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Mindfulness and Social Emotional Learning: The Lived Experience of Students Learning English as a Second Language

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MINDFULNESS AND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING: THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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This dissertation is dedicated to my daughter,
Mary Katherine. Always chase your dreams.

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In a phenomenological case study, the author sought to gain an awareness of the lived experiences of 4th and 5th grade ESL students, their parents, and their teachers who participated in the MindUp mindfulness curriculum. The author was interested in the relationship between the mindfulness curriculum and SEL based on the perspective of all three participant groups. Qualitative interviews were conducted with 3 students, at least one parent of each of those three students, and the two classroom teachers who conducted the MindUp lessons. Five main themes developed from coding of the raw data: (1) positive impact on students; (2) calm classroom environment; (3) teacher common interest in brain development; (4) connection to other content; and (5) differences in gender. The results of the data suggested a positive relationship between the MindUp mindfulness curriculum and increased SEL (i.e. increased self-confidence, curiosity, and a more calm disposition) in all three ESL students.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The educational experiences and needs of children and adolescents are far different today than in the past. Zenner et al. (2014) reported an increase in stress both inside and outside the school causing elevated clinical needs in children. One out of five adolescents age 13 to 18 has been diagnosed at some point in their life with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), anxiety, depression, or conduct problems. Of the mental health disorders listed, depression has been more frequently diagnosed than any other. Although mental health disorders are very prevalent in youth, Greenberg, et al. (2003) estimated that 75-80% do not receive treatment or appropriate support. As mental health diagnoses increase, schools have been looking for appropriate research-based interventions to support students' emotional needs.

Mindfulness and meditation practices are not new concepts. They have deep roots in Buddhist culture and societies where meditation is used as a spiritual practice. Mindfulness separate from Buddhist culture has taken on a secular meaning, according to Kabat-Zinn (2003), and refers to the awareness and the act of being present without judgment (Hwang et al., 2015; Mendelson et al., 2010).

In addition to mindfulness interventions, another initiative in public schools to address social needs began as a result of community concern with students' risky behaviors (Greenberg et al., 2003). According to Greenberg et al. (2003), the Fetzer Institute propelled this initiative in response to the spike of violence, drug use, and other problematic behaviors in adolescents. The Fetzer Institute held a meeting in 1994 that ended with an outcry for positive support for students' social and emotional needs to support academic achievement concurrently. Social emotional learning (SEL) is a term

created by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) as a result of this outcry. SEL was created to address five social and emotional competencies students must possess to be successful in school and life: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. The focus of CASEL revolves around a prevention initiative, to be consistently implemented over time, to reduce risky and harmful behaviors of youth. The overall goal for this prevention is for children to learn to regulate their emotions, enhance individual decision making, understand perspective, and more.

There are very few studies that have connected mindfulness and SEL. Of the four located during a review of the literature, two analyzed the relationship between the two and were conducted outside of the United States. Le and Trieu (2016) adapted a mindfulness curriculum specifically related to the Vietnamese Buddhist culture to be sensitive to the belief system of students in two Vietnam schools. Waldemar at al. (2016) used a program, Mindfulness and Social-Emotional Learning Program, with students in a Brazil public school that specifically addressed the CASEL SEL components. The two sets of authors who connected mindfulness and SEL in the US both used the MindUp curriculum (Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015) to generalize results for elementary school students.

Although the four studies that connected mindfulness and SEL represented participants in three different cultural settings (Bakosh et al., 2015; Bakosh et al., 2015; Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015), none of them combined the social emotional need for students learning a second language. Students receiving English as a Second Language (ESL) or English Language Learners (ELL), terms that are

interchangeable, are a population of students in US public schools that continues to grow every year. This population includes both immigrant and refugee students throughout the US.

Blanco-Vega et al. (2008) reported that the Latino/a population is not only the largest representation of ESL students, but the fastest growing minority population as well. According to Vela et al. (2017), the increase of Latino/a students was caused by elevated levels of violence in Central America in recent years. While the number of ESL students has fluctuated over the past 15 years in various states, California has consistently served the largest population at approximately 1.5 million. In the same time frame, states like Texas and Illinois both saw an increase of 150,000 and 30,000 ESL students respectively.

Although all students require a set of skills necessary to succeed in U.S. schools, there are additional social and emotional components that are prevalent for ESL students. Garner et al. (2014) reported that decreased sense of belonging and physical aggression from peers are barriers present for Latino/a students. Castro-Olivo (2014) added perceived discrimination as another barrier for this population of students. The author expressed that these barriers have a larger academic impact with Latino/a students who perform significantly lower than other groups overall and have an increased chance of dropping out.

With the rapidly growing ESL population over the course of the past two decades, there has also been an influx of entirely new immigrant populations, many of whom have sought asylum through refugee status. According to Ryu and Tuvilla (2018), a little over

half of all refugees are children and adolescents, many of whom experienced trauma prior to moving or during the immigration process.

One new group in the US is Somali Bantu refugees. According to Birman and Tran (2017), Somali Bantu refugees immigrated to the US for the first time in 2004. However, the school stressors for this population were found to be entirely different in their qualitative study on school impact. This population of students struggled due to limited access to schools in the refugee camps, understanding basic norms of school, and literacy in general since there is no written form in their native language. The authors gave a specific example of how students showed increased frustration using a pencil because of the lack of schema behind the use. Many used too much pressure causing the pencil to break easily or were upset when the pencil shrank due to sharpening and use.

Ryu and Tuvilla (2018) reported narratives from Chin students who discussed their educational experience and issues that were present because of discrimination or ideology they held before they moved. For example, one of the teenagers shared that she was scared to ask questions during class time because of the impact of the strict military had before she migrated to the US. Others reported bullying, teasing, or stereotypes that peers had about them based on their native culture and its negative impact that had on their overall success.

Moreover, stressors in children and adolescents are very real issues in US culture. Although all students have a layer of school-based social stress, around 20% have at least one significant mental health diagnosis. ESL students have additional stressors related to language, fitting in with peers, prior trauma, and more. Therefore, this population of students may benefit greatly from a mindfulness-based curriculum that supports SEL.

Although this is a very real need, few studies conducted on SEL have included ESL students. To the researcher's knowledge, no mindfulness studies have contained ESL or mainly ESL students in the US. Further research is necessary in this area to fill gaps in understanding within the literature. The current study took a qualitative approach to understand more about the social emotional learning of ESL students after a mindfulness intervention. This approach was used to understand the perspective of teachers, students, and parents post intervention to analyze the relationship between mindfulness and social emotional learning for this population in one setting. This could impact the need for further research with this subgroup in the future.

Research Questions

The central research question for this study was:

What are the perceptions of the teachers, participants, and parents during and after the completion of the MindUp mindfulness intervention? Specific research questions that addressed the overarching question included the following:

Question 1: What are teachers' perceptions of the curriculum? What are teachers' perceptions of changes in the classroom environment/climate during and after the intervention?

Question 2: How do students perceive the classroom environment during and after the intervention? What were the students' perspectives of the curriculum?

Question 3: Do parents notice any difference in their child's overall social/emotional skills post intervention? If there was a change, how do parents perceive the change?

This study has the potential to expand literature relevant to the connection of mindfulness curriculum and SEL specifically as it relates to the social emotional needs of ELL. This research examined the perspectives of teachers, students, and parents to inform future exploration of the two topics through the lens of ELLs.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Many researchers have studied the impact of mindfulness as it relates to adults struggling with a chronic illness or mental health disorder. This review of literature examined a few research studies with adults to give an example of how mindfulness has been used with older participants. The review will then transition to mindfulness interventions with children in clinical and school-based interventions as both are important in the progression of mindfulness research with youth. However, the main focus consists of school-based interventions and the associated outcomes.

Mindfulness studies on adults over the course of time have varied in purpose. Many researchers have examined mindfulness as a trait that adults possess to determine how it impacts specific areas of their life. Other researchers have examined the impact of adding mindfulness practices in problematic conditions. Radford et al. (2014) and Ramos Diaz et al. (2014) were two sets of researchers who studied the impact of trait mindfulness as it related to depressive symptoms and acute stressors within adults. According to Radford et al. (2014), trait mindfulness was coined because of literature describing mindfulness as an individual trait that could be assessed in one's overall personality. Ramos Diaz et al. (2014) found that trait mindfulness was significantly related to a decrease in intrusive thoughts. Intrusive thoughts were referred to as thoughts that come to an individual without intention (i.e. reflecting on a past event or conversation without trying). Radford et al. (2014) also showed results of trait mindfulness as a limiting factor of depressive symptoms, meaning the more mindfulness an individual possessed as a personal trait, the less depressive symptoms that individual displayed. Greeson et al. (2015) provided a mindfulness intervention for adults with

depressive symptoms. Results showed a significant decrease in depressive symptoms post mindfulness intervention.

As school systems continually search for ways to improve academic learning, they also seek better strategies to meet students' social and emotional needs. Effectiveness of mindfulness practices with adults has sparked the interest of researchers to study the impact of these same practices could have on youth as it relates to their emotional stability and problematic school behaviors.

Description of Mindfulness Studies: Participants, Design, and Sample Size

Mindfulness-based classroom interventions and techniques seem to have developed rapidly, and quantitative studies of their effects can be found for every grade level. The youngest participants in a school-based setting were represented by Viglas and Perlman (2018), who implemented a mindfulness-based program with students in Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten with an age range from 3 years, 9 months to 6 years, 5 months. Bakosh et al. (2015) chose to focus on students in Grade 3 because it represented the middle of elementary school, and third grade reading levels were highly associated with graduation rates in high school. Other studies contained participants in the fourth and fifth grades or ages 9 to 11 (Mendelson et al., 2010; Schonert-Reichl, Oberle, Stewart Lawlor, Abbott, and Thomson, 2015) because of literature written by Collins (1984) and Windle et al. (2008), who stated that this is the developmental time period in which children begin to exhibit behaviors and self-regulation strategies that sustain into adulthood (as cited by Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015 and Mendelson et al., 2010). Carsley and Heath (2018) conducted the only accessible study that targeted middle school students. Their research focused solely on students in Grade 8. Beauchemin et al. (2008)

and Broderick and Metz (2009) focused on high school students. Studies conducted in a clinical setting tended to have a wider group of ages ranging from 8 to 17 (Hwang et al., 2015; Milligan et al., 2013; Tan & Martin, 2012).

Mixed-methods studies have focused on students in later elementary through middle school. Keller et al. (2017) focused on the youngest students at Grade 4. Students in Grades 5 and 6 were among the most common participants in mixed-methods studies (Britton et al., 2014; Costello & Lawlor, 2014). Sheinman et al. (2018) studied the span of these grades starting at third and continuing through sixth. Doss and Bloom (2017) focused on the oldest students in middle school, Grade 8.

Qualitative studies have targeted elementary school age students through Grade 6. Cheek et al. (2017) studied participants from age 8 to 11 in a clinical study. School-based qualitative studies all spanned across grades. Haberlin and O'Grady (2018) began at the youngest grade level starting with second grade and ranging to fifth. Bannirchelvam et al. (2017) utilized participants in Grades 3 through 6 whereas Dariotis, et al. (2016) covered Grades 5 and 6. The most popular qualitative approach was through the use of a case study.

Most quantitative studies have been conducted in Grades 4 and 5. These authors used a similar sample size and procedure (Black & Fernando, 2014; Flook et al., 2010; Mendelson et al., 2010; Schnoert-Reichl, 2015). The most common procedure used was a randomized controlled trial (RCT). Research by authors who used this procedure contained samples from 64 participants (Flook et al., 2000) to 409 (Black & Fernando, 2014). Mendelson et al. (2010) and Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015) both utilized approximately 100 participants from four different elementary schools. Although they

both used RCT, Schonert-Reichel et al. (2015) used the procedure to determine which classrooms received the mindfulness intervention as compared to the business as usual (BAU) classrooms. Mendelson et al. (2010) randomly selected 25 students who volunteered from each of the four schools to participate in the study. Additional authors who chose the RCT procedure were limited based on participant needs. For example, Tarrasch (2018) had to rearrange the RCT procedure to fit the needs of the school principal who participated in this study. At the request of the principal, all fourth-grade classes participated in the intervention and included 101 students. Therefore, the control group was randomly selected between third- and fifth-grade classes as a comparison.

Other quantitative studies used open-controlled trials in which they allowed participants to opt in or out. Bakosh et al. (2015) attained this by allowing classroom teachers to opt in to teach the mindfulness curriculum. Out of the 93 total students, the participants in the study were determined by the classroom in which the teacher chose to teach the content. Broderick and Metz (2009) allowed their sample of 120 high school seniors to choose whether or not they wanted to participate in the study. Although open controlled trials contained similar sample sizes, two sets of authors analyzed treatment only participants (Beauchemin et al., 2008; Kielty et al., 2017) and utilized sample sizes of 45 students or less. Cheek et al. (2017) was the only qualitative study that reported information about participants or sample-analyzed artifacts from 112 students.

Coholic and Eys (2016) conducted research in a clinical setting and used a similar sample size with 90 total participants at a mean age of 10.34. However, there was a low attrition rate. Only 47 of these participants completed the post-intervention qualitative interviews. Other studies conducted in a non-educational setting had much smaller

sample sizes. Hwang et al. (2015) required that participants meet criteria for having an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and have a mother willing to aid in providing the intervention. Five total mother and child participants completed the study together. Milligan et al. (2013) had 29 participants. Seven of the participants completed the post-intervention qualitative interviews as well as five parents.

Mixed-methods studies have had the most variance in sample size. Although most authors included a sample size of 28 (Keller et al., 2017) to 63 (Costello & Lawlor, 2014), there was one extreme outlier who had 624 participants (Sheinman et al., 2018). Authors who took a qualitative approach had more similar sample sizes that ranged from eight (Bannirchelvam et al., 2017) to 30 (Higgins & Eden, 2018).

Description of Mindfulness Methods

Commonalities in sample size and age range extended into the methods for most of the studies reviewed. Most of the research utilized trained professionals meeting certain criteria to implement the intervention. Hwang et al. (2015) used an author-developed and implemented intervention. The authors used individual interviews to determine specific needs of each child. This was the only study that provided individualized training to mothers as well as youth participants. The intervention process was lengthy and extended over the course of 17 months. The first stage of the study provided eight weeks of mindfulness training for the mothers. Mothers met one time per week for two and one-half hours and had a four-week break between weeks seven and eight. Following the training in stage one, mothers were given a two-month span for self-practice to prepare for stage two. During stage two, interviews were conducted with each child to develop specific and intentional interventions tailored to individual needs. Each

child received mindfulness training delivered by their mother in the home. The authors made weekly home visits and held online meetings to support the mothers with their interventions. The authors released responsibility to the mothers gradually as they became more comfortable. Stage two was conducted over a 12-month period with online and social media support.

Milligan et al. (2013) and Coholic and Eys (2016) also used facilitators to implement the intervention they designed. Milligan et al. (2013) required the most specific facilitator requirements due to the unique integration components of the intervention. Facilitators needed training or experience in the following: martial arts, yoga, and mindfulness-therapy training or cognitive-behavior therapy. The purpose of the Milligan et al. (2015) study was to examine the impact of their program had on overall self-regulation of youth with learning disabilities (LD) using mindfulness martial arts (MMA). The researchers integrated mindfulness, yoga, and martial arts together in one program session. The sessions included five components: brief sitting meditation, skill or daily lesson, the case (application of the skill through story), yoga warmup, and martial arts training. Coholic and Eys (2016) provided an intervention that integrated mindfulness with other tasks to embed preferred tasks to increase mindful participation. Their approach included arts-based activities. Therefore, the six core facilitators had graduate degrees in either counseling, childcare, and social work or art education. There was an even split in this core group, with three falling into the social sciences background and the others in art education.

Mendelson et al. (2010) used a similar process of having facilitator-led interventions. Since the interventions were facilitated by researchers within the school

setting, this may have impacted implementation rate. Researchers used an intervention created by the Holistic Life Foundation. Facilitators led each of the mindfulness intervention groups. The authors noted that teachers were generally supportive of the intervention. However, at one of the two intervention schools, under 40% of the participants attended at least 75% of the intervention sessions. This poor attendance rate was attributed to teachers who took away the intervention group as a punishment for problem behaviors in the classroom.

Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015) eliminated this problem of low attendance rate by providing a mindfulness curriculum for classroom teachers to implement. The Scholastic MindUp program was utilized in the two groups chosen to participate in the mindfulness intervention. The program contained 12 lessons designed to be taught over the course of 12 weeks. Each lesson was designed to be 40 to 50 minutes in length. This method had a 99% attrition rate and 100% implementation rate.

Bakosh et al. (2015) and Bakosh et al. (2018) utilized a similar method in both studies. Classroom teachers who participated in the training went through a training themselves first in order to lead the classroom-based mindfulness component. The authors created 10-minute audio-taped sessions that classroom teachers then played in their classrooms for a total of 35 (Bakosh et al., 2015) and 90 sessions (Bakosh et al., 2018). At the end of the session, the last two minutes contained a journaling aspect to reflect on the mindfulness practice.

Viglas and Perlman (2018) used a similar method of following the treatment with journaling. However, the authors in this study used the Mindful Schools curriculum which consisted of 18 sessions over the course of six weeks. Each of the sessions lasted

approximately 20 minutes. Kielty et al. (2017) combined components of the Mindful Schools program and MindUp for nine total sessions, 30 minutes each, over the course of three weeks. However, no journaling component was noted following the intervention.

Flook et al. (2010) developed their own curriculum for mindful awareness practices (MAPs). Each session contained three parts: sitting meditation; an activity that focused on the objective for the week (i.e. awareness of others or the environment, sensory input, etc.); and a body scan. The intervention was conducted twice a week for eight weeks, for a total of 16 sessions.

Like Flook et al. (2010), Broderick and Metz (2009) completed a program evaluation on a researcher-created curriculum referred to as Learning to BREATHE. There were six total sessions delivered within their school health program that focused on understanding emotions, body awareness, etc.

Beauchemin et al. (2008) did not develop a curriculum but used an expert in the field of mindful meditation (MM) to conduct a teacher training followed by a student training with a focus on breathing in a seated posture. After the initial training, classroom teachers led MM sessions for 5 to 10 minutes daily at the beginning of class for a total of five weeks.

Yeh, Chang, and Chen (2019) took a digital approach to mindfulness. The authors used the digital game-based learning of creativity (DGLC) to determine student dispositions and creativity in developing solutions. Although it was unclear from their article, it appeared that the authors created this game. Students in this study were given a pretest in their classroom. After the pretest, students completed nine games over the course of five weeks as part of their computer lab curriculum. The sixth week was

designated for peer evaluation, questionnaire, and rewards for the most creative solutions over the course of the study. The authors provided gift cards for the rewards to promote motivation and mastery.

Carlsey and Heath (2018) took an approach unlike any of the other studies previously mentioned. The authors collected all of their information in one sitting with the goal to elicit test anxiety, provide a short intervention, and then collect post-intervention data. Therefore, the researchers entered the building and handed out assessments in a very formal manner. They told students that the results of their assessments would be sent to their parents after it was completed. Students then completed several self-reporting measures related to test anxiety and mindfulness. After they were finished, they were given either a structured mandala to color or a blank sheet of paper in which they could draw or color however they wanted. After they completed this task, they took the same measures again for a post-assessment, but prior to taking the actual spelling test. They were then given the spelling test and a final scale for assessing mindfulness.

Although most mixed-methods mindfulness studies have included some form of journaling, each study took a slightly different approach. Britton et al. (2014) conducted a six-week meditation course from the Integrative Contemplative Pedagogy (ICP) that focused on the lived experience of each student. This approach was different from most because it was included within an Asian history course in the participating school. The mindfulness coursework was led by the history teacher. The mindfulness experiences started in short segments of three minutes and gradually increased to end with 12-minute sessions. The three components in the mindfulness curriculum included the following:

breath awareness; thought, feeling, and sensation awareness; and body sweeps or scans. After each mindfulness session, students were asked to journal about their experience. The control group in this study was taught by the same teacher as the mindfulness curriculum. However, the control group focus was on first-person experiences related to the coursework of African History.

Costello and Lawlor (2014) developed a mindfulness curriculum from two already established interventions, The Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy for children (MBCT-C) and The Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction course for children (MBSR-C). This intervention, like Britton et al. (2014), started with daily sessions of three minutes or less and gradually increased to 12 minutes over the course of five weeks. Classroom teachers provided the intervention with a script and audio CD, developed by the authors, in order to provide teachers with an option for implementation of the curriculum. Students were asked to journal about their experiences immediately following daily sessions. Sixteen students and two teachers participated in semi-structured interviews following the intervention.

Instead of having teacher-led mindfulness sessions, Sheinman et al. (2018) had experienced mindfulness instructors teach the Mindful Language program one time per week for 45 minutes. Classroom teachers attended the sessions with their students. In the participating school, this had become part of their curriculum, and a room was designated for mindfulness lessons. This particular school embedded mindfulness into their school-wide culture by holding monthly mindfulness sessions for all of the school faculty members. Parents were even invited to attend sessions and workshops. Students in this mixed-methods study were also asked to journal their experiences of mindfulness.

Doss and Bloom (2017) utilized a pre- and post-test methodology approach. However, they also included observations, mindful classroom discussions, and student reflections through five journal entries. The mindfulness intervention was provided daily for four weeks and lasted anywhere from 3 to 30 minutes. The mindfulness curriculum in this study was pulled from different sources including online guided meditations and the MindUp curriculum.

Keller et al. (2017) conducted a mindfulness intervention based on components of the Strong Kids/Teens curriculum. The first author of Keller et al. (2017) actually implemented the first 27 sessions. The classroom teacher completed a course on mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) to take over and facilitate the last 20 sessions. Following all sessions, the classroom teacher rated student attention during the lesson on a scale from 1 to 4, with 1 representing very little attention and 4 representing attention as always or almost always. In addition, the teacher also rated each student in one of the three categories: practicing more, practicing more with the instructor, and practicing less. Practicing more referred to students who frequently participated whereas practicing less indicated students who minimally participated. Throughout the study, students journaled about their progress, understanding, and application of mindfulness in both their classrooms and in everyday situations. The teacher who facilitated mindfulness sessions also answered open-ended and closed-ended questions that covered classroom interventions as well as the mindfulness practice of the teacher.

Like mixed-methods studies, qualitative studies have shown similarities in terms of methods. Haberlin and O'Grady (2018) completed a 10-session mindfulness intervention specifically for students qualified as gifted in Grades 2 through 5. These

students received daily sessions of about 30 minutes taught by the researchers, one parent certified in mindfulness, and the school counselor. The researchers completed weekly observation notes, and participants were interviewed immediately following the mindfulness sessions. Interviews were videotaped to be transcribed later.

Bannirchelvam et al. (2017) conducted the Triple R Program over the course of six weeks. The program was facilitated by two outside researchers during school time. The six-week intervention was the initial phase of the program. Additional sessions were considered boosters and were taught at the beginning of each school term for eight total sessions. After the final session, semi-structured interviews were completed with each participant. Due to restrictions placed on the researchers, interviews were transcribed verbatim during the interviews themselves.

Dariotis et al. (2016) provided a mindfulness intervention that was developed by the cofounders of a nonprofit organization, the Holistic Life Foundation. In addition to developing the program, the three yoga instructors also provided the intervention in three schools with three others on a waitlist. The intervention was provided during resource time at two of the schools and during a portion of lunch time at the third. The intervention was provided twice a week over the course of 16 weeks, for 45 minutes each. While the authors, like both of the previous qualitative studies, included interviews that were audio recorded and transcribed later, they also conducted student focus group discussions. Focus group discussions lasted about 35 minutes and were led by a male, though most groups contained both male and female participants. According to the authors, this method was utilized to compare groups as well as individual beliefs about the mindfulness intervention. The facilitator of the focus group discussions called on each

participant in a circular pattern to ensure that each had an opportunity to respond during all prompts. The facilitator inserted questions only when needing clarification to responses. In addition to student participation, seven classroom teachers also formed a focus group and two teachers were interviewed individually.

Higgins and Eden (2018) also used group discussions through what they referred to as cogenerative dialoguing. The participants in this group were students, one teacher, and two researchers. The cogenerative dialoguing happened concurrently with the five observations of the mindfulness breathing practice held at the beginning of mathematics lessons. The five observations and cogenerative dialoguing took place over the course of three months. Each of the sessions were videotaped and then transcribed at a later time.

Davenport and Paginini (2016) took a completely different approach. The authors used a case study to analyze the Langerian mindfulness in one elementary school, The New School San Francisco. Langerian mindfulness was not a curriculum that was implemented. In essence, Langerian mindfulness referred to the way the researchers examined how school staff members were mindful about resolving issues without solely relying on already existing patterns of behavior or behavior management techniques. Cheek et al. (2017) took more of a historical approach and analyzed letters from one teacher's class who taught mindful-based practices in the 1990s. The letters were coded to determine themes that emerged from the letters.

Mindfulness Measurement Tools and Data Analysis

Measurement tools and data analysis used to evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions have varied across studies more so than the sample and methods. Quantitative research conducted in a school setting used a variety of self-reporting

measurements. In fact, only two studies used a duplicate measurement tool, even though several studies sought to examine the same component. Statistical analyses were also widely varied. Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015) used a battery of assessments including the Resiliency Inventory (Noam & Goldstein, 1998); Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1983); Marsh's Self-Description Questionnaire (Marsh et al., 1984), Seattle Personality Questionnaire for Children (Kusche et al., 1988); Mindful Attention Awareness Scale for Children (Lawlor et al., 2014); and Social Goals Questionnaire (Wentzel, 1993). The researchers also used peer-reporting, salivary cortisol testing, and the flanker task/hearts and flowers task were both used to measure response time and executive functioning skills. Data were analyzed using a binary logistic equation to compare the MindUp intervention and the BAU control group. Multilevel modeling was used to measure response time on the flanker task/hearts and flowers task. The authors used a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) to measure the changes in sets of measurement data from pre to post-intervention followed by an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to examine the differences in group data. While Flook et al. (2010) also measured executive functioning skills, the authors utilized the Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function (Gioia et al., 2000) instead, but also used MANCOVA to analyze data.

Mendelson et al. (2010) used the following self-reporting measurements to examine the effects of the mindfulness intervention: The Response to Stress Questionnaire (Connor-Smith et al., 2000); Involuntary Engagement Coping Scale (Connor-Smith et al., 2000); The Short Mood and Feelings Questionnaire (Angold et al., 1995); The Emotion Profile Inventory (Benn, 2003); and People in my Life (Cook et al., 1995). Like Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015), Mendelson et al. (2010) used a comparison

analysis to measure pre- and post-intervention data. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for this study. Hwang et al. (2015) used self-reporting measurements that included information about parent stress and the overall family quality of life because the mother was also a focus in this study. The measurements used in this study were the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (Walach et al., 2006); Beach Family Quality of Life (Hoffman et al., 2006); Parenting Stress Scale (Berry & Jones, 1995); and Child Behavior Checklist (Achenback & Rescorla, 2001). SPSS statistics software and a paired-sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank test were used to compare data across the intervention by group.

Kang et al. (2018), Carsley and Heath (2018), Beauchemin et al. (2008), and Britton et al. (2014) were all authors that used an overlapping measure, the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory-State Anxiety Scale (Spielberger, 1989). Other anxiety measures used throughout various studies were the following: The Spence Children's Anxiety Scale (Keller et al., 2017); the Revised Children's Anxiety and Depression Scale (Dove & Costello, 2017); and the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (Greeson et al., 2015). Although each set of authors used different anxiety scales, three above also shared the commonality of the Child and Adolescent Mindfulness Measure (Carsley & Heath, 2018; Dove & Costello, 2017; Keller et al., 2017). Carsley and Heath (2018) chose to compare these scales using an ANOVA statistical analysis whereas Dove and Costello (2017) and Keller et al. (2017) both used *t*-tests.

Another measure that was used frequently among authors was the Five-Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (Radford et al., 2014; Ramos Diaz et al., 2014; Sanger et al., 2018). Other measures of particular interest were those used by Viglas and Perlman (2018), who included the youngest students involved in qualitative data, Head-Toes-

Knees-Shoulders (HTKS) used to assess self-regulation skills and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire to measure prosocial and maladaptive behaviors. The authors used an ANCOVA for statistical analysis.

Yeh et al. (2019) developed their own measure during the study as a way to measure mindfulness through digital means. This measure was called the Inventory of Mindful Learning Experience in Digital Games (IMLE-DG). After both an exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis, 13 items were kept after they were found to be reliable and valid.

Many qualitative research articles have used journaling and interviews to understand the lived experience of the participants. Authors who chose to use journaling and interviews coded data to determine themes (Bannirchelvam et al., 2017; Burke et al., 2017; Dariotis et al., 2016; Haberlin & O'Grady, 2018) that arose as a result. For example, Cheek et al. (2017) used the data analysis process of coding themes that emerged from the 188 historical letters they reviewed. All letters were read and coded by at least two researchers to provide trustworthiness of the findings. Other authors, such as Davenport and Paginini (2016), reported findings in narrative form without sharing specifics of how data were collected (observations, interviews, etc.). The report included very few examples of how Langerian mindfulness was applied within the school. This seemed particularly interesting since Stake (1995) pressed the importance of allowing readers to come to their own vicarious learning through presentation of raw data. No information was provided about triangulation or validity in general.

Sheinman et al. (2018) used an entirely different process to gather data. Although the authors chose a form of journaling, there were specific prompts to which each student

responded. Students were given five open-ended questions that were scenarios of daily life. Students were asked to reflect on the scenarios and use details to outline what they would do or the steps they would take to address each situation. Responses were then coded by the mindfulness approaches that they included. Each mindfulness strategy in a response was given a score of 0 to 2. The maximum score for one question was 6, meaning the student gave three detailed examples of mindful strategies that they would use.

Mindfulness Results

Results in qualitative and quantitative research have shown consistent themes of improved emotion regulation skills like self-esteem and attention, as well as decreased aggression, in the effects of mindfulness interventions. Milligan et al. (2015) reported that the two main reasons for youth joining the MMA program were to develop their skill of martial arts mastery by obtaining a higher-ranking belt and to improve emotional well-being and peer relationships. Through the interviews, both participants and their parents discussed the theme of how martial arts helped to develop a sense of pride. The researchers also discussed four main outcomes: increasing calmness, the ability to think before acting, improved self-understanding and communication, and tolerating/accepting discomfort. In the discussion, the authors considered the interview findings of youth participation goals of achieving a higher belt and desiring to perform martial arts consistent with mastery and performance-oriented goals. According to the authors, these goals helped increase focus, which helped youth benefit from actively applying the skills and then translating them to real-life situations. The authors discussed that developing calmness was likely a result of learning to accept discomfort because experiencing

discomfort creates a situation in which one would need to stay calm. It was also discussed that outcomes like calmness could be explained under the larger psychological well-being idea of emotion regulation.

Coholic and Eys (2016) reported outcomes of increased emotion regulation, coping and social skills, confidence, empathy, and attention/focus. Like Milligan et al. (2015), Coholic and Eys (2016) considered that all of the outcomes were related and encompassed under emotion regulation. The authors reported how improved emotion regulation yielded improving participant expression of feelings, feeling happier/more positive, developing better coping skills, self-esteem, feelings of empathy, and attention. The authors also discussed that a group setting helped to support the outcomes of the intervention because peer support helped participants make friends and feel supported. It was noted that a consistent finding was that participants had fun within the program. The authors suggested that this was helpful in obtaining the outcomes because participants were able to gain emotion regulation skills through positive rather than painful experiences.

Results from Hwang et al. (2015) showed that after stage one of the intervention, parent mindfulness levels increased, parental stress decreased, and total problem behaviors of the child decreased. All three showed significant correlations for all three components of the study with *p*-levels of 0.042, 0.043, and 0.046. After stage two, there was a significant increase in reported family quality of life. The authors noted that the mindfulness interventions for the mothers impacted their overall psychological wellbeing which influenced more positive behavior from their children. Mendelson et al. (2010) reported significant *p* values as well with improvements in involuntary engagement,

rumination, intrusive thoughts, and emotional arousal. Other findings reported, but not found to be significant, were the predictions of the mindfulness intervention limiting depression symptoms and negative affect.

Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015) reported that at post-test, children receiving the MindUp curriculum had shorter response time on the EF tasks of the flanker/hearts and flowers tasks. Also, at post-test MindUp students had significantly higher cortisol levels in the morning than the BAU students. After the interventions, MindUp students showed significant improvement at post-test in empathy, perspective-taking, optimism, emotional control, school self-concept, and mindfulness, as well as decreased depressive symptoms. At pre-test, students in the MindUp group were peer nominated as having significantly higher likelihood to start fights and break the rules. However, this decreased significantly at post-test, whereas comparison children were liked less by their peers. Students in the MindUp program showed higher end-of-year math grades as well.

Other school-based interventions also showed statistical significance in improvement of student grade, though the results varied. Statistically significant improvements were shown from pre- to post-intervention in mathematics and social studies (Bakosh et al., 2018); reading and science (Bakosh et al., 2015); and overall academic improvement by teacher reports (Beauchemin et al., 2008). However, the results were not statistically significant for reading and science (Bakosh et al., 2018) or mathematics and social studies (Bakosh et al., 2015) meaning that both studies contradicted each other in terms of academic improvements from the mindfulness interventions. Results for test anxiety showed statistically significant decreases from pre- to post-intervention (Beauchemin et al., 2008; Carsley & Heath, 2018; Khalsa et al.,

2012; Malboeud-Hurtubise et al., 2017; Weijer-Bergsma et al., 2014;) and a correlation between test anxiety over time and gender (Carsley & Heath, 2018). Statistically significant emotional benefits included a reduction in negative affect (Bazzano et al., 2018; Broderick & Metz, 2009); aggression (Malboeud-Hurtubise et al., 2017; Parker et al., 2014; Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010); prejudice/stereotyping (Berger et al., 2018); off-task behaviors (Rush et al., 2017); and mindfulness for overall symptom reduction in a meta-analysis by Zoogman et al. (2015). In addition, increases were shown in the following: executive functioning (Flook et al., 2010; Parker et al., 2014); receptive and attentive awareness (Kielty et al., 2017); intentionality (Kielty et al., 2017); feeling calm (Broderick & Metz, 2009); resiliency (Malow & Austin, 2016); bodily awareness (Weijer-Bergsma et al., 2014); and attention (Malboeud-Hurtubise et al., 2017). Many authors noted a statistically significant finding of increase in mindfulness levels in participants over time (Britton et al., 2014; Long et al., 2018; Sanger et al., 2018).

In a meta-analysis, Zoogman et al. (2015) found benefits of mindfulness across studies, and the authors noted that the effect size between clinical and school-based interventions were significant. Clinical intervention effect sizes were approximately three times greater than school based. Another meta-analysis conducted by Zenner et al. (2014) found that the strongest effect size was in cognitive performance. Although the effect size was much smaller, resilience measures were statistically significant as well. In addition, Broderick and Metz (2009) reported that students who practiced mindfulness outside of school four or more times per week compared to those who only practiced in class actually showed symptoms of dizziness and felt over-tired. The authors reported that many students reported a greater sense of awareness of fatigue or feeling over-tired after

mindfulness sessions in the classroom and proposed that this finding could be a result of the students' great sense of body awareness.

In addition to the quantitative data previously reported, other results arose from the qualitative perspective in the mixed-methods approach by Britton et al. (2014). According to these authors, journal entries indicated that students engaged in 94% of mindfulness activities, and only 6% reported rejecting the practice entirely. Costello and Lawlor (2014) reported themes of a greater sense of awareness, self-regulation, classroom relationships with both peers and adults, as well as addressing stress. Doss and Bloom (2017) reported that by week four of the intervention, all but two students reported they enjoyed their mindfulness practice. Many students also reported increased focus. Keller et al. (2017) reported that students who were classified as more engaged in the mindfulness practice category referred to themselves as good students who had a good relationship with their teacher. On the opposite end of the spectrum, students who were less engaged reported more intents to harm others, placed an emphasis on wanting to look good, discussed playing video games more, and referred to mindfulness as boring.

Bannirchelvam at al. (2017) reported that interview data indicated students already had experiences with mindfulness. Therefore, their interview questions shifted from a focus on the curriculum that the students were taught to the students' experiences in everyday life as they related to mindfulness. Of the eight participants, the two who reported mindfulness was boring to them still reported instances of using mindfulness strategies to cope with difficult situations or to help regulate their emotions.

Higgins and Eden (2018) reported that students openly discussed their difficulties with their minds wandering during mindfulness practice and related this to typical things

that occur throughout their day. For example, students discussed forgetting something in another room that they may need. Students discussed the practice as relaxing as opposed to being overly energetic or hyper in ways that they could be throughout the rest of the day.

Dariotis et al. (2016) reported four main themes that emerged from interviews and focus group discussions. The first was related to the program delivery. Students felt torn between attending the intervention at the time it was offered and the space in which it was offered because they often missed out on other enjoyable courses or activities. Teachers reported a wish for better communication about program goals and logistics with the facilitators. Both teachers and students reported ways in which the facilitators could get more student buy-in by offering brief sessions within the classroom periodically to gain interest and to also embed some of the practices of the program into the daily classroom routine. The fourth theme was that students felt the facilitator treated them with respect by modeling appropriate behaviors rather than yelling. Students also wished for a female facilitator because there were more girl participants than boys. The girl participants reported that the facilitator understood the boys better because he was a male.

Davenport and Paginini (2016) found that Langerian mindfulness in The New School San Francisco provided more opportunities for 21st century skills of creativity, communication, collaboration, and critical thinking to be developed by students. Participants also reported that mindfulness helped develop cultural perspectives to celebrate diversity.

Cheek et al. (2017) found five main themes that emerged from analyzing the historical letters. The themes that emerged were students feeling a sense of place, feeling

part of a community, actively participating in meditation (some reported this as a gradual process), understanding of relationships with others, and self-awareness. Although the theme of self-awareness was shown in numerical terms within the quantitative data, the rest of the themes centered around the experience of the individual that was not captured outside of qualitative data.

Overwhelmingly, results from these mindfulness studies showed positive increases in emotional regulation abilities such as self-awareness, attention, and perspective. In addition, decreases were shown in depressive symptoms, aggression, and off-task behaviors. Qualitative data also indicated that students chose to use mindfulness strategies to cope with difficult situations and reported a greater sense of self, better relationships with peers, and an overall enjoyment of the mindfulness sessions. Although the data for academic improvement were not consistent, none of the authors who analyzed results of academic achievement conducted longitudinal studies. It is important to note that the two main groups of authors who analyzed academic achievement compared academic data from the third quarter to the fourth (end of year). Therefore, this data could be much different when analyzed in a longitudinal framework because many of the emotional regulation increases had a factor of increase over time. However, the increases in emotion regulation made mindfulness curricula important to consider in the school classroom context.

Social Emotional Learning and English Language Learners

According to Greenberg et al. (2003), the term social emotional learning (SEL) was coined as a result of a forum held by the Fetzer Institute surrounding concerns about student health and prevention of risky adolescent behaviors. The term was introduced as a

conceptual framework. From that meeting, CASEL was formed in an effort to embed SEL into public education from Kindergarten through 12th grade. Understanding that short-term interventions rarely produce long-term results, CASEL embarked on a systematic effort within the public education context to promote social and emotional learning over time.

CASEL (2003) identified five competencies/domains of (SEL): self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Self-awareness was defined as one's ability to accurately describe goals, emotions, values, and confidence. The authors described self-management as emotion regulation and the ability to control impulses. Social awareness was described as the ability to recognize others' emotions as well as show empathy for others, particularly in understanding the perspective of those from different backgrounds. The authors defined relationship skills as building and maintaining positive and healthy relationships with others without succumbing to social pressure. Responsible decision making was described as ethical decision making taking into consideration safety and behavioral norms. All of these competencies were thought to be predictors of positive educational outcomes. On the other hand, deficits in these areas could be considered predictors of negative educational outcomes.

Description of SEL Studies: Participants, Design, and Sample

The quantitative studies conducted on SEL comprised a wide range of participants, with most studies using between 102 (Castro-Olivo, 2014) to 1394 (Schonfeld et al., 2015) with one outlier consisting of just 20 participants (Cramer & Castro-Olivo, 2016). Most of these studies focused on students in elementary schools in

Grades 3 through 5. McCormick et al. (2015) studied the youngest students in elementary school in Kindergarten and first grade. Two authors who chose middle and high school as the targeted participant group focused on students in English as a Second Language (ESL) programs (Castro-Olivo, 2014; Cramer & Castro-Olivo, 2016). Most of the participants in ESL were Latino/a. Similarities continued in design as most authors used either a randomized controlled trial or quasi-experimental approach. McCormick et al. (2015) and Schonfeld et al. (2015) both analyzed data through a longitudinal study with the latter starting in Grade 3 and ending at Grade 6.

Sheard et al. (2012) used a mixed-methods approach and included the largest number of participants in any study, with about 3,500 students, 74 teacher participants, and 22 parents. This sample came from twelve participating primary schools with students ranging in age from 4 to 11. These authors also took a longitudinal approach using a randomized controlled trial using socio-cultural theory as a framework.

All of the qualitative studies included elementary school participants with one school and included students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 (Stillman et al., 2018). Similarities continued in design type and sample size. All of the authors used a case study approach, and two of the three sampled six teacher participants (Cho et al., 2019; Ng & Bull, 2018).

Description of Related Studies: Methods

There were more differences than similarities in methods of the SEL studies. An intervention called INSIGHTS was one curriculum used in elementary schools. McCormick et al. (2015) conducted a program review on the effects of INSIGHTS effects on children's temperament. This intervention contained teacher, parent, and

student components. A randomized controlled trial was used to select which schools received INSIGHTS. Schools that were not randomly selected were given a supplemental reading program instead and were considered the control group. Teachers and parents both attended weekly sessions for 10 weeks. Each session lasted two hours, and both groups were given gift cards for attending. The same weeks that parents and teachers attended sessions, students received one 45-minute lesson.

Portnow et al. (2018) focused on the reduction in aggressive behaviors as a result of the 4Rs + MTP intervention program. The 4Rs (Reading, Writing, Respect, & Resolution) is a program designed to focus on conflict resolution and social-emotional skills in an embedded English Language Arts curriculum. MTP is a form of professional development in which there is ongoing access to video examples of explicit teaching strategies as well as eight individual video coaching sessions. Once teachers consented to participate, they were required to complete self-reported demographics as well as measures for students whose parents had consented for participation. These were completed both before and after the intervention. In addition, researchers conducted observations, many with two observers to account for inter-rater reliability.

Coelho and Sousa (2018) chose the Positive Attitude curriculum. In this intervention, four education psychologists conducted sessions across multiple settings to analyze differences in results among each. Settings chosen were in the classroom and after school, and there was also a control group. There were 13 one-hour sessions conducted weekly.

Schonfeld et al. (2015) used a curriculum called PATHS for all schools randomly assigned to the intervention group whereas all other schools continued using the pre-

existing SEL curriculum. The number of lessons in the curriculum varied by grade level but ranged from 31 to 45 lessons over the span of one school year. Teachers in the intervention group received 16 to 20 hours of training each year. In an effort to make sure teachers delivered the content according to the original intent of the authors of PATHS, all teachers received coaching sessions, modeling, and co-teaching support.

Sheard et al. (2012) also used the PATHS intervention in a mixed-methods approach. In this study, the authors used a wide range of data collection that included semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, play-time observations, and teacher rating scales over five different time frames for the longitudinal study.

Three sets of authors used variations of the Strong Kids/Teens intervention. Wong et al. (2014) borrowed aspects of the Strong Kids curriculum to create their own since they did not gain permission from the creators of the curriculum before conducting the study. The authors called their intervention Spooks of Emotions, and targeted students in Grades 1, 2, and 3 in a primary school in Hong Kong.

Castro-Olivo (2014) also used a variation of the Strong Teens program called Jovenes Fuertes that incorporated a culturally responsive aspect to the curriculum. This particular study was conducted to determine the impact of the program on SEL for Latino (ELL) in both middle and high school. The author specifically identified students who were still acculturating to language and U.S. culture in lower-level ELL classrooms. To ensure authenticity of cultural adaptations, the curriculum was taught by two Latina teachers, who were also bilingual, over the course of 12 lessons.

Cramer and Castro-Olivo (2016) also used an adaptation of the Strong Teens curriculum with cultural adaptations. However, the participants in this study represented

African American students in addition to Latino students. One student participant was categorized as White. In order to accommodate multiple cultural categories of students, the authors asked students to set goals for their learning of the SEL curriculum according to their own culture. Goals were set for both home and school. This curriculum was also delivered across 12 individual sessions.

In addition to the quantitative literature, Cho et al. (2019) also focused on SEL and culture. The authors selected teacher participants in Kindergarten, Grade 1, and one English as a Second Language teacher who had at least 50% refugee ELL students. Open-ended interviews were conducted with the teacher participants to determine teacher perceptions of refugee students and their social emotional learning.

Stillman et al. (2018) conducted a qualitative case study for one single independent school with grades Kindergarten through eighth. This school used an emotional intelligence (EQ) program called Six Seconds Emotional Intelligence Assessment-Adult Version and Six Seconds Emotional Intelligence Assessment-Youth Version systemically throughout the school. Teachers completed the adult version to analyze their own EQ. These scores were also used to plan staff meetings and professional developments. After students completed the youth version, the teacher created a personalized plan based on the results. Students and teachers then met to set goals and objectives that could be attainable by the end of the trimester. Classroom lessons and coaching were provided to help students attain these goals. After the trimester was completed, students reflected not only on their academics, but also on their social and emotional goals as well. One teacher shared in a reflection that her own frustration

decreased during teaching because she had a deeper understanding of how to meet her students' needs.

Ng and Bull (2018) took a completely different approach to their qualitative study. There was no intervention curriculum implemented into instruction in the six preschool classrooms they studied. Instead, the authors conducted observations and completed video recordings to note instances of SEL components embedded in the individual teacher behaviors. Observations were conducted without participation from the researchers. Video recordings were taken in each classroom and ranged from about two to almost three and one-half hours.

SEL Measurement Tools and Data Analysis

The most varied aspect of all studies was the measurement instruments used to compare pre- and post-test results of the intervention. There were three measurements that were also used to measure mindfulness outcomes in the quantitative literature above: Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Waldemar et al., 2016; Sheard et al., 2012); Woodcock-Johnson III (McCormick et al., 2015); and the Behavioral Assessment System for Children (Portnow et al., 2018). McCormick et al. (2015) included raw scores from the Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement, Form B scales Letter-Word Identification and Applied Problems, the Leiter International Performance Scale, the Sutter-Eyberg Student Behavior Inventory, and aggregated teacher reports on the school climate and leadership. The latter was used to formulate a baseline on the extent to which staff members in the building had high expectations for student work as well as the perceived physical and emotional safety within the school building. The authors chose to

analyze the data using multiple regression models to determine how the variables impacted one another.

Portnow et al. (2018) used the Home Interview that gave students scenarios to gauge baseline aggression levels, the Behavioral Assessment System for Children (BASC), and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System to assess the interactions between teachers and students. Coelho and Sousa (2018) included the following measures: Social and Emotional Competencies Evaluation Questionnaire which closely relate to the five SEL domains and Global Self-Esteem scale from the Self-Description Questionnaire II. Multilevel regression models were also used to analyze the data from this study. The trend continued in the use of a multiple regression to analyze and compare data for Schonfeld et al. (2015). However, this was the only group of authors who chose to use a singular measurement tool within the study. The measurement chosen was the State Mastery Test (Schonfeld et al., 2015).

Similar trends were found in the studies that compared middle and high school students. Castro-Olivo (2014) and Cramer and Castro-Olivo (2016) both used the Behavior Emotional Rating Scale and Social Validity as measurement tools. However, Castro-Olivo (2014) used an ANOVA data analysis procedure whereas Cramer and Castro-Olivo (2016) used a *t*-test. Coelho and Sousa (2018), who also used middle school participants, chose to analyze data using both an ANOVA and *t*-test. However, the authors used completely different measurement tools that included the following: Social and Emotional Competences Evaluation Questionnaire and the Global Self-Esteem scale from the Self-Description Questionnaire II.

Almost all of the qualitative data collected were through either open-ended or semi-structured interviews (Cho et al., 2019; Stillman et al., 2018; Sheard et al., 2012). Ng and Bull (2018) took a different approach to assessing SEL in the preschool classrooms they observed. Instead of conducting interviews, the authors used inductive content analysis to determine the instances SEL was shown or modeled by teachers. All of the qualitative data collected, regardless of the method, were coded to determine themes present in the data.

SEL Results

After coding the responses, Cho et al. (2019) reported that most of the teachers' reports of refugee ELL student behaviors were concerning and created problems for the class. Teachers reported that these behaviors often disrupted the entire class due to either the nature of the behavior and/or the need for the teacher to provide immediate feedback. Some of the behaviors indicated were aggression toward peers, blaming/tattling, lying to parents or caregivers about school, an overall negative attitude about school, and an unwillingness to try. Teachers reported deficits in all five SEL domains/competencies.

Post intervention results reported from the studies above indicated that SEL program implementation led to statistically significant increases in the following: mathematics and reading achievement for students with lower levels of leadership at baseline (McCormick et al., 2015; Schonfeld et al., 2015); writing proficiency (Schonfeld et al., 2015); attention (McCormick et al., 2015); self-esteem (Coelho & Sousa, 2018; Sheard et al., 2012); self-control (Coelho & Sousa, 2018); quality of life (Waldemar et al., 2016); problem solving (Sheard et al., 2012); thinking before acting (Shear et al., 2012); taking turns (Sheard et al., 2012); listening to others (Sheard et al., 2012); and

social awareness (Coelho & Sousa, 2018). Decreases were also reported in the following: overall behavioral problems (McCormick et al., 2015; Wong et al., 2014); aggression (Portnow et al., 2018; Sheard et al., 2012); internalizing (Wong et al., 2014); hyperactivity (Wong et al, 2014); bullying (Sheard et al., 2012); and teacher frustration (Stillman et al., 2018). According to Ng and Bull (2018), teacher strategies for modeling SEL in the classroom were using positive tone, suggesting solutions when students were struggling, allocating tasks, and providing extensions.

SEL was found to be particularly important for ELL students. Chang et al. (2007) described ELLs as not only learning a second language, but also navigating the membership of a different sociocultural group as well. The authors reported that ELLs lacking the ability to communicate with their peers are at risk to become social outcasts, have more difficulty adjusting to school, struggle with peer acceptance, and have lower academic self-concept. All of these risk factors translate in the classroom as less likely to participate, withdrawal, speaking less, and seem less motivated than same aged peers. In a longitudinal study from pre-Kindergarten to fifth grade, Kim et al. (2014) found that social skills in conjunction with cognition and proficiency in the student's primary language at age 4 were predictors in English language acquisition. The authors reported that students who were naturally outgoing and willing to take risks at a young age grew more in learning English than same aged peers, even if this meant that they were perceived as presenting problem behaviors in the classroom. In addition, ELL students who arrived in the U.S. under refugee status often had an additional layer of social emotional. According to Cho et al. (2019), many refugee ELLs had post-traumatic stress from exposure to war, persecution, or just the resettlement in and of itself.

Connection to English Language Learning Students

Although SEL is particularly important in the US educational system, there are limitations within SEL assessments to include students of different racial, ethnic, and language backgrounds. In a review of six meta-analyses, O'Conner et al. (2017) found that most SEL assessments rarely included applicable instruments to assess students from different racial/ethnic/language groups. Most SEL instruments were designed with a White, homogenous population in mind. Therefore, there were limited connections to (ELL). The findings, in general terms, were that ELL students were typically exposed to many risk factors such as low socio-economic status, limited English proficiency, living as undocumented immigrants, and more. All of these risk factors were linked to negative educational outcomes of higher dropout rates, teenage pregnancies, and increased delinquent behaviors.

Several authors explored risk factors in U.S. schools specifically for Latino/a students. Balagna et al. (2013) used an interpretive phenomenological analysis for 11 Latino/a students in Grades 6 and 7 at risk for being identified as having an emotional behavioral disorder. Themes that arose were negative affect due to experiences of verbal and microaggressions at school, problems in adjusting to middle school, and difficulties in asserting needs due to helpfulness/unhelpfulness of teacher behaviors and reciprocity. Garner et al. (2014) reported peer aggression and decreased sense of belonging at school as high risk factors. The authors also reported an increased sense of belonging for students who were encouraged to embrace their own cultural norms with the opposite true for students who were encouraged to acculturate instead. Blanco-Vega et al. (2008) defined acculturation as the change process when two cultures combine, and the adoption

of the new culture creates a shift in customs and social identity. The authors also discussed acculturative stress, which referred to the pressure of adopting the mainstream culture rather than the traditional beliefs or social norms of the native culture. Acculturative stressors specifically related to barriers in language, discrimination/racism, depression, and more. Higher levels of acculturative stress have been linked to negative outcomes such as low self-esteem, more chance in internalizing stereotypes, and greater mental health challenged overall. O'Neal (2018) analyzed the overall impact on the impact of stress in a largely Latino/a sample. The results showed that stress impacted engagement which, in turn, impacted overall reading achievement.

Tran and Birman (2019) echoed the pressure of acculturation for Somali Bantu students as well regardless of whether or not the messages they received were spoken or implicit. Birman and Tran (2017) conducted an open-ended ethnographic study of a group of 19 Somali Bantu students in a Chicago primary school, most of whom had no formal education. The study included field notes, interviews with teachers and other staff members, and memos from two consecutive school years. Themes that emerged from student behaviors in the classroom were hoarding food, overall distress, disruptive behaviors, and academic disengagement. While all of these were significant in the first year of the study, all of these behaviors decreased by year two. A specific example of disruptive behaviors that the authors gave was the lack of understanding in using a pencil, which often caused frustration. Some of the issues were too much pressure that often caused them to break; how pencils became smaller from sharpening; forgetting a pencil for instruction; and misuse of the pencil (throwing it in the air, on the floor, or at a peer).

Tran and Birman (2019) conducted further analyses from their research above and focused specifically on teacher expectations. Results indicated that the teachers of Somali Bantu students expressed acculturation ideas about expectations for students' language, knowledge of U.S. customs, clothing, and eating in order to fit in with peers and the overall school culture. Teachers particularly struggled with the students' overall emotional state, and many referred to how angry the children seemed. Dodds et al. (2010) analyzed Somali refugee students in Australian classroom settings and found that they had a more difficult time resolving conflicts than other peers.

In addition to Latino/a and Somali students, Pryor (2001) explored the impact of Albanian students in the U.S. educational system. Qualitative interviews indicated that Albanian families discussed a lack of understanding about neighborhoods and schools prior to moving and were unhappy with the location in which they resided. Over time, the parents understood some of the deeper issues within the communities, but their children had grown close with friends at their school and were unwilling to move which caused family conflict. Parents also expressed the disconnect with homework and other needs at school because of the language barrier. The author described a boy in the classroom who struggled with an assignment and began crying. He was eventually sent to the office and sent home with a headache rather than addressing the stress of the assignment.

Ryu and Tuvilla (2018) conducted interviews with 10 Chin high school students. The students expressed concerns of trouble connecting with their teachers, which led to a struggle in asking for help or just general questions in the classroom. Most of the students viewed assimilating to US cultural norms as necessary to excel in the academic and professional realm. Although many of the students were refugees, they described their

immigration as a choice to move to the US. Many of the students expressed discontent with the impoverished areas in which they lived, and many students experienced teacher beliefs that underestimated their knowledge and prior educational experience. Most of the students reported teasing or bullying.

In a longitudinal mixed-methods design, Suarez-Orozco, et al. (2009) had a total sample of 309 students over the course of the five-year study of newcomer ESL students. The final sample included students from Central America, China, Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Mexico. Findings reported the importance of other peers who spoke the same language or had the same cultural background. Students expressed the importance of leaning on peers for understanding of content, emotional support, and sometimes safety or protection. Students spoke about the support of their parents toward their education, though many were unable to help with homework. The authors discussed the importance of a connection with teachers or other staff members as a contributing factor to school success.

A review of the previous literature indicated a clear need for social and emotional support for ESL students within the U.S. educational system. Although not be true for all, there was a clear disconnect between many students from other cultures and their educational experience and success. The SEL competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making have all shown to improve student academic success.

All of the SEL competencies fell under the umbrella of emotion regulation that mindfulness research has shown to support. Kabat-Zinn (2003) referred to the lasting effects that mindfulness had in processing the negative emotions that all people

experience in stress. Since many ESL students experienced an additional layer of stress due to the process of acculturating to U.S. norms, emotional regulation was even more important for this group of students. Although there was no mindfulness literature to the researcher's knowledge that was directly related to the ESL population, the relationship that mindfulness shares with improved emotion regulation and SEL supports the need for further exploration.

The compelling correlation between improved SEL and the emotional regulation results of mindfulness interventions was important to consider in the classroom environment specifically related to ELL. Since this population of students had increased needs for emotional support, the gaps within the literature in mindfulness and SEL were glaring and need to be explored. In addition to the gaps for ELLs, there were additional gaps within the literature in qualitative review for both mindfulness and SEL. Therefore, this study sought to analyze a single mindfulness curriculum and the experiences of teachers, ELLs, and their parents as they related to social emotional learning.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The goal of this study was to determine the impact, if any, that the MindUp curriculum had on ELL students post intervention. The general research questions all related to the ways students, teachers, and parents interpreted their experience of the MindUp intervention. It also encompassed how each role group viewed any changes (whether positive or negative) that may have occurred in students as a result of the mindfulness program. This approach reflected what Seidman (2019) described as making meaning of the experience and included features of what Slavin (2007) considered essential elements of qualitative design.

Research Design

Slavin (2007) discussed the difference between using qualitative versus quantitative methods as the difference in wanting to understand the depth of a situation or context rather than wanting to generalize the results across settings. Stake (1995) described this difference as the search for happenings rather than cause. The author further argued that qualitative methods were most appropriate to understand the experience of participants rather than the cause and effects over time. A qualitative approach was used in this study because of the connection between this description and the overall purpose for review.

The design of this study could be described as a program evaluation (Mertens & Wilson, 2012) using a phenomenological case study approach (Slavin, 2007; Stake, 1995; van Manen, 2018). Since MindUp was the sole intervention that was implemented, this study essentially assessed the MindUp program's impact from an SEL perspective. Mertens and Wilson (2012) described program review to be an evaluation of a particular

program that involves multiple stakeholders. In this instance, three of the most important stakeholders of the study were the focus of the interviews: students, teachers, and parents. This case study was in alignment with the approach used by Stake (2004) in qualitative program review which was to simply understand the relationship between the intervention and the experience of the stakeholders.

This also aligned with the purpose of phenomenological qualitative research, to understand the perspective of others and determine the patterns that arose from the experience of the participants (Slavin, 2007; van Manen, 2018). Phenomenologist van Manen (2014) discussed the process as understanding the lived experience or the reflection of the participant who experienced the phenomenon. According to van Manen (2014), it is important to note a main characteristic in phenomenological studies is to interpret rather than explain results. Therefore, this study interpreted the experiences of all participant groups.

Last, the present qualitative case study focused on one school and one program (Slavin, 2007). In alignment with both phenomenological and case study approaches, open-ended interviews were used as the main source of data collection (Slavin, 2007). The other data that were collected included attendance data of the student participants relative to the days that the MindUp program was taught in the classroom. Data collected from three different role groups (students, teachers, and parents) helped to achieve triangulation. Triangulation refers to the confirmation of data collection with different sources (Slavin, 2007). Stake (1995) discussed the importance of triangulation for reliability of interpretation. The author discussed how triangulation could occur from collecting evidence from different sources or hearing the same general information from

multiple participants. The present case study used multiple participants to generate themes from interview responses.

Phenomenological Case Study Methods

According to Stake (1995), all program reviews are case studies. Stake (1995) reported that the purpose of case study specifically is not to understand other cases but to understand as much as possible about a particular case. Creswell and Poth (2018) defined case study with the following characteristics. To begin, there is an identified individual, community, decision, or event to be analyzed. The identified case must be bound within a set of parameters and with specific intent. Case studies require an in-depth understanding from multiple data sources. Last, case themes are determined, and conclusions are formed by the researcher.

The difference between this above process in qualitative case studies and quantitative methods is what Stake (1995) described as an emphasis on the process and the overall quality of the program activities. This interpretation of the participants' perspectives is completed in an interpretive narrative description. Stake (1995) reported that generalizations will be made about a case and referred to these as “petite generalizations” (p. 7). As necessary in all case studies, Stake (1995) discussed the importance of multiple data sources and triangulation.

In a phenomenological case study, it is imperative to focus on a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018) and what van Manen (2014) described as the lived experience of the participant. The lived experience reflects on both the active and passive direct experiences of participants as a result of the case. Rather than explain, these experiences create the interpretive narrative description.

Role of the Researcher

Slavin (2007) described the role of the research as a process of evolution as the researcher learns about the setting and participants. Rather than an excessive concern about outcomes, the researcher is focused on the process of the intervention. Stake (1995) extended this by saying the key role for researchers is as an interpreter because the process of knowledge is constructed, not discovered, in qualitative research.

Slavin (2007) discussed the importance of the researcher in examining any subjective beliefs or perspectives relative to the case. Once these perspectives are determined by the researcher, it is important to acknowledge how they could influence the research. In addition to this acknowledgment of researcher beliefs, van Manen (2014) suggested that researchers bracket those perspectives. Essentially, bracketing is trying to put aside any prior biases or beliefs in order to access a clearer picture of the lived experience of the participants.

This study used "purposeful sampling" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 100) and selected a specific program for review within one particular school. The school that was chosen for this case study was a school in which the researcher holds an administrative position. Due to the positive working relationship as well as culture within the building, there was already a strong sense of community. A strong sense of community is helpful in conducting phenomenological case study research because there is a greater comfort level in trying something new and then sharing authentic experiences. The researcher was also able to communicate with teachers implementing the curriculum frequently and easily whenever there was a question.

The researcher had a particular interest in the topic and literature for this study. As the professional school counselor in the school setting, the researcher had already been implementing small mindfulness sessions within classroom counseling lessons and small groups using various online apps. Although the researcher did not have prior experience implementing the specific program for review in this case study, the researcher did possess an overall positive impression on the influence of mindfulness in the classroom setting.

The Case

MindUp was chosen for this case because it was the only mindfulness curriculum in the literature that had connections made to key characteristics of SEL in elementary school settings within the US (Schonert-Reichel et al., 2015) to the researcher's knowledge. A program review of MindUp was conducted, based on these curriculum components, within a single school setting. The elementary school chose to participate based on the relationship with the researcher as well as the ongoing need to fulfill character education needs.

The school is located within a large urban public school district in the Midwest that contained approximately 100,000 students. Within that population, 9,574 students were identified as ESL. The elementary school itself had a total enrollment of 594 students (39% White, 26% Black, 19% Hispanic, and 10% Asian). Out of the total population, 252 students were identified as ESL, and although 10 additional students qualified for services, their parents chose to waive services for their child. A total of 30 different languages were represented within this school. The top three languages after

English were Spanish, Somali, and Albanian respectively. The school received Title I funding, with 85.1% of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch.

Population and Sample

Creswell and Poth (2018) discussed the importance of purposeful sampling in qualitative research to ensure the population aligns with the purpose of the study. The authors reported that criterion sampling, in which participants have all experienced a particular phenomenon, is a preferred strategy in phenomenological studies. This study utilized criterion sampling for the initial selection of potential candidates. The first layer of criterion referred to teaching the MindUp curriculum. One fourth- and one fifth-grade teacher agreed to implement the curriculum within their classroom out of six total fourth- and fifth-grade teachers. Therefore, the only student and parent participants who qualified for participation were drawn from these two classrooms. The fourth- and fifth-grade teachers in this school departmentalize and teach specific content only. The fourth-grade teacher who opted in taught writing and science. The fifth-grade teacher taught reading and social studies.

Another layer of this study was the experience of the curriculum specifically with ESL students. Based on the top three languages (Spanish, Somali, and Albanian), the school was allocated bilingual instructional assistants to support communication with these specific populations. Therefore, students who had one of these three primary languages were given parental consent letters in their native language, once IRB approval was given, to ensure streamlined communication for the purposes of this study.

Parents were able to opt in for themselves and their child for the interview process once the curriculum was complete. Of those who met all of the criteria, one fourth-grade

and two fifth-grade students returned parental consents that opted in both the parent and student. Students signed a consent form indicating that they were also given a choice to participate. All three students signed the consent form. Two of the three families (parent and student) spoke Spanish as a first language. The other student spoke Somali. In addition, both teachers who taught the MindUp curriculum consented to participate in the interview process. There were eight total participants who completed the semi-structured interviews. Moreover, participants included three students, two teachers, and three parents.

Research Questions

The central research question for this study was:

What are the perceptions of the teachers, participants, and parents during and after the completion of the MindUp mindfulness intervention? Specific research questions that addressed the overarching question include the following:

Question 1: What are teachers' perceptions of the curriculum? What are teachers' perceptions of changes in the classroom environment/climate during and after the intervention?

Question 2: How do students perceive the classroom environment during and after the intervention? What were the students' perspectives of the curriculum?

Question 3: Do parents notice any difference in their child's overall social/emotional skills post intervention? If there was a change, how do parents perceive the change?

Procedures

The researcher received approval from the Institutional Review Board at both Western Kentucky University and the school board that governs the participating school. Both Institutional Review Boards gave approval, as the study met the qualification to provide safeguards for this protected population of children and ELL.

Data were collected from three different participant groups of students, teachers, and parents through semi-structured interviews. In addition, attendance data were collected for the student participants to determine the number of lessons that the students actually received out of 15.

MindUp

The MindUp curriculum outlines mindfulness in four units: "getting focused," "sharpening your senses," "it's all about the attitude," and "taking action mindfully." "Getting focused" was a unit that introduces the parts of the brain that influence focus. The curriculum encourages students to engage in mindful breathing to demonstrate focused awareness. "Sharpening your senses" incorporated each of the five senses in demonstrations of how students can be mindful. This unit incorporated mindful listening, seeing, smelling, tasting, and movement. Mindful movement was achieved by having students balance playing cards to get them to stand independently. The lesson then moved into asking students to balance on one leg while simultaneously balancing a bean bag on top of their heads. All of the lessons in sharpening your senses asked students to examine small ways in which they could use the things around them and their attention to be mindful.

The next two units discussed practical application of mindfulness. “It’s all about attitude” challenged students to examine perspective, optimism, and gratitude. The final unit, “taking action mindfully,” asked students to take their mindful awareness to impact others. This unit discussed expressing gratitude, acts of kindness, and using that within their world.

Interviews

Seidman (2019) suggests that children interviewed be at least 10 years of age to adequately comprehend and articulate their experience. This aligned with research findings from Collins (1984) and Windle et al. (2008) that students begin to develop lasting emotional regulation strategies at this same age. Therefore, the MindUp curriculum was only offered to fourth- and fifth-grade teachers only for the purposes of this study.

According to Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015), because classroom teachers implemented the MindUp curriculum, all 15 lessons were taught during the study. Between the two teachers who provided the lessons, one teacher had students complete 81% of the daily lessons while the other completed 95%. In a program review conducted by Durlak and DuPre (2008) related to fidelity, any intervention implemented over 60% showed positive impacts. Therefore, it was important that teachers provide the intervention within the classroom setting to increase the possibility of fidelity.

This also promoted the natural setting that Slavin (2007) discussed as important to understanding the context in qualitative research. In an additional attempt for fidelity to be the highest possible, teachers opted in to teach the curriculum in their classroom within the content area of their choice as long as the time was appropriate to complete the

lessons. Choice and flexibility of time frame within the day were given to increase implementation as well. The only time constraint was the window in which the lessons were taught. IRB approval for research was given from both institutions on December 13, 2019. Although the curriculum began in October of 2019, the lessons were spaced out and completed at the beginning of February 2020.

Students aged 10 and above, and in fourth and fifth grade, who were receiving English as a Second Language services as well as MindUp qualified to be participants in the study. The students who met this criterion were sent a translated letter in the family's primary language. Interpreters followed up as needed to discuss the intervention, the interview process, and to obtain written parental approval. In this way, parents were able to make an informed decision about opting in without written language as a barrier. Parents who chose to opt in their child and/or themselves determined the official participants of the study.

After students received all 15 lessons from the MindUP program, the researcher set up qualitative interviews with the teachers who implemented the program as well as ELL students and parents who opted in for the interview process. The intent of the interviews was to follow the structure Seidman (2019) outlined as a three-part process. The first interview Seidman (2019) suggested was to establish the context of each group by focusing on the life history of the person interviewed. This helped to establish a relationship, if one was not already present with the interviewee, to assist in the comfort to share within the next two interviews. The purpose of the second interview focused on reconstructing the experience of the MindUp intervention and understanding what van Manen (2018) calls the lived experience. The third asked for interviewees to discuss the

meaning that they put to that experience. However, because there was already a basic rapport with all of the participants due to the relationship with the researcher, the interviews were all condensed. One reason for this decision was that the interviews moved a little quicker in pace because of the already established rapport with the researcher. The other was the researcher's concern with inserting bias by asking leading questions when the participants' answers were very short or limited. Limitations and delimitations are explained in detail in the Limitations/Delimitations section.

Attendance Data

Attendance data of student participants were also considered in this interview process to determine any potential limitations of the study. Attendance data were taken to determine how many MindUp lessons the participants each received as that had the potential to shape the study's findings. Students who received all 15 lessons obviously had more exposure to the MindUp curriculum than those who did not. Therefore, this was an important consideration in the findings of this study.

Trustworthiness

Interviewing students, teachers, and parents provided triangulation (Slavin, 2007) of data to improve validity and reliability. Slavin (2007) refers to triangulation as the process in which conclusions are drawn based on interpretations from multiple data sources. Stake (1995) discussed triangulation between data sources to note how the phenomenon is similar or different across settings. Interviewing students in different grades presented an opportunity to explore the experiences of the content taught by different teachers. In addition, interviews by both teachers allowed a perspective of the content as well as the experiences of the ESL students in their classroom. Interviewing

parents added a third layer of perspective to see if the experiences of each child were able to be validated in a holistic view.

Stake (1995) focused on the importance of detail and description to allow the reader an opportunity to triangulate as well. The author encouraged more description to allow the reader to make up their own mind rather than assume the presentation of data from the researcher was absolute. Creswell and Poth (2018) echoed the need for description, detail, and overall dependability of the researcher. Therefore, detail and description were a focus of the interpretation of findings in this study.

Another view of validity that was equally important for this study was presented by van Manen (2014) for the representation of a phenomenological method. This perspective of validity highlighted the importance for the researcher to examine biases or presuppositions surrounding the phenomenon. These biases are explored in the limitations section to give readers an understanding of any outside influences that the researcher may have unintentionally inserted within the data collection process.

Data Analysis

Once the interviews were completed, they were transcribed to look for themes that were present in the data (Seidman, 2019). Thomas (2006) stressed the importance of multiple readings of the raw data. Seidman (2019) also suggested multiple readings as themes that may arise early on within the data may not last throughout the raw data. Both Seidman (2019) and Thomas (2006) refer to coding as the labeling of themes in the data. The process of coding in this study was used to determine the patterns in the experiences of the participants.

The process of data analysis in this study followed the outline provided by Braun and Clarke (2006) for thematic analysis. This process included the following steps: the researcher became familiar with the data with multiple readings, initial codes were produced from the readings, themes were created from the initial codes, the themes were reviewed, themes were given names and defined, and the report was produced from the themes. The researcher used what Braun and Clarke (2006) referred to as the latent level of thematic coding and identified underlying ideas or conceptualizations from the data.

Limitations/Delimitations

There are several limitations and one delimitation that are important to note in the interpretation of the data from this study. The first is a delimitation due to the relationship between the researcher and the participants. The researcher is an administrator in the school that was the setting for the study. Therefore, there may have been concerns or negative aspects of the curriculum that participants were unwilling to share. Although both teachers chose to teach the curriculum, the dynamic of the teacher/administrator roles in the interviews should be noted in the event that the data presented inflated positive experiences.

This same relationship may have impacted the interaction with parents as a limitation. One of the parents who opted in received a great deal of assistance over the holidays from the administration team at the school because of need. The researcher was unaware that this particular family would be eligible for interviews at that point in time. When the researcher thanked the parent for agreeing to participate, the parent responded that it was “the least” she could do for all of the support.

The researcher is unsure if this relationship inflated the number of student participants because all of the students already had a great deal of rapport with the researcher. The role of the researcher in the typical school setting is as counselor. All of the participants in this study have engaged with the researcher in multiple classroom and individual counseling scenarios and often asked to see the researcher because of the level of trust already established. Therefore, the results from this group may have reflected the most honest responses. However, it is still important to note the dynamic of the relationship because there also may have been limitations due to this relationship.

In addition to the relationship with the researcher, there was a political climate that is equally important to consider as a limitation. Two of the three parents interviewed were Spanish speaking. In the current political climate, many Spanish speaking families are fearful of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) because of increased deportation of Latino/a residents. Therefore, this could have influenced these particular interviews to have an increased sense of positivity that may not have been the truest version of reality.

Perhaps the most influential limitation of the study was the language barrier. Although interpreters were used for the parent interviews, all of the interpreters stopped to process how to translate the word mindfulness. The Somali interpreter added that there is no equivalent word in Somali. Therefore, the translation was a description or definition instead. One of the Spanish interpreters said he was “not exactly sure the exact phrase for that” but did his best to interpret in the moment. The researcher gave the basic definition to help with the translation. In addition, one of the parent/student language dynamics was particularly difficult because the student only speaks fluent English and the parent only

speaks fluent Spanish, making their day-to-day conversations more difficult in general. Although the other two student participants speak their first language fluently, discussing the mindfulness curriculum with their families would still have been challenging because of the indirect translation process.

An additional limitation specific to this case study was the departmentalization of content in fourth and fifth grades. The fourth-grade teacher in this case taught only writing and science. The fifth-grade teacher taught only reading and social studies. Therefore, there was no opportunity for connection to other content. This should be considered when interpreting the findings.

The biases of the researcher should also be noted as a potential limitation of the study. The researcher has used mindfulness techniques in classroom counseling and small group sessions with students frequently through her employment as a counselor. In addition, the initial exploration of mindfulness literature influenced and increased the researcher's own experience with mindful meditation. The positive impact of the researcher's own experience influenced further exploration of the topic as it related specifically to students in the elementary school setting. The researcher attempted to bracket through journaling (Seidman, 2019; Slavin, 2007; van Manen, 2014) or eliminate thoughts or feelings already associated with the topic itself when coding the data. While it was impossible to eliminate all bias, it was something for the researcher kept in mind and noted when reporting themes.

Transferability

This program evaluation using phenomenological case study as a design examined the overall experience of students, teachers, and parents. It may help to inform

future educators in choosing mindfulness and/or SEL instruction and interventions specifically with ELL students in the classroom. A limitation described in qualitative research by Slavin (2007) is the ability to make determinations across settings due to the limited sample. This was true for this particular study. Although it addressed a topic or phenomenon that has not been explored by any other current studies to the researcher's knowledge, this does not mean that the results of this study can be transferred to other settings or populations. However, it does have the potential to expand knowledge of the topics of both mindfulness and SEL, with ELL students as a particular focus. Results need to be interpreted with these limitations in mind so that readers are able to make their own conclusions based on the data presented.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

Two teachers, three students, and three parents participated in semi-structured interviews for this study. All participants were selected from one elementary school in a large urban school district in the Midwest United States. The elementary school that participated holds the largest population of ESL students in the school district compared to other elementary schools, with 41% of 594 total students. Thirty different languages were represented within this same population. The three languages that represented the largest portion of the ESL students were Spanish, Somali, and Albanian respectively. The students and parents who opted to participate in the study spoke either Spanish or Somali. In addition to a large ESL program, the school also contained a sizable population of students who received free or reduced lunch with 85.1% of the population who qualified.

The teachers, both female, represented one fourth- and one fifth-grade classroom. Student participants included one fourth-grade male, age 10, whose primary language is Spanish. This student was referred to using the pseudonym Tony. There were two fifth-grade student participants, one male and one female, both aged 11. The pseudonyms that were used for these students are Hector, who was also a native Spanish speaker, and Amal, whose primary language is Somali. All students who participated had at least one parent who also opted into the study. Both of Hector's parents participated in the study. The coding system used to identify each of the participants and their quotations related to specific interviews is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Interview Coding System

Role	Name	Interview Code
Teacher- Fourth Grade	Elizabeth Carter	T-EC-I1 (interview 1) T-EC-I2 (interview 2)
Teacher- Fifth Grade	Mary King	T-MK-I1 (interview 1) T-MK-I2 (interview 2)
Student- Fourth Grade	Tony Martinez Morales	S-TMM
Student- Fifth Grade	Amal Abdullah	S-AA
Student-Fifth Grade	Hector Gonzalez Ramirez	S-HGR
First Parents	Eduardo Sosa Zambrano Diana Gonzalez Ramirez	FP-ESZ FP-DGR
Second Parent	Daniella Morales Morales	SP-DMM
Third Parent	Fatuma Adan	TP-FA

Participant interviews followed delivery of the MindUp curriculum led by the same classroom teachers who participated in the study. All interviews were conducted

within a week following the final lesson of the curriculum. The researcher intended to complete three interviews with each participant to build rapport, reconstruct the experience, and make meaning of the experience. However, rapport was already established prior to the interviews because of the nature of the school counselor relationship with all three participant groups. Therefore, only one interview was conducted with each student and parent participant. Two interviews were held with teacher participants to ask follow-up questions from the initial interview. The second source of data collected was student attendance to determine the number of MindUp lessons they each received. The researcher transcribed all of the interviews and used thematic coding to analyze the data related to the following research question: What are the perceptions of the teachers, participants, and parents during and after the completion of the MindUp mindfulness intervention?

Additional questions included:

What are teachers' perceptions of the curriculum? What are teachers' perceptions of changes in the classroom environment/climate during and after the intervention?

How do students perceive the classroom environment during and after the intervention? What were the students' perspectives of the curriculum?

Do parents notice any difference in their child's overall social/emotional skills post intervention? If there was a change, how do parents perceive the change?

Overview of Findings

Five main themes emerged from the interview transcripts and are presented in Table 2: positive impact on students, calm classroom environment, teacher common interest in brain development, connection to other content, and differences in gender.

Within each of these themes, there were several subthemes. Within student impact, there were three subthemes: student practice outside of the lessons, student interest in the program, and the balance lesson. Under the main theme of calm classroom environment were two subthemes: overall calmness and change in the classroom environment. The third theme was developed from the common interest in brain development that both teachers expressed in their interviews. Also, from the teacher interviews, a theme was developed from the discussions around how mindfulness connected to current content and could be added in the future. This fourth theme was called connection to other content. The last theme, differences in gender, came from teacher experiences of the ways in which boys and girls interacted with the mindfulness lessons separately.

Table 2

Themes and Subthemes

Theme	Subtheme
Positive Impact on Students	1. Student practice outside of the lesson 2. Student interest in the program 3. The importance of the balance lesson
Calm Classroom Environment	1. Overall Calmness 2. Change in classroom environment
Teacher Common Interest in Brain Development	
Connection to Other Content	
Differences in Gender	

Theme 1: Positive Impact on Students

The first clear theme was the positive impact of the program on students. Every participant reported some student impact throughout the school year. Amal's teacher reported that she had "calmed down" this school year compared to last. Amal echoed this statement. She stated, "I can, like, calm down and do something about mindfulness and that stuff" (S-AA). She stated multiple times that she calmed down by using deep breathing strategies. "Yeah, we was [*sic*] calming our heart down. And then we had to breathe in and I was... don't be like crazy and that's it" (S-AA). Amal's mother described

her growth this school year in terms of her seriousness about learning and challenging herself more. Specifically, her mother stated the following with the help of a translator:

> As a parent, it makes me very happy. To see that your child is really working harder and challenging themselves, it's really nice. At 6:00 in the morning, that's when we get up to pray for the morning prayer. Normally, because when you pray, you go back to sleep, to see her still up so that way she could read more, and she would tell me, mom, before [her brother's] bus comes, I want to read some more. I want to do some more stuff. To see that, it's really good as a parent to see your kid challenging themself, and to really... And the thing is that you're not asking them, she wants to reach that goal. So that makes me happy. (TP-FA)

Although her mom was very proud, Amal seemed to be even prouder of her hard work in school this year. When the researcher asked her about this, her smile accompanied by a head nod acknowledged the statement was true. Amal added the following "I said okay, I'm just going to learn how to read" (S-AA).

Similarly, Hector and his family also indicated an impact directly related to the mindfulness curriculum. Hector described this impact of mindfulness also in terms of deep breathing: "I use mindfulness when people are using, they're having a fight and I just take deep breath in and take deep out" (S-HGR). Hector's mom and stepdad described several positive changes in him this school year that they also attributed to the MindUp curriculum. The first change they noted was that he is more "relaxed" now. They also described changes in curiosity and responsibility. The translation of their conversation was the following:

> Something very important to note here, I felt like this curriculum also left a positive footprint within him, which like you said is focused on mindfulness so staying focused on something. He's saying for a child it's very important for them to question things, and he feels like this…part curiosity within his son to ask questions, like "What is this? What is that?" I've noticed that since the beginning of the school year I felt like my son has become someone more responsible, he is asking more questions, become more curious about things and overall become a very centered kid. (FP-ESZ)

His mom noted after this that she did not "feel like she could expect more or ask more of him" (FP-DGR).

Tony and his mom reported changes in his attitude and behavior as a result of the MindUp curriculum as well. Tony described that the curriculum helped him rebound from tough situations. "I mean it kind of helped my head to kind of get in shape back from what happens" (S-TMM). His mom reported that she had seen a change in his self-confidence this school year.

In addition to these students, the teachers also reported greater impacts for ESL students as a whole in the classroom. The fourth-grade teacher reflected on a lesson in which students participated in mindful eating with a chocolate chip and the lengthy conversation that followed.

> And they were surprised that that was what happened with it because I don't know that they had ever really left a chocolate chip in their mouth and let it just dissolve. It's always just put it in, chew it up, swallow it, and if it's anything that's

sweet or chocolate like that, then they think that it's just all about finishing it quickly. (T-EC-I1)

The fifth-grade teacher remembered the "balance lesson" where one ESL student really thrived. "A Balancing Act" was the title of a lesson in a section titled *Sharpening your senses: Movement II.* In the warmup of this lesson, students were asked to stand four to six playing cards on the top of their desks without laying any card flat and it was required that it must touch at least one other card. After a discussion of what caused the cards to fall, what gave them stability, etc., the students then moved into an activity where they were asked to balance on one foot. While they were balancing, they were expected to also keep a beanbag on top of their heads.

> It was the balance lesson...there was a student who struggles socially and behaviorally, and that was something he did extremely, extremely well [and] was building with the cards. So, to see him excel in something and now he even pulls it out at wellness, he continues sometimes even inside wellness. That's something he chooses to do. The voice of that is something that could calm him down. So that part really sticks out to me, and how he uses that. (T-MK-I1)

In addition to this specific student impact, both teachers reported that students would remind them on MindUp days or if they forgot to do a mindfulness activity for the day.

Subtheme 1: Student Practice Outside the Lessons

A recurring subtheme within the realm of student impact was students who practiced outside of the classroom. The fifth-grade teacher taught the curriculum to her homeroom class and had the opportunity to be outside with these students during wellness (the district term for recess) in addition to their day-to-day classroom

instruction. This teacher noticed that several students practiced specific mindfulness lessons such as mindful listening and balancing from the curriculum while they had free play time. She reported that Amal was a student in particular who did this frequently.

> Even outside sometimes, her, [and another ESL student], they sit and do like mindful things. They tell me they're doing mindfulness and listen to the birds. And the balance [practice]...that's another thing that the girls do outside sometimes, they like that one. And they follow her [Amal] and they stand on one leg. (T-MK-I1)

Amal also described this experience of practicing outside at wellness. “The first day what [I] did was like...we was [*sic*] feeling the weather and that stuff. We was hearing everything. So, when we came inside we was [*sic*] talking about it” (S-AA). In addition to practicing at wellness, Amal reported that she used the practice to calm down outside of school as well.

> Breathing in is mindful for me because that's what I do all the time. I'm home and I get angry. I practice when I'm at my cousin's house, because it's like... there's only one girl. When I said can I play with that doll? [She said] “no, I'm playing with it.” And then that like make me angry because I'm like the biggest girl over there so I just go out of the room and just calm down. (S-AA)

Tony was less specific about when he practiced mindfulness outside of class but reported that he practiced “when something really gets you down and you really got to pick yourself up” (S-TMM). He described his practice as thinking “about what the thing [is]... What makes you happy and [you] take a rest or do something you like to do to get your mind off of it” (S-TMM).

Hector reported that he used what he learned from MindUp “when people are... they're having a fight and I just take [a] deep breath in and take [a] deep out” (S-HGR). Hector's family also reported seeing him practice at home. “He practiced some of these exercises that they did and they looked a little peculiar... he seemed to enjoy it” (FP-ESZ).

Subtheme 2: Student interest in the program

The next recurring subtheme under student impact was the interest students had in the program itself. The fourth-grade teacher reported that students would remind her every Friday.

> The kids really looked forward to it and they would remind me on Fridays, because we just did it once a week on Fridays. And they would always be like, it's MindUP day, it's MindUP day. And I was like, yes. Got it. I'm ready. They were like ready to do MindUP. I think it was just kind of a good alternative to the regular everyday things and they looked forward to it. (T-EC-I1)

The fourth-grade teacher also reported that students were so interested in the conversations sometimes that she would have to “cut them off” because they needed to move on.

The fifth-grade teacher reported the same interest in not only the MindUp curriculum, but also mindfulness activities in the classroom in general. This teacher not only taught the mindfulness curriculum, but also incorporated mindfulness of the month activities in which students would be challenged to complete one mindfulness activity each day to go along with their theme. For example, in November the class focused on gratitude. Each day they were challenged to complete one act of gratitude during the

school day. Typically, these were specific acts of gratitude that they would discuss in their class morning meeting to start the day. When the teacher stopped doing this in December, students started to ask, "'Well what's our mindfulness thing this month?' I'm like, 'I don't have anything'" (T-MK-I1). This fifth-grade teacher also noted that student interest was evident because of the level of engagement in the activities.

> They were very engaged. I mean, whatever the focus was, they were easily able to tell whether it's perspective or balancing to do the balance. And when balancing, gratitude, random acts of kindness, everything was very focused on what we were doing. Most of them came to the carpet, were very intrigued. I think it was nice and relaxing for them because it wasn't strictly just academic content. (T-MK-I1)

Again, the teacher reflected specifically on Amal when she discussed student interest. "Just her mindful breathing...When we did mindfulness breaks, some of them don't do it; they just put their head down, because that's an option, but she actually does do everything" (T-MK-I1).

Although the mindfulness breaks were an addition to the MindUp curriculum, Amal seemed to come up in the interview as one of the students who was most actively engaged or interested in mindfulness overall.

Hector was the only student who reported that he tried to describe the curriculum to his parents, which showed a different level of interest in the program than other participants. His family reported the following with translation services:

> He kind [of] tried to explain to them, give them a clue of what it was that was going on, but the most important part, even though they might not have grasped the idea 100%, is that he understands what is going on. (FP-DGR)

Although this was tricky to understand with translation, his parents were able to recall him attempting to practice some of the exercises that they described as looking "peculiar."

Subtheme 3: The Importance of the Balance Lesson

The last subtheme that arose in student impact was the balance lesson in the MindUp curriculum. All student and teacher participants discussed the balance lesson in the interviews. The fourth-grade teacher discussed the balance lesson as being "more mindful of your body and your movement to stand on one foot" (T-EC-I1). She discussed the connection that the class made between practicing this and getting rid of the hiccups. They discussed that when you get the hiccups, if you do not "concentrate on it, they usually go away" (T-EC-I1). The class felt like this activity could help them concentrate on something else to get rid of their hiccups. Tony, who was in this fourth-grade class, described the balance lesson as "easy" although it was one of the lessons he remembered the most.

The fifth-grade teacher described the balance lesson as the following:

> It was you had to build the tallest tower using the cards, and he was able to build the tallest tower. And I modified it a little bit, just because all the kids liked it so much, where you could actually fold the cards, index cards…(T-MK-I1)

She described this really benefiting one ESL student in particular who really struggled with behavior in the school setting: "and he did that and he had the best one. That is something he really was able to feel good that you could do, and everybody was looking at him like, wow, that is totally awesome" (T-MK-I1). This student continued to practice this lesson during indoor and outdoor wellness time.

Although Tony described the balance lesson as easy, Hector and Amal both disagreed. Hector remembered it as the following: “It was kind of hard cause we did balance and it was hard cause I almost fall and the cards it couldn't have balance” (S-HGR). Amal agreed that most everyone in the class found it difficult. She recounted the lesson by describing her experience:

> The one that I remember really well was like… you have to put one of your feet up and then you have to look for your, you have to get a book and put it in there. And then you have to breathe. You don't have to move, you have to stand still. Everybody was like, it was hard, it was hard, it was hard. (S-AA)

Although participants had differing views of the level of ease, the balance lesson seemed to be the lesson that impacted every participant in one way or another because it was the only lesson that all participants discussed.

Overall, positive student impact was supported by all three groups of participants. Every single participant reported some level of student impact that was noticed over the course of the school year, most of which were directly related to the curriculum of the MindUp lessons.

Theme 2: Calm Classroom Environment

The next theme that emerged was the calm classroom environment during the mindfulness lessons and then immediately following them as well. The fourth-grade teacher attributed this to the culture of the classroom environment and the level of conversations they were able to have as a result.

> But they were, the memories that they shared were really cool, things like that. And then just times that it would ask them, has this ever happened to you? Have

> you ever had a bad day? And then how did you get over it? Or things like that. So they were pretty open and honest in their conversations, I feel like. I feel like they thought it was a safe space to share stuff and they, most of them wanted to share what was going on, (T-EC-I1).

For the bulk of this theme, it seemed to be pretty consistent with two subthemes: overall calmness and the change that happened in the classroom environment as a result of the curriculum.

Subtheme 1: Overall Calmness

Both teachers reported an overall calmness or stillness in the classroom environment during the lessons. The fourth-grade teacher reported an overall stillness in the mindful eating lesson where the students let a semi-sweet chocolate dissolve in their mouths. Being able to just sit and let it dissolve while resisting the urge to eat the chocolate can be difficult. However, as a result of being able to resist that urge, students were able to experience the different sensations of bitterness and sweetness that their piece of chocolate provided.

Another word that came up often from multiple participants about the environment was “relaxing.” The fifth-grade teacher contributed to some of the relaxation to the break from general education content. Amal described the classroom as quiet. She went on to add the following:

> It was nice. Like people like, like not loud, like we could not hear. But people was quiet, we could hear her, what she was saying. Then we did it and then it was fun. We were like, let's do this, let's do this. Yeah. (S-AA)

Hector also described the classroom as quiet. However, when he reflected on the balance lesson, he described that a little differently because of the level of frustration his classmates experienced. “The class was quiet concentrating, but when it got louder when they were getting confused about the cards everyone was frustrated” (S-HGR).

Subtheme 2: Change in Classroom Environment

Although Hector described the level of frustration in the classroom during the balance lesson, he also said that by the end of the lesson everyone in the classroom was able to become calm again. He noted the change in the environment after their level of frustration decreased by using mindfulness in the following way: “It felt like people that it was like the room was silent and I feel like nobody was there” (S-HGR).

Hector was the only student participant who touched on the change in the classroom environment from the beginning, middle, and end of the lesson. However, both teachers noted a change in the classroom environment from the start of mindfulness lessons to the post-lesson environment. The fourth-grade teacher even noticed a shift in environment from the first lesson to the last, noting the level of seriousness about the lessons shifted. “I would say at first not all of them took it seriously, so it was sometimes a little laughing but as the lessons went on they were quiet and engaged. Afterwards they were more focused and calm” (T-EC-I2).

The fifth-grade teacher described a more pronounced change in environment given the activities that led up to the lessons themselves.

> We always did mind up right after a transition from coming back from another class and teacher, so the energy in the room was more active versus when kids were were working for me. More talking and moving was going on but given the

> countdown to begin students moved to the carpet or their area and were ready to begin the mindup lesson. Immediately following the lesson it was always very calm and had an open feeling students mind and bodies were calm and they were actively involved in reflection time after the lesson. (T-MK-I2)

Considering the level of movement before the MindUp lesson, the shift in environment may have been more noticeable in this scenario.

Overall, the feeling of a calm classroom environment was shared by almost every participant who experienced the lessons, with both classroom teachers and two of three student participants who reported on the level of calmness in the room sometimes during, but always following a lesson.

Theme 3: Teacher Common Interest in Brain Development

Both classroom teachers reported a common interest in brain development within students. The fourth-grade teacher reported on this a little more in depth:

> I think that mindfulness [has] kind of always been in the back of my mind and I'm interested in researching things, having to do with the brain, side bar that we've talked about with, I've talked about with [another staff member] is just our short term memory, is that we've seen a lot of kids through even just like [special education] stuff that that's where they usually score the lowest when it comes to all those tests that they do. And so, short term memory is kind of my thing that I would like to do more background research on, but MindUP is a good way to think about brain research and stuff like that too. I was just interested to see how it would affect kids and myself too, to be more mindful of things. I think that it's been something new that's kind of the new buzz word as far as things go in

> education. So I was just interested to see what it was all about and see how it affected myself and the kids. (T-EC-I1)

Although the fifth-grade teacher did not share the same interest of learning about mindfulness for herself, too, she did share that she was interested in teaching this curriculum because she already uses mindfulness herself in the classroom.

> I'm really interested in brain development and how mindfulness can help kids, because I use it in the classroom myself as a teacher. So, I wanted to see if it can help kids as well, and I wanted them to know the power of it. (T-MK-I1)

This common interest in brain development was an unexpected experience in the reasoning for choosing to participate in the study and has a need to be explored in the discussions in Chapter V.

Theme 4: Connection to Other Content

The MindUp curriculum has a section within each lesson to connect to core content curriculum such as reading, math, science, and social studies. However, both teachers made connections that moved beyond connections with the typical curriculum. This included ways that they decided to incorporate it into other parts of their day or ways in which they would like to explore the curriculum further within other content in the future. The fourth-grade teacher was able to change the daily writing prompts that were already embedded into her classroom when discussions became lengthy during MindUp.

> They wanted to share a lot. I feel like sometimes it was very surface conversations as far as like the one that was about being grateful for things. They just wanted to say, my family or my friends or things like that. But then we kind of did continue

> that through writing because that's what it suggested was to journal every day. So we just made that our writing prompt for the week. And so I specifically broke it down more into, okay, name some things that you're actually thankful for, name some people that you're grateful for, name some that are not things or people. Like other stuff that you might be grateful for. (T-EC-I1)

The fifth-grade teacher also incorporated the MindUp content into social studies related to the perspectives of others.

In addition to the cross-curricular content they were able to embed within the lessons, they both had plans or ideas of how to incorporate it in the future. The fourth-grade teacher discussed how she could use it in the future to tweak science lessons she already teaches:

> I think all the ones about the senses were very interesting and I think that that could even be a science lesson too, because we did a science lesson with Oreos. They have those Mystery Oreos. And so, I gave them the Mystery Oreo and let them look at it. Just what do you see? What do you smell? What do you taste? And so just using all their senses for that. But then this kind of took it a step farther as far as savoring what you smell or really picking out the parts of the smells. And the eating part, savoring what you're eating and things like that. So I feel like that part was really good. (T-EC-I1)

The fifth-grade teacher had plans to incorporate the structure of the gratitude lesson into her class morning meeting to start the day. “And I liked that gratitude lesson in MindUP, the gratitude circle. We said we're going to incorporate that into our morning meeting” (T-MK-I1).

Theme 5: Difference in Gender

Both classroom teachers reported a difference in gender and participation in the MindUp lessons within their instruction. The fourth-grade teacher reported that she did not feel that the boys wanted to share as much as the girls. However, she also added that she did not call on people specifically to share, so the people who chose to share happened organically.

> So not that they weren't taking something out of it, it was just that as far as like vocalizing it, they weren't as vocal as the girls were in general. And I didn't really pick out people specifically, I just picked people who were volunteering for this. (T-EC-I1)

The fifth-grade teacher shared a difference in gender based on who she noticed practicing mindfulness unprompted. “Specifically, the girls, I've seen them use [mindfulness] more so without me having to prompt it than the boys” (T-EC-I1).

The difference in gender was not an unexpected experience with this study. Carsley and Heath (2018) found a significant difference in the decrease of anxiety post-intervention for girls over time compared to boys in the same condition.

Attendance Data

The three student participants all had perfect attendance at the time the interviews were conducted. Therefore, they were present for and attended all of the MindUp lessons in their respective classrooms. Attendance, or lack thereof, was not a limiting factor for the reported experiences in the interview process.

Conclusion

The overall research question focused on the experiences of all three participant groups during and following the completion of the MindUp lessons. The specific research questions that were formulated to answer that question were the following:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of the curriculum? What are teachers' perceptions of changes in the classroom environment/climate during and after the intervention?
2. How do students perceive the classroom environment during and after the intervention? What were the students' perspectives of the curriculum?
3. Do parents notice any difference in their child's overall social/emotional skills post intervention? If there was a change, how do parents perceive the change?

Research Question 1 focused directly on the experiences of the classroom teachers. Both teachers noted clear changes in the classroom environment as being more calmed and relaxed following the instruction of the lessons. In addition, they both experienced changes in student behaviors over the course of the study that included more seriousness about the content, transferring the skills of the lessons to other parts of the school day, and ways in which the content could be included within core instructional areas. Teachers also expressed a common interest in brain development that led to their choice to opt in to teach the MindUp curriculum. Last, teachers noted differences in the way that girls engaged in the mindfulness lessons as opposed to the boys. The girls in this study appeared to be more engaged than the boys overall.

The second research question focused on the experience of the students during and after the lessons. There was a concise agreement that the mindfulness techniques they

learned were able to be applied to other situations within their school day and home life. Two of the three students confirmed the calm and relaxed environment that the lessons brought about in their classroom. All three students noted a memorable experience with the balance lesson specifically.

The last research question referred to the second-hand experiences the parents of student participants observed during the same time period of the MindUp instruction, specifically related to social/emotional skills. All three parents reported some level of increased social/emotional ability of their child post-intervention. These included increased self-confidence, responsibility, seriousness about learning, and a more relaxed personality. Two of the three parents expressed a sentiment of being proud of their child as a result. One parent said she could not ask anymore of her child. The other expressed herself as proud of her child for the extra effort she has put in this school year to focus on her learning.

Table 3

Data Sources of Themes and Subthemes

Themes	Data Source							
	T-EC	T-MK	S-TMM	S-AA	S-HGR	FP-ESZ & DGR	SP-DMM	TP-FA
Student Impact	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Student Impact- S1		X	X	X	X	X		
Student Impact- S2	X	X				X		
Student Impact- S3	X	X	X	X	X			
Calm Class. Enviro.	X	X		X	X			
Calm Class. Enviro.- S1	X	X		X	X			
Calm Class. Enviro.- S2	X	X			X			
T. Com. Int. in Brain Dev.	X	X						
Conn. To Other Content	X	X						
Differences in Gender	X	X						

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

Mindfulness curricula and interventions have gained momentum in the educational realm in the past 10 years. As more empirical research is conducted on mindfulness in schools, interest has also grown in how mindfulness practice can help advance the goals of SEL. Additionally, there are numerous gaps in research about students who speak English as a second language (ESL). Overall, ESL students often present more barriers to academic learning than native-speaking English students and could benefit from additional SEL supports. To the researcher's knowledge, this is the first study that examined the intersection of mindfulness practice and SEL learning specifically for ESL students.

This chapter includes three main components: (a) a summary of findings related to the overarching research question of the experience of each participant group and any change noted by teachers (RQ1), students (RQ2), and parents (RQ3) as a result of implementing the MindUp mindfulness curriculum; (b) a connection between the findings of this case study and previous literature; and (c) considerations for future researchers and educational leaders.

Summary of Findings

This phenomenological case study examined the experiences of three different role groups (teachers, students, and parents) related to the implementation of the MindUp mindfulness curriculum. The researcher used this qualitative method approach to conduct a program review with this particular curriculum. The goal of the researcher was to better understand the experiences of ESL students who participated in each of the lessons, as well as the perceptions of their teachers and their families. This examination sought to

understand the experience of participants during and following the lessons. The researcher was particularly interested in how or if the experience of the curriculum was solely limited to the instructional time it was delivered or if concepts introduced through MindUp influenced other areas of school and beyond.

This study was conducted in a single elementary school located in one of the largest school districts in the midwestern US with approximately 100,000 students. Given that nearly 10,000 students in this district receive ESL services, this group of students was of particular interest to the researcher and her position in the district (as a guidance counselor). Furthermore, given the dearth of research on ESL students and mindfulness or SEL, this study addressed an important gap in the literature.

The researcher used a thematic coding analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of the interview transcriptions to identify underlying ideas and conceptualizations from the raw data. The interview data analysis began with multiple readings of the data (Braun & Clark, 2006; Siedman, 2019; Thomas, 2006). As suggested by Braun and Clark (2006), initial codes were formed and then reviewed. Once the codes were given names and defined, the report of analysis was created.

This phenomenological case study utilized data from participants' experiences that supported overall student growth socially and emotionally, as well as positive benefits to the general classroom setting following implementation of the MindUp curriculum. Five themes emerged from the data as well as supporting subthemes within each describing the student growth and classroom climate. The following is a summary of how each of these answered the research questions as well as a graphical representation in Table 4.

Table 4

Themes and Subthemes by Research Question

Themes	Research Question		
	RQ1 Teachers	RQ2 Students	RQ3 Parents
T1- Positive Impact on Students	X	X	X
S1- Practice Outside the Lesson	X	X	X
S2- Student Interest in the Program	X		X
S3- The Importance Of the Balance Lesson	X	X	
T2-Calm Classroom Environment	X	X	
S1- Overall Calmness	X	X	
S2- Change in Classroom Environment	X	X	
T3- Teacher Common Interest in Brain Development	X		
T4- Connection To Other Content	X		
T5- Differences in Gender	X		

Research Question 1: What are teachers' perceptions of the curriculum? What are teachers' perceptions of changes in the classroom environment/climate during and after the intervention?

All five themes and each subtheme helped to answer the first research question. Teachers described the impact of the MindUp curriculum on students (the first theme), noting how students practiced mindfulness outside of the formal lessons, expressed interest in the program, and especially responded to the "balance" lesson (the first three

subthemes). Teachers' perceptions of the curriculum were also addressed in themes four and five, in that teachers made connections between the MindUp program and other content areas and noted how male and female students responded to the curriculum differently. Tying the mindfulness curriculum into other content showed a positive teacher perspective of the program because it moved beyond the basic level of curriculum implementation and toward an active decision to embed it within other core content instruction.

Teachers also perceived changes in the classroom environment (theme two). In the subthemes, teachers reported an overall calm environment during the lessons and an increased calmness from the start of the lesson to the end helped to answer this aspect of RQ1.

Research Question 2: How do students perceive the classroom environment during and after the intervention? What were the students' perspectives of the curriculum?

Themes one and two addressed both parts of this question about student experiences. Students' perceptions of the classroom environment were answered in theme two, calm classroom environment. Students reported perceiving the classroom as relaxing during the lessons, captured in subtheme one: overall calmness. In addition, fifth-grade student Hector described students in the classroom being loud before the lesson to feeling as though no one else was in the room by the end. This last perspective helped to solidify subtheme two, change in classroom environment.

Student perspectives of the curriculum were also answered in theme one, positive student impact, and two of the three subthemes: practice outside of the lesson and the

importance of the balance lesson. Each student reported a level of impact from the mindfulness curriculum. Students Amal and Hector, both reported using deep breathing strategies, and Tony reported the ability to bounce back from negative situations. All three explained specific instances in which they practiced the content outside the lessons (subtheme one). Teachers even witnessed one of them practicing at recess when other students were playing. This showed an elevated impact because it was not only reported by students, but it was also witnessed by teachers. In addition, all students reported having a memorable experience with the balance lesson. This lesson specifically was a positive experience with the MindUp curriculum.

Research Question 3: Do parents notice any difference in their child's overall social/emotional skills post intervention? If there was a change, how do parents perceive the change?

This question was answered solely through theme one, positive student impact and two of its subthemes: practice outside of the lesson and student interest in the program. Parents reported changes they saw in their child this school year: increased self-confidence (Tony); increased interest in learning (Amal); and an increased curiosity, relaxed personality, and responsibility (Hector). Amal's mom expressed that this was the first year of school she has asked to stay up after morning prayer to work on her reading, and Hector's mom said she couldn't ask any more of him. Both of these statements reflected a positive perception of the change in their child.

This study was unique in that it explored the experiences of ESL students in relation to their experiences with mindfulness curriculum. Findings suggest that positive increases in SEL may be possible as a result of the MindUp curriculum for this

population of students. In addition, both teachers and parents were able to see the impact mindfulness had on the students which could positively influence mindfulness engagement in the future.

Connection to Previous Literature

Research on mindfulness and SEL has increased significantly in US schools in the past decade as educators seek additional ways to support the social emotional needs of students to influence academic achievement. Although few researchers have connected mindfulness and SEL (Bakosh et al., 2015; Bakosh et al., 2018; Schonert-Reichel et al., 2015; Valosek et al., 2019), mindfulness outcomes typically present increased characteristics of SEL as well (Schonert-Reichel & Lawlor, 2010; Schonert-Reichel et al., 2015). To the researchers' knowledge, no literature has connected mindfulness and ESL and very few SEL and ESL connections have previously been made. As ESL populations grow in the US each year (Blanco-Vega et al., 2009), mindfulness and SEL research is critical to explore ways in which social emotional skills can be increased to support students who experience the following risk factors: difficulty adjusting to school (Chang et al., 2007); peer acceptance (Chang et al., 2007); lower academic self-concept (Chang et al., 2007); increased exposure to microaggressions (Balagna et al., 2013); difficulties in asserting needs (Balagna et al., 2013); increased peer aggression (Garner et al., 2014); and decreased sense of belonging at school (Garner et al., 2014).

The findings of this study reflect increases of social emotional skills just as previous studies have in both the mindfulness and SEL realms. Connections were also made to practice outside the actual lessons and overall calmness of the classroom that resulted. In addition, this study highlighted teacher experiences of difference in gender

toward the mindfulness curriculum. The findings on gender have been mixed in previous literature, with some studies finding no differences in gender and mindfulness and others highlighting more mindfulness impact and engagement in girls. Therefore, this could be helpful for future researchers and/or educators when approaching the topics of mindfulness and SEL.

Increased Social Emotional Skills

Findings in the current study show increases of student self-confidence, interest in learning, relaxed disposition, responsibility, and curiosity. These findings helped answer RQ3 as all of these characteristics were reported by parents. Previous literature also has found increases within mindfulness literature in self-confidence (Le & Trieu, 2016), curiosity (Yeh et al., 2019); and a more relaxed disposition (Broderick & Metz, 2009). Self-confidence/self-esteem increases were also found in multiple studies regarding mindfulness (Coholic & Eys, 2016; Randal et al., 2015) and SEL (Coelho & Sousa, 2018; Sheard et al., 2012).

Teacher reports of Amal having "calmed down" this school year could also relate to teacher reports of decreased problem behaviors in mindfulness (Beauchemin et al., 2008; Parker et al., 2014) and SEL literature (Cho et al., 2019; Sheard et al., 2012). This finding helped answer RQ1 that asked about teachers' perceptions were of the classroom environment during and after the mindfulness lessons. Although there have been multiple references to improved academic performance in the literature, there were no reports of increased interest in learning. However, the two could be related and should be noted for future research.

Practice Outside of the Classroom

Student descriptions of practicing mindfulness outside of the classroom have appeared in previous literature as well and helped to answer RQ2 (the perspective of students related to the mindfulness curriculum). Doss and Bloom (2017) specifically explored the relationship students had with mindfulness practice outside of classroom instruction. Amal's experience of using mindfulness when interacting with her siblings and cousins connected to Doss and Bloom's (2017) findings of use during interaction with siblings. In addition, Hector's experience of using mindfulness during the school day when peers would fight connected to Doss and Bloom's (2017) finding of use in everyday middle school life. Teacher and parent experiences of mindfulness practice in the literature have all revolved around expected daily practice as a part of the mindfulness curriculum. Therefore, this could be a potential interest in future research within the topic.

Overall Calmness

Overall feelings of calm were expressed in the findings of multiple authors within mindfulness literature (Beauchemin et al., 2008; Haberlin & O'Grady, 2018; Higgins & Eden, 2018; Milligan et al., 2013). Although none of these feelings of calm expressed a relationship to the classroom environment, there was a specific relationship to a feeling of calm within participants' bodies/experiences just as Amal and Hector recounted their experience of calmness when participating in mindfulness lessons. Although they both reported feelings of calm related to the classroom environment, they also reported using deep breathing to help calm themselves when they were in various stressful situations as

well. Higgins and Eden (2018) reported similar findings that a focus on breathing strategies produced a calming effect for students. These findings helped answer RQ2 that asked the students' perspective of the classroom environment and overall experience of the curriculum.

Connection to Other Content

In this study, teachers connected mindfulness to writing through journaling, science, and social studies and planned to connect social times of the day like morning classroom meetings. This finding helped to answer RQ2, teachers' perspectives of the mindfulness curriculum. Many previous studies have connected mindfulness with journal writing post-mindfulness intervention (Bakosh et al., 2015; Bakosh et al., 2018; Britton et al., 2014; Costello & Lawlor, 2014; Doss & Bloom, 2017; Keller et al., 2017; Viglas & Perlman, 2018). Keller et al. (2017) also incorporated reading in addition to the journaling. In an attempt to make mindfulness more seamless in academic content, Davenport and Paginini (2016) took a completely different approach and used mindfulness throughout daily assignments. For example, in economics students were asked to use practical application and critical thinking skills relative to their community's needs. Moreover, mindfulness has been used in various other studies either as a component or as a way to embed mindfulness into core content to enhance student learning.

Differences in Gender

Results of differences in gender have varied in previous research findings. Most findings in literature have compared increases of self-regulation skills in girls and boys compared to a specific outcome. For example, Carsley and Heath (2018) examined the

differences in gender as it related to test anxiety over time. The authors found that, while both genders benefited from the mindfulness intervention, females reported a statistically significant decrease in test anxiety as compared to males.

Sheinman et al. (2018) was the only group of authors, to the researcher's knowledge, who have examined mindfulness dispositions by gender. In their study, the authors found a significantly higher use of mindfulness coping strategies used by females than males. These results support the experience of the classroom teachers within the current case study of differences in levels of participation and interest in females and males, with females showing more interest, participation, and practice outside of the classroom than their male classmates. These results helped to answer RQ1, the teachers' experience of the classroom environment.

Considerations for Future Research and Educators

Findings from this study suggest directions for future engagement in mindfulness instruction in the classroom for educators as well as implications for research.

Educator Considerations

Within the teacher interviews, the issue of understanding mindfulness vocabulary terms arose in both. Although this data point did not appear to be repeated often enough to constitute a separate theme in the results of the study, it is necessary for educators to consider when implementing mindfulness lessons with students in the future. The fifth-grade teacher reported that she "front loaded" all of the lessons with vocabulary terms that would be discussed in the lesson. This teacher was also working on her ESL endorsement and had training relative to this specific strategy for ESL students prior to teaching any kind of content. The fourth-grade teacher did not have this same training

and brought up the vocabulary as something that may have limited her ESL students' understanding of the content. Therefore, it should be considered that vocabulary terms be taught before engaging in mindfulness lessons so that ESL students have access to understanding what is expected of them and what they are expected to do during the lesson.

Consideration for Both Educators and Researchers

During the semi-structured interviews with parents, every time the researcher used the word mindfulness, the translator had to stop and seek clarification about the meaning. What each translator shared separately with the researcher was that there is not a translation for the word "mindfulness." Therefore, the translator had to gain context about the word and then describe it as a definition in order to translate. This is important for both researchers and educators.

As educators, it may be helpful to ask students to practice describing mindfulness to someone who is not already familiar with the word in their native language as well as English (for those with proficiency). Since only one of the three students attempted to explain it to their parents, this could present a barrier in transferring the skills or discussing it in real-life situations. For researchers who have documents translated or who are prepared to conduct interviews, this is important to understand before engaging in those activities. It could be helpful to have a preplanned explanation of the word or to discuss with a translator how best the word could be translated in another language. For example, if meditation is a word that already has a translation in that specific language, the two could be correlated for better understanding. Also, the Pali word "sati" translates to mindfulness. However, this word has different meanings in different cultures and

should be explored before using this with a translator. All of this furthers the need for vocabulary breakdown when engaging with ESL students and families.

Another consideration for both teachers and researchers is the possibility of teacher impact. The fifth-grade teacher has taught the MindUp curriculum before and has practiced mindfulness on her own in her personal life. However, the fourth-grade teacher had never taught the MindUp content and had a more limited understanding of mindfulness in general. Therefore, the fourthgrade teacher reported that mindfulness lessons impacted her as well as her students whereas the fifth-grade teacher did not. The examples she gave of her own impact were in the lesson of mindful eating. During the mindful eating lesson where the students (and the teacher) let a semi-sweet chocolate dissolve in their mouths while resisting the urge to just eat it, the teacher connected the lesson to her own life as a teacher. She noted that as a teacher she has such a limited time to eat lunch that she has conditioned herself to eat quickly and mindlessly.

> And it helped me to slow down myself when I'm trying to eat and enjoy a meal, but not here necessarily, but when I'm somewhere else, it reminded me to just slow down and take in the food and actually enjoy it, and savor that moment, instead of just trying to eat it as quickly as possible. (T-EC-I1)

That condition has transferred over for her outside of school as well. She reported that the lesson made her stop and observe herself while eating and how it was a mindfull experience now.

In addition to the impact from the mindful eating lesson, the fourth-grade teacher also reported an impact from the experience of the gratitude content. At the beginning of the school year, the teacher had placed a picture of the fourth- and fifth-grade teachers,

who all took a trip to the beach together, in each of their respective classrooms without telling them so that when they saw it, they would have that memory triggered of that relaxing trip to the beach. This was done with the intent that they could see the picture and have a feeling of gratitude for that particular time.

The departmentalization of content taught by the fourth- and fifth-grade teachers should be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings of this study. Being that the teachers only taught reading, social studies, science, and writing, there was not an opportunity to connect the MindUp curriculum to other content within this study. Connections to other content should be explored in future research or educational opportunities in the classroom.

Last, differences of gender should be carefully considered when conducting future research and mindfulness interventions in the classroom setting. Although differences in gender have been explored in the research and were a finding of this study, it is important to note that the differences reported by teachers were only reports of outward examples of the students' experiences. When students actually reported on their own experience, all of the participants reported a level of impact and interest in this study. All parents also reported social emotional gains from the school year. While the outward participation may vary by gender, it is important to consider that students may be getting more from the curriculum than is can actually witnessed.

Considerations for Future Researchers

This study has just scratched the surface as it relates to mindfulness, SEL, and ESL students. There is a great deal more to learn about how mindfulness and SEL curricula, either separate or combined, might promote social emotional skills necessary to

excel academically and socially in school settings. With the increased risk factors suggested in the literature for students who speak English as a second language, this is a group that could benefit from further research in mindfulness and SEL.

Just as vocabulary is a consideration for future educators who teach mindfulness curriculum to students, it should also be a consideration for future researchers. Specific interest in vocabulary could be related to the relationship of English proficiency and impact on ESL students. For example, is there an impact on students who have minimal English proficiency experiencing mindfulness curriculum solely in English? To what extent does the vocabulary need to be explicitly described within the mindfulness curriculum for ESL students to have full access? Future researchers should explore this relationship when ESL students are included in the sample population.

There are mixed results within the literature relating to differences in gender as it relates to mindfulness. Although this study presented data from the experiences of two teachers, this does not present findings that are able to be generalized to larger populations especially with the consideration of outward expressions of interest versus internal experiences of participants. Therefore, there is still a need to explore the relationship between gender and mindfulness in future research.

Last, there was no generalizable evidence in this study about academic improvement and mindfulness interventions. Although one of the students expressed a greater interest in learning this school year, there could have been additional outside factors that accounted for this in addition to the MindUp curriculum. Although there have been studies that included academic improvement as an outcome explored from

mindfulness interventions, there should be further exploration of the possible connection to increased interest in learning as well.

Conclusion

Social emotional skills impact students on a daily basis both academically and socially in classrooms across the nation. As ESL populations rapidly increase, it is important to note the additional risk factors these students face as a result of having a different primary language in a predominantly English-speaking country. It is imperative that educators build or continue to embed social emotional skills into curriculum using mindfulness and SEL programs such as MindUp. Mindfulness curriculum can help build SEL to promote a greater overall understanding of social emotional skills.

This study provided an initial exploration into the connection between mindfulness, SEL, and ESL. Although the results cannot be generalized to other populations, it is an important first step to better understand how mindfulness can help address the additional risk factors and give students coping strategies (like taking deep breaths) to calm in stressful situations.

In addition, the findings of this study highlight the change in the classroom environment as well. Since the MindUp lessons were taught whole-class, all of the students received the benefit of the calmed and relaxed nature of the classroom post-intervention. Overall, the MindUp curriculum made a positive impact on the ESL students in this study both during the lessons and after. Students used the curriculum to improve social relationships and to calm in stressful situations giving them practice for carryover in the future. The MindUp curriculum helped to build social emotional skills

such as self-confidence, curiosity, and a more calmed/relaxed disposition. Therefore, the MindUp curriculum did help improve SEL for these specific ESL students.

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