EXPERIENCES OF FIFTH-GRADE STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN AN EMOTIONAL
MINDFULNESS INTERVENTION

A Dissertation

By

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BS, University of Madras, India, 2010
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This dissertation meets the standards for scope and quality of
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and hereby approved.

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I implemented an emotional mindfulness intervention and explored the experiences of fifth-grade students. The study examined the lived experiences of 13 fifth-grade students who received an Emotional Mindfulness Intervention (EMI) designed for this investigation. The 6-session EMI intervention was designed to teach a set of skills for children to help them identify, understand, analyze, and regulate their own emotions and emotional experiences. I captured participant's lived experiences through observation, collection of weekly journal entries, individual interviews, and a post-program focus group. The results of a qualitative data analysis revealed four themes: (1) identifying and recognizing feelings, (2) caring about and for others, (3) being present, and (4) applying learned skills to handle emotions.

The results of the study are congruent with findings from previous research investigating perceptions of children and adolescents experiencing emotion mindfulness interventions. Participants described how mindfulness activities helped them learn about emotions (their own and others), regulate emotions, and relate their emotions to feelings.

DEDICATION

Will all my hearts, I dedicate this dissertation to my dad and grandmothers. I dedicate this dissertation to my mom, who had kept me grounded and served as a sense of support throughout this process. I also dedicate this work to my uncles, aunt, brothers, and amazing understanding friends in India.

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Lastly, I would like to acknowledge that it is been always hard for me to stop and acknowledge my growth and achievements. In this dissertation, I would like to give a 'pat on my shoulders' and say, '*you did, and you can do more*.'

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Emotions are a normal part of everyone's daily life experiences. People try to manage and cope with these emotions in ways that may be effective or ineffective. Life without emotions would lack meaning, richness, and a connection with others. Emotions help individuals to understand and communicate their needs, frustrations, rights, and desires. Emotions may motivate us towards change, help us to avoid stressful life events, or know when we have accomplished a task. However, many people are overwhelmed by their emotions, fearful of their feelings, and unable to cope and process their emotions in an effective way (Leahy, Tirch, & Napolitano, 2012). Mental health providers and researchers have studied and experimented with various skills and techniques to help individuals regulate their emotions. The strategies involved in regulating emotions include cognitive restructuring, meditation, and relaxation skills (Leahy et al., 2012; Linehan, 1993; Wadlinger & Isaacowitz, 2011; Willard, 2015).

Emotion regulation skills are increasingly identified as integral models of mental health and well-being (Mennin & Farach, 2009). Emotional regulation is the process that enables individuals to modify their emotions intentionally while responding to environmental stimuli (Campbell-Sills & Barlow, 2007; Gross & Munoz, 1995). In the past, theorists have associated an individual's ability to regulate emotions with academics, occupation, well-being, quality of life, and improved relationships (Aldao, Nolen-Hoeksema, & Schweizer, 2010). Deficits in emotion regulation skills among adults and children have been evidence of various mental health issues, including borderline personality disorder (BPD), major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), social anxiety disorder, eating disorders, and substance-related disorders (Linehan, 1993; Ruiz-Aranda et al., 2012; Siener & Kerns, 2012).

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Deficits in emotional regulation skills are found to contribute to school violence, such as bullying, cyber bullying, theft, assault, suicide, and school shootings (Oberleitner & Sheposh, 2016; Rose, 2009).

Various counseling theorists have developed approaches which can be used by counselors to help individuals understand and regulate their emotions, such as emotional intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), dialectical behavioral theory (Linehan, 1993), and acceptance- and mindfulness-based therapy (Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 1999). Counseling interventions, such as skills training (Linehan, 1993), can be particularly helpful in supporting the socioemotional growth of individuals experiencing non-typical, delayed, or dysregulated emotional experiences that contribute to behavioral difficulties (Ricard, Lerma, & Heard, 2012).

Milestones for Children's Socioemotional Growth

Socioemotional development involves a gradual process mediated by biological (age-related) maturity and learned skills for managing and coping with affective experiences in the context of our daily lives. Cognitive developmental literature describes the milestones of socioemotional maturity (Labouvie-Vief, Grühn, & Studer, 2010). While we essentially experience emotions from very early in life, there is normative and substantial growth in the complexity of our emotional experiences, as well as our awareness and ability to regulate and control our feelings throughout our life experiences.

The extant research literature indicates that social and emotional understanding is primarily related to early social competence and is rooted in children's evolving understanding that people (themselves and others) have internal mental states that direct their behavior (Thompson & Goodman, 2009). Consistent with the cognitive shifts described by Piaget, from self-centered and limited perspectives (Piaget, Brown, Kaegi, & Rosenzweig, 1981), children's

theory of mind between ages three to five supports an understanding about the internal and psychological bases of emotions (Thompson & Goodman, 2009). At this same developmental period, these competencies similarly set the foundation for the rudimentary understanding of empathy and caring for others (Labouvie-Vief et al., 2010; Thompson & Goodman; 2009).

One of the most important hallmarks of socioemotional development is learning to control and regulate emotions, observe emotional expressions, and recognize the impact emotions might have on one's behavioral tendencies (Monteiro, 2015; Saarni, 1999). There is evidence that these begin to develop in preschool years (Saarni, 1999). Emotional regulation is an integrative process of functioning and psychological development that connects between the emotional regulation and the cognitive processes; an example of one such process is attention (Monteiro, 2015). Emotion regulation skills help individuals to modify their emotions intentionally while responding to environmental stimuli (Campbell-Sills & Barlow, 2007; Gross & Munoz, 1995).

While a limited number of fundamental emotional regulation skills begin at the preschool age, cognitive developmental literature describes regular increases in age-appropriate capacity to regulate and control affective experiences. Children develop useful emotion regulation skills around age seven (Piaget et al., 1981). These emotion regulation skills facilitate children's capacity for appreciating and engaging in peer relationships (Labouvie-Vief et al., 2010; Piaget et al., 1981). Further, these same competencies support children in handling stressful situations in schools like studying, performing, and volunteering (Labouvie-Vief et al., 2010). Children who do not have healthy emotion regulation skills are at high risk of developing unhealthy behaviors to process emotions, such as self-harm or suicide (Seymour, Chronis-Tuscano, Iwamoto, Kurdziel, & Macpherson, 2014).

An understanding of individual differences often referred to as emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995) has emerged from studies exploring children's development of cognitive competencies for managing self-regulation and impulse control (Mischel, Shoda, & Peake, 1988). In a typical delay-of-gratification paradigm, young children ages three to nine are asked to choose between receiving an immediate small reward or waiting for a more desirable larger one later. The results of this classic delay-of-gratification study revealed positive age-related changes in children's ability and use of strategic self-regulation strategies to wait for more substantial rewards (Mischel et al., 1988). In addition to the age-related changes in effective self-regulation, Mischel and his colleagues observed individual differences that proved stable over many years and were predictive of academic achievement. This ability to delay gratification and regulate our emotions and behavior is important aspect of social-emotional skill set. In a synthesized summary, Daniel Goleman (1995) described the profile of proficient delayers as the basis of emotionally intelligent. Emotional skills are crucial for children to become successful both socially and academically.

Emotional Intelligence

Mayer and Salovey (1990) coined the term emotional intelligence (EI) and defined it as the ability of an individual to perceive emotions, facilitate thoughts using the emotions, understand emotions with the actions that caused it, and regulate one's own emotions. Cole and Rozell (2011) concluded from their work that individual differences in EI promote increased perception and a better understanding of given situations. Individuals demonstrating a high level of emotional intelligence are more likely to perceive and interpret situations more effectively. Individuals lacking emotional intelligence often tend to misinterpret given situations, resulting in ineffective behavior strategies, whereas individuals possessing EI often

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have a more accurate perception of a given situation and employ better behavior choices (Cole & Rozell, 2011).

In the past, emotional intelligence was studied among adults in relation to occupation and professional relationships. Recently, researchers have investigated the factors influencing and affecting emotional intelligence with children and adolescent populations. Researchers have endeavored to develop school-based interventions infused within the school curriculum as children and adolescents spend more time in school settings and learn with and from their teachers and peers (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger,2011; Jordan, McRorie, & Ewing, 2010)

The emotional well-being of children and adolescents has been gaining attention among policymakers, researchers, and program developers in many countries (McLaughlin, 2008). There is a growing number of school-aged children and adolescents experiencing social, emotional, and behavioral challenges which interfere with their academic achievements, interpersonal relationships, and potential to become competent and productive future adults (Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010). Evidence suggests that many children experiencing these difficulties would benefit from increased control of skills for understanding, regulating, and moderating emotional experiences. Emotion regulation is the ability of an individual to regulate both positive and negative emotions and engage optimally with the environment. During childhood and adolescence, depression and anxiety are often associated with academic problems, emotion regulation issues, and impaired social relationships (Siener & Kerns, 2012). For example, anxiety disorders affecting children and adolescents could have long-term consequences in terms of mental well-being (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Anxiety and stress symptoms interrupt attention and concentration, which exacerbates academic problems

for children and adolescents. Additionally, children with anxiety disorders exhibit poor emotion coping skills (Semple, Lee, Rosa, & Miller, 2010). These challenges indicate that many students lack socioemotional coping skills to facilitate and succeed in academics, social interactions, self-awareness, and engagement in early romantic relationships (Shoshani & Slone, 2013).

Interventions for Socioemotional Development

Evidence suggests that many children with limited command of emotional regulation skills would benefit from increased control of skills for understanding, regulating, and moderating emotional experiences. Both atypical development (clinical and subclinical syndromes), as well as individual differences in capacity to navigate social and emotional tasks of living, often characterized by trait-like characterizations of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995), seem to be impacted by focused and deliberate skills practice (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). Building on a common core profile of socioemotional skill interventions from a variety of research-based traditions has resulted in a core empirically valued knowledge base of interventions targeted at supporting the development of socioemotional skills for an adaptive living (CASEL, 2003; Durlak et al., 2011; Ross &Tolan, 2017).

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social emotional learning (SEL) is one example of integrating emotional intelligence focused interventions in classroom settings. Many SEL programs have emerged; one of the evidence-based practices that has been incorporated into the school curriculum is Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). CASEL has been implemented in existing school curriculum from early childhood to high school (CASEL, 2003; Elbertson, Brackett, & Weissberg, 2010). CASEL includes five socioemotional skills: self-

management, social awareness, empathy, relationship skills, and decision making, which enhance education, career, and overall life success among children and adolescents (CASEL, 2003).

Ross and Tolan (2017) tested the validity of CASEL with a normative adolescence sample in the United States. The adolescents who participated in this study were enrolled in the fifth, sixth, and seventh grade level classes. The result of the study supported CASEL as a valid intervention among early adolescents. The findings indicated that the CASEL model of SEL is a prominent conceptual model which promotes healthy social and emotional skill development among adolescents.

Castillo-Gualda, Cabello, Herrero, Rodríguez-Carvajal, and Fernández-Berrocal (2018) stated that adolescents' aggressive behavior results in complications with their well-being and psychosocial adjustment in the school environment. The researchers conducted a three-year pre-post quasi experimental longitudinal study with 476 adolescents, ages 11−15 years. The purpose of this study was to determine emotion-related patterns and derived behaviors among early and middle-school children. The researchers used a positive and negative affect schedule and aggression questionnaire. Findings included a significant reduction in physical and verbal behavior, as well as negative affect, anger, and hostile feelings of the treatment group compared with the control group of students. Furthermore, they recommended that future researchers focus on EI skill-based interventions to prevent aggression in school settings for adolescents (Castillo-Gualda et al., 2018).

Durlak et al. (2011) conducted a meta-analysis on school-based universal intervention and found evidence for five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies of SEL: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making in the classroom, school, family, and community environment. In the meta-

analysis, they observed various components, such as the year of the study, the population, methodology used, source of data collection, intervention format, number of sessions, and location of the population. The researchers concluded that the SEL programs significantly enhanced the students' socioemotional behaviors, skills, attitudes, and performance toward school. In some studies, researchers used parents as a source of data and found that there was a significant positive change within the family relations as a result of the SEL programs (Durlak et al., 2011). Similarly, mindfulness-based interventions have emphasized directing attention deliberately to thoughts, feelings, and behavior among different populations. Most significantly, researchers have studied the effects of mindfulness strategies in helping individuals attain a state of self-awareness and regulation to lead a quality life (Crane et al., 2017).

Mindfulness-Based Interventions

Mindfulness is defined as a state of an individuals' awareness that appears and advances as they practice paying attention to the present moment in an open and non-judgmental fashion (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Knowledge and skilled practice with mindfulness techniques (Kabat-Zinn, 2003) have been demonstrated to be related to skill for emotion regulation (Brackett, Rivers, Reyes, & Salovey, 2016; Castillo-Gualda et al., 2018; Harpin, Rossi, Kim, & Swanson, 2016). Mindfulness interventions have been effective in helping children and adolescents learn about their emotional experiences (Deplus, Billieux, Scharff, & Philippot, 2016; Harpin et al., 2016). There have been several mindfulness-based intervention approaches, which collectively address student capacity for awareness and internal reflection. In addition, mindfulness-infused techniques and elements of third-wave behaviorism therapeutic approaches, such as Dialectic Behavior Therapy (DBT) skill training modules (Linehan, 1993) and Acceptance Commitment

Therapy (ACT; Hayes et al., 1999) have been successfully and explicitly utilized to address socioemotional development in children (Mazza et al., 2016; Ricard, Lerma, & Heard, 2012).

Emotional mindfulness is a relatively recent contextualization of the integration of emotional intelligence and mindfulness. Parker (2016) and O'Brien (2014) stated that mindfulness is one of the keys to processing difficult emotions and developed a six-step guideline. In the six steps, individuals (1) turn toward their emotions with acceptance, (2) identify and label the emotion, (3) accept experienced emotions, (4) realize the impermanence of the felt emotion emotions, (5) inquire and investigate, and (6) let go of the need to control the emotions. Individuals should stop and take a deep breath, identify the emotion, and sit with the emotion. They should accept feeling with openness and a non-judgmental attitude. They should understand and believe that emotions are temporary: emotions come, stay, and go. Finally, individuals should investigate the actions toward the emotion while being calm and open to the outcome. Although researchers have understood the relationship between mindfulness and emotions, and how these two concepts complement each other, there is very limited intervention-based study (Arch & Landy, 2015; Schutte & Malouff, 2011; Wadlinger & Isaacowitz, 2011).

Recently, researchers have designed a program that combines the concepts of mindfulness and emotional intelligence and studied its effectiveness with the adult population. Enríquez, Ramos, and Esparza (2017) conducted an 8-week mindful emotional intelligence program called PINEP, which is designed to facilitate the use of emotional regulation skills of college students. The objective of the program was to optimize emotional intelligence through mindfulness to help individuals effectively navigate their emotional challenges. The researchers combined research and practical insights from EI and mindfulness-based literature to design the intervention (Ramos et al., 2012 as cited by Enríquez et al., 2017). The results demonstrated how

the PINEP program helped students in regulating their emotions and refocusing in a stressful situation. Moreover, the PINEP program reduced college students' academic burnout. The emotional mindfulness intervention implemented and explored in this dissertation highlights the historical perspectives of two traditions, Emotional Intelligence (EI) and mindfulness, and its amalgam into an emotional mindfulness intervention to explore the phenomenological experience of children.

Statement of Problem

Children and adolescents face several complex transitions not only from childhood to adolescence (Vanlede, Little, & Card, 2006) but also from elementary to secondary school (Shoshani & Slone, 2013). This stage of life is a time when many children struggle with anxiety, aggression, stress, and depression symptoms in and outside the school, home, and social environments (Ruiz-Aranda et al., 2012; Semple et al., 2010; Siener & Kerns, 2012). Emotionally overwhelmed children and adolescents can often benefit from intervention and deliberate emotion regulation skill practices on how to manage and cope effectively with difficult emotions. Children and adolescents who lack these emotional regulation skills are at higher risk for depression and engaging in maladaptive behaviors such as suicide and self-harm (Seymour et al., 2014). The emotional and mental state often results in aggression, sadness, low self-esteem, victimization, and other negative behavior (Kokkinos & Kipritsi, 2012).

In recent years, researchers have found the effectiveness of mindfulness-based group interventions in reducing depression symptoms, improving prosocial behavior, developing better-quality academic performance, and enhancing emotion regulation skills among children and adolescence (Ciucci, Baroncelli, Grazzani, Ornaghi, & Caprin, 2016; Deplus et al., 2016; Harpin et al., 2016). Additionally, emotional intelligence-based interventions (Castillo, Salguero,

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Fernández-Berrocal, & Balluerka, 2013; Roy & Arora, 2017) and mindfulness-based interventions (Harpin et al., 2016) are found to be effective among adolescents and children in facilitating academic achievement, reducing aggression, enhancing empathy, and improving psychosocial adjustments.

However, there is a limited qualitative research addressing emotional intelligence and mindfulness-based interventions among children (Joronen, Hakamies, & Astedt-Kurki, 2011; Dariotis et al., 2016). Children's voices about their meaningful experiences allow the researcher to modify an existing program or develop a new program. While emotional intelligence and mindfulness have been integrated into a single construct for college-aged students (Enríquez et al., 2017), there has been no such intervention developed for school-aged children. The goal of this study is to address the gap in the literature by developing an emotional mindfulness intervention and investigating the lived experiences of participating fifth-grade students.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this descriptive phenomenological study was to develop a 6-week emotional mindfulness intervention (EMI) and explore the lived experiences of the fifth-grade students participating in it. For the purpose of this dissertation, I am defining emotional mindfulness as the ability of an individual to use mindfulness practices to identify and regulate their emotion/s and recognize the emotional experience of others. I delivered the EMI intervention in a classroom guidance setting. The intervention was designed to support elementary children's knowledge and understanding of the socioemotional landscape. The EMI sessions contained activities and prompts that taught children a set of skills for identifying, understanding, analyzing, and regulating their own affective experiences, as well as those of others. This is like emotional self-awareness and empathy. Specifically, this study explored the

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lived experiences of students learning about emotions and using mindfulness practices to deepen their understanding of emotions, emotional expression, and strategic regulation of emotional experiences from a 6-week emotional mindfulness intervention. The detailed description of the intervention is presented in Chapter 3.

Research Question

The following research question guided this study.

1. What are the lived experiences of fifth-grade students who participate in a 6-week Emotional Mindfulness Intervention?

Significance of the Study

Children and adolescents experience stress (Semple et al., 2010), anxiety (Ruiz-Aranda et al., 2012), and depression (Siener & Kerns, 2012) symptoms that are associated with poor academic performance, peer relationships, emotion regulation skills, and coping skills. Siener and Kerns (2012) conducted a study with middle-school children and found that children who have depressive symptoms may experience difficulties with emotion regulation. Similarly, Ruiz-Aranda et al. (2012) stated that children diagnosed with anxiety disorders lack emotion regulation skills.

Although there have been many interventions developed and found effective to help children and adolescents process emotions and attain emotional well-being, there is a lack of studies combining emotional intelligence and mindfulness practices into one single program. Emotional intelligence and mindfulness practices were combined into one program because mindfulness practices enhance an individual's ability to attend to the experienced stimulus and response. Additionally, mindfulness practices have been shown to support individuals in their

understanding and regulation of experienced emotions (Deplus et al., 2016; Enriques et al., 2017).

The results of this study may be a helpful resource for school counselors who work with children and adolescents. School counselors design the classroom guidance program and provide small group counseling interventions with respect to classroom needs and presenting problems of the classroom (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2016; CACREP, 2016). Moreover, school counselors may use this intervention in individual and small group settings to help students.

This study is designed as a descriptive phenomenological qualitative research, the results of which might be helpful for future researchers to modify the intervention. Future researchers can add or reduce sessions, alter the activities, or use different methodologies

Definition of Terms

Emotional Intelligence is defined as an individual's ability to use and perceive their own emotion and regulate themselves and others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Social Emotional Learning is a program that implements the concepts of emotional intelligence in a school curriculum. This program facilitates the students' development of social and emotional skills, behavior, and attitude towards school (CASEL, 2003).

Mindfulness is described as an individual's ability to purposely pay attention to the present situation non-judgmentally (Kabat Zinn, 2011).

Emotional Mindfulness is the ability of individuals to use mindfulness practices to identify and regulate their emotion/s and recognize the emotional experience of others.

Emotion Regulation is the ability of individuals to respond to and manage their own emotions and other emotions (Gross, 1998, 2002).

Empathy is the ability of an individual to recognize, comprehend, and relate to how another person is feeling (Davis, 1983).

Summary

This chapter presented the introduction, purpose of the study, and the significance of exploring the lived experiences of fifth-grade students receiving an emotional mindfulness intervention. Chapter II will present the theory and research studies from the existing literature of emotional intelligence, socioemotional learning, and mindfulness. Chapter III will present the descriptive phenomenological research design used in this dissertation and the emotional mindfulness intervention in detail. Chapter IV will report the findings of this dissertation, and Chapter V will demonstrate how the results of this dissertation support the existing research literature.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature from a general theoretical perspective of the growth and development of emotion knowledge, awareness, and regulation across the life course. The typical milestones of emotional development, individual differences in emotional development, are described within an empirical, theoretical tradition of Emotional Intelligence (EI), which addresses emotion knowledge and skill capacity for perceiving emotions, understanding emotions, using emotions to process thought, and emotion regulation (Mayer & Salovey, 1990). Finally, a review is presented of the empirical literature on interventions designed to facilitate the development of emotion knowledge and emotional regulation in school-based guidance settings and skills-training traditions (e.g., CASEL, DBT, and mindfulness-based interventions). This chapter then provides an overview of the empirical and contextual foundation for the Emotional Mindfulness Intervention detailed in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

Children's Social Emotional Development

The extant research on socioemotional development suggests that children are capable of being aware of their emotions and expressing them from a very young age, even before they have learned to use words (Labouvie-Vief et al., 2010). Typical developmental trajectory and milestones of children's emotional development begin with communicating emotions with facial expression and body gestures; children then gradually develop words to communicate their emotion and others' emotions. Children learn emotional language from their parents, other family members, and caregivers. The development of communicating and using emotions in children includes factors like brain development, family culture, social culture, and the child's perception of these experiences (Camras & Schuster, 2013; Füstös, Gramann, Herbert, & Pollatos, 2013).

Children are capable of being aware of their emotions and expressing them from a very young age, even before they have learned to use words. They express emotion through facial expressions and body gestures. By age two or three, children use adult-like emotion labels to describe their subjective feelings as they learn the labels and meaning from their environment. Gradually, children learn about causes of different emotions, recognizing other people's emotions and the need to process and regulate their emotions throughout childhood and adolescence (Hietanen, Glerean, Hari, & Nummenmaa, 2016).

Several developmental theorist have studied the stages of development with emotions and emotion regulation, as this helps as a guidelines for parents, teachers, school counselors, and policymakers to facilitate the growth of emotion competency to build a better adults in the future (Saari, 1990; Vygotsky, 1930). Pons and Harris (2005) conducted a longitudinal study among children to examine the change and stability in understanding the components of emotions among school-aged children. The study consisted of 42 children, who were divided into three groups by age. The emotional understanding of the participants was studied twice (beginning and end of the school year) using the Test of Emotion Comprehension (TEC). The researchers laid out a rough developmental timeline from the results to demonstrate the development of emotional understanding in school-aged children. Group 1 findings indicated that by the ages of four to five, the majority of children start to precisely recognize facial expressions and the impact of the causes. Group 2 findings indicated that by ages five to six, the majority of children begin to understand the concept of having contradictory desires and its impact on their emotion. Furthermore, they learn to cover their emotions. For example, a child who is hurt because of words of other children responds to the teacher saying, "I am ok" when the teacher asks, "Is something wrong?" Group 3 findings indicated that by ages 11 to 12, children understand the

concept and need for emotion regulation and acquire a stronger capacity to comprehend

conflicting or complex emotions. At this age level, children understand that they can feel more

than one emotion at the same time or on the same day and they can evaluate the stronger

emotion. When they evaluate their emotions, children often tend to apply emotion regulation

skills they have used in the past, which they learned by observing/taught by parents, family

members, peers, or teachers.

General Cognitive Developmental Milestones of Emotional Development

Understanding the development of emotional knowledge parallels general cognitive

development (Piaget et al., 1981), indicating a general shift from the sensorimotor stage to the

formal operational stage. Piaget explored intelligence and emotion development, stating that

children develop emotion and intelligence from infancy via social interactions. Vygotsky (1930)

stated how children learn from social interactions and create meaning for the object, emotion,

people, and situation. Primarily, children from infancy interact with parents and siblings; during

preschool year ages, they interact with peers, teachers, and others in the school environment.

Socioemotional development involves a gradual process mediated by biological (age-related)

maturity and emotional learned skills (family, peers, and teachers) for managing and coping with

environmental situations (McCabe & Altamura, 2011; Saarni, 1999).

Parents teach infants to understand their world and process environmental stimuli such as

"this is an apple and apple is sweet," or "oh, that is a smile." By the age of three, children tend to

use words to communicate about the object, emotion, people, and events. Additionally, children

learn to perceive others' emotions from their facial expressions and tone of voice. Children start

to act and behave referencing their parent or caregiver reaction, a behavior known as social

referencing (Walden & Ogan, 1988). This helps children develop the understanding of others'

emotions. Before age six, children learn to differentiate how different situations evoke different emotions, complex emotions (more than one emotion), and that emotional responses are behavioral (constructive or destructive). Children at this stage start to learn and implement emotion regulation strategies based on their cognitive and emotional development (McCabe & Altamura, 2011).

Emotion regulation is the process, which helps individuals, modify their emotions intentionally while responding to environmental stimuli (Campbell-Sills & Barlow, 2007; Gross & Munoz, 1995; Monterio, 2015). Children develop emotional regulation skills at preschool age. Cognitive developmental literature describes regular increases in age-appropriate capacity to regulate and control affective experiences. A cognitive shift, such as formal operations (Piaget et al., 1981), supports the development of abstract thinking; metacognitive and executive function (EF) skills aid children's ability to regulate their emotions. Executive functions are learned goal-directed activities that aid in the self-regulation process. When a child is expressing anger, he or she might be able to use the learned coping skill, which is directed to regulate his or her emotions (Piaget et al., 1981). For both children and adults, some people are overwhelmed by their emotions, fearful of their feelings, and unable to understand, cope, and process their emotions in an effective way (Leahy et al., 2012). Children who do not have healthy emotion regulation skills are at high risk of unhealthy behaviors (Seymour et al., 2014).

Children's Knowledge of Emotional Experiences in the Body

Emotions and emotion regulation are closely associated with one's bodily state and physiological response. In the past, emotion theorists had stated there is a relationship between body, cognition, and emotional process (Damasio, 1994; James, 1884; Füstös et al., 2013). William James (1884) commented on the vascular or somatic (changes in body temperature,

heart rate, blood pressure) activities of an individual on experienced emotions. Researchers have hypothesized individuals who are observant of their bodily sensations can identify and regulate their own emotions better than others. Moreover, they can connect with others' emotional states (Füstös et al., 2013).

Brechet (2017) examined the ability of children to recognize emotional facial expressions, comparing two types of stimulus: photographs and drawings of faces. The researcher aimed to investigate if there was any difference among students who are shown photographs or drawings to learn to identify facial expressions. A total of 343 children participated: 160 children who were approximately five years old, and 183 children who were approximately seven years old. The study was conducted in elementary schools in France. The children were presented one after the other with photographs and drawings displaying facial expressions of basic emotions like happiness, sadness, anger, and fear. The students were asked to match the emotions to the photographs and drawing displayed. The photographs used were selected from the Radboud Faces Database. The drawings were designed by the researcher on the basis on the children's description of the respective emotion. The results show that drawings are better recognized than photographs for sadness, anger, and fear. Furthermore, the difference between the photographs and drawings tends to be more important for five-year-old children than seven-year olds.

Researchers have incorporated body scan and body awareness lesson plans and activities to help children and adolescents learn and regulate their emotions. Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) is one of the pioneer evidence-based approaches that utilizes body scanning and yoga strategies developed to help individuals' process difficult emotions affecting their mental well-being (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). The MBSR program had been found to be effective

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among children and adolescents (Sibinga et al., 2016). Metz et al. (2013) studied the effectiveness of the learning to BREATHE (Broderick 2013, cited by Metz et al., 2013) program on emotion regulation among adolescents. The researchers used a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest comparison group design, with 216 total high school students, mean age 16.5 years. Learning to BREATHE is a mindfulness-based program based on six core themes intended to facilitate the growth of emotion regulation and attentional skills for middle- and high-school students (Broderick, 2013). The lesson content focuses on body awareness and sensation of emotions and thoughts. The results of Metz et al. (2013) showed that program participants reported a more significant reduction in psychosomatic symptom, reduction in the state of lack of emotional awareness, and improvement in overall self-regulation.

Leigh (2017) explored the experiences of children attending to somatic moment education. The study participants were 22 children, the age rage was 4 to 11 years. The somatic moment education was developed by Leigh (2017) considering the developmental level of the study participants. The program encompassed of yoga, physical moments, body work, and balance. The study participants expressed their emotions via physical moment and discussed their understanding of emotions and emotional expressions during their pair work, journals, group work, and reflections. As the result of the somatic moment education the students shared that they learned to identify and express their emotions via yoga and body movements. Leigh (2017) noted in the results how some students could notice facial expressions and others has some trouble in perceiving and understanding facial emotional cues. The study participants expressed using yoga as a tool for processing their emotions during the session and future.

Additionally, progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) has been a major method for addressing stress-related issues in school settings. PMR is a systematic relaxation technique that

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consists of the progressive tensing and relaxing of muscles. The action of tensing and relaxing the muscles results in the relaxation of one's own mind. Hashim and Zainol (2104) conducted a study to compare the effects of six and 12 sessions of relaxation training on emotional distress, short-term memory, and sustained attention in elementary school children. The total number of study participants included 132 children, ages 10 and 11 years old. The study participants were divided into three groups: six sessions, 12 sessions, and control group. The study variables were measured with self-report measures. The results indicated that nearly half of all students reported moderate to extremely severe stress, and more than half of the participants reported having extreme anxiety and depression symptoms. A greater memory increase was observed in the students who received the 12-session group than other groups. No significant differences were observed among the groups in anxiety, depression, and sustained attention.

In contrast, a study conducted by Larson et al. (2010) using relaxation techniques found there was a positive change among students who received the relaxation technique program. The study purpose was to reduce the negative effects of test anxiety among third-grade students. The study participants consisted of 177 third-grade students from public elementary schools in the Midwest. The study participants belonged to two different schools; students from one school received the relaxation training and the other acted as the control group. The researchers used the Westside test anxiety scale (Driscoll 2007), elevator breathing, and guided relaxation to measure the levels of anxiety. The researchers found that the relaxation intervention had a significant effect in reducing test anxiety in the experimental group. There was no significant decrease in test anxiety among the control group.

Children's Emotion Vocabulary: Learning to Identify and Talk about Emotions

Emotion vocabulary helps an individual understand one's own and others' emotions. The development of emotion vocabulary begins in early childhood and continues across the lifespan. Saarni (1999) states that emotional competency includes emotion, vocabulary, and expression. Vocabulary assists individuals in exploring and making meaning of emotional states of self and others. Additionally, it promotes a higher level of interpersonal communication as it allows individuals to reflect on their own emotion, the situation, and the others. The ability to identify and accurately label emotions influences other emotion-related skills, such as emotion comprehension, empathy, and regulation. Emotion vocabulary and understanding is an essential component of socioemotional development in children and adolescents (Bazhydai, Ivcevic, Brackett, & Widen, 2018).

Santiago-Poventud et al. (2015) conducted a research study on kindergarten and first-grade students to investigate the growth of emotion vocabulary as a result of the Social-Emotional Learning Foundations (SELF) program. The SELF-program was developed by Santiago-Poventud et al. (2015); it was based on the cognitive behavioral curriculum and focused on the development of the concepts and vocabulary related to emotions and behavior. The researchers used pretest-posttest control group design to study the effectiveness of the SELF-program among kindergarten and first-grade students. The total sample size was 108 during the pretest and 91 at posttest, as students moved to a different school. Members of the research team pre- and postintervention individually assessed all the study participants. The results indicated that students who received the SELF intervention had significantly higher scores, interpreted as more important knowledge of feeling vocabulary, than students in the business as usual (BAU)

control group. The students who participated in the intervention were able to provide the meaning of the words with examples as well.

Bazhydai et al. (2018) conducted a study to explore emotion vocabulary with age and gender among fifth- to eighth-grade students. They found that adolescents tend to have broader and more complex emotion vocabulary than younger adolescents (fifth-grade students). They found the eighth graders label and categorize emotion words and other nonemotion responses like physical reactions and social experiences. Additionally, they found that there is a significant difference between gender and emotion vocabulary with girls having a higher level of emotional vocabulary than boys. Furthermore, Brackett et al. (2012) illustrated how feeling words could be used to increase academic performance and social competency among fifth- and sixth-grade students.

Learning about the Emotional States of Others

Children learn to connect with others' emotions in early infancy by coping and referencing; social referencing is a developmental learning process wherein infants observe an adult's (mother, father, or caregiver) affective responses and act towards the situation, object, or person (Walden & Ogan, 1988). For example, when a child accidentally trips, he or she looks and gathers reference from parents; if the parents express worry and fear, the child will start crying. Gradually, children learn how to express emotions which could be different from others. As children develop language, they start to communicate their emotions and acquire the skills to relate to others' emotions as they grow older (Saarni, 1999).

Empathy is the ability of an individual to recognize, comprehend, and relate to how another person is feeling (Davis, 1983). Empathy plays an exclusive role in nurturing children's relationship skills with parents, teachers, peers, and others. Empathy benefits them and they

become more responsive, cooperative, and respectful. These skills enhance their social skills and academic performance. Developmentally young children are ego-centric and self-observed in nature, gradually they start to develop an understanding that others respond, feel, and think differently towards the situation (Masterson & Kersey, 2013). For instance, a child who is acting silly while coloring the walls observes and understands the parent's reaction is opposite of silliness. Parents and teachers can assist children to learn to empathize by teaching them to care, share, and take others perspectives (Masterson & Kersey, 2013).

To promote and cultivate empathy among children parent and teaches should provide opportunities wherein children can conversate about empathy and build the idea of relating to other people's thoughts, feelings, and situations. Pretend play is one way to create the learning environment for children which results in the development of greater empathy among peers in a school setting (Spivak & Howes, 2011). Additionally, role play activities involving make-believe scenarios enhances, cognition, altruistic behavior, and self-regulation among children (Leong & Bodrova, 2012; Vygotsky, 1930).

Ornaghi, Brockmeier, and Grazzani (2013) conducted a study to discover whether training children with emotion understanding skill will enhances their social cognition. The study participants consisted of 110 children and the mean age of the children were 7 years and 3 months. The children were randomly assigned to training and control group, the training group consisted of 52 students and control group consisted of 58 students. The research consisted, pretest, emotion understanding training, posttest, and follow-up. The follow-up phase was directed six-months after posttest. The emotion understanding training is a conversational program wherein emotional stories were read to the students. The first phase of the intervention includes reading emotion stories and scenarios and in the second phase students exchange

dialogues about what they learnt. In the results, Ornaghi and colleagues (2013) reported in their results that the training group performed better than the control group with emotion comprehension and empathy.

Picture books are used by teachers and school counselors to help children with general moral development, friendship, kindness, and emotions. Specifically, picture books aimed at teaching children emotions, empathy, and coping skills serves the children to learn to identify and label emotions, and its corresponding facial expressions. Some books contain some tips and strategies to help children with managing emotions (Harper, 2016; Ornaghi et al., 2013).

For older children picture book facilitated with relevant activities will enhance the development of empathy. Schwenck et al., (2014) conducted a study to investigate the influence of age, gender, and intelligence on the development of cognitive and emotional empathy among children. The researchers studied emotion recognition, perspective taking, and emotional empathy of 134 children, aged seven to 17 years. The researchers used animated shapes task, video sequence task, and the empathy response task. The study results indicated that the age of the children had a strong influence on their cognitive empathy factor. Results of this study indicated empathic skills like emotion recognition; perspective taking, cognitive empathy, and emotional empathy typically develop in children and adolescents beyond the preschool age.

Joronen, Hakamies, and Astedt-Kurki (2011) studied the experiences of children participating in a drama program and learning the components of social and emotional learning. The research data was collected using a demographic questionnaire, interview, and focus group. The drama program was delivered to 104 students from fourth- and fifth-grade classrooms. The interview sample consisted of 16 students in total. The interviewed students were divided into four groups for focus group interviews. The study results demonstrated how most of the students

liked the program and described how the program enhanced their social and emotional

understanding. Furthermore, students explored their prosocial behavior and friendships.

Emotion perspective taking and empathy are related with one another: emotion

perspective taking helps an individual to observe the emotional expression expressed by another

person, and empathy serves as the action behavior of perspective taking (Bensalah, Caillies, &

Anduze, 2016). Bensalah and colleagues (2016) investigated the development of the affective,

cognitive, and behavioral components of empathy. The study consisted of 158 children aged four

through six years. Results of the study reported by researchers indicated that there is a

developmental categorization of cognitive empathy among children; older children tend to have

better thought processing on observed emotions. However, the study revealed that affective

empathy stays the same across the ages four and six.

Learning to Control/Regulate our Emotions

The awareness of emotion regulation develops in late childhood. Children learn to

regulate their emotion from their family and school environment (Pons & Harris, 2005).

Emotional awareness and emotion regulation give individuals the ability to enhance the quality

of their life. Emotional awareness refers to one's ability to attend and express one's own

emotional state (Lambie, 2009). Preschool-aged children can express their basic emotional

experiences, like they are happy, sad, or mad. Emotional awareness advances with age; older

children with developed metacognitive abilities can reflect and process complex emotions

(Lambie, 2016).

Kranzler et al., (2016) found emotional self-awareness in children predicts anxiety and

depression symptoms among children. The sample consisted of 316 youth, ages ranging from

seven to 16 (third, sixth, and ninth grade level). Furthermore, the study results showed there was

a significant difference in age and emotional self-awareness. As per the results, the researchers recommended incorporating emotional awareness component in the treatment and prevention programs of depression and anxiety disorders among children and adolescents.

Children and adolescents who lack emotion regulation skills are at greater risk of facing mental health issues as adults in the future (Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010). Moreover, children using ineffective emotion regulation strategies often experience peer rejection (Kim & Cicchetti, 2010), depressive symptoms (Siener & Kerns, 2012), anxiety symptoms, (Semple et al., 2010) and significant other issues. Kim and Cicchetti (2010) conducted a longitudinal study over two consecutive years among children ages six to 12 years and found emotion regulation was predictive of higher peer acceptance over time among the participated children.

Individual differences in emotional intelligence are rooted in early cognitive development work, which explored young children's choice behavior in experiments. Children were asked to choose between a getting a small reward immediately and getting a larger more desirable one later. The results of these classic delay-of-gratification studies revealed reliable age-related changes in children's ability (and use of strategic self-regulation strategies) to wait for larger rewards (Mischel et al., 1988). In addition to the age-related changes in effective self-regulation, Mischel and his colleagues observed individual differences that proved stable over many years and predictive of academic achievement. This ability to delay gratification and regulate our emotions and behavior is a key component of a set of skills often referred to as social-emotional skills. In this synthesized summary, Daniel Goleman, described the profile of proficient delayers as the basis of emotionally intelligent (Goleman, 1995). Emotional skills are crucial for children to become successful both socially and academically.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is defined as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p.189). Mayer and Salovey described four dimensions of their model of EI: perceiving emotions, understanding emotions, using emotions to process thought, and emotion regulation. Perceiving emotions is the ability to recognize and name emotions in self and others, for example, observing the situation, thought process, and bodily functions/ behaviors to determine the feeling and intensity. Understanding emotions is an ability to assess the cause and consequences of the identified emotion, interpersonal and intrapersonal. Knowing the cause and consequence of the emotions helps the individual to process and attain peace with the emotional state; moreover, this helps how they navigate emotions with others. Individuals can use emotions to process thoughts to benefit self and others, for example, using the feeling of fear and then rationalizing it with needs and goals to perform on stage. The above stated dimensions will enhance emotion regulation skills (Brackett et al., 2016). Martins, Ramalho, and Morin (2010) stated that individuals who demonstrated higher levels of emotional intelligence experience better physical, psychological, and social health.

The concepts of emotional intelligence have been studied since 1990s with different populations and variables, such as interpersonal functioning, academic achievement, professional performance, and overall mental health (Tamir & Ford, 2012). Earlier in the research literature, EI had been studied on adult or adolescent populations and gradually researchers started to explore it with children and preadolescents. Cha and Nock (2009) have posited that adolescents with a high level of EI experiences encounter few episodes of depression, anxiety, and school-related problems. For children and adolescents, the level of EI predicts mental health rather than

cognition and personality (Davis & Humphrey, 2012). Correspondingly, mindfulness practices

enhance mental health and well-being in children, adolescents, and adults. Being present helps

individuals to attend to their emotional cues and regulate them effectively (Arch & Landy, 2015;

Wadlinger & Isaacowitz, 2011).

Mindfulness and Mindfulness Based Theories

Mindfulness-based practices have transcended their initial roots in spirituality associated

with specific religious and culture traditions and are incorporated into present day evidence-

based practices designed to support client mental health and wellness (Dreyfus, 2011).

Mindfulness is an awareness state that seems to develop in individuals as they begin to practice

paying attention in the moment without any judgments (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). To magnify upon the

initial definition, Bishop and colleagues (2004) included two-components of mindfulness. The

first component involves self-regulation of attention so that it is maintained on existing

experience, allowing increased recognition of cognition at the present moment. The second

component involves selecting an orientation in the present moment, an orientation that is

characterized by curiosity, openness, willingness, and acceptance.

Mindfulness is an important component of third-wave cognitive behavioral approaches

designed to help adults with chronic pain, anxiety, depression, and stress. Most commonly used

evidence-based third-wave Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) includes Mindfulness-Based

Stress Reduction (MBSR; Kabat-Zinn, 1990), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)

(Linehan, 1993), and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT; Hayes, Boyd, & Sewell,

2011). Mindfulness-Based interventions (MBIs) are increasingly used in helping children and

adolescents with various mental health symptoms. These approaches foster compassion for self

and others, interpersonal effectiveness, emotion regulation, and awareness level in children and teens (Willard, 2015).

MBSR, DBT, and ACT theories are illustrated in this section due to the emotional mindfulness intervention emphasis on implementing mindfulness to regulate emotions, understand body sensations (embodiment of emotion), and being present with one's own emotions.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) was developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn in the 1970s to help people with symptoms of chronic pain, stress, and anxiety in adult populations in a clinical setting. MBSR encompasses an 8-week module based on mindfulness mediation, body scanning, hatha yoga, and other informal mindfulness practices like eating, walking, and coloring. This intervention focuses on helping individuals explore their behavior, thoughts, and emotion (Kabat-Zinn, 1990).

Body scans guide individuals to attend to various parts of their body in a systematic order while breathing gently. In sitting meditation, individuals sit in a comfortable position and focus on breathing, incorporating open awareness or loving kindness meditations. In hatha yoga, individuals perform yoga postures, focusing on their breathing. In addition to focusing on breathing, individuals observe any bodily sensations, thoughts, or emotions without judging them in each module (Kabat-Zinn, 1990).

MBSR has been found to be effective with children and adolescent populations. Sibinga et al., (2016) conducted a 12-week MBSR program with 300 fifth- through eighth-grade students in Baltimore, Maryland. The students were randomly assigned into two groups: intervention group and active control group. The active control group received a health education program

and the other group received the MBSR program. This study data was collected using self-report

measures and checklists at baseline, post program and at a three-month follow-up. The

researchers found children who participated in MBSR program reported to have a lower level of

depression, negative affect, negative coping, and rumination. In addition, the MBSR group

showed overall better psychological functioning and coping (Sibinga et al., 2016).

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)

The core idea of Dialectic Behavior Therapy (DBT) is that there is an opposite of

everything, and we can find balance between the opposites to lead a quality life. Dialectical

Behavior Therapy (Linehan, 1993) was originally established for suicidal and non-suicidal self-

injurious behavior in adult populations with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD). Emotional

dysregulation and impulsivity are two major features of BPD. Emotion dysregulation is a result

of individuals' inability to process and regulate their emotional responses. Impulsivity is a state

resulted from emotion dysregulation wherein individuals react uncontrollably to harm

themselves. To help individuals process and regulate emotions, the DBT therapist teaches

patients skills based on the four training modules of DBT: regulation, mindfulness, distress

tolerance, and interpersonal effectiveness (Linehan & Wilks, 2015; Mazza et al., 2016). Two of

the training modules focus on helping individuals with handling difficult emotions, emotion

regulation, and distress tolerance. The emotion regulation module includes skill sets for

managing emotions, increasing positive emotions, and decreasing unpleasant emotions. From

this skill set, individuals learn how to be mindful with their emotions, identify and label

emotions, and problem solve by analyzing their emotions. Distress tolerance skills address the

capacity to tolerate unpleasant experiences with activating a wise mind and using self-soothing

skills. The mindfulness module includes skill sets to increase intentional attention on the stimuli,

enhancing self-awareness and realization. The interpersonal effectiveness module includes skill sets to communicate efficiently with another person and maintain a relationship (Linehan, 1993; Mazza et al., 2016).

Beyond treating clients with BPD, DBT has established effectiveness with different diagnoses and populations, such as eating disorders, depression, and a cluster B personality disorder (Linehan & Wilks, 2015). DBT skills training has been applied specifically in middle- and high-school settings to help students with skills build resilience, emotion management, friendship, and decision making. School-based Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum (reviewed later in this chapter) for children and adolescents is a derivative from DBT skills training modules. The DBT Skills Training for Emotional Problem Solving for Adolescents (DBT STEPS-A) curriculum includes 30 lesson plans; each session is 50 minutes long. The lessons are designed to fit within a general school education curriculum for adolescents. The curriculum was adapted from the skills training program in Dialectical Behavior Therapy. The lessons include orientation and goal setting, dialectical thinking, core mindfulness skills, distress tolerance skills, emotion regulation skills, and interpersonal effectiveness skills (Linehan & Wilks, 2015; Mazza et al., 2016; Ricard et al., 2013).

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) was developed by Steven Hayes to teach adult clients to become mindful with the ultimate focus on awareness and then accept their experiences of the event, rather than avoiding the event. The ACT model is considered trans-diagnostic in that it is an approach to understanding psychological well-being that is outside the conceptual framework usually associated with diagnosis.

There are six core principles of ACT: acceptance, cognitive diffusion, being present, observing the self, values, and committed action. Acceptance is the practice of being open to all aspects of the experience. Diffusion means to establish some emotional distance from the thought process or the experience itself. Being Present means focusing on the current moment or experiences. Self-as context in ACT is the ongoing state of individuals to be stable observers of their experiences and perspective. Values in ACT are the personal qualities of individuals that they would like to incorporate into their actions. Committed action means to engage actions towards the chosen goals (Gillard, Flaxman, & Hooper, 2018). Empirical research on ACT is recently emerging in the school system and among children of different age groups (Hayes et al., 2011).

School Based Intervention on Children's Socioemotional Regulation Skills

Children spend a significant amount of time at school, children learn from their peers, and school becomes the second home, so researchers have developed several school-based interventions focusing on emotions, emotion learning, mindfulness, and social emotional factors (Brackett et al., 2016; Castillo-Gualda et al., 2018; Harpin et al., 2016). School counselors are poised to support students in development of socioemotional skills in the school setting, which significantly influences students' behavior at home and in other environments (ASCA, 2016; Ricard et al., 2013).

For this research, the lived experiences of fifth-grade students who participated in a 6-week Emotional Mindfulness program are studied. In this chapter, emotional intelligence and mindfulness-based school interventions for elementary and middle school students are the key focus.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is the most used classroom intervention focused on the foundations of emotional intelligence. Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is an intervention developed to prevent emotional and behavioral problems in children and adolescents. Some well-known SEL-based evidence-based programs are Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2003), Promoting Alternative THinking Strategies (PATHS) (Greenberg et al., 2002), RULER Feeling Words Curriculum (Rivers & Brackett, 2011), and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS, 2016). Most of the programs focus on self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationships skills, and responsible decision-making. Self-awareness is the ability to precisely identify one's own emotions, thoughts, values and the influence behavior. Social-awareness is a skill to be able to take the perspective of and empathize with others. Responsible decision-making is the ability to make productive choices based on personal experiences and social interactions. Self-management is the ability to effectively regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. Relationship skills is the ability to create and maintain mutual rewarding relationships. There are several types of social emotional programs that are offered in schools (CASEL, 2003; Jones et al., 2017; Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013).

CASEL (2003) and PBIS (2016) are standardized nationwide social emotional learning curriculum systems which are implemented in middle- and high-school settings. RULER is a program developed by Rivers and Brackett (2011) based on a SEL foundation, which includes identifying emotions in oneself and others, understanding the causes and consequences of emotions, labeling emotions, and expressing and regulating emotions.

The objective of SEL programs is to help students of all ages successfully navigate stressful live events, cope with emotions, and maintain a mentally healthy lifestyle (Mazza et al., 2016). Researchers have found SEL programs and their components provided positive outcomes in children and adolescents. Specifically, SEL programs proved efficient in reducing the symptoms of depression (Schonert-Reichl et al, 2015), general anxiety (Bavarian et al., 2013), and other emotional problems (Wigelsworth, Humphrey, Kalambouka, & Lendrum, 2010).

Jones et al. (2017) researched the SEL-based intervention in the elementary school setting and the intervention's outcome focus. As a result of this investigation they found 11 SEL-based interventions have been researched since 2004 in the school classroom setting with different age groups and outcome variables, such as cognitive, social, emotional, academic, and behavioral. The 11 widely used SEL based interventions are 4Rs, PATHS, Positive Action, Responsive Classroom, Second Step, RULER, MindUP, Fast Track PATHS, Making Choices, Good Behavior Game, and PBIS. Furthermore, Jones, Barnes, Bailey, and Doolittle (2017) provided recommendations for policy makers, practitioners, and researchers to focus on the teacher's social emotional competence and classroom level and develop SEL psychometric tools (Jones et al., 2017).

Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015) developed the MindUP program incorporating SEL and mindfulness. They conducted a research study to illustrate the effectiveness of the program among fourth- and fifth-grade students. The results of this study indicated that children who received the MindUP program reported improvement in cognitive control, empathy, perspective-taking, emotional control, optimism, school self-concept, and mindfulness, and a decrease in symptoms of depression and peer-rated aggression. Additionally, the students who participated

in the MindUP program were rated by peers as exhibiting more prosocial behaviors and had an increased rate of peer acceptance (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015).

Researchers investigated Emotional Intelligence (EI), predicting psychopathology across the school transition of children and adolescence (Jordan et al., 2010; Williams et al., 2009). Jordan et al. (2010) studied the relationship between EI and academic performance among male (*n*=49) and female (n=37) children ages 11 to 12 years of age. Students who have social and emotional coping skills, with the exception of stress management, do appear to find the transition from primary to secondary school easier than others. As the result of this study, researchers (Jordan et al., 2010; Williams, Daley, Burnside, & Hammond-Rowley, 2009) recommend that the EI components should be implemented in the primary school curriculum to help students make a successful transition.

Coholic (2011) conducted a study to investigate the benefits and feasibility of Arts-Based Mindfulness-Based Practices with Young People facilitating the concepts of self-awareness and resilience. The total number of participants received the Art-Based Mindfulness-Based Practices in groups were 81 and there were multiple groups. The students were rereferred by a local child protection service. The participation was voluntary, the children were matched with age and gender. The age level of the groups varied from 8 to 12 and 13 to 15. Qualitative inquiry was used as the research method, semi-structured interviews and post intervention group discussion were used to collect data. The major theme was fun, self-esteem, and self-awareness. Coholic (2011) reported that the research will be continued among young population to further investigate the impact of the Art-Based Mindfulness practices.

Wigelsworth et al. (2010) developed an 8-week short trial version intervention based on a SEL programed called 'Going for Goals' in England. The sample consisted of 182 children (ages

six to 11) from primary schools across England. The researchers randomly assigned 102 students to the experimental group and 80 students to the comparison group. The data for this study was collected using the emotional literacy assessment and intervention and the strength and difficulties questionnaire. These questionnaires have parent and teacher versions that were also used by the researchers. The measures were administered pre-, post- and at a seven-week follow-up. The data results of both student and teacher versions indicated that the intervention had a positive impact on the social and emotional skills of children. The follow-up data analysis showed that the positive effect of the intervention sustained. The results obtained from the parental report data yielded no positive results, which questions the participant's ability to use the knowledge and skills beyond the school setting. Additionally, the parent's data questioned the generalizability of the 'Going for Goals' program with different settings. From the result of the study, the researchers suggested the future researchers to upgrade the program with activities that students can use beyond the school environment.

Classroom Based Mindfulness Interventions for Emotion Knowledge and Regulation

There is an increased expectation of students in K–12 schools to develop a greater level of attention and emotion regulation skills. Approximately 20% of childhood affective disorders will influence students' academic performance and social behavior. Neuroscience researchers have studied and supported the relationship between cognitive and emotion regulation. Recently, mindfulness approaches and techniques have been implemented in the K−12 schools (Semple, Droutman, & Reid, 2017).

The effectiveness of mindfulness and mindfulness-based interventions is increasing among young people. Studies have explored how children understand, process, and apply mindfulness skills in their daily practices (Hutchinson, Huws, & Dorjee, 2018). Hutchinson et

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al. (2018) conducted a qualitative inquiry to explore how children who received mindfulness training practiced and implemented mindfulness in their life. There were 15 children who participated in the study; their average age was 11 years. The children received the Paws b curriculum for Year 4 (developed by Silverton, Sawyer & Roxburgh in collaboration with the Mindfulness in Schools Project –MiSP). The Paws b program consists of six 1-hour long lessons. Paws b is delivered as part of the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum. Through this curriculum children learn to regulate their emotions, respond better in a difficult situation, and cultivate happiness. Data was collected using focus groups and a semi-structured interview. The data was analyzed using inductive thematic analysis. The findings indicated that the Paws b program helped children to regulate their emotions. Four themes were recognized: (1) processes of emotion regulation, (2) dysregulation prompt to apply mindfulness, (3) challenges and strategies, and (4) the conditions that support or hinder mindfulness use (p.3490). As the result of this study the researchers recommended future researchers implement meditation-based approaches in schools to facilitate self-compassion and kindness.

Burke (2010) conducted a meta-analysis study on the current literature of mindfulness-based approaches with children and adolescents, clinical and non-clinical populations. The researcher reviewed 15 studies between the years of 2005 to 2010, and found one study with preschool age children, six studies with elementary school age students, and eight studies with high-school age populations. The majority of the reviewed studies used pre-post between group designs to study the effectiveness of the intervention with children and adolescent populations. The researchers reported that the mindfulness meditation practices are practical among the

population to produce significant outcomes. The outcome variables could be social skills, compassion, and emotion regulation.

Compassion and empathy are important components of prosocial behavior, which can lead to greater peer acceptance and interaction, and positive relationships in children and adolescents. Cheang et al. (2019) researched six databases and found 548 relevant papers. The researchers focused on children and adolescents, measuring the outcomes of empathy or compassion mindfulness-based interventions. The researchers independently checked the studies for methodological quality, and data were extracted and analyzed narratively. The results indicated MBIs increasing empathy in children and adolescents. Further, there was some evidence to suggest that MBIs increase self-compassion among this population and that this was correlated with an increase in mindfulness.

Mendelson et al. (2010) studied the outcomes of a 12-week school-based mindfulness intervention among urban youths. The sample consisted of 55 fourth-grade students and 42 fifth-grade students; the mean age was 9.7. Four measures were used pre- and postintervention: Involuntary Stress Responses, Positive and Negative Emotions, Relations with Peers and School People in My Life, and Depressive Symptoms. Findings of this study suggest that there was a positive effect on problematic responses to stress including rumination, intrusive thoughts, and emotional arousal.

Schonert-Reichl and Lawlor (2010) conducted a quasi-experimental study to evaluate the effectiveness of the Mindfulness Education (ME) program. The study participants consisted of fourth- to seventh-grade students (Pre- and early adolescent). The ME program is a prevention intervention delivered in a classroom setting wherein trained classroom teachers implemented the ME program within their standard teaching curriculum. Researchers used standardized

measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the ME program: optimism, school and general self-concept, positive and negative emotions (PANAS), and teacher reports of social and emotional competence. Results revealed that the students who participated in the ME program showed significant increases in optimism, self-concept, and positive emotions compared to the comparison group. Moreover, there were significant improvements on the dimensions of social and emotional competent behaviors found that favored the students who participated in the ME program.

Similarly, researchers have used Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) (Semple et al., 2010) and found effectiveness among children and adolescent populations. Semple et al. (2010) conducted a study to test Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Children among children ages nine to 13 years. The study results showed that MBCT-C is one of the evidence-based practices for attention issues, behavior problems, and childhood anxiety disorders. Anxiety and stress symptoms in children and adolescents interrupt their ability of attention and concentration. Moreover, children with anxiety disorders exhibit poor emotion coping skills, which promotes reactive behaviors that influence their academic performance.

The above listed research studies demonstrate that social emotional learning and mindfulness interventions have been found to be effective among children and adolescents. These interventions served the purpose of helping children process attention, emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in a successful way to influence other parts of their life like academics, peer relationships, and family interactions. Moreover, these interventions equipped children to face their future.

Emotional Mindfulness: Researches and Interventions

Mindfulness and emotional intelligence have been researched for several decades and these variables have enhanced the quality and well-being of individuals' lives. Moreover, these two constructs are highly correlated with various dimensions of wellness and positive quality of life, which include emotional awareness and coping. Similarly, researchers have argued how cultivating mindfulness addresses the emotional benefits and helps individuals to live happier lives.

Mindfulness helps an individual attend to their emotional experience, and process and regulate the experienced emotion successfully (Arch & Landy, 2015). In Gross's model of emotion regulation, the concept of mindfulness is represented as an attention deployment method for emotion regulation (Gross, 1998). Attention deployment is an antecedent approach where several attentional processes and procedures are employed to shape emotional experience (Wadlinger & Isaacowitz, 2011). Emotional experiences can be pleasant or unpleasant; being mindful will help an individual to process and navigate the emotion constructively (Arch & Landy, 2015).

Wadlinger and Isaacowitz (2011) studied how individuals can be trained to enhance their attention that will result in emotion regulation. The researchers studied how attention interventions had facilitated emotion regulation among young adults and adult clinical and non-clinical populations from 1997 to 2010. As a result of their research, they formulated models of attention training methods integrating emotion regulation and attention network. Additionally, they recommended future researchers should investigate which attention training works better with adult, young adult, and children populations.

Chambers, Gullone, and Allen (2009) reviewed the framework of emotions, mindfulness, and mindful emotion regulation in their article. In this article, they discussed the literature of mindfulness, emotions, and emotion regulation with different populations and explained the connection between mindfulness and emotion regulation. As a conclusion of their review, they define mindful emotion regulation:

> Mindful emotion regulation represents the capacity to remain mindfully aware at all times, irrespective of the apparent valence or magnitude of any emotion that is experienced. It does not entail suppression of the emotional experience, nor any specific attempts to reappraise or alter it in any way (Chambers et al., 2009 p.569).

Schutte and Malouff (2011) conducted a study to examine whether emotional intelligence facilitates the relationship between mindfulness and subjective well-being among university students in Australia. A total of 125 students participated; the average age was 34.17 (SD = 9.63). The researchers used Mindfulness Inventory, Assessing Emotions Scale, PANAS, and Satisfaction with Life for this study. The results showed that higher levels of mindfulness were associated with greater emotional intelligence, positive affect, and life satisfaction and lower negative affect (Schutte & Malouff, 2011).

Enríquez et al. (2017) conducted an experimental study to determine the effectiveness of Mindful Emotional Intelligence Program (PINEP) among college students to regulate their emotions. The study consisted of 139 participants from Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez (México) with a mean age of 21.8 years. A personal growth program was delivered to the control group subjects and the PINEP program was given to the experimental group subjects. PINEP is an 8-session (each session is three hours) 8-week program and was developed by Ramos et al in 2012 (cited by Enríquez et al., 2017) to optimize emotional intelligence through mindfulness to

help individuals in effectively navigating emotional challenges. Enríquez et al. (2017) used Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey, Student Academic Engagement, Big Five Questionnaire, Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire, and Interpersonal-empathy Reactivity Rate. The results showed how the PINEP program helped students in regulating their emotions and refocusing on the stressful situation. Moreover, the PINEP program reduced college students' academic burnout. The researchers recommended further study on the effects of the PINEP program in increasing the level of empathy among college students and other populations. However, the study conducted by Enríquez et al. (2017) has been found to be effective among the adult population; this is the only intervention study which has combined EI and mindfulness. Additionally, the study was conducted in Mexico and the original manuscript is written in Spanish. An emotional mindfulness intervention was developed for children due to the lack of a similar study with this same population.

Summary

Emotions play vital roles in individuals' lives. Many people struggle to regulate their emotions and lead a quality life. In recent years, researchers have shown interest in studying emotions and the concept of emotion regulation with children and adolescents. As a result, researchers have developed several school-based programs to help children and adolescents with knowledge and a tool kit on emotion regulation based on several theoretical orientations. Most of the emotion regulation theories encompass mindfulness and emotional intelligence foundations. Mindfulness and emotional intelligence have been researched for several decades and these two constructs are highly correlated with various dimensions of wellness and a positive quality of life, which include emotional awareness and coping. Recently, these two concepts have been combined and found to have an effect on the adult population. Children who lack emotion

regulation skills are subjected to grow with maladaptive behavior or coping skill that will lead them to develop depression, anxiety, and other psychotic disorders. In this study, the constructs of emotional intelligence and mindfulness skills were combined. An intervention was developed to help children learn and understand concepts of emotions and emotion regulation using mindfulness practices. More specifically, this study demonstrated the lived experiences of fifth-grade students who received emotional mindfulness intervention.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This chapter elaborates on the research design, emotional mindfulness intervention, and data analysis. This chapter also includes detailed information of the participants involved in the study.

Design Methodology

In qualitative research design, the researcher attempts to capture stories via interviews, journals, artifacts, and a focus group to understand the perspectives and experiences of the research participants. The researcher analyzes the data to discover meaningful patterns and themes from the collected data to illustrate the research findings (Patton, 2014). In this study, I used the philosophical framework of descriptive phenomenology developed by Amedeo Giorgi (2009) to understand the personal experiences of fifth-grade students participating in an emotional mindfulness intervention. The goal of the study was to address the research question: What are the lived experiences of fifth-grade students who participate in a 6-week Emotional Mindfulness Intervention?

I used a phenomenological research design to explore the experiences of the fifth-grade students who received the intervention. This is the best methodology for this study because it is capturing the essence of participating in this unique intervention. I developed the intervention by considering socioemotional developmental stages with the constructs of emotional intelligence, socioemotional learning, and mindfulness. Currently, there is no other intervention on emotional mindfulness with children, so this study provides the foundation for exploring how the students reacted to, learned from, and processed the intervention. Thus, I wanted to explore the experiences of fifth-grade students who received the emotional mindfulness intervention.

Giorgi's (2009) descriptive phenomenological approach was formulated by combining Husserl's and Merleau-Ponty's philosophical phenomenology. Edmund Husserl is generally credited with the introduction of modern phenomenological philosophy. He viewed phenomenology as a scientific method to investigate consciousness, lived experience, and existence (Giorgi, 2009). Merleau-Ponty posited that phenomenological researchers submit form, formlessness, or openness of the data, to analyses. In the descriptive phenomenological approach, the researcher makes use of epoché, reduction, imaginative variation, and searches for essential psychological structures (Applebaum, 2011).

The descriptive phenomenological method delivers the lived context of the research participant by focusing on his or her perspective without using deception (Giorgi, 2009). In other words, this method focuses on the voice of the participants in the research. In this research, I analyzed their thoughts, feelings, interpretations, understandings, and experiences during the implementation of six classroom guidance sessions.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the roles of the researcher are situationally determined by the study and research question (Glesen, 2016). In this research, I maintained multiple roles. I served as researcher, facilitator, and interviewer. As a researcher, my primary functions were to review the literature on my topic, consider the need for the study, and assess the significance of conducting the study. In addition, I developed research questions, assessed sample possibilities, selected my sample for the study, collected data, analyzed the data, and reported findings. Lastly, the researcher is responsible for maintaining confidentiality with the collected data (Patton, 2014; Sutton & Austin, 2015). Data were collected and kept confidential by using passwords on a protected laptop, audio recorder, and flash drive.

As a facilitator, I delivered the Emotional Mindfulness Intervention by using PowerPoint presentations, discussion group exercises, videos, and pictures related to the concepts presented. I assisted the students in their understanding of the content of the sessions and facilitated the learning process. As the researcher, I interviewed participants individually and conducted a focus group. While interviewing, I played the role of an active listener and learner. I asked participants to clarify and elaborate on their responses using follow-up questions. I was the interviewer for the focus group session. I was in an etic, or outsider, position (Patton, 2014) throughout the study. I was an observer, not a participant in this study. In other words, I was not part of the population.

The Lens of the Researcher

In a qualitative research design, the role of a researcher is like that of an instrument (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Patton, 2014). The data is facilitated through the human instrument rather than a questionnaire. It is important for the researcher to be aware of his/her beliefs, assumptions, and biases towards the phenomenon. Being Indian, I had practiced yoga and meditation at home and school from a very young age. As a young child, I was unaware of the benefits of yoga and meditation or how directly and indirectly yoga and meditation had helped me process my emotional experiences. As a doctoral student, I learned more about mindfulness and emotion, which helped me connect to my background and past experiences with yoga and mindfulness. Over the years, I have learned to process and navigate my emotional experiences by being present and using mindfulness skills such as doodling, breathing exercises, and brief body scans. Moreover, I have read research studies wherein the researchers studied the relationship between mindfulness and emotions (Arch & Landy, 2015; Enríquez et al., 2017; Wadlinger & Isaacowitz, 2011). My experiences of practicing yoga and meditation have influenced me and the

way I reviewed the research data. My personal and professional experience with emotions and mindfulness has resulted in positive beliefs about mindfulness and its impact on emotions. In order to account for any positive bias, I maintained a reflective journal, which helped me to navigate my biases and beliefs.

Sample and Setting

Participants

I received Institutional Review Board (IRB) and School District approval to conduct research with voluntary student subjects. To recruit potential participants, I met the school principal and fifth-grade classroom teacher to set a time and date to meet with the fifth-grade students once per week for six weeks. I met the students every Wednesday. As a result of the meeting, I was told to meet students every Wednesday at 1:45 to 2:30 p.m. to deliver the sessions. I met the students a week before my intervention started to introduce my topic and distributed the consent and assent forms to the students. The students returned their consent assent forms to the classroom teacher, and they were filed in the locked cabinet. The Emotional Mindfulness Intervention was delivered as a classroom guidance lesson to all the fifth-grade students (21 students). Throughout the six weeks, the students brought in the signed consent and assent forms. The teacher requested the change in time after the third session and recommended that future sessions be held from 8:15 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., as the students were involved in different activities.

A total of 13 students returned both consent and assent forms, seven girls and six boys. The participants represented the following racial and ethnic groups: multiracial ($n=6$) and White ($n=1$), and Hispanic or Latina ($n=6$). The mean age of participants was 10.7 years of age, with nine participants indicating they were 11 years old and four indicating they were 10 years old.

Setting

  This study was conducted at a public elementary school in South Texas operated by the local independent school district. The campus has an English/Spanish dual language curriculum and instruction from pre-K3 to fifth-grade students. There is one classroom in each grade level with a maximum of 22 students; admission is based on a lottery selection.

<div align="center">

Procedure

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  For this study, I met the fifth-grade students during the second week of January 2019 with the permission of the principal and the classroom teacher. I introduced myself and the study to the students. I provided participants with research packets, which included parental consent and participants' assent forms in English and Spanish versions. The program started on the following Wednesday. A total of 21 fifth-grade students participated in the Emotional Mindfulness Intervention; however, I collected data from only those students who had parents' permission and were interested in being a part of the research. The program involved six 45−50-minute classroom lessons once per week for six consecutive weeks. Each session included psychoeducational content with relevant activities followed by process questions. Individual interviews, journals, and focus group interviews were used to gain an understanding of participants' experiences. All students who participated in the intervention responded to written prompts in their journal at the end of each session; I used only use those students' data who returned their assent and consent forms approved by themselves and parents. Then the students were individually interviewed and participated in the focus group. I used Giorgi (2009) to interpret and analyze the collected data.

  Emotional Mindfulness Intervention sessions were conducted in the fifth-grade classroom. I used PowerPoint slides to deliver the session content and instruction of the

activities. The Emotional Mindfulness Program is six weeks, and each session ran about 45−50 minutes. See Table 1 for an overview of the EMI sessions.

Emotion Mindfulness

After reviewing the definitions of EI (Mayer & Salovey, 1990) and mindfulness (Dreyfus, 2011; Kabat-Zinn, 2003) by other researchers, I defined emotional mindfulness as an individuals' ability to use mindfulness practices to identify and regulate their emotions and recognize the emotional experience of others (Author). Moreover, individuals can be mindful in identifying and naming other emotions. The emotional mindfulness intervention is primarily designed for children's aged nine to 12, as they encounter emotional, behavioral, and academic challenges in school and their home environment. These challenges can result in the development of aggressive behavior, anxiety issues, and depression. Researchers in the literature have studied how EI helps in reducing aggressive behavior and enhancing the mental well-being among preadolescents (Castillo-Gualda et al., 2018).

Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs) also have been found effective in reducing depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms, impulsivity, dysfunctional emotional regulation, and maladaptive repetitive thoughts among children and adolescents (Willard, 2015). With the EI and MBIs as a guide, I developed the emotional mindfulness intervention for this age group. This intervention is designed for the school setting and can be implemented by trained school counselors; they can modify the program with different activities or by dividing the sessions. Furthermore, classroom teachers can support the activities and remind students to be mindful and to use the learned skills.

Emotional Mindfulness Intervention Protocol

Overview of the Emotional Mindfulness Intervention can be found in table I.

Table I

Overview of the Emotion Mindfulness Intervention Protocol

Session Title	Purpose	Activities
Session 1: Learning about Emotions	To teach the students about emotions and enhance their emotional vocabulary	lphabetically listing the emotion ords eck of emotion cards: recognizing d situational example
Session 2: Reading emotional states of others	To teach students the definition of empathy with examples. I will review the previous session and then introduces the topic of empathy	1. Emotion stories (Brackett and Simmons, 2015) 2. A deck of real-life emotion cards: labeling others' emotions
Session 3: Cultivating mindful self-awareness	To teach and provide an opportunity for students to explore different mindfulness activities.	1. Blowing bubbles 2. Coloring using watercolors 3. Cloud watching (Coholic, Eys, & Lougheed, 2012; Costello & Lawler, 2014)
Session 4: Practicing mindful self-regulation skills	To teach the concepts and importance of emotion regulation.	1. Creating an emotion thermometer or speedometer 2. Separating the colored beads into the cups 3. Spotting the difference (Niemiec, Rashid, & Spinella, 2012)
Session 5: Human Physiology and Emotional Regulation	To teach students emotional physiology and how we can use physiological impulses to name and regulate our emotions.	1. Mindful walking (Khan, 2015) 2. Brief Progressive Muscle Relation (PMR) technique (Lehrer, 2012; Thompson & Gauntlette-Gilbert, 2008; Young, 2017) 3. Daily Emotion Chart: One Week: homework after session 5 until session 6
Session 6: Group Discussion and Role Playing	To review and process the week of recording in daily emotion chart and strengthen the learned skills of the students.	1. Breathing Exercise Role Play (Hartley, Frank, & Goldenson, 2013)

The Emotional Mindfulness Program is psychoeducational and experiential in nature and follows a graduated format wherein participants build on information covered in previous sessions. The program encompassed six 45−50-minute sessions. At the end of each session, students were given 10 minutes to complete a prompted journal entry (see Appendix B). Each session had a different journal prompt related to the general session content or the activity. After completing the intervention, the goal was to have each fifth-grader possess an emotional mindfulness skill set that might help them regulate their emotions. Some interventions were specifically designed to help children gain an understanding and vast knowledge of emotion words. Emotion words help children to become aware of their emotions and the emotions of others (McTigue, Douglass, Wright, Hodges, & Franks, 2015; Saarni, 1999).

In addition, children participating in the Emotional Mindfulness Program learn to identify how emotions relate to their body and how they can identify emotions by being mindful of what their body is telling them (Mondloch, 2012; Zandt & Barrett, 2017). Several mindfulness activities are taught to children participating in this program to help them regulate their emotions and process mindfulness activities (Ciucci et al., 2016; Semple et al., 2010).

Session 1: Learning about Emotions

The objective of session was to teach students about emotions and enhance their emotional vocabulary. At the beginning of this session, I introduced the intervention, benefits of participating in the intervention, session length, meeting room, and the frequency of sessions. I asked the students if they had any questions regarding the program. The content of this session involved an explanation and definition of emotions and components of emotional intelligence. I asked the students in the classroom what is an emotion? They all started to define emotion in their own words. Then, we briefly discussed the definitions of emotions they had shared. Then I

explained the components of emotional intelligence in the following order: identify emotions, understanding the meaning of emotions, understanding the importance of relating emotions to thoughts, how to address emotions. Then, I mentioned to students when they are feeling an emotion, they should be able to label the felt emotion. Next, they should be able to define the emotion they are feeling in their own words and understand that the felt emotion is connected to thoughts. I stated the process of examining thought process will help them while managing emotions. Emotional mindfulness was defined and discussed following our review of emotions. The definition I presented to students was, emotional mindfulness means you will be present with your emotion when you experience them, including naming them, defining them, and managing them with activities like breathing, coloring, and stretching. I also alerted students they will be learning about emotions and mindfulness using class activities.

The most important objective of this session was teaching emotion words and discussing their meaning with students. McTigue et al. (2015) provides support for the content in session one, indicating that it is important to teach emotion vocabulary to students as it helps them to communicate effectively. Cognitive and emotional developmental theorists have supported the teaching of emotion words to children by parents, caregivers, and educators (Saari, 1991). Perceiving and understanding emotions are components of emotional intelligence, as defined and developed by Salovey and Mayer (1990). Based on these theorists and researchers, I chose the content and experiential activities for this session.

After I defined emotions, emotional intelligence, and emotional mindfulness, the students were provided instructions on an activity. This session included two activities; first activity was alphabetically listing emotion words. For this activity, I used a classroom white board and colored dry erase markers. I presented the alphabet vertically on the white board and encouraged

students to name emotion words starting with letters from the alphabet: a,b,c, . . . z. After the students' listing of emotion words, we reviewed several emotion words (anger, bored, calm, depressed . . . restless, sad . . . young, and zestful) and discussed examples that could further help them understand how the word might be used, as "I am feeling sad because I got a low grade." Students had some difficulty listing emotion words for letters M, N, O, Q, R, U, V, W, X, Y, and Z. I assisted them by providing a few emotions words like, mad, neutral, nervous, optimistic, restless, xenophobic, and zestful. After listing the emotion words from each letter in the alphabet, I asked probing questions such as What was it like to list emotions? Were there any familiar or new emotion words encountered? and Was the activity useful?

Then we moved to the second activity, utilizing a deck of emotion cards that were divided among students. Maxwell and DesRoches (2010) stated that emotion cards are an essential tool when teaching emotional understanding to children. I used Feelings Playing Cards by Jim Borgman. The feeling playing card set contained the names of emotions along with cartoon faces. Each student received two cards and was asked to read the emotion and give an example. For example, the emotion happy was used in the sentence, I am happy because today is Friday. During this activity, I observed how much young children enjoyed looking at cartoon faces on the emotion cards. Processing questions used to close this session included, What did you learn from the feeling card activity? And How did this activity help you learn about emotions? At the conclusion of session one, students were given 10 minutes to complete the journal entry (see Appendix B).

Session 2: Reading Emotional States of Others

The objective of this session was for students to be able to define empathy and provide examples of using empathy. Empathy develops during preschool years wherein children start

understanding that feel differently and gradually they start relating to others emotions (Saari, 1991; Vygotsky, 1930). Understanding and relating to the emotions of others is a component of emotional intelligence addressed by Salovey and Mayer (1990).

To begin the session, I reviewed the previous session followed by an introduction of the topic empathy (Rieffe, & Camodeca, 2016; Rieffe, Ketelaar, & Wiefferink, 2010). I used two YouTube videos to help children define empathy. The videos were approximately three minutes in length. The video included a definition of empathy in a song from, the song lyric begins with 'empathy it's the ability to understand and share the feelings of another being . . .' (see Appendix E). The next video included pictures with emotion stimulation. Students had to guess the feelings felt by the characters in the pictures. After each picture, the particular emotional response was stated in the video (see Appendix E).

After watching the videos, I asked the students what they learned from the videos. Following the discussion about the videos, I introduced a short story activity to the students. Brackett and Simmons (2015) created a story for teachers to use when studying or discussing empathy. The story involves a middle school student who has a warning label; the story describes a day in the student's life. This story enabled the teachers to recognize and understand the student's feelings. In reference to Brackett and Simmons (2015) I created four two-line stories (see Appendix G). I read them one after the other and asked students to share the emotions felt by the character in the story and how they would empathize with the character.

Then I introduced the second activity. The second activity was taken from the perspective taking lesson plan ("let's face it," 2015). Maxwell and DesRoches (2010) support the use of this activity, stating that photo-lessons are excellent tools to teach empathy to children (kindergarten through fifth grade). I printed a lesson plan called Perspective Taking from the,

"let's face it" (2015) website. I cut and pasted the pictures to index cards and projected the pictures using a classroom projector. I projected one picture after another, and I was asking the students what emotions they saw in the picture and what cues made them arrive at that emotion. There were a variety of pictures, including a child sitting in a corner, a child crying, a child sitting down amongst crowd of people, and a child sitting on a couch with parents pointing at them on the other couch. At the end of the activity, I asked the students what they learned from the activities? I asked them to quote an incident from the past where they had expressed empathy towards another person? After processing questions, the students completed their journal entry (see Appendix B).

Session 3: Cultivating Mindful Self-Awareness

The objective of this session was to teach and provide an opportunity for students to explore different mindfulness activities. At the beginning of this session, I reviewed the previous session and then introduced the topic of mindfulness. I modified the definition of mindfulness and explained mindfulness in three parts: being present, thinking about now, being focused on one thing, and free from distractions. I stated that if they get distracted, they can bring themselves back to the present moment.

I used three YouTube videos to help students understand mindfulness and being present (see Appendix E). Each video was approximately three minutes long. The videos described the meaning of mindfulness and the value of being present. The first video explained the meaning of being present stating being present includes listening carefully what others are saying, feeling, being nice to your friends, and focusing on your work and not thinking about recess. The second video was a book, with the title of 'mindful monkey and happy panda' by Lauren Alderfer. A brief summary of the story involves the monkey asking the panda how he is so happy all the

time, and the panda's response was I focus on one thing at a time and it keeps me happy. The next video was a story 'I am peace' by Susan Verde. This book illustrated how to pause and take a breath if you have several thoughts and feelings. After playing the three videos, I asked the students, what they learned from the videos? I asked them to explain if they have noticed themselves being distracted during a class or doing homework, and If they have stayed very focused doing something?

The next part of the class included several activities. The activities included blowing bubbles, coloring mandalas, using watercolors, and cloud watching (Coholic, Eys, & Lougheed, 2012; Niemiec, Rashid, & Spinella, 2012). Costello and Lawler (2014) conducted an exploratory study among primary school children and incorporated these mindfulness activities into the curriculum to help students address stress and emotion regulation. The researchers provided the teachers with extra activity materials such as bubbles, pebbles, and balloons, which the students could access and use when needed. Participants of this study stated they used bubbles to regulate their emotions and level of stress. In a similar activity, Coholic et al. (2012) implemented a Holistic Art-Based Mindfulness program to help children aged eight to 16 years improve their ability to re-focus.

The students spent five minutes on each activity, I instructed the activities one after the other. The instructions for the activities were similar, I asked the students to focus on the activity they are doing and be involved in the activity. I also told them, if they get distracted, they have to bring themselves back to focus on the activity.

After each mindfulness activity, I processed the learning experience with a few questions, such as their experiences of being focused on an activity and what helped them to refocus, or if there were any distractions? Moreover, I asked them how they would use the learned skills to

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regulate emotions in the future. I encouraged students to provide examples on how they would use the activity in the future. At the end of the session, the students completed their journal entry (see Appendix B).

Session 4: Practicing Mindful Self-Regulation Skills

The objective of this session was to teach the concepts and importance of emotion regulation. Participants were taught about the effects of poor emotion regulation in response to negative feelings toward self and others (Ciucci et al., 2016). Salovey and Mayer (1990) have addressed the importance and usefulness of emotion regulation skills. Kabat-Zinn (2003) introduced and emphasized on how practicing mindfulness skills can help individuals be emotionally self-regulated.

At the beginning of session four, I reviewed the previous sessions and then introduced the topic of emotion regulation. I defined emotion regulation, the intensity of emotions (low, moderate, high), and discussed emotion regulation skills like breathing, watching clouds, reading books, and listening to music (Ciucci et al., 2016). The definition of emotion regulation I provided was, individuals face different types of emotions and sometimes the emotion they experience becomes uncontrollable and starts interfering with their life. In such cases, individuals need to handle and manage their emotions. I additionally, explained how they can use the skills presented and discussed in the previous sessions as well as the skills they will be learning in this session to manage their emotions.

I used one YouTube video to help students understand the effects of a lack of emotion regulation skills and its importance. The video was approximately three minutes long. Mr. Box, the main character, who was experiencing more than one emotion. The consequence of having more than one emotion is illustrated in the video. Moreover, the video also suggests some

emotion regulation skills. After the video, I asked the students what they learned and if they experienced more than one emotion at the same time in the past. I also asked the students what strategies they have used in the past to regulate their emotions.

I re-introduced the concept of mindfulness as a strategy for effective emotion regulation. I then connected the previous session's mindfulness activities and explained the use and benefits of mindfulness in emotional regulation. I used examples, supported by the literature such as if you are mad at something you might draw your attention towards mindfulness activities (Ciucci, et al., 2016; Semple et al., 010). Additionally, in this session, students created an emotion speedometer or thermometer to process the intensity of an experienced emotion. There are several versions of an emotion thermometer-or-speedometer used by school counselors to teach emotion regulation. I handed out popsicle sticks and card stock paper for students to create their own emotion thermometer and speedometer. I observed, that the students enjoyed this arts and crafts activity. After that, I asked students to give examples of using these tools and asked how the emotion thermometer and speedometer helped them understand the concept of emotion regulation.

In the next part of this session, I divided the students into four groups, two groups did a rice and beans activity, while the other two groups were doing the spot the difference activity (see Appendix I). Students were given cups and instructed to separate the beans or the rice into their cup from a mixed bowel. After five minutes, I instructed students to switch tables so they could experience both activities. The students were given five minutes in each station. After each mindfulness activity, I asked questions about their learning experience to process the activity, such as how the activity was and what was their experience. I noticed that children enjoyed the

activity and were very involved, as they asked for extra time to continue the activity. At the conclusion of the session, students completed the journal entry (see Appendix B).

Session 5: Human Physiology and Emotional Regulation

The objective of this session was to teach students emotional physiology and how we can use physiological impulses to regulate our emotions. Emotion theorists had stated there is a relationship between body, cognition, and emotional process. Individuals can experience emotions in their vascular system and use body scanning and moments to regulate their emotions (Damasio, 1994; Füstös et al., 201; James, 1884; Kabat-Zinn, 1990). Based on the above listed theories, I selected the content and activities used in this session.

I reviewed the content of Sessions Four and introduced a mindfulness walking activity (Khan, 2015). The students were involved in a mindfulness walking activity for five minutes. Mindfulness walking is an activity wherein individuals focus on walking while connecting with the natural environment without making any judgments (Khan, 2015).

I was unable to take the students outside for the mindful walking exercise as it was raining, and the outside was wet. I observed a few students getting distracted during the activity because of the limited space. After the activity, the students shared how it was to focus on walking and how they re-focused if they had experienced distractions. The students also shared how they can use mindful walking during recess, if they stressed or worried.

Then I introduced the physiology of emotion and how the body is related to emotion regulation. I explained the concept and interaction of physiology of body and emotion, which includes the brain, limbic system, endocrine system, and nervous system (Etkin, Büchel, Gross, & Büchel, 2015). To help the students understand the physiology of emotion, I used the emotion mapping worksheet developed by Zandt and Barrett (2017). Emotion mapping is a tool designed

to help children and adolescents understand the relationship between emotion and body. I asked the students about some of the emotions faced by fifth graders. They listed a few emotions, such as happy, depression, mad, sad, irritated, sleepy, anxiety, and stress. From this list, the students selected five emotions to map. After the activity, the students processed how important it is to know how we feel and where we feel the emotion.

Next, the participants spent 15 minutes practicing a brief Progressive Muscle Relation (PMR) technique. I used a YouTube video and link is referenced in appendix E, that was seven minutes long. The YouTube video guided the students to tense and relax their muscles from their face to their feet. PMR consists of the sequential tensing and relaxation of muscles, which may lead the individual to relax the mind and body (Lehrer, 2012). Young (2017) stated that breathing exercises and progressive muscle relation techniques are effective in regulating anxiety, depression, and other secondary emotions. In this session, the students were given an emotion chart (see Appendix F) homework, and I explained how to complete the assignment. The purpose of the emotion chart is to help students log their emotions, the skill they used to address the emotion, and if they understood another person's emotion. In the end of the session, participants were asked to complete a journal entry (see Appendix B).

Session 6: Group Discussion and Role Playing

The objective of this session was to review and process the daily emotion chart and strengthen the skills that were learned by students. The session began with a mindful breathing exercise. Breathing with a greater level of focus and intentionally phasing the inhaling and exhaling process is called as mindful breathing (Metz et al., 2013).

The breathing was guided by a five-minute YouTube video with the children focusing on a geometric image. The geometric image guided the students to inhale and exhale slowly (see

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Appendix E). Several researchers have implemented mindful breathing exercises as a strategy for

emotion regulation among children and adolescents (Kabat-Zinn, 2011; Sibinga et al., 2016).

Then I reviewed the content of previous sessions and the homework with the students. I

processed their experience of maintaining an emotion chart and making a note of their emotions

and the skills used to regulate emotions. Four students completed the homework. I reviewed their

emotion chart briefly with the entire class.

Next, I randomly divided the students into groups and gave them a role play script to

reiew (see Appendix F). Role-playing is a technique used in clinical and group counseling

settings often with children and adolescents (Hartley, Frank, & Goldenson, 2013). I gave the

students 15 minutes to plan and prepare for a role play. Groups of students enacted the case study

script. While one group was presenting the other students were observing. I asked the students to

identify the emotions felt by the main character and how each character managed their emotions

using a mindfulness activity in the enacted play. I observed, how children enjoyed the role-

playing experience. After the activity, I lead a discussion based on the role-play activity. Process

questions included How was the activity? What was interesting about the activity? And What did

you learn from the activity? what the learned from the emotion mindfulness intervention? At the

conclusion of this session, the students completed their journal entry (see Appendix B).

Data Collection

I used the descriptive phenomenological approach, as my goal was to explore the

experiences of the fifth-grade students participating in the Emotional Mindfulness Intervention.

Creswell (2018) stated that in qualitative inquiry, the researcher collects data in naturalistic

settings in multiple forms, including journals, interviews, drawings, focus groups, photo-voice,

and observation notes. I used multiple sources of data, including individual interviews, journals,

and focus group interviews to gain an understanding of the participants' experiences. Additionally, I used a demographic questionnaire to obtain a description of my participants.

Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic information was collected from each participant at the beginning of the first session in a questionnaire format. The demographic questionnaire included a preferred nickname, age, gender, and ethnicity (see Appendix A).

Student Journals

Journals are one way to obtain concrete and comprehensive information from the participants about their experiences in a descriptive phenomenology method (Giorgi, 2009). After each session, students were given 10 minutes to complete a journal entry about a specific prompt related to that session's content (see Appendix B). The journal was used as a tool to collect qualitative data. In total, the students responded to six journal prompts. I created a folder for each student in the first session. Students were instructed to create a pseudonym, which they used throughout the study to enhance confidentiality. After each journal entry, I took the folders with me and put them in a locked cabinet at my apartment. I brought back the journals to the students each session. After the last session, I typed the journal entries in my personal password-protected laptop. After transferring participants' journal entries to my personal laptop, I shredded the journals, as the students did not want to take them home with them. This helped with minimizing the threat of data loss and confidentiality.

Individual Interviews

I interviewed the participants using a semi-structured question format with follow-up questions (see Appendix C). Semi-structured interviews are used to collect qualitative research and allow the researcher to ask follow-up questions from the study participants (Patton, 2014).

Each interview lasted approximately 10 minutes. I scheduled the interviews after the last group session; the date and time of the interview were established with the classroom teacher and the school principal. I audiotaped the interviews and then transcribed them. I used a digital voice recorder to record the individual interviews and focus group. I transcribed the data and saved the document in my personal password protected data. The paper copies of all the data were shredded after the data analysis, and the soft copy will be kept in an encrypted flash drive for three years after graduation.

Focus Group Interviews

The purpose of conducting a focus group is to check the scientific rigor of the data. According to Giorgi (2009), focus group questions are formulated after the initial analysis of other data sources (journal and individual interview), which aids the purpose of *critical other*. In this study, once individual interviews were completed, I transcribed each interview. I did an initial data analysis based on Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method with the data collected from the individual interviews and journals to develop questions for the focus group (see Appendix D). I met with my committee member to review the questions based on the initial analysis before conducting the focus group. The focus group interview lasted approximately 50 minutes. The focus group discussions were audio recorded and transcribed. I transcribed the data and saved the document in my personal password-protected data. The paper copies of all the data were shredded after the data analysis, and the soft copy will be kept in an encrypted flash drive for three years after graduation.

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Data Analysis

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Giorgi's method of data analysis is based on Husserl's phenomenological principles and attitude. It requires the researcher to utilize two kinds of epochēs (or bracketing). First, the

bracketing procedure requires the researcher to stop integrating previously obtained scientific knowledge, concepts, results, or hypothesis about the studied subject matter. The second bracketing procedure requires the researcher to analyze the data in a naive way by assuming the existence of the participants' experiences without noticing the conscious experiential processes (Giorgi, 2009; Wertz et al., 2011).

I used Giorgi's phenomenological data analysis in this study. First, I conducted individual interviews and transcribed them. I typed the participant's journal entry in a word document, which helped me to "get a sense of the whole" as stated by Giorgi (2009, p.128). The process of transcribing the data was a new experience, as this is my first qualitative study. Transcribing the individual interview and typing the student journals took approximately one week. While transcribing, I was knowledgeable and aware of my research question, which kept me actively involved during the transcription process. I had taken some time off after transcription before starting to analysis the research data. I maintained a reflective journal while facilitating the sessions where I noted my observations and reflections. Moreover, throughout the process of the data collection, transcribing, and analysis stage of the research study, I had maintained a reflective journal. This reflective journal had helped me to assume the phenomenon of psychological reduction, two types of bracketing. First, it helped me see the data as original and not to compare it with the existing literature. Next, it helped me process the experiences of participants, validating their past experiences and directing my focus on their present experiences of participating in the emotion mindfulness intervention.

During this stage, I met with my committee member who is an expert in qualitative methods to discuss the process of data analysis. As a result, I was able to read and make notes from the data, thereby understanding the sense of the data as a whole and its parts. I proceeded to

navigate my beliefs and biases by emphasizing the importance of the participants' voices in this study. This helped me further understand psychological reduction and bracketing. After that, I started to read and re-read the transcripts (student journals and individual interviews) numerous times to gain familiarity with the responses of participants. I printed the transcribed data, making it possible for me to make notes in the margins, resulting in a clearer picture of the data and data sources, the participants' experiences (Giorgi, 2009). I stepped away from my study intentionally in order to refocus and gain a fresh look at the data.

The second stage of data analysis involved the process of selecting meaningful units, which involved reading and re-reading the data (journal and individual interviews) and breaking the data into parts and understanding the meaning of each part. During this stage, a descriptive phenomenologist seeks to determine the meaning of the data. Establishing these meaning units is not based on the intelligence of the researcher. It is based on the experiential, psychological perspective of the researcher (Giorgi, 2009). These "meaning units" are separate units, which together form the whole meaning of the experiences of participants (Giorgi, 2009, p 129). During this phase of the data analysis, the researcher has to read the data by assuming phenomenological scientific reduction and with a sense of openness.

During the second stage of data analysis, I made notes of meaning units of data derived from student journals and interviews. Simultaneously, I was underlining the meaning units within the data and making notes. Giorgi (2009) stated there are no objective meaning units when analyzed by themselves. The extent of the meaning units surfaces once transformed and reintegrated by the researcher into the phenomenon being studied. Wertz (1983) suggested this helps the researcher pay attention to the participants' experiences, specifically, to what is being said and repeated. I placed meaning units into categories using a note pad.

The third stage is considered the heart of the descriptive method according to Giorgi (2009). During this stage, I revisited earlier outcomes of the data analysis. The purpose was to interrogate each meaning unit individually and explore how to express the derived meaning units most suitable to the experience phenomenon. During this process, I revisited the data, meaning units, and the psychological meaning again. This step is considered time-consuming in nature (Giorgi, 2009). The goal is to transform each participant's natural expression of the phenomenon sensitively. In this stage, the researcher processes the phenomenological procedure of free imagination, using his/her imagination to obtain higher-level of categorizing. Wertz (1983) stated there are phenomenological description limitations when the research participants fail to express the depth of their experiences with the subject matter. In this study, I used journal responses and individual interviews to solicit the experiences of fifth-grade students taking part in an emotional mindfulness intervention. In cases where participants have not described their experiences to the fullest, the researcher examined the intrinsic psychological meanings from the descriptions and reported them in the findings. As I explored the expression of the meaning units, I grouped similar meaning units together. Each unit was then copied from the transcripts to a separate word document. I tabulated and clustered similar meaning units under columns assuming psychological reduction. After tabulating the meaning units and the categories, I stepped away from my data, thus allowing me to rearrange the meaning units creating greater clarity. This transformation of the data allows the researcher to integrate the data from all the participants into an organized structure (Giorgi, 2009).

Once I established the meaning units with the respective psychology structure, I revisited my research question to rearrange the meaning units. The steps to reach a general psychological structure of the data are very ambiguous. I had to rearrange the meaning units several times in

this step. I met with my expert committee member to discuss how few meaning units were stand-alone from other categorized meaning units. It was affirmed that that some of your meaning units might not fit within a theme. At the end of step three, I had themes from my preliminary data analysis of how participants described their experiences. With this information, in step four, I developed semi-structured interview questions for the focus group.

After gathering data from the focus group, I began transcribing participant responses. I was overwhelmed with the process of qualitative methodology and its ambiguity, as the result of transcribing the focus group data. At this stage of my data analysis, I had to refocus, reflect, and accept the nature of qualitative methodology. After contacting my committee members and processing the structure of descriptive phenomenological inquiry, I started to read the focus group data to see if the students had shared any new information that was not available in their journal and interview responses. The students had not expressed new information during the focus group. After an initial reading, I reread for a second time, and made notes of meaning units and its psychological structure. I added the meaning units that were derived from the focus group to a table, which I had created. This table helped me to group the experiences of participants and synthesize the data into respective themes. While categorizing the themes, I noted that some were interrelated. For example, participants described how learning to be present at the moment helped them with emotion regulation, and, similarly, how it helped in identifying emotions of self and others. Initially, I had 10 themes at the end of data analysis. Upon further review, themes were combined and renamed, leading me to six themes. Themes are identified and described in Chapter 4.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative researchers express the trustworthiness of the research, as it is similar to validity in quantitative research. Trustworthiness refers to confidence of the data collected by the researcher and interpretation method implemented by the researcher (Pilot & Beck, 2014). To obtain trustworthiness, qualitative researchers can implement several methods, which include triangulation, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Glesne, 2016; Patton, 2014). In this study, I used bracketing and data triangulation approaches to enhance the credibility of the data and findings to establish trustworthiness. Credibility of the study indicates the truth of the reported study findings, specifically the themes and respective quotes (Pilot & Beck, 2014).

In the descriptive phenomenological approach, the researcher ensures rigor through assuming an attitude of phenomenological reduction. The phenomenological reduction is obtained through the use of bracketing (Giorgi, 2009). Giorgi recommends the researcher to follow two types of bracketing. First, the bracketing procedure requires the researcher to stop integrating previously obtained scientific knowledge, concepts, results, or hypothesis on the studied subject matter. This allows the researcher to track his/her own biases, separating their past experiences and knowledge about the phenomenon, which then provides the researcher an opportunity to explore deeper levels of participants' experiences, thus enhancing credibility (Giorgi, 2009). I maintained a reflective journal to track my way of thinking about my data during the sessions and analysis to help me with bracketing past and present knowledge and my biases.

The second bracketing procedure requires the researcher to analyze the data in a naive way by assuming the existence of the participants' experiences without noticing the conscious

experiential processes (Giorgi, Giorgi, & Morley, 2017, p.178). I assumed a non-critical, naïve stance in relation to the data as I read to understand the whole of the experience. This process improves the credibility of the research findings reported by the researcher.

Credibility is referred to as the truth of the data interpretation by the researcher (Polit & Beck, 2012). According to Giorgi (2009), credibility can be established via consulting with a critical other. In this research, focus group questions were formulated after the initial data analysis; participants themselves served as critical others as they considered initial findings and expanded on those findings.

Data triangulation is a method that supports the validity of research findings (Hunt, 2011; Patton, 2015). In the current study, I utilized three data sources: individual interviews, journals, and the focus group. During data analysis, all the data was examined; subsequently, data from each source was examined to determine whether there was disparity in the data across the sources.

I also met with a committee member who is an expert in qualitative research method during the data analysis stages. We met several times during data analysis process. We met to discuss the step-by-step data analysis procedures. We discussed the process of analysis in general as well as the process of considering and reconsidering themes. The process of consulting with a critical other about the process of research also contributes to the trustworthiness of the data analysis procedure.

Summary

A detailed description of the study's research design and methodology was provided in this chapter, including design rationale, my role as a researcher, the personal lens that influenced

my research, data collection, and analysis procedures and how I ensured trustworthiness. The

results and discussion of this study are illustrated in Chapters 4 and 5.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

This chapter consists of themes and the lived experiences of participants who received the 6-week emotional mindfulness intervention. The researcher's session observations and reflections are also included.

Overview of Results

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of fifth-grade students participating in the 6-week emotional mindfulness program. I utilized weekly journal entries, individual interviews, and a focus group to gather data. I analyzed the data according to Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological approach described in Chapter 3. The analysis of the collected data resulted in four themes:

- Identifying and recognizing feelings

- Caring about and for others

- Being present

- Insights about managing self.

Each theme is defined in this section with illustrative quotes from the participants. There were some additional findings, which include personal awareness, favorite activities, and suggestions expressed by the research participants.

Theme 1: Identifying and Recognizing Feelings

This theme refers to the enhanced understanding of the participants about different words, definition of feeling words, and other general learning about emotions described by the students. The general knowledge about emotions illustrated by the participants includes that emotions are temporary, complex, and every day. They explained that there can be multiple

emotions at the same time, and emotions can be experienced physically, through our bodies. Overall, participants described their emerging vocabulary and their understanding that emotions are experiences that are complex, multifaceted, and changing.

The research participants illustrated learning different feeling words and the meanings of the words. Brown detailed his understanding in his journal of how one can experience "multiple different feelings." Bob stated in his journal, "I also learned the ABC emotions. And there are many emotions." Bob is referring to alphabetically listing emotion word when he says, "ABC emotions." During the interview, Kay expressed how she learned different names of the emotions from the emotion alphabet activity saying, "emotion ABC . . . I learned what the specific names were . . . I did not know them before . . . like zestful, xenophobic, anxiety." Avy noted in her journal, "I learned about different emotions such as: xenophobia, zestful, etc. I also learned about seeing what people are feeling by their face expression or their tone. I know a person can be sad, happy, angry, bored etc."

Furthermore, the study participants noted emotions are temporary, every day, and there can be, multiple emotions can be felt at the same time. For example, Becky commented during the focus group "Emotions are daily, not that they all are the same daily." Ariel agreed with Brown during the focus group and said that, "There is a bunch of emotion . . . you can feel many emotions at any time." Kay related to Ariel's comment during the focus group, saying, "I have woken up with different emotion and it is true to other people as not everyone have same emotions." Josh noted on the learning about different emotions that emotions change over time, saying, "I learned that feelings are special to people every letter has a feeling. People have different emotions at different times" in his journal.

Participants commented on how emotions and emotional expressions are connected with one's own body. For example, a student noted in her journal, "there are a lot of different ways to express your emotion …. Physically by how you walk, how your facial expression looks" (Amber). Becky commented during her interview, "emotion affect your body . . . when we did the muscle relaxation, it felt so relaxing . . . I am going to do that activity . . . when I am feeling anxious." Kay illustrated her understanding of "where and how my body reacts to that emotion" in her journal. Ariel noted in her journal that, "your emotions can take over your body, but there is stuff to take care of it." Ariel means there are several mindfulness activities one could do to take of their body when she is saying "stuff to." Few students considered breathing and deep breathing exercises helpful with emotion regulation and reported that in their respective individual interviews. For example, Ben stated, "…if you are mad, take deep breath." Ariel commented similarly, "Breathing in and out . . . calm you down." Also, Becky said, "Breath in and out." During the focus group Ariel commented, "Some people when they are really stressed can kind of move their neck or they pop their knuckles and sometimes it kind of helps them like relieving the muscles inside their body and help them calm down." In the next theme the participants are illustrate interpersonal emotions.

Theme 2: Caring About and For Others

Caring about and for others has to do with participants' recognition of the importance caring about how others feel as well as a variety of ways they can care for others. Additionally, the students illustrated a variety of ways of caring for others such as comforting, helping, and supporting. In discussing caring about others, several students, including Ariel, Becky, and Ben, Ariel, Becky, and Ben, indicated they care about other people's feelings. Caring about was often connected with the understanding and recognition that participants sometimes have the same

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feelings as others. Kay noted in her journal that she could relate to others and sometimes has "the same emotion as some people around me." Kris noted that how people are treated can elicit feelings in them, and wrote "If someone is left out, they probably feel sad or mad. If someone is bullied, they will feel mad and sad" in his journal.

The students illustrated how they would show care towards others. Bob talked about "making someone feel better by relating to them" in the individual interview. Two students stated the golden rule to illustrate empathy in their respective journals: "Treat people like you want to be treated" (Ben and Ariel). Kassy expressed during the individual interview how she can understand her friends and comfort them saying, "I would try to comfort other people . . . my friends I can tell when they are sad . . . mad . . . what is wrong." Avy noted during her individual interview, "we should comfort people when they are feeling low." Kay referenced to the role play activity and described the relationship between advocating and empathy. She noted in her journal how she "can sometimes relate and have same emotions as some people… I also learned that when I can empathize with someone, I should stick up for them." During the focus group, while discussing the concept of caring and empathy, Becky quoted the role play activity and said, "where a girl stuck out for another girl because there was another girl her friend was like making fun of her laughing . . . I mean you have to care for other people you have to try to like kind of think about their feelings like try to stick up for them." I observed that the students were very interactive and commented on each other's perspectives and helped each other completing their though process. Josh added how he remembered, "the video with the little boy . . . you can relate and tell them oh its ok you can do better next time" in the focused group. Ariel stated she "agrees with Josh." In the next theme students demonstrate their understanding and perception of being focused.

Theme 3: Being Present

The theme being present emphasized how the participants understood and process the definition of mindfulness. Students illustrated the general benefits of mindfulness, such as improving focus and decreasing worries. Moreover, the students related mindfulness and emotion stating how being present in the moment guides them to be focus on one emotion at a time.

Becky stated that she "learned that mindfulness is how you feel at the moment." Brown described the value of "thinking about what you are doing at the moment . . . not be thinking of past or future. I learned that you should be thinking of one thing only and that the present" in his journal. Josh noted in his journal saying, "mindfulness means to be right here right now." Kay noted in her journal, "learning on how to be mindful with my emotions." Similarly, Brown stated that he "learned about how I can be mindful of my feelings" in his journal. During the focus group discussion Kris commented, "mindfulness is like what is happening at the moment and how to think about one thing instead of several emotions."

The students listed general benefits of mindfulness. Bob mentioned during the individual interview saying, "Present will keep you calm and less worried." Kay noted in her journal, being present is like "to admire little things instead of thinking of future and past" in her journal. Lena noted in her journal, "I notice that being mindful is very important and respectful; for example, whenever someone is talking to you have to be listening." During the focus group, Becky commented the state of being present with the moment would reduce the level of stress. She said, "whenever you are doing something, you shouldn't be thinking of other things as it will make you more stressed." Ariel noted during the individual interview when she would use mindfulness

activities, saying, "When I get mad or stressed . . . I can kind of do one of mindfulness . . . let it all go." The next theme shows how the students learned to process their emotions.

Theme 4: Applying Learned Skills to Handle Emotions

Applying learned skills to handle emotions refers to participants' recognition of the importance of managing or handling emotions in the present and future and their knowledge of utilizing different learned skills from the intervention. Participants referred to specific skills, including mindful walking, breathing, reading, stretching, and painting and how they will apply them with examples.

Participants' quotes demonstrated that they recognized the importance of managing emotion. Jim and Avy mentioned the importance of learning to control emotion: "I learned to control emotions" (Jim, interview) and "learning to control emotions" (Avy, journal). Bob noted the meaning of emotion regulation in his journal, saying, "Regulation is learning how to control your emotion." During his interview Bob said, "Sometimes when I don't control my emotions, I can hurt other people."

Students stated that they learned activities from the program which will help them manage their emotions in a better way. Avy noted in her journal that she "would handle it by reading a book or playing games." Kris noted during the interview, "If I ever get mad at someone . . . I know what to do or not to do. I can control my emotions in a better way . . . I can count to ten. I can read. I can color. I can draw. I can blow bubbles. I can watch clouds and take a nap." Another student illustrated in her journal how fun activities can help in changing negative emotions, saying, "I could change my feelings by doing something I enjoy or having fun with people I love" (Kay). Ariel illustrated an example during her interview explaining how and when she will use mindfulness, "when I get mad or may be stressed over too much work . . . I can kind

of do one of the mindfulness." Josh stated during his interview that, "you can actually use those skills like later in life . . . mindful walking because in I know maybe in middle school it will get harder . . . I get really stressed on a test . . . I can just walk to the restroom and come back." Lena stated in her interview how before "preparing for a big test, I would probably like to do some mindful breathing."

Ben explained during the focus group how he, "learned . . . too much feelings you might explode and hurt someone . . . tell them something rude or physically hurt them." I had asked the students in focus group about the Mr. Box video and Amber initiated the conversation describing the story, "we watched a video about Mr.Box and he had too many emotions floating inside him, he was angry because someone stole his crayon he is sad because he did not sit by someone at lunch . . . a lot of emotions floating inside of him . . . he exploded". Kay interrupted saying, "like the Mr. Box like most of the people" and illustrated how "when we are little kids . . . things had happened to us, but we did not like explode but we would cry and get mad like or something. Kris added, "sometimes you can like control one emotion but when you have more emotion you can't control all at the same time so you have to do like mindful walking or painting or blowing bubbles to get your mind of the things and will help you".
Ariel added, "Now . . . we know we have something to do calm us down" in focus group.

The responses and expressions students shared in the focused group are more elaborative because responses by one student encouraged other students to add and illustrate as a group. Moreover, the nonverbals of the group portrayed that they agreed with each other.

Students articulated their understanding on using of muscle relaxation activity for emotion regulation. Bob was fascinated by the idea "control emotions by stretching the muscles" and noted in his journal. Lena noted in her journal muscle relaxing to be "very relaxing." Josh

described his experience with muscle relaxation activity in his journal, saying "stretching your muscle can relax you … calms you down and wakes you up." Similarly, Kris responded during the focus group, "muscle relaxation helped to calm down and feel more awake." Few students mentioned how progressive muscle relaxation activity being helpful with stress and anxiety symptoms in their individual interview and focus group, like "muscle relaxation is kind of helpful for stress and anxiety" (Ariel), "helping you relax when you're stressed" (Kay), and "when you are stressed out you get really tense the stretching will help" (Brown). Avy indicated that in future she might be using "breathing exercise the most" in the individual interview.

Additional Findings

Personal Awareness

Personal awareness of feelings and emotions reflects participants' self-knowledge and insight into their own emotions and emotional responses to events, experiences, and persons. Brown said, "I guess I have anger issues sort off" during individual interview. Similarly, Lena, Kassy, and Avy noticed how they experience one emotion more than other emotions in their day to day life. Lena stated during her individual interview, "I worry a lot." Kassy noted in her journal saying, "I can get really sad easily and want to cry for no reason and out of nowhere." Similarly, Avy had mentioned during her individual interview, saying, "I have negative feelings." Kay noted how she is aware of her reactions to emotions in her individual interview, saying, "I learned how how I react to the emotion." Likewise, Kris said, "I learned more about myself and learning about other people . . . my feelings can change . . . I control my emotions in different ways" in his individual interview. While discussing with the participants regarding personal aware a student expressed how they understand and process their own emotions. For

instance, Ben stated, "I understand more about myself now that I know that emotions that I can feel and capable of feeling."

Favorite Activities

The participants indicated their favorite activities and stated why they liked these activities. Lena noted during her individual interview that she liked "the separating the beans and rice, smooth and relaxing." A student mentioned during her individual interview how she liked painting, saying, "I like the painting because it satisfying to me" (Amber). Ariel also mentioned during her interview that she liked watercolor, saying, "made me really focused on the colors . . . trying to stay inside the lines . . . helped me really focus on one thing." Josh stated how "painting just calmed me down … lowered my stress … I also noticed that watching clouds can relax you" in his interview. Kassy noted how she felt while mindful walking saying, "It is kind of relaxing . . . walk peacefully and just focus on that" in the interview. Ben noted during his individual interview how he liked the role-play activity, "we each had a character and we had to say like what their emotions." Amber stated how she liked the emotion cards activity in the focus group saying, "I liked the cards because it was kind of fun and mixed with learning." Kay noted during the focus group, saying she liked, "the painting because it was like relaxing." Amber stated, "I agree with Kay umm with painting because it was very relaxing for me and when I do it calms me down from whatever I am either stressed or frustrated or mad about, so it is very relaxing and soothing for me." Moreover, few students did mention about their fondness towards role play activity during the focus group.

Suggestions

The participants provided some suggestions to modify the intervention in the future. The suggestions include more time, more activities, no homework, more journal time, more learning

lessons on empathy, and more role-play activities. Kris recommended that "maybe we could have went outside …. mindful walking" in his interview. Amber mentioned about extending the activity time to be more than 5 minutes, and her recommendation was, "I would have had 15 minutes for each because it was fun to do" in her interview. Ariel commented on, saying, "more journal time usually when I write I felt being rushed" during the focus group. Additionally, Amber noted how she liked "talking about empathy so we can talk more about empathy" during the focus group session.

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Researcher Observation and Reflection

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While facilitating the 6-week sessions, I maintained a reflective journal and noted the overall observation of the students as a group attending the emotional mindfulness intervention for each session. In the session, I noted how the students processed the information from the lesson content and the activity while responding to the process questions. I have illustrated the session-by-session observation and reflection in the following section.

Session 1

Researcher's Observation

The students were dedicated to learning the content of the session. As the session started, they started discussing what emotion is and started to give examples. A few students said emotion is an expression, emotions are different, and emotions change. A few students named different of emotions at the beginning of the session: happy, angry, sad, depressed, worry, etc., while we were doing the first activity where students where listing the emotions alphabetically. I observed that students got involved and shared more than one emotion per alphabet, for example, A-Anxiety, Anger; B-Boring, Bad; C-Care, Cautious, Calm; and so on (Theme, learning about feelings). Students had difficulties in listing emotion words for the letters like M, N, O, Q, R, U,

V, W, X, Y, and Z. The students were intrigued when I helped them with few emotion words for the letters and interested in learning the meaning. Students gave examples based on their cards in the emotion card activity. The students participated in the activity process question by sharing experiences and learning from the activities. They said they learned about different names of emotions and their meaning.

Researcher's Reflection

I was feeling performance anxiety. Even though I had worked with these students and knew them as their former school counselor, returning after a semester break to their classroom for my dissertation had an impact on my anxiety. I was mindful of my thoughts and feelings at that moment. I had accepted the anxious feeling and started the session. After the first activity, some students left the classroom for a spelling bee and the class got a little distracted. As I lost some time in redirecting the class, I was worried about ending the session in a timely manner. I felt a little pressure. Quickly, I processed my thoughts to be flexible and moved to the second activity. At the end of the first session, I spoke to the classroom teacher and conducted the session again to the students who missed the part of Session 1 before Session 2.

Session 2

Researcher's Observation

In this session, students watched the videos on empathy. Students shared that they learned about the importance of caring for others, complimenting others, and checking on their family and friends (Theme, caring about and for others). Students comprehended the concept of empathy by sharing examples. A student stated, "Ask your friend if something is bothering them if they are quiet." Another student stated, "when your friend gets a bad grade, tell them they will

do better next time." After the activities, "Few students specifically illustrated examples with bullying, "if someone is being bullied, you need to stand up against the bully."

Researcher's Reflection

I started this session a little different based on experience from session 1; I went to the classroom 15 minutes before my session time. This helped me process with the time and performance anxiety I had experienced in my first session. I enjoyed the session and became very comfortable with the time limitation.

Session 3

Researcher's Observation

The students appeared to be excited and thrilled as they saw me carry bubbles and colors. The students concentrated on the instructions for each activity. I had to repeat a few simple instructions in between the activity; this helped the students to remember to be present with the activity. After each activity, I asked the students how the experience was, and if they had been distracted, how did they refocus? The student's responses were being calm, relaxed, and sleepy, etc. They also mentioned how they refocused for the activity, "changing the color, blowing the bubbles slowly, and closed the eyes to focus better (Theme, Being present)."

Researcher's Reflection

 In this session, I was worried about the activities and how to conduct the session with less chaos. I decided to be calm, relaxed, and accepting of my feeling and thoughts. Accepting the feelings and thoughts helped me to conduct the session in an effective way. In the end, I realized the change in the classroom environment among the students. The students were very calm, connected, and collected. I felt calm and relaxed, as well.

Session 4

Researcher's Observation

The students participated in the discussion of emotion regulation and associated it to empathy. I asked them how this connects to the other concepts we have learned, and another student expressed the term empathy. A student said it is important to manage one's own emotions, "if we don't, then we might hurt another people's feelings." The students also shared some creative mindfulness activity ideas, for example, reading, eating, arranging books, and colors. For example, a student shared if she gets mad with her siblings, she will read a book (Theme, applying skills to handle emotions).

Researcher's Reflection

I enjoyed this session. The students made this session interesting by sharing and building their understanding. I was glad and interested to witness the way students were making these connections. I am very grateful and enjoying doing what I am doing.

Session 5

Researcher's Observation

In this session, the students did a mindfulness walking activity for five minutes. The students were given very simple instructions: to focus on walking and to be present with walking. I observed that students enjoyed mindfulness walking. After the activity, I asked the student to share their experience. The students shared that they enjoyed mindfulness walking and how they will use this activity during recess. The students mentioned that they learned body parts are connected to the emotion they feel from the emotion mapping activity (Theme, learning about feelings). The students were involved and focused during the Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) section. Students felt calm and relaxed after stretching their muscles.

Researcher's Reflection

As the session started, I learned that the title of the session was difficult for students to understand. At the end of the session, students shared that they felt relaxed and fresh. I noticed the same feeling in the classroom environment.

Session 6

Researcher's Observation

I observed that the students concentrated on the breathing exercise. The students shared the breathing triangle helped and guided them to stay focused on the breathing. In this session, I reviewed the homework, an emotion chart. Only a few students completed the homework. I reviewed and discussed the completed homework sheet with all the students. A student had used reading and mindful walking to manage his/her emotions. Another student used to breathe to manage his/her emotion. The students who completed their homework mentioned anger and sadness were difficult emotions to manage. After reviewing the homework, I gave the students the role-play script, and the student groups were given 10-15 minutes to practice. Group 1 was very creative, changed the name of the character, and performed a skit titled Joshua (See Appendix F). The groups acted the play and other students processed the information about the emotion expressed and the activity used to manage emotion by the character. The students were very excited and engaged in the role-play activity.

Researcher's Reflection

This being the last of all the six-sessions, I was happy, excited, and sad at the same time. I enjoyed observing the students perform the role-play and being creative with the character and story. I enjoyed conducting all six sessions. This was a great learning experience.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented the themes that emerged from participant voices via a descriptive phenomenological approach. The participants shared their feelings and experiences about the activities. Student narratives illustrated a declarative knowledge of emotion words and the dynamics and diversity of emotional experiences. The students also demonstrated a willingness to explore and learn more about their feelings and the potential of how they might impact others. Moreover, students reflected an appreciation of the program activities and insights into how efforts to monitor and control emotions could be useful to cope with difficult emotions in the future. Students expressed being present at the moment will help them from not being worried or stressed. Students explored and deepened their understanding of how emotions are felt in the body in the context of emotion mapping activity.

In addition to monitoring student voices (session-by-session observations, journal prompts, individual and focus group interviews), I asked students to provide suggestions and feedback regarding their experience of participating in the Emotional Mindfulness Intervention. Student responses supported my interpretation of participant perspectives and will perhaps be useful to future researchers interested in programming future guidance-based interventions Finally, I also included my session-by-session direct observations and reflections as a participant observer (leader) as data and additional interpretative context for interpretation of participant voices.

Collectively, these results provide a portrait of the student-expressed lived experiences in this guidance program designed to support elementary student knowledge regarding emotions and emotional regulation. The next chapter provides a discussion of how these findings connect with broader themes evident in the extant literature on emotion knowledge, emotion regulation,

and previous results of school-based interventions that address Socioemotional Learning (SEL) for elementary aged children.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

This chapter includes an overview of the results and describes the significance and relationship (congruence and incongruence) of current findings with the existing research literature, especially in relation to themes observed in existing school-based intervention studies based on emotional intelligence, social emotional learning, and mindfulness among children and adolescents. This chapter also includes the limitations and implications of the study and recommendations for future researchers.

Overview of Results with the Existing Literature

The results of this study reflect children's active participation and exploration of the emotional landscape. Student voices were elicited to detail each student's lived experience in the context of guidance activities, interviews, and group discussion (focus group). After analyzing the data using Giorgi's (2009) approach, four themes were observed: (1) identifying and recognizing feelings, (2) caring about and for others, (3) being present, and (4) applying learned skills to handle emotions. Qualitative and quantitative studies on emotional mindfulness intervention programs are limited among children and adolescent populations. Therefore, the lived experiences and themes expressed by the children in this study are compared and contrasted with the results of intervention programs based on social emotional learning and mindfulness among children and adolescent populations.

Identifying and Recognizing Feelings

The learning and recognizing feelings theme included the way children talked about learning different emotion words and meaning. The children added that they learned how emotions can change and how an individual is capable of feeling several emotions at the same

time. Additionally, the students stated emotions can be observed and felt by certain parts of the body.

The results are similar to the findings of the quantitative study conducted by Santiago-Poventud et al. (2015), who found that the young children in the treatment group receiving the Social-Emotional Learning Foundations (SELF) intervention established significantly higher knowledge of emotion vocabulary words than children in the control group setting, as indicated by the SELF Vocabulary Measure (SVM). The children who received SELF lessons had more knowledge to define the emotion words they were taught and use them by providing examples. Although Poventud's (2015) study involved preschool age children, the results from this study utilizing fifth-grade adolescents are supported by Poventud's findings. In both studies, participants stated that they learned to identify and define different emotions and discovered new emotion words for the first time irrespective of the age difference.

Correspondingly, Bazhydai et al. (2018) reported adolescents tend to have a broader and more complex emotion vocabulary than younger adolescents (fifth-grade students). The researchers additionally stated in their findings that young adolescents are more likely to quote nonemotion labels (e.g., crazy, hungry, sleepy) as an expression of feeling. The results of Bezhydai and colleagues (2018) match my observation during the session, while the participants in this study were giving examples, nonemotion words, such as *I am feeling hungry*, were observed.

Additionally, the fifth-grade students noted a general understanding of how one can recognize emotion via facial expression and body language. Salovey and Mayer (1990) stated the first skill an individual acquires is recognizing emotion through facial expressions, vocal tones, and body language. Brechet (2017) conducted a study to investigate which method helped

children to recognize emotional facial expression via drawings or photographs. The results of the study indicated that there was no significant difference between the two materials and, interestingly, the researcher noted that there was a significant effect of age difference in perceiving emotion facial cues. Children who were seven years of age performed better than five-year old children as they recognize more facial expressions like sad, anger, and fear. Although the Brechet (2017) studied five- and seven-year-old children, the results support this theme wherein the fifth-grade (average age 11 years) students stated they are aware of reading emotion cues from facial expression, voice, and body language.

In another study, Leigh (2017) explored the experiences of children attending to somatic moment education. The study participants were 22 children, ranging in age from four to 11 years. The study participants expressed their emotions via physical moment and discussed their understanding of emotions and emotional expressions. Leigh (2017) noted in the results how some students could notice facial expressions and other students had some trouble in perceiving and understanding facial emotional cues. This might be because the age rage used by Leigh (2017) is wide, a four-year-old might not be perceiving responding similar to a 11-year-old child. In this current study, the average age of the fifth-grade student is 11 and they expressed emotions are expressed via facial expressions and body language.

In the current study participants stated that they learned emotions can change every day and an individual can feel several emotions at the same time. The general understanding of the nature of emotions is a unique finding reported by the fifth-grade students. The second theme indicated an interpersonal aspect of emotion.

Caring About and For Others

The current study participants emphasized an awareness of caring about others by acknowledging, understanding, and relating. Additionally, the students stated a variety of ways they would show care for others: comforting, helping, relating, and supporting.

The study results support the findings of the research study conducted by Joronen et al. (2011) which used a drama program to enhance empathy, social competency, and students' interactions with parents and teachers. The researchers noted that students experienced thoughts and feelings of empathy and expressed the importance of friendship. From my experiences of working with this group of children, I have observed and encountered how these children care and support each other in difficult school situations like grades and friendship conflicts. Additionally, the students in the current study noted how they will relate to others and express empathy.

In the current study, the emotional mindfulness intervention included the concept of teaching the study participants about the relationship between the body and mind to identify and label felt emotion and to regulate emotions. Children noted how they care about their friends by reminding them about the activities. Similarly, results from a recent qualitative study indicated how a sample of youth participants reported that the Mindfulness-based yoga program enhanced their skills in identifying emotional states of one's own self and others. Students reported the program promoted positive social interactions as the students learned how to respond and interact while others are experiencing negative emotions (Dariotis et al., 2015).

Furthermore, Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015) developed the MindUP program and conducted a research study among fourth- and fifth-grade students. The results of this study indicated that children who received the MindUP program reported they improved cognitive

control, empathy, perspective-taking, emotional control, optimism, school self-concept, and mindfulness. The students reported a decrease in symptoms of depression and peer-related aggression. In the current study the participants have noted the importance of empathy and prosocial skills, stating learning about empathy may help them make new friends in middle school. The participants also stated supporting their friends is a way of expressing empathy.

Overall, the results of the current study are similar to the following previous studies, the results indicated that the eight-week short SEL based intervention had a positive impact on the social and emotional skills of children (Wigelsworth et al., 2010). Furthermore, Brackett et al. (2012) illustrated how feeling words could be used to increase academic performance and social competency among fifth- and sixth-grade students. Cheang et al. (2019) conducted a systemic review and stated Mindfulness Based Interventions may be effective in increasing empathy and compassion in children and adolescents. These are similar to the current study in which the participants commented on attending to the emotional cues expressed by others and offer help, support, or comfort. Moreover, the participants noted learning feeling words and mindfulness activities facilitated their empathetic skills and understandings. The next theme describes the awareness and application of present focus with emotion and emotion regulation.

Being Present

In the current study, children noted how they recognized the importance of paying attention to the present moment helps them in being calm, worrying less, and feeling stress free. They also stated how they had learned to pay attention to small details from mindfulness activities. Burke (2010) conducted a meta-analysis study on the current literature of mindfulness-based approaches with children and adolescents, clinical and non-clinical populations. The researchers reported that the mindfulness meditation practices are practical among the population

to produce significant outcomes. The outcome variables could be social skills, compassion, and emotion regulation. Mendelson et al. (2010) conducted a quantitative study among fourth- and fifth-grade students and found a mindfulness-based approach indicated a positive impact on stress. The results reported by Burke (2010) and Mendelson et al. (2010) are similar to the current study as children stated being present in the moment helps them navigate worry and stress.

Correspondingly, the results of the existing study are congruent with the results reported by Metz et al. (2013). They reported in the findings that high school students learned to live in the present moment and to concentrate on emotion from the Learning to BREATHE program. While the age group of the current study differs from the Metz and colleagues (2013) study, the results indicate similarity. As the participants stated, after going through the emotional mindfulness intervention, they have developed the understanding of being in the moment and not thinking about past or future.

Furthermore, the results of the current study support a recent qualitative study by Dariotis et al. (2016), who stated that their study participants (fifth and sixth grade) reported experiencing feeling calm, more awake, a less in impulse behavior, decreased anger, and greater self-regulated while using mindfulness breathing skills. The researchers noted the various terminology used by the participants referencing the learned breathing strategies, for instance, "easy breathing, the tongue breathing, deep breathing, Breath of Fire, Ocean Breath, and the Cooling Breath" (p. 80). The experiences noted by the students from Dariotis et al. (2016) resemble the experiences of the current study participants.

The current study results are congruent with a qualitative research study conducted by Hutchinson et al. (2018). Hutchinson et al. (2018) delivered the Paws b program to students

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and found four themes, the themes are kind of similar to the present study. The population

targeted by Hutchison et al. (2018) is similar to the population of current study as well. The

study participants of Hutchison et al. (2018) quotes were similar to some comments made by

fifth-grade students in the current study in response to the definition of mindfulness and the

results of being present in the moment. A few examples from Hutchison et al. (2018) study

include, "doesn't make you focus on the future, you focus on the now", "When you do

mindfulness you're in your own bubble and it's sort of, you are not worried about things around

you" (p.3941), and "Mindfulness helps me most when I feel like I can't keep on top of

everything that's happening because there is too much going on in my head. I use mindfulness to

empty my brain of my worries" (p.3943). In the next theme discusses the awareness about

managing emotions.

Applying Learned Skills to Handle Emotions

The participants reported they recognized the importance of managing or handling

emotions in the present and future, and using the skills learned from the emotional mindfulness

intervention. Similar results were found by Harpin et al. (2016) in a quantitative study with one

qualitative question in which the research participants (fourth graders) reported how mindfulness

changed them. Participants in the Harpin et al. study stated, "enjoyed mindfulness classes,"

"would use mindfulness again in the future," and agree that they "think more children should

learn mindfulness" (p 153). The conclusion of the results of the study illustrated how the students

learned to use mindfulness skills for emotional regulation and in the classroom: "When I was

upset, I use mindfulness when 1 am mad [sic]" and "I use mindfulness before a test" (p 153).

These quotes are similar to the comments made by the fifth-grade students in the present study,

wherein the students noted how they might be using breathing and mindful walking exercises before taking a test in the future.

Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015) found children who received the MindUP program reported improvement in emotional control, school self-concept, and mindfulness, and a decrease in symptoms of depression. The results reported by Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015) is congruent with the student's overall experience noted in the theme applying learned skills to handle emotions.

The fifth-grade students in the study noted a general understanding of how their bodies are connected to their emotional experiences. Specifically, the participants reported that the body can be used to regulate emotions. The concept of mind-body relationship and using body scanning and posture to regulate emotion was noted by Kabat-Zinn (1990). He developed Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), which includes an 8-week module based on mindfulness mediation, body scanning, hatha yoga, and other informal mindfulness practices like eating, walking, and coloring. This intervention focuses on helping adults and children in exploring their behavior, thoughts, and emotion. MBSR has been found to be effective with children and adolescent populations. Sibinga et al., (2016) conducted a 12-week MBSR program with fifth- through eighth-grade students. The researchers found children who participated in MBSR program reported to have a lower level of depression, negative affect, negative coping, and rumination. In addition, the MBSR group showed overall better psychological functioning and coping (Sibinga et al., 2016). The fifth-grade students participated in the emotional mindfulness intervention noted using progressive muscle relaxation (PMR), breathing, and mindful walking exercises while coping with stress and anxiety symptoms. The students did not associate or comment on using PMR or breathing exercise to cope with depression.

The results of a study conducted by Hashim and Zainol (2104) differs with the current study. The fifth-grade students in this study stated that they would use muscle relaxation activity when they encounter stressful and anxious events. Hashim and Zainol's (2014) study results indicated the opposite, reporting that the progressive muscle relation technique had no significant effect on anxiety and depression symptoms among children. Larson et al. (2010) conducted a study similar to Hashim and Zainol's and the findings differ. Larson et al. (2010) conducted a study using relaxation techniques among third-grade students and found there was a positive change among students who received the relaxation technique program compared to the control group students. The study population of Larson et al. (2010) is different from the current study but the results are similar, as the current study participants stated they will use relaxation techniques like breathing and mindful walking before the test.

The study results correspond with the outcomes of a qualitative study conducted by Dariotis et al. (2016) in which the study participants, fifth- and sixth-grade students, demonstrate their understanding by stating yoga postures help in calming down and reducing stress. Students reported how sitting down and doing yoga postures can help them calm down and make the right choices. For example, "Like if sometimes like I don't wanna fight them, I be like just, just calm yourself down, just sit down and move away from the situation" (Dariotis et al, 2016, p. 83.). Similarly, the results of the study conducted by Metz et al. (2013) indicated study participants reported body scan and mindful moment practices as the most useful and effective strategies for emotion regulation.

The current study results are similar to the qualitative research study conducted by Hutchinson et al. (2018). The Hutchinson et al. study participants (2018) quotes were similar to some comments made by fifth-grade students in the current study, who explained how being

mindful in the moment and regulating emotion will help them not hurt another person verbally or physically. Moreover, the fifth-grade students stated doing mindfulness activities calms them.   A few examples from the Hutchison et al. (2018) study include, "If you were the bully, if I were the bully I would probably, I would see how the other person was feeling and use mindfulness to be able to calm down before I say something again" (p. 3942), and "Sometimes when I get real upset, sometimes I go and take a walk and that calms me down. And I do a mindfulness practice when I've calmed down a little bit, and that calms me all the way down" (p. 3944).

One comment made by Hutchison and colleagues' (2018) participants is quite similar to the comment made by one of the fifth-grade students in the current study. The fifth-grade student mentioned how he will regulate his emotion by counting to 10, which is similar to the response, "Sometimes I just go and sit on the bench and I count to 10 and I just restart it" (Hutchison, et al., 2018, p. 3944). The fifth-grade student's comments on using muscle relaxation activity in the future resonates with the responses of a student from Leigh (2017) research study. Leigh (2017) noted that one participant expressed using yoga as a tool for processing their emotions during the session and future.

<center>**Additional Findings**</center>

Personal Awareness

Students not only learned emotion labels/words but were also able to recognize how to apply them to a personal affective experience. Participants reported being aware of one's own feelings and emotional responses to events, experiences, and persons. Fourth- to seventh-grade students who attended a Mindfulness-Based Education (ME) Program demonstrated significant progress in social and emotional competence compared to the control group. Teachers reported

observable changes in their students who received and practiced ME by researchers (Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010), saying "I noticed considerable growth in my students' awareness of their place in the world around them and their ability to articulate their feelings and thinking in class discussions" (p 145). Additionally, the researchers stated there was a significant improvement in the positive emotional state among the students who received the ME program compared to the control group students.

In another quantitative study, the researchers (Kranzler et al., 2016) found how a low level of emotional self-awareness in children aged seven to 16 predicted a higher level of anxiety and depression symptoms. Furthermore, the study results showed age had a significant influence on children's emotional self-awareness; older children were found to have lower level of emotional awareness than younger children did. Developmental researchers stated emotional awareness increases with age (Lambie 2016).

Favorite Activities

The current study participants indicated painting, role-play, emotion cards, and mindful walking as their favorite activities and stated why they liked these activities. There are limited qualitative research studies in the literature exploring the favorite mindfulness activities of children. From my observation, while I was delivering the EMI program, the students were very involved in the activities and classroom discussions after the activity. After each session several students always asked what activities we would be doing in our next class; this shows that they were eager.

Suggestions

The participants provided some suggestions to modify the intervention in the future: more time, more activities, no homework, more journal time, more learning lessons on empathy, and

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more role-play activities. There are limited qualitative research studies in the literature stating similar suggestions reported by the current study participants. From my observation, while I was delivering the EMI the students were very involved in the activities and classroom discussions after the activity. Moreover, students asked their classroom teacher if they could continue the activity for few more minutes after the session, as I was ending the session.

Limitations

Limitations are considered potential weaknesses of a study, which are out of the researcher's control (Simon, 2011). The validity and reliability of results in a qualitative study depends on the participants' responses (Patton, 2015). The first limitation of this study involves participant response rate. Eight of the thirteen students provided brief responses to the journal prompt. Six of the thirteen students gave brief responses during their interview, and three students commented on just two occasions during the focus group. The reduced number of responses could have influenced the quantity and the quality of collected data, thus affecting the study outcome.

Another limitation involves the validity of the data collected. I observed that the participants were distracted while completing their journal entries. For example, students were talking, sharing with each other their thoughts on the prompt, or looking at their peers' writing. As a result, some students had similar journal entries as their peers. These combined distractions and discussion amongst participants also resulted in the students having a limited amount of time to complete their journal entries. This may have affected the quality and quantity of the journal data.

A final limitation involves my previous association with student participants when they were in third grade while I was serving as the school's school counselor intern. This past

established relationship with the 13 participants in this study could have affected student responses and the findings of this investigation.

Delimitations

Delimitations are those characteristics that limit the scope and define the boundaries of the research study, which includes the choice of the research questions, choice of the problem, theoretical perspectives, population, and setting (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Simon, 2011). I chose to explore the experiences of fifth-grade students, as research indicates that fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade students have similar levels of emotional and cognitive development (Saari, 1999; Vygotsky, 1930). The choice of the grade level of participants could have weakened the statement of the problem, outcome of the study, and implications.

A second delimitation of this study involves the questions asked, including when they were asked to the participant's during the data-gathering stage of the investigation. As an example, the journal prompt included questions that were based on each session, with participants completing their journal responses after each session. This could have been an asset, helping students simply repeat words used to describe their experiences. During the interview, however, I asked comprehensive questions regarding their experience during the intervention and encouraged students to expand upon their responses with follow-up probes. In the focus group, students, on occasion, simply repeated how they agreed with what others already said in the group. Differences in questions asked, and under what circumstances, could have influenced the data collected and findings of the study.

Implications

The results of this study reflect the lived experiences of fifth-grade students participating in this emotional mindfulness intervention that was developed to help students understand and

process emotion and mindfulness. Based on the themes, students experienced the program as being resourceful, informative, and impactful in their acquiring knowledge about emotions, mindfulness, empathy, emotion regulation, and self-awareness. The students expressed a higher level of interest and eagerness to be part of the intervention. School and community-based counselors who work with elementary school students may find these results inspiring and support the intervention as a feasible method for working with children. This intervention is designed as a counseling-guidance lesson, which may help school counselors working with students in a large group setting (20-25 students per class).

Additionally, these results may have implications for other school-based interventions in the future to help students with emotion regulation and mindfulness. For example, the study participants noted suggestions and the activities that interested them the most. Specifically, a student mentioned incorporating more content on empathy. Practitioners administering similar programs may want to consider incorporating more lessons and activities about empathy to influence better learning outcomes.

The study has implications for counselor educators and school counseling program coordinators mentoring school counselors. For example, the response of the participants illustrated in the results section may guide counselors-in-training in understanding how children will respond and interact with interventions. Moreover, these results may assist with the curriculum of counseling education programs, and in terms of teaching counseling students to work effectively with children and develop programs to facilitate emotion competency and mindfulness.

Recommendations for Future Research

The current study explored the experiences of fifth-grade students receiving emotional mindfulness intervention. There are several recommendations for future research. First, researchers may consider the suggestions provided by the research participants like more time for activities, more content and activities to learn about empathy and emotions, more role-play activities, and modifying the intervention age appropriately. Second, researchers may conduct additional qualitative research to understand the experiences of students in different age groups participating in an emotional mindfulness intervention. Third, as this study was a qualitative study, future researchers can recreate this study using a larger sample size and quantitative measurements to generalize the study results. Future research using quantitative methods in the form of randomized controlled trials, experimental design, quasi-experimental design, or single case research designs could explore the effectiveness and impact of the emotional mindfulness intervention. The researchers can use the following questionnaires: Basic Empathy Scale (BES; Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006), Emotional Regulation Questionnaire for Children and Adolescents (ERQ-CA: Gullone & Taffe, 2012), and Child and Adolescent Mindfulness Measure (CAMM; Greco, Baer, & Smith, 2011). Finally, in the literature, several researchers have stated the importance and necessity of developing interventions to help children understand, process, and regulate emotions. Budding researchers can develop more specific and precise interventions to implement in a classroom setting.

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this descriptive phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of the fifth-grade students who participated in the 6-week emotional mindfulness intervention.   The intervention was designed to teach a set of skills to help the children identify,

understand, analyze, and regulate their own emotions and emotional experiences. Importantly, it includes skills for reading and connecting with others' emotional experiences (empathy). What are the lived experiences of fifth-grade students who participate in a 6-week Emotional Mindfulness Intervention?   Multiple sources of data were used, including individual interviews, journals, and focus group interviews on gaining an understanding of participants' experiences. Additionally, I used a demographic questionnaire to obtain a description of my participants. The analysis of the collected data resulted in four themes:

- Identifying and recognizing feelings

- Caring about and for others

- Being present

- Applying learned skills to handle emotions.

Each theme is defined in this section with illustrative quotes from the participants. Additionally, this section includes the favorite activities and suggestions mentioned by the research participants. The study results are congruent with the results of previous studies among children and adolescent populations in the way the participants expressed learning about emotions and using mindfulness helped them regulate their emotions and relate to others' feelings. The study results are informative, which may encourage future researchers into similar intervention studies.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Demographic Form

Name: _____Nick Name:_____

Age_____

Gender: (circle one)

Male   Female

Ethnicity: (circle one)

African   Asian   Hispanic or   Native   White, Non-   Biracial   Other

American   American   Latino (a)   American or   Hispanic

Pacific Islander

Appendix B: Journal Prompt

1. What did you learn and now know about feelings?

2. Please write about your understanding that, "everyone around you has feelings"?

3. What did you notice about yourself from today's class activities?

4. Describe a feeling and how you might handle it using mindfulness skills?

5. What did you understand from today's class? What do you think about muscle relaxation for manage your feelings?

6. What did you learn from the program?

   What did you like most about the program? Least?

   What would you have liked to learn more or do more of in the program?

Appendix C: Post Program Semi-structured individual Interview Questions

1. What was it like for you to be in this program?

2. In what ways did learning about emotions seem helpful to you?

   a) Did you learn anything about your feelings and how to manage them?

3. What did you think about the activities we did?

   Examples: breathing, coloring, mindful walking, spot the differences, muscle relaxation

   activities, and roleplay activities.

   a) What was your favorite activity?

4. Do you think you learned something you will use in the future?

5. If you could change anything about what we did in the program, what would it be?

6. Is there anything else you want to tell me about the program and your experience?

Appendix D: Focus Group

We are here for a group discussion and I have some questions. We are going to have a discussion on each question. Remember there are no right or wrong answers and every one of us are different and understood the program differently than others.

1. Many of you mentioned that the program was fun, Good, and interesting; tell me what you liked about that?

2. Many of you talked about learned about multiple feelings and ways to express your feelings can you talk a little bit about it?

3. Many of you mentioned in the interview and journal that you were focused and mindful while doing the bubbles, painting activity, walking, breathing, and other activities. Tell me more about it?

4. You all talked a lot about awareness (learning something about yourself: I mean the feelings you had experienced and how to manage your own feelings) from the program can you guys talk a little more about that experience?

5. You all talked about couple of videos, what was it like to watch the videos?

6. We talked about empathy a lot and what you learned about empathy?

7. Summary, now that we are at the end what did you liked and some suggestions for me?

Facilitating and follow up questions

1. Have others had similar experiences or Did anyone else think about it?

2. Can anyone rephrase that in a different way, or Can you give an example

Appendix E: You tube URLs

Session 2

Kids Learning Tube. (2018). Empathy for Children. Retrieved from

    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9A-Hpwp3lU

BabyA Nursery Channel. (2017). Emotion Case Simulation

    Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RN4fIb5292M

Session 3

Fablefy - The Whole Child. (2017). What does being present mean? - Mindfulness for

    children Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1Go8cyA-M8

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Appendix F: Daily Emotion Chart: One Week

Name of the feeling	Situation	Name of Other's feeling	Intensity of your feeling	Skill Used

Appendix G: Short Stories

1. John had a tough day at school. He was in the principal's office for few minutes. How is John feeling? How would you feel for John? What would you tell John when you see him?

2. Krista was called a mean name by her classmates. she starts crying. How is Krista feeling? How would you empathize with Krista?

3. Aiden lost his math folder which had his homework. The teacher is asking the class about their math homework folder. How is Aiden feeling? How would you empathize with Aiden?

4. Anabelle has never played soccer before. She was playing soccer with her friends during recess and she won the game. she is smiling. What is she feeling? How would you empathize with her?

Appendix H: Roleplay Script

Joshua

Number of students needed: 5

Joshua, Anthony, Teacher, Jessica, and Mom/Narrator.

Joshua woke up late this morning and was rushing to get ready to school. His mom was yelling

at him "Hurry, hurry you are going to be late to school. Why can't you wake up early when I was

waking up your little brother? You have to be responsible. "

Joshua reaches school late because of the traffic and he is frustrated being late to the school

again. He says to himself "I am late again , and I am frustrated". His friend Anthony is waving at

him and Joshua is not waving back. Anthony gets upset with this behavior of Joshua as Anthony

was excited to see Joshua at school.

It is Science class, the teacher is teaching about the solar system. The teacher asks the students

"What is your favorite planet and why?". Students start to raise their hands. Joshua, Anthony,

and Jessica were the first three students to raise their hands. Teacher says "Jessica what is your

favorite planet and why?" Jessica, "Earth is my favorite planet because I enjoy the blue and

green color." Teacher "That is good, let me call Joshua, oh no, Anthony what is your favorite

planet and why?" Joshua is making faces, as he is disappointed and frustrated. Anthony, "I

like…..I like……Mercury because it is close to the sun and I love summer." After this the

teacher moves on to the next topic of the science class. Joshua is experiencing strong emotions.

Joshua starts to do breathing exercise while the teacher is setting up the computer to watch a

video about planets. After doing breathing exercise, Joshua thinks to himself "I feel a little better

than before".

Questions

1. List the feelings Joshua was experiencing?

2. Why was Anthony getting upset?

3. How would you show empathy towards Anthony?

4. What was the mindfulness skill used?

5. What was the level of Joshua's feelings?

6. What are the other skills Joshua or Anthony could have used?

Lee

Number of students needed: 6

Maria, Tanya, John, Jesus, Lee, and Narrator/ teacher.

The 5ᵗʰ grade class is at recess. The teacher gave the students extra recess time as they were practicing a kindness activity and being nice to their classmates. All the students were happy and excited about the extra recess time. A few students start to play tag. Maria, Tanya, John, and Jesus are close friends and they are also playing tag along with other students. Lee is a new student. Lee is feeling shy and isolated. Maria is thinking aloud to herself, "We should invite Lee to play with us." Jesus joins Maria and he says, "Maybe Lee is feeling alone and sad. We have to talk to him and become friends. I was feeling lonely when I came to this school last year as a new student. We need to talk to John and Tanya about this.". Maria and Jesus are looking for John and Tanya. They find Tanya. Maria and Jesus, "Hey Tanya, can we talk about the new student Lee? Where is John? We all need to talk to each other and invite Lee to be our friend." Tanya, "Sure, that is a great idea! John went to see the math teacher, he will be back soon. We can wait for him.". Maria, "We do not have much time left in recess. We need to talk to Lee. We

can talk to John after he comes." Jesus, "Yes, John will agree and join us". Maria, Tanya, and Jesus are walking towards Lee. Lee is sitting by himself and watching other kids play.

Jesus, "Hello Lee, how are you?"

Lee, "I am good. You?"

Jesus, "I am good. These are my friends, Maria and Tanya"

Tanya, "Hi Lee, John is also one of our friends"

Maria, "We would like to get to know you and make you our friend"

Jesus, "We all can sit together at lunch!"

As the students are having a conversation with Lee, John comes back. John is watching from a distance and he is happy about his friends. He is getting very excited and he runs towards his friends. The teacher rings the bell before John reached his friends and Lee. John walks back to the class. While walking back, John is mindfully walking as he wants to manage his excitement. By managing the feeling of excitement, John will be able to communicate to Lee in a better way.

Questions

1. List the feelings Lee was experiencing?

2. What was John feeling?

3. What was the mindfulness skill used?

4. Who is empathizing with Lee? How is the student empathizing with Lee?

5. What was the level of John's feeling?

Polo

Number of students needed: 4

Marcus, Polo, Sindy, and Narrator.

Most of the students in London School are stressed as it is the testing time of the year. Polo starts to feel stressed when there is a small class test or state exam like STAAR. Polo has scored low B's this school year and is worried about making C. The science and math teacher wants to help students prepare for the STAAR test, so she arranges a preparation exam. The exam is going to be held next week. Marcus' parents have restricted him from playing video games and watching television. Marcus talking to Sindy, "My parents are not letting me play video games or watch TV so I can focus on school and the test. I am mad at my parents, video games helps me calm myself down.".

Sindy, "I understand, my parents did the same with my older brother last year as he was playing video games all the time."

Marcus, "That is bad. Did they give it back to him?"

Sindy, "Yes, after the exam and he was very happy!"

Marcus, "That is good, my parents have done the same in the past with me."

During lunch, Marcus, Polo, and Sindy are sitting together and waiting for their classmates to get settled with their lunch. Sindy notices that Polo's behavior indicates stress. Sindy asked Polo "Are you okay?"

Polo, "……………………..Yes, I guess."

Sindy, " I have been noticing that you have become very quiet and preoccupied. What is going on?"

Polo, "I am highly stressed about my grades and the STAAR prep test and STAAR test"

Sindy, "I am sorry that you are feeling stressed. We will get through the exam successfully. We have one week for the STAAR prep test and one month for the STAAR. We all will do great!"

Polo, "Hmm, you are right."

Sindy, "All of our classmates have seated, we can start eating lunch. Do you want to do mindful eating with me. It will help you to manage your stress. "

Polo, "Sure, we can focus on the taste and color of the food."

Questions

1. List the feelings Marcus was experiencing?

2. List the feelings Polo was experiencing?

3. Who was showing empathy and how?

4. What was the mindfulness skill used?

5. What was the level of Polo's feeling?

Natalie

Number of students needed: 5

Natalie, Tanya, Mary, Jennifer, and narrator.

Natalie is walking down the hall at school. As she passes a group of girls, they look at her, then start whispering and laughing. Natalie sees that Tanya is in the group. Tanya is one of her best friends. Natalie says, "Hi, Tanya. Do you want to eat lunch together today?"

Mary, the leader of the group, says, "You can't eat with any of us. We don't hang out with people like you."

Natalie looks at Tanya, but Tanya looks away and doesn't answer. The rest of the group laughs at Natalie.

Natalie is feeling disappointed and embarrassed. She was highly disappointed from her best friends' behavior. Natalie was talking to Jennifer about this incident. Jennifer, "I am so sorry that this happened. I understand sometimes people change and their behavior is hurtful."

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Later at lunch, Natalie sits down at a table to eat. It is near where Mary, Tanya, and the group of girls are sitting. Mary walks over to Natalie and says, "You can't sit there. You're too close to our table. Find somewhere else to sit." The rest of the girls at Mary's table start laughing. Tanya doesn't say anything.

Jennifer, another girl at Natalie's table, says, " Mary, She can sit wherever she wants. Natalie, please stay seated and enjoy your lunch."

Then, Jennifer and the other students start eating their lunch.

After lunch, it is recess time. Natalie starts to walk and she starts to focus on the clouds. As she is watching the clouds she is telling herself, "Clouds makes me calm and get fresh, positive energy."

Questions

1. List the feelings Natalie was experiencing?

2. List the feelings Jennifer was experiencing?

3. Who was showing empathy and how?

4. What was the mindfulness skill used?

5. What was the level of Natalie's feeling?

Appendix I: Spot the difference examples