Summer 2016

Training future teachers to promote emotion regulation in the classroom

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TRAINING FUTURE TEACHERS TO PROMOTE EMOTION REGULATION IN
THE CLASSROOM

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

In
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Psychology

Combined-Integrated Program in Clinical and School Psychology

August 2016

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my sincerest appreciation and gratitude to my advisor and dissertation committee chair Dr. Elena Savina. I respect your knowledge and expertise, value your opinion, and admire you as a person. Thank you for both challenging and supporting me through this process and throughout my graduate education, which has truly helped me to become a better human being. To my committee members, Dr. Craig Shealy and Dr. Trevor Stokes, a heartfelt thank you for your expertise, support, enthusiasm, and encouragement to think deeply. Thank you to the C-I Faculty for your guidance and care in my professional and personal development, and for expanding my worldview exponentially. Thank you to my loving family, to my friends for their deep care and support, and to the Dissertation Support Group at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles who rallied for me. A special thank you to Mariel Cannady who pulled, Jessica Rossi who pushed, and the Kissinger Family who held. Above all thank you to my Grandma whose unparalleled love gave me the guts to believe I could “get in there and figure it out.” I know you’re crossing this finish line with me in spirit.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ......................................................................................... ii
ABSTRACT .................................................................................................................. iv
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION ................................................................................... 1
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW ......................................................................... 10
CHAPTER 3. CURRICULUM ..................................................................................... 37
REFERENCES ........................................................................................................... 99
ABSTRACT

The classroom is a rich emotional environment where both students and teachers experience a wide range of emotions. Emotions influence all aspects of learning including attention, motivation, interest, memory, creativity, and social interactions. While negative emotions generally impede learning, the experience of positive emotions leads to improved outcomes for both teachers and students. Thus, the ability to regulate emotions is a very critical skill for both teachers and students. Teachers must be equipped with the necessary skills to manage their own emotions as well as emotional incidents in the classroom; however, few teacher preparation programs provide the knowledge and skills to navigate the emotional nature of the classroom environment. To meet this need, a social emotional learning (SEL) curriculum for pre-service teachers was developed to provide future teachers 1) with the skills needed to teach emotion regulation to students, and 2) the underlying emotional competence needed to meet the emotional demands of the classroom. The curriculum is intended for implementation as part of an existing teacher education course or as a seminar for pre-service teachers in their last year of schooling.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The impact of emotions on learning is complex and multi-faceted (Frenzel & Stephens, 2013; Fridja & Mesquita, 1994; Linnenbrick & Pintrich, 2000; Pekrun, Goetz, Titz, & Perry, 2002; Gross & Thompson, 2007). Negative emotions decrease working memory and attention (Eisenberg et al., 2000; Flook, Repetti, & Ullman, 2005; Fried, 2011; Linnenbrick & Pintrich, 2000), increase problem behaviors (Eisenberg et al., 2000), negatively impact academic achievement (Valiente, Lemery-Chalfant, & Castro, 2007), and impair the ability of students to develop relationships with teachers and peers (Fabes & Eisenberg 1992). Positive emotions create enjoyment of learning tasks and have the ability to increase attention, interest in learning, intrinsic motivation, and creativity (Fredrickson, 2001; Fried, 2011; Linnenbrick, 2007; Pekrun et al., 2002; Pekrun & Stephens, 2012). Further, positive emotions have an “undoing” effect on negative emotions that leads to overall psychological well-being (Fredrickson, 2001).

Given the significant impact of emotions on the academic and social success of students, the growing body of research indicates a need for students to be equipped with the ability to regulate their emotions (Davis & Levine, 2013; Elias, 2006; Eisenberg et al., 2007; Frenzel & Stephens, 2013; Fried, 2011; Graziano, Reavis, Keane, & Calkins, 2007; Gumora & Arsenio, 2001; Pekrun et al., 2002; Thompson, 1991; Valiente et al., 2010). Emotion regulation is the process by which people exercise control over the experience and expression of emotion, and alter or redirect their emotional states in order to accomplish goals (Gross, 2002; Sutton, 2004; Koole, 2009; Schutz, Hong, Cross, and Osborn, 2006). In the classroom, emotion regulation is associated with improved academic performance (Gumora & Arsenio, 2001; Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, &
Walberg, 2004), effortful control (Valiente, et al., 2010), persistence with school tasks (Cole, 2010), improved attention (Pekrun et al., 2002) and memory (Davis, Levine, Lench, & Quas, 2010), intrinsic motivation to learn (Pekrun et al., 2002; Zins et al., 2007), improvements in behavior and attitude toward learning (Zins et al., 2007), improved social relationships (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Trentacosta, Izard, Mostow, and Fine, 2006; Graziano et al., 2007), and overall psychological well-being (Gillom et al., 2002; Perkrun et al., 2002).

Failed attempts to regulate emotion lead to emotion dysregulation (Gross, 1998; Hargreaves, 1998). In particular, inability to regulate the experience of negative emotions early in life poses a greater risk for developing psychopathology (Cole, Hall, & Najal, 2013). Emotion dysregulation is a core feature of many mental health disorders including eating, personality, mood, and conduct disorders, anxiety, ADHD, and autism spectrum disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Cicchetti, Ackerman, & Izard, 1995; Gross, 1998; McLaughlin, Hatzenbuehler, Mennin, & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2011). Further, emotion dysregulation often precedes suicidal ideation (Wyman et al., 2009; Law, Khazem, & Anestis, 2015), and in the past year nearly 15% of youth reported feeling so sad or hopeless that they made a plan to commit suicide (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2016). The significant link between emotion dysregulation and increased risk for psychopathology further outlines the imperative for emotion regulation competency in schoolchildren (Hargreaves, 1998; McLaughlin et al., 2011).

To promote social emotional learning (SEL), the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning foundation (CASEL) supports the use of evidence-based
SEL programs that can be taught by classroom teachers. Examples of these programs include *I Can Problem Solve* (ICPS) (Shure & Spivak, 1980), *Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies* (PATHS) (Greenberg, Kusché, & Riggs, 2004), and *Second Step* (Grossman, 1997), which have all been demonstrated to improve social and emotional skills in students (Shure & Spivak, 1980). Nonetheless, these programs do not address the underlying emotional competencies of teachers, which is essential for effective implementation of SEL programs and integration of social emotional skills throughout the day. Fragmented implementation of SEL programs is ineffective and impedes long-lasting change in students (Greenberg, et al., 2003).

Not only must teachers have the ability to teach students emotion regulation techniques, they must also have the ability to regulate their own emotions (Becker, Goetz, Morger, & Ranellucci, 2014; Hargreaves, 1998; Jiang, Vauras, Volet, & Wang, 2016; Zins et al., 2004). Historically, teaching has been viewed as an activity focused on pedagogical and content knowledge, and the emotions of the teacher have largely been ignored (Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991). Rather than seeking to encourage teachers’ emotional awareness, emphasis has been on managing teachers’ emotions to fit the agenda of administrators (e.g. improving test scores) (Fineman, 1993; Hargreaves, 1998). Not enough attention has been given to providing teachers with the underlying emotional competence needed to be effective in the classroom (Hargreaves, 2000; Schutz et al., 2006; Waajid, Garner, & Owen, 2013; Williams-Johnson et al., 2008). As Constanti and Gibbs (2004) stated, because emotions are “intangible qualities which cannot be measured...” they have been “considered worthless” within education (p. 247).
Emotional health is critical to the professional health of the teacher (Day & Leitch, 2001). The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher (2012) revealed that over half of teachers in the United States report feeling excessive stress multiple days a week. The emotional demands required to effectively interact with students, parents, administrators, and other school professionals entail a significant amount of emotional labor, defined as the practice of managing emotions in accordance with expected norms and guidelines (Yilmaz, 2015). Professions high in emotional labor are more likely to lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout (Hargreaves, 2000; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Yilmaz, 2015). In particular, Yilmaz (2015) found that surface acting (i.e. hiding real feelings and presenting different feelings toward others) leads to emotional exhaustion and burnout, whereas “deep acting” (i.e. trying to actually feel the emotions) required less emotional labor and thus lead to better outcomes. Thus, teachers who possess the emotional competence and ability to effectively regulate their emotions are less likely to experience burnout (Williams-Johnson, 2008; Yilmaz, 2015). Further, teachers who are unable to effectively cope with stress have a decreased sense of teaching efficacy (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012). In a cyclical manner, this leads to further stress and decreased ability to manage classroom behavior and apply effective instructional practices (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012).

When teachers are able to provide students with the ability to regulate their emotions, it leads to improved behavioral outcomes in students (Zins et al., 2007). With fewer problem behaviors in the classroom, teachers are more easily able to manage the classroom environment, which brings about feelings of teaching efficacy (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012). These feelings of efficacy create feelings of job satisfaction and buffer
against burnout (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012). Teaching efficacy leads to more effective teaching.

The emotional skills of teachers are important to both teacher and student success (Becker et al., 2014; Corcoran & Tormey, 2013; Jiang et al., 2016; Zins, et al., 2004), and teachers’ emotions influence the emotions of their students (Becker et al., 2014; Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991). When teachers experience positive emotions and express supportive care to their students, it fosters positive teacher-student relationships where students are more likely to seek help and emotional guidance (Birch & Ladd, 1997). Without emotional competence, there is increased potential for cultural differences to cause the teacher to misconstrue student emotions (Mauss, Bunge, & Gross, 2008; Mesquita & Frijda, 1992). When these misunderstandings occur, it impedes teacher-student relationships and negatively impacts learning (Mauss, Bunge, & Gross, 2008). Thus, teachers must also have an understanding of how culture impacts their own perspective and the perspectives of their students when interpreting emotional events, experiencing emotion, and regulating emotion (Mauss et al., 2008; Mesquita & Frijda, 1992).

Literature suggests teachers feel responsible for teaching emotion-regulation skills (Boyer, 2009) and possess some knowledge of how to teach these skills (Perels, Meget-Kullman, Wende, Schmitz, & Buchbinder, 2009). Teachers also recognize the importance of regulating their own emotions in the classroom and do so largely because it impacts student learning; however, they frequently use suppression to regulate emotions (Hosotani and Imai-Matsumura, 2011), which is ineffective in decreasing the experience of negative emotion (Gross, 2002; Jiang et al., 2006). Further, teachers do not evidence
good knowledge of how to use emotions to facilitate positive learning environments (Hargreaves, 1998) or decrease stress. Clearly, teachers’ foundational understanding of emotions is lacking (Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991).

Teaching is a profession that requires passionate, emotional beings (Hargreaves, 1998). Hence, emotions are at the center of teachers’ work (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003), and it is not enough for teachers to simply follow a prescribed set of principles and teaching methods. What is needed is a “deep understanding of the self and the student” (Day & Leitch, 2001, p. 405) that results from teachers’ emotional competence. Emotionally competent teachers must possess more than an understanding of emotions; emotional competence also includes the belief that one has the capacity to achieve desired outcomes by deliberately using their emotions to guide them in relationships with others and to achieve desired inner emotional states (Saarni, 1997). Pre-service teachers would benefit from a better understanding of the emotional experiences in the classroom in order to help them feel capable of acknowledging and managing student emotions (Greenberg et al., 2003; Schutz et al., 2006; Waajid et al., 2013; Williams-Johnson, 2008).

Despite the importance of emotion in our lives and in the role of the teacher, emotions have previously been ignored in educational reform (Hargreaves, 1998; Waajid et al., 2013). Until recently, federal policy and legislation did not encourage standards of teaching that support emotion regulation. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2002) lacks provisions regarding SEL, and, while the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) (2012) references the importance of teachers providing caring and
nurturing behavior, there is no mention of emotional competence in the five core principles of teaching, and focus remains more on behavior management (2012).

Recent changes to legislation and two newly introduced bills reflect the importance of incorporating SEL in our schools. In December 2015 the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed and, although it does not directly mandate SEL, elements of the new law allow for the potential to use SEL as a broader way to define school success and measure outcomes. Even more encouraging, in January 2015 the Supporting Emotional Learning Act (H.R. 497, 2015) was introduced to require that teacher preparation programs include training in SEL; a month later in February 2015 the Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Act of 2015 (H.R. 850, 2015) was introduced to allocate federal funding for the purpose of training existing teachers and principals in SEL. If schools are to succeed in providing students with an effective, relevant education, emotions cannot be discounted (Hargreaves, 1998), and new trends in legislature are beginning to support this understanding. Teachers must have the tools required for success, which includes training in emotional competence (Hargreaves, 2000; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Williams-Johnson et al., 2008).

While there is a considerable amount of research regarding the importance of emotion-regulation in the classroom (Davis & Levine, 2013; Frenzel & Stephens, 2013; Gumora & Arsenio, 2001; Pekrun et al., 2002; Rothbart & Jones, 1998; Trentacosta et al., 2006; Valiente et al., 2010; Zins, et al., 2004), very few teacher training programs focus on the SEL needs of the student, or the underlying emotional competencies teachers must possess to teach these skills. Pre-service teachers need to understand the emotional nature of the school environment (Williams-Johnson et al., 2008), and should be
equipped with the skills to effectively manage their own emotions as well as emotional incidents in the classroom (Jiang et al., 2016; Schutz et al., 2006). Thus, modifications to teacher training programs is necessary to provide explicit training in skills necessary to teach emotion regulation to students, manage the emotional environment of the classroom, and understand and adaptively cope with their own emotional experiences (Greenberg et al., 2003; Waajid et al., 2013).

**Focus of Present Research**

The focus of the present research is to develop a curriculum to assist pre-service teachers in developing the fundamental emotional competencies necessary for a successful teaching career. The curriculum is unique because it focuses on both student regulation of emotion, and the teacher’s own emotional competence, which will enhance their ability to teach emotion regulation, manage emotional situations in the classroom, and regulate their own emotions (Orphinas & Horne, 2004).

This curriculum is based on a conceptualization of emotional competence proposed by Saarni (1999) and Saarni, Campos, Camras, and Witherington (2006). Briefly, emotional competence is conceptualized as encompassing the following skills: an awareness of one’s own emotions, ability to understand other’s emotions, ability to use emotion vocabulary, capacity for empathic attunement, ability to respond emotionally, ability to adaptively cope with difficult emotions, ability to use emotions to build relationships, and the potential for emotional self-efficacy. Emotion regulation is further conceptualized based on Gross’s (1998) process-oriented approach to emotion regulation.

The proposed curriculum has the following objectives: 1) provide pre-service teachers with the skills needed to teach emotion regulation to students, and 2) provide
pre-service teachers with the underlying emotional competence needed to meet the emotional demands of the classroom.
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotion Regulation in the Classroom

*What is emotion regulation?*

Emotion regulation is defined as a process by which people alter or redirect their emotional states in order to accomplish their goals; it is the ability to exercise control over the experience and expression of emotion (Gross, 2002; Sutton, 2004; Koole, 2009; Schutz et al., 2006). Both negative and positive emotions are increased, decreased, or maintained through emotion regulation, and this happens both at the conscious and unconscious level (Gross, 2002; Schutz et al., 2006).

Before discussing emotion regulation, there must first be an understanding of what emotions are. Researchers emphasize the complex and multidimensional nature of emotions (Frenzel & Stephens, 2013; Fridja & Mesquita, 1994; Gross & Thompson, 2007; Frenzel & Stephens, 2013). Although consensus on the definition of emotions does not exist, emotions are frequently described as having the following components: affective, physiological, cognitive, motivational, and expressive (Fredrickson, 2001; Frenzel & Stephens, 2013; Fridja & Mesquita, 1994; Gross & Thompson, 2007; Koole, 2009). Emotions first occur when an individual appraises an event as relevant to his/her goals (Fridja & Mesquita, 1994; Gross & Thompson, 2007). Depending on the appraisal, the individual then experiences an affective response. Emotions are also characterized by a physiological response that occurs in both the peripheral and central nervous systems (Frenzel & Stephens, 2013; Fridja & Mesquita, 1994). For example, when experiencing fear, the pulse increases, breathing becomes shallow, and muscles constrict. Cognitions regarding an emotion are often generated. For example, a student experiencing fear
before an exam might think, “I am going to fail this exam!” In addition, the emotion encompasses an expressive component whereby the individual spontaneously produces facial expressions and body movements conveying the emotion (Frenzel & Stephens, 2013). Emotions also provide a motivational push that prepares the individual for an action (Frenzel & Stephens, 2013; Fridja & Mesquita, 1994; Gross & Thompson, 2007); or, can interrupt the individual’s activity to varying degrees (Fridja & Mesquita, 1994).

**Process model of emotion regulation**

In his process-model of emotion regulation, Gross (2002) identified five families of emotion regulation strategies: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. Using *situation selection* the individual takes action to avoid situations that elicit negative emotions, and instead moves toward situations that produce positive emotions. Examples of this include talking to a friend after having a bad day, or not answering an unpleasant phone call. *Situation modification* occurs when the individual changes a situation so that it does not elicit certain emotions. For example, an individual who is feeling sad may sit in a room with bright lights and listen to happy music. The strategy *attentional deployment* occurs when the individual purposely diverts attention away from specific aspects of a situation without changing the environment. This diversion can be physical, such as closing one’s eyes when viewing a scary movie, or can be internal such as by shifting attention away from thoughts of negative experiences. *Cognitive change* refers to consciously changing one’s cognitive interpretation of the experience so the experience is not felt as intensely. An example of this may be an individual who is facing a difficult challenge who says to his/herself, “this is no big deal.” Finally, *response modulation* refers to the individual’s
attempt to regulate the expression of emotion. This occurs through emotional suppression, or by attempting to regulate the physiological aspects by means such as exercise, alcohol, or even food (Gross, 2002).

Situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, and cognitive change, are antecedent-focused strategies, and occur before the emotion is fully experienced physiologically or behaviorally. Response modulation, on the other hand, is a response-focused strategy, which occurs after an emotion has been triggered and is fully in progress.

Different emotion regulation strategies may lead to different outcomes (Gross, 2002). For example, individuals who engage in suppression exhibit a decreased behavioral response, but continue to experience the negative emotion. While suppression serves to decrease negative and positive emotion, the negative experience is still present. Additionally, the cognitive energy required to suppress emotion can negatively impact working memory and the ability to store verbal memories (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998; Gross 2002). Further, individuals who outwardly display less emotion receive less social support and are often less liked by others (Patrick & Ryan, 2003). Conversely, reappraisal has been demonstrated to decrease the expression and experience of negative emotion, while simultaneously increasing the experience and expression of positive emotion (Gross, 2002). In addition, reappraisal does not adversely affect memory functioning (Gross, 2002). In a study by Rice, Levine, & Pizzaro (2007), students who were instructed to disengage from a negative emotion eliciting event by using strategies such as distraction and reappraisal were able to redirect their attention in order to attend to and remember educational material. While emotional disengagement is
not a healthy strategy to use long-term, it can be useful short-term strategy in situations where mild negative emotions cannot be immediately addressed and learning must take place (Rice et al., 2007).

Koole (2009) argues that the type of emotion regulation strategy used is dependent on the emotional target. Based on this assumption, he identified need-oriented, goal-oriented, or person-oriented strategies. Three systems generate emotion regulation targets: attention, which allows the individual to selectively attend to information; knowledge, which allows the individual to make cognitive reappraisals; and the body, which gives rise to the physical sensations of emotion. *Need-oriented strategies* focus on the individual’s need to feel pleasurable states. Avoidance is an example of a need-oriented strategy to regulate attention because it seeks to disengage one’s attention from thoughts that lead to negative emotions. *Goal-oriented strategies* are those that seek to promote or inhibit emotional responses in order to reach a specific goal. Cognitive reappraisals in which the individual changes his/her assessment of a situation in order to alter the cognitive impact is an example of a goal-oriented strategy focused on knowledge. Finally, *person-oriented strategies* promote overall functioning of the whole person. Deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation are both person-oriented strategies targeted at the body (Koole, 2009).

*Cultural influences on emotion regulation*

Emotion regulation is shaped by cultural context (Mauss, Bunge, & Gross, 2008). Individuals from different cultures have different views of the self. Many Asian, African, Latin-American, and some Southern European cultures hold an interdependent view of the self, which stresses fitting in and harmonious mutual dependence (Markus &
Kitayama, 1991). In contrast, American and many Western European cultures hold a view of the self as an independent entity where appreciation of individual differences, autonomy, and attending to the self are valued over attending to the needs of others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). These different views of the self and other affect how individuals automatically interpret emotional events, and experience and regulate emotions (Mauss et al., 2008; Mesquita & Frijda, 1992). Generally, Western societies encourage the expression of emotions because they demonstrate the individual’s unique inner attributes (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Mauss et al., 2008). In particular, positive emotions such as happiness are highly valued as a sign of psychological well-being (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). However, general tendencies may not represent groups in their entirety. For example, the prototypical American view may best represent white, middle class American men and be less descriptive of other groups of US citizens (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

**Temperament and Emotion Regulation**

Temperament greatly impacts emotion regulation because it defines individual differences in emotional responsiveness and self-regulation (Rothbart, Sheese, & Posner, 2014). It can partially explain why children experience different emotions in response to the same stimuli; differences in emotional intensity; and differences in ability to regulate emotions (Rothbart & Jones, 1998).

Gray (as cited in Matthews & Gilliland, 1999) described two different neurophysiological pathways that trigger approach or avoidance behaviors depending on if the individual views the situation as rewarding or punishing. The behavioral inhibition system (BIS) is activated when the individual is confronted with stimuli that signal
danger or loss, and results in avoidance behaviors. The behavioral activation system (BAS) is activated when the individual experiences reward, which leads to approach behaviors and results in the emotions of joy, interest, and enthusiasm. Individuals with BIS tendencies are naturally more receptive and responsive to negative stimuli, while individuals with stronger BAS are more responsive and reactive to positive or rewarding stimuli. However, individuals high in effortful control can inhibit dominant response tendencies and approach punishing situations and avoid situations that are immediately rewarding (Rothbart & Jones, 1998).

Environment shapes temperament through a complex interaction (Rothbart, Derryberry, & Posner, 1994; Matthews & Gilliland, 1999; Bates, Goodnight, & Fite, 2008). Negative parenting can interact with the child’s negative emotionality and lead to externalizing behaviors. Or, negative emotionality within the child can cause negative parenting practices which also leads to more externalizing behaviors. Children who have poor ability to regulate their emotions and also have parents who are harsh and unresponsive are more likely to develop externalizing problems than children with good regulation of emotion who have the same type of parents (Bates et al., 2008).

**Emotions and Emotion Regulation in the Classroom**

*Emotions and Learning*

Emotion regulation is critical for learning, as emotions influence one’s ability to process and understand information. Emotions can enhance or reduce learning. In a cyclical manner, emotions affect thinking processes, and thinking processes affect the experience, expression, and regulation of emotional responses (Wyman, Cross, Brown, Yu, Tu, & Eberly, 2010). Students who self-report negative affect in relation to school
are less likely to use higher-level cognitive skills and perform worse academically than their peers (Linnenbrick & Pintrich, 2000; Gumora & Arsenio 2001). Negative mood states decrease both working memory and attention, which makes it more difficult for students to learn (Linnenbrick & Pintrich, 2000; Flook et al., 2005; Fried, 2011). Students with compromised working memory and attentional capacity will struggle with all areas of learning.

Further, students with decreased working memory and attentional capacity rely more heavily on external direction, control, and motivation (Pekrun et al., 2002). Negative emotions also have the potential to direct attention away from learning; however, reappraisal strategies may be effective in regulating sadness and enhancing memory (Davis & Levine, 2013). In a study by Eisenberg et al. (2000), students experiencing high levels of negative emotion demonstrated higher levels of problem behavior and lacked attentional control.

Pekrun at al. (2002) use the term academic emotions to refer to those emotions associated with academic learning, classroom instruction, and achievement. Academic emotions extend beyond achievement emotions, which are related to achievement outcomes and are measured by success and failure, and include emotions associated with all aspects of learning.

Student’s emotions in the classroom can be categorized according to their valence and activation (Pekrun & Stephens, 2012). Negative deactivating emotions such as boredom and hopelessness decrease motivation and attention and lead to superficial information processing (Harvey & Chickie-Wolfe, 2007; Pekrun & Stephens, 2012). Negative activating emotions include anxiety, shame, anger, and frustration. These
emotions have different effects on students depending on their level of activation and independent student variables. Mild levels of negative activating emotions can provide the motivation to avoid failure by resisting procrastination and focusing attention. However, high levels of negative activating emotions produce worried thinking, reduce attention and working memory, weaken intrinsic motivation, and inhibit complex cognitive processing (Pekrun & Stephens, 2012).

In a study by Valiente, Lemery-Chalfant, and Swanson (2010), students who were able to regulate their emotions were higher in effortful control, and effortful control predicted higher achievement. However, anger may affect the ability to use effortful control (Valiente et al., 2010). Students experiencing low levels of anger performed better on achievement measures when they were high in effortful control, while students experiencing high levels of unregulated anger were low in effortful control and achievement. Regulated anger helps children persist with school tasks (Cole, 2010). Anger is an activating emotion, and when students are able to exercise control over anger, it can provide motivation to find solutions to problems. Task-related anger can induce motivation to cope with negative events and overcome obstacles (Pekrun et al., 2002). For example, Pekrun et al. found that when students experienced anger in response to feeling anxiety about an exam, it motivated them to implement coping strategies to decrease the anxiety. Thus, when anger occurs as a meta-emotion (i.e. feelings about ones own emotions) it induces coping strategies to manage the anxiety.

Baker et al. (2010) identify boredom as one of the emotions occurring most frequently during learning, while delight and surprise occur much less frequently. This is likely because the negative emotional state produced by boredom persists longer than
those aroused by delight and surprise; once a student is bored and disengages it is difficult to regain his/her attention and interest (D’Mello & Graesser, 2011). Difficulty associated with re-engaging bored students is consistent with goal-appraisal theories of emotion. Boredom is particularly detrimental because it is caused by absence of value in a task and leads not just to lack of approach, but to avoidance of the task (Pekrun, Goetz, Daniels, Stupinsky, & Perry, 2010). Emotions such as boredom, hopelessness, sadness, and disappointment are deactivating and are negatively related to intrinsic motivation (Pekrun & Stephens, 2012).

In a review of the literature, Harvey and Chickie-Wolfe (2007) found that positive emotions promote higher level thinking skills. Positive emotions direct the student’s attention toward the task at hand and are linked to self-regulation (Pekrun, et al., 2002). Emotions such as enjoyment, hope, and pride activate students and are positively associated with student’s effort, interest, and intrinsic leaning motivation (Pekrun et al., 2002).

Fredrickson’s (2001) broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions proposes that positive emotions expand the individual’s desire to explore, be creative, and share experiences with others. Further, they yield brief, non-specific action tendencies, termed momentary thought-action tendencies, which broadens an individual’s repertoire of skills, and increases personal resources. These resources serve as part of a reserve and can be drawn upon and utilized later in times of emotional distress. While positive emotions increase the “scope of attention, cognition, and action, and… build physical, intellectual, and social resources” (p. 220) negative emotions decrease these same resources. Specifically, the discrete emotions of joy, interest, contentment, pride, and love all
broaden an individual’s momentary thought-action tendencies. Joy sparks creativity and the desire to play. Interest inspires exploration. Contentment encourages the individual to enjoy and integrate life events in order to build a greater sense of self and more holistic worldview. Pride incites the urge to share accomplishments with others and encourages visioning future accomplishments. Love, which incorporates aspects of several positive emotions, creates repetitive cycles of the desire to play, explore, and value experiences with loved ones (Fredrickson, 2001).

A second aspect of the broaden-and-build theory is that the experience of positive emotions can actually help to undo negative emotions (Fredrickson, 2001). During the experience of negative emotions cardiovascular activity increases. However, experiencing positive emotions after the negative emotion elicits a faster recovery of the cardiovascular system to a normal state, thereby “undoing” the effects of the negative emotion. As the individual experiences positive emotions, the range of potential actions the body and mind are prepared to take is broadened, and creativity, flexibility, and novel problem-solving are increased. This cognitive broadening also leads to overall emotional well-being over time (Fredrickson, 2001).

*Relationships and emotion regulation*

Relationships with peers can significantly contribute to the emotional experiences of students. Negative peer relations are associated with depression and loneliness (Flook et al., 2005). This sets off a chain of events in which students develop negative thoughts about themselves and toward school, which, in turn, leads to poor academic self-concept. Students who do not feel academically adept lack motivation and confidence and are less likely to put forth effort in school (Flook et al., 2005).
Trentacosta et al. (2006) found that students who understand and can identify emotional cues in others demonstrate better ability to concentrate and sustain attention in the classroom. Students who display attentional competence are perceived more positively by their peers, which leads to both improved social relationships and better academic performance (Trentacosta et al., 2006). When students have difficulty regulating their emotions, particularly anger, they demonstrate more problem behaviors than their peers and are less socially competent and popular among their peers (Fabes & Eisenberg 1992).

On the other hand, students who experience positive school social environments experience more positive emotions, which maximizes their learning (Patrick & Ryan, 2003). Positive emotions increase the ability to generate and use cognitive strategies, while also increasing intrinsic motivation (Fried, 2011).

Sources of Emotions in the Classroom

Temperament, physiological processes, and cognitive appraisals are the main sources of emotions. Context-specific academic emotions largely emerge based on appraisals influenced by the social and instructional environment (Pekrun et al., 2002). Schutz et al. (2006) argue that emotions in the classroom emerge based on appraisals the student makes about tasks they are required to perform. When presented with a task, the student first makes an appraisal of how important the task is to him/her. If the task is viewed as highly important, there is more potential for strong emotions to arise. After the student determines the importance of a task, he/she then makes an appraisal regarding his/her ability to perform the task. For example, a student performing a task viewed as highly important, who does not feel capable of adequately performing the task because of
lack of preparation may feel anxiety. In the same example, if the student feels incapable because he/she blames the teacher for not teaching the material properly, the resulting emotion might be anger.

A study by Frenzel, Pekrun, and Goetz (2007) demonstrated that girls’ maladaptive beliefs about their own competence in math led to negative emotions about math. The goal-related appraisals students make are able to be manipulated and serve as an important aspect of emotion regulation. If a student is able to change his/her appraisal of a given situation, he/she will be able to change the emotional experience through emotion regulation (Schutz et al., 2006).

Anxiety is the most widely studied academic emotion because it occurs most frequently (Pekrun et al., 2002). Students experience anxiety when they fear failure and perceive lack of control such as when taking exams (Harvey & Chickie-Wolfe, 2007; Pekrun & Stephens, 2012). Shame is also experienced in relation to failure, while anger and frustration often occur when students do not feel they have the ability to complete academic tasks (Harvey & Chickie-Wolfe, 2007; Pekrun & Stephens, 2012). Boredom results when students are given easy or repetitive tasks or when the task is perceived as lacking value, while hopelessness can occur when students do not believe they can learn.

Positive activating emotions include enjoyment, hope, and pride, and occur when students are highly engaged in learning. When students are intently focused on challenging work that is neither too easy nor too difficult, they experience a state of flow that results in both high level work and positive activating emotions (Csikszentmihalyi cited in Harvey & Chickie-Wolfe, 2007). Additionally, students experience pride when they attribute success to ability or effort.
Classroom environments that support emotion regulation

It is clearly beneficial to elicit positive emotions in the classroom, and several key aspects of the school environment are associated with positive outcomes for students including teacher support, promoting mutual respect, task-related interactions, and performance goals (Patrick & Ryan, 2003). Teacher support refers to the student feeling that a caring teacher-student relationship exists, which encourages a positive academic self-concept in the student. Birch and Ladd (1997) also found that students who have a close relationship with their teacher are more likely to perceive the school environment as supportive. When students feel their needs will be met in a supportive way, they are more likely to seek help and emotional guidance from the teacher when needed (Birch & Ladd, 1997). Promoting mutual respect refers to the teacher setting the expectation that students will value each other. Task-related interaction occurs through creating collaborative learning opportunities for students (Hawkins et al., 2001; Patrick and Ryan, 2003). Finally, promoting performance goals emphasizes the importance of creating a cooperative rather than competitive environment where students do not feel there is an ability hierarchy. These environmental factors all discernably affect the students’ experience of positive emotions in the classroom (Patrick & Ryan, 2003).

Strategies to promote emotion regulation skills in students

For a child who is predisposed to experiencing negative emotions, it is important for adults in the environment to provide opportunities for the experience of success and positive emotions. Supportive guidance and assistance in acquiring emotion regulation strategies has potential to change the developmental trajectory of students who lack emotion regulation (Rothbart & Jones, 1998). Similar to the negative interactions that
develop in families, so too can rigid teacher-child interactions perpetuate developmental psychopathology and anti-social patterns of behavior (Matthews & Gilliland, 1999). For example, the teacher who responds to the child’s display of anger by also expressing anger will create a pattern of negativity that inhibits the child from learning new patterns of behavior.

Literature on parenting skills regarding emotion regulation indicates that differences among children’s ability to understand emotions is largely based on the parental characteristics of how the parent expresses his/her own emotions, if and how the parent uses emotion-focused explanations, and how the parent reacts to the child’s emotions (Denham, Zoller, & Couchard 1994). A study conducted by Denham et al. (1994) found that mothers who used more emotional-language in conversation and explained their emotions had children with increased ability to verbally express and understand emotion. This outlines the importance of language skills when teaching, learning, and using emotion regulation strategies (Cole, 2010). These strategies can also be applied to the classroom.

Language is a powerful tool in regulating emotion because it helps students recall previous experiences and relate them to new experiences (Thompson, 1991). Children experience the world on an emotional level, and must be taught strategies to verbally mediate their experiences (Greenberg et al., 2004). Students use language to identify situations in which they need to regulate their emotions, such as when a student with test anxiety is about to take a test. Language also helps students to identify consequences of emotions, particularly unregulated emotions. For example, when Jane gets angry and has the impulse to hit her friend, she can use internal language to think through the
consequences of this action. Additionally, language guides students through the steps needed to regulate emotions (Thompson, 1991).

Students should be taught an emotion vocabulary in order to express internal experiences (Macklem, 2008). Having an emotional vocabulary assists students in understanding and identifying emotions in themselves and others, and communicating their emotions. Kistner et al (2010) found that explicit teaching of skills is more effective than implicit instruction because it leads to better maintenance and generalization of skills. One way to foster the development of emotional language is by showing students photographs with different pictured emotions on them. When students use feeling words to describe their emotions the teacher should provide positive reinforcement to encourage their continued use. Another strategy is to use children’s literature. During and after reading, teachers can focus discussions on how characters feel and what caused them to feel that way. This sets the stage for teaching problem-solving and coping skills.

When students must work together, their focus shifts from personal priorities toward collaboration. In a study by Järvenoja & Järvelä (2009) students were assigned to complete collaborative learning tasks and were then asked to complete questionnaires measuring emotion regulation. Results indicated that collaboration leads to shared emotion-regulation between group members. Assigning group projects allows students to build on and practice emotion regulation. However, children who experience high levels of anger do not yield the same benefit from collaborative learning, and teachers rate them as being easily frustrated and more difficult to teach.

Teachers also need to implement strategies that teach children to forestall anger, distract themselves, express anger using words, and shift attention away from sources of
frustration (Cole, 2010). Using positive self-talk is an effective strategy for students to use to regulate negative feelings. Teachers can teach students to make comments to themselves such as, “I can do this,” “I need to calm down,” and “I know I can solve this problem.” Children as young as 5 and 6 years of age can independently implement metacognitive regulation strategies such as changing their thoughts or altering their goals in order to reduce negative emotion (Davis, Levine, Lench, & Quas, 2010). Further, they demonstrate the ability to describe the strategies they use and indicate recognition that these strategies are better than other types of coping (Davis et al. 2010).

Pincus and Friedman (2004) advocate modeling and explicitly instructing students in coping skills. After determining different ways to solve a problem, the teacher should model the solution using specific problem-solving steps and verbalizing the internal dialogue that accompanies each of the steps (Macklem, 2008). For example, a student who is working on a difficult math problem might be identified as frustrated or angry. The teacher can model taking deep breaths or counting backward from 10 to calm down, and then review different ways the student could solve the problem such as by telling him/herself to keep trying, asking for help from the teacher, or working on something else until the student feels ready to attempt the problem again. Throughout the modeling, the teacher should be sure to verbalize the thoughts of the student as he/she goes through the problem-solving steps.

Noticing and labeling student’s feelings is yet another strategy that can be incorporated easily into the school day. This strategy is particularly important because it encourages students to be more aware of their emotions. For example, the teacher might comment, “Sarah and Michael are smiling and laughing and seem really happy to be
playing together,” or “John, it looks like you are having a difficult time building that tower. You seem to be getting frustrated.” As the teacher labels the student’s emotions, the student begins to connect internal feeling states with language. Teachers can also teach students to identify emotions in others by helping them to notice differences in facial expression, body language, tone of voice, and situational context. This can also be done through children’s literature and photographs as well as modeling, and role-plays. Helping children identify emotions in others also promotes empathy, which improves social problem-solving (Pincus & Friedman, 2004).

Teachers can also label their own feelings and model their own emotional regulation strategies for students. For example, a teacher who drops a stack of papers may say, “Oh no! I’m so frustrated that I dropped the papers everywhere! I’m going to take a few deep breaths to calm down.” The teacher might then demonstrate asking someone for help to pick up the papers, or may model positive self-talk by saying, “It’s only paper. I can pick them all up if I work quickly.”

Children also need to be taught that when they experience emotions that are uncomfortable they can change the experience of those emotions (Thompson, 1991). One way students can shift from a negative to a positive mood is by thinking about positive or pleasant things. During a test, a student who begins to worry and feel anxious about his/her performance can be taught to stop and think about something pleasant such as imagining him/herself completing the test and earning a good grade. The student might also make a cognitive reappraisal and say to him/herself, “It’s only a test,” to promote an emotional shift. Teaching students to use positive self-talk such as, “I can do this if I just keep trying.” “It’s okay. I can handle this.” “What do I need to do to solve
this problem?” or “I will feel better in just a little while,” can also help students remain engaged when completing difficult tasks as well as help them re-direct their attributions. As suggested by Koole (2007), deep breathing into the abdomen and progressive muscle relaxation are both strategies teachers can use in the classroom to reduce the physiological effects of negative emotions such as anger, frustration, and anxiety.

Children, particularly those with difficult temperament or those who come from abusive or emotionally deprived environments, must be explicitly taught emotion regulation skills (Joseph & Strain, 2003). Pincus and Friedman (2004) demonstrated that emotion-focused coping strategies can be successfully taught to children at a very young age. This further indicates that children have the ability to think and reason using emotions, but need to be taught the necessary skills required to do so (Pincus & Friedman, 2004).

There are many pre-packaged, specialty designed school-based social-emotional learning curricula available for teachers to implement in the classroom. The curricula are aimed at the development of a set of socio-emotional skills identified by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning foundation (CASEL). Among these skills are 1) identifying and recognizing emotions; 2) understanding others’ emotions and being able to take another’s perspective; 3) actively regulating emotions so emotions facilitate rather than hinder progress, help to delay gratification, and promote perseverance; 4) establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships, and 5) making responsible decisions. Social emotional curricula intended to be implemented by teachers are briefly discussed below.
I Can Problem Solve (ICPS), previously known as Interpersonal Cognitive Problem-Solving, has been demonstrated to effectively teach students to generate solutions to interpersonal problems and determine the consequences of their actions (Shure & Spivak, 1980). The program teaches the process of problem-solving by helping students to generate and implement solutions, but does not teach the emotion-focused strategies required to calm down, take the perspective of the other person, or make cognitive reappraisals (Pincus & Friedman, 2004). Before an individual can effectively apply a problem-solving strategy, he/she must be under appropriate emotional control.

The Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) curriculum focuses on emotion-regulation and teaches self-control, emotional awareness, and interpersonal problem-solving. There are a total of 131 lessons designed for implementation in first through sixth grades by classroom teachers as an integrated part of the curriculum. The lessons should be taught at least three times a week for a minimum of 20-30 minutes for each lesson. Specific strategies utilized by the program include using breathing to calm-down, taking another person’s perspective during a conflict by following a specific step-by-step process, and class meetings to help solve interpersonal problems. Materials to send home to parents are also included to generalize skills across settings (Macklem, 2008). Effectiveness of the program was demonstrated by Greenberg, Kusche’, & Riggs (2004) in both regular education and special education settings. Students in the intervention group demonstrated significant improvements in problem-solving, planning, social problem-solving, and emotional understanding. In another study using the same measures, 49 students in grades 1-3 in a special education setting participated in the program and demonstrated improved math achievement, planning ability, social
problem-solving, and emotional control. Additionally, students reported lower levels of depression than the control group, and teachers rated them as having improved frustration tolerance as well as better ability to self-regulate.

In yet another study, PATHS was implemented as part of the FAST Track Project in four different school districts across the country (Greenberg, Kusche’, & Riggs, 2003). In each district 14 schools participated and an equal number of schools in the same districts served as comparison groups. The program was implemented over three years with first grade students, and a total number of 198 classrooms received the intervention. To determine the effectiveness of the PATHS curriculum, researchers collected data on teacher and peer ratings of each child’s behavior in the classroom as well as ratings of the overall classroom environment. Results demonstrated a decrease in peer ratings of aggressive and disruptive behaviors in classmates, a decrease in disruptive behaviors reported by the classroom teachers, and improved classroom environment (Greenberg et al., 2003).

Second Step is another evidence-based social-emotional learning curriculum designed to be taught by classroom teachers to students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. For each grade level there are between 22 and 28 separate lessons. Second Step focuses on teaching empathy by helping students understand their own emotions and the emotions of others. Social problem-solving is taught by helping students to regulate their own emotions and then take the perspective of the other person to determine the most appropriate solution. A solution is assessed by evaluating how it will influence other people, and by determining if it is safe and fair (Joseph & Strain 2003). Lessons incorporate the use of a large photograph depicting a problem situation, and the teacher
leads the class through a guided problem-solving discussion. Results of a study conducted by Grossman et al. (1997) demonstrated decreased aggression in students who participated in the program, as well as increased pro-social peer interactions and conflict resolution skills.

These studies highlight the effectiveness of implementing SEL curriculums in the classroom.

*How teachers regulate their own emotions*

Teaching is a demanding and often very challenging profession (Hargreaves, 1998). Teachers have less and less control over what they teach in the classroom, and the demands placed on teachers can be quite stressful (Macklem, 2008). This stress leads to intense emotions that must be regulated in order for teachers to be successful in the classroom (Sutton, 2004). Teachers believe they must manage their emotions for the benefit of their students, because experiencing too much emotion would interfere with their ability to teach (Hargreaves, 2000). When a teacher feels her/his emotions may lead to behaviors that are not congruent with the perception of how a teacher should behave, or when the teacher feels her/his emotions will interfere with instruction, the teacher will display a different emotion than is actually felt (Schutz et al., 2006). It is particularly important that teachers regulate angry emotions since children who are repeatedly exposed to adult anger have difficulty understanding emotions (Denham et al., 1994).

In a study by Sutton (2004), teacher’s beliefs about their own emotion regulation was explored. Data collected through semi-structured interviews indicated teachers regulated emotions continually throughout the day. They were particularly aware of regulating anger because they believed regulating anger helped them to keep their focus
on academics. Some teachers reported that displaying impulsive, angry behavior was “disturbing and shameful” (p. 386). To regulate their emotions, teachers employed the use of both preventive and responsive emotion regulation strategies. Preventive strategies are intended to alter circumstances so that a specific emotion is not triggered, while responsive strategies are those that modify or alter emotional experiences as they are occurring. Preventive strategies reported by teachers included modifying the situation by using specific classroom management strategies or revising lessons; using “attention deployment” prior to the beginning of the school day (i.e. talking to colleagues, self-talk, etc.) or at the emotional cue (i.e. ignoring or diverting attention); and using cognitive change strategies such as self-talk and reflection. Responsive strategies reported included cognitive strategies such as thinking positively and behavioral strategies such as deep breathing. Teachers also reported “just holding it in” as a strategy. Unfortunately, no observations of the classroom teachers were conducted to determine if teachers actually employed these strategies to adaptively cope with difficult emotions. Despite this, findings suggest the teachers had some understanding that emotions exhibited by the teacher impact student functioning, and they used both preventive and responsive strategies to regulate their emotions. Teachers believed regulating anger helped them to focus on academics, but did not indicate awareness of how emotions can be used relationally. Further, belief by some teachers that anger should be regulated because it is shameful suggests lack of understanding regarding the nature and utility of emotions.

Hargreaves (2000) found that teacher’s use of emotion regulation strategies was impacted by the organization of the school, which can either bring students and teachers together or push them apart, and professional expectations of how teachers should display
their emotions. In elementary classrooms, teachers developed a higher level of emotional understanding of their students because the organization of the elementary classroom allows for close proximity with their students all day, which fostered closer, more personal relationships. Additionally, elementary teachers felt more of a professional expectation to create a warm and positive environment. In secondary schools, however, teachers were more likely to operate from a professional standard where they approached students in a more distant and professional manner. They spent less time interacting with students individually and displayed less emotional understanding (Hargreaves 2000).

A study by Hosotani and Imai-Matsumura (2011) investigated the emotional competence of Japanese teachers by exploring their emotional experiences, expression of emotion, and use of emotion regulation strategies. Teachers reported experiencing anger, sadness, joy, fear, and disgust in the classroom. Fear and disgust were reportedly always suppressed, while anger, joy and sadness were regulated using suppression, and direct staging. Direct staging was utilized to communicate approval and intentionally evoke emotion in students, while suppression was used to encourage students to listen, to be independent, and prevent students from knowing the teacher’s emotion. When emotions were expressed, they were largely utilized to encourage the development of academic skills in students.

Findings suggest experienced teachers understand 1) the need for self-regulation, 2) how regulating their own emotional expressions influences students, and 3) that emotion regulation is a skill that is related to teaching. However, teachers reported significant use of suppression, which increases emotional labor and leads to emotional exhaustion (Hargreaves, 2000; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Yilmaz, 2015). Additionally,
teachers did not possess awareness of how emotions could be used in an authentic way to promote positive relationships or enhance enjoyment of the teaching and learning experience. Further, because experienced teachers were the subjects in this study, it is unclear if teachers with less experience possess this knowledge of emotion regulation strategies.

As a whole, literature suggests teachers utilize a variety of emotion regulation strategies in the classroom and do so because they understand their emotions impact students, and also because it is a professional obligation (Hargreaves, 2000; Hosotani and Imai-Matsumura, 2011; Sutton, 2004). However, it is uncertain if teachers understand how the emotion regulation strategies they choose impact self and other, or if teachers have the ability to respond emotionally in such a way that it facilitates relationships or demonstrates emotional attunement.

**Training Teachers to Regulate Emotions in the Classroom**

Research indicates the importance of emotion regulation in the classroom as it relates to successful learning and socio-emotional functioning. Clearly it is efficacious for students to learn to regulate their emotions, but theory must be put into practice and those on the frontline of education must be equipped with the tools necessary to handle the emotional events that occur in the classroom (Williams-Johnson et al., 2008). To assist teachers in developing socio-emotional competency, modifications to teacher training programs must occur (Greenberg et al., 2003). Pre-service teachers need to understand the emotional nature of the school environment, and must be equipped with the skills to effectively manage their own emotions as well as manage emotional incidents in the classroom (Schutz et al., 2006). Thus, teachers must receive explicit
training to develop the skills necessary to teach emotion regulation to students as well as manage and cope with their own emotional experiences.

There is a considerable amount of research regarding the importance of emotion-regulation in the classroom (Gumora & Arsenio, 2001; Davis & Levine, 2013; Frenzel & Stephens, 2013; Pekrun et al., 2002; Rothbart & Jones, 1998; Trentacosta, Izard, Mostow, & Fine, 2006; Valiente, Lemery-Chalfant, & Swanson, 2010; Zins, et al., 2004). However, there are limited studies examining teachers’ knowledge of emotion regulation, their beliefs about emotion regulation, if/how they teach emotion regulation in the classroom, and teacher’s skill in regulating their own emotions.

A qualitative study by Boyer (2009) examined how preschool teachers view their role in student’s development of self-regulation and emotion regulation skills. The researcher led three focus groups with preschool educators (N=15) to explore their beliefs regarding the development of self-regulation in children. Additional data was collected through interviews and teacher journaling in which teachers reflected upon their experiences in the classroom and during focus groups. Findings from this study indicate that preschool teachers understand the importance of promoting self-regulation in young children and feel responsible for fostering self-regulation in students.

In a study by Winzelberg and Luskin (1999), meditation training was demonstrated to reduce stress levels in secondary school teachers. Through meditation teachers were encouraged to slow their actions and consciously focus their attention on one thing at a time. Meditation increases the ability to sustain attention and can thus be viewed as an important technique in emotion regulation. This study demonstrated
promising results that teachers can be effectively taught how to use emotion regulation strategies.

Perels, Meget-Kullman, Wende, Schmitz, and Buchbinder (2009) examined the effects of training kindergarten teachers to teach self-regulation to their students. A process-model of self-regulation informed the development of four training units. The first unit introduced teachers to the concept of self-regulation. The second unit aimed to demonstrate the importance of appropriate goal setting and how to apply metacognitive strategies. In the third training unit teachers learned specific strategies to help students self-regulate. The fourth training unit encouraged self-exploration of teachers’ attributional patterns, and teachers were taught to use self-reflection as a strategy to manage and stay aware of attributional patterns.

Results demonstrated significant increases in self-regulation knowledge and skills in the training group, while the control group demonstrated no significant changes. Findings suggest teacher training to promote self-regulation in students is effective, and may be enhanced when the training includes self-reflective activities such as exploring attributional patterns.

In a study by Waajid, Garnew, and Owen (2013) researchers investigated whether SEL concepts could be integrated into an already existing undergraduate course on curriculum and instruction (2013). A course in curriculum and instruction was purposefully chosen over other courses such as those focusing on classroom management, instructional design, or the role and function of the teacher, as the intended goal of a course in curriculum and instruction is to provide understanding of how students learn and the best way to provide education in the classroom. A main goal
of the study was to prepare pre-service teachers to understand how emotions impact learning and behavior. The course was taught using four instructional methods that included: 1) formal instruction, 2) participating in activities to apply knowledge gained, 3) presenting learned information to the group, and 4) assessing conceptual understanding and learning outcomes. Results of this study demonstrated pre-service teachers developed new understanding that emotions and academic learning are interrelated. Further, pre-service teachers indicated the course on SEL was valuable and important in preparing them to appropriately handle emotion incidents in the classroom. Results underscore the importance of requiring SEL courses in teacher preparation programs (Waajid et al., 2013).

Thus, research suggests teachers believe they play an important role in assisting students’ development of self-regulation (Boyer, 2009). Additionally, specific training in how to teach self-regulation enhances teachers’ ability to teach regulation strategies to students (Perels et al., 2009; Winzelberg and Luskin, 1999), this training can be successfully incorporated into a pre-existing undergraduate course in a teacher preparation program (Waajid et al., 2013), and that additional training in teacher emotional competence is necessary (Waajid et al., 2013).
CHAPTER 3. SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING CURRICULUM FOR
PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

Curriculum Goals

The proposed curriculum is designed to: 1) provide pre-service teachers with the
skills needed to teach emotion regulation to students, and 2) provide pre-service teachers
with the underlying emotional competence needed to meet the emotional demands of the
classroom. The curriculum fills a gap identified in the literature because it focuses on
both student regulation of emotion and teacher emotional competence.

Curriculum Content

The content of the curriculum was developed based on conceptual knowledge of
both emotion regulation and emotional competence, which was gained from extensive
review of the literature.

The first learning block, What are Emotions?, provides pre-service teachers with
foundational knowledge of emotions, their functions, how emotions are elicited, the
impact of positive, negative, and self-conscious emotions, the influence of culture on
emotions, and conceptual understanding of emotion regulation (Fredrickson, 2001;
Frenzel & Stephens, 2013; Fridja & Mesquita, 1994; Gross, 2002; Gross & Thompson,
2007; Koole, 2009; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Mauss, Bunge, & Gross, 2008; Schutz et
al., 2006; Sutton, 2004)

In the second block, Emotions in the Classroom, the foundational knowledge
about emotions is further elaborated on and directly applied to the classroom.
Specifically, this block focuses on how emotions are elicited in the classroom, how
emotions impact school relationships, how to facilitate emotion language in students,
instruction and practice in teaching emotion regulation strategies, and how to increase positive emotions in students (Davis & Levine, 2013; D’Mello & Graesser, 2011; Eisenberg et al., 2000; Flook et al., 2005; Fried, 2011; Frenzel et al., 2007; Gumora & Arsenio 2001; Harvey & Chickie-Wolfe, 2007; Linnenbrick & Pintrich, 2000; Patrick & Ryan, 2003; Pekrun et al., 2002; Trentacosta et al., 2006; Wyman et al., 2010).

Block three, *Emotion Regulation Strategies for Teachers*, builds upon the knowledge pre-service teachers gained in previous learning blocks, and focuses on teachers’ emotional competence. Instruction is aimed at fostering pre-service teachers’ ability to identify, attend to, and track their own emotional reactions, reduce stress, and regulate their own emotions. This block was informed by the literature indicating emotionally competent teachers must possess the following skills: an awareness of one’s own emotions, ability to understand other’s emotions, ability to use emotion vocabulary, capacity for empathic attunement, ability to respond emotionally, ability to adaptively cope with difficult emotions, ability to use emotions to build relationships (Cole, Martin, & Dennis, 2004; Eisenberg & Spinrad, 2004; Saarni, 1999; Sarni et al., 2006), and the potential for emotional self-efficacy (Saarni, 1999).

Sequencing of the lessons was based on the concepts of scaffolding and zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978), whereby different instructional strategies and techniques are utilized to move students toward greater levels of knowledge and deeper understanding of the learning material.

**Learning Outcomes**

Bloom’s (1956) taxonomy of educational goals was used to generate expected learning outcomes for each lesson. Bloom’s taxonomy is typically used in education to
structure learning objectives as it provides a framework to ensure learning occurs at different levels and incorporates higher order thinking (Bloom, 1956). While all levels of Bloom’s taxonomy were included, specific focus was on creating learning outcomes that employ skills at higher levels of the taxonomy to increase reflective, metacognitive, and creative thinking in students.

**Instructional Methods**

Both teacher-centered and learner-centered instructional methods and techniques are utilized in the curriculum. Teacher-centered approaches include lecture, use of questioning, and large group discussion. Learner-centered approaches include small group discussion, cooperative learning, self-reflection, role-plays, and brainstorming. These methods have been demonstrated as effective instructional methodology (Adams & Mabusela, 2013; Dean & Marzano, 2012; Ebert et al., 2011; Silver & Rath, 2002).

*Teacher-centered instructional strategies*

Direct instruction through lecture is considered an effective and efficient method of presenting information consistently to large groups (Silver & Rath, 2002). Throughout the lecture, the instructor’s use of questioning activates students’ prior knowledge and assists students in making connections to new information (Dean & Marzano, 2012; Ebert, Ebert, & Bentley, 2011; Silver & Rath, 2002). Both inferential and analytical questioning assists students in making inferences, analyzing presented material, and thinking more deeply about information. Further, questioning can reinforce information already learned (Dean & Marzano, 2012; Ebert et al., 2011).

*Learner-centered instructional strategies*
Self-reflection requires the highest levels of critical thinking as it encourages the student to draw upon and evaluate individual experiences and synthesize those experiences with new information (Ebert et al., 2012) to generate new knowledge or awareness. Large and small group discussions promote dialogue and the exchange of ideas, which fosters engagement, critical thinking, and problem-solving (Ebert et al., 2011). Further, discussions help to focus student attention (Dean & Marzano, 2012). Used as part of a discussion, the strategy to compare and contrast is a highly effective technique that assists students in making abstractions and creating mental representations (Dean & Marzano, 2012). Role-plays provide students with the ability to practice learned skills. They are a type of experiential learning activity where the learner is continually engaged in a process of “experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting” (Adams & Mabusela, 2013, p. 493). Role-plays are interactive and allow students to receive feedback from their peers, which promotes self-reflection and insight regarding the student’s strengths and areas for growth (Adams & Mabusela, 2013; Silver & Rath, 2002). Brainstorming is a cooperative learning task that draws upon the unique knowledge and experiences of individuals to generate new ideas. Brainstorming enhances creativity as one idea has the potential to lead to another idea (Ebert et al., 2012).
Table of Contents

**BLOCK 1: WHAT ARE EMOTIONS?**
This block includes a discussion of the multidimensional nature of emotions; sources and manifestation of basic emotions; the role of positive emotions in well-being; and the impact of culture on emotion regulation.

LESSON 1  Emotions
LESSON 2  Elicitors of Emotions
LESSON 3  Negative Emotions
LESSON 4  Positive Emotions
LESSON 5  Self-conscious Emotions
LESSON 6  Emotions and Culture
LESSON 7  Emotion Regulation

**BLOCK 2: EMOTIONS IN THE CLASSROOM**
This block focuses on the role of emotions in learning; sources of emotions in the classroom; how to increase positive emotions; and strategies to promote emotion regulation in children.

LESSON 1  Emotions in the Classroom
LESSON 2  Social Relationships and Emotions
LESSON 3  Emotion Regulation and Language
LESSON 4  Emotion Regulation Strategies
LESSON 5  Increasing Positive Emotions

**BLOCK 3: EMOTION REGULATION STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS**
This block focuses on attending to and tracking emotional reactions; stress reduction techniques; and emotion regulation strategies.

LESSON 1  Understanding Emotional Responses
LESSON 2  Teacher Regulation of Emotion
LESSON 1. Emotions

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to increase awareness of the internal experience of emotions, identify functions of emotions, and appreciate the importance of emotional competence.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

1. Identify the functions of emotions
2. Identify components of emotions
3. Identify emotion eliciting situations
4. Describe the phenomenological experience of different emotions
5. Explain multiple theories of emotions

MATERIALS

1. Ten newspaper cartoon handouts for each student

LECTURE

Why do we Have Emotions?

Emotions provide depth and meaning to our experiences and add richness to our lives. Without emotions, our experiences would be dull and lackluster. It is hard to imagine life without emotions. Think about going to a birthday party without experiencing emotions. There would be no excitement as the birthday candles were blown out, no surprise as the presents were opened, and no feelings of joy as you take part in the festivities. Even negative emotions serve an important function in our lives.

DISCUSSION

Why do we have emotions? What functions do they serve? Let’s consider the following scenarios:

You are walking through the woods and see a snake. What emotional response do you have? What happens to your body? What function do you think the fear serves?

LECTURE

Emotions prepare us for action. When we experience fear our body has a fight or flight response. Blood flow is diverted from the brain and digestive system and rerouted to the lower half of the body, which causes increased heart rate, perspiration, dry mouth, etc. Breathing becomes heavier and eyes open wider to take in a larger visual field. Adrenaline also increases to prepare us for the stress of fighting or fleeing.
DISCUSSION

Has anyone ever had the experience of drinking rotten milk? What was it like (disgusting)? Do you take any additional precautions before drinking milk now? (i.e. smelling the container, taking a small sip first, looking at the expiration date, making sure it does not curdle when you pour it into your coffee).

Think about a class you took where you worked very hard and received a good grade on the first paper or exam. How did you feel (proud, happy, etc.)? The next time you had an exam or paper to write for that class, how did you approach it? In both cases, emotions motivate our behaviors and act as reinforcement.

You see a young, pregnant woman sitting alone on a bench crying. It’s starting to rain and she does not have a jacket or an umbrella. How might you feel (worried/concerned)? What might you do (approach her, offer her assistance)? You pass another bench and see a man in tattered and dirty clothing who also appears in need of help, but he has a snarl on his face and is glaring at you. How might you feel (nervous/scared/apprehensive)? What might you do (avoid him/stay away)? In both cases, the emotions of the other person serve as a social signal to us.

Our emotions also send signals to others. Think about the emotional response that occurs after the death of a loved one (sadness, grief). How do others respond to us?

LECTURE

Emotions have evolved over time to assist humans in adapting to circumstances needed for survival. They provide us with important information quickly and without thinking. Consider how the emotion of fear may have helped an early human flee when faced with a predator. Fear quickly signals to the individual that there is danger and he must flee to avoid harm. Think of a time when you felt someone watching you only to turn around or look up and see that you were correct. This is a leftover response from times when it would have been extremely important to know if a predator was stalking you. Jealousy is another emotion with evolutionary roots.

What purpose might romantic jealousy serve?

LECTURE

For females, romantic jealousy is sparked by fear that her mate may give needed resources to another female. For males, romantic jealousy is caused by fear that his mate will procreate with someone else, which he will mistake as his own offspring and utilize his resources on offspring that is not genetically his.

Emotions lead us toward or away from something and prime us for action. They let us know if something is good or bad for us, and they help us to respond quickly and without deliberate thinking.

Emotions also have relational value. Our expression of emotion helps us to communicate valuable information to others about how we feel, what we need, and our intentions.
They provide important signals to others that can aide in problem-solving and having our needs met.

We also interpret the emotions of others and then use this information to make decisions about how we in turn should respond or react. A mother who smiles and expresses joy as her child is gently playing with his/her sibling signals to her child that this is a desired behavior and the behavior will be more likely to occur in the future. Thus, emotions provide information about desired behaviors. Reading others’ emotions also lets us know if we should approach or avoid them. Someone smiling at a party is more likely to have others approach him/her. On the other hand, an angry person on the street is likely to be avoided. A person who appears angry may provoke fear in others.

**Emotions versus Mood**

Emotions are different from mood. Mood is a pervasive state that lasts a long time. It is often difficult to determine the direct cause of a particular mood. Emotions are fleeting; they last a shorter amount of time and are a response to some stimuli. Mood can be thought of as major seasonal changes, whereas emotion is daily change in temperature and precipitation.

**Theories of Emotions**

There are several theories of emotions. The James-Lang theory posits that physiological arousal precedes emotion; you feel sad because you are crying, you feel afraid because your heart is racing. Our experience of emotion is essentially a physiological response to an emotion eliciting stimuli. For example, if I am taking a stroll through the woods and see a bear, my heart would begin to race and I would experience fear. So, your heart does not race because you are afraid; instead, you feel afraid because your heart is racing. The emotion is in response to the physiological arousal. If my heart did not begin to race or if I did not notice my heart racing I would not feel afraid.

*What do you think about this theory? Does it make sense to you?*

**ACTIVITY**

Pass handout of funny cartoons to students and instruct them not to look at it. Divide the class into two groups.

Instructions for group one:

Take a pen or pencil and hold it in your mouth just behind your front teeth. Try to keep your lips apart, and do not allow your lips to touch the pencil (*this will create a smile, but do not share this with the students*).

Instructions for group two:

Hold a pen or pencil between your lips with your lips curled in, and do not touch the pen/pencil with your teeth (*this will create a frown, but do not share this with students*).
Do not tell the students they are smiling or frowning. Instruct students to read each of the cartoons and rate how funny they find the cartoon on a scale of 1-5. When finished, instruct students to calculate the mean (average) of their ratings for all the cartoons. Ask students to share their averages and write their responses on the chalkboard or large sheet of paper. Calculate the mean for each group. Share that for group one the pen/pencil placement induced a smile, while the pen/pencil placement in group two induced a frown.

- How do you explain the difference in ratings between groups?
- Do the results fit with the James-Lange theory of emotion?
- There is research demonstrating that when people are asked to demonstrate basic emotions (e.g. happy, sad, anger, and fear) through their facial expressions, they actually experience those emotions. What are some of the implications?
- What are some problems with this theory?

(Try to elicit the following responses: 1) We can experience physiological arousal without an emotion (i.e. swimming will increase your pulse but will not necessarily cause an emotion). 2) Different physiological responses, such as an increased pulse, can be associated with many emotions including fear, excitement, or embarrassment. 3) Emotions can occur before a physical response.)

LECTURE
Another theory was developed that challenges the James-Lange theory and suggests that there is no cause and effect relationship between bodily functions and emotions. Instead, the increased pulse does not cause fear, and fear does not cause an increased pulse. Rather, they occur separately and simultaneously and together create what we call fear. This theory is called the Cannon-Bard theory. According to the Cannon-Bard theory, you see a bear and feel fear, and bodily changes such as increased heart rate occur at the same time.

Yet another theory of emotions is the Schachter-Singer theory. This theory incorporates a cognitive component. According to this theory, when an emotion occurs the individual experiences a physiological arousal and then looks to the environment to try and explain why the arousal is occurring. It is how the individual defines and labels the physiological reaction with words that leads to the emotion.

What are your thoughts about this theory?

LECTURE
Lazarus developed an appraisal theory that states thoughts lead to emotions. If you receive an 85 percent on your exam and perceive this as a good grade you will feel happy. If you only believe grades above 95 percent are good, then you will likely feel disappointed.

Components of Emotions
Emotions have several components: physiological, expressive, experiential, and cognitive. People feel feelings in their bodies. When an emotion is experienced, there is
a physiological reaction in which the nervous system reacts with different bodily sensations such as sweating palms, a racing heart, “butterflies” in the stomach, tears, trembling, tightness in the chest, etc. Emotions are expressed through facial expressions, posture, tone of voice, and gestures. Emotions are experienced by the individual as pleasurable or unpleasant. Finally, emotions influence our thoughts and are directed by our thoughts. As we experience emotions our cognitive thoughts and beliefs influence the intensity of the emotion. Additionally, the experience of an emotion can shape the way we think.

REFERENCES
LESSON 2. Elicitors of Emotions

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to increase understanding of how emotions are elicited.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

1. Describe how memories trigger emotions
2. Distinguish between emotions triggered by the past and emotions elicited by the present
3. Explain how emotions are triggered through the five senses

MATERIALS

2. Photograph of Twin Towers on 9/11

LECTURE

Where Do Emotions Come From?

Emotions can be elicited by events, but not all events elicit emotions. Further, the same event may not elicit the same emotion in every person. It is really the evaluation, or appraisal, the individual makes about the event that elicits the emotion. Only those events perceived as important to some goal elicits emotions.

ACTIVITY

Emotion Eliciting Situations

Let’s consider some different emotion eliciting situations or events:

Imagine it is nighttime and you’re alone walking down an unfamiliar street trying to get to your car. The street is dimly lit, all of the shops are closed, and there are not any people around. You hear something behind you, you turn to look, and there is nothing there. You quicken your pace and keep walking, when you notice some movement out of the corner of your eye. You turn to look and you see someone staring at you and holding a weapon.

- What emotion would you feel (scared)?
- What physical response might you have (heart races, body may feel hot and/or tingly, muscles tense, eyes open wide)?
- What thoughts and actions might accompany these feelings?
Imagine that you are eating dinner with a friend in a restaurant you have never been to before. You're enjoying a very delicious meal when suddenly you bite down on something hard and unfamiliar. You spit it out and find a fingernail in your food.

- What emotion would you feel (disgusted)?
- What type of physical response might you have (narrowed brows, protrusion of the tongue, gagging noise, wave of nausea)?
- What thoughts and actions might accompany this?

Imagine that you are driving your car down a busy highway. You are on your way to an important meeting and are concerned about being late, but when you look at the clock it seems you have just enough time to arrive on schedule. You are thinking about the meeting, when suddenly the car from the right lane cuts ahead of you and causes you to slam on the brakes to avoid hitting them. Once the car crosses into your lane it is going ten miles below the speed limit.

- What emotion would you feel (anger/irritation)?
- What physical response might you have?
- What thoughts or actions might accompany this?

Imagine you’re approaching the drive-through to purchase a coffee beverage. Another car arrives at the same time as you. You signal for the person to go ahead. You order your five dollar drink, and when you get to the window to pay, you learn that the person who you let go ahead of you has already paid for your drink.

- What emotion might you feel (happy, grateful)?
- What physical response might you have?
- What thoughts or actions might accompany this?

It is finally the weekend. You have had a long week and are looking forward to some fun at the beach with your friends. You wake up and it’s a beautiful, sunny day. Perfect for the beach! You pack a cooler and load it into your car. You put on your bathing suit, slather on some sunblock, and grab some towels. You walk out of your house and notice some clouds in the distance. A few seconds later you feel some drops of water, and before you know it there is a complete downpour.

- What emotion might you feel (disappointed)?
- What physical response might you have?
- What thoughts or actions might accompany this?

**LECTURE**

*Emotions Elicited Through Memories*

Emotions can also be elicited by memories. Thinking about the past can trigger emotions. For example, seeing a picture of the Twin Towers can elicit strong emotions (Show picture of Twin Towers and ask students what thoughts and emotions come up for them). Memories of experiences from the past are very powerful and can influence how
a person feels in the present moment. Before seeing the photo you may have felt enjoyment, interest, or boredom. The image then triggered a memory of a particular event and you experienced the emotions associated with that memory. Emotions triggered by memories of the past are different than emotional responses triggered by the present, but they contribute to how you feel in the present.

Emotions are tied to memories. You remember incidents and information better when they are tied to an emotion. For example, do you remember driving to school last Tuesday? Probably not, unless the experience was tied to an emotion such as if you were stuck in traffic for a long time and experienced anger, frustration, or fear of being late; if there was inclement weather making it difficult to drive; or if you were in an accident.

**Emotions Elicited through the Senses**
Emotions can also be stimulated through the senses of sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste. For example, music can evoke very strong emotions.

**ACTIVITY:**  
**Sound**  
Let’s listen to some musical pieces, and as you listen pay attention to what emotions begin to arise.  
After listening to each musical piece discuss what emotions were elicited.

**LECTURE**  
**Smell**  
The sense of smell has a very powerful ability to elicit memories and emotions. The memories elicited by smells are instant and emotional. Think of a perfume (particularly your mother’s perfume), soap, lotion, or laundry detergent that elicits a strong emotion for you. Right now we are only thinking of the smell, but if you could actually smell the scent now, the emotion elicited would be much stronger.

*What comes up for you when you think about outdoor smells such as freshly cut grass, dirt, rain, or fall leaves?*  *How about sunscreen?  What does the smell of freshly sharpened pencils or school glue elicit?*  The smell of different foods also elicits specific memories and strong emotional reactions.  *Can you think of one?*

The impact of smell on emotion is why aromatherapy is very effective. Scents such as eucalyptus, lavender, mint, and vanilla can all be very calming.

**Taste**  
The sense of taste also elicits emotional memories. Think of your favorite meal or your favorite food from childhood.  *What memories and emotions come up (family, friends, learning to cook with mother, holidays, fighting at the dinner table, etc.)?*
Vision
Visual images also elicit memories and emotions. Have you ever been in a situation where you thought you saw someone you knew, but did not like? What was your immediate reaction? If it turned out not to be the person you thought it was, how did you feel (relief)? What about if you thought you saw a person you liked very much and had not seen in a long time? What emotional response might you have (excited)? Then, when you realized it was not him/her, how might you have felt (disappointed)? Just seeing the person elicited a memory connected to an emotion.

Touch
Touch is another sense that elicits emotions. Do you have an emotional reaction to the feel of wearing different fabrics such as wool, silk, cashmere, or cotton?

When we experience something pleasurable through the senses, we want to repeat it and a desire for the experience occurs. When we taste something we like very much, we want to taste it again. When we see a beautiful work of art, we want to experience it again. In contrast, when something causes pain through the senses we avoid it and feelings that lead to aversion, such as fear or anxiety, are elicited.

Social signals
Emotions are also generated through social signals. For example, if as a child you witnessed your mother stiffening up and shrinking in avoidance every time she saw a cat, it would have signaled to you that cats are dangerous and should be feared. If you had a father who viewed athletic achievement as highly important, it may have signaled to you that you should feel shame if you did not make a sports team.

REFERENCES
LESSON 3. Negative Emotions

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to recognize the universality of emotions, increase awareness of emotional states and their functions, and assist in developing awareness of how beliefs shape personal responses.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

1. Differentiate emotional states in others
2. Explain the specific functions of negative emotions
3. Identify and evaluate personal emotional coping strategies
4. Evaluate personal beliefs about negative emotions
5. Reflect on how positive emotions can change negative emotions

MATERIALS

1. Photographs of people displaying different emotions
2. Book: Alexander and the Terrible, No Good, Very Bad Day (also available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h6rp0SZX7lg)

LECTURE

There are several core, or primary emotions. Disgust, fear, anger, sadness, and happiness are five emotions that are commonly identified as universal emotions experienced by people in many cultures.

ACTIVITY

Show photographs of people exhibiting different emotions and ask students to identify the emotions. Point out that the students identified the same emotion for each facial expression, and that these emotions are considered universal because people from around the world are also able to identify each of the facial expressions as the same emotion. Each of these emotions has a specific function.

DISCUSSION

Fear and anxiety

Explore student’s beliefs about anxiety. Questions to guide discussion:

- Is anxiety a good or bad emotion?
- What does it mean for you if you feel anxious?
- What do you tell yourself about your anxiety?
- How do you know if you are experiencing too much anxiety?
- What do you think about other people who are experiencing anxiety?
LECTURE
Fear is an aversive state centered on threat. Fear signals to us to avoid danger by withdrawing. The goal of fear is to keep us safe. For example, seeing someone with a weapon causes fear. The weapon has the potential to cause harm, and we experience fear, which signals us to move away in order to keep ourselves safe. Related to fear is anxiety. However, the difference between fear and anxiety is that fear always has an identifiable eliciting stimulus, while anxiety can be defined as apprehensive anticipation of future danger or misfortune. Anxiety is associated with disengaging attention from threat. When we are no longer in the situation or in the presence of the weapon, we may continue to feel uneasy or apprehensive thinking about the possibility of being exposed to the weapon again. This is anxiety. If we originally saw a person with a weapon at the park, anxiety may guide us to avoid the park.

DISCUSSION
Think about a time when you had a long-term assignment to complete.

- Did the assignment trigger some sort of anxiety?
- Did you do something to try and manage the anxiety?
- Did you try to decrease the anxiety by getting started on the project right away, or did you attempt to decrease the anxiety by procrastinating and avoiding the assignment?
- How have you coped with anxiety in the past?
- Is that the same way you cope with anxiety currently?

ACTIVITY
Anger
Explore student’s beliefs about anger. Questions to guide discussion:

- Is anger a good or bad emotion?
- Is it okay to feel angry?
- What should we do with our anger?
- What is the difference between feeling angry and angry behavior?
- What do you think makes children angry?

Break into small groups and generate a list of what causes children to become angry.

LECTURE
Anger tells us that that something is in the way of meeting a goal. When you are cut off in traffic the other driver poses an obstacle in meeting your goal of arriving at your destination. Anger alerts us that something is wrong; something is in the way of achieving a goal or end state. If we regulate or channel our anger effectively, it can help us to overcome obstacles; however, if we let our anger consume us it can have a very negative effect.
DISCUSSION
Think of a time that made you feel very angry.

- How did you manage that anger?
- Did you express it with angry behavior?
- Did you distract yourself with something else to help you decrease the anger?
- Did you tell yourself you should not have the angry feelings and try to ignore them?

LECTURE
Anger is the most commonly suppressed, or held in, emotion. Over time, holding in anger can be very toxic to well-being. Trying to ignore the anger will not make it go away. Anger must be processed and released. When it is ignored or held in, it stays within the individual and causes psychological and physical stress on the body. This stress weakens the immune system making us more susceptible to injury and illness. The energy used to suppress the anger also uses up resources and makes it more difficult to think, concentrate, and problem-solve. Over time, this can lead to depression and withdrawal.

DISCUSSION
Sadness
Explore student’s beliefs about sadness. Questions to guide discussion:

- Is sadness a good or bad emotion?
- Is it okay to feel sad?
- What do you think about yourself when you find yourself feeling sad for more than a couple of hours?
- What do you tell yourself when you are feeling sad?
- What do you say or do when others around you are feeling sad?
- Why do you think you feel sad?

LECTURE
Sadness signals to us that we have lost something. A very common cause of sadness is the loss of a significant relationship, which often leads to a more prolonged state of grief. The loss of a job, or the loss of the potential to achieve a desired goal also causes sadness. When we experience sadness our mind and bodies slow down to help us conserve energy. The adaptive purpose of sadness is that it helps promote personal reflection by turning our attention inward. Looking inward allows us to re-appraise our goals. Sadness is also adaptive because it has an interpersonal feature. When others see we are sad, it signals that we are suffering, leads to feelings of sympathy in the other person, and helps us to gain support from others. While sadness can be very adaptive, prolonged states of sadness can also lead to depression and withdrawal.
DISCUSSION

Disgust
Explore student’s beliefs about disgust. Questions to guide discussion:

- What types of behaviors disgust you?
- Why do you think you feel this way?
- How do you respond when you feel disgusted?
- Do you think it is okay to feel disgusted?

LECTURE
Disgust is an emotion related to revulsion of something that is unpleasant and may contaminate or cause illness. When we feel disgust, we avoid the stimulus causing the disgust. The adaptive function of disgust is that it alerts us to avoid something that may cause illness.

ACTIVITY
Read the book Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day (video version: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h6rp0SZX7lg

Discuss the emotions Alexander experiences throughout the book, how his negative emotions continue to build and escalate, and how this led to decreased ability to problem solve and concentrate. What could have led to the experience of positive emotions? How might the experience of a positive emotion in the midst of the negative emotions change the trajectory of his day?

REFERENCES

LESSON 4. Positive Emotions

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to increase understanding of how positive emotions impact subjective well-being and psychological resiliency.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

1. Identify how positive emotions lead to specific thought-action tendencies
2. Discuss and reflect on personal situations in which positive emotions have impacted the experience of negative emotions
3. Describe how positive emotions lead to overall well-being

MATERIALS

1. Positive Emotion Eliciting Activities List

LECTURE

Positive Emotions

As previously discussed, emotions lead to specific responses including behaviors and thoughts. For example, you wake up on a rainy day, and, if you don’t particularly like rainy days, you might feel down and glum. These feelings lead to specific responses such as wanting to avoid the rain. You may have thoughts such as “I don’t want to go out there,” or engage in behaviors such as staying in bed longer.

The opposite effect is true for positive emotions. Positive emotions lead to approach behaviors. If you wake up and look out your window and it is a bright, sunny, 70-degree day with a nice breeze, you may feel joy, which may then lead to thoughts such as, “I can’t wait to get outside!” You will likely be motivated to get out of bed sooner. The positive emotions of joy, interest, contentment, pride, and love all create momentary positive experiences, but more importantly they have a lasting effect and lead to well-being over time.

LECTURE

Specific Positive Emotions

Happiness is a positive emotion that is experienced when we meet our goals. Individuals have been shown to feel happiest when they are focused on one thing occurring in the present moment. This is adaptive in that it helps us focus and assists us in reaching our goals.

When an individual experiences joy, it leads to creativity and the desire to be playful. Interest inspires the individual to explore the environment. Contentment encourages the individual to think about life experiences in a positive manner, consider how these events
fit together, and reflect on how they contribute to a greater sense of individual purpose in the world.

Love incorporates aspects of several positive emotions and creates a repetitive cycle in which the desire to play, explore, and value experiences with loved ones continue to build upon each other.

Positive emotions increase resources that then get stored up and can be drawn upon later when experiencing emotional distress. While negative emotions decrease attention, problem-solving abilities, thinking abilities, and social resources, positive emotions increase them and create stores that can be drawn upon later. Positive emotions build resiliency to negative emotions.

Can you think of an example of this? What are some potential implications?

When we experience negative emotions cardiovascular activity increases; however, experiencing positive emotions after a negative emotion helps the body to recover and return the cardiovascular system to a normal state. Positive emotions have an “undoing” effect on negative emotions. Positive emotions also lead to something called cognitive broadening, which increases creativity, flexibility, and novel problem-solving. This cognitive broadening also leads to overall emotional well-being. People experiencing positive emotions actually think differently over time. When people feel good, they become more creative, and they are more open. Even though the emotion may only last a short period, it creates a lasting effect.

ACTIVITY
How do we generate happy moods? What makes you feel happy? Pass out Positive Emotion Eliciting Activities List and ask students to discuss which items on the list would create feelings of happiness in them. Ask if students regularly engage in these types of activities when they are experiencing low mood. Discuss barriers that might prevent them from attempting to engage in pleasurable activities when they experience low mood, and possible solutions to those barriers. Ask students to list additional activities they could participate in that would elicit positive emotions.
Positive Emotion Eliciting Activities

1. Soaking in the bathtub
2. Seeing old friends
3. Cooking something new.
4. Collecting things (coins, shells, etc.)
5. Going on vacation
6. Thinking how it will be when I finish school
7. Practicing relaxation.
8. Cleaning the house.
9. Recycling old items
10. Window shopping
11. Going on a date
12. Going to a movie
13. Jogging, walking
14. Practicing yoga or meditation
15. Thinking I have done a full day's work
16. Listening to music
17. Recalling past parties
18. Buying household gadgets
19. Lying in the sun
20. Laughing
21. Thinking about my past trips
22. Going somewhere beautiful
23. Listening to others
24. Reading magazines or newspapers
25. Thinking about volunteering
26. Hobbies (painting, model building, etc.)
27. Spending an evening with good friends
28. Planning a day's activities
29. Meeting new people
30. Smiling at someone
31. Remembering beautiful scenery
32. Saving money
33. Walking the dog
34. Listening to music
35. Eating and savoring something enjoyable
36. Learning a new sport
37. Going to the zoo
38. Playing cards
39. Remembering the words and deeds of loving people
40. Wearing new clothes
41. Having quiet evenings
42. Taking care of my plants
43. Doodling
44. Exercising
45. Going to a party
46. Flying kites
47. Talking with friends
48. Having family get-togethers
49. Running a track
50. Going camping
51. Singing around the house
52. Arranging flowers
53. Practicing religion (going to church, group praying, etc.)
54. Going to the beach
55. Thinking I'm an OK person
56. Going to a restaurant
57. Learning a new sport
58. Traveling abroad or in the United States
59. Sitting in a sidewalk cafe
60. Painting
61. Doing something spontaneously
62. Getting a massage
63. Entertaining
64. Singing with groups
65. Flirting
66. Learning to play a musical instrument
67. Doing arts and crafts
68. Making a gift for someone
69. Planning parties
70. Cooking something new
71. Going hiking
72. Writing (poems, articles)
73. Going out to lunch
74. Discussing books
75. Sightseeing
76. Gardening
77. Going to the beauty parlor
78. Drinking coffee
79. Going to plays and concerts
80. Daydreaming
81. Making lists of tasks
82. Biking
83. Traveling to national parks
84. Completing a task
85. Going to a spectator sport (auto racing, horse racing)
86. Thinking about pleasant events
87. Eating healthy food
88. Playing with animals
89. Reading a good book
90. Writing diary entries or letters
91. Cleaning
92. Taking children places
93. Dancing
94. Going on a picnic
95. Thinking "I did that pretty well" after doing something
96. Meditating
97. Having lunch with a friend
98. Going to the mountains
99. Thoughts about happy moments in my childhood
100. Reflecting on how I've improved
101. Talking on the phone
102. Going to museums
103. Lighting candles
104. Getting a message Saying "I love you"
105. Thinking about my good qualities
106. Buying books
107. Taking a sauna or a steam bath
108. Going bowling
109. Sitting in a sidewalk café
110. Going horseback riding
111. Thinking about becoming active in the community
112. Doing something new
113. Making jigsaw puzzles
114. Thinking I'm a person who can cope
115. Planning your next holiday
116. Practicing yoga or meditation
117. Going rock-climbing
118. Taking a martial arts class
119. Watching a DVD
120. Getting a massage
121. Going for a drive
122. Calling a friend
123. Riding your bike
124. Learning a new sport
125. Playing cards
126. Taking yourself out to lunch
127. Thinking about your good qualities
128. Organizing a camping trip
129. Doing something new
130. Thinking about happy moments in childhood
131. Writing some affirmations


REFERENCES

LESSON 5. Self-Conscious Emotions

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to become familiar with self-conscious emotions and how they are elicited through self-evaluations and personal reflection.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

1. Name and describe self-conscious emotions
2. Distinguish between how self-conscious emotions and discrete emotions are elicited
3. Reflect on personal experiences of self-conscious emotions and apply self-compassion
4. Generate strategies to avoid eliciting shame in students

MATERIALS

1. Reflective journal

LECTURE

We also experience something called self-conscious emotions. Self-conscious emotions are elicited through self-evaluations and reflection on our actions.

Pride is experienced when we appraise ourselves as good for something we have done, or when others view us as good because of something we have done. Pride incites the urge to share accomplishments with others and encourages visioning future accomplishments. Socially valued achievements often lead to feelings of pride. When we attain academic, athletic, or occupational achievements, we feel pride because our achievements signal we are good. Others also evaluate us as good. Pride can also be experienced when we are successful at following our personal moral code. Pride is adaptive because it encourages us to behave appropriately.

Shame is felt when we do something that we believe will cause others to view us as bad. Shame is a painful emotion that we avoid feeling; thus, we avoid doings things that will cause us to feel shame. Shame can be adaptive in several ways. It assists us in maintaining respect from others so we are not alienated from the group; it assists us in maintaining respect for ourselves; and it communicates to others that we submit to their standards.

Guilt is similar, but different from shame. Guilt lets us know we have done something that goes against personal standards. Guilt arises when we do not meet internalized standards, while shame occurs when we do not meet an external expectation. It is adaptive in that it moves us to follow a social contract and behave in a pro-social manner.
When we go against our personal standards, guilt leads us to engage in actions to repair what we have done. It motivates us to not continually make the same mistakes.

Another major distinction between shame and guilt is that shame involves feeling that the self is a failure, while guilt is about the failed behavior that negatively impacted someone else. In other words, shame is felt when we perceive ourselves as bad, guilt is felt when we perceive our behavior as bad.

It is important to make a distinction between guilt and shame because the cause and function of the emotions are different and they lead to different outcomes. Shame can be a very harmful emotion. When it leads to intense feelings of inferiority and inadequacy, the impulse is to hide the behaviors that led to the feeling of shame. There is fear in revealing to others that you are “not good enough.” Feeling ashamed often causes the individual to retreat and avoid the cause of the emotion, while guilt is more likely to lead to a change in behavior.

Consider the following example: If you have owed your friend $20 for a long time, you might feel guilty. To remove the guilt you would likely return the money and apologize for not returning it sooner. If you stole $20 from your friend you would likely feel ashamed. This shame would make it more difficult to face the situation, and is more likely to lead to avoidance and continued feelings of shame.

Continued feelings of shame over time have a very negative impact. To reduce the negative self-evaluations that lead to shame, the use of self-compassion has been found to be very helpful. Self-compassion is having compassion for oneself, which is opposite to feeling inferior. It is conceptualized as having three parts: 1) being kind to yourself, 2) knowing that you are not alone in your experiences and that others have also “been in your shoes,” and 3) keeping painful thoughts about yourself in balance with other positive attributes.

**ACTIVITY**
Assist students in applying self-compassion to the less painful emotion of guilt. Instruct students to think of something that causes them to feel guilt and write down the thoughts associated with the emotion in their reflective journal. Then, encourage students to apply self-compassion. List positive, opposite self-affirming statements. Then take time to write down statements that confirm others have also encountered this experience before. End by listing kind, positive statements about yourself and ways to demonstrate kindness to yourself. Allow volunteers to share their experience completing this activity.

To avoid eliciting shame in students it is important to focus on behaviors rather than on innate traits.

**ACTIVITY**
As a group brainstorm how teachers can avoid eliciting shame in students (i.e. avoid always/never statements, comparing students to each other, making sarcastic remarks, withholding praise, treating some children better than others, focusing on mistakes,
public punishment, etc.) and reflect on how routine practices in many classrooms elicit shame.

REFERENCES

LESSON 6. Emotions and Culture

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to identify and understand the important influence culture has on emotion.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

1. Discuss why cultural differences in emotion are important
2. Explain key vocabulary including: cultural display rules and ideal affect
3. Evaluate and reflect on how culture impacts their own experience of emotions

MATERIALS

1. Video Clip: Jeanne Tsai, Culture and Emotion (6:32)
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEpc-Nzy_4

LECTURE

As humans, we experience the same emotions, but do we all have the same emotional response to the same situations? The answer is no. Culture plays an important role in the emotional response a situation elicits, as well as how we display and express emotions. Culture can be defined as the beliefs, values, and attitudes that govern behavior.

Cultural Differences

Let’s first talk about some basic differences between cultures. The most widely studied differences in emotional response have been between Eastern and Western cultures, specifically North American and East Asian. In our discussion today we will talk about these cultures in general, but recognize that general tendencies may not represent an entire group. For example, the prototypical North American view may best represent white, middle class, men and be less descriptive of other groups of North American people. North American culture holds an independent view of the self. This means that the individual is viewed as separate and unique, and focus is on autonomy and internal attributes. East Asian cultures hold an interdependent view of the self. This means the individual makes adjustments to fit in with others. The self is viewed in relationship to others, and interdependence is valued. Internal attributes are minimized.

An example of these cultural differences is illustrated in the following:
In the United States it is said, “The squeaky wheel gets the grease.” In Japan, “The nail that sticks out gets pounded on.” In the US, when a child does not want to finish a meal, her parents might say, “Think of the starving children in Africa and appreciate how different you are from them.” In Japan, a parent is more likely to say, “Think about the farmer who worked so hard to produce this rice for you; if you don’t eat it, he will feel bad, for his efforts will have been in vain.”
DISCUSSION
How do these statements reflect independent and interdependent views of the self? What emotions do you think each culture would value? How might expression of emotion look different?

LECTURE
How Cultural Differences Impact Emotions
Ideal affect is the affect that people value and strive for. It is the affect you believe you should ideally have. Culture shapes how we want to feel, or what the most desirable affect should be. These cultural rules about how we should display and express emotions are transmitted through many avenues, but largely by parents and society. In the previous lesson we discussed universal recognition of certain emotions. While individuals recognize and experience these universal emotions, they may also display them differently. These differences in display of emotions are accounted for by culture. Cultural display rules dictate the ways in which it is appropriate or acceptable to show emotions outwardly. Cultural display rules determine the type and amount of emotional displays that are acceptable within a specific culture. They provide us with a set of rules and expectations we can follow to guide us and let us know what is socially appropriate.

ACTIVITY
Show the following video clip: Jeanne Tsai, Culture and Emotion (6:32)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEpc-Nzv_4c

LECTURE
Cultural beliefs about emotions are transmitted to children by caregivers and from the society at large through media. For example, in one study researchers found that bestselling children’s books in the US depicted more exciting content than children’s books in Taiwan, which depicted more calm content. The smiles were bigger and conveyed more excitement. When children were exposed to books with more exciting content, they were more likely to value excited states and indicated preference for activities that promote arousal such as beating on a drum loudly with a fast tempo. Children exposed to books with calm content showed preference for calm states and chose less arousing activities such as beating a drum with a quiet, slow tempo. Exposure to storybook content impacted their ideal affect. In the same study, they found that women’s magazines in the United States showed more excited smiles than in Hong Kong where they were calmer smiles. The exposure to different content determined differences in emotional display.

Cultural Differences in Parenting
From a very early age, and without awareness, information about emotions is transmitted from parents to children. Basic parental practices, which are also influenced by culture, begin to shape the child’s emotional preference from an early age. Seemingly benign differences in how parents respond emotionally to the child’s crying have an impact on the child’s emotional development. Parents choose methods to soothe and meet the needs of their infants based on culture.
Two major cultural differences in parenting practices are the use of swaddling and co-sleeping. In the US swaddling has traditionally been unpopular because it restricts movement and thus can place undesirable limits on the child. This has the possible side effect of restricting the child’s ability to develop independence, which is associated with submission and is in misalignment with traditional values of independence. In Eastern societies, however, where submission and interdependence are preferred, swaddling is more widely used as a method to soothe the infant. Co-sleeping also promotes greater attachment and interdependence and is thus not widely practiced in the United States.

Further studies demonstrate that even the positioning of infants and the amount of physical activity they are exposed to impact expression of emotion. Mothers in the United States provide more stimulation through repositioning, jostling, and using a higher pitched voice. Japanese mothers are more soothing and lulling in their interactions. Mothers in the US use more positive emotions when interacting with their children as they get older, while Japanese mothers were found to use more soothing and calming language. Studies have demonstrated that exposing infants to vigorous activity has been helpful in overcoming fear. All of these interactions teach the child about ideal affect.

The specific culture of the home environment also impacts how the child will perceive emotions. Children exposed to domestic violence and see a lot of angry faces perceive the emotion of anger more often even in faces that are not expressing anger. Children exposed to traumatic events, who have depressed or emotionally unavailable parents, parents with poorly controlled anger, or who experience instability in the home environment may all have difficulty fitting in with the ideal affect of the classroom.

**Importance of Understanding Influences of Culture on Emotion**

It is important to understand how culture impacts emotions in order to have a good understanding of emotions in general, but it is also important to prevent misunderstandings and misinterpretation of others, and to promote competent interaction with cultures different from our own. Culture can often explain why people respond to the same stimuli in different ways.

Cultures that value independence and autonomy also value high arousal states such as excitement. Cultures that value interdependence value low arousal states such as calmness. Often times in the US, instead of being understood as calm, individuals form East Asian cultures may be characterized as cold, passive, stoic, or uninterested in having fun. This has the possibility to lead to misunderstandings.

East Asian cultures also value dialectical thinking. Dialectical thinking is being able to hold multiple opposing views at the same time. There is a balance between positive and negative states. For example, an individual who just won a tennis tournament may feel happy and proud of her accomplishment, but also hold feelings of deep sadness when reflecting on the experience of the person they defeated.
DISCUSSION
How does your own culture influence your emotions? Consider how emotion is expressed in your family of origin and in your peer group. How does this impact your feelings, thoughts, and ideas about which emotions are "good" versus "bad"? How do you think this shapes your expression of emotion? How does this impact your interpretation of emotions expressed in others?

REFERENCES


LESSON 7. Emotion Regulation

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to teach the foundational elements of emotion regulation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

1. Define emotion regulation
2. Identify different emotion regulation strategies
3. Apply emotion regulation strategies to a “real-life” situation
4. Discuss the impact of emotional suppression

MATERIALS

None

LECTURE

Emotion regulation is the ability to exercise control over the experience and expression of emotions. Emotion regulation is not simply the “getting rid of” emotions, because emotions are not bad. The goal is also not to rigidly control emotions; instead, emotion regulation is the idea that once an emotion is experienced, it can intentionally be redirected or altered in order to help the individual accomplish a goal. Emotion regulation helps to experience an optimal level of emotion so that the emotional experience is helpful rather than making things more difficult. Emotion regulation can assist both in decreasing negative emotions and increasing positive emotions.

DISCUSSION

Let’s examine your beliefs about emotions. Do you believe people can change or learn to control their emotions? How much control do you feel people have over their emotions?

Your beliefs about emotions are important, because the more you believe emotions are malleable and able to be changed, the more likely you are to attempt to manage your emotions. This, in turn, leads to more success in actually managing emotions. Let’s consider some everyday examples of how people regulate their emotions.

LECTURE

Anxiety is an uncomfortable emotion, and people do things to relieve the experience of anxiety.

What are some of the ways people relieve anxiety (eating, exercising, listening to music, talking to a friend, drinking alcohol)? These are all ways people regulate or change their experience of anxiety. Some ways of regulating emotions are healthier than others.
What happens when you think of painful memories (feel sad)? Thinking of painful memories during class, while you are at work, or when you are trying to study will take your attention away from what you need to accomplish. Fortunately we are not slaves to our emotions and we can do something to change our experience of them such as by distracting yourself from the painful memories for a short time.

Emotions can be down-regulated or up-regulated. Down-regulation decreases the experience of an emotion, and up-regulation increases the experience of an emotion. For example, if you are lying on the couch watching television and feeling very relaxed, it may be difficult to motivate yourself to begin working on a paper that is due next week.

What might you do to motivate yourself (elicit examples of up-regulation)?

When you are starting to feel angry with a customer service representative on the phone, you will be more successful in reaching a positive outcome if you down-regulate your anger.

What are some ways you might do this (elicit examples of down-regulation)?

One model of emotion regulation outlines five strategies for regulating emotions. The focus of each strategy is different, and occurs at a different point in the experience of the emotion. To illustrate these five strategies, let’s use the following example: You are excited about an invitation to a party, but then learn that your ex-partner will be there.

One strategy is to select a situation that will help to promote or avoid a particular emotion. This is the first point in emotion regulation, and involves avoiding situations that cause negative emotions, and moving toward situations that produce positive emotions. In our example you can select to go to the party, or you can select not go to the party.

What emotions might you experience if you go to the party? Might you potentially avoid those emotions if you choose not to go to the party?

Selecting not to go to the party is a form of emotion regulation because it prevents you from experiencing a particular emotion before it occurs.

We can also modify a situation so that it does not elicit certain emotions. If you decide to go to the party, you can choose not to speak to your ex-partner, or you can choose to have a conversation with him/her. If you choose not to speak to your ex-partner you are modifying the situation to influence the potential emotions you may experience.

What emotions might you experience if you speak to your ex-partner? What emotions might you experience if you do not speak to your ex-partner?

Another strategy involves purposefully diverting attention away from emotional aspects of a situation. The environment is not changed, but what is paid attention to changes.
Once you are at the party and decide not to talk to your ex-partner, you can regulate your emotions by determining what you will pay attention to. Will you watch as your ex-partner flirts with someone else, or will you pay attention to the heated ping-pong tournament occurring in the other room?

*How might watching your ex-partner flirt make you feel? If you did not give your attention to this, might it prevent these emotions from occurring?*

**Cognitive change** is another strategy that refers to consciously changing one’s interpretation of the experience so the experience is not felt as intensely. You change your thoughts related to the situation. If you end up watching your ex-partner flirting, the thoughts you have will impact how you feel.

*How would the following thoughts influence your emotions: “I’m glad he/she is having a good time and seems happy” versus “The person my ex-partner is flirting with is much more attractive and way better than me.”*

If you are watching your ex-partner flirt with someone else and thinking that the person they are flirting with is better looking, you are likely to feel jealous or angry. At this point the emotion is fully experienced, and **response modulation** is a strategy to regulate the expression of emotion. This occurs through emotional suppression, or by attempting to regulate the physiological aspects by means such as deep breathing, exercise, alcohol, or even food.

Different emotion regulation strategies lead to different outcomes. Think about a time when you tried to get rid of an emotion completely. It is very difficult to get rid of emotions once they have already occurred.

After a traumatic event (such as the death of a love one, witnessing violence, or being exposed to a natural disaster) people experience natural numbing of emotions. The emotions are suppressed. Think back to our discussion on the evolutionary purpose of emotions.

*What purpose do you think this numbing or suppression of emotion serves (protective factor that helps the individual manage an overwhelming amount of intense, painful emotion)?*

However, avoiding awareness of your emotions over the long-term can have a negative impact. When an emotion is already experienced suppression can only be used for a short amount of time. Emotions stay inside your body. They are still present and do not go away until you process them in a healthy way. Negative emotions cause stress on your body. Even when you are distracting yourself and not consciously aware of the emotion, the negative experience is still present. It takes a lot of energy to suppress emotions; however, suppression is a helpful short-term strategy to use when the emotions cannot be addressed. For example, it would not be appropriate to burst into tears at work in front of
the class, and suppressing the urge to do this until later would be a healthy response; however, the emotion must be addressed at some point in the near future.

Another problem with emotional suppression is that when you suppress your emotions you send signals to others that are incongruent. This incongruence between the inner and outer self results in others feeling that you are inauthentic or fake. In other words, others can tell that you are hiding something, which may interfere with and negatively impact relationships with others.

Think of a time when someone you know appeared upset, and when you asked him/her if something was wrong they responded that everything was “fine.” How did this make you feel? If this continued to occur over the long-term, how would you feel?

It is essential to understand when, how, and with whom emotions can be expressed.

REFERENCES

BLOCK 2: EMOTIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

LESSON 1. Emotions in the Classroom

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to increase understanding of the emotional experiences of students in the classroom.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

1. Recognize emotional triggers of children in the classroom
2. Describe how emotions impact learning

MATERIALS

None

LECTURE

The classroom is a rich emotional environment. Both students and teachers experience a wide range of emotions. Emotions influence all aspects of learning including motivation, interest, engagement, memory, learning, and social interactions. Academic emotions are those emotions that are associated with the learning and social environment of the classroom. Let’s discuss how specific emotions impact students in the classroom.

Anxiety is an emotion that is widely experienced in the classroom. The right amount of anxiety can help us to focus and complete tasks; however, too much anxiety has a negative effect as it disrupts learning and memory and can be debilitating.

DISCUSSION

Think of a time you had a class assignment that caused a little bit of anxiety. How did that anxiety impact your thoughts and behaviors? If, however, you had an assignment that caused a great deal anxiety, how was that different in the way it impacted your thoughts and behaviors?

LECTURE

Anxiety in the classroom is largely related to fear of failure. When students have difficulty understanding main concepts or organizing information for later retrieval it causes anxiety. In a cyclical manner, this leads to further anxiety, which makes it even more difficult for students to think and concentrate. Social difficulties are another cause of anxiety for students. Students who struggle to get along with others, are teased or bullied, have difficulty understanding social cues, or feel disliked by the teacher are also at risk for developing anxiety in the classroom.
ACTIVITY
Break students into small groups and ask students to brainstorm answers to the following questions: *What are some specific situations that might cause a student to feel anxiety in the classroom? How might you know a student is feeling anxious?*

LECTURE
Because anxiety can have such a negative effect, it is important to be able to identify anxious students in the classroom. Anxiety is largely an internalized emotion, meaning it is expressed inwardly. When anxiety is internalized it can be easy to overlook. Often times anxious students are shy, worry frequently, and can be clingy to the teacher or have difficulty separating from their caregivers. You may notice nail biting, hair twirling, leg bouncing, pencil tapping, and chewing on items such as clothing or pens.

When anxiety is externalized it can often manifest as angry or oppositional behavior. For example, a student trying to escape or avoid an anxiety-producing situation may frequently get out of his seat, ask to leave the classroom to go to the bathroom, or avoid completing assignments. Anxiety is also frequently misperceived as ADHD because of the impact it has on the ability to sustain attention and concentrate. Anxious students may also suffer from stomachaches or other physical ailments and may frequently ask to visit the school nurse.

**Boredom** and **hopelessness** are other academic emotions. Students feel bored when they do not feel the learning task is valuable. Hopelessness occurs when students do not feel they able to accomplish learning goals. For example, a student who struggles to understand the information or who feels unable to complete academic tasks adequately may feel hopeless. Both boredom and hopelessness lead to decreased motivation and attention and increased difficulty making connections and linking previously learned information to new information. When a student feels bored or hopeless they disengage and it can be quite difficult to re-engage them in learning. Of course, not all learning tasks are inherently fun or particularly interesting. To prevent boredom, it is important that students understand the value and significance of the task.

ACTIVITY
Break into small groups and brainstorm ways to prevent feelings of boredom and hopelessness in the classroom.

**Anger** and **frustration** are experienced when a student cannot meet a desired goal. Within the classroom setting student goals are largely related to academic achievement and social success. For example, a student working hard to solve a difficult math problem may experience anger and frustration. A student with the goal of joining in a game of kickball and is left out might also experience anger and frustration. While temperament makes some students more prone to anger, it is the amount of the anger that the student experiences and the way in which he channels the anger that predicts how successful the student will be. If the student who is angry and frustrated about the math problem lets the anger take over, he may respond by crumpling up the paper and angrily
pouting at his desk for the remainder of the lesson, which will obviously have a negative impact on learning.

If, however, he can regulate his anger, the anger and frustration may provide motivation to work harder to solve the problem. In the case of the student who is left out, if she experiences a high level of anger she might jump into the game, grab the ball, and throw it over the fence to stop the game from continuing; she will not achieve her goal of joining the game. If she is able to regulate her anger, she might watch the game from the side and ask to join again later, or leave to join another group of children. Low levels of regulated anger motivate students to persist in finding solutions to problems, while high levels of anger and frustration inhibit complex problem-solving and reduce attention.

**ACTIVITY**
Break into small groups and brainstorm specific situations that might cause students to feel angry/frustrated in the school environment. Then, discuss how student anger/frustration impacts the teacher.

**LECTURE**
Enjoyment, hope, and pride are positive academic emotions. They occur when students are highly engaged in learning. Students are most engaged when presented with tasks that are interesting; when the work is neither too demanding nor too easy; when they are pushed just beyond their comfort zone; and when the work is intrinsically rewarding. In this space students are their most creative and most attentive. Positive emotions have the ability to fuel continued positive emotions that further direct attention to the work task and support continued effort and creativity. When students accomplish something challenging they experience pride. Pride leads to feeling to undertake additional challenging tasks and leads to increased self-agency.

**ACTIVITY**
Break into small groups and brainstorm ways to promote positive academic emotions in the classroom.

**REFERENCES**
LESSON 2. Social Relationships and Emotions

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to understand the important role the teacher-student relationship plays in student social, emotional, behavioral, and academic functioning, and how this relationship can be developed and maintained.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

1. Explain why teacher-student relationships are important
2. Describe how positive teacher-student relationships impact student learning and behavior
3. Identify how to promote positive teacher-student relationships
4. Reflect on their role in promoting positive relationships in the classroom

MATERIALS

None

ACTIVITY

The teacher-student relationship is very important. Take a minute to think about one of your favorite teachers. Write down why he/she was your favorite teacher. Now imagine yourself in his/her classroom.

- How did you feel with this teacher?
- How did you perform in this class?
- Did you feel motivated?

Now think about one of your least favorite teachers. Again, write down why he/she was your least favorite teacher, and as you do so recall how you felt when you were with this teacher. Now write how you felt when you were in the classroom with this teacher.

- How did you feel with this teacher?
- How did you perform in this class?
- Did you feel motivated?

LECTURE

Students spend a large percentage of their time within the school setting, and the relationship between teacher and student is extremely important. Outside the family, the relationship with the teacher is one of the most significant relationships children have. Relationships between teachers and students play a similar function to relationships between parents and children. Students must feel secure, understood, and emotionally supported by the teacher. Learning in the classroom environment is an emotional
endeavor, and as such, students must feel their teachers will be responsive to their needs. Teachers set the emotional tone for the classroom environment, and have a powerful role in determining what type of relationship will be had with each student. These relationships dictate the types of emotions that are likely to be experienced by students in the classroom.

Positive, close relationships with teachers provide motivation for students to achieve, foster positive attitudes towards learning, predict higher achievement, and lead to more enjoyment of school. Negative teacher-student relationships negatively impact students’ attitudes towards school and often result in lack of motivation, student withdrawal and avoidance, and behavioral difficulties.

When students feel their needs will be met in a supportive way, they are more likely to seek help and emotional guidance from the teacher when needed. The relationship between teacher and student is important for all students, but it is even more important for students who are at-risk for learning and behavioral problems. The relationship with the teacher also plays a crucial role in the development of emotion regulation.

**Promoting positive teacher-student relationships**

When working with challenging students it is critical to remember that you have an important role in their lives. While at times it may seem that your relationships with students are insignificant, you must remind yourself that the teacher-student relationship has a major impact on student functioning and success. Students must feel that you genuinely care about them. Spend time getting to know your students. Display interest in their individual backgrounds and personal preferences. Find time to spend individual time with students, and demonstrate enjoyment in your interactions with them. Students must feel related, or socially connected, to the teacher.

**ACTIVITY**

As a group, generate a list of specific ways that teachers can demonstrate interest in students.

**DISCUSSION**

As a group, assist students in reflecting on their feelings regarding their role in building relationships with students. Questions to guide discussion:

- Is this a role students expected to take on as a teacher?
- How important is it for the teacher to focus on building relationships between teachers and students? Between peers?
- Is relationship building part of the teacher’s job, or is it a burden that should be “someone else’s responsibility?”

**LECTURE**

Keep in mind that you are modeling the behaviors you would like to promote in students. Children learn by watching others, and the teacher is a powerful role model in the classroom. Students notice how the teacher interacts with others, how the teacher
responds to frustration, if the teacher is kind and patient with others, and if the teacher is respectful and genuine. Teachers must be aware of both the implicit and explicit messages teachers send to children. It is important to be respectful in your interactions, and keep displays of irritability and anger to a minimum. Teachers who display anger and frustration teach students to also respond and communicate with anger and aggression, which negatively impacts peer relationships. Enthusiasm for learning and the use of humor also promotes a positive learning environment.

**Positive Classroom Environments**

Positive classroom environments also promote positive teacher-student relationships. A positive classroom environment is one in which students feel both competent and autonomous. It is important that students feel capable of completing expected tasks, as well as able to make decisions for themselves. Engaging in discussions that include open-ended questioning and opportunities for self-reflection, and balancing encouragement with constructive feedback assists students in developing feelings of competence and autonomy, which improves the teacher-student relationship and builds a foundation for both understanding and organizing emotional experiences. Supporting students’ independence also reinforces the belief that they are capable of controlling themselves.

**Relationships with Peers**

Positive relationships with peers are also very important. Social relationships impact whether students like school or not. The ability to understand social cues and emotions in others is highly related to social success. In a reciprocal pattern, students with good ability to regulate their emotions are more socially competent and thus are more popular and well-liked by other students. They are better able to manage conflicts and understand how to appropriately display emotions. Students lacking social competence are often rejected by their peers and viewed as immature. Students who cannot control their anger or who are highly emotionally reactive are not well-liked by others. When students are socially unsuccessful they report liking school less than their more popular peers. They are also at higher risk for behavioral problems and anxiety.

**ACTIVITY**

As a group, generate a list of specific ways in which teachers can promote positive relationships among peers.

**REFERENCES**

LESSON 3. Emotion Regulation and Language

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to increase understanding of the role language plays in emotion regulation and as well as to identify and demonstrate specific strategies to promote emotion language in students.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

1. Explain the role language plays in emotion regulation
2. Identify and develop strategies to teach emotion vocabulary
3. Demonstrate the ability to use children’s literature to teach emotion language
4. Model skill in using praise to promote use of affective language in children
5. Model the ability to verbalize personal use of emotion regulation strategies for children

MATERIALS

1. Picture books with emotional content (see Books About Emotions list)
2. Feelings thermometer
3. Outline of the body

LECTURE

Children enter school with a range of skills regarding their abilities to regulate their emotions. Emotion regulation is an important aspect of self-agency and feeling that the individual has the ability to exert some control over their own responses and reactions. Without this ability, students may feel helpless when experiencing strong emotions. With the abundance of emotions experienced in the classroom and the influence emotions have on attention, learning, and social relationships, it is essential that students are able to implement strategies to assist them in altering or modifying emotions. Fortunately, emotion regulation is a set of skills that can be taught, and teachers serve an instrumental role in helping students develop these important lifelong skills.

Language and Emotion Regulation

As we know, emotional responses are more automatic and unconscious compared to cognitive processes. Before students can regulate their emotions they must first be aware of them. Thus, we need to help students bring their emotions to conscious awareness. Language provides a way for us to do this. Language is an extremely important tool in regulating emotions. First, it helps students to identify their internal experiences and communicate them to others. It helps students recall previous experiences and relate them to new experiences, and identify consequences of emotions, particularly unregulated emotions. For example, when Jane gets angry and has the impulse to hit her friend, she can use internal language to think through the consequences of doing this.
Using language to provide students with information about emotions also helps them understand and make sense of their experiences. Additionally, language guides students through the steps needed to regulate emotions. Students can use language to identify situations where they need to regulate their emotions, such as when a student with test anxiety is about to take a test.

**Identifying Emotions Using Language**
The first step in emotion regulation is to be able to identify emotions, understand when they are experienced and what causes them, and recognize how they are displayed or communicated. It is very important that students possess the vocabulary to identify their emotions. An emotion vocabulary is essential to helping students identify and label what they are experiencing, and it should be explicitly taught.

**Strategies for Teaching Emotion Vocabulary**
There are many strategies to teach students emotional vocabulary. Photographs with different pictured emotions can be shown to students to help them identify the differences in facial expression for each emotion. Further, students can discuss what might have caused the emotion.

Drawing pictures of different emotions, making books/stories about emotions, or developing emotion collages also help students develop the language of emotions. Emotion vocabulary can easily be included on spelling or vocabulary tests, and can also be displayed in the classroom to continually expose students to emotion language.

Class meetings, particularly in lower elementary grades, are also a good time to include discussions of emotions experienced by students.

**Using Children’s Literature to Teach Emotion Vocabulary**
Reading stories with socio-emotional themes or watching videos and discussing the emotional experiences of the characters is also very beneficial. The teacher can ask questions such as, “How do you think the character is feeling?” “What clues let you know he/she is feeling that way?” “Why do you think the character is feeling that way?” “What can he/she do?”

**ACTIVITY**
Provide students with picture books having emotional themes. In small groups, instruct students to take turns role-playing using a read-aloud to teach about emotions to others in the group. After each role-play, ask students to provide positive feedback to the person doing the read-aloud.

**LECTURE**
To reinforce the use of emotional vocabulary, teachers can use affective language throughout the day, and encourage parents to use affective language at home. As students begin to use emotion vocabulary to describe their emotions, the teacher should make sure to provide praise and positive reinforcement to encourage their continued use.
ACTIVITY
As a group, brainstorm a list of phrases teachers can use to praise students for using affective language.

LECTURE
It is also important that teachers label student’s emotions. Noticing and labeling student’s feelings is a strategy that can be incorporated easily into the school day. For example, the teacher might say, “John, it looks like you are having a difficult time on your spelling work. You seem to be getting frustrated.” As the teacher labels the student’s emotions, the student begins to connect internal feeling states with language. Simply talking with students about what they are feeling and connecting feelings to external events helps them to understand their emotions and promotes regulation. Labeling negative emotions as they are occurring also assists in decreasing the intensity with which the student is experiencing the emotion. Teachers should also help guide students through emotion regulation techniques; in doing so the child begins to internalize these emotion regulation strategies.

ACTIVITY
Allow students to practice identifying and labeling emotions. Ask for two volunteers and assign one student to role-play the child and one student to role-play the teacher. The child role-plays a situation in which he/she feels angry/frustrated, disappointed, sad, proud, happy, or anxious. The teacher practices labeling the emotion and identifying what clues let the teacher know the child is experiencing the emotion (e.g. facial expression, body language, situation, etc.). Provide the following example for students: “Gloria you are smiling and I can tell that you feel proud about turning your homework in on time.” Repeat the role-play with different emotions and volunteers.

Following each role-play ask the student playing the child what it was like to have the teacher acknowledge and label his/her emotions. Ask other students in the class to comment on what the student role-playing the teacher did well.

LECTURE
Identifying Emotions in the Body
It is important for students to understand how emotions are experienced in the body, and the physical sensations that occur with different emotions. Being able to identify these physical sensations verbally provides students with a clue about how they are feeling. One way to teach this is to provide students with an outline of the body and assist them in identifying where different sensations occur when they experience different emotions. For example, a student might say he notices his face becomes hot and his fists begin to tighten when he starts to feel angry. These areas of the body can be colored in with a color of the students’ choice. Identifying bodily sensations is an important clue in understanding and identifying emotions.
**Intensity of Emotions**

It is also important for students to develop an understanding that emotions occur at different intensities. A “feelings thermometer” can be developed to demonstrate the difference between feeling annoyed, angry, and furious; or content, happy, and excited.

**ACTIVITY**

In small groups, allow students to brainstorm other strategies for teaching students emotion vocabulary and share these ideas with the whole group. Provide students with a blank feelings thermometer as well as an outline of the body and role-play using these and other strategies in the classroom.

**Mixed Emotions and Emotions in Others**

Finally, students must also understand that an individual can experience more than one emotion at a time, and that different people may feel differently about the same situation. For example, Jane might feel excited about the first day of school, Johnny might feel nervous, and Billy might feel both excited and nervous. Discussions about why each child feels this way assists students in understanding different perspectives and also helps students develop a better understanding of their own emotional experiences.

Another helpful activity is to provide students with comic strips with empty thought bubbles and ask students to use clues from the facial expressions and situations to determine what the characters might be thinking and feeling.

**Modeling Emotion Regulation**

Teachers can also teach emotion language by example. They can label their own feelings and model their own emotional regulation strategies for students. For example, a teacher who drops a stack of papers may say, “Oh no! I’m so irritated that I dropped the papers everywhere! I’m going to take a few deep breaths to calm down.” The teacher might model positive self-talk by saying, “It’s only paper. I can pick them all up if I work quickly.” Or, the teacher can demonstrate asking someone for help to pick up the papers by saying, “Billy, can you please help me pick these papers up? Thank you so much! It makes me really happy when we work together.”

**ACTIVITY**

In small groups, allow students to practice labeling and modeling emotion regulation strategies for children.

**REFERENCES**


Books About Emotions

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LESSON 4. Emotion Regulation Strategies

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to assist in the development of specific strategies to promote emotion regulation in students.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

1. Identify specific emotion regulation strategies including coping self-talk, relaxation, reappraisal, and distraction
2. Compare and contrast the impact of negative self-talk versus coping self-talk
3. Generate ways to implement relaxation in the classroom
4. Demonstrate the ability to make cognitive reappraisals

MATERIALS

None

LECTURE

Self-talk

Self-talk language is very important to emotion regulation. Self-talk is the internal language we use to talk to ourselves. It often happens without much awareness, and it has a great impact on how we feel. There are two types of self-talk: negative self-talk and coping self-talk.

DISCUSSION

Which of the following statements do you think illustrates coping self-talk, and which statement illustrates negative self-talk: “This is really hard. I’ll never be able to do this.” and “This is really hard, but I can do it if I keep trying.” What impact do you think the first statement will have on how the student feels and behaves? What impact do you think the second statement will have on how the student feels and behaves?

LECTURE

Negative self-talk is associated with lower self-esteem, poor academic performance, and difficulties developing and maintaining friendships. Negative self-talk both creates and intensifies negative feelings such as frustration, anger, sadness, and anxiety. On the other hand, using coping self-talk is a helpful strategy that effectively guides us through challenging situations and increases positive feelings and motivation.

We can teach students to use coping self-talk such as, “I know what to do,” “I’m smart and I can do this,” “Just keep trying,” “I can ask for help if I need it,” “It’s not such a big deal,” and “Even if I make a mistake it’s okay because everyone makes mistakes.” All of these statements assist in coping with challenging situations. They help the student to
remain focused and attentive to task, and prevent the student from becoming overwhelmed and frustrated. Students should be encouraged to pay attention to their internal thoughts and taught how to use more effective coping self-talk. Coping self-talk leads to more positive reappraisals, which helps students adjust the way they think about a particular situation so their thoughts do not cause further distress.

**ACTIVITY**

In small groups, ask students to re-write the following negative statements as positive statements.

- I can’t do it.
- This is too hard.
- No one likes me.
- I won’t get it right.
- If I ask them to play, they will say no.
- I am stupid.
- I am not good enough.
- The other kids will laugh at me.
- I will make a mistake.
- I am not good at school.
- My handwriting is bad.
- I can’t run fast enough.
- I fail at tests.

**LECTURE**

*Relaxation Strategies*

It is also important to teach students relaxation strategies to help them regulate emotions. Thoughts, feeling, and behaviors are interrelated, and thus it is important to help students relax their bodies in order to help them regulate their emotions. Relaxation strategies should be taught and practiced with the whole class during non-stressful situations to assist students in developing an understanding of how to utilize these strategies. Later, when students are under stress, they will have the knowledge and capability of implementing these strategies independently. Relaxation techniques can be utilized both on an individual basis and as a whole class activity.

Deep breathing is a simple and effective way to assist students in calming their bodies. The act of breathing deeply allows oxygen to go to different parts of the body, which has a calming effect. Deep breathing involves taking a deep breath in through the mouth and out through the nose. The breath should be drawn in as deeply into the belly as possible, rather than the chest. These breaths should be slow and smooth.

Thinking of a calming place is another strategy that students can use to help them calm down. Students should be taught to identify a place where they imagine feeling calm such as on the beach, in their bed, or floating on a cloud. They should be encouraged to imagine the sights, sounds, smells, and physical sensations that occur in this place. This strategy helps reduce the overwhelming experience of a negative emotion so the student
can think of a problem-solving strategy. Counting backwards from five is also a helpful strategy to teach students.

Based on what we know already, why do you think this strategy would be helpful (provides time for the student to calm down before responding to a challenging situation)?

**ACTIVITY**
In small groups, ask students to brainstorm additional relaxation strategies, and then role-play implementation with the whole group. Encourage students to use electronic sources to help them think of ideas.

**LECTURE**
*Distraction*
Distraction or shifting attention away from intense emotions for a short period can be helpful in the short term, particularly for students who are highly emotionally reactive. Asking the student to get a drink of water or go on a short walk to deliver something to the office or another teacher helps to remove the child from the situation causing the intense emotion. Of course, this is only a short-term strategy that may serve to de-escalate a situation so that the student can apply other emotion regulation strategies or a problem-solving strategy. Another form of distraction is to teach students to “do something else,” or engage in another activity if the task they are working on is causing too much frustration or anxiety. When the student feels calm, he/she should be prompted to return to the initial task. At times it may also be necessary for students to distract themselves, or ignore, other students who may be disrupting learning.

**ACTIVITY**
Allow students to practice teaching planned ignoring to students. Ask for two volunteers and assign one student to role-play the child and one student to role-play the teacher. The teacher will practice teaching how to use planned ignoring to the child. The steps for planned ignoring include: turn your attention away, do not look at the other person, do not speak to the other person, turn your body away, do something else to distract you, and tell yourself something to help you keep ignoring (e.g. “Just keep working, Billy will stop talking to me if I don’t pay attention to him.”) Repeat the role-play with different volunteers.

Following each role-play ask other students in the class to comment on what the student role-playing the teacher did well.
LESSON 5. Increasing Positive Emotions in the Classroom

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to assist teachers in the development of specific strategies to increase positive emotions in students.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

1. Generate and describe specific positive emotion eliciting activities in the classroom
2. Describe elements in the classroom environment that encourage positive emotions in students
3. Reflect on barriers to implementing positive emotion eliciting activities and develop solutions to those barriers.
4. Describe the experience of being guided through mediation and use a meditation script to guide students through meditation

MATERIALS

1. Guided meditation script

LECTURE

It is important to directly teach students how to increase positive emotions because positive emotions decrease the impact of negative emotions, improve learning, and increase overall well-being. Positive emotions don’t just feel good, they put students in the mood to be more creative, they spark curiosity, and they help students to feel more engaged.

Positive classroom environments

Creating a positive classroom environment is central to fostering positive emotions in students. Positive classroom environments are those that encourage students to feel independent and in control of their learning, as well as confident they can reach learning goals. In a cyclical manner, independence inspires confidence, and as students feel more confident they are encouraged to be more independent learners. To help students feel confident and independent, students must be allowed opportunities to make choices and decisions for themselves. It is also important to set high expectations for students, let them know you believe they can reach those expectations, and provide enough scaffolding for students to reach the goals. Confidence and independence in completing learning tasks fosters a sense of agency, which leads to the experience of more positive emotions.

ACTIVITY

In small groups, discuss how the following practices that promote independence and confidence in the classroom lead to positive emotions:
• Helping students identify and develop personal learning interests.
• Assisting students in developing rubrics and encouraging self-monitoring and self-evaluation of progress
• Assisting students in setting personal goals
• Modeling problem-solving steps

**ACTIVITY**
Brainstorm classroom “jobs” students can be responsible for completing (i.e. taking care of a class pet, leading a morning meeting, passing out pencils, etc.). Discuss how these responsibilities lead to feelings of independence and competence.

**LECTURE**
Assisting students in identifying subjects/topics they enjoy learning about brings this enjoyment to conscious awareness. Further, helping students to understand the purpose of learning exercises leads to more enjoyment of the activity. Emotions are also contagious, and your enjoyment of learning impacts students.

*What learning tasks or topics do you enjoy? How can you model this enjoyment for your students?*

**ACTIVITY**
*Meditation*
Mindfulness meditation has also been demonstrated to improve positive emotions. Lead students through meditation using a guided meditation script. At the end of the exercise ask students to comment on their experience. Then, in pairs of two, allow students to practice leading guided meditation. Students can also look for meditation scripts on the Internet and share them with the group.

**LECTURE**
It is important to praise students for their efforts and focus on the process of learning rather than student abilities.

*What are some praise statements that focus on effort rather than ability?*

Students can be encouraged to reflect on the process of learning by asking them questions such as: What did you find interesting today? What did you work hard at today? and What mistake did you learn from today?

**LECTURE**
*Positive emotion eliciting activities*
Similar to adults, students can be taught to engage in pleasant activities to increase positive emotions.

*Why might it be helpful to allow students to engage in a pleasant activity for a short amount of time after working on a very difficult or frustrating task?*
The following is a list of activities school-age children may find enjoyable:

1. Playing a board game or cards
2. Doing a jigsaw puzzle
3. Talking to a friend
4. Drawing/ coloring
5. Completing a crossword puzzle or word search
6. Having lunch with the teacher
7. Reading a book, magazine, or comic
8. Taking care of class pet or plant
9. Singing
10. Playing on the playground
11. Listening to music
12. Eating a snack
13. Dancing
14. Having a class party
15. Watching a video
16. Wearing different clothes at school (i.e. hat day, sunglasses day, backwards clothes day, pajama day, etc.)
17. Doing arts and crafts
18. Helping the teacher
19. Writing a story or poem
20. Telling jokes

**DISCUSSION**

What might be some of the barriers to taking a break in the day to allow students to participate in these activities? What are some solutions to these barriers? How might you be able to incorporate positive emotion building activities into the school day?

**LECTURE**

One way to help students identify how they can increase positive emotions is to provide students with the following scenarios and ask them, “How would you feel if…” Then, discuss what students might do to regulate their emotions, with focus on how to increase the experience of positive emotions.

1. Your friend sat with someone else at lunch?
2. You did not like your lunch?
3. A big dog barked at you?
4. Your parent was late to pick you up at school?
5. You did not do well on a test?
6. You had to read aloud to the class?
7. Your teacher gave you a compliment?
8. You earned an award for being a responsible student?
9. Someone made fun of you?
10. Your teacher called your parent on the phone?
11. A friend shared their markers with you?
12. Your classmates would not let you join a game with them?
13. You have to take a really hard test?
14. You need help from the teacher, but he is busy with another student?
15. You have a substitute teacher for the day?
16. You forgot to bring your homework to school?
17. You fell during gym class and hurt your arm?
18. You walked into the bathroom and saw some other students goofing around?
19. Someone got in line in front of you?
20. The lunch lady said you could not have another drink?
21. Another student says she is going to beat you up?
22. Your best friend said he is a best friend with someone else?
23. You got an A on your math test?
24. You tripped and fell in front of the class?
25. You were the last person to finish your work?
26. You are chosen last for a game?
27. You do not understand how to do your homework?
28. Your teacher reprimands you when it was not your fault?
29. It’s raining outside and you cannot go out for recess

This activity can be useful in both understanding how events in the environment trigger emotional responses in the student as well as in others. Understanding emotions in others is a critical skill for students to develop emotional competence. It is important that teachers continually assist students in identifying emotions in others by helping them to notice differences in facial expression, body language, tone of voice, and situational context. Helping children identify emotions in others also promotes empathy, which improves social problem-solving. During this activity, students can also identify how they might help another person in the same situation.

**ACTIVITY**
In small groups, allow students to role-play using this activity.

**REFERENCES**

BLOCK 3: EMOTION REGULATION STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS

LESSON 1. Understanding Teachers’ Emotional Responses

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to assist teachers in drawing awareness to their own emotional experiences.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:
1. Identify the importance of emotional experiences
2. Identify the importance of tolerating negative emotions
3. Increase their ability to reflect on and process emotional experiences

MATERIALS

None

LECTURE

Teaching is a very emotional endeavor, and to prevent burnout and stress teachers must possess a significant amount of emotional competence. Without awareness of your emotional experiences, it will be difficult to effectively regulate your emotions in the classroom. Emotional competence is also necessary to truly understand the emotional experiences of your students and assist them with emotion regulation.

It is important to be guided by our emotions, but not be overcome by them. Emotions do not have to be disruptive, and they are not something to be feared or avoided. Once accepted, emotions can provide us with a great deal of information. In order to get to the stage of being able to process emotions you first need to be able to identify them and stay with them long enough to understand and make sense of them. When you experience an emotion, it is important to draw your attention to your emotional experience, reflect on what you are experiencing, and identify this experience using language. Language helps to make sense of emotional experiences.

Why is this important? What happens to emotions when we do not acknowledge them or try to push them away?

Staying with the emotion means you allow yourself to feel the emotion and don’t try to push it away. To do this, notice and draw your attention to the different sensations that occur in your body. Pay attention to where you experience the sensation (head, stomach, chest, throat), and what it feels like (burning, empty, throbbing, warm, hollow). Notice any thoughts you might be having and if the thoughts give you information about your emotions. Also notice any desire to avoid, suppress, or move away from these feelings. Although the experience of the emotion may be uncomfortable and difficult, remember that the emotion will not last forever. It may be
helpful to take deep breaths to help you stay with the emotion. Instead of pushing the emotion away, try to tolerate the emotion and reflect on what it is telling you. Once you understand what the emotion is telling you it opens up the potential to act on it appropriately and let the emotion guide you towards an adaptive response.

To understand your emotion, the following questions might be helpful: Is there a need that has been unmet such as for love, understanding, or respect? Have you been treated unfairly? Is this emotion triggered by something that occurred in the past? Is the emotion a response to a stressful event? Did I lose something or was I rejected or disapproved of? Was I threatened in some way? Are my emotions the result of distorted or negative thinking?

Sometimes it is enough to experience the emotion, understand why you are experiencing it, and allow it to pass. At other times you may need to do something more such as to talk with someone about your emotions, try to change your thinking, or determine how to get your needs met.

**ACTIVITY**
Listen to the following scenarios and think about 1) what emotion(s) the person is feeling, 2) what clues help you to identify the emotion, 3) what the emotion might be telling the person, and 4) what the person might do with the emotion.

**Scenario 1:** For the past week Gloria has felt tired and has had little energy. A good friend calls and invites her to dinner, but Gloria declines stating she has no appetite and thinks to herself that going out would not be enjoyable. When she gets off the phone she notices a hollow, achy feeling in her chest and tears begin to stream down her face as she thinks about not being accepted into the school she was hoping to attend.

- **How do you think Gloria is feeling?**
- **How do you know (i.e. what clues helped you to identify the emotion)?**
- **What might her emotion be telling her?**
- **How is this information helpful?**

**Scenario 2:** Bill is walking across campus when he receives a notification on his phone that a recent test grade has been posted online. He logs into his account hoping for an A, but finds that he received a C-. His breathing becomes fast, his fists clench, and he feels the urge to kick something.

- **How do you think Bill is feeling?**
- **How do you know (i.e. what clues helped you to identify the emotion)?**
- **What might his emotion be telling him?**
- **How is this information helpful?**

**Scenario 3:** For the past few days Tom has had difficulty sleeping and finds himself restless and unable to concentrate. He begins thinking about the argument he had with his girlfriend two days ago and has not spoken to her since the argument. He notices tightness in his stomach and his palms begin to perspire.

- **How do you think Tom is feeling?**
- **How do you know (i.e. what clues helped you to identify the emotion)?**
What might his emotion be telling him?
How is this information helpful?

It is particularly important that teachers are aware of their experience and expression of anger in the classroom.

DISCUSSION
Think about your classroom experiences as a student. Do you remember your teacher feeling angry? What are situations that caused the teacher to feel angry? How did the teacher’s anger impact you (i.e. how did you feel when the teacher was angry)?

LECTURE
Anger in the Classroom
Teachers often become angry when students do not appear to be putting forth enough effort or have difficulty understanding concepts (i.e. when they are unprepared, do not participate, do not pay attention, do not complete homework assignments, ask “dumb” questions, do not know the answer when called on, etc.), or when students misbehave (i.e. talking during instruction, getting out of his/her seat, making jokes, not completing class assignments, calling out, etc.). At other times teachers may be angry or preoccupied about something that is not school related, and their mood is carried into the school setting.

When students misbehave, have difficulty learning, or do not put forth enough effort, it inhibits the teacher’s ability to meet the goal of teaching students so they can learn. When something gets in the way of meeting a goal, what emotion is elicited (anger)? It is not surprising that anger and frustration are emotions commonly experienced by teachers in the classroom.

Display rules dictate that teachers should not show anger because it is viewed as unprofessional; therefore, teachers are encouraged to hide or suppress feelings of anger. While this is helpful in the short-term because it limits the negative impact anger has on student learning, suppressing or hiding anger does not actually decrease the experience of the anger. Eventually you must process what caused you to feel angry.

What does it mean for the teacher when students are exhibiting the behaviors that make the teacher frustrated or angry (elicit responses that will likely blame the students or the teacher)?

Except in the situation where the teacher felt angry before entering the classroom, all other situations are a threat to what the teacher is trying to accomplish, and a threat to the teacher’s sense of being a good teacher. Recall that anger is a result of not being able to reach a goal. In these cases, the students are not only posing a roadblock to meeting learning goals, they are posing a direct threat to the teacher’s ability to be a good teacher.
LESSON 2. Teacher Regulation of Emotion

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to assist teachers in learning strategies to effectively regulate their emotions in the classroom.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:
1. Reflect on their beliefs regarding the malleability of emotions
2. Identify specific scenarios that elicit anger and frustration in teachers
3. Identify strategies to regulate emotions

MATERIALS

None

LECTURE

As we have discussed previously, teaching is a demanding profession that can be quite stressful and create intense emotions in the teacher. Not only must teachers be able to assist students in regulating student emotions, they must also have the ability to regulate their own emotions. It is particularly important that teachers regulate anger since child exposure to adult anger has many negative consequences. Further, becoming frustrated with students also creates a cycle where the student may become more resistant and cause the teacher to feel more frustrated.

The ability to regulate your emotions not only increases the effectiveness of your teaching, it also has the potential of making your teaching experience more pleasant, enjoyable, and rewarding; however, in order to effectively regulate your emotions you must have an underlying belief that emotion regulation in the classroom is important. Additionally, the type of regulation you choose will depend on whether or not you believe emotions can be changed.

DISCUSSION

Do you think emotion regulation in the classroom is important? Do you believe you have the power to change your emotional response?

The focus of most therapies is on changing emotional responses, and in fact, there is much evidence demonstrating you have much control over your emotional responses.

LECTURE

There are two categories of emotion regulation strategies teachers can implement: responsive and preventive strategies.

Responsive Strategies

Responsive strategies occur “in the moment” when you are already experiencing an emotion. Responsive strategies are particularly helpful in decreasing the experience of anger.
ACTIVITY
Deep breathing is a very effective responsive strategy that can be used in the classroom to decrease negative emotions. By breathing deep into your diaphragm you decrease feelings of anxiety and frustration. This technique is particularly effective because it can be used anytime. Guide students through the basic steps of deep breathing:

1. Sit or stand with good posture.
2. Breathe in slowly through your nose (about four seconds).
3. As you inhale take the breath into your lower belly.
4. Hold your breath for a few seconds.
5. Exhale slowly through your mouth (about four seconds).

It’s important to practice deep breathing in situations when you are not experiencing negative emotions in order to master this skill and increase your ability to apply it in more challenging situations.

LECTURE
Suppression is another commonly used responsive strategy. While suppression may decrease the amount of anger you show to students, it requires a great deal of energy and also does not take away the emotional experience of the anger. In other words, you will continue to feel angry, but it will be less apparent to students. While this is helpful in the short-term because it limits the negative impact anger has on student learning, suppressing or hiding anger will not “get rid of” the anger. Eventually you must process what caused you to feel angry.

In some instances it might be reasonable to share with students that you are not having a good day. Students experience bad days and difficult moments too, and they are likely to understand this. Sharing your feelings also models emotional expression to students.

Preventive Strategies
Recall that preventative strategies are those that are intended to alter circumstances so that a specific emotion is not triggered. Diverting your attention, selecting and modifying situations so they promote or avoid particular emotions, and changes your thoughts are all preventative strategies that can be used in the classroom.

Attention Deployment
Attention deployment is a strategy used to divert attention away so that a particular emotion is not triggered. If a student is displaying minor misbehavior it is okay to intentionally ignore it and give attention to students displaying positive behaviors. Behaviors we give attention to are reinforced, and if minor misbehavior can be ignored it is less likely to use up mental and emotional energy. Additionally, if you anticipate a student’s behavior may cause you to be frustrated, it may be okay to physically withdraw and move to another area of the classroom for a short time.

ACTIVITY
Provide the following scenario and two options for responding:
Sally continually calls out while several other students raise their hands.
Option one: Say, “Sally, you need to raise your hand.” Then call on a student whose hand is raised.

Option two: Ignore Sally and say, “Billy, I really like how you’re raising your hand and waiting to be called on. What would you like to say?”

*Which option would you choose? What are the benefits of using the second option?* (Assist students in understanding that by using the second option the teacher gives less attention to the negative behavior and thus is less likely to feel frustrated. Additionally, ignoring Sally’s negative behavior and attending to Billy’s positive behavior reinforces Billy’s positive behavior and teaches Sally the desired behavior.)

**LECTURE**

**Situation Selection**

In the classroom, situation selection involves taking time to select or create situations that are likely to give rise to positive emotions and less likely to elicit negative emotions. For example, when creating the seating arrangement the teacher might separate two best friends from sitting next to each other because she knows when the students talk during class it will cause her to become irritated.

Getting to school early to avoid feeling rushed, and planning lessons to occur when you will feel most up to them are also ways to employ situation selection. For example, you may know that by Friday you are feeling tired and may have less patience, so planning to review material through fun games and activities might be a better option than to plan to introduce a new learning unit. Or, if you find that students have more difficulty concentrating on math in the afternoon, structure the day so that you teach math in the morning. Avoid frustrating activities or activities that require a high level of energy when you are experiencing a high level of negative emotions (i.e., it might not be the best day for papier-mâché when you are tired, worn out, and feeling feverish). It is also very important that teachers spend time adequately preparing their lesson plans. Teachers are more likely to have positive teaching experiences and minimize negative emotions when they come to class prepared with well thought out lessons.

*How do you think good lesson plan preparation promotes emotion regulation?*

**Situation Modification**

Recall that situation modification involves making changes to the environment so desired emotions are elicited. There are times when even the best-planned lesson does not go as anticipated, and you may find yourself feeling frustrated and upset. In these situations it is good to have a back-up plan to modify the situation. A good idea might be to assign something students can work on independently at their desks while you take time to recover. Changing the environment by turning music on or dimming the lights can also impact both your mood and the mood of your students. Allowing students to take a break can also serve to regulate both teacher and student emotions. Movement breaks can either relax or energize students, and can include light stretching or yoga poses. Suggestions for other types of breaks include allowing students to talk with each other for two minutes, going for a short walk, playing a whole-class game, or engaging the class in guided imagery.)
**Cognitive Change**
Cognitive change involves changing your thoughts about the situation or changing your thoughts about your ability to manage the situation. By changing your thoughts about the situation you change what the situation means to you. This leads to a different emotional response. Viewing the situation differently can potentially cause less stress.

**ACTIVITY**
In the following situations, think of self-talk that would lead to negative emotions; then, try to reappraise the situation and think of calming self-talk that would lead to a different emotional response.

*Situation 1:* Sally has not turned in her homework for the past two weeks.

*Situation 2:* Johnny daydreams during class, does not pay attention to lessons, and does not complete his class work.

*Situation 3:* Other students repeatedly complain that Gloria engages in name-calling and cheats during games.

**LECTURE**
One important reappraisal tactic is to remind yourself that you are working with children for whom school is not always a pleasant experience due to difficulties learning, controlling their behaviors, and getting along with other students. Additionally, just as teachers do, students carry in problems from home: they may be witness to familial discord, may have sick family members, or may struggle with poverty.

When making reappraisals it is very helpful to consider why a student might be responding in a particular way and wonder about what may be contributing to their behaviors.

**General Strategies**
Teaching is an emotionally demanding profession, and it is important to keep a general level of calm to avoid stress and burnout. Outside school, make sure to engage in general self-care by eating healthy foods, exercising, spending time engaging in enjoyable activities that are restorative and rejuvenating, and practicing mindfulness.

Things happen in life: your car breaks down, you have an argument with a significant other, or your pet becomes ill. Although difficult at times, it is important not to bring emotional stress into the classroom. Engage in emotion regulation strategies before entering school. Suggestions include talking to a colleague or friend, taking deep breaths, visualization, and using calming self-talk.

After a challenging day seek social support by connecting with peers, family, and friends to decrease the experience of negative emotions. Support from others creates positive emotions. Taking time to write or journal about stressful emotional experiences is also a very helpful way to understand and process emotional experiences.
ACTIVITY

Provide students with the following scenarios:

*Sally is often late to school and rarely completes her homework. During whole class reading instruction you call on Sally to read and she is on the wrong page and has not been following along. After reading you provide instructions for students to independently complete an activity. As you are giving instructions Sally gets up to sharpen her pencil and dawdles on her way back to her seat. When she returns to her seat Sally begins writing a note to a friend. You remind Sally to start working and she says she does not know what to do.*

*Despite multiple reminders to raise his hand, Johnny repeatedly calls out during lessons. When he is not calling out he is talking to other students, playing with his supplies, and making noises by tapping his feet and drumming his pencils on his desk.*

After each scenario, discuss the emotions each student might trigger in the teacher, reflect on why these emotions are triggered, and generate emotion regulation strategies the teacher can use to regulate his/her own emotional response.

LECTURE

Your reactions in the classroom impact student leaning and shape the classroom environment. Emotions are contagious. When you feel happy and have a positive attitude, it is likely that your students will feel happy and think more positively as well. When students feel happy, they perform better in the classroom. In a cyclical manner, student happiness and enjoyment will also improve the teacher’s mood. Incorporating humor while teaching increases the experience of positive emotions. Humor is an excellent way to boost mood and create a positive learning environment. Try not to take misbehavior personally, and remind yourself that student misbehavior is often indicative of deficits in the student’s ability to self-regulate and problem-solve. If you do show anger to students, an apology can go a long way. This models appropriate social skills, and lets students know that when they make a mistake they can recover from it. Most importantly, have empathy for both your own emotional responses and the emotional responses of your students.

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