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Developing Social and Emotional Skills in Early Childhood Instruction: A Delphi Study

A Dissertation by

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School of Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

December 2018

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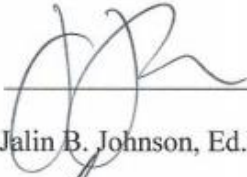
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December 2018

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"Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen." – Ephesians 3:20-21

To my angel Grandmother, Mama. I always hoped to live up to your high opinion of me. You have been my cheerleader for as long as I can remember and your endless praise and encouragement have been a constant source of inspiration on this journey. I know I've made you proud, as you have never missed an opportunity to tell me so. Thank you for being my best friend for my whole life. This is for you!

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elephant one bite at a time! I can't thank you enough for your leadership and

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DEDICATION

To my beautiful children, Kensington Rose and Preston Jay. You were too little to understand what I have been up to for the past few years, but you were the source of inspiration for this research! I wanted to learn as much as I could to be the Mom you deserve. Thank you for being my teachers and my absolute joy every single day! You make life so beautiful and I know you will change the world someday with your kind hearts and many talents. Stay humble, work hard, and be kind. Fix your eyes on Jesus and you can tell the mountains to move! I love you more than anyone ever loved anyone in the history of EVER.

- Mommy

ABSTRACT

Developing Social and Emotional Skills in Early Childhood Instruction: A Delphi Study

by Tess Breen

Purpose: The purpose of this Delphi study was to explore social and emotional learning in early childhood instruction with an emphasis on identifying the methods expert early childhood teachers use to support and promote the development of empathy and emotion regulation, to have the teachers rate the impact of these methods, and to identify the specific activities used to implement the six most highly rated methods.

Methodology: This study utilized the Delphi method which is an iterative process used to collect and distill the judgments of experts using a series of questionnaires interspersed with feedback. Fourteen participants recommended strategies to support and promote the development of empathy and emotion regulation in preschool classrooms. This data provided the content for the second survey where participants rated the effectiveness of 10 strategies on a 5-point Likert scale. Once the top six strategies were identified, participants recommended methods to implement these six methods in the classroom.

Findings: This study identified the following instructional strategies as effective to support and promote the development of empathy and emotion regulation in preschool classrooms: building positive relationships with students, modeling, role play, providing a quiet area, identify and label feelings, and group time. The study also provides recommendations to implement these strategies.

Conclusions: The findings of this study lead to three major conclusions. First, teachers need access to personal development tools where they can develop their own empathy and emotion regulation skills. Next, teachers need to understand the students' family

dynamics and build relationships with parents to ensure these social and emotional learning tools are being reinforced at home. Lastly, school districts need to adopt specified curriculum aimed at teaching social and emotional learning skills.

Recommendations: It would be wise for school districts to develop and implement a specific curriculum program that is implemented in all classrooms. This would ensure that every child is receiving the same level of training at each grade level. There is a need for additional research supporting the positive benefits of social emotional learning training across multiple contexts and ages, particularly in preschoolers.

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Children today are growing up in a new frontier; learning to navigate challenges their parents never had to face. According to Rickes (2016), children today are pioneers in the age of technology characterized by constant streams of information and distractions which they have learned to process quickly. Dubbed Generation Z, the successor to the millennials have been called "digital natives," described as consummate multitaskers, achievement oriented, and sheltered (Rickes, 2016). One of the most notable effects of this digital age is a stress-induced environment due to increased connectivity, academic demands, a host of extracurricular activities, and athletic competition (Hoffman, 2011; Knopf, 2016). The result is a mental health crisis where young people are riddled with anxiety and an inability to regulate their emotions (Knopf, 2016).

How can parents and educators help students manage this anxiety to lead happy and successful lives? Though a high intelligence quotient, or IQ, has long been touted as the ultimate measure of intelligence and success; researchers have suggested there may be multiple forms of intelligence which can positively contribute to academic and professional success (M. Brackett, Rivers, & Salovey, 2011; Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Gardner, 1987). The development of social and emotional competence, described as emotional intelligence (EI), has become a topic of interest in the business world and, more recently, in the field of education.

The changing demands placed upon children in Generation Z have created a need for systematic prevention and early interventions that emphasize the importance of social emotional learning (SEL) in schools (Hoffman, 2011). Schools that successfully implement SEL programs report increases in academic success, decreases in problem

behavior, and an improvement in overall mental health and well-being (J. A. Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Karimzadeh, Goodarzi, & Rezaei, 2012). These social and emotional development interventions are part of a paradigm shift moving education from academics only to a more holistic approach of educating the whole child towards emotional literacy (Barber, 2015; Miller, 2010).

Research suggests social and emotional competencies in young children contribute to school readiness for preschoolers (Barnett et al., 2008; Szanton, 1992). Furthermore, children who are able to demonstrate age-appropriate levels of social and emotional competence are more resilient to life stressors, leading to positive effects on their development (Barber, 2014; C. C. Raver, 2002; C. C. Raver & Zigler, 1997). In light of this research, parents and educators alike may have an interest in identifying specific social and emotional development strategies to prepare preschool students for success upon entering this challenging emotional terrain.

Background

In this section, a variety of topics will be discussed to provide a background for the study of social and emotional development in preschool-aged children. Included in this section is an overview of America's current mental health crisis, the theoretical framework of EI as a possible antidote, and a brief history of social emotional learning programs. Lastly, a discussion of current research on SEL as it applies to early childhood education.

The Mental Health Crisis

Millions of Americans suffer from mental health disorders and the numbers appear to be growing. In 2013, the Center for Disease Control estimated that one in five

children suffer from a mental health disorder, now the largest contributor to disease among children and the largest cause of disability worldwide (as cited in Denizet-Lewis, 2017; Whiteford et al., 2013). Even more alarming, the number of children hospitalized from mood disorders increased 68% between 1997 and 2011 (Pfuntner, Wier & Stocks, 2013). What is causing this worldwide mental health crisis? According to Knopf (2016), paralyzing anxiety and an inability to regulate emotions has created a society in which suicide is now a leading cause of death - even for young children under eight years old. The most recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, published in June 2018, shows the U.S. suicide rate rose by 25% between 1999 and 2016 (Vestal, 2018). Experts agree coping skills and the ability to regulate one's emotions at an early age is becoming increasingly important in this climate (Choi, 2010; Guerra, Modecki, & Cunningham, 2014; Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2011).

EI

The mounting crisis of mental health has created a need for positive emotional interventions to address the growing rates of depression and anxiety. The term "emotional intelligence," frequently referred to as EI or IQ, refers to an individual's capacity for learning about, understanding, and attending to his or her own emotions and those of others (D. Goleman, 1995; J. D. Mayer & Caruso, 2008; J. D. Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004). The term was first coined by John Mayer and Peter Salovey in 1988 but later popularized by researcher Daniel Goleman (1995) in his book *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ.* The emotionally intelligent individual has been described as "personally resilient and a positive influence on others" (Morton, 2012, p. 12). Collective research demonstrates that EI involves a core set of cognitive

3

emotional processes that involve perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions (MacCann & Roberts, 2008; J. D. Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey 2000).

EQ versus IQ. Growing evidence is pointing to EI as a greater predictor of success in life than a high IQ (Anari, 2012; M. A. Brackett, Rivers, Maurer et al., 2011; Stosny, 1998). Unlike IQ, thought to be predetermined from birth, it is widely believed EI can be learned (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Forrest, 2015; D. Goleman, 1995; Guerra et al., 2014). Moreover, D. Goleman (1995) suggests emotions out of control can actually impede the intellect and mastering this emotional competence can help to facilitate other types of intelligence, including IQ.

Bradberry and Greaves (2009), suggest individuals with high EI scores are high performers and, on average, make more money than individuals with lower EQ scores. The ability to understand and manage emotions as well as managing behavior and personal relationships may be the intangible "it factor" that determines success. This suggestion that EQ can actually improve a person's IQ performance and overall success has generated interest in the topic from educators and parents alike.

EI in children. Researchers have identified connections between a person's EI and several other positive outcomes including emotional well-being, academic achievement, job satisfaction, and general life success (M. Brackett, Rivers, & Salovey, 2011; Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2005; J. D. Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Research on the topic of EI has primarily been focused on adults and available research on EI in children is scarce (Alegre, 2011). Still, recent studies are finding significant and meaningful preventative effects on aggression, social competence, and academic engagement through applied emotional learning programs for elementary school children

(Bierman et al., 2010). According to Psychologist Lisa Firestone (2016) EI can be taught and learned at any age. She believes there is an opportunity to positively affect the EI of future generations by implementing learning programs in our public schools (Firestone, 2016).

EI in early childhood education. In the formative years of life, a child's brain develops at an amazing rate. D. Goleman (2006) explains a child's brain grows to about two thirds of its adult size and evolves in complexity at a greater rate than it ever will again. During the first three or four years of life, important learning takes place more readily than later in life – particularly the area of emotional learning (D. Goleman, 2006). Not only is SEL important in early childhood education, the foundation of future learning is established in the first few years of life (Colbert, 2008; Szanton, 1992).

One of the many benefits associated with the development of EI in children is the success of behavioral interventions that help children regulate their own emotions. For example, research demonstrates young children stop having temper tantrums when they develop an emotional vocabulary to express and discriminate among differing emotional states (Modecki et al., 2017; Stosny, 1998). This emotional vocabulary may be useful to combat the alarming increases in depression and suicide in children (Lim, You & Ha, 2015; Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts, 2012). Though research in the development of EI in early childhood education is still limited, Colbert (2008) argues giving young children skills and strategies for controlling their emotions, solving problems and relating to others in positive ways, gives them tools that will serve them well for the rest of their lives.

Theoretical Foundation

The concept of EI is relatively new, but it is based on other theoretical

foundations dating back to Ancient Greece. In Plato's *The Republic*, written almost

2,500 years ago, he describes the idea of "arete" as a man's ability to regulate and rule

himself (as cited in Futter, 2012). Plato's suggestion for a holistic curriculum aims to

create a balance of physical education, the arts, and philosophy as well as the

development of character and moral judgment (Reid, 2007). This personal virtue,

character, is the foundation upon which other theories of EI later emerged.

Dr. Howard Gardner (1987) first introduced the concept of multiple intelligences

in his book *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, arguing IQ alone is

too limited to describe a person's collective intelligence. About a decade after his theory

had been published, Gardner (1995) defined his idea of personal intelligence which was

comprised of interpersonal intelligence, the ability to understand others; and intrapersonal

intelligence, the ability to accurately understand oneself. The term "emotional

intelligence" was first used by J. D. Mayer and Salovey (1988), though it was not

popularized until Daniel Goleman (1995) introduced the concept in his best-selling book

Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ. D. Goleman suggests that

approximately 20% of factors contributing to life success can be attributed to IQ, leaving

eighty percent of success determined by other forces.

So, what are these "forces" that can positively contribute to success? D. Goleman

(1995) posits the ability to "motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to

control impulses and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from

swamping the ability to think; to empathize and to hope" (p. 34) are all categorized under

the definition of EI. J. D. Mayer and Salovey (1988) identified five domains associated with EQ including: (a) knowing one's emotions, (b) managing emotions, (c) motivating oneself, (d) recognizing emotions in others, and (e) handling relationships. As D. Goleman and others postulated EQ could be learned and was a key ingredient for general life success, researchers began to seek training methods to develop these skills further (Elias et al., 1997; D. Goleman, 1995; J. D. Mayer & Salovey, 1998).

The Emergence of SEL

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson declared a "war on poverty." Part of his plan to rebuild impoverished communities was to develop a comprehensive child development program that would help communities meet the needs of disadvantaged preschool children (Vinovskis, 2005). From this initiative, the Project Head Start program was designed to provide preschool children of low-income families with a comprehensive program to meet their emotional, social, health, nutritional and psychological needs (Szanton, 1992). Today, the Head Start program focuses on five specific areas for preschool development to provide a learning environment that supports children's growth and includes: (a) language and literacy, (b) cognition and general knowledge, (c) physical development and health, (d) social and emotional development, and (e) approaches to learning (Nix, Bierman, Domitrovich, & Gill, 2013).

Johnson's Head Start program paved the way for the development of other SEL programs aimed at helping children acquire the skills of self and social awareness, emotion regulation, responsible decision making, problem solving, and relationship management (J. E. Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). SEL programs first emerged in the 1960s, tracing back to the Comer School Development Program (Comer,

1988). The program launched at two low-achieving elementary schools in New Haven,

Connecticut where both attendance and academic performance were low. Comer later

wrote, "the contrast between a child's experiences at home and those in school deeply

affects the child's psychosocial development and this in turn shapes academic

achievement" (p. 42). Within two decades, both schools experienced a transformational

change, surpassing the national average for academic performance along with a decrease

in behavioral problems and truancy (Cook, Murphy, & Hunt, 2000). This program

became a catalyst for further research on SEL.

In 1994, the Collaborative to Advance Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

was born with the mission "to establish social and emotional learning as an essential part

of education" (Elias et al., 1997, CASEL Drives the Movement section). The

establishment of the CASEL program coincided with the release of Daniel Goleman's

(1995) book *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ*, bringing together

the worlds of education and psychology. The book opened up a dialogue between

educators and psychologists in an effort to align school programs for cultivating social

and emotional competence with the scientific understanding of human emotion (L.

Lantieri, 2001). Since the early days of the movement, SEL programs have grown across

the United States and continue to gain popularity.

According to researchers, a systematic process for promoting students' social and

emotional development is associated with schools reporting an increase in academic

success, improved quality of relationships between teachers and students, a decrease in

problem behavior, and an improvement in overall mental health and well-being (J. A.

Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Karimzadeh et al., 2012).

Additionally, Brackett and Rivers (2014) from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence reported significant shifts in social, emotional, and academic competencies as well as improvements in the quality of learning environments as a result of SEL programs. The measurable success identified in existing SEL programs has created more attention for the movement, prompting more states to begin implementing similar programs.

SEL in Public Education

With the increasing popularity of the SEL programs in public schools, there has been a movement toward teaching social and emotional skills as an integral part of educating the "whole child" towards emotional literacy (Barber, 2014; Miller, 2010). The whole child movement suggests the public education system has an expanded responsibility to help socialize children. According to D. Goleman (2006), this holistic approach requires two major changes: that teachers go beyond their traditional mission and that community members become more involved with schools as both active participants in children's learning and as mentors.

In 2011, the H. R. 2437 Academic, Social and Emotional Learning Act was submitted to the United States Congress to support evidence-based SEL programming (Civic Impulse, 2018). The bill was not enacted, but supporters continue to lobby for widespread SEL programs in public education (D. Goleman, 2006; Hoffman, 2011; J. E. Zins, Weissbert et al., 2004). On July 1, 2018, the state of New York, added a paragraph to the state's Education Law mandating mental health instruction as part of health education curriculum in all public schools (DiGiulio, 2018). New York became the first state in the U.S. to require mental health to be taught as part of health education. The only other state to introduce a similar law was Virginia, which created similar legislation

in fall 2018. These laws, if implemented successfully, may provide a precedent for other

states to follow.

SEL Programs for Preschoolers

Research conducted by McClelland, Tominey, Schmitt, and Duncan (2017)

indicates preschool-age children participating in SEL programs can improve their

behavior, but we may also see changes in their brain structure and function. According to

Szanton (1992), future success in school is dependent on characteristics largely formed

by the age of three. These characteristics of successful students include: (a) coming to

school curious, (b) confident, (c) conscious of what behavior is expected of them, (d)

comfort in seeking assistance, and (e) the ability to get along with others - qualities

largely developed, or not developed, in the first three years of life (Szanton, 1992).

Additionally, the National Center for Clinical Infant Programs has identified seven

qualities they believe to be the emotional foundations of school readiness:

- confidence

- curiosity

- intentionality

- self-control

- relatedness

- capacity to communicate

- cooperativeness (as cited in Szanton, 1992).

Hoffman (2011) suggests additional research is needed to link the assessment of

children's school readiness skills with the identification of the specific targets for

intervention. Researchers also indicate a need for implementing interventions focused on

teaching children social-emotional competence and self-regulation (Barnett et al., 2008; Blair, Denham, Kochanoff, & Whipple, 2004; Riggs, Jahromi, Razza, Dilworth-Bart, & Mueller, 2006). As the literature suggests, additional research is needed to identify specific interventions that can positively affect the social and emotional development of preschool-aged children in order to prepare them for success in grade school and beyond.

Statement of the Research Problem

Young people today are faced with a mental health crisis. They report overwhelming anxiety and depression, rendering them incapable of regulating these negative emotions (Denizet-Lewis, 2017; Knopf, 2017). In order to successfully navigate these challenges, researchers have emphasized a need for systematic prevention and early interventions to combat these challenges (Hoffman, 2011). Children who demonstrate age appropriate social and emotional competence in preschool also tend to be the children who are actively engaged in their learning and have future academic success in kindergarten and beyond (Coolahan, Fantuzzo & Mendez, 2000; Thayer, 2012). Children who do not transition successfully are often lacking adequate social and emotional skills needed to support their learning (Lin, Lawrence, & Gorrell, 2003; R. C. Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004; Thayer, 2012).

The focus of preschool curriculum today is primarily geared toward enhancing the academic skills of preschoolers "at the expense of social and emotional skills" (Team, 2006, p. 3). According to Thayer (2012), to ensure optimal social, academic, and psychological success the future, educators and researchers need to understand the development of social and emotional competence in early childhood education. Researchers are calling for a shift in the traditional preschool curriculum in order to

11

include EI training as part of educating the whole child toward emotional literacy (Barber, 2014; Miller, 2010).

Research on the effects of SEL programs is limited, and much of the existing research is focused on low-income students in publicly funding preschool programs (Starnes, 2017; Steed & Roach, 2017). Within the body of research on social and emotional training for preschool-aged children, the majority of the research focuses on measuring direct social and emotional growth related to school readiness (DeRosier & Mercer, 2007; Starnes, 2017). The problem is, despite evidence that early detection and intervention can prevent academic and social difficulties, few studies have been conducted which examine specific methods teachers can utilize to promote SEL in the preschool setting (Gallegos, 2014; Hoffman, 2011).

Gallegos (2014) recommends "more research regarding curriculum and best practices to ensure healthy and positive social-emotional development for all preschool children" (p. 115). Additionally, Hoffman (2011) suggests further clarification is needed regarding "specific teacher instructional practices that may account for improvements in children's school readiness skills" (p. 93). The goal of this research is to add to the body of knowledge regarding SEL curriculum in the preschool setting. Gathering such information would allow for a better understanding of SEL and can be included in curriculum for school readiness.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this Delphi study was to identify the instructional strategies expert early childhood teachers use to support and promote the development of empathy and emotion regulation in early childhood instruction. In addition, it was the purpose to rate

12

the effectiveness of these instructional strategies, and to identify the specific activities used to implement the six most highly rated instructional strategies.

Research Questions

The research questions were divided into three rounds and are as follows:

Round 1

1. What instructional strategies do expert early childhood teachers use to support and promote the development of empathy and emotion regulation in early childhood instruction?

Round 2

2. How do the teachers rate the effectiveness of the methods identified in Round 1?

Round 3

3. What specific activities do teachers recommend to implement the six most highly rated methods identified in Round 2?

Significance of the Problem

According to the World Health Organization (2014), mental health disorders are experienced by 10 to 20% of children and adolescents worldwide, affecting one in five children. Common diagnoses include impulse control disorders, disruptive disorders, mood disorders, eating disorders, and anxiety disorders (Kaufman, 2017). Furthermore, The CDC (2015) reported suicide as the third leading cause of death for children between the ages 10 and 24. These statistics suggests the worldwide mental health crisis is a genuine concern for Generation Z.

Studies have linked EI with a variety of positive outcomes including physical and mental health, lower stress levels, positive social relationships, job satisfaction, and overall life satisfaction (Montes-Berges & Augusto, 2007; Nourmand, 2013). Meanwhile, deficiencies in EI heighten the risk of depression, eating disorders and drug abuse (D. Goleman, 1995). The literature suggests EQ plays a crucial role in overall health and life satisfaction, creating a need for further research on strengthening these competencies in children (Gallegos, 2014; Hoffman, 2011).

The significance of this study is that it fills a gap in the current literature by providing information about how teachers promote the development of EI competencies in the preschool setting (Gallegos, 2014). Additionally, Hoffman (2011) emphasized a need for identifying the specific methods the teacher's rate as most impactful in developing empathy and emotion regulation in children. Research in this area is very limited, and the goal of this study was to enhance the literature with specific methods for teaching these social and emotional competencies (Mihic et al., 2016; Starnes, 2017; Steed & Roach, 2017). As Gallegos (2014) advocates, having a better understanding of these teaching strategies could improve school readiness and positively affect children's social relationship and mental well-being later in life.

Although EI promises a wide range of positive outcomes, very little research has been conducted on developing these capabilities in early childhood education. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14 (Vestal, 2018). Parents and educators alike may be missing an opportunity for preventing future social and emotional disruptions if they neglect

important training at this critical stage of development. Giving preschoolers a jump start on healthy habits may immunize them from future mental health issues.

Definitions

Theoretical Definitions

Emotional Intelligence (*EI*). As defined by D. Goleman (1995), EI includes five main domains of personal intelligences: (a) knowing one's emotions, (b) managing emotions, (c) motivating oneself, (d) recognizing emotions in others, and (e) handling relationships.

Head Start Program. A program funded by the United States Department of Health and Human Services to promote the school readiness of children from birth to age five from low-income families through agencies in their local community. Services include early learning, health, and family well-being (About the Office of Head Start, 2018).

Intelligence Quotient (IQ). "A theoretical construct used by psychologists within standardized tests as a means of describing one's intelligence level" (J. Grohol, 2018a, para. 1).

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). The process of integrating thinking, feeling, and behaving in order to become aware of the self and of others, make responsible decisions, and manage one's own behaviors and those of others (Elias et al., 1997).

Operational Definitions

Early Childhood Education. Early childhood education consists of activities or experiences intended to effect developmental changes in children prior to their entry into elementary school (Early Childhood Education, 2018).

Early Childhood Educator. Any professional working in Early Learning and Development Programs, including but not limited to center-based and family child care providers, infant and toddler specialists, early intervention specialists and early childhood special educators, home visitors, related service providers, administrators, Head Start teachers, Early Head Start teachers, preschool and other teachers, teacher assistants, family service staff, and health coordinators (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

Emotion regulation. "The modification of any process in the system that generates emotion or its manifestation in behavior" (Campos, Camras & Frankel, 2004, p. 380).

Empathy. "The capacity to think and feel oneself into the inner life of another person" (Kohut, 1984, p. 82).

Generation Z (Gen Z). The name given to describe people born in the mid-2000s, following the millennial generation. The most notable attributes of this generation have been access to and regular use of the Internet as well as the other technological breakthroughs that have occurred since the 1990s (Cooper, 2014).

Mental health disorders. As defined by J. Grohol (2018b), mental health disorders are "characterized by problems that people experience with their mind and their mood" (para. 1).

Delimitations

This study was delimited to preschool teachers from Riverside County, in the state of California. The teachers involved in this study were actively teaching children ages three to six during the past five years and hold a masters or doctoral degree. The study took place during 2018.

Organization of the Study

The remainder of the study is organized into four chapters. Chapter II contains a review of literature regarding EI and SEL. Chapter III provides an explanation of the methodology and research design including a description of the population and sample of the study. Next, the findings of the study are presented in Chapter IV while Chapter V provides a complete summary of the research as well as conclusion and recommendations for future research in this area.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this literature review is to summarize the historical perspective and conceptual framework of EI, review the relevant variables, and discuss the research problems requiring further study. The review of literature begins with a historical background of mental health issues and the inception of EI. The chapter will conclude with a more recent history of SEL programs and emerging research on the current impact of these programs.

Review of the Literature

The Mental Health Crisis

According to Knopf (2016), paralyzing anxiety and an inability to regulate emotions has created a society in which suicide is now a leading cause of death - even for young children under eight years old. What is causing this current worldwide mental health crisis? Escalating suicide rates affect nearly every demographic group and location in the United States (Smith, 2018). These alarming statistics add to a growing consensus early intervention and prevention is the key to solving the current mental health crisis in the United States (Cosgrove, 2018). Experts agree coping skills and the ability to regulate one's emotions at an early age is becoming increasingly important (Choi, 2010; Guerra et al., 2014; Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2011).

Children's mental health. Childhood stress has increased dramatically in the last few decades due to a struggling economy, the demands of academics and competitive sports beginning at a very young age (Newmark, 2008). Christine Moutier, Medical Director of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, identifies a need to teach people how to manage things like breakups and job stresses "because anybody can

experience those stresses. Anybody" (as cited in Brent, 2018, p. 23). This includes children.

Mental health disorders are now recognized as the largest source of disability worldwide, particularly among children and adolescents (Begg et al., 2007; Prince et al., 2008; Whiteford et al., 2013). In 2013, the Center for Disease Control estimated one in five children suffer from a mental health disorder (Denizet-Lewis, 2017). Statistics indicate this problem is on the rise as the number of children hospitalized from mood disorders increased 68% between 1997 and 2011 (Pfuntner et al., 2013). Newmark (2008) explains "our children are growing up in an age of anxiety, change, and uncertainty – one which is probably more difficult for children than any previous time in history" (p. 2). Kirkland, Soleimani, and Newton (2018) cite "inadequate responses" to the needs of children's mental health, particularly in the United States. Researchers now estimate one out of seven children aged two to eight years old have a diagnosed mental or behavioral disorder in the United States (Bitsko et al., 2011). These statistics provide evidence of an epidemic plaguing young people.

Suicide rates in children. The rapid growth in suicide rates for children ages 10 to 14 is alarming and seems to be more prevalent in girls for the first time in history (Brent, 2018). Perhaps most concerning, suicide is now the third leading cause of death in very young children (Knopf, 2016). The most recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found the U.S. suicide rate rose by a quarter between 1999 and 2016 (Vestal, 2018). These sharp increases in suicide rates are not only a mental health problem, but a public health problem (Nutt, 2018). Brent (2018) reports the success of preventive interventions aimed at bolstering family resiliency provides

hope for long-term protective effects against suicidal ideation and behavior. These

prosocial preventive approaches, which can be delivered in the classroom setting, have

been shown to reduce suicidal ideation and attempt in young people (Brent, 2018). Just

as helplessness and despair are learned behaviors, optimism and hope can be learned as

well (D. Goleman, 1995; Kanoy, 2013).

EI

Dr. Martin Seligman, renowned psychologist and author explained "the

prevention of mental illness comes from recognizing and nurturing a set of strengths,

competencies, and virtues in young people – such as future-mindedness, hope,

interpersonal skills, courage, the capacity for flow, faith, and work ethic" (as cited by

Covey, Covey, Summers, & Hatch, 2008, p. 10). The ability to regulate one's emotions

is important, not only for the mentally ill, but for anyone struggling with lifestyle

problems (Choi, 2010; Guerra et al., 2014; Nutt, 2018; Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner,

2011). This skill has been termed "emotional intelligence" which describes an

individual's ability to understand and regulate his or her own emotions and to recognize

these emotions in others (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Gardener, 1983; D. Goleman,

1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Teele, 2000).

EI is considered to encompass a fundamental set of cognitive emotional processes

that involve the perception, use, understanding, and management of emotions (MacCann

& Roberts, 2008; J. D. Mayer et al., 2000). Bar-On (1997), author of the EQ-i EI

measurement tool, defines the concept as "an array of non-cognitive capabilities,

competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with

environmental demands and pressures" (p. 14). Morton (2012), describes an emotionally intelligent individual as resilient in his or her personal life and a positive influence on others.

There are an increasing number of studies that show a relationship between EI and an array of positive outcomes such as academic achievement, emotional well-being, job satisfaction, and general life success (Alegre, 2012). Emotionally intelligent people are considered better at coping with life's challenges and environmental demands, contributing to overall positive psychological and physical health (Lanciano & Curci, 2015). According to Ghosh and Rajaram (2015), EI directly influences key entrepreneurial qualities such as proactive behavior, self-actualization, effective planning, ambiguity tolerance, risk-taking and self-responsiveness. With so much evidence pointing to EI as a strong success indicator, parents and teachers are seeking to harness the power of EI and find practical ways to help young develop their skills.

EI versus IQ. Use of the term "intelligence" to describe emotional competence has led to confusion between EI and IQ (Jensen, Kohn, Rilea, Hannon, & Howells, 2007). General intelligence is defined as "an ability or skill that can be traditionally measured by performance on tasks that require the specified skills" (Jensen et al., 2007, p. 5). In comparison, EI refers to an individual's capacity for learning about, understanding, and attending to his or her own emotions and those of others (D. Goleman, 1995; J. D. Mayer et al., 2004; J. D. Mayer et al., 2008).

Much of the research on cognitive intelligence has focused on the standard intelligence test as a predictor of academic success, however, researchers are discovering a strong relationship between EI and future success in life (Anari, 2012; M. A. Brackett,

Rivers, Maurer et al., 2011; Stosney, 1998). J. D. Mayer and Salovey (1997) successfully

redefined their concept of EQ to focus strictly on cognitive abilities which include the

ability to perceive emotions; to use emotions in order to communicate more effectively;

to understand emotional information; and to use feelings for self-understanding and

personal growth. Though IQ is believed to be predetermined from birth, EQ is a set of

skills which can be learned (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Forrest, 2015; D. Goleman,

1995; Guerra et al., 2014).

D. Goleman (1995) postulates IQ is responsible for about 20% of life success

which leaves 80% to "other forces" (p. 34). Among these other forces: (a) the ability to

motivate oneself; (b) to persist during times of frustration; (c) to control impulses; (d) to

delay gratification; (e) to regulate one's mood; (f) to empathize; and (g) to experience

hope (D. Goleman, 1995). These interpersonal and intrapersonal qualities can be

synopsized as character (D. Goleman, 1995). According to Caruso and Salovey (2004),

"This is the challenge of emotion management—neither to suppress feelings nor to vent

them but to reflect on them, integrate them with our thinking, and use them as a source of

information and an inspiration for intelligent decision making" (p. 73). IQ and EQ may

be different forms of intelligences which can work together to increase effective decision

making and overall life success.

EI in children. The breadth of the literature regarding EI is focused on adults,

with little attention given to EQ in children (Alegre, 2011). Recent studies have

discovered a correlation between EI and the prevention of aggression, increased social

competence, and increased academic engagement through applied emotional learning programs (Bierman et al., 2010). Firestone (2016) states EI can be taught and learned at any age.

Linda Lantieri (2008), a founding member of the CASEL, asserts "the capacity to be more in control of one's thoughts, emotions, and physiology can form a sort of internal armor that gives children the inner preparedness they need to face the challenges and opportunities of life" (p. 8). This resiliency is necessary to help children cope with the stresses of everyday life. Unmanaged stress in children is often mistaken for inappropriate behavior. When a child's stress is not managed appropriately, it negatively affects a child's overall well-being and capacity to learn (L. Lantieri, 2008).

EI in early childhood education. During the early childhood years, the ability to independently regulate one's own emotions experiences substantial growth – particularly in the area of emotional learning (D. Goleman, 2006). The SEL established in the first few years of childhood education becomes the foundation of future learning (Colbert, 2008; Szanton, 1992). Developing an emotional vocabulary to discriminate between different emotional states in these formative years has been linked to a reduction of negative behaviors such as temper tantrums (Modecki et al., 2017; Stosny, 1998). Developing this emotional vocabulary may be useful for addressing recent increases in depression and suicide in children (Lim, You & Ha, 2015; Zeidner et al., 2012).

Colbert (2008) believes the skills and strategies for controlling emotions, solving problems and relating to others in positive ways, give children important tools which will serve them well for school success. These tools include an increased capacity for controlling negative emotions and the use of more positive, prosocial, and cognitive

emotion regulation strategies (Stansbury & Sigman, 2000; S. C. Thayer, 2013). In other words, preparation for school success is less dependent on knowledge of facts, but on the knowledge of how to learn. According to D. Goleman (1995), school readiness includes seven components:

- Confidence: A sense of control

- Curiosity: A positive view of learning

- Intentionality: A desire and capacity to have an impact, and to act with persistence

- Self-control: A sense of inner control of one's actions

- Relatedness: A sense of understanding others and being understood

- Capacity to communicate: The ability to verbally exchange ideas, feelings, and concepts with others – including adults

- Cooperativeness: The ability to balance one's own needs and desires with those of others in group activity

Each of these components are emotional or social in nature, which suggests school readiness is based more on emotional social and emotional competence than on cognitive competence.

The social emotions such as feelings of (a) insecurity, (b) humility, (c) jealousy, (d) envy, (e) pride, and (f) confidence appear to mature by age five when children enter kindergarten (D. Goleman, 1995). Mashburn et al. (2008) discovered observed emotional support in pre-kindergarten classrooms was predictive of a child's social competence in the future as well as a reduction in disruptive behaviors. For this reason, experts recommend SEL programs begin at home and in early childhood classrooms (Mashburn

24

et al., 2008; Thayer, 2013). Children who learn to express emotions and engage in caring and respectful relationships prior to entering elementary school are more likely to avoid violence, depression, suicide, and other mental health problems as they grow older (L. Lantieri, 2008). A child's self-concept about personal abilities and social competencies crystalize during elementary school, making programs that tie personal skill building into strategies that boost positive connections with teachers and peers especially useful for future success (Modecki et al., 2017).

Theoretical Foundation

The concept of EI is grounded in the field of psychology, though the ancient Greeks espoused the values of self-regulation and personal virtue which might be described today as character and moral values (Futter, 2012; Reid, 2007). In Plato's *The Republic*, he describes the idea of "arete" as a man's ability to regulate and rule himself (as cited in Futter, 2012). Plato suggests a comprehensive curriculum which aims to balance physical education, the arts, and philosophy (Reid, 2007). At some point in history, this "whole person" approach to education became unpopular, and it did not reemerge until the 19th century. Plato's personal virtue, or character, is the foundation upon which the theory of EI later emerged.

Thorndike's social intelligence. E.L. Thorndike was an influential psychologist who helped popularize the concept of IQ in the 1920s. In his research, Thorndike acknowledged three types of intelligence: (a) abstract, (b) mechanical, and (c) social (as cited in J. D. Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Thorndike described social intelligence as the ability to understand others and to act wisely in human relationships, which he believed to be a component of IQ (as cited by D. Goleman, 1995). In modern times, IQ has been

revered as the ultimate measure of intelligence and success; although researchers have

suggested there may be multiple forms of intelligence which can positively contribute to

academic and professional success (M. A. Brackett, Rivers, Maurer et al., 2011;

Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Gardner, 1987).

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Drawing from Thorndike's research,

Gardner (1987) first introduced the concept of multiple intelligences in his book *Frames

of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences.* He suggested IQ alone was not sufficient

to describe a person's collective intelligence (Gardner, 1987). Though Thorndike

identified three types of intelligence, Gardener expanded this concept to describe seven

different forms of intelligence: (a) logical mathematical, (b) linguistic, (c) musical, (d)

spatial, (e) bodily kinesthetic, (f) interpersonal, and (g) intrapersonal intelligence

(Gardner, 1987).

Gardener's (1987) definition of interpersonal intelligence, the ability to

understand others; and intrapersonal intelligence, the ability to accurately understand

oneself is similar to Thordike's description of social intelligence. Both theorists believed

the aptitude for effectively understanding oneself as well as others is a particular form of

intelligence. Gardner later referred to this concept as "personal intelligence," which

encompasses both interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. This concept laid the

groundwork for what would later become the concept of EI.

Mayer and Salovey. The term "emotional intelligence" was first coined by J. D.

Mayer and Salovey (1988) who described EQ as a set of skills which contribute to "the

accurate appraisal and expression of emotions, the effective regulation of emotions, and

the use of emotions to motivate, plan, and achieve in one's life" (p. 185). J. D. Mayer

and Salovey identified four major components of EI:

- Emotional perception: recognizing and inputting information from the

  emotion system

- Emotional facilitation: using emotion to improve cognitive processes

- Emotional understanding: cognitive processing of emotion

- Emotional regulation: emotional management in oneself and others

This concept of a new measure of intelligence as an indicator of success, challenged the

common belief that a high IQ was the only measurement for intelligence.

After further research, J. D. Mayer and Salovey (1997) agreed EI is based on

psychological processes and one's ability to match those processes to manage emotions

effectively. This caused the researchers to revise their original definition to include the

role of feelings. J. D. Mayer and Salovey (1997) believed that asserting EI is a person's

ability "to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion" (p. 10) coupled with an

ability to "promote emotional and intellectual growth" (p. 10).

Daniel Goleman. Although J. D. Mayer and Salovey (1997) are credited with

introducing the concept of EI, the idea was popularized by D. Goleman (1995) when he

published the book, *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ,* which

soared to the top of the best seller list and brought the idea of EI into the public arena for

the first time. According to D. Goleman, the abilities associated with EI include "self-

control, zeal and persistence, and the ability to motivate oneself. And these skills…can

be taught to children, giving them a better chance to use whatever intellectual potential

the genetic lottery may have given them" (p. xii). Although D. Goleman acknowledged

the benefits of teaching EI skills to children, his early work was focused on studying the relationship between EI and positive outcomes such as job performance and career success.

In D. Goleman's (2014) model, he identifies five key components of EQ:

- Self-awareness: Knowing one's own strengths and weaknesses, drives, values, and impact on others

- Self-regulation: Managing one's own disruptive impulses or moods

- Motivation: Relishing achievement

- Empathy: Understanding the emotions of others

- Social skills: The ability to build rapport with others in order to move them in a desired direction

From its inception, EI was considered important for children to learn. However, more than twenty years after the release of D. Goleman's book, very little research has been done on the positive effects of EI competencies in young children.

Conceptual Framework

For the purpose of this study, the conceptual framework to define EI includes an individual's understanding of his or her own emotions, the ability to manage his or her own emotions, his or her personal motivation, recognizing the emotions of others, and handling relationships with others. Table 1 provides the conceptual framework used to define the key components of EQ for this study.

Table 1

Conceptual Framework that is used to Describe Emotional Intelligence

-	Knowledge	Skills	Behaviors	Strategies
Understanding their own emotions	- Uses emotional self-awareness - Uses emotional self-knowledge	- Displays self-regard - Is intuitive - Is insightful - Is reflective	- Is confident - Is assertive	- Recognizes one's strengths and weaknesses - Capitalizes on strengths and improves weaknesses through self-improvement
Managing their own emotions	-Understands and uses impulse control -Understands and uses self-control	-Is resilient -Is flexible -Displays a tolerance for dealing with stress	-Holds back negative emotions to remain positive -Displays positive emotional behavior	-Reframes problems -Uses humor -Takes time out to relax
Motivating themselves	-Understands and believes in one's potential (potency)	-Is optimistic -Is hopeful -Is persistent -Approaches challenges with enthusiasm	-Delays gratification -Displays positive energy -Accepts responsibility for their own behavior -Focuses attention on the task at hand	-Sets personal goals -Breaks down large tasks into smaller steps -Celebrates small successes
Recognizing emotions of others	-Understands and demonstrates empathy	-Reads people's nonverbal behavior -Listens actively -Demonstrates insights about other's feelings, motives, and concerns	-Pays attention to people and relationships -Mirrors others' movements and tone -Demonstrates regard and compassion for others	-Develops rapport with colleagues and employees -Allows employees to express emotion -Provides emotional support for others

Table 1

Conceptual Framework that is used to Describe Emotional Intelligence

-	Knowledge	Skills	Behaviors	Strategies
Handling relationships with others	-Understands how to develop relationships	-Influences, persuades, and inspires others -Appropriate expression and transfer of emotion -Harness the willing participation of others	-Demonstrates respect for others -Recognizes and responds appropriately to people's feelings and concerns -Makes personal connections with others -Promotes cooperation	-Models emotional intelligence -Builds trust in - relationships -Boosts organizational morale -Builds collaboration among people -Gives praise, recognition and rewards

Note. Adapted from "An exploratory study of the ways in which superintendents use their emotional intelligence to address conflict in their organizations," by L. Geery, 1997, p. 100 (Doctoral dissertation, University of La Verne).

The Emergence of SEL

The literature demonstrates a link between EI and positive outcomes including improvements in school life adaptation and academic achievement (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Lim, You & Ha, 2015; Webster-Stratton & Herman, 2010). This knowledge led to the emergence of SEL which can be defined as the integration of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in order to become more aware of one's self and others, to make responsible decisions, and to manage one's own behaviors and those of others (Elias et al., 1997). SEL intervention programs stem from research on EI and are designed to facilitate SEL in systematic and comprehensive ways (M. A. Brackett & Rivers, 2014).

According to researchers, a systematic process for promoting students' social and emotional development is associated with schools reporting an increase in academic success, improved quality of relationships between teachers and students, a decrease in

problem behavior, and an improvement in overall mental health and well-being (J. A.

Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Karimzadeh et al, 2012).

There is a growing imperative at the local, state, and federal levels in the United States

demanding schools meet not only the academic needs of students, but also their social

and emotional developmental needs in order for students to reach their full potential (M.

A. Brackett & Rivers, 2014). M. A. Brackett and Rivers (2014) from the Yale Center for

Emotional Intelligence reported significant shifts in social, emotional, and academic

competencies as well as improvements in the quality of learning environments as a result

of SEL programs.

The measurable success identified in existing SEL programs has created more

attention for the movement, prompting more states to begin implementing similar

programs. Social and emotional interventions in SEL programs are evidence of a new

approach to education in which students receive a holistic education with the goal of

educating the whole child towards emotional literacy (Barber, 2014; Miller, 2010).

Modern day SEL programs are designed to meet the developmental needs of students

which include feelings of belonging, safety, and community. Having emotional needs

met can create ideal conditions for success across other domains of life such as academic

success, improved relationships, mental health, and ultimately success in the workforce

(M. A. Brackett & Rivers, 2014; Karimzadeh et al, 2012). In fact, a meta-analysis of 213

research studies on SEL revealed SEL students scored 11% higher on report cards and

test scores compared to similar students who did not participate in SEL programs (M. A.

Brackett & Rivers, 2014; D. Goleman, 2008). Belfield et al. (2015), a team of

economists, estimate benefits of evidence-based SEL programs which affect academic

performance and positive social behavior outweigh the program costs by a ratio of 11 to

one.

Further research and best practices regarding "emotional coaching" are still being

developed, but this may become a new trend in popular SEL teaching strategies.

Emotional coaching focuses on interpreting and managing emotions in one's self and

others (Hromek, 2007). Emotional coaches are equipped to mediate during times of

emotional crises in order to empower children to take responsibility for their actions and

to improve their self-regulation abilities (Hromek, 2007). In order for teachers to become

effective emotional coaches, they must first possess emotional awareness of their own.

Without strong EI skills, caregivers cannot effectively coach children on their EI

development.

SEL in Public Schools

Young people today are not being educated in affective competencies, basic

values, social skills, and moral reasoning which become the crucial foundations and skills

for becoming caring, empathic, responsible, and compassionate adults (Zeidner et al.,

2012). This has led to a renewed emphasis on SEL in public schools. SEL is taking

public education by storm, as a growing number of administrators recognize students'

ability to manage their emotions and relationships is inextricably linked to reading,

writing and arithmetic (Elmore, 2018). Firestone (2016) believes there is an opportunity

to positively affect the EI of future generations by widely implementing SEL programs in

our public schools.

Peter Salovey, one of the seminal experts on EI, believes in the importance of integrating EQ with other forms of intelligence. He explained, "I'd rather see math teachers teach about frustration when kids are learning long division, or see reading teachers teach about emotions when a character in a story has emotions" (as cited in Jones, 1997, p. 34). Research findings indicate well-implemented, multi-year SEL programs in public schools can have "significant and meaningful preventive effects on the population-level rates of aggression, social competence, and academic engagement in the elementary school years" (D. Goleman, 2004 p. 156). Additional studies indicate a relationship between psychological well-being and EI competencies along with reduction in depression and an increase in optimism, positive moods, and self-esteem (Lim, You & Ha, 2015).

SEL in Early Childhood Education

Research conducted by McClelland et al. (2017) indicates preschool-age children participating in SEL programs can improve their behavior, but we may also see changes in their brain structure and function. According to Szanton (1992), future success in school is dependent on characteristics largely formed by the age of three. These characteristics of successful students include coming to school curious, confident, conscious of what behavior is expected of them, comfort in seeking assistance, and the ability to get along with others - qualities largely developed, or not developed, in the first three years of life (Szanton, 1992).

The National Center for Clinical Infant Programs has identified seven qualities they believe to be the emotional foundations of school readiness: (a) confidence, (b) curiosity, (c) intentionality, (d) self-control, (e) relatedness, (f) capacity to communicate,

and (g) cooperativeness (Szanton, 1992). These social and emotional competencies are the foundation of school readiness for preschoolers (Barnett et al., 2008; Szanton, 1992). Furthermore, children who are able to demonstrate age-appropriate levels of social and emotional competence are more resilient to life stressors, leading to positive effects on their development (Barber, 2014; C. C. Raver, 2002; C. C. Raver & Zigler, 1997).

Project Head Start

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson declared a "war on poverty." In accordance with his plan to rebuild impoverished communities, the Project Head Start program was born (Vinovskis, 2005). The goal of this initiative was to develop a comprehensive child development program that would help low-income communities meet the needs of disadvantaged preschool children (Vinovskis, 2005). This comprehensive program was meant to meet preschooler's emotional, social, health, nutritional and psychological needs in order to prepare them for future success (Szanton, 1992).

Today, the Head Start program focuses on five specific areas for preschool development: (a) to provide a learning environment that supports children's growth, language and literacy; (b) cognition and general knowledge; (c) physical development and health; (d) social and emotional development; and (e) approaches to learning (Nix et al., 2013). Although there is not sufficient evidence to support the short-term effectiveness on children's social and emotional outcomes in the Head Start program, research does indicate a long-term impact on well-being when the child enters early adolescence and young adulthood (Bitler, Hoynes, & Domina, 2017). The federally funded Head Start program is targeting the development of SEL for low-income

communities, yet these services have not yet been offered to the community at large to benefit all American children.

Comer School Development Program

Johnson's Head Start program paved the way for the development of other SEL programs aimed at helping children acquire the skills of self and social awareness, emotion regulation, responsible decision making, problem solving, and relationship management (J. E. Zins, Bloodworth et al., 2004). SEL programs first emerged in the 1960s, tracing back to the Comer School Development Program (Comer, 1988). The program launched at two low-achieving elementary schools in New Haven, Connecticut where both attendance and academic performance were low. Comer later wrote, "the contrast between a child's experiences at home and those in school deeply affects the child's psychosocial development and this in turn shapes academic achievement" (p. 34). Within two decades, both schools experienced a transformational change, surpassing the national average for academic performance along with a decrease in behavioral problems and truancy (Cook et al., 2000). This program became a catalyst for further research on SEL.

CASEL Program

In 1994, the CASEL was born with the mission "to establish social and emotional learning as an essential part of education" (Elias, 1997, para. 2). The establishment of the CASEL program coincided with the release of Daniel Goleman's book *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ*, bringing together the worlds of education and psychology. The book opened up a dialogue between educators and psychologists in an effort to align school programs for cultivating social and emotional competence with

the scientific understanding of human emotion (L. Lantieri, 2001). Since the early days of the movement, SEL programs have grown across the United States and continue to gain popularity.

L. Lantieri (2008) explains CASEL focuses on five skill sets of EI which can be systematically cultivated at school and home:

- Self-awareness: Identifying thoughts and feelings and recognizing how they influence one's choices and actions

- Social awareness: Identifying and understanding the thoughts and feelings of others and developing empathy

- Self-management: Managing emotions so they do not interfere with tasks, setting goals, and overcoming obstacles

- Responsible decision making: Generating, implementing, and evaluating informed solutions to problems and considering the consequences

- Relationship skills: Refusing peer pressure and resolving conflicts to maintain healthy connections with others

Daniel Goleman previously acknowledged the usefulness of teaching these strategies to children, and he became a founding leadership team member for this program. The CASEL program was one of the first of its kind to create specific curriculum designed to help teachers implement EQ training in the classroom setting. Figure 1 provides a visual representation and further explanation of the CASEL model.

Self-awareness	Accurately assessing one's feelings, interests, values, and strengths; maintaining a well-grounded sense of self-confidence
Self-management	Regulating one's emotions to handle stress, control impulses, and persevere in overcoming obstacles; setting and monitoring progress toward personal and academic goals; expressing emotions appropriately
Social awareness	Taking the perspective of and empathizing with others; recognizing and appreciating individual and group similarities and differences; recognizing and using family, school, and community resources
Relationship management	Establishing and maintaining healthy and rewarding cooperative relationships; resisting inappropriate social pressure; preventing, managing, and resolving interpersonal conflict; seeking help when needed
Responsible decision making	Making decisions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, appropriate social norms, respect for others, and probable consequences of various actions; applying decision-making skills to academic and social situations; contributing to the well-being of one's school and community

Figure 1. The CASEL Model of SEL Competencies. Adapted from "The Scientific Base Linking Social and Emotional Learning to School Success," by J. E. Zins, M. R. Bloodworth, R. P. Weissberg, & H. J. Walberg, 2004. Copyright by Teachers College Press.

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)

The PATHS program is an SEL program for preschool and elementary school children designed to increase social and emotional competence while decreasing behavior problems (M. A. Brackett & Rivers, 2014). The PATHS curriculum is delivered twice per week, typically in 30-minute increments. Lessons are given on topics such as identifying and labelling feelings, controlling impulses, reducing stress, and understanding the perspectives of others (Humphrey et al., 2015). In the preschool

setting, PATHS has effectually increased social competence and reduced social withdrawal in children (Domitrovich, Cortes, & Greenberg, 2007). This curriculum is supplemented by activities that support the application of new skills during the school day and activities that are sent home to parents that cover the topics taught in class (Humphrey et al., 2015). The involvement and reinforcement of a child's parents is a critical element of this SEL program.

Yale RULER Program

The Yale RULER Program was developed by M. A. Brackett and Rivers (2014) with the intention of creating comprehensive SEL integration for an entire school or district. RULER is an acronym which represents five key skills:

1. R-recognizing emotions in self and others

2. U-understanding the causes and consequences of emotions

3. L-labeling emotions with diverse and accurate vocabulary

4. E-expressing emotions constructively

5. R-regulating emotions (Nathanson, Rivers, Flynn, & Brackett, 2016).

The objectives of this program are to assist educators in understanding how emotions enhance thinking and learning, relationships, decision-making, and well-being and also to integrate specific tools, activities and lessons to develop their personal EQ along with their students (Nathanson et al., 2016). Figure 2 provides a more comprehensive explanation of the theory behind the RULER approach to SEL.
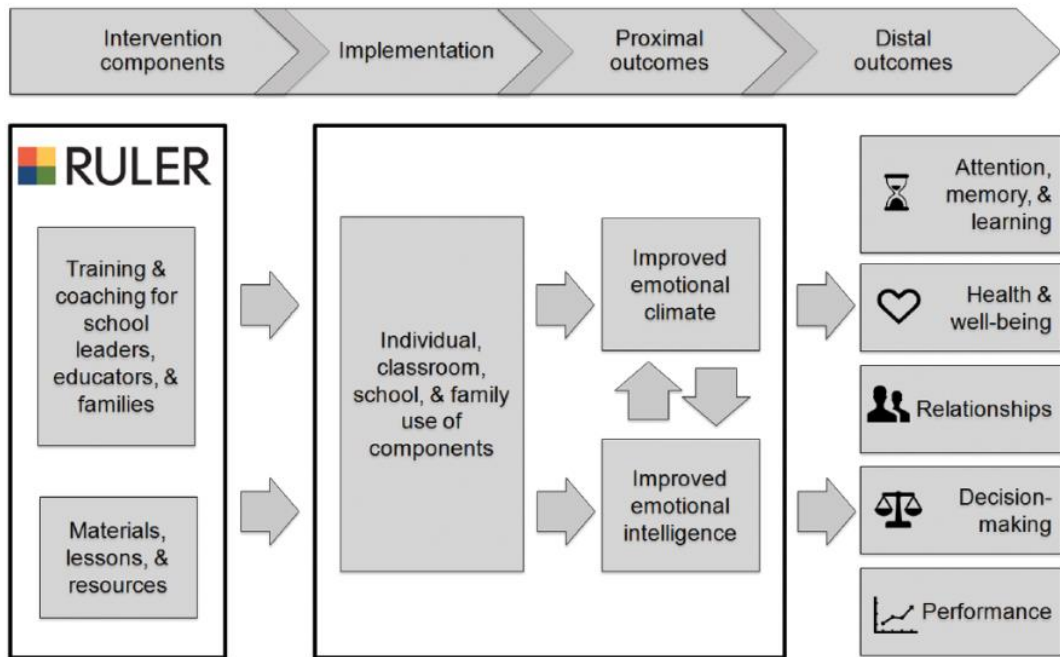
Figure 2. Ruler theory of change. Adapted from "Creating Emotionally Intelligent Schools with RULER," by L. Nathanson, S. E. Rivers, L. M. Flynn, & M. A. Brackett, 2016. *Emotion Review 8*(4), 306.

The RULER program provides age-appropriate curriculum for children from preschool age to high school. For preschoolers, the curriculum includes "feeling words" and a "mood meter" (Nathanson et al., 2016, p. 307). A study of preschool children ages three to five from low-income families in the RULER program indicated an increased knowledge of their emotions compared with classes who did not use the program (Nathanson et al., 2016).

Second Step Early Learning (SSEL)

The Second Step program was developed by Committee for Children, a non-profit organization, to promote SEL for children of all ages. The program includes curriculum with units on skills for learning, empathy, emotion management, and problem solving appropriate for use from preschool through eighth grade (Low, Cook, Smolkowski, & Buntain-Ricklefs, 2015). The SSEL program was developed as a commercial curriculum

for children age's three to five and includes different SEL activities for each day of the week (Upshur, Heyman, & Wenz-Gross, 2017). Specific teaching strategies reinforce the daily themes. For example, the teacher might think back to when a child used the daily skill and praise them for their progress (Upshur et al., 2017).

The preschool curriculum includes five specific units:

1. Learning skills: Listening, focusing attention, following directions, and being assertive

2. Empathy: Identifying self and other's feelings, taking another person's perspective, and showing care and being helpful to others

3. Emotion management: Understanding strong feelings, identifying one's own feelings when they are strong, and specific steps to calm down

4. Friendship skills and problem solving: how to join in play, inviting friends to play, fair ways to play, calming down and using problem solving steps to solve social problems

5. Transition to kindergarten: Reviews the program skills and concepts and helps children think ahead about using them in kindergarten (Upshur et al., 2017).

When applied in a kindergarten classroom, researchers observed improvements in social and emotional competence and positive behavior in children who demonstrated a deficit in these areas early in the year (Low et al., 2015). Existing research on the SSEL program indicates positive effects on students' social and emotional competency (McNeeley, 2016).

Legislation for Mental Health Education

With the increasing popularity of the SEL programs in public schools, there has been a movement toward teaching social and emotional skills as an integral part of educating the "whole child" towards emotional literacy (Barber, 2014; Miller, 2010). The whole child movement suggests the public education system has an expanded responsibility to help socialize children and attend to their emotional development in additional to their cognitive development. According to D. Goleman (2006), this holistic approach requires two major changes: that teachers go beyond their traditional mission and that community members become more involved with schools as both active participants in children's learning and as mentors.

The Academic, Social and Emotional Learning Act of 2011. In response to this initiative towards holistic education, Democrat Representative Susan Davis of San Diego, California introduced legislation to help teachers include SEL in the classroom in 2011. The H.R. 2437 Academic, Social and Emotional Learning Act of 2011 was submitted to the United States Congress in support of evidence-based SEL programming for public schools (Civic Impulse, 2018). Although the bill was not enacted, supporters continue to lobby for widespread SEL programs in public education (D. Goleman, 2006; Hoffman, 2011; J. E. Zins, Bloodworth et al., 2004).

Mental health education in New York. On July 1, 2018, the state of New York, added a paragraph to the state's Education Law mandating mental health instruction as part of health education curriculum in all public schools for Kindergarten through grade

12 (DiGiulio, 2018). New York became the first state in the United States to require

mental health to be taught as part of health education. The justification for Bill A3887B

states:

> Over 90% of youth who die by suicide suffer from depression or another
>
> diagnosable and treatable mental illness at the time of their death. Over 50
>
> percent of students with emotional or behavioral disorders drop out of
>
> high school and, of those who do remain in school, only 42% graduate.
>
> Health education that respects the importance of mental health and
>
> challenges of mental illness will help young people and their families feel
>
> more comfortable seeking help, improve academic performance and save
>
> lives. As New York works to restructure and integrate systems of health
>
> and mental health care, so too should our schools prepare our citizens of
>
> tomorrow to think differently about the role of mental health in their lives.
>
> (New York State Assembly, 2018, Justification section)

Mental health education in Virginia. Following in New York's footsteps, the

state of Virgina became the only other state to introduce laws supporting mental health

education. Virginia passed legislation to be enacted in Fall 2018 mandating school to

teach mental health curriculum to 9th and 10th graders (DiGiulio, 2018). These laws, if

implemented successfully, may provide a precedent for other states to follow.

Research Gap

Although research indicates a direct link between a child's EI and positive

outcomes such as physical and mental health, improved behavior, and future academic

success, there is an apparent gap in literature related to the topic of EI in young children.

Surprisingly few articles have been written about strategies and activities that can promote these skills in a preschool setting. The literature cites a need for additional research to apply and evaluate programs for helping youth deal with normative stressors and challenges which may be useful to combat the alarming increases in depression and suicide in children (Lim, You & Ha, 2015; Thayer, 2013; Zeidner et al., 2012).

Modecki et al. (2017) explain the body of research points to the importance and effectiveness of SEL programs, yet the literature is less clear about how to integrate these skills in a comprehensive and feasible manner. There is an urgent need to identify specific strategies that foster the greatest level of skill acquisition (Modecki et al., 2017). Though there are some programs in place, they are not yet accessible to the larger population and there is not a consensus on how these strategies should be implemented.

Summary

Findings from the literature review indicate social and emotional skills are as important as any academic subject we expect children to learn today. In light of the current mental health crisis, they may prove to be more important (Elmore, 2018). One of the most consistent findings in the literature is evidence supporting the link between EI and high performance both academically and professionally (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Caruso & Salovey, 2004; D. Goleman, 2005; Lim, You, & Ha, 2015; Webster-Stratton & Herman, 2010). The coping skills that enable a young adult to thrive at a job, in a friendship or in a marriage or family are life skills which can be learned. Extensive research confirms students can learn how to use their emotions to make healthy decisions and to manage behavior effectively (M. A. Brackett & Rivers, 2014; J. A. Durlak & Weissberg, 2011). A thorough review of the literature was conducted and the research

was synthesized using a literature matrix (see Appendix A). The literature demonstrates a correlation between these emotional coping skills and the reduction of mental health issues such as suicide and depression, which is a contemporary issue worldwide. Early intervention is possible and necessary to prevent future crises for young people today.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

This chapter reviews the methodology used to conduct this Delphi study, which examined specific methods expert early childhood teachers utilize to support the development of SEL within the preschool setting. The study also asked teachers to rate the impact of specific learning activities and to identify methods by which they can be used in the classroom. Lastly, the chapter reviews the purpose statement and research questions that were used along with the rationale for the choice of research design, population, sample, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. The limitations of the selected methodology are discussed along with the ethical precautions taken to ensure human subjects were protected. Approval for this mixed-methods study was granted by the Brandman University Institutional Review Board (BUIRB) prior to the commencement of the study (see Appendix B) and a certificate of completion from The National Institutes of Health (NIH) was received (see Appendix C).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this Delphi study was to identify the instructional strategies expert early childhood teachers use to support and promote the development of empathy and emotion regulation in early childhood instruction. In addition, it was the purpose to rate the effectiveness of these instructional strategies, and to identify the specific activities used to implement the six most highly rated instructional strategies.

Research Questions

The research questions were divided into three rounds and are as follows:

Round 1

1. What instructional strategies do expert early childhood teachers use to support and promote the development of empathy and emotion regulation in early childhood instruction?

Round 2

2. How do the teachers rate the effectiveness of the methods identified in Round 1?

Round 3

3. What specific activities do teachers recommend to implement the six most highly rated methods identified in Round 2?

Research Design

The Delphi technique was appropriate for this study as it describes perceptions of lived experiences where there is little knowledge or information (Krahn, Hartman & Skulmoski, 2007). Krahn, Hartman, and Skulmoski (2007) describe the Delphi method as an iterative process used to collect and distill the judgments of experts using a series of questionnaires interspersed with feedback. The results of each questionnaire are used to narrow down the focus of the questions until a consensus is reached or when sufficient information has been exchanged. The Delphi study permits the collection of richer data, "leading to a deeper understanding of the fundamental research questions" (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004, p. 20).

A Delphi approach is appropriate for addressing research questions where no definite evidence is available, and the researcher must rely on the knowledge and experience of experts. According to Thangaratinam and Redman (2005), the Delphi technique is useful in clinical education for a variety of applications including forecasting, planning and curriculum development. Since research on SEL within the preschool environment is progressing rapidly, the Delphi technique can add to a better comprehension of the lived experiences of the experts (Krahn et al., 2007; Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004).

The Delphi method was first introduced by Dalkey and Helmer (1963) of the RAND Corporation. It was created to gain consensus of opinion from of a group of experts to answer a central question (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963). There are key design elements of the Delphi technique which were implemented in this research study: (a) anonymity of participants, (b) iteration of questions posed to the same panel of experts, (c) controlled feedback using data collected from other experts obtained from precedent questionnaires, and (d) the participation of experts who are committed to contributing their knowledge and expertise and to completing all requirements of the research study (Krahn et al., 2007; Nowack, Endrikat & Guenther, 2011).

Population

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), a population is a group that conforms to "specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of research" (p. 129). The questions a Delphi study investigates are those of high uncertainty and speculation, thus, a general population might not be sufficiently knowledgeable to answer the questions accurately (Okoli & Pawlowski 2004).

47

According to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, there were 176,000 preschool and pre-kindergarten teachers employed in California as of 2012. In this Delphi study, the population included preschool teachers in the state of California who work with SEL with children age's three to five.

Target Population

A target population includes individuals chosen from the overall population from which the data can be used to make inferences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In this study, the target population consists of preschool teachers in Riverside County, California with a minimum of five years teaching experience and a master's or doctoral degree. The results of the study should allow for generalizations to this group based on the expert experiences of the panelists being interviewed by the Delphi method.

Sample

The process of sampling refers to selecting a number of individuals from a larger population, preferably in such a way that the individuals are representative of the larger group from which they were selected (Fraenkel, Hyun & Wallen, 1993). Within the Delphi method approach, group size does not depend on statistical power, but rather on group dynamics for arriving at consensus among experts. Thus, the literature recommends 10 to 18 experts on a Delphi panel (Okoli & Pawlowski 2004).

> Okoli and Pawlowski (2004) explain a Delphi study
> does not depend on a statistical sample that attempts to be representative of any
> population. It is a group decision mechanism requiring qualified experts who
> have deep understanding of the issues. Therefore, one of the most critical
> requirements is the selection of qualified experts. (p. 20)

A Delphi study is a virtual panel of experts gathered to arrive at an answer to a difficult question. Thus, a Delphi study could be considered a type of virtual meeting or as a group decision technique, though it appears to be a complicated survey (Okoli & Pawlowski 2004). The sample for this study was 14 qualified experts that meet the selection criteria.

Sample Selection Process

This study utilized purposeful sampling which "focuses on selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study" (Patton, 2015, p. 230). Panelists who will be invited to take part in this Delphi method study are considered experts in the field of early childhood education based on the following inclusion criteria:

- Minimum of five years teaching experience in pre-kindergarten and/or preschool

- Hold a master's or doctoral degree

- Have received specific SEL training

- Are recommended as an expert by leaders of the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning

- Recognition as an expert in Early Childhood Education by their District Administration

Potential participants were identified with the use of purposeful sampling which is based on the use of criteria to identify qualified participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Subjects were recommended for inclusion by contacting current and former superintendents and program directors in the following areas:

- Associate Superintendent of Educational Services, Corona-Norco Unified School District

- Executive Director, Riverside County Division of Early Learning Services

- Former Superintendent, Hemet Unified School District

- Superintendent, Moreno Valley Unified School District

Once potential participants who met the selection criteria were identified, the researcher contacted all qualified potential participants via email or telephone to request his or her participation. The final sample of 14 participants was identified with the use of convenience sampling which is based on the use of qualified subjects available to the researcher (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Once a list of 14 willing participants was developed, these participants were contacted by email and provided with Informed Consent (see Appendix D), a Letter of Invitation (see Appendix E), a Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix F), and Participant Bill of Rights (see Appendix G).

Instrumentation

A Delphi study involves three rounds of questionnaires in order to address the research questions (see Appendix H). Each round is described below:

Round 1

The first question was an open-ended survey question that asked each respondent to identify methods used in the teaching process that promote the development of empathy and emotion regulation in early childhood instruction.

Round 2

The second round was devised to rate the answers from the first round on a Likert rating scale. In a true Likert scale, the stem will include a value or direction to which the

respondent can indicate the level of his or her agreement or disagreement (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Each method identified in Round 1 was rated on a 5 Point Likert Scale. The mean scores for the effectiveness rating of each method was calculated.

Round 3

The final round of questions was designed to provide recommendations for implementing the methods identified in the second round of the study. The top six rated items were sent to the respondents in a survey that asked for open ended narrative responses. Each respondent was asked to identify and describe the most effective activities for implementing each of the six highest rated methods in the early childhood classroom.

Prior to executing the electronic survey through Survey Monkey, an online survey instrument, the researcher collected Informed Consent, a Demographic Questionnaire, and Participant Bill of Rights. Next, each participant received instructions for accessing the online survey by email. Additionally, the initial email contained the Round 1 survey question which allowed participants to review the question prior to beginning the survey.

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Pilot Study

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A pilot study is often used to test the design of the full-scale study which then can be adjusted. It offers potentially valuable insight to improve the chances of a clear outcome in the full-scale study. A pilot study also provides an estimate of the amount of time it will take to complete the survey and an initial pattern of responses that are likely (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). For this study, three non-participating subjects were used to conduct a pilot study prior to the actual study. Feedback from the participants regarding the clarity, ease of use, and general comments regarding the instruments and

the process were gathered and any required adjustments to the instruments or process were made prior to the full-scale study.

Data Collection

Prior to collecting any data for this study, the researcher obtained approval from the BUIRB. A list of 14 participants was selected, and the researcher contacted each participant by email to confirm his or her willingness to participate in the study. Information regarding confidentiality was included in the informed consent and all data collected was stored in a password protected electronic file which was only accessible to the researcher. Once consent was confirmed, all 14 participants received the Survey Monkey link to Round 1 of the survey by email. The email also contained a deadline for completion, definition of terms, and contact information for the researcher.

Round 1

In the first round of this Delphi method study, participants were asked to provide short answer responses regarding activities early childhood teachers use to support and promote the development of empathy and emotion regulation in early childhood instruction. The survey question was open-ended. The responses were captured and sent to the researcher for data analysis.

Round 2

In Round 2 of the survey, the researcher compiled a list of all the respondents' answers from Round 1. Then, participants received a second email link where they were asked to rate each of the responses given in Round 1 on a Likert rating scale. A 5-point frequency scale was used to measure the teachers' rating of the impact of the activities identified in Round 1 as follows: 1 = *not impactful at all*, 2 = *rarely impactful*, 3 =

somewhat impactful, 4 = *very impactful*, 5 = *always impactful*. The data was send to the researcher for analysis.

Round 3

Using the data collected in Round 2, the researcher was able to identify the six most highly rated activities using the item mean scores. In the final round of the survey, participants were asked to provide recommendation for specific methods to implement these top six activities identified in Round 2. Participants were asked to provide a short answer response and the data captured was sent to the researcher for data analysis.

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Data Analysis

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This mixed-methods Delphi study utilized both qualitative and quantitative data collection. After the first round of the survey was completed, the data was coded for qualitative analysis while the Likert scale responses in the second round yielded quantitative data. The interval data resulting from Round 2 provided the researcher with data to determine the top six most highly rated activities so the participant could provide qualitative recommendations for implementing each of these six activities.

Round 1 Data Analysis

In the first round, the participants were given an open-ended question and the data was captured using Survey Monkey. This data was coded for frequency and organization of common themes. A data analysis matrix was created to store the data and common themes were noted for inclusion on Round 2 of the survey.

Round 2 Data Analysis

In Round 2 of the survey, participants were asked to rate each of the responses given in Round 1 on a Likert rating scale. Using the 5-point impact rating scale allowed

the researcher to compare and rank the data collected in Round 1 and calculate a mean for each method from the responses. Once the highest rated activities were identified, the top six responses could be used in the final round of the survey.

Round 3 Data Analysis

Round 2 of the survey provided quantitative data to develop consensus on the six most highly rated activities. In the final round of the survey, participants provided recommendations for implementing these activities. To analyze this data, the researcher organized the data into tables by practice, coded the data for frequency, and identified the strategies most frequently cited for each activity.

Limitations

According to Roberts (2010) study limitations are features that may negatively affect a researcher's ability to make generalizations to a larger population. These limitations can include areas over which you have no control such as sample size, length of study and response rate (Roberts, 2010). One of the possible limitations of this study was the number of participants. The sample was limited to 14 expert teachers within Riverside County, California and may not be generalizable to the larger population of California. Additionally, the purposeful sample selection process is another limitation for this study. Since the participants were recognized using the selection criteria, their ideas may not represent the larger population of preschool teachers.

Summary

This chapter included a review of the methodology of this Delphi study along with the purpose of the study and associated research questions. It also described the rationale for the choice of research design, the population, sample, instrumentation, data

collection, data analysis, and limitations of the study. Chapter IV of this study will

present the corresponding results of this study along with an analysis of the data

collected. Chapter V will present the conclusions, implications, and recommendations

for action drawn from the study.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Overview

Chapter IV provides a comprehensive analysis of the data collected from this study. The goal of this study was to identify practices experts identify as effective for utilizing activities which support the development of empathy and emotion regulation in young children, to determine how experts rated the effectiveness of different practices, and to determine what strategies experts recommend for the implementation of the six practices identified as most effective. In addition, this chapter restates the study's purpose, research questions, methodology, population, and sample as well as presenting the data collected using the research questions. Chapter IV concludes with a summary of the research findings.

Purpose

The purpose of this Delphi study was to identify the instructional strategies expert early childhood teachers use to support and promote the development of empathy and emotion regulation in early childhood instruction. In addition, it was the purpose to rate the effectiveness of these instructional strategies, and to identify the specific activities used to implement the six most highly rated instructional strategies.

Research Questions

The research questions were divided into three rounds and are as follows:

Round 1

1. What instructional strategies do expert early childhood teachers use to support and promote the development of empathy and emotion regulation in early childhood instruction?

Round 2

    4. How do the teachers rate the effectiveness of the methods identified in Round

       1?

Round 3

    2. What specific activities do teachers recommend to implement the six most

       highly rated instructional strategies identified in Round 2?

Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

The Delphi technique was selected for the design of this study as it describes

perceptions of lived experiences where there is little knowledge or information (Krahn,

Hartman & Skulmoski, 2007). In this iterative process, the results of each questionnaire

are used to narrow down the focus of the questions until a consensus is reached. A

Delphi approach is appropriate for addressing research questions where no definite

evidence is available, and the researcher must rely on the knowledge and experience of

experts.

The Delphi design was useful in finding a consensus among experts in early

childhood education across Riverside County, California about what these experts

perceive as the most effective ways to teach social and emotional skills. As part of the

methodology selection process, the researcher considered the nature of data needed for

collection. As the Delphi technique uses both quantitative and qualitative data, the data

is strengthened through triangulation.

Population and Sample

In addition to selecting the most appropriate research method, the researcher also

considered the population and sample selection design in order to identify true experts in

the field of early childhood education. According to the Commission on Teacher

Credentialing, there were 176,000 preschool teachers employed in California as of 2012.

In this Delphi study, the population included preschool teachers in the state of California

who work with SEL with children age's three to five.

The target population for this study was preschool teachers within Riverside

County, California. This included teachers within the following 22 school districts:

- Alvord

- Banning

- Beaumont

- Coachella Valley

- Corona-Norco

- Desert Center

- Desert Sands

- Hemet

- Jurupa

- Lake Elsinore

- Menifee

- Moreno Valley

- Murrieta

- Nuview

- Palm Springs

- Palo Verde

- Perris, Riverside

- Romoland

- San Jacinto

- Temecula Valley

- Val Verde

In order to identify a sample from this large target population, the researcher utilized purposeful sampling which "focuses on selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study" (Patton, 2015, p. 230).

The literature recommends 10 to 18 experts on a Delphi panel (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). According to this design, the study utilized 14 expert panelists for the sample. Panelists invited to take part in this Delphi method study are considered experts in the field of early childhood education based on the following inclusion criteria:

- Minimum of five years teaching experience in pre-kindergarten and/or preschool

- Hold a master's or doctoral degree

- Have received specific SEL training

- Are recommended as an expert by leaders of the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning

- Recognition as an expert in Early Childhood Education by their District Administration

Participants in the study were gathered from four of the 22 Riverside County school districts including: Corona-Norco, Hemet, Moreno Valley, and Riverside.

Presentation of the Data

Data is presented for each research question, beginning with research question one. Each of the three rounds of the Delphi study is reported consecutively for each research question.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked: *What instructional strategies do expert early childhood teachers use to support and promote the development of empathy and emotion regulation in early childhood instruction?*

Round 1. In Round 1, participants were asked to respond to the research question in short answer form through an electronic survey sent via email. Fourteen participants completed the Round 1 survey and the researcher distilled, coded, and categorized each of the responses. As similar responses were identified, categories began to emerge into larger themes. These themes generated 10 commonly cited instructional strategies based on the participants' survey responses.

Analysis of round 1. All 14 research participants responded to the Round 1 survey and provided at least three suggested strategies to promote social and emotional development within the classroom setting. The majority of participants, 10 out of 14, cited the importance of modeling positive behavior and empathy in the classroom. For example, Respondent 9 suggested "*discussing options for a variety of feelings including the harder ones (anger, frustration, anxiety, etc.).*"

Ten of the 14 participants noted *PBIS* can be useful in the classroom. Respondent 2 stated "*structuring the day to provide a predictable routine and prevent common behavior problems, teaching rules, redirecting, and using effective, positive*

discipline strategies that are age-appropriate." Additionally, Respondent 6 suggested "*coaching specific, age-appropriate self-regulation skills.*"

Eight research participants suggested *using books and videos to provide examples of emotion regulation and empathy*. Respondent 7 suggested the use of picture books and videos to model questions involving the "why" behind a character's smile, frown, or tears "*to call attention to context and environmental cues as to how someone else feels and why they feel that way.*" Participants also recommended the addition of dolls or puppets to support the supplemental materials.

Seven participants noted *breathing techniques and mindfulness practices* to bring awareness to emotions and to become more present. Responded 6 noted the "*S.T.A.R. strategy which means Smile, Take a deep breath, And Relax.*" Another 7 participants noted the use of *role play* to explore empathy. For example, situational roles can demonstrate how to be a good friend with an emphasis on moral lessons and character building. Seven participants also noted the importance of *identifying and labeling feelings* to help students differentiate between various emotional states.

Six of the 14 participants noted the importance of *group time* to help reinforce sharing, controlling feelings, delaying gratification, and taking turns. As Respondent 2 explained, "*Requiring sharing toys and materials helps a child confront their natural desire to keep everything to themselves.*" Respondent 10 expounded when a child waits for his or her turn while using a timer, the child learns that playing the waiting game gets rewards such as use of a computer, playing in a game, or getting a turn to talk.

Five of the respondents noted the use of a *quiet area* to provide children a space to regain control of emotions. Students often have access to tactile tools, books, and

other independent activities in this area. Another five participants noted *building*

positive relationships with students can help them manage challenging emotions when

they arise. Five people also cited the need for *positive reinforcement* and praising

students' successes or referring back to previous incidents of positive behavior. An

example of this is using "kindness notes" which students can give to others as reward for

getting caught doing the right thing. The complete list of instructional strategy themes is

outlined in Table 2.

The responses collected in Round 1 of the Delphi method study yielded the

content of the Round 2 questionnaire. Each of the 10 strategies identified in the Round

1 data were entered into an electronic survey for Round 2.

Table 2

List of 10 Commonly Cited Instructional Strategies Recommended to Support and Promote Empathy and Emotional Regulation

Strategies experts identify as most effective for the development of empathy and emotion regulation in early childhood instruction	
Strategies	Frequency
Modeling: Teachers model positive behavior and empathy throughout the day, finding teachable moments which lend themselves to model kindness, compassion, tolerance, acceptance, and forgiveness.	12
Positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS): Emphasizes preventing problem behaviors before they happen to increase the opportunity for students to learn. Useful for developing social skills and teaching students to make good choices in life. Behavioral expectations are discussed, and age-appropriate conscious discipline is used to coach self-regulation skills.	10
Utilize books and videos: Fictional stories can provide support for describing emotions and demonstrating empathy in social situations. Can provide examples of emotion regulation and empathy in a relatable and age-appropriate way.	8
Breathing techniques / mindfulness practices: Useful for directing students to be fully present, aware of where we are and what they are doing, and to avoid becoming overly reactive or overwhelmed by what is happening around them.	7
Role play: Utilizing curriculum that explains how to deal with situations through examples and situational role play. Puppets or dolls are sometimes used to help reinforce the concepts.	7
Identifying and labeling feelings: Teaching students to know which emotions are being experienced so they can differentiate between them. Visual images of different emotions can be useful in labeling different emotional states. Students can "check in" on a visual emotion chart to identify how a student is feeling at that moment.	7
Group time: Using group activities such as games, projects, and community circle time to encourage positive relationships. Children are required to share toys and classroom materials to encourage delayed gratification and controlling their feelings. A timer is sometimes used to practice waiting your turn to talk or play with a toy.	6
Quiet area: Providing a designated area with a calming environment to reduce over-stimulation. Students have access to tactile toys, books, stuffed animals, and other manipulative items to regain control of their emotions.	5
Building positive relationships with students: Creating a positive relationship with each student and helping them manage difficult emotions when they arise. Sharing personal examples and stories to build connections.	5
Positive reinforcement: A positive approach that focuses on identifying what is working well, analyzing why it is working well and then doing more of it. Praising success and referring back to prior success.	5

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked: *How do the teachers rate the effectiveness of the methods identified in Round 1?*

Round 2. For the second-round questionnaire, the participants received the electronic survey by email and the panel of expert teachers were asked to rate the effectiveness of the 10 strategies identified in Round 1. The instructions for the second survey explained the questionnaire included aggregated responses from the first round which were distilled, categorized, and consolidated based on common responses from participants. Participants were asked to rate the effectiveness of the methods identified in Round 1 on a five-point Likert interval scale indicating the degree to which he or she agreed or disagreed with the method's effectiveness. The rating scale was as follows: 1 = not impactful at all, 2 = rarely impactful, 3 = somewhat impactful, 4 = very impactful, 5 = always impactful.

Analysis of round 2. Research participants used the survey to rate each of the 10 strategies from Research Question 1 on a five-point Likert scale. A mean score was calculated for each of the 10 strategies. These scores had little variance ranging from 3.92 to 4.69 with a standard deviation of 0.73. Once each strategy was ranked from the highest mean to the lowest mean, the researcher selected the six most highly rated strategies for inclusion in the third round of the study.

The most highly rated strategy was *building positive relationships with students* which had a mean score of 4.69. Following closely behind with a mean score of 4.62 was *modeling positive behavior and empathy throughout the day*. The third ranking strategy was *role play*, with a mean rating of 4.46. Next, participants ranked *providing a*

designated quiet area as fourth with a mean score of 4.25. *Identifying and labeling*

feelings had a mean score of 4.17, and the sixth highest rated activity was *group time*

with a mean of 4.08. The results of the participant ratings are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Ranking of Strategies Experts Identify as Most Effective for the Development of Empathy and Emotion Regulation from Research Question 1

Ranking	Mean
Building positive relationships with students: Creating a positive relationship with each student and helping them manage difficult emotions when they arise. Sharing personal examples and stories to build connections.	4.69
Modeling: Teachers model positive behavior and empathy throughout the day, finding teachable moments which lend themselves to model kindness, compassion, tolerance, acceptance, and forgiveness.	4.62
Role play: Utilizing curriculum that explains how to deal with situations through examples and situational role play. Puppets or dolls are sometimes used to help reinforce the concepts.	4.46
Quiet area: Providing a designated area with a calming environment to reduce over-stimulation. Students have access to squishy balls, books, teddy bears, and other manipulative items to regain control of their emotions.	4.25
Identifying and labeling feelings: Teaching students to know which emotions are being experienced so they can differentiate between them. Visual images of different emotions can be useful in labeling different emotional states. Students can "check in" on a visual emotion chart to identify how a student is feeling at that moment.	4.17
Group time: Using group activities such as games, projects, and community circle time to encourage positive relationships. Children are required to share toys and classroom materials to encourage delayed gratification and controlling their feelings. A timer is sometimes used to practice waiting your turn to talk or play with a toy.	4.08
Utilize books and videos: Fictional stories can provide support for describing emotions and demonstrating empathy in social situations. Can provide examples of emotion regulation and empathy in a relatable and age-appropriate way.	4.00
Positive behavior interventions and supports: Emphasizes preventing problem behaviors before they happen to increase the opportunity for students to learn. Useful for developing social skills and teaching students to make good choices in life. Behavioral expectations are discussed, and age-appropriate conscious discipline is used to coach self-regulation skills.	3.92
Breathing techniques / mindfulness practices: Useful for directing students to be fully present, aware of where we are and what they are doing, and to avoid becoming overly reactive or overwhelmed by what is happening around them.	3.92
Positive reinforcement: A positive approach that focuses on identifying what is working well, analyzing why it is working well and then doing more of it. Praising success and referring back to prior success.	3.92

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked: *What specific activities do teachers recommend to implement the six most highly rated instructional strategies identified in Round 2?*

Round 3. The final round of the Delphi method study utilized the six most highly rated strategies identified in Round 2. Research participants were asked to review these six strategies and provide specific recommendations to implement these strategies in the classroom. Once again, all 14 participants received an electronic survey.

Analysis of round 3. The data collected from Round 3 was coded and consolidated into tables to identify the implementation strategies most frequently identified by expert teachers. The participants provided detailed suggestions for using each of the six strategies in the classroom. All 14 experts participated and provided short answer responses for each of the six strategies identified in Round 2.

Instructional strategy 1. In the first question of Round 3, panelists were asked to recommend instructional strategies which help build positive relationships with students. In 10 replies, experts noted the importance of *validating the child's emotions: help students recognize their emotions and assure them that you care and want to help*. For example, Respondent 7 explained, "*I let them know they are loved no matter what their choices are and together, with their families, we are a team*." Respondent 1 provided an example of how she develops specific ways to help each child use his or her strengths and interests:

Today many of my students wanted to sing 'Going on a Bear Hunt' - I know one of my students doesn't like it. They get scared easily so I asked if he wanted to

stay by me or go to the other side of the room and help his other teacher set the table for snack; something I know he likes to do. This gave him a choice on how to manage his own emotions, he chose to set table. He is getting less stressed about this and similar situations as time goes on - offering choices, when appropriate, is an important tool.

Another suggestion for instructional strategy 1, *greeting children with eye contact and/or physical contact such as a high five*, was cited nine times. Respondent 4 explained students can choose their greeting at arrival time. This can include a hug, fist bump, a wave, a smile or a high five. Participants also recommended *offering choices, when appropriate, that are specific to the child's strengths and interests* seven times. Another commonly cited suggestion was *maintaining open communication with the students' families and discuss goals so positive behaviors are reinforced at home*. This tactic was suggested five time.

Instructional strategy 2. In question two, panelists were asked to provide recommendations on how to *model positive behavior and empathy throughout the day and find teachable moments which lend themselves to model kindness, compassion, tolerance, acceptance, and forgiveness*. Twelve of the 14 panelist suggested *regular discussions about kindness, compassion, and emotions*. They also noted *books can be used to reinforce these ideas*. Respondent 6 explained:

Teaching through modeling is a powerful example of 'what to do and how to do it' for students. Teaching through modeling and using language that is developmentally appropriate to the students assists in learning two dynamic skills side by side. As an adult talks the child through how to be kind in words

and actions, the child can start internalizing the social-emotional scripts for the next time the situation arises.

Panelists suggested *modeling kindness and compassion with other teachers and students in the classroom* eight times. They also mentioned *creating familiar phrases you want children to use with others and model how to use them* four time as well as mentioning *maintain a calm and peaceful relationship with other teachers f*our times. Demonstrating and repeating this positive behavior through modeling seemed to be a common theme amongst experts.

Instructional strategy 3. The third highest rated instructional strategy was *situational role play* which can include reading stories about how to be a good friend and literature that emphasizes moral lessons and character. In order to do this, the panelists recommended using stories from books or videos to explain social skills and moral lessons and to connect the stories to real life events, if possible. This strategy was referenced nine times. The participants also suggested using puppets to illustrate difficult situations, moral lessons and character five time. Respondent 5 explained, "*From as simple as learning how to introduce oneself to a friend or asking for help, role playing gives students practice and exposure to situations they don't know how to explain.*" Teachers also referenced the use of specific curriculum for role playing, such as the SSEL curriculum, mentioned four times.

Instructional strategy 4. Instructional Strategy 4 is to *provide a designated area with a calming environment to reduce over-stimulation*. In this "safe space," children have access to manipulative items which help them regain control of their emotions when they become overwhelmed. Seven participants believe it is important to teach children to

use these areas and materials purposefully. Respondent 6 described her quiet area as a place "*to help regain self-regulation*." Some of the items she includes in her quiet area are a small trampoline, weighted bean bag animals, a body sock, putty, and a soft roller to roll on student legs or backs.

Six of the 14 respondents recommended offering students the choice to use the quiet space when needed and with no expectation of time they are allowed. The student is given the freedom to use the space when needed, and to rejoin the class when ready. Two of the experts mentioned the quiet area must be limited to one or two students at a time in order to maintain a sense of security and isolation for children whose emotions are out of control.

Instructional strategy 5. In question five, panelists provided suggestions to help students *identifying and label feelings* and provided strategies for teaching students to know which emotions are being experienced so they can differentiate between them. Twelve of the 14 participants recommended using a visual emotion chart where students can "check in" chart to identify how he or she is feeling at that moment. Nine respondents also recommended *using emotional vocabulary words sorting games and class discussions* to expand the child's understanding of how they are feeling. *Discussing the characters' emotional states while reading stories* was also cited five times.

Instructional strategy 6. Instructional Strategy 6 *is using group activities such as games, projects, and community circle time to encourage positive relationships. Children are required to share toys and classroom materials to encourage delayed gratification and controlling their feelings*. Seven of the participants noted the

importance of *using group time to help students practice sharing and using their negotiating skills*. Respondent 8 explained:

> Children, intrinsically, want to be friendly with each other but may not have the skills to go about developing relationships. Group time offers the opportunity to relate, share, take turns, make room, and even interrupt if it is necessary which grows relationships over time.

Three participants also mentioned the importance of modeling how to listen and share by teachers and peers. The results of the participant recommendations are included in Table 4.

Table 4

Recommendations for Implementing Instructional Strategies to Support and Promote Empathy and Emotional Regulation in the Classroom

Instructional Strategy 1	
Building positive relationships with students: Creating a positive relationship with each student and helping them manage difficult emotions when they arise. Sharing personal examples and stories to build connections.	
Suggested Activities	Frequency
Validate emotions: help students recognize their emotions and assure them that you care and want to help.	10
Greet children with eye contact and/or physical contact such as a high five.	9
Offer choices, when appropriate, that are specific to the child's strengths and interests.	7
Maintain open communication with the students' families and discuss goals so positive behaviors are reinforced at home.	5
Instructional Strategy 2	
Modeling: Teachers model positive behavior and empathy throughout the day, finding teachable moments which lend themselves to model kindness, compassion, tolerance, acceptance, and forgiveness.	
Suggested Activities	Frequency
Have regular discussions about kindness, compassion, and emotions. Books can be used to reinforce these ideas.	12
Model kindness and compassion with other teachers and students in the classroom.	8

(continued)

70

Table 4

Recommendations for Implementing Instructional Strategies to Support and Promote Empathy and Emotional Regulation in the Classroom

Instructional Strategy 3	
Role play: Utilizing curriculum that explains how to deal with situations through examples and situational role play. Can include reading stories about how to be a good friend and literature that emphasizes moral lessons and character.	
Suggested Activities	Frequency
Use stories from books or videos to explain social skills and moral lessons. Connect the stories to real life events, if possible.	9
Use puppets to illustrate difficult situations, moral lessons and character.	5
Use specific curriculum for role playing such as the Second Step Early Learning curriculum.	4
Instructional Strategy 4	
Quiet area: Providing a designated area with a calming environment to reduce over-stimulation. Students have access to squishy balls, books, teddy bears, and other manipulative items to regain control of their emotions.	
Suggested Activities	Frequency
Teach children to use the area and materials purposefully. The quiet area, or safe center, provides a quiet space for students when they feel overwhelmed by their emotions.	7
Offer this quiet space as a choice when needed with no expectation of time. When the student is ready to rejoin the class, he or she may do so.	6
Limit the space to 1 or 2 students at a time to provide a space with a sense of security and isolation for children to regain control of their emotions.	2
Instructional Strategy 5	
Identifying and labeling feelings: Teaching students to know which emotions are being experienced so they can differentiate between them. Visual images of different emotions can be useful in labeling different emotional states.	
Suggested Activities	Frequency
Students use a visual chart depicting various emotional states to identify how they are feeling at that moment.	12
Teach emotional vocabulary words sorting games and class discussions.	9
Discuss the characters' emotional states when reading stories.	5
Instructional Strategy 6	
Group time: Using group activities such as games, projects, and community circle time to encourage positive relationships. Children are required to share toys and classroom materials to encourage delayed gratification and controlling their feelings. A timer is sometimes used to practice waiting your turn to talk or play with a toy.	
Suggested Activities	Frequency
Use group time to help students practice sharing and negotiating skills	7
Modeling how to listen and share by teachers and peers	3

Observations

The strategies with the highest frequencies (12 out of 14 panelists) were in response to Instructional Strategy 2: *Modeling* and Instructional Strategy 5: *Identifying and Labeling Feelings*. The majority of experts agree *regular discussions about kindness, compassion, and emotions* are extremely useful ways of modeling. They also seem to concur over the importance of *using a visual emotion chart to* help students identify and label their feelings.

A common theme present in three of the six practices was using stories to accompany the instructional strategies. Using books for role play scenarios or class discussions was cited as a useful tool for modeling positive behavior, explaining moral lessons, and identifying feelings. Several teachers recommended specific literature for this purpose (see Appendix I).

Summary

Chapter IV presented the data and findings related to the three research questions which guided this study of social and emotional development in the preschool setting. The goal of the study was to determine the practices expert teachers in early childhood instruction identify as effective for developing social and emotional skills in children ages 3 to 6. The six most highly rated activities were identified, and the expert teachers provided recommendations to implement these six activities. The population included preschool teachers within the state of California and the target population was preschool teachers within Riverside County, California. In total, 14 teachers representing four Riverside County school districts participated in the study.

In Round 1 of the study, 14 participants supplied suggestions for promoting the development of empathy and emotion regulation in the classroom. These recommendations were coded and consolidated into 10 commonly cited practices which are considered effective in the classroom by expert panelists. These 10 instructional strategies provided the content for the second round of data collection.

For Round 2 of the Delphi method study, research participants were asked to rate the degree of effectiveness of each strategy identified in Round 1. This yielded quantitative data used to rank each of the 10 strategies from the highest mean score to the lowest. The top six instructional strategies were identified and used in Round 3 of the study.

In the third and final round of the study, expert panel members were asked to review the six effective strategies they identified in Round 2 and provide suggestions for implementing them in the classroom. Participants provided short-answer responses for each of the six strategies to describe how these strategies can be implemented. Once again, this qualitative data was distilled, coded, and categorized to find common themes. An independent reviewer familiar with this study reviewed the data for themes to ensure intercoder reliability. The results of this data analysis provided the findings of this study.

Chapter V will present the unexpected findings of this research, conclusions, implications for action, and recommendations for future research on this subject. It will also offer concluding remarks and reflections.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter V provides a review of the purpose of this study, restates the research questions, methodology, population and sample. It also discusses the major findings as well as the unexpected findings of the research. The researcher will then present conclusions based on the research findings, implications for action based on the research findings, and recommendations for further research.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this Delphi study was to identify the instructional strategies expert early childhood teachers use to support and promote the development of empathy and emotion regulation in early childhood instruction. In addition, it was the purpose to rate the effectiveness of these instructional strategies, and to identify the specific activities used to implement the six most highly rated instructional strategies.

Research Questions

The research questions were divided into three rounds as follows:

Round 1

1. What instructional strategies do expert early childhood teachers use to support and promote the development of empathy and emotion regulation in early childhood instruction?

Round 2

2. How do the teachers rate the effectiveness of the methods identified in Round 1?

Round 3

3. What specific activities do teachers recommend to implement the six most
   highly rated instructional strategies identified in Round 2?

Research Methods

This mixed-methods study utilized the Delphi technique to collect and synthesize
the opinions of expert panelists using a series of three questionnaires interspersed with
feedback. The results of each questionnaire were used to narrow down the focus of the
questions until a consensus was reached. This lead the researcher to a better
understanding of the research questions. Since research on SEL within the preschool
environment is progressing rapidly, the Delphi technique was useful in understanding the
lived experiences of the expert preschool teachers who participated in this study.

The researcher relied on purposeful sampling to identify participants within the
target population of preschool teachers within Riverside County, California. Expert
teachers were selected based on the following selection criteria:

- Minimum of five years teaching experience in pre-kindergarten and/or
  preschool

- Hold a master's or doctoral degree

- Have received specific SEL training

- Are recommended as an expert by leaders of the Center on the Social and
  Emotional Foundations of Early Learning

- Recognition as an expert in Early Childhood Education by their District
  Administration

Once a list of 14 willing participants was developed, these participants were contacted by email and provided with Informed Consent, a Letter of Invitation, a Demographic Questionnaire, and Participant Bill of Rights. Participants in the study were gathered from four of the 22 Riverside County school districts including Corona-Norco, Hemet, Moreno Valley, and Riverside.

Prior to distributing the first round of the study, a field test was conducted to test the survey instruments with three teachers outside of Riverside County, California. The field test produced successful results, and the researcher began the data collection process with the 14 study participants.

Major Findings

The major findings of this Delphi method study are organized and presented by research question.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked: *What instructional strategies do expert early childhood teachers use to support and promote the development of empathy and emotion regulation in early childhood instruction?*

Round 1 findings. The first survey yielded 13 unique themes identified as useful in promoting empathy and emotion regulation. Once this data was coded for frequency, the researcher condensed the list to 10 themes which were recommended by at least two of the 14 participants. This data provided the content for the second survey.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked: *How do the teachers rate the effectiveness of the methods identified in Round 1?*

Round 2 findings. In the second round, participants were asked to rate the effectiveness of methods provided in Round 1 on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *not impactful at all* to *always impactful*. Once all 14 participants completed the Round 2 survey, the mean of each method was calculated, and instructional strategies were ranked from highest to lowest frequency. This yielded a list of the six highest rated strategies for inclusion in Round 3:

- Building positive relationships with students: Creating a positive relationship with each student and helping them manage difficult emotions when they arise. Sharing personal examples and stories to build connections.

- Modeling: Teachers model positive behavior and empathy throughout the day, finding teachable moments which lend themselves to model kindness, compassion, tolerance, acceptance, and forgiveness.

- Role play: Utilizing curriculum that explains how to deal with situations through examples and situational role play. Can include reading stories about how to be a good friend and literature that emphasizes moral lessons and character.

- Quiet area: Providing a designated area with a calming environment to reduce over-stimulation. Students have access to squishy balls, books, teddy bears, and other manipulative items to regain control of their emotions.

- Identifying and labeling feelings: Teaching students to know which emotions are being experienced so they can differentiate between them. Visual images of different emotions can be useful in labeling different emotional states.

- Group time: Using group activities such as games, projects, and community circle time to encourage positive relationships. Children are required to share toys and classroom materials to encourage delayed gratification and controlling their feelings. A timer is sometimes used to practice waiting your turn to talk or play with a toy.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked: *What specific activities do teachers recommend to implement the six most highly rated instructional strategies identified in Round 2?*

Round 3 findings. Each of the expert panelist provided recommendations for implementing the six practices identified in Round 2. These recommendations were distilled and coded for frequency, yielding two to four methods for each of the six practices.

Strategy 1: Building positive relationships with students. The majority of participants emphasized the importance of validating emotions, helping students recognize their emotions, and assuring them that you care and want to help.

Strategy 2: Modeling. Twelve of the 14 experts recommended having regular discussions about kindness, compassion, and emotions. Books are often used to reinforce these ideas.

Strategy 3: Role play. Panelists frequently recommended using stories from books or videos to explain social skills and moral lessons, making connections to real life events, if possible.

Strategy 4: Provide a quiet area. Respondents stressed the importance of teaching children to use the area and materials purposefully.

Strategy 5: Help students identify and label feelings. Twelve of the 14 experts recommended using a visual chart depicting various emotional states for students to identify how they are feeling at that moment. This chart can be revisited throughout the day, so students can understand the fluctuating nature of emotions.

Strategy 6: Group time. Panelists cited the importance of helping students practice sharing and negotiating skills.

Round 3 themes. Two major themes emerged from the responses provided in Round 2. First, building personal relationships with children was by far the most frequently cited strategy. Each child has individual needs and emotions can fluctuate throughout the day. Building a trusting relationship with the child using eye contact and physical touch such as a hug or high five allows the teacher to better understand the emotional needs of each child. It also allows the teacher to provide emotional coaching when the child experiences difficult feelings.

The second commonly identified theme was the use of children's books to reinforce concepts and prompt discussions regarding feelings, empathy, and positive behavior. This theme was present across three of the six instructional strategies, demonstrating books can be used in many ways.

Unexpected Findings

The data from this study provided two unexpected findings regarding the development of empathy and emotion regulation in early childhood instruction.

Unexpected Finding 1

Several teachers reported a need to establish positive relationships with other teachers in the classroom. As Respondent 3 reported, "*Staff never have observable*

79

negative moments in front of the children. We delay until a time we can discuss the matter in private. The children always have a sense that staff are on the same page and are supportive." The power of demonstrating positive relationships, kindness, and respect is not limited to lesson time. It is important for all staff to consistently model positive relationships for children in all interactions with the children and with one another.

Unexpected Finding 2

The importance of building an open and communicative relationships with the child's family was an unexpected finding. As Respondent 5 explained, "*I have daily contact with my student's families and am aware of many issues that arise for my students. Emotional separation from their parents first off sets the tone for the whole day and year*." It is difficult to teach social and emotional skills if the practices are not being reinforced at home. Having an awareness of the child's family life and keeping open communication with families helps teachers to meet the emotional needs of the child and understand behaviors in the classroom.

<div align="center">Conclusions</div>

The purpose of this study was to identify the instructional strategies expert early childhood teachers use to support and promote the development of empathy and emotion regulation in early childhood instruction. In addition, it was the purpose to rate the effectiveness of these instructional strategies, and to identify the specific activities used to implement the six most highly rated instructional strategies. The following conclusions can be drawn from this study.

Personal Development

The first conclusion resulting from this research is the importance of teachers developing their own empathy and emotion regulation skills. It is impossible to give what you do not have or to teach what you do not understand. In order to effectively model positive behaviors in the classroom, teachers must first be in control of their own emotions. Teachers who are aware and in control of their emotions create a healthier learning environment for children's social and emotional skills to flourish.

Family Relationships

The second conclusion drawn from this study is the importance of understanding the child's family dynamic. Current research indicates that there are several variables which can influence parents' impact on a child's intelligence and emotional development. These variables can include parenting styles, time spent together, the involvement of the father in the child's life and whether or not the mother is working outside of the home (Alegre, 2012). It is important to take these variables into consideration as they can influence a child's social and emotional capabilities in the classroom. Teachers and parents must also model positive behavior and relationships with one another in order to teach these skills effectively.

SEL Curriculum

The final conclusion of this research is the importance of utilizing specialized curriculum targeted at developing empathy and emotion regulation. Many teachers cited the usefulness of the Second Step® and Conscious Discipline® curriculum programs as well as a variety of books which help reinforce SEL concepts. Some school districts have

adopted specified curriculum to implement these strategies, but there is not a universal

consensus on which curriculum is most effective.

<div align="center">**Implications for Action**</div>

Professional Development

Based on the conclusions of this research study, it is recommended that all school

districts provide teachers with professional development training in order to assess and

develop their EI skills. Teachers should receive assessments which measure their EI

skills as part of the hiring process, and targeted strategies should be implemented to

continue developing these abilities. Discussion of teachers' emotional intelligence scores

should be included in annual performance evaluations. Additionally, the researcher

recommends a series of workshops throughout the year where the EI scores can be

reevaluated and the teachers can receive individualized coaching to improve their scores.

Parent Workshops

Research conclusions cite the importance of reinforcing social and emotional

learning at home as well as creating positive relationships with children's families. It is

recommended that parents and care givers receive training on how to partner with their

child's teacher to reinforce these concepts at home. The researcher recommends a

curriculum program for parents which compliments the classroom curriculum. Parent

training workshops on specific SEL concepts should be conducted throughout the year

and the child's progress should be reviewed at parent teacher conferences.

Legislation

New York and Virginia have become the first states to implement a state-wide

education law mandating mental health instruction as part of health education curriculum

in all public schools. New York is requiring mental health education for all Kindergarten through 12th graders, while Virginia is requiring it for 9th and 10th graders as a response to escalating suicide rates. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that states nation-wide implement similar legislation mandating a holistic approach to education which includes social and emotional learning and mental health curriculum. This curriculum should be adopted for state operated preschool programs as well as K-12 schools.

Recommendations for Further Research

The results of this study have led to several recommendations for future research on developing empathy and emotion regulation in preschoolers.

Recommendation 1

The first recommendation is to replicate the study on a larger scale and in multiple counties within California as well as in other states. A larger study would result in more participants, making the data more reliable. In a larger study, there may be significant differences found in the data as well as additional recommendations for developing these skills.

Recommendation 2

Another recommendation for future research would be to obtain teachers' EI scores using tools such as the Emotional Intelligence Appraisal® or the Emotional Quotient-Inventory 2.0®. It would be useful to select participants with a high EI score and to compare their responses to teachers with lower EI scores. The data may result in significant differences between the two groups. Having this data would also be useful in

tracking teachers' professional development and may be useful for hiring practices as well.

Recommendation 3

Another recommendation for future research would be to conduct a meta-analysis on various SEL curriculum programs to determine which ones are most useful in the classroom setting. It would be wise for school districts to develop and implement a specific curriculum program that is implemented in all classrooms. This would ensure that every child is receiving the same level of training at each grade level.

Although there is a growing amount of research on EI in adults, there is very little research on the topic regarding children. The research available on social emotional learning and EI in preschoolers is practically non-existent. There is a need for additional research supporting the positive benefits of SEL training across multiple contexts and ages, particularly in preschoolers.

Recommendation 4

Further research is needed to examine possible gender differences in social and emotional learning and development. There were no studies available which differentiated between the emotional intelligence capacity of boys and girls. It would be useful to discover if such differences exist, and if teachers use different teaching strategies according to the child's gender.

Recommendation 5

A final research recommendation would be to study effective practices psychologists use to teach SEL skills to young children. This study focused on SEL in the classroom setting, but research utilizing clinical psychology may yield additional

strategies for developing empathy and emotion regulation, possibly with a more targeted focus on addressing depression and other mental health disorders. The data collected may result in significant differences between the strategies used by teachers and psychologists.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

In a world where we have vaccines for nearly every ailment, our culture is in need of an inoculation against mental illness. EI may be a possible anecdote for the mental health epidemic around the world. With millions of children considered at-risk for emotional and behavioral problems, we must extend ourselves outward to reach them. In a culture where suicide in a leading cause of death, society has an urgent need for parents, psychologists, and educators to begin implementing these social and emotional learning programs as a form of prevention as early as possible.

Findings from the literature review indicate social and emotional skills are as important as any academic subject we expect children to learn today. In light of the escalating mental health crisis, they may prove to be even more important. As research indicates, EI is positively related to academic achievement, financial success, and increased subjective well-being. Moreover, individuals with high EI scores report happier and more fulfilling lives; they are not committing suicide.

Nobel Laureate, James Heckman, believed the greatest returns on education investments are "from nurturing children's non-cognitive skills, giving them social, emotional and behavioral benefits that lead to success later in life…" (Heckman & Masterov, 2004, p. 3). Our youth today are not being educated in basic social skills, values, and moral reasoning which are the crucial foundations for becoming empathetic,

responsible, and compassionate adults. As a society, we are failing to prepare children for future success. There is an urgent need to teach these emotional coping skills at an early age to help promote overall well-being as a form of prevention against mental illness. Parents and teachers alike must form a united front in defense of our children, and our future.

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Zins, J. E., Weissberg, R. P., Wang, M. P., & Walberg, H. J. (2004). *Building academic*

success on social and emotional learning. What does the research say? New

York, NY: Teachers College Press.

APPENDICIES

Literature Matrix

Emotional Intelligence / REFERENCES	Early Learning	Self-Awareness	Anger Management	Modeling Emotions	Teach Core Values	Good Habits / Personal Responsibility	Emotional Vocabulary	EI Definition	Increased Subjective Well-Being	Academic Achievement	Intervention Strategies	Professional Success	Mental Health	Social/Emotional Learning Curriculum	Research Methods
About the Office of Head Sta	x													x	
Asti, L., Bridge, J.A., Campo	x												x		
Bailey, C., Olsen, S., Sneed	x				x		x				x			x	
Bar-On, R. (2017).							x	x			x				
Barnett, W. S., Jung, K., Ya	x										x			x	
Begg, S., Vos, T., Barker, B												x			
Belfield, C., Bowden, B., Kla	x										x			x	
Bierman, K. L., Coie, J. D.,										x	x			x	
Bitler, M.P., Hoynes, H., & D														x	
Bitsko, R.H.; Holbrook, J.R.													x		
Blair, K. A., Denham, S. A.,	x			x			x				x			x	
Brackett, M. A., & Rivers, S.											x			x	
Brent, D. (2018).															
Cakir, T. (2014).	x										x			x	
Campos, J., Camras, L. & F		x	x				x								
Caruso, D. R. & Salovey, P.							x					x			
Centers for Disease Control													x		
Choi, B. (2010).	x	x						x						x	
Civic Impulse. (2018).	x													x	
Colbert, J. (2008).	x					x					x			x	
Cook, T.D., Murphy, R.F. &														x	
Coolahan, K., Fantuzzo, J.,	x			x							x			x	
Cooper, P. G. (2014).						x							x		
Cosgrove, A. (2018).													x		
Covey, S.R., Covey, S., Sun									x	x				x	
Dalkey, N. & Helmer, O. (19															x
Department of Health and H													x		
Domitrovich, C.E., Cortes, F	x										x			x	
Durlak, J.A. & Weissberg, R														x	
Early Childhood Education	x														
Elias, M. J., Zins, J. E., Wei														x	
Elmore, T. (2018).													x	x	
Firestone, L. (2016).	x						x				x			x	
Forrest, J. (2015).		x													
Fraenkel, J. R., Wallen, N. E															x
Futter, D. (2012).							x								
Gallegos, D. (2014).	x									x	x			x	
Gardner, H. (1987).							x								
Ghosh, N.B. & Rajaram, G.							x					x			
Goleman, D. (1995).							x			x		x			
Goleman, D. (2004).	x										x			x	
Goleman, D. (2006).							x								
Goleman, D. (2008).															
Greenberg, M., Bierman, K.														x	
Grohol, J. (2018).													x		
Guerra, N., Modecki, K., & (														x	
Ha, D., Lim, S. A. & You, S.	x			x					x						

Emotional Intelligence — REFERENCES	Early Learning	Self-Awareness	Anger Management	Modeling Emotions	Teach Core Values	Good Habits / Personal Responsibility	Emotional Vocabulary	EI Definition	Increased Subjective Well-Being	Academic Achievement	Intervention Strategies	Professional Success	Mental Health	Social/Emotional Learning Curriculum	Research Methods
Hoffman, A. J. (2011).	x									x	x			x	
Humphrey, N., Barlow, A., V										x				x	
IQ Test. Psych Central. (20								x							
Jensen, S., Kohn, C., Rilea,							x	x	x		x				
Kanoy, K. (2013).	x			x	x	x	x				x			x	
Karimzadeh, M., Goodarzi,														x	
Kaufman, A.R. (2017).												x			
Kirkland, S., Soleimani, A.,												x			
Knopf, A. (2016).	x								x					x	
Kohut, H. (1984).									x					x	
Krahn, J., Hartman, F., & Si															x
Lanciano, T., & Curci, A. (20							x							x	
Lin, H.L., Lawrence, F.P., &									x	x					
Low, S.S., Cook, C.R., Smc														x	
Mayer, J.D. & Salovey, P. (1		x					x								
Mayer, J.D. & Salovey, P. (1				x			x	x						x	
Mayer, J.D., Salovey, P. & C							x	x	x			x			
Mashburn, A.J., Pianta, R.C	x		x	x	x	x									
McClelland, M. M., Tominey														x	
McMillan, J. & Schumacher,															x
McNeely, J.T. (2016)														x	
Modecki, K.L., Zimmer-Gem				x			x		x		x		x		
Montes-Berges, B., & Augus												x	x		
Nathanson, L., Rivers, S.E.,														x	
Newmark, G. (2008)	x			x	x	x	x	x							
Nourmand, R. S. (2013).															
Nowack, M., Endrikat, J., &															x
Okoli, C., & Pawlowski, S. D															x
Pianta, R., Howes, C., Burc	x													x	
Plato. (trans. 2009). The Re								x							
Prince, S. A., Adamo, K. B.,												x			
Reid, H. L. (2007).								x						x	
Rickes, P. C. (2016).												x			
Riggs, N., Jahromi, L., Razz															
Smith, M. (2018)								x					x		
Stansbury, K. & Sigman, M.	x		x								x			x	
Starnes, L.P. (2017).	x									x	x			x	
Stosney, S. (1998).	x			x	x	x					x				
Team, R.M. (2006).	x					x					x			x	
Teele, S. (2000).								x							
Thangaratinam, S., & Redm															x
Thayer, S.C. (2012).	x										x			x	
Upshur, C.C., Heyman, M.,														x	
U.S. Department of Educati															
Vinovskis, M. (2005).	x													x	
Webster-Stratton, C. & Herr															
White, R.L. (2016).								x					x		
Whiteford, H.A., Degenhard													x		
World Health Organization (													x		
Zeidner, M., Matthews, G.,								x					x		
Zimmer-Gembeck, M.J., & S								x			x			x	
Zins, J.E., Bloodworth, M.R.											x			x	

APPENDIX B

BUIRB Approval

BRANDMAN
University Chapman University System

Tess Breen <tbreen@mail.brandman.edu>

BUIRB Application Approved: Tess V. Breen
2 messages

MyBrandman <my@brandman.edu>   Thu, Oct 18, 2018 at 5:13 PM
To: tbreen Student <tbreen@mail.brandman.edu>
Cc: "Devore, Douglas" <ddevore@brandman.edu>, "Pendley, Philip" <pendley@brandman.edu>, buirb
<buirb@brandman.edu>

Dear Tess V. Breen,

Congratulations! Your IRB application to conduct research has been approved by the Brandman University Institutional Review Board. Please keep this email for your records, as it will need to be included in your research appendix.

If you need to modify your BUIRB application for any reason, please fill out the "Application Modification Form" before proceeding with your research. The Modification form can be found at IRB.Brandman.edu

Best wishes for a successful completion of your study.

Thank You,

BUIRB
Academic Affairs
Brandman University
16355 Laguna Canyon Road
Irvine, CA 92618
buirb@brandman.edu
www.brandman.edu
A Member of the Chapman University System

This email is an automated notification. If you have questions please email us at buirb@brandman.edu.

APPENDIX C

National Institutes of Health (NIH) Certificate

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Tess Breen** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 05/16/2017.

Certification Number: 2396397.

Informed Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY
16355 LAGUNA CANYON ROAD
IRVINE, CA 92618

RESEARCH STUDY TITLE: Developing Social and Emotional Skills in Early Childhood Instruction: A Delphi Study

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Tess Breen, Doctoral Candidate

TITLE OF CONSENT FORM: Consent to Participate in Research

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: The purpose of this Delphi study was to identify the instructional strategies expert early childhood teachers use to support and promote the development of empathy and emotion regulation in early childhood instruction. In addition, it was the purpose to rate the effectiveness of these instructional strategies, and to identify the specific activities used to implement the six most highly rated instructional strategies.

PROCEDURES: In participating in this research study, you agree to complete three electronic surveys (via Survey Monkey). The surveys will take approximately 10 -15 minutes to complete. The surveys will ask questions designed to determine effective practices to support and promote the developing of social and emotional skills in early childhood instruction. Additionally, you will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire that will include questions that capture your background information.

I understand:
   a) There are no known major risks or discomforts associated with this research.

   b) There are no major benefits to you for participation, but a potential benefit may be that you have an opportunity to contribute to research that may impact the field education. The information from this study is intended to inform parents, teachers, school districts and county offices of education what practices experts identify as effective for utilizing activities which support the development of empathy and emotion regulation in young children.

   c) I will not be compensated for my participation in this study.

d) Any questions I have concerning my participation in this study will be answered by Tess Breen, Brandman University Doctoral Candidate, who may be contacted by phone at [redacted] or by email at tbreen@brandman.edu. The dissertation chairperson, Dr. Phil Pendley, will also be available for questions at pendley@brandman.edu.

e) I may refuse to participate or withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the investigator may stop the study at any time.

f) I understand no information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be informed, and my consent re-obtained. I understand if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call of the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, and 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.

g) I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the Research Participant's Bill of Rights.

I have read the above and understand it and hereby voluntarily consent to the procedures(s) set forth.

_____   _____
Signature of Participant or Responsible Party   **Date**

_____   _____
Signature of Principal Researcher   **Date**

Brandman University IRB August 2018

111

APPENDIX E

Letter of Invitation

Developing Social and Emotional Skills in Early Childhood Instruction: A Delphi Study

October _____, 2018

Dear Prospective Study Participant:

You are invited to participate in a Delphi research study designed to discover and describe methods which promote social and emotional learning in early childhood instruction. The principal researcher of this study is Tess Breen, Doctoral Candidate for Brandman University's Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership program. You were selected to participate in this study based on the following selection criteria:

1.   Actively teaching within Riverside County, California
2.   A minimum of five years of experience in early childhood education
3.   A master's or doctorate degree
5.   Capacity and willingness to participate
6.   Sufficient time to participate in the Delphi method study
7.   Effective communication skills and English proficiency

Twelve to 15 teachers will engage in this study. Participation should require approximately 30 minutes of your time over the course of three surveys and is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. Additionally, you will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire that will include questions that capture your background information.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Delphi study is to explore social and emotional learning in early childhood instruction with an emphasis on identifying the activities expert early childhood teachers use to support and promote the development of empathy and emotion regulation, to have the teachers rate the impact of these activities, and to identify the specific methods used to implement the six most highly rated activities.

PROCEDURES: If you decide to participate in the study, you will be sent three rounds of a survey via email by the researcher. The survey will be via Survey Monkey and your responses will remain anonymous.

RISKS, INCONVENIENCES, AND DISCOMFORTS: There are no known major risks or discomforts associated with this research.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS: There are no major benefits to you for participation, but a potential benefit may be that you have an opportunity to contribute to research that may impact the field education. The information from this study is intended to inform parents,

teachers, school districts and county offices of education what practices experts identify as effective for utilizing activities which support the development of empathy and emotion regulation in young children.

ANONYMITY: Records of information that you provide for the research study and any personal information you provide will not be linked in any way. It will not be possible to identify you as the person who provided any specific information for the study.

You are encouraged to ask questions, at any time regarding how this study will be performed and/or how it will affect you. You may contact me at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or by email at tbreen@brandman.edu. You can also contact Dr. Phil Pendley by email at pendley@brandman.edu. If you have any further questions or concerns about this study or your rights as a study participant, you may write or call the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.

Respectfully,

Tess Breen
Principal Researcher, Doctoral Candidate
Brandman University

APPENDIX F

Demographic Questionnaire

INSTRUCTIONS: Please complete the following demographic information. Your name will remain confidential throughout the duration of this study.

1. Name:

2. Title/Position:

3. School Location:

4. How many years of experience in current position?

5. What type of formal training (if any) have you had in teaching social and emotional

   learning (SEL)? Please explain.

Research Participant's Bill of Rights

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Research Participant's Bill of Rights

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.

2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.

3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.

4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.

5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.

6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.

7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.

8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.

9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.

10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the Brandman University Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The Brandman University Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949) 341-9937 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.

Brandman University IRB   Adopted   November 2013

Delphi Study, Round 1 Questionnaire

ROUND 1: Developing Social and Emotional Skills in Early Childhood Instruction

Round One Instructions

The purpose of this Delphi study is to identify the instructional strategies expert early childhood teachers use to support and promote the development of empathy and emotion regulation in early childhood instruction. In addition, the purpose is to rate the effectiveness of these instructional strategies, and to identify the specific activities used to implement the six most highly rated instructional strategies.

Research Questions

Round 1
1. What instructional strategies do expert early childhood teachers use to support and promote the development of empathy and emotion regulation in early childhood instruction?

Round 2

2. How do the teachers rate the effectiveness of the methods identified in Round 1?

Round 3

3. What specific activities do teachers recommend to implement the six most highly rated instructional strategies identified in Round 2?

Instructions:
A Delphi method research study involves three rounds of questionnaires in order to address the research questions.
This first round is opened-ended. Please spend a few minutes considering various strategies which can be used in a classroom setting to encourage the development of empathy and emotion regulation. You are encouraged to list as many different tactics as you can think of. All responses will be collected and sorted for similarities for the next round of the survey. You will receive the next round after all participants have responded to the Round 1 survey which could take approximately 1 week.

* **1. What specific instructional strategies are useful in promoting the development of empathy and emotion regulation in early childhood classrooms?**
   (Please list as many as you can think of).

Delphi Study, Round 2 Questionnaire

ROUND 2: Developing Social and Emotional Skills in Early Childhood Instruction

Round Two Instructions

Thank you for your continued participation in this project!

This round of the Delphi method study includes aggregated responses from Round One. Responses were distilled, categorized, and consolidated based on common responses from participants. This resulted in 10 recommended practices for evaluation.

In Round 2, participants are asked to rate the effectiveness of the methods identified in Round One on a Likert interval scale indicating the degree to which you agree or disagree with the method's effectiveness. This will help us narrow the methods down to the top 6.

__Instructions:__
Please read all items in each section and consider the degree of effectiveness of each of the methods identified in Round 1 before rating.

Please rate the impact of each activity listed as follows: 1 = *not impactful at all*, 2 = *rarely impactful*, 3 = *somewhat impactful*, 4 = *very impactful*, 5 = *always impactful*.

*For the next round, we are looking to identify the TOP SIX recommended methods.

* 1. **Positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS): Emphasizes preventing problem behaviors before they happen to increase the opportunity for students to learn. Useful for developing social skills and teaching students to make good choices in life. Behavioral expectations are discussed and age-appropriate conscious discipline is used to coach self-regulation skills.**

Not impactful at all	Rarely impactful	Somewhat impactful	Very impactful	Always impactful
○	○	○	○	○

* 2. **Modeling: Teachers model positive behavior and empathy throughout the day, finding teachable moments which lend themselves to model kindness, compassion, tolerance, acceptance, and forgiveness. Teacher focuses on building strong, trusting, and caring relationships with the children.**

Not impactful at all	Rarely impactful	Somewhat impactful	Very impactful	Always impactful
○	○	○	○	○

* 3. **Role play: Utilizing curriculum that explains how to deal with situations through examples and situational role play. Can include stories about how to be a good friend with an emphasis on moral lessons and character building. Puppets are sometimes used to help reinforce the concepts.**

Not impactful at all	Rarely impactful	Somewhat impactful	Very impactful	Always impactful
○	○	○	○	○

* 4. **Group time: Using group activities such as games, projects, and community circle time to encourage positive relationships. Children are required to share toys and classroom materials to encourage delayed gratification and controlling their feelings. A timer is sometimes used to practice waiting your turn to talk or play with a toy.**

Not impactful at all	Rarely impactful	Somewhat impactful	Very impactful	Always impactful

Delphi Study, Round 3 Questionnaire

Round Three Instructions

Thank you for your continued participation in this research study. This is the third and final round of questions!

In Round 2, you rated the effectiveness of methods identified in Round 1. From that data, the six most highly rated methods from Round 2 are listed below from highest to lowest.

Instructions:
Please carefully review the six most highly rated methods used in the teaching process to promote the development of empathy and emotion regulation in early childhood classrooms below.

In short answer form, please identify and describe <u>specific activities</u> recommended to implement each of these methods identified in Round 2. Please provide as much detail as possible.

* 1. Building positive relationships with students: Creating a positive relationship with each student and helping them manage difficult emotions when they arise. Sharing personal examples and stories to build connections.

2. Modeling: Teachers model positive behavior and empathy throughout the day, findinf teachable moments which lend themselves to model kindness, compassion, tolerance, acceptance, and forgiveness.

3. Role play: Utilizing curriculum that explains how to deal with situations through examples and situational role play. Can include reading stories about how to be a good friend and literature that emphasizes moral lessons and character.

4. Quiet area: Providing a designated area with a calming environment to reduce over-stimulation. Students have access to squishy balls, books, teddy bears, and other manipulative items to regain control of their emotions.

5. Identifying and labeling feelings: Teaching students to know which emotions are being experienced so they can differentiate between them. Visual images of different emotions can be useful in labeling different emotional states. Students can "check in" on a visual emotion chart to identify how a student is feeling at that moment.

6. Group time: Using group activities such as games, projects, and community circle time to encourage positive relationships. Children are required to share toys and classroom materials to encourage delayed gratification and controlling their feelings. A timer is sometimes used to practice waiting your turn to talk or play with a toy.

Children's Book Recommendations

Being a Friend

A Rainbow of Friends
by P.K. Hallinan

A Very Special Critter
by Gina and Mercer Mayer

Gigi and Lulu's Gigantic Fight
by Pamela Edwards

How do Dinosaurs Play with
Their Friends?
by Jane Yolen & Mark Teague

Making Friends
by Fred Rogers

Sharing How Kindness Grows
by Fran Shaw

My Friend Rabbit: A Picture Book
by Eric Rohmann

Dealing with Difficult Feelings

Alexander and the Terrible
Horrible No Good Very Bad
Day
by Judith Viorst

Tucker Turtle Takes Time to
Tuck and Think by Rochelle
Lintini

The Way I feel
by Janan Cain

My Many Colored Days
by Dr. Seuss

Dealing with Difficult Feelings (cont.)

Franklin's Bad Day
by Paulette Bourgeois and Brenda
Clark

Llama Llama Mad at Mama
by Anna Dewdney

How Full Is Your Bucket? For Kids
by Tom Rath and Mary Reckmeyer

Glad Monster, Sad Monster
by Ed Emberley and Anne Miranda

The Color Monster: A
Story About Emotions
by Anna Llenas

Grumpy Monkey
by Suzanne Lang

Waiting Is Not Easy!
by Mo Willems

Even Superheroes Have
Bad Days
by Shelly Becker

Separation Anxiety from Family

The Kissing Hand
by Audrey Penn

Lama Lama Misses Mama
by Anna Dewdney

Making Good Choices

What Should Danny Do?
by Ganit & Adir Levy

**Best Behavior® Series
by Elizabeth Verdick & Marieka Heinlen**

Worries Are Not Forever

Voices Are Not for Yelling

Hands Are Not for Hitting

Germs Are Not for Sharing

Tails Are Not for Pulling

Words Are Not for Hurting

**Early Social Behavior® Series
by Nita Everly**

Can You Talk to Your Friends?

Can You Stand Up for Yourself?

Can You Be a Helper?

Can You Keep Trying?

Can You Use Your Words?

Can You Use a Good Voice?

Can You Be a Friend?

Can You Take Turns?

Can You Share?

Can You Tell How Someone Feels?

Can You Be Polite?

**Learning to Get Along® Series
by Cheri J. Meiners & Meredith Johnson**

Listen and Learn

Know and Follow Rules

Cool Down and Work Through Anger

When I Feel Afraid

Be Careful and Stay Safe

Accept and Value Each Person

Talk and Work It Out

Try and Stick with It

Join in and Play

Respect and Take Care of Things

Share and Take Turns

Cool Down and Work Through Anger

Be Honest and Tell the Truth

Reach Out and Give

Know and Follow the Rules

Respect and Take Care of Things

Be Polite and Kind

Understand and Care

**Mindful Mantra® Series
by Laurie Wright**

I Can Handle It

I Matter

I Am Proud of Myself

**Mindful Mantra® Series
by Laurie Wright
(cont.)**

I Will Be Okay

I Will Try

**The Best Me I Can Be® Series
by David Parker**

I Accept You as You Are!

I Am Generous!

I Am Responsible!

I Can Cooperate!

I Show Respect!

I Tell the Truth!

I'm a Good Friend!

I Am Generous!

I'm in Charge of Me!