will contribute to the Venn Diagram via an instructor lead class discussion
- Students will be encouraged to use the Mood meter for examples of varied describing words
- Instructor will ask students to come to the Venn Diagram and draw a star next to examples of positive qualities listed within the Venn Diagram

Mini-lesson Twenty-Three:

Materials: Venn diagram papers

Procedure: (20 minutes)

- Instructor will review definitions of “positive qualities”, and Venn diagrams
- Instructor will introduce activity for the day: “Today, you and a friend will be making a Venn Diagram about the ways that you are similar, and the ways that you are different. As you and your partner are both wonderful, special people, I want you to use only positive qualities about yourself and about your partner in your Venn Diagram.”
- Instructor will separate class into pairs, grouping proficient readers and writers with struggling readers and writers. Instructor will label each section of the Venn Diagram for each pairs
- Instructor will walk amongst students, offering support and assistance
- Instructor will collect papers

Mini-lesson Twenty-Four:

Materials: One piece of Construction paper for each student in the class, with their name and picture on it, markers

Procedure: (20 minutes)

- Instructor will review definition of “positive qualities”, and will ask students to brainstorm examples of positive qualities. Instructor will write each suggestion visibly on the board
- Instructor will group students into two large groups, based on assigned student number

(ex. students 1-10, students 11-20). Each group will sit in a large circle

-Instructor will pass out markers

-Each student will be given a piece of construction paper with their picture on it. Each paper will be labeled “We love (student name) because he/she is...”

Student will pass their paper clockwise

-Instructor will explain the directions for the activity: “You will be receiving a paper for each of your friends in the class. When you receive their paper, choose a “positive quality” word that you think best describes them. Use the words we brainstormed, and the Mood meter to help you come up with describing words. Write that word on their paper. When I say “pass!” please pass your paper to the person next to you, this way (instructor will demonstrate which way). You will get a new person's paper. You will write a “positive quality” that best describes that classmate too.”

-Instructor will pass out papers, and students will begin the passing rotation

-Instructor will collect half completed papers at the conclusion of the mini-lesson

Mini-lesson Twenty-Five:

Materials: One piece of Construction paper for each student in the class, with their name and picture on it, markers

Procedure: (20 minutes)

-Instructor will review brainstormed examples of positive qualities from the mini-lesson prior

-Students will be put in the same two circles (based on assigned student number) from the mini-lesson prior

-Instructor will switch groups of papers (students 1-10 will have the papers of students 11-20)

-Instructor will review directions from mini-lesson twenty-four

-Students will complete collage of “positive qualities” for each classmate

-Each student will be given their collage to bring home

Week Six: Learning Goal Two, Subsection C (2C.1a, 2C.1b)

Target: Students will identify ways to work and play well with others. Students will demonstrate adaptability and appropriate social behavior at school.

CCSS/NGSS: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1,CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.2,

Mini-lesson Twenty-six:

Materials: “*Have you filled a bucket today?*” by Carol Mccloud, Bucket-fillers pledge

Procedure: (20 minutes)

-Instructor will read “*Have you filled a bucket today?*” by Carol Mccloud

-Instructor will lead class discussion on what a “bucket” is, what “fills a bucket” and what “drains a bucket”, following the book

-Instructor will introduce the “Bucketfillers’ pledge”, and will recite with students

Mini-lesson Twenty-seven:**Materials:** Bucket-fillers pledge**Procedure: (20 minutes)**

- Instructor will review Bucket Fillers pledge”, and will recite with students
- Instructor will introduce the activity for the day: “As a teacher, I have sometimes seen my students struggle to play nicely with their classmates. This always makes me very sad. I need some volunteers to be in my skits, so I can show you some of the ways I’ve seen students behave towards their friends. When the skit is over, let’s come up with some ways that the student could have handled the problem better, together.”
- Instructor will act out a scene where she is playing a game with a student, and loses. The instructor will act out throwing a fit over the loss
- Instructor will ask the class questions following the skit: “How was I feeling when I lost the game? Is it okay to feel sad? Is it okay to throw a fit? How could I have handled losing in a different way? Instructor will facilitate class discussion
- Instructor will act out a scene where she is playing with a toy that somebody takes from her. The instructor will scream “you’re not my friend anymore!” and will act out tattling
- Instructor will ask the class questions following the skit: “How was I feeling when my friend took my toy? Is it okay to feel sad? Is it okay to throw a fit? How could I have handled losing in a different way? Instructor will facilitate class discussion

Mini-lesson Twenty-eight:**Materials:** Bucket-fillers pledge, chart paper**Procedure: (20 minutes)**

- Instructor will review Bucket Fillers pledge”, and will recite with students
- Instructor will introduce activity for the day: “Yesterday we talked about some ways to handle disagreements. These ideas we came up with will be very useful to us during time that we spend working and playing with our friends. We are going to come up with a list of class rules together. After, we will have time to play games, and you will get to demonstrate how well you can follow our new rules, and play together.”
- Instructor will facilitate the creation of Social rules for the classroom, via collaboration from students. Rules will be written on chart paper and displayed visibly in the room
- Students will have the remainder of the time to play together
- Instructor will praise examples of social rule following noticed during play time

Week Seven: Learning Goal Two, Subsection D (2D.1a, 2D.1b)**Target: Students will identify problems and conflicts commonly experienced by peers.****Students will identify approaches to resolving conflicts constructively.****CCSS/NGSS: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1,CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.2,**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.1,CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.5, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1.A 1R1,1R2, 1R3,1R4: 1R7,1R9, 1W1, 1W4,1SL1,1SL4:

Mini-lesson Twenty-nine:

Materials: “*Rulers of the Playground*” by Joseph Kuefler

Procedure: (20 minutes)

- Instructor will read “*Rulers of the Playground*” by Joseph Kuefler
- Instructor will ask questions throughout and at the conclusion of the book: “Is it fair for one person to be in charge of everything? Was Jonah kind to his friends? Would you want to play with Jonah? Is it fun to play with people who bossy? How did Jonah and Lennox gain back their kingdom?”
- Students will be asked to share, in a circle, how they could deal with a friend who is acting bossy. Instructor will prompt students to use components of the “social rules” that the students helped to generate in minilesson twenty-eight in their answers

Mini-lesson Thirty:

Materials: Student Apology Plan sheet, “*Rulers of the Playground*” by Joseph Kuefler, pencils

Procedure: (20 minutes)

- Instructor will introduce the activity of day: “In “*Rulers of the Playground*” Jonah and Lennox realized that they had hurt a lot of their friends feelings. They knew that the right thing to do was to apologize, or to say sorry to their friends. So together, they made an Apology Plan. Today, we are going to take a closer look at that apology plan, and we are going to brainstorm what we can add to our own Apology Plans. These can help us to make good choices about saying sorry when we are wrong.”
- Instructor will facilitate brainstorming of how to correctly say sorry to a friend (ex. “Look at your friend when saying sorry”, “Say sorry like you mean it”, “Make your friend feel better if they are still sad after you say sorry.”)
- Students will be given an Apology Plan sheet, and will fill it in with what they believe to be the most important components of an adequate apology
- Students will decorate their Apology Plans after completion

Mini-lesson Thirty-One:

Materials: Talking Piece”

Procedure: (20 minutes)

- Instructor will introduce the concept of Friendship (or Restorative Justice) Circles
- Instructor will explain that Friendship Circles are used to share feelings and solve problems
- Instructor will introduce a “Talking Piece”, and will explain that the talking piece signals that the person holding it is the only person allowed to talk. The instructor will elaborate to

say that this is a way of showing respect to peers.

-Instructor will pose icebreaking questions to acclimate students to the circle, and to build comfort and trust

-Instructor will pose the question “How are you feeling today, on a scale of 1 to 5?”. The instructor will share their own answer, and will explain why. Students will answer question practicing using and respecting the talking piece

--Instructor will pose the prompt “You’re in my boat if...” The instructor will share their own answer (ex. “You’re in my boat if you love chocolate.” “You’re in my boat if you don’t have a Nintendo Switch”) Students will be encouraged to raise their hand to “agree” with with statements that apply to them, when they are “in the same boat”. Students will practice using and respecting the talking piece

Unit Three

Week Eight: Learning Goal Three, Subsection A (3A.1a, 3A.1b)

Target: Students will explain why acts that hurt others are wrong. Students will Identify social norms and safety considerations that guide behavior.

CCSS/NGSS:CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.2,

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.4,CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.7

CCSS.ELA-

LITERACY.RL.1.91R1,1R2,1R3,1R4,1R7,1R9,1W1,1W4,1SL1,1SL4,1L5,1L5d,

Mini-lesson Thirty-Two:

Materials: “*When Sophie’s feelings are really, really hurt*” by Molly Bang

Procedure: (20 minutes)

-Instructor will read “*When Sophie’s feelings are really, really hurt*” by Molly Bang

-Instructor will pose questions throughout reading: “How is Sophie feeling right now?”, “How do we know?” “Have you ever felt hurt by the actions of others?”, “Why do people sometimes say mean or hurtful things? “Do you think it is right or wrong to hurt somebody else’s feelings?”

-Instructor will ask students to think of one word to describe how Sophie felt when her classmates were being mean to her. Instructor will create a word cloud with student answers

Mini-lesson Thirty-Three:

Materials: “How I could be a friend to Sophie” sheet, pencils

Procedure: (20 minutes)

-Instructor will review the book read in the mini-lesson prior, and will review with the class how Sophie felt when her classmates were being mean to her

-Instructor will pose the question: “If you were in Sophie’s class, what could you have said or done to make Sophie feel better?”

-Students will brainstorm with a small group

-Students will respond to the writing prompt “How I could be a friend to Sophie” with two sentences, describing words they could say, or actions they could take to make Sophie feel better when she was sad and hurt.

-Students will share answers

--Instructor will ask students to think of one word to describe how Sophie would feel, if she could hear and experience all of the ways they came up with to make her feel better.

Instructor will create a word cloud with student answers

Week Nine: Learning Goal Three, Subsection B (3B. 1a, 3B.1b)

Target: Students will identify a range of decisions that students make at school and at home.

Students will make Make positive choices when interacting with classmates.

CCSS/NGSS: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.2, 1R1, 1SL1

Mini-lesson Thirty-Four:

Materials: Decision making powerpoint

Procedure: (20 minutes)

-Instructor will introduce the topic of the mini-lesson to students: “I have been thinking a lot about Sophie, from the book we read last week. I have been thinking about how some of her classmates made the decision to be unkind to her, and how badly they made her feel by making that decision. Then I thought about how happy I was to have a class full of students who said that they would make the decision to make her feel better. And then I thought, “wow!” every day my students make many, many decisions. I am so curious about the decisions you all make throughout the day!”

-Instructor will pull up powerpoint. Each slide will contain a side by side picture of two options. (Slide one: cereal/eggs, Slide two: bus/car, Slide three: bellringer paper/book, Slide Four: bagged lunch/ bought lunch, Slide Five: TV/book, Slide Six: Smiley face/frowny face)

-Instructor will ask students to think back to their day yesterday

-Instructor will ask students to vote on which decisions they made throughout their day

-Instructor will lament on the many, many other decisions that a person makes throughout their day

-Instructor will then phrase the question “Have you ever had to make a decision that was very, very difficult?”, and will provide age-appropriate examples (“Have you ever had to make the decision to spend time with one friend instead of another?” or “Have you ever had to make the decision to lie or tell the truth to your parents?”)

-Students, in a circle, will have the opportunity to share about a decision that they had to make at some point in their lives that they found difficult or challenging

Mini-lesson Thirty-Five:

Materials: Decision Wheel paper, decision wheel visual, colored pencils

Procedure: (20 minutes)

-Instructor will introduce the concept of a decision wheel, provide a visual of a completed decision wheel, and will lead a class discussion of each component of the decision wheel and how it can be used to make a good decision when faced with a tricky problem

(Section 1) What is the problem?, Section 2) What are the choices you have?, Section 3) What will happen if you make these choices?, Section 4) How do you feel about the situation?, Section 5) Do you need to ask for help? Who will you ask?, Section 6) What is your decision? Do you think it was right?)

-Students will be given a printed out copy of the decision wheel. Students will cut out the decision wheel, and will use colored pencils to color code each section. (Section 1: red/ Section 2: orange/ Section 3: yellow/ Section 4: Green/ Section 5: Blue/ Section 6: Purple)

Mini-lesson Thirty-six:

Materials: Decision Wheel paper, short story

Procedure: (20 minutes)

-Instructor will review each section of the decision making wheel from the prior mini-lesson.

-Instructor will read the following short story to the students:

“ At recess, everyone is out on the playground, including the teacher. You have to go the bathroom. On the way, you pass your classroom and notice that there is someone in the room. You stop and peek in out of curiosity. Just as you do, you see one of your best friends reach into another person’s desk and take something out of it. They don’t know that you saw them take it. Just before the lunch time, the student whose desk you saw your friend reach into, walks up to the teacher. A moment later the teacher announces that this student’s stuffed animal was stolen. What do you do?”

-Instructor will lead class discussion, using each section of the decision wheel to assess the scenario. Instructor will ask students for input while discussing each section

-Students will vote on a decision (Should you tell the teacher what you saw? Yes or No)

-Students will discuss how the decision wheel can help solve real life problems.

Week Ten: Learning Goal Three, Subsection C (3C. 1a, 3C.1b)

Target: Students will identify and perform roles that contribute to one’s classroom.

Students will identify and perform roles that contribute to one’s family.

CCSS/NGSS

Mini-lesson Thirty-seven:

Materials: “*Clothesline Clues to Jobs People Do*” by Kathryn Heling and Deborah Hembrook

Procedure: (20 minutes)

-Instructor will introduce the definition and concept of community

- Instructor will read “*Clothesline Clues to Jobs People Do*” by Kathryn Heling and Deborah Hembrook
- Instructor will ask questions throughout and at the conclusion of the book ‘What does this person do to help the community? Why does a community need this person?’
- Instructor will facilitate class discussion on why community helpers are necessary and important
- Students will share, in a circle, what job they would like to have one day, and how they could help their community in that job

Mini-lesson Thirty-eight:

Materials: Class jobs list and visuals, popsicle sticks with student names, student pictures

Procedure: (20 minutes)

- Instructor will facilitate discussion about how a classroom is a community
- Students will be asked to share what makes a community thrive and grow
- Instructor will introduce the concept of class jobs, and will explain that each student will be assigned a job and a responsibility to help the classroom run smoothly and efficiently
- Instructor will explain the responsibilities of each class job (ex. Line Leader, Plant Waterer, Messenger, Classroom Greeter, Lunch Monitor, Board Cleaner, Ipad Master) and will show an accompanying visual for each job and job description
- Teacher will draw names of students to be assigned to each job
- Teacher will explain that students will rotate through different jobs each week
- Instructor will hang a chart of classroom jobs, and will post a picture of the student who currently holds the classroom job next to the name/visual of the job

Mini-lesson Thirty-nine:

Materials: White board, markers

Procedure: (20 minutes)

- Instructor will facilitate discussion about how a home is a community
- Students will be asked to share what makes a community thrive and grow
- Instructor will lead discussion about what needs to be done in a home, to make sure that it is thriving
- Students will be asked to share, in a circle, what they do or can start doing to help their home thrive
- Instructor will list examples on board, and will contribute their own suggestions (ex. Dust, wipe down tables, clean room, fold towels)

Mini-lesson Forty:

Materials: White board, markers, paper, staples, colored pencils

Procedure: (20 minutes)

- Instructor will explain that students will be making coupon books as a present for their

mothers (or a caregiver in their lives) for Mothers Day

-Instructor will explain how a chore coupon works

-Instructor will demonstrate how to cut and staple paper to create the booklet

-Instructor will assist students as they cut and staple paper to create the booklet

-Students will be asked to choose five of the chore suggestions from the mini-lesson prior. -

Students will write one chore on each page of the booklet.

-Teacher and proficient writers will assist struggling writers

-Students will decorate the booklet

-Instructor will staple cover sheet to the front of chore booklet

-Students will bring booklet home on the Friday before Mothers Day Sunday

Conclusions

The purpose of this Curriculum Project was to create a curriculum aligned with the benchmarks of the New York State Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Standards for the Early Childhood Grade levels 1-3. The completed curriculum addresses the problem that no lesson plans or supplementary materials aligned with the SEL benchmarks of Early Childhood have been made available to the public by New York State. This completed curriculum intends to promote SEL within a Buffalo Charter School first grade class. In addition, this curriculum intends to incorporate first grade Common Core state standards, and Next Generation State Standards for reading and writing in order to further supplement core subject academics within the first grade class. The author chose to develop a curriculum for Early Childhood students, because she is an Early Childhood teacher. She chose to incorporate first grade academic standards, as she is, specifically, a first grade classroom teacher. The author hopes that this curriculum will help students to establish a foundational Social and Emotional skillset that will aid them in healthy decision making, goal setting, and their understanding of emotions throughout their schooling, college, career, and life. The author believes that SEL education in schools provides educators with a way to support the whole child in their growth and development, and will reflect a positive correlation in a student's health, happiness, and

academic performance.

Discussion

This curriculum project was developed by creating a curriculum and corresponding lesson plans aligned to the New York State Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Standards. The final product consisted of a curriculum of 40 mini-lessons, each intended to address and meet the learning goals of the 10 subsections of the NYS SEL Benchmarks for Early Childhood grade levels (New York State Department of Education, 2018). The decision to span the curriculum over 40 mini-lessons was made for two primary reasons. The first, for the sake of practicality and implementability. The author designed the time frame of each of the lessons to be 20 minutes or fewer in length, acknowledging the lack of disposable time in the school day available for anything other than the core academic curriculum. The second reason that the author chose to span the curriculum over 40 mini-lessons was to promote student learning through scaffolding understanding of the content. This guidebook emerged from the evaluated lack of suggested lesson plans or supplementary materials for the implementation of the NYS SEL Benchmarks for Early Childhood grade levels (New York State Department of Education). As a first grade teacher, I perceived the benefits of providing Early Childhood students with a foundation of social and emotional knowledge in order to assist them in the development of self-awareness and self-management skills essential to success in school and in life, to promote the Use of social awareness and interpersonal skills in order to establish and maintain positive relationships, and to provide these students with the ability to demonstrate ethical decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts (New York State Department of Education) In this final chapter, I will assess the significance and limitations of my work in the development of a curriculum aligned to the NYS SEL benchmarks for implementation within early childhood grade levels.

Significance

This curriculum project matched the initial design to create a curriculum aligned with the New York State SEL benchmarks for implementation in Early Childhood grade levels. In addition, each mini-lesson within the curriculum is also aligned with the New York State Common Core State Standards, as well as the New York State Next Generation Learning Standards. The decision to align the SEL curriculum with reading and writing academic standards was bi-fold. The first reason that the author chose to incorporate English Language Arts (ELA) standards in her curriculum was to provide additional supplementation of practice and understanding to her students in a core academic subject. The second factor in the decision to align each mini-lesson to academic reading and writing standards was to align this curriculum with the core values and school mission of the author's school of employment. The school mission of the Buffalo Charter school where the author works, and designed the curriculum for implementation within, places value on a literacy focused approach to bridging the gap of poverty with the literacy and language skills that make up the foundation for all learning (REACH Academy Charter School, Buffalo, New York. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.reachacademycharter.org/school-mission>).

Limitations

Constructively, through examining the completed curriculum that makes up this project, it can be noted that there are limitations. One of the limitations of this curriculum would be the lack of available time throughout the day in order to ensure regular implementation of lesson plans. As the school day is usually filled with obligatory lessons and curriculum, the author recognizes that she would not want to do her students the disservice of allowing them to fall behind in any of their core academic subjects. In addition, the author recognizes that the

completed curriculum would benefit from the inclusion of the materials needed for each lesson plan. The creation of all necessary materials would prove time consuming for any teacher wishing to implement this curriculum within their own classroom. The author acknowledges that the supports built into her completed curriculum would benefit from more intensive supports for students with disabilities, and for English Language Learner (ELL) students. Another limitation of this project is the lack of research, both short term and long term, emergent from the implementation of the NYS SEL standards at any grade level. As the SEL standards were published in August of 2018, and this curriculum was completed in April of 2019, less than a year had passed, and there can be noted an evident shortage of research available regarding the effectiveness of the NYS SEL standards, and any limitations of the benchmarks themselves (New York State Department of Education, 2018).

Future Investigations

If given another attempt to approach this curriculum project, the author acknowledges that it would be beneficial to include all materials necessary for each of the mini-lessons included in the curriculum. Moreover, the curriculum design would benefit from several modifications to improve the final product. One such modification to the design of the curriculum would be the inclusion of mathematics, aligned with state academic standards, in order to provide further support and practice to students in another core academic subject. Furthermore, the diversification of the curriculum would further benefit from modifications for students with disabilities and ELL students. If given another chance to design this curriculum, it would also be beneficial to provide more opportunities for student lead learning, student choice, and consideration for different learning styles.

This curriculum project will be added to the archives at this college so that students and researchers can have access to this curriculum. This project may be beneficial to any researcher, pre-service teacher, or current teacher interested in the NYS SEL benchmarks, and possible ideas or suggestions for implementation at Early Childhood grade levels.

Conclusions

This curriculum project set out to align lessons with the New York State Social and Emotional Learning benchmarks for implementation within early childhood grade levels. Although there were limitations in the form of a lack of included materials, the absence of alignment to state mathematics standards in any of the lesson plans, and a shortage of diversified teaching strategies for implementing these lessons in a classroom with students with disabilities or ELL students, this project was successful in its goal of providing teachers with a curriculum for the implementation of lessons promoting social and emotional learning within their early childhood classrooms. Therefore, through this curriculum, an early childhood teacher could fully meet each benchmark for teaching social and emotional learning, as published by New York State (New York State Department of Education, 2018). The implementation of this curriculum would successfully assist teachers with fostering development of self-awareness and self-management skills essential to success in school and in life in their students, promoting the use of social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships, and providing their students with the ability to demonstrate ethical decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.

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