

Shifting School's Climate to Enhance Emotional Intelligence for
21st Century Learners.
Case-Study #WeCare

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ABSTRACT

Shifting School's Climate to Enhance Emotional Intelligence for 21st Century Learners. Case-Study #WeCare

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In the present case study, a SEL initiative entitled the #WeCare approach was designed and implemented over a two-year time span within EM Elementary School. Through the support of school administration, the #WeCare approach provided staff training, curriculum modifications, construction of a multisensory environment room, as well as online interactive digital support tools to help teachers and support staff integrate SEL skills within their classrooms. A total of 23 teachers and support staff participated in initial training sessions, while 11 participants completed online surveys reporting on the results, including 3 participants who agreed to be interviewed in depth about their experiences. Results of surveys and interviews were analyzed and coded into four main themes including: the need for a proactive school climate, pedagogy using the RULER approach (Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing and Regulating emotions), Behaviour Management for the Digital Child, and Self-Regulation Strategies using the Harmony Room. Findings state that there was a positive climate change, where teachers created a safe and supportive environment for students. There need for further training was discussed by participants and that the teachers were motivated to implement the changes recommended. Potential limitations of the present study are discussed, and avenues for future research are highlighted with the focus of parental involvement in the #WeCare approach.

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Dedication

To my parents Dorothy and Giacomo for expecting me to be great.

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I am who I am because you helped me be the best me.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

Emotional intelligence is being aware that emotions can drive our behaviour, impact people (positively and negatively), and learning how to manage those emotions – both our own and others with – especially when we are under pressure (Golman, 1990). Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is a concept embraced by educators, in the form of educational programs. SEL is the process through which we learn to recognize and manage emotions, care about others, make good decisions, behave ethically and responsibly, develop positive relationships, and avoid negative behaviours (Elias et al., 1997). The World Economic Forum (2016) states that policy-makers, educators, parents, businesses, researchers, technology developers, investors need to come together to ensure that development of social and emotional skills becomes a shared goal and competency of education systems everywhere so that school climate change can happen (Soffel).

There is an inconsistency between the stated educational goals espoused by the Montreal Anglophone school system, and current research. Although the Québec Education Program (QEP) (2001) highlights the importance of social emotional competencies, in the preschool curriculum, it fails to further its development in elementary and high school. Cohen (2006) highlighted that parents and teachers expect schools to support students' ability to become lifelong learners who are able to love, work, and act as responsible members of the community. The limitations in the educational system is that it does not assist in the development of social-emotional competencies for the 21st century learners (Turculet & Turbure, 2014), hence are not being successful at enhancing these competencies when reflecting to current research. Children need to learn and practice social-emotional skills in order to build lifelong emotional intelligence (Elias et al., 1997). According to the English Montreal School Board, many schools in the EMSB lack SEL integration into the school curriculum and/or into their teaching pedagogy (EMSB, 2016). The QEP (2001) states that “emotional competencies are established as early as preschool, and that these skills are developed through helping children develop self-knowledge, and through building self-esteem” (p. 33). School settings lack appropriate means of teaching Social Emotional Learning skills (SEL) to students (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011).

The following thesis brings forward details from a case study on how elementary school teachers and staff members help build students SEL skills by implementing climate change within the school. As Ryan, Kuhl and Deci (1997) highlight the importance of “creating a supportive responsive learning environment, where there is room for self-initiations in the context of a secure connection to others within the different domains of life” (p. 715). SEL must occur at an optimally challenging pace, relative to developmental capacities, if it is to be internalized in a way that facilitates relative autonomy and a sense of social competency (Ryan, Kuhl & Deci, 1997). Children learn a variety of strategies to view themselves as unique individuals and take pleasure in activities that allow them to experience autonomy (Kolb, 2014). When people develop autonomy, they are in touch with their true needs and are able to act in accordance with them (Ryan, Kuhl & Deci, 1997). With consideration to childhood social developmental pathways, there is need to “balance between how children are expressing their individuality, with society’s need to have children regulate their expression” (Posner & Rothbart, 2000, p. 438). Within the context of balance, children should be able to express themselves freely in an environment that fosters a safe and open space. It is currently debatable to state that children may not be encouraged to express themselves because the teachers and staff members do not have the strategies to properly facilitate this.

Social emotional learning programs in elementary schools have been found to improve the students' social and emotional skills, positive social behaviours and academic performance, and decrease conduct problems and emotional distress (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). In order for this to occur, “social emotional learning needs to be implemented into the mindset of the schools” (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2007, p. 200). Designing and implementing a consistent social emotional learning program must be a collaborative process, which involves administrators, teachers, parents, staff members and students.

Social and emotional education involves teaching children to be self-aware, socially cognizant, able to make responsible decisions, and competent in self-management and relationship-management skills so as to foster their academic success (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2007). Cohen (2006) summarizes “social-emotional competencies and ethical dispositions provide an essential foundation for lifelong learners who are able to love and work” (p. 202) (as cited in, Cohen, 2006; Elias et al., 1997; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). Education needs to be restructured to focus not only on academic learning, but also social,

emotional, and ethical competencies so that children could have a holistic approach to learning (Cohen, 2006). Doing so will help prepare children to become well-rounded adults that will be profitable towards “maintaining concentration, speaking of himself/herself positively (“I can...”), finding ways to overcome difficulties and resolve conflicts, controlling his/her impulses, paying attention and managing stress.” (QEP, 2001, p. 66).

The lack of SEL within teachers’ pedagogy in Montreal schools has become evident when compared to current research. SEL competencies are reflective to 21st century learning skills. For example, Saavedra & Opfer (2012) mention that 21st century learning requires 21st century teaching. This program referred nine lessons to ways to develop higher-order thinking skills, deeper learning outcomes, complex thinking and communication skills. These lessons are known as the following: make it relevant, teach through the disciplines, develop thinking skills, encourage learning transfer, teach students how to learn, address misunderstandings directly, treat teamwork like an outcome, exploit technology to support learning, and foster creativity (Saavedra & Opfer, 2012). When 21st century skills are taught, developing SEL competencies is achieved.

This case study responds to this problem by suggesting a program called #WeCare, which provides tools, curriculum and support to integrate social emotional learning in schools. #WeCare is a program providing a design that helps teachers have the skills to successfully incorporate social emotional learning skills within their pedagogy using digital media. The approach proposed to implement change uses a combination of methods and theories such as the Ruler Approach from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. It also includes other influences such as the Collaborative Problem Solving approach from Think: Kids, which is a program in the Department of Psychiatry at the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), and MindUp from the Hawn foundation. #WeCare uses the four pillars to self-regulation within an interactive sensory room build specifically to help children learn how to self-regulate their emotions autonomously. The #WeCare approach suggests focusing on the five elements of social emotional learning skills to help 21st century learners, and build emotional intelligence with a great focus on self-regulation different strategies which some involve digital media.

1.2 Problem statement

Schools in Montreal (Quebec) generally lack an understanding of how Social Emotional Learning programs work and what factors influence the success for 21st century learners.

1.3 Research questions

1. How does school climate impact social emotional learning?
2. To what extent does SEL programs such as RULER approach influence a teacher's experience with social emotional learning?
3. How can a behavior management protocol increase problem-solving strategies within the school?
4. What factors related to the Harmony room help the students learn self-regulation skills according to their teacher?

1.4 Significance of the study

The research project involved implementing an educational school climate which could help teachers and front-line workers to support students' social emotional growth and build emotional intelligence catering to 21st century learners' unique needs, which included promoting self-regulation skills.

Brown (1992) argued that “research in learning should be undertaken in real classrooms with real students and real teachers who are provided with technology and professional learning support” (p. 152). This study will contribute to the field of education by describing a solution-focused approach within a school. This study will contribute to the field of education by describing a solution-focused approach within a school by helping identify teachers and staff members (special education workers, child-care workers) who would benefit/need to learn skills in order to support the children's emotional growth within a 21st century learning environment that involves technology. Suggestions are offered to teachers interested in adopting new methods for social emotional learning. This research encourages the teachers to critically reflect on SEL and have an opportunity to accumulate evidence by active listening, resulting in constructive communication with others in order to improve a situation and to bring about positive change (Chevalier & Buckles, 2003).

As Brackett, Rivers, Reyes and Salovey (2012) state, emotions matter! They affect one's ability to learn, solve problems and make decisions. By learning about emotional intelligence, through the #WeCare program, the teachers acquire the tools they need to incorporate social emotional learning into their curriculum. The teachers and staff members will be trained in an approach that they can keep implementing. One of the main goals of this research project is to expand this project and apply it to other schools and learning environments. The most important

reason for implementing this research project is to help 21st century learners learn social emotional skills. Doing so can increase emotional intelligence in students and have them feel safe and cared for at school. Children will have the skills to express their emotions, label their feelings and self-regulate their emotions. The climate of the school may change, children and teachers will bring their learning to their home life and help build a better emotionally regulated environment in a holistic matter by incorporating home, school and community.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Emotional intelligence is a term defined by Salovey and Mayer (1990) as a set of skills, and the use of feelings to motivate, plan, and achieve in one's life. Current research suggests that pedagogy needs to adapt to students in order to teach essential skills that students require to succeed in the 21st century (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor & Schellinger, 2011). Addressing these skills appropriately according to these new learners' developmental stages and with respect to their emotional self-regulation capacities is particularly important (Webbs, Miles & Sheeran, 2012). This chapter offers an extensive literature review which grounds social emotional learning within school settings that is reflective of 21st century learners.

The review begins by explaining the meaning of school climate change, then exploring 21st century learners, and digital technology and media. Next, it describes SEL programs being currently used in schools. The literature review concluded with describing the emphasis is placed on social emotional learning in regards to behaviour management and developmental components associated to a self-regulation framework.

2.1 School Climate Change

School climate is described as the atmosphere, culture, resources, and network of the school (Loukas & Murphy, 2007). School climate involves three dimensions: the relationship between the members of the organization, the personal development of the members, and the maintenance of change of the organization (Moos, 1979). In other words, climate change involves policy makers facilitating implementation and practice of the change (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). Generally, policy makers believe that the development of social-emotional skills is important for success in academic and life outcomes (Hough, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2017). Due to this growing understanding that schools can contribute to students' social-emotional development (Hough, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2017), policy makers are using social-emotional learning, and school culture and climate as measurable variables in conducting studies to analyze school performance (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011).

There is a growing awareness of SEL and emotional intelligence within the schools (Durlak, Domitrich, Weissberg, & Gullott, 2015). 21st century learners are in need of a flexible environment that prepares them for a learning culture that is active and productive (Rochelle, 2008). Emphasis needs to be placed on learning how to solve real world problems, critical

thinking and play a great role in managing and evaluating their learning (Linn & His, 2000). Lifelong learning experiences through formal and informal learning opportunities help build moments to learn SEL by having teachable moments (Scott, 2015). The #WeCare program presents how implementation to a SEL for 21st century learners.

2.2 21st century learners

The term 21st century learners is used widely within the educational system. 21st century learners are students that are highly relational and demand quick access to new knowledge (Betts, Kapushion & Carey, 2016). The gap between the skills people learn and the skills people need in the 21st century is becoming more apparent (Betts, Kapushion & Carey, 2016). According to the World Economic Forum report, 21st century skills are the combination of fundamental literacies tasks, competencies and character qualities (Soffel, 2016). The following will describe the term skills by breaking down terminologies: tasks, competencies and qualities. Soffel's (2016) study described the following:

“Fundamental literacies are how parents apply core skills to everyday tasks literacies, numeracy, scientific literacy, ICT literacy, financial literacy, cultural and civil literacy. In order to obtain 21st century skills, learners need to have the competencies to approach complex challenges. These competencies include critical thinking / problem solving, creativity, communication and collaboration. 21st century students also need to learn character qualities to know how to best approach their changing environments through curiosity, initiative, persistence, adaptability, leadership and social and cultural awareness.” (p. 2)

Creativity is considered one of the 21st century skills that educators need to foster in students (Rosefsky & Opfer, 2012). There is a decline over time in creative thinking (Kim, 2011). Numerous studies were conducted describing the rationale to the decline in creative thinking. Kim (2011) conducted studies for forty years using the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT). The total sample for all six normative samples included 272,599 students and adults, from kindergarten through 12th grade. Analysis of the normative data showed that creative thinking scores remained static or decreased starting in 6th grade and since 1990, even as IQ scores have risen, creative thinking scores have significantly decreased for kindergartners through third graders (Kim, 2011). Yet, a study conducted at Yale University by Hoffmann, Ivcevic, & Brackett (2016) identified that the way in which research measures creativity in

adolescents does not take into account digital creativity, thus does not cater to 21st century learners due to the great use of technology within the pedagogy. Robinson and Aronica (2016) believe that creativity is strongly associated to critical thinking and personalizing learning. Schools need to create moments of innovation and learning instances where the students are encouraged to create, problem solve and think out of the box. At the same time, schools need to adopt an intrinsic motivating approach. The learners are driven by a sense of autonomy, by having the opportunity and the desire to master a skill and by having a higher purpose (Pink, 2011). It is time for schools to apply ways that foster readiness within the learning dimension using a student-centered approach to foster collaborative learning (Sheldon & Bettencourt, 2002). With the world literally at their fingertips, today's students need teachers and administrators to re-envision the role of technology in the classroom.

Supporting 21st century learners. Teachers need to support learners develop essential skills for the 21st century learning. Given that the way children process information is evolving within the 21st century due to the influence of pervasive technology (Trilling & Fedal, 2009), the methods of teaching social emotional learning must adapt as well. As Bavelier, Green, & Dye (2010) state, there is no single effect of eating food there is also no single effect of watching television or playing video games. While computers and digital technology play a role in developing 21st century learning skills, these, more importantly, are critically involved in developing the ability to engage in independent critical thinking skills and problem solving (Trilling & Fadel, 2009; Kivunja, 2014).

Gijsbers and van Schoonhoven (2012), define a learning model called the transmission model as the way in which teachers function as depositors of information and students, as receptors. Gijsbers and van Schoonhoven (2012) explain the transmission model can no longer serve 21st century learners. The transmission model has similarities to the banking model created by Freire in 1970, which describes, “[k]nowledge emerges only through invention and reinvention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (p. 24). It is evident that there is a need for a new pedagogy with the emphasis to shift to developing pedagogical media that provide many alternative ways of teaching, which learners select as they engage in their educational experiences. This can be based on active participation and learning through authentic real-world contexts that encourages the development of problem-solving, critical thinking and

communication skills (Scott, 2015). These skills are indispensable in the complex environment of the 21st century and have a great need to be taught in schools in order to be acquired. In this endeavour, technology can be a tool as it provides learners with the opportunity to problem solve in different contexts (such as schools), to practice appropriate responses, and to collaborate with their peers (Saavedra & Opfer, 2012).

In order to reflect the ways in which children have changed as well as to better equip staff members to help children be well rounded (Scott, 2015) involves adopting 21st century pedagogy requiring teachers to rethink their reasoning about *what* they teach and *why*, and to rethink *who they are* as teachers (Scott, 2015). A growing body of research from (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008) that reviews spans of students from Kindergarten to high school, college and graduate school from all programs of study. Research shows that “deeper learning takes place when learners can apply classroom-gathered knowledge to real-world problems and take part in projects that require sustained engagement and collaboration” (p. 3). Active and collaborative learning practices have a more significant impact on student performance than any other variable, including student background and prior achievement (p. 8). Furthermore, “learners are most successful when they are taught *how* to learn as well as *what* to learn” (Barron & Darling-Hammond 2008, p. 3).

In other words, implement SEL skills within their pedagogy and identify how they, as teachers, express those skills to students. Teachers and administration need to think critically about how to seamlessly implement social emotional learning within pedagogy with the help of technological tools and be reflective thinkers (Ee, 2009). This includes to practice critical thinking for themselves as teacher, through reflective practice. Shön (1983) focuses on reflective practice; the basic idea that through reflection-in-action; which responds to the belief that “our knowing is in our action” (p. 49), so that we can gain verifiable insight into our thought processes (Shön, 1983). Reflective practice as the practice by which professionals become aware of their implicit knowledge from their experience. Reflection-in-action, “doing and thinking are complementary” (Shön, 1983). Finlay (2008), where the difficulty in reflection is noted especially for busy teachers that are short on time. Applying reflective practice is difficult without falling in bland, mechanical, unthinking ways because it is expected. A final critique to teachers’ reflection is Ryan, Kuhl and Deci (1997) with a view on autonomy as it entails endorsement of one’s actions at the highest order of reflection. By teachers being able to retrieve

their information on their own with regards to implicating social emotional learning within their practice, they can then reflect on their process with ease.

21st century learner's skills are derived from the influences of technology and digital media (Clarke, Dede & Dieterle, 2008). When critiquing the skills, tasks and qualities of 21st century learners, technology and digital media influences must be considered. It is fair to state that education in the 21st century has to be different from the past, because technology and digital media have influences on the students of today (Roschelle & Singleton, 2008).

2.3 Technology and Digital Media use

Digital media has become part of our daily lives, both personal and professional. The integration of a well-balanced technology curriculum should be encouraged in school settings as suggested by Tapscott (1998). (Plass, Heidig, Hayward, Homer, & Um, 2014) state that interactive digital media is one of many tools to be used for enhancing social emotional learning skills. Velez (2012) explains how preparing students to learn to think critically and build social emotional intelligence as a 21st century learners is a topic that can be further explored. Today, nine out of ten youths use some form of social or other digital communication media to transmit information (Common Sense Media, 2012).

According to a survey conducted by Statistics Canada (2012), 83% of Canadian households have access to the Internet at home, which represents a 4% increase since 2010; it is likely that communication styles and their processes—and subsequently SEL skills as well—may be affected by increased access to internet infrastructure (Tapscott, 1998). In Montreal and Quebec, it is observed that babies from two years of age and younger are learning to interact with the assistance of technological devices such as smart phones and tablets. Educational best practices have been trying to evolve in tandem with the development of digital platforms, so as to continue to meet modern students' needs (Orr, 2006). However, technology adoption within informal learning environments in a school setting can be affected by a variety of factors, including the motivation of educators to establish these tools in the first place, and the availability of volunteers (Straub, 2009). By integrating new learning tools to address the changing needs of students, SEL program delivery formats must continue to evolve as well (Er, 2009).

Digital technologies are primary mediators of human-to-human communication (Palfrey & Gasser, 2011). These forms of communication are changing human relationships in

fundamental ways and the majority of children are using technology at increasingly early ages; a survey by Media Smarts (2014) found that “99% of students were able to access the Internet outside of school, and that the majority of these students (62%) used portable devices (laptops, smart phones) to do so” (p. 8). Technology has become ubiquitous in both work and play across the lifespan, and in most countries, technology supports learning in the classroom, as well as being widely applied within work place settings (Media Smarts, 2014 & Kleiman, 2004).

Current generations of young children are now widely being described as ‘digital natives’ and ‘21st century learners’, that is, children who have been born into an ever-changing digital media environment from birth (Negroponte, 1995 & Tapscott, 1998). Adopting the term ‘digital natives,’ Marc Prensky (2001) theorized that “growing up in a world mediated by digital technologies alters the way in which youth undertake cognitive and information processing” (p. 3). The digital natives of today represent the first generation to grow up surrounded by information and communications technology (Tapscott, 2008). These digital natives of computers, video games, and the Internet, have been shown to be active, experiential learners, and natural multitaskers, and are adept at using a range of digital devices and platforms simultaneously to drive their own informal learning agendas (Prensky, 2001 & Prensky, 2010). This does not mean that these digital natives can automatically become digital specialists that can multitask, naturally collaborate, be creative and be interactive. They need to be taught to do so (Buckingham & Willett, 2006; Bennet, Maton & Kervin 2008; Bennet & Maton, 2010).

Age is not the only characteristic defining the current generation of digital natives; experience using technology and breadth of use are equally important factors. While not all young people will have equal access to technology or be equally skilled in critically assessing information, teachers who make extensive use of technology may be able to communicate more effectively overall with their students, since they will be ‘speaking the same language’ (Helsper & Enyon, 2010). However, it is important not to over generalize since this runs the risk of overlooking socioeconomic and cultural factors which might leave out those students who are less interested in technology or who are less able to access it (Bennett, Maton & Kervin, 2008). To summarize, the “digital divide can prevent children from fulfilling their potential, and digital connectivity is the new necessity of our times” (Unicef, 2017, p. 16) meaning that facilitating connectivity through educational learning environments might help create equal opportunities for students to develop these skills.

In contrast, youth with access to technology is more socially connected than ever before, and effortlessly share new online content amongst their peers (Shaw Rocket Fund, 2014). Use of online social networking sites by teenagers has increased from 55% in 2006 to 80% in 2011 (Lenhart, 2012). Within a collaborative learning environment, interactive digital media can serve as a tool to facilitate productive exploratory learning which addresses the needs of the whole child; school-based programming should strive to improve the quality of the environments in which academic, social, and emotional learning occurs (Greenberg et al., 2003). In relation to what defines a "whole child" this must include how the present 21st century learners develop with reference to having a holistic approach to children; focusing on their cognitive and emotional development (Durlak, Domitrovich, Weissberg, Gullott, 2015).

2.4 Social Emotional Learning Framework

The following section highlights SEL and how it can help 21st century learners' emotional development. SEL is a pedagogical framework for developing 21st century competencies (Soffel, 2016), which is gaining interest within Canada and the United States (Cooper, 2013). SEL, as described by *The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning* (2013) is the process of "acquiring and effectively applying the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to recognize and manage emotions, developing caring and concern for others, making responsible decisions, establishing positive relationships, and handling challenging situations capably" (p. 5) (see table 1). Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor and Schellinger (2011) suggest that "SEL competencies, provides a foundation for better adjustment and academic performance as reflected in more positive social behaviours, fewer conduct problems, less emotional distress, and improved test scores and grades" (Greenberg et al., 2003, p. 406). A recent meta-analysis on social emotional learning programs suggests *that these* promote an increase in academic success, improved quality of relationships between teachers and students, and a decrease in problematic behaviors (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor & Schellinger, 2011). The meta-analysis study was conducted with 213 school-based, universal social and emotional learning (SEL) programs involving 270,034 kindergarten through high school students. The research stated that compared to controls, SEL participants demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behaviours, and academic performance that reflected an 11-percentile-point gain in achievement behaviors (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor & Schellinger, 2011).

Table 1
Social emotional learning competencies

Self-management:	The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thought and behaviors in different situations.
Social- awareness:	The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures.
Self-awareness:	The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotion's
Relationship skills:	The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups.
Responsible decision-making skills:	The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns and social norms.

Note: Social emotional learning competencies From Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

Social emotional learning programs need to cater to the 21st century learner and incorporate cognitive development, positive character education, digital literacy skills, and trauma-informed programs learning within its pedagogical framework (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor & Schellinger, 2011). According to (Durlak, 2015), there are 25 SEL programs currently being incorporated across Canada and the United States, meeting standards associated with the five social emotional learning competencies. Although there is extensive research on the importance of social emotional skills in learning, health, and well-being, there is little available documentation describing the specific skills, strategies, and programmatic features inside SEL-focused interventions and programs which serve to encourage those positive outcomes. Additional research is needed on how teach SEL, such as; “instruction in processing, integrating and selectively applying social and emotional skills ... in appropriate ways (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011, p.3), p. 3). Research by Jones et al. (2017) suggests that children learn best within a climate where they can view and model the skills expressed by adults, and where they have the chance to practice these skills.

2.5 Social emotional learning and developmental components

The way in which children internalize and externalize behavioural problems is a pertinent element in how children deal with everyday challenges and how they decide on how to self-regulate. SEL focuses on the development of the four abilities associated with emotional intelligence described by Mayer and Salovey (1997), namely perception of emotion, use of

emotion to facilitate thought, understanding of emotion, and the management of emotion. Self-regulation involves the engagement of executive processes to change (inhibit, delay, minimize, or amplify) prominent emotional responses and is an outgrowth of self-control, allowing for flexible adaptation to real-world demands (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Multiple factors help individuals develop self-regulation, including neurological factors (Kuhl, Quirin, & Koole, 2015), biological factors (Cicchetti & Tucker, 1994), environmental factors, cognitive factors and developmental factors (Vohs & Baumeist, 2016). This is important because it helps the child develop fully within the areas of his life.

Pro-Social Self-Regulation. Self-regulation and self-control have been used interchangeably. Kopps (1982) explain the distinction as involving a “difference in degree, not in kind” (p. 207). During the early years of development, self-control is thought to “develop ... at around 24 months of age and ... includ[es] the ability to behave according to a caregiver’s requests and to adhere to social expectations in the absence of external monitors” (as cited in Vohs & Baumeist, 2016, p. 278). Self-regulation, on the other hand, is developed at around 36 months, and “represents an internalization of self-control that allows for a degree of flexibility, allowing children to meet the changing demands of a dynamic context” (as cited in Vohs & Baumeist, 2016, p. 278). Within the research, self-regulation is the term that will be used to describe how students will learn 21st century skills to for life-long success.

Emotional regulation is a critical developmental skill that falls under the umbrella category of self-regulation; children have learned this skill once they are able to adjust their strong emotional reactions using appropriate strategies (Bridges, et al., 2004). A meta-analysis on the effectiveness of self-regulation strategies from a conceptual model of regulation suggests that the “most effective strategies for regulating strong feelings involve reappraising the emotional stimulus, taking perspective on the situation, and active distraction” (p. 799), suggesting that cognitive strategies are most effective in utilizing emotional self-regulation. Developmental and contextual emotional self-regulation strategies, on the other hand, fall into four types, as described by Stansbary & Man (1999):

Instrumental or trying to change the situation (e.g., bidding for caregiver attention), comforting or soothing oneself without changing the situation (e.g., thumb-sucking, nail biting, hair twirling), distraction or redirecting attention elsewhere (e.g., looking away), or cognitive, which is thought to be the most sophisticated and includes reframing the

situation in a positive light, bargaining, or compromising (p. 124).

Cole, Hall and Hajal (2008) found that emotional skills increase markedly across early childhood, and that typically developing children rarely show emotional deregulation by the time they have reached school age. With reference to the developmental component of social emotional learning and especially with regards to self-regulation, the concept of agency (the ability to act as a free agent) has occasionally prompted controversies (Ryan, Kuhl, & Deci, 1997). Researchers suggest that both internal challenges (such as willpower) and external challenges (such as parenting and socioeconomic conditions) can impair or assist in the development of social emotional skills (Ryan, Sheldon, Kasser, & Deci, 1996). These external challenges become increasingly common as children age into, and move through, the education system, yet there is a lack of research in this regard, since “there is more research on self-regulation and the performance of children before and early in preschool but less about self-regulation as children move through formal schooling” (McClelland et al., 2018, p. 291)

Pre-school children need to learn how to self-regulate externalized behavioral problems such as disobedience, impulsivity, and defiance which have been linked to higher levels of anger expression and rule violation (Cole, Hall, & Hajal, 2008). By first grade, most children’s capacity to regulate their emotions and actions has developed to the point where they are ready to handle the everyday frustrations and challenges they encounter at school (Blair & Razza, 2007). As stated by Cole, Bendezú, Ram et Chow (2017):

Most children are usually able to tolerate the difficulties of learning new material, to delay and inhibit selfish responses in order to get along with others, to comply with adult directions and prohibitions even if they conflict with their goals, and to control impulsive action even if frustrated or disappointed (p. 684).

Various models exist which seek to explain pro-social self-regulatory capacities for children of pre-school age; the Dyadic Emotion Regulation (FDER) developed by Stansbury and Zimmermann (1999) is one such model (see table 2).

Table 2
Emotion Regulation Codes and Categories for Children

<u>Self-Comforting</u>
1. Child seeks for comfort.
2. Child employs or requests transitional objects.
3. Child hugs or pats self or sucks thumb.
<u>Instrumental Regulation</u>
1. Child states or restates request.
2. Child contradicts mother's reasons.
3. Child gives reasons mother should grant request.
4. Child gets or does desire object or behavior.
<u>Cognitive Regulation</u>
1. Child asks for explanations or denied request.
2. Child bargains or compromises.
3. Child redefines situation.
<u>Distraction</u>
Child initiates or participates in alternative activities.

Note: Dyadic Emotion Regulation (FDER) and Self-regulation process.

The dyadic emotion regulation model helps children develop the positive proactive strategies that they will continue to utilize on a daily basis throughout their lives. Halfon and Forrest (2018) “explain ... that self-regulation is fundamental to successful accomplishment of adaptive developmental tasks at all stages of life” (p. 275).

Stress. There is an extensive amount of research which suggests that stress is one of the leading causes of poor overall development and that stress has an inhibitory influence on the healthy development of those areas of the brain responsible for self-regulation (Blair & Raver, 2012). Halfon and Forrest (2018) suggest that toxic stress, coupled with other cumulative risk factors, can significantly impair the development of self-regulation skills in children, because they have fewer opportunities to practice positive self-regulation. In the 21st century, children’s media and technology usage is widespread; Nikkelen, Valkenburg, Huizinga, and Bushman’s (2014) meta-analysis suggests a significant relationship between media usage and stress-related behaviors in children, but conclusive results are not available due to the paucity of research in this area. This is contradicting to previous research that states how technology is essential to learning for the 21st century (Plass, Heidig, Hayward, Homer, & Um, 2014) and (Velez, 2012).

2.6 Social Emotional Learning and 21st-century Learners

SEL programs are designed to help young people from early childhood and middle

school master age-appropriate social and/or emotional skills (Cooper, 2013). SEL programs tend to fall into three categories: violence prevention, mental health promotion, and character education (Cooper, 2013). Children who are emotionally distressed and are experiencing feelings of sadness, anxiety, or frustration are generally preoccupied, and have trouble both paying attention during educational activities and retaining what is taught in the classroom (Davis & Levine, 2013). As numerous researchers state, social and emotional lessons must be embedded in the educational process in order to be effective (Goleman, 2008; Brackett, Rivers, Reyes, & Salovey, 2012). Salovey and Mayer (1990) describe an emotionally intelligent person as "one who is able to discriminate between the negative and positive effects of emotions as well as to use emotional information to guide his or her thinking and behaviour" (p. 134). Positive emotions energize students and enhance learning. Schools are expected to play an important role in promoting the social emotional development of children and adolescents by preparing them societal expectations (Sklad, Diekstra, Ritter, Ben, & Gravestijn, 2012).

There are detrimental effects to excessive technology use (Rosen, Lim, Felt, Carrier, Cheever, Lara-Ruiz, & Rokkum, 2014). Research has highlighted that there is an association between excessive internet usage and individuals' inability to develop appropriate social skills needed to interact with others (Schimmenti, Passanisi, Gervasi, Manzella, & Famà, 2014). Children who are psychologically vulnerable are at increased risk of using interactive multimedia in problematic ways ((Schimmenti, Passanisi, Gervasi, Manzella, & Famà, 2014)). Furthermore, research emphasizes that individuals may experience psychological, social, or behavioural problems as a result of excessive internet usage (Caplan, 2010). The attitudes, behaviours, and relationships children form with technology can stem from parental support and modeling when technology use is part of their every day. Research is exploring the possible associations between parental attachment and maladaptive technology use (Kalmus, Blinka, & Olafsson, 2015). The self-regulation skills needed by school-aged children to self-monitor, control, and critically assess their internet usage behaviour can also be applied effectively towards remaining disciplined in the completion of school tasks (Caplan, 2010). A recent study suggests that preventative home and school-based interventions are needed for helping and encouraging children to identify adaptive coping strategies and specify factors leading to healthier internet usage (Lenhart, 2012). Maladaptive cognitions and excessive internet usage has also been shown to impact adolescents' socio-emotional well-being and academic performance (Chong, Chye,

Huan, & Ang, 2014). Social emotional skills can therefore be seen as assisting factors which may reduce the probability that students will engage in problem behaviours at school (Catalano, Hawkins, Berglund, Pollard, & Arthur, 2002).

2.7 Social emotional Learning and School Based Programs

Researchers at the Harvard Graduate School of Education created a practical resource on SEL programs for elementary schools (Jones et. al, 2017). Their research examined outcomes associated with different elements of the programs including cognitive regulation, emotional processing, and emotion/behavior regulation (Jones et. al, 2017). The researchers collected information from all 25 SEL programs and hoped to outline “the specific skills targeted, instructional methods used, ... [and] programmatic features offered by each program and is more explicitly designed to enable schools and OST organizations to look across programs and easily identify those that best align with their focus, needs, and goals” (Jones et al., 2017, p. 9). According to the report, *the RULER Method* and *Mindup* are two programs strongly catering to the 21st-century learners, and both programs were developed in association with the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning organization (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning organization, 2013). “*Mindup* respondents showed an 83% increase in cognitive regulation skills associated with attention control from pre to post intervention. While *the RULER approach* focused on emotional process 94%, focuses on emotion knowledge/expression 56%, and emotion/behaviour regulation 36%” (Jones et al., 2017, p. 153).

Mindup. The *Mindup* program also seeks to provide children of school age (Pre-K through Grade 12) with cognitive emotional tools to better manage their emotions and problem behaviours, to help reduce stress, to sharpen concentration, and to increase empathy and optimism (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). The program integrates SEL using concepts from the fields of neuroscience, and positive psychology to help students develop self-regulation, focus, and sustained attention, while also helping to reduce stress and anxiety (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). A longitudinal follow-up study is underway to summarize the long-term effects of the MindUp program (Maloney, Lawlor, Schonert-Reichl, & Whitehead, 2016).

Lawlor (2007) conducted a formative quasi-experimental evaluation of the MindUP curriculum to understand the development of the implementation of the program. Through teacher questionnaires, focus groups, student satisfaction surveys, and implementation lesson

tracking, Lawlor (2007) obtained qualitative and quantitative data to investigate feasibility, program integrity, and participant responsiveness of the program. Participants included nine teachers, one administrator, and 110 students from kindergarten to grade 6 across three sites. The results showed that all teachers rated the program positively using a Likert scale ($M = 4.5$). Students reported mid to high levels of enjoyment of the program, and teachers reported mid to high levels of student engagement for each lesson.

Three key findings that emerged from qualitative data that were considered in future revisions and implementation of the program:

“(1) Primary grade teachers identified a need for age-appropriate lesson plans for younger students. These comments supported the work to create a primary curriculum in the current iteration of the program. (2) Although teachers reported the manual as largely, “easy to use, well-organized and written,” 87.5 % of those teachers felt the training they received was not sufficient to feel comfortable to implement the program. Based on these findings, the protocol for teacher training was reformatted to include more time to learn about mindfulness, more information on particular techniques, and more time to practice and role-play to facilitate comfort level with the program. (3) Results indicated a need to improve the program’s ability to be embedded into existing required subject areas” (Maloney, Lawlor, Schonert-Reichl, & Whitehead, 2016 p. 318).

RULER approach. Researchers at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence have spent 15 years developing evidence-based approaches to teaching social and emotional learning across the developmental spectrum. RULER is the Center’s signature, whole-school approach to social-emotional learning that is grounded in emotional intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). RULER is an acronym that represents five skills: *recognizing* emotion in the self and others, *understanding* the causes and consequences of emotions, *labelling* emotions with a diverse and accurate vocabulary, *expressing* emotions constructively across contexts, and *regulating* emotions effectively. In another meta-analysis study, Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015) hypothesized that a social and emotional learning (SEL) program involving mindfulness and caring for others, designed for elementary school students, would enhance cognitive control, reduce stress, promote well-being and prosociality, and produce positive school outcomes. To test this hypothesis, 4 classes of combined 4th and 5th graders (N 99) were randomly assigned to receive the SEL with mindfulness program versus a regular social responsibility program. Measures assessed

executive functions, stress physiology via salivary cortisol, well-being, prosociality and peer acceptance (peer reports), and math grades. The children in the study who received the SEL program with mindfulness (a) improved more in their cognitive control and stress physiology; (b) reported greater empathy, perspective-taking, emotional control, optimism, school self-concept, and mindfulness, (c) showed greater decreases in self-reported symptoms of depression and peer-rated aggression, (d) were rated by peers as more prosocial, and (e) increased in peer acceptance (or sociometric popularity). The results of this investigation suggest the promise of this SEL intervention and address a lacuna in the scientific literature—identifying strategies not only to ameliorate children’s problems but also to cultivate their well-being and thriving (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015).

According to findings, the RULER approach appears to be the most effective program focusing on the development of emotional intelligence in school-aged children using a whole system approach (Reyes, Brackett, Rivers, White, & Salovey, 2012). The RULER approach is an approach to SEL which aims to develop emotional intelligence in students and to prepare teachers and staff members to model these skills through creating a supportive and healthy emotional climate for students (Brackett, Rivers, Reyes, & Salovey, 2012). These skills are essential to effective leading, teaching, and learning, as well as other key outcomes, including sound decision-making, quality relationships, mental and physical health and both academic and workplace performance (Brackett & Rivers, 2014).

Another interesting program that was studied by (Jennings, Frank, Snowberg, Coccia, & Greenberg, 2013) was the Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE). The CARE program for teachers in pre-K-12 classrooms has been offered in the America. The CARE intervention is based on the Prosocial Classroom model (Jennings and Greenberg 2009) including its four broad interventions and aims to: (1) improve teachers’ overall well-being; (2) improve teachers’ effectiveness in providing emotional, behavioural, and instructional support to students; (3) improve teacher-child relationships and classroom climate; and (4) increase students’ prosocial behavior. A randomized controlled trial of 50 randomly assigned participants examined program efficacy and acceptability to CARE or waitlist control condition. Participants completed a battery of self-report measures at pre- and postintervention to assess the impact of the CARE program. ANCOVAs were computed between the CARE group and control group for each outcome, and the pretest scores served as a covariate. Participation in the CARE program

resulted in significant improvements in teacher well-being, efficacy, burnout/time-related stress, and mindfulness compared with controls. Evaluation data showed that teachers viewed CARE as a feasible, acceptable, and effective method for reducing stress and improving performance. Results suggested that the CARE program has promise to support teachers working in challenging settings and consequently improve classroom environments. Participants noticed improvements in students' prosocial behavior (76%), on-task behavior (66%), and academic performance (57%).

The authors' stated design goals for the program include increasing children's attachment to school, reducing risky behaviors, and improving students' social and emotional development (Brackett & Rivers, 2014).

Modern technology has changed the way humans communicate, access information, and create new knowledge (Buckingham & Willett, 2013; Rosen et al., 2014). In the present thesis, "21st century skills" refers to those core competencies specific to contemporary technological learning and include collaboration, digital literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving; educators and advocates have suggested that educational curriculum increasingly needs to incorporate these skills within educational programs in order to allow students to thrive in today's world (Tapscott, 1998). This paradigm shift might best be encapsulated by the set of principles and learning competencies put forth within the *Shifting Minds: The 21st century learning framework 3.0 for Canadians* (C21 Canada, 2015). Using a holistic model of learning, this framework champions a set of systems and designs reflecting the escalating changes observed within contemporary technological and educational domains (C21 Canada, 2015). The learning framework concludes that those superficial changes being made to modern educational curriculums will not equip learners for the 21st century and suggests that fundamental change is needed at the core of educational practice: "whole-system reform requires conditions that support educators in examining and reshaping the foundations on which their practice is built" (C21 Canada, 2015, p. 6).

2.8 Promising practices with Technology Integration in SEL Programs

Nowadays, children spend more time on average using digital media (including television, movies, digital games, and interactive stories) than on any other waking activity, including time spent at school and doing homework (Shaw Rocket Fund, 2014). Despite digital media being available to most North Americans, there is evidence that 21st century learners may

potentially have insufficient media literacy and critical literacy skills (Macedo & Steinberg, 2007). Students are using technological tools yet, have never been formally instructed in how to acquire the social context associated to digital technology (Macedo & Steinberg, 2007).

Today's youth creates personal spaces through accessing online social networks and forms attachments to their growing collections of virtual possessions (Odom, Zimmerman, & Forlizzi, 2011). This allows them to create an online identity within a separate virtual space; the concept of virtual reality and net-based communities—as found within social media platforms—have normalized the idea that cyberspace has made new social worlds accessible (Macedo & Steinberg, 2007). Some students find their own comfortable and safe spaces within these virtual worlds, and these spaces need to be thoughtfully integrated within the learning environment (Dawley & Dede, 2014). Since educators are beginning to incorporate virtual learning environments to teach their students, it may be relevant to understand the role emotional intelligence might play within these spaces, and it is important to study how virtual reality might affect efficacy and productivity of the child. Since emotional intelligence skills developed within virtual environments, it can then be transferable to face-to-face classroom environments or to real-life social interactions (Donkor, 2013).

Computer games are now being used as tools to facilitate communication, to teach, and to influence real-world attitudes and behavior (Dawley, & Dede, 2014). As summarized from Dormann and Biddle (2009), humour can be used within video games to develop and teach interpersonal skills, and as a means of helping connect learning elements within these games. Computer games may also create a space in which children and youth are provided with different opportunities to experience and express emotions; research highlighted by Tsai and Kaufman (2009) suggests that virtual characters may be able to evoke empathic responses from children (Dias et al., 2006; Scheeff, Pinto, Rahardja, Snibbe, & Tow, 2002), as cited in Tsai & Kaufman, 2009). Owning a real pet animal may help promote children's socio-emotional development, helping children to develop empathy, responsibility, and learning how to care for others (Tsai & Kaufman, 2009). Robotic technologies are also being designed for varied applications in education and healthcare; one such example is 'the Huggable', a robotic companion. The robot is a semi-autonomous robot avatar with educational applications (Stiehl, Chang, Wistort, & Breazeal, 2009). Huggable is used to enable educators and therapists to focus on the client interaction with the robot, in a safe setting. The focus is to promote a setting that

does not promote high cognitive load, meaning it is an essential member of a triadic interaction to enhance human social networks (Stiehl, Chang, Wistort, & Breazeal, 2009). Studies are presently being conducted at Boston Children's Hospital with the Huggable robot.

Within the psychosocial helping fields, art therapists have been integrating digital media components to their available toolbox of interventions so as to encourage expression and disclosure. Barbara Parker-Bell (1999) explains that, "no art tool including the computer, can attend to all needs or situations, but most can be used well in a therapeutic context if the therapist knows the properties and potentials they hold" (p. 184). In other works, digital art tools can help open up new possibilities for clients to explore the world of art therapy so as to support and encourage methods of self-expression (Parker-Bell, 1999).

Interactive multi-sensory digital media tools have been also used in helping students with special needs and/or psychosocial issues adapt to learning environments; the multi-sensory environment known as 'Snoozelin' uses collections of objects and equipment designed to provide sensory stimulation and to promote learning through play, all within a calming atmosphere (Stephenson, 2002). The multi-sensory environment encourages the development of motor skills and cognitive skills, promotes relaxation, and aims to build trust between students and educators (Stephenson, 2002; Robles-Bykbaev et al., 2017). Catering to specific learning styles, the holistic approach seeks to foster students' emotional connection to learning content through the use of multimedia stimuli (Stephenson, 2002).

There are also discrepancies between technological resource availability in schools within affluent and low socioeconomic areas (Durlak, Domitrovich, & Weissberg, Gullott, 2015); schools should therefore ensure that students have access to technology within the school environment to balance any lack of access at home. Educators' participation in professional development opportunities might also help lessen the digital divide by addressing issues of technological disparities within the school system and teaching educators digital literacy skills they can pass along to students (Clarke & Zagarell, 2012). Creating a common culture by transitioning a focus on training and development, which integrates technology into the system. Additionally, emphasizing clear expectations for implementation of those digital skills and knowledge gained during professional development workshops might encourage educators to develop accountability for their learning and its transmission (Elmore, 2000). Although digital media has become increasingly common within informal learning environments—for example,

computers being used for entertainment purposes, educational documentaries, the increase of social media to promote information sharing (Greenfield, 2009)—it might also be used effectively within formal learning environments as well. Children and youth in Quebec (ages nine to eighteen years) watch an average of 21 hours per week of media on a technological device; however, usage of smartphones and laptops increases significantly when youth reach the age of 13 years old (Shaw Rocket Funds, 2014). On average, youth spend 14 hours per week using digital technology informally outside of school (Shaw Rocket Funds, 2014). Since this is a critical developmental period in which social emotional skills are being refined, integrating interactive digital media tools which can facilitate SEL within formal educational environments may be especially useful. However, it is important to note that skills and interests developed through everyday technology usage cannot always be transferred to academic contexts, and students' competencies may often be overestimated (Bennett & Maton, 2010), all of which needs to be taken into account when interactive digital media programs are being integrated within school curricula.

Current evidence shows that SEL school programs are catered for the 21st century learners, equal importance must be researched on the implications associated to how SEL programs and how it helps improve behaviour management in schools.

2.9 Social Emotional Learning and Behaviour Management.

Behaviour management is the way in which the school administration and staff manages and handles how the children learn from breaking rule(s) or regulation(s) of the school (Er, 2009). Teachers are required to be implicated in the process of educating children on their emotional development and emotional intelligence (Salovey, 1997). Unfortunately, many teachers are called upon to fulfill duties for which they may feel unqualified (Marlow & Inman, 2002). In addition to focusing on students' cognitive development, teachers must also be prepared to address children's continuous physical, emotional, social, and spiritual growth (Kotler & Kotler, 1993), and consequently, teachers may be under-prioritizing students' social emotional development due to lack of guiding protocol, time focused on behaviour management and feeling unqualified to address SEL (Ee, 2009). Teachers at the beginning of their careers have reported that “classroom behaviour management is a particularly challenging hurdle to overcome since they have not yet developed the psychosocial competencies needed to address these problems in the classroom” (Dumitriu & Dumitriu, 2011, p. 796). Effective instruction of

SEL is facilitated through the implementation of behaviour management protocols (Nathanson, Rivers, Flynn, & Brackett, 2016). Throughout the research, it has become evident that implementing SEL within the behaviour management protocol is essential for child development since these are the teachable moments to help the children learn the competencies needed to be well-rounded adults (Ee, 2009).

Heckman and Masterov (2004) suggest that teaching children social and emotional skills may have positive behavioural benefits, which leads to success later in life. However, due to time and resource restrictions, teachers often tend to address behaviour modification techniques as means of punishing inappropriateness. Maladjusted behaviours often disrupt from the learning process, and Brackett (2013) suggests this partially may have to do with the fact that strong emotional reactions affect students' ability to process information and learn. Rather than focusing on disruptive behaviours student may be exhibiting, teachers can learn to identify which skills the child may be lacking that are getting in the way of his or her learning (Greene & Ablon, 2005). Pollastri, Epstein, Heath, and Ablon (2013) conceptualize the collaborative problem-solving approach—also known as the CPS model—as emphasizing childhood externalizing behaviours as being the product of lagging cognitive skills within the broader domain of problem solving, flexibility, and frustration tolerance. The authors highlight that “CPS identifies a child’s cognitive-skill deficits and then assists the child to build these skills through a process of collaboratively solving problems to find solutions that are mutually satisfactory” (p. 198). The more focused, alert and calmer a child is, the better he can integrate and assimilate diverse and multi-sensory information, so as to sequence his thoughts and actions (Shanker, 2010). As stated by Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, and Walberg (2004) “SEL is a process through which we learn to recognize and manage emotions, care about others, make good decisions, behave ethically and responsibly, develop positive relationships, and avoid negative behaviours” (p. 4). It is apparent to state that it is at times difficult to avoid negative behaviours, therefore, students need to be taught how to be reflective and self-manage their emotions.

Behaviour management is a reflective element of self-regulation skills, since these skills include children’s ability to manage their emotions, focus their attention, and inhibit some behaviours while activating others (Blair & Razza, 2007; Smith-Donald, Raver, Hayes, & Richardson, 2007). As children approach school age, their self-regulatory capacities correspond with their cognitive capacities; as developmentally expected (Calkins & Howse, 2004).

Researchers highlight that there is a difference between children's capacity to self-regulate and compliance; while compliance is based on avoiding punishment, self-regulation nurtures children's ability to cope with greater challenges in the future (Shanker, 2010). Self-regulation activates and practices varied cognitive skills including "executive functioning, language processing, cognitive functioning, emotional regulation, and social skills" (Greene & Ablon, 2005, p. 78). As Shanker (2010) explains, "we need to focus on the emotional qualities that create mentally healthy children: their motivation, curiosity, empathy, emotional range, self-esteem, internal discipline, creativity, and moral integrity, skills which will prepare them to become balanced adults" (p. 18). We can do so by focusing on developing those skills which the student may be lacking when he or she exhibits problematic behaviours, instead of focusing on compliance and punishment (Greene & Ablon, 2005). Providing children with opportunities to learn proactive strategies to self-regulate their emotions before conflicts arise, and how to solve problems constructively are also effective strategies for preventing problematic behaviour. Since children's individual differences in regulatory styles vary widely, and these styles develop in relation to their developmental, social, and neurobiological influences (Ryan, Kuhl, & Deci, 1997), it is important to identify those self-regulation tools which they autonomously adopt in order to make the integration process easier for them (Shanker, 2010).

SEL programs used within school settings apply collaborative and connected learning theories to facilitate the development of students' emotional intelligence through activating students' various meta-cognitive processes depending on their strategies and developmental milestones (Merrell & Gueldner; 2010 & Ee, 2009). Metacognition is the process of "thinking about thinking", being able to set goals, plan and organize and use a variety of strategies to monitor, evaluate and regulate to fit the demands of the task or the problem (Ee, 2009). In order for students to be active participant in their own learning, they need to have high self-efficacy and be intrinsically motivated to be in control in one's own emotions and feelings (Ee, 2009).

To identify SEL programs for 21st century learners, teachers can apply several learning theories in combination with interactive digital media to develop students' SEL skills. The two main learning theories that seem to be most relatable includes the Cognitive-Affective Theory of Learning with Media (CATLM) (Mayer, 2005) and the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000). CATLM focuses on making meaningful social connections through the combination of words and pictures using media (Mayer, 2005). Students' needs for autonomy,

competence, and relatedness can be encouraged through effective use of technological learning tools, which have been shown to encourage students' intrinsic motivation (Prenski, 2010). SDT focuses on the respective roles of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in cognitive and social development, while respecting individual differences in students' learning styles (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Taylor et al. (2014) suggest that intrinsic motivation reflects a sense of volition and personal interest in activities and goals, rather than originating through external pressures, and that "intrinsic motivation seems to be the most important ... motivational ingredient" (p. 355) needed in the recipe for academic achievement; this suggests that bolstering students' intrinsic motivation may be among the preliminary conditions needed to engender their autonomous learning processes.

A potential complicating factor towards these aims could be that multifarious societal and cultural factors determine individuals' capacities and needs in developing autonomy, competence, and relatedness using technological learning tools within real world settings (Prenski, 2010; Ertmer, & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010). Deci and Ryan (1985) comment that "self-determination is the ability to engage in an activity out of desire and [that students' will] ... do so by personal choice... [in] act[ing] in tune with themselves" (cited from Lachapelle & Wehmeyer, 2003, p. 206-207). In summary, 21st century learners are now motivated to learn using technology, therefore triadic interactions can be the way to successfully encourage the development of SEL skills.

Technology has been shown to potentially impact individuals' overall learning development in several different ways; by enhancing learning through eliciting students' intrinsic motivation (Um, Plass, Hayward, & Homer, 2012), by actively encouraging processes of metacognition, as well as by providing means of reducing cognitive load (Moreno & Mayer, 2007). Since interactive digital media is shaping the way contemporary students process cognitive information, further cognitive and motivational research is needed to deepen our understanding of the ways in which technology-based learning approaches might continue to inform students' meaningful social emotional learning (Moreno & Mayer, 2007).

Research using CATLM has explored the ways and extent to which multimedia interventions can support cognitive acquisition, brain development, and student learning (Mayer, 2005). Research has begun to demonstrate that some learners can better understand and process information through combining words with pictures in order to build more meaningful mental

representations of complex conceptual ideas (Mayer & Moreno, 2003); SEL interventions need to take into account the ways in which these mental representations are being constructed within classroom settings in ways which will strengthen positive SEL skills. If educators want to be successful in teaching SEL skills, cognitive processes need to be taken into account to cater to the way new learners' process information. Furthermore, the way in which students process information and learn is influenced by the school's climate (Durlak, Domitrovich, Weissberg, & Gullott, 2015).

2.10 Final thoughts

As Sherry Tukle proclaims in her book *Alone Together* (2011), "we are shaped by our tools" (p. 41), and this statement has a particularly resonant meaning for educators attempting to address the needs of 21st century learners whose cognitive and emotional capabilities are being transformed through technological ubiquity. On the other hand, the universal availability of technology may also be contributing in some ways to the deterioration of students' social emotional skills such as emotional intelligence, and this is a serious issue, which also needs to be addressed by educators. SEL and digital media has been shown to be interrelated, and it is therefore apparent that these technological tools need to be integrated within appropriate educational frameworks in order to meet contemporary students' evolving needs. While face-to-face interactions remain as valuable in establishing connectedness as compared against complementary digital interactions (Shaw Rocket Fund, 2014), educational and helping sectors need to begin to acknowledge the extent to which most contemporary individuals—and young people in particular—are now dependent on technology (Macedo & Steinberg, 2007). Regardless of the potential benefits of using technological tools within the classroom, most educators remain reluctant to change their ways of teaching; some of the reasons for this reticence could be lack of access to appropriate technologies, lack of appropriate training, and time or budget constraints (Merrell & Gueldner, 2010). Furthermore, funding can be a big setback to integrating technology within psychosocial fields in schools (Durlak, Domitrovich, Weissberg, & Gullott, 2015). Technological interventions are not the only potential methods available to educators in addressing social emotional development. Incorporating technology may be especially effective in motivating students in ways that face-to-face communication cannot. Supporting students' intrinsic motivation is essential since it is at the core of their biological, cognitive, and social capacities for developing regulation skills and for facilitating their self-discovery (Ryan & Deci,

2000). Furthermore, teaching media literacy to students allows teachers the opportunity to express rich symbolic content that is reflective to the 21st century learners.

As cited by Dearden, Emerson, Lewis, and Papp (2017), “engagement is the link between the person and their action (Kemp, Kishida, Carter, & Sweller, 2013) and can determine a person’s achievement and school behaviour” (Reschly & Christenson, 2006, p. 23). The most important component is for teachers and staff members to engage in the change to help students be more socially and emotionally able to solve their problems prosocially. Although technology is an important component for the 21st century, the most vital element is the human connection and motivation to care (Suler, 2015). To summarize, the preceding literature review highlights the main concerns of today’s educational system, including behaviour management, and students’ emotional and self-regulation skills (Brackett & Rivers, 2014). Through exploring these concerns, the following section will address potential ways of beginning to equip school staff members with the tools and skills they will need in order to enhance social emotional learning within their students.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

This chapter outlines the study's methodology including the research questions and the case study design and function, as well as justification and rationale for the holistic qualitative methodology analysis chosen by the author. Furthermore, the detailed study plan describes and outlines procedural components involved in answering the research questions.

Secondly, details of participant selection are outlined so as to ensure that the sample was representative of the relevant educator population, and so as to confirm the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. A description of the role of the researcher played will be explicitly stated.

Thirdly, the types of instruments and procedures used within the study design and data collection are described, the data analysis is explained, and applicable researcher biases are acknowledged. Lastly, the study's validity, possible sources of errors, and actions undertaken to ensure qualitative rigor are discussed.

3.1. Background of the case

For children with special needs, engagement has been described as “a journey which connects a child and their environment (including people, ideas, and materials and concepts) to enable learning and achievement” (Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, 2011). A wide range of approaches have been attempted to promote the engagement of children with additional needs, including music (Simpson et al., 2013; Vaiouli et al., 2015), social stories (Delano & Snell, 2006) and Snoezelen rooms (Cuvo, May & Post, 2001).

The case study was divided into three main areas of focus: behaviour management protocol adaptation, applying the RULER approach into the pedagogy, and using the interactive therapy room (Harmony room) as a safe place for students and staff to learn self-regulation techniques. Prior to the research, the administrator, teachers and staff members of EM school initiated an approach called #WeCare that focused on SEL through classroom curriculum, behaviour management and self-regulation.

Behaviour management protocol. The main purpose of outlined alterations to the behaviour management protocol (Appendix B) was to clarify how teachers and support staff were to implement behaviour management techniques in a proactive, strategic manner so as to inform the instruction of Social Emotional Learning. When an incident occurred with a student,

teachers participating in the study were asked to refer to the guide and to follow specified behaviour management protocols.

At the beginning of the 2016-2017 year, teachers and staff members were asked to participate in a training workshop (Appendix C). A discussion followed outlining possible changes staff hoped to see take place in the school year to come; with relation to how the teacher, administration and staff members help students learn from breaking a rule and promote SEL skills in their everyday situations and conflict resolution. The results of these discussions were summarized within a written proposal which was subsequently submitted to the principal. The principal undertook further adjustments, and the document was finalized under the title of the #WeCare protocol for behaviour management (Appendix B). The principal presented this final document to participating teachers and support staff during a staff meeting and was then implemented within their classroom teaching and behaviour management styles throughout the upcoming school year.

Applying the RULER. whole-school approach to social-emotional learning that is grounded in emotional intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). RULER is an acronym that represents five skills: *recognizing* emotion in the self and others, *understanding* the causes and consequences of emotions, *labelling* emotions with a diverse and accurate vocabulary, *expressing* emotions constructively across contexts, and *regulating* emotions effectively. The RULER is an evidence-based approach for social and emotional learning developed by Marc Brackett, Ph.D. and his colleagues at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence (Brackett, Rivers, Reyes, & Salovey, 2012). According to their research, RULER is designed to help students, educators, and families develop the emotional intelligence skills needed to make sound decisions, foster healthy relationships, enhance their personal well-being, and achieve desired outcomes at school, home, and in the workplace (Nathanson, Rivers, Flynn, & Brackett, 2016).

The principal, one teacher and two specialized staff members from the school participated in a two-day workshop situated at Yale Maine, New York); in addition to the workshop training, they were provided with a comprehensive curriculum resource designed to help them implement RULER within the school as a resource liaison for the teachers and staff members, as well as being allotted four web-based and phone coaching sessions which were to be used over the upcoming academic year following the workshop. All teachers and staff within the school were provided with access to the RULER online community, as well as to the RULER

online courses. Throughout the 2015-2016 school year, six classes participated in the pilot project on implementing the RULER approach within the classroom and both teachers and students emphasized the benefits it had on them. The teachers stated that they saw a huge difference with the students with regards to how they were able to freely express themselves within the classroom setting and use proactive problem-solving skills. All six classroom teachers were interested in continuing the approach the following year.

In the 2016-2017 school year, ten homeroom teachers applied the RULER within their classrooms. Prior to doing so, this new cohort of teachers participated in a three-hour workshop (Appendix C) on applying the method, as well as participating in a two-hour online training created and provided by the Yale Centre for Emotional Intelligence. During the training, participating staff members created a staff charter (Appendix D), which was displayed in a central area in the school (staff room). The teachers then supervised students in creating their own school-wide charter (Appendix D). The school's special education worker acted as a RULER facilitator, visited ~~into~~ each homeroom for four sessions (one hour each) to introduce the main concepts associated to the RULER approach (Appendix E). The 2016-2017 cohort of teachers then applied methods into their curriculum, as outlined in Appendix F.

The Harmony Room is used as a multisensory room to provide a space for students to practice self regulation skills. There are few organizations and community organizations within the Montreal region which have a sensory room in place, yet do not base themselves on evidence-based research. Multi-sensory rooms is an evidence-based room that is used as an inclusive intervention within school settings for children with particular needs (Robles-Bykbaev et al., 2017). The multi-sensory setting that the current study focuses on is called the Harmony Room, which was designed to be a safe environment where students and teachers could practice emotional coping and self-regulation strategies with the goal that students learn how to use these SEL skills independently and autonomously in classroom and real-world settings. The Harmony room at EM is unique due to the fact that it was set-up to be used by any student from kindergarten to grade six (5-12 years old), who wanted to have access to a place to self-regulate their emotions, as opposed to only focusing on relaxation. Most existing Snoozelin approach sensory rooms within the English Montreal School Board only focus on stimulating specific senses so as to calm the mind and body (Cuvo, May & Post, 2001). EM's Harmony room focused not only on calming strategies, but on social emotional skills as well. Within the

Harmony Room, students are prompted and taught to go through a process of self-regulation allowing them to mindfully select those methods of regulating their emotions which worked best for each individual. This provided them the opportunity to develop autonomous awareness and facilitated their capacity to transfer acquired SEL skills into other applied life settings.

Jenson (2005) suggests that environments that promote intrinsic motivation involve “low stress and high challenge, including encouragement, enabling student choice, providing a role model for enjoyment of learning, and ensuring a variety of relevant experiences. There is an importance of persistently exploring the interests and conditions that enable a student to engage in learning opportunities” (Dearden, Emerson, Lewis, & Papp, 2017. p. 25).

Students had the option to select amongst four different pillar methods (Elitri, 2015): calming strategies, challenging strategies, activating strategies, and creative strategies, and are provided tools and materials by the school, which could be used within each pillar (see Appendix G). Examples of these included: activating strategies (playing a sport or game allowing the child can release physical energy), calming strategies (using a technique such as relation, breathing or meditating to calm themselves to a state of peacefulness), challenging strategies (using cognitive strenuous activities such a board game to encourage cognitive stimulation), or creative strategies (where children could tap into their creative side to calm themselves down). Student emotional literacy was encouraged through a teacher supervised framework helping students practice these techniques to increase their ability to recognize, understand, label, express, and regulate their emotions.

The room was set-up with banners espousing the norms and values of the school and those of the special education workers, helping to emphasize the cultural values of the school and offering sensory tools and materials within each of the four pillars. Sensory materials included an interactive floor which utilized computer software called Po-motion which students could use to play physical games promoting movement and gross motor functioning (such as soccer or hockey). Additionally, it housed an interactive sensory wall which used everyday materials (ex. bike wheel, steering wheel, bells, locks, robes, velcro, fake grass, stones, sand, bricks, mulch, etc.) to encourage students’ fine motor skills and sensory discovery and which could also be used as an independent emotional calming strategy. The Harmony room featured a calming cave where children could hide in, should they feel the need for safety or alone time. Children could use the Harmony room to rest or to read books, and was outfitted with a drape, reading light, and

cushioned floor. The room also featured a section full of arts and crafts, puzzles, Legos, and games which promoted visual, fine, and gross motor skills. A large bubble wall allowed students to change the lighting or to play music of any selection, and a computer and projector allowed other media content to be played as well. All materials were purchased through donations.

The room encouraged the usage of interactive digital media and other materials as therapeutic sources to help teach autonomous social emotional self-regulation skills and was intended to be a safe environment where students could practice these emotional coping strategies on their own.

3.2. Choice of Research Methodology

This research study follows a qualitative case study approach, which represents “an in-depth exploration of a system (process and individuals) based on extensive data collection” (Creswell, 2002 p. 476). Yin (2009) defines a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context” (p. 18) so as “to expand and generalize theories...” (Yin, 2009, p. 15). “To understand a real-life phenomenon in depth, but such understanding encompassed important contextual conditions—because they were highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study” (Crown et al, 2011, p.5). The present case study used a series of direct interviews, over a one-month period with involved teachers and staff members, in order to make generalizations about participants’ opinions of the program (Stake, 1995, p. 10). A document with the findings was then uploaded to a digital software called Dedoose, a web application for mixed methods research.

At the end of the 2017 school year, teachers were asked to fill in an anonymous online survey (Appendix H) which had questions related to the perceived effectiveness of the #WeCare approach put in place throughout the previous year. Three participants volunteered to be interviewed. The interviews were conducted on site, in a private office at school. Each interview was audio recorded and then transcribed into a document. As Stake (1995) outlines, qualitative inquiry such as case study design has its emphasis in interpretation, and the researcher’s job during data collection is “to maintain vigorous interpretation” (Stake, 1995, p. 9); the researcher’s job is not only to interpret meanings from participant interviews, but to draw conclusions so as to tell a story derived from the data. Interviews were completed by the end of the school year on June 23th, 2017.

3.3. Rationale for conducting the study

The rationale for this qualitative case study was to explore a contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and the relationships between them (Zainal, 2017). The research project involved implementing an educational school climate which could help teachers and front-line workers to support students' social emotional growth and build emotional intelligence catering to 21st century learners' unique needs, which included promoting self-regulation skills (self-management, decision-making, social awareness, self-awareness, and relationship skills) (CASEL, 2013). Changes to school culture were based on research demonstrating that behaviour management alone may not be sufficient to help students self-regulate and work effectively in school, and that rather than focusing on students' problematic behaviours, a shift in focus towards lacking social emotional skills might engender autonomous behavioural change from the students themselves (Greene & Ablon, 2005).

The rationale behind choosing to conduct a qualitative case study approach during this study was three-fold:

1. Case study design offers researchers rich, in-depth data using a variety of collected information, including participants' interviews, academic documents, physical artefacts, school site character curriculums, and direct observations (Creswell, 2002). An individual elementary school with an established caring community, nurturing student environment, and high staff interest in making changes to the emotional and cultural climate of the school provided the opportunity to extensively explore this author's construct of emotional intelligence.
2. A case study helps by providing practical feedback (Creswell, 2002) to develop a more in-depth understanding of how social and emotional learning and the building of caring relationships can be most effectively integrated into a school's instructional day, everyday activities and behaviour management policies.
3. Having participants involved in the process through open communication networks and undertaking interviews with them, enables participants to be more implicated in the study process, thereby making room for flexible responses to the material, so participants are better able to implement their own ideas. This generates intrinsic

motivation for the teachers and front-line workers and makes for a more rapid process of implementing change (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

3.4. Participants

The project was open to all teachers of students, from all elementary grades attending EM School in Montreal. It was particularly directed at teachers of students who were experiencing psychosocial difficulties such as anxiety, behavioural or emotional difficulties, or students diagnosed with disorders such as Pervasive Developmental Disorders, ADHD, language disorders, or learning difficulties. The administrator of the school provided a statistical report stating that 46% of the school's students are following an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) Due to the need of additional resources or support. These plans include both those academic and social emotional competencies students are being encouraged to achieve. An IEP is a planned set of coordinated actions established by a team of specialized teachers, professionals and parents, for children with a handicap or difficulties and in need of adapted or modified actions in order to develop the competencies required for success (MELS, 2004). Within some students' IEP, it is stated that they are encouraged to work on their social emotional skills.

Participants were identified with pseudonyms where used in the research rather than real names. Although the school did not request to anonymous, the school's real name was not used throughout the research. The research played a role in the research by being part of the training prior to the research was conducted. She also was trained in the RULER approach.

Table 3
Participants

Participants	Gender	Role	Data
1	Male	Special education worker	Survey and interview
2	Female	Teacher	Survey and interview
3	Female	Teacher	Survey and interview
4	Male	Teacher	Survey
5	Female	Teacher	Survey
6	Female	Teacher	Survey
7	Female	Teacher	Survey
8	Female	Teacher	Survey
9	Female	Teacher	Survey
10	Female	Teacher	Survey
11	Female	Teacher	Survey

Note: Participant involvement

Given the #WeCare approach was implemented school-wide, all teachers and staff members were expected to be part of the project; however, being an active participant in the data collection for the study was optional. All members were expected to complete the surveys as requested by the principal via email sent to all staff members but were not obliged to participate in the interview portion of the data collection. Nevertheless, while participation in the interview process was voluntary, all members signed the consent form (Appendix I) agreeing to be part of the research by completing the online survey.

The research project was initially introduced during the first three-hour training teachers received at the outset of the study; teachers and staff members were invited to volunteer to be interviewed through a recruitment letter (Appendix J) handed out during one of their staff meetings. Once they accepted to be part of the case study, further details were presented to them.

The researchers participated in the RULER training and was the facilitator for workshops for the teachers prior to the study.

3.5. Instruments

The focus of this case study research was to understand the process of a yearlong project and how participants related to it (Yin, 2011). Throughout the process, the same survey instruments were used to measure three components of the approach; how the behaviour management protocol was being used, how the RULER was being applied and what were the effects of the Harmony room on students' capacities to self-regulate their emotions and behaviours. Two instruments were used in this study involving the teachers and staff members. The first was an online survey using the Survey Monkey platform. Second, a series of three face to face structured individual interviews were conducted.

Following the data collection process, qualitative analysis was conducted to determine whether the initial research questions had been effectively answered through the survey questions, and whether any emergent themes resulted from participants' responses. The main interview questions and survey questions for each section are presented below:

Survey.

1. How would you describe the behaviour management protocol that has been put in place?
2. Do you think the behaviour management protocol has improved from last year?
3. Describe in a few words the school's climate.

4. What are the common scenarios that you need to call for assistance?
5. What social emotional skills did your students improve in?
6. Identify the following social emotional skills you incorporate in your teaching
7. How do your students self-regulate their emotions?

Interview. The interview questions were for individual one-on-one interviews which were conducted with two teachers and one support staff. The interviewees volunteered to be interviewed after receiving the recruitment letter. The following is a list of interview questions:

1. Overall, have you seen a change in the school's climate? If so, how?
2. Have you noticed that the #WeCare approach has affected students in a positive or negative way? Please provide an example.
3. Describe your experience and the experience of the students having the RULER implemented in your classroom.
4. Have you applied the RULER in your teaching? If so, how? If not, why not?
5. Do your students use the Harmony room? If so, please provide examples.
6. Can you describe what you have noticed regarding the behaviour management protocol at EM?
7. Do you have any ideas on how to improve the behaviour management protocol?
8. What would you like to see happen next year?
9. Do you have any additional statements or comments?

3.6. Procedures for data collection

In collaboration with the staff and teachers of EM School, the case study research methodology was approved by the school principal and focused primarily on how best to improve the school climate. This included the way teachers use and implement the behaviour management protocol, implement social emotional learning, and help children regulate their emotions. Most funding was donated from FedNav, and the financial breakdown is described in the calendar plan (see Table 4). A pilot project was put in place in 2016 to introduce the research to the school (described in more detail within the 2016-2017 calendar plan, Appendix K) and continued into the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year. An email was sent to the teachers and staff members by the principal (Appendix L) encouraging them to complete the online questionnaire. All members that agreed to be interviewed were also asked to fill in a consent form (Appendix I). Although all members completed the consent form, only 10 teachers and staff

members answered the questions online; three of the ten participants volunteered to be interviewed in person.

Table 4
Calendar plan

Tasks (data analysis and collection)	Date	Budget	Participants	Tools
Anonymous survey for teachers and staff	05-06-16	N/A	Teachers, staff,	Survey Monkey
Anonymous survey for teachers and staff	05-06-17	N/A	Teachers, staff,	Survey Monkey
Interviews with teachers and staff	01-06-17	N/A	Teachers, staff, volunteer	Recorded transcribed to a Word document
Findings and conclusion	Date	Budget	Collaborators	Tools
Review all data	01-06-17	N/A	Researcher	Dedoose (research software)
Analysis of data	01-08-17	N/A	Researcher	Dedoose (research software)
List of recommendations for the following year Review with principal	01-06-17	N/A	Researcher, Principal, staff	Case study findings
Creation of video summarizing #WeCare	01-06-17	N/A	Staff Principal	Powtoon and Youtube

Note: Methodology calendar plan 2016-2017

3.7. Data analysis

Case study methodology involves “the collection and analysis of multiple sources of data including thorough surveys and interviews; triangulating participants’ responses allows the researcher to confirm and verify collected data, and involves a process of repetitious data gathering and critical review of what is being reported” (Stake, 2013, p. 34). The transcripts were read and re-read numerous times to code all the information and find common themes through the “search for meaning often is a search for patterns, for consistency within certain conditions,” known as correspondence (Stake, 1995, p. 78). This process of verifying the data increases the validity of the study, and to this end, numerous different stake holders (teachers, administrators support staff members) were consulted, thus resulting to triangulation. The ultimate goal was to develop a more complete picture of the phenomenon being studied, since similar conclusions

began to emerge across different stakeholders' points of view (Yin, 2009). Observations and interpretations based on the data were therefore potentially more significant and objective, having been corroborated by numerous participants (Stake, 2013).

Chevalier and Buckles (2003) describe measurement instruments as means to provide information, clarify people's views or knowledge about a topic, define priorities, focus attention during group discussions, structure conversations, and so as to find patterns within datasets. Dedoose software was used to summarize the transcription data which emerged from the discussion groups. Survey Monkey was used to create the questionnaires. In accordance with coding strategies suggested by Kawulich (2004), the interview content from participants was subjected to thematic content analysis. Knowledge of participants' experience helped the researcher better understand the context for participants' behaviour and decision-making rationale (Seidman, 1993).

To ensure meaning and evidence to be consistent in the data, through the coding process, the following steps were put in place (Creswell, 2002):

1. Read each interview and survey transcript and note ideas and themes.
2. Read through each document again and note the underlying meaning in the text.
3. Identify sections in the text and assign a code word/phrase that best describes the meaning in each one.
4. Find patterns and repetitions in the codes, with the goal to reduce the codes to themes and summarize these themes.

Codes were examined to identify common themes; following this method, data analysis and data coding resulted in a definitive set of themes of universal importance to all participants (Checkland & Holwell, 1998). Examples of integrated codes include: Harmony room, RULER approach, and the behaviour protocol (Appendix M). Since the project focused on three alterations being implemented within the school changes to the behaviour protocol, pedagogical changes addressing social emotional learning, and the implementation of the interactive self-regulation room, it was evident that the codes were related to it.

3.8. Credibility or Trustworthiness

Gathering multiple sources of data surfaced the reality of a study, contributes towards validating findings, and increases the credibility of the study. To ensure credibility and trustworthiness within the study, the researcher encouraged open communication of participants,

and provided time and space for them to provide critical feedback about aspects of the experience which they were unsatisfied with. Triangulation was formed, “the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals (teachers and staff members), types of data (surveys and interviews) or methods of data collection, documents and interviews in descriptions and themes in qualitative research” (Creswell, 2002 p. 266). During the study, triangulation took place through survey data collection and interviews done by the teachers and staff members before and after the program. Triangulating the data adds trustworthiness to a qualitative study by confirming reliability (Creswell, 2002).

Due to the fact that the researcher was very invested in the project, a volunteer was recruited to conduct the interviews so as to minimize bias during qualitative data collection; this ensured that the researcher did not inadvertently prompt interview subjects to respond according to the researcher’s expectations. All participants were provided with a letter that formally introduced the volunteer (Appendix N). Furthermore, the online survey was anonymous, and interviews were conducted by a volunteer student. The interviews were then transcribed and uploaded on Dedoose for analysis by the researcher. Once the codes were organized, they were then summarized on a Word document (see appendix M).

Chapter 4: Results

The following chapter will include a summary of the findings described as the emerging themes that resolved in understanding how school climate change had occurred. Behaviour, pedagogy, and self-regulation were determined to be interconnected parts within the methodology since each aspect influences the others (Pollastri, Epstein, Heath & Ablon, 2013); deconstructing the relationships between these three aspects helps shed light on how best to create a school climate which is conducive to children's healthy emotional development.

The emerging primary theme was that of a proactive school climate; the importance of this theme highlighted how the school climate had changed, while acknowledging positive proactive changes and constructive critiques from participants about the process. Additional themes highlighted below suggest the need to continue working with school administrators to engender long-term change.

Teachers and Educators from EM school have stated their concerns associated to children misbehaving, having difficulties learning, demonstrating signs of stress. The principal noted to have more than 10 students lined up in front of her office after every lunch period. Every year at least one teacher would request to be placed on sick leave due to burn out. The classroom was loud and children would be solve issues with aggression. By the end of the 2017 school year, teacher and student worked collaboratively on solving problems. The students used self-regulation skills to deal with their emotions with the guidance of their teachers. The school's climate changed to a more proactive environment where teachers were motivated to help students learn skills.

4.1 Emergent themes

Emerging theme one: Proactive school climate. Rita is a teacher for the senior language closed classroom. She teaches children from grade four, five, and six who have language disorders. She has worked at EM for more than 15 years and contributed with numerous helpful opinions when she was interviewed. When asked about whether she has observed a change within the school climate, Ms. Rita said:

“Absolutely, compared to the past ones. First of all, I've seen fewer kids downstairs in front of the principal's office, (laughing), just that alone is a big difference, fewer issues at school. The kids look happier. Just that alone has shown to be positive.”

This statement points to evidence of children developing greater social emotional learning skills; if students are spending less time in the principal's office being disciplined, they are spending more time in the classroom having opportunities to learn, and are thus likely experiencing a greater educational experience. Furthermore, since they are frequenting the principal's office less often, this points to the fact that teachers and students are practicing autonomous problem solving and behaviour management skills without resorting to the assistance of administration members. Further research would be needed to determine what problem-solving strategies were affected and which elements of social emotional learning were being practiced.

Marie-Lynn is a grade 1 teacher and the staff assistant of the school. She is responsible for the school when the principal is not present. Ms. Marie-Lynn has been a principal for over 20 years. She was one of the four staff members to be trained in the RULER approach at Yale University. When Ms. Marie-Lynn was interviewed about potential changes within the school climate, she responded:

"I feel that the school has made a shift toward a school where the children is at the center, and the wellbeing of the child is at the center of everything. As soon as you step foot inside the school, this is how I feel, that we're not all about academics and performance, but we're also about wellbeing and being happy in the school setting."

This statement is representative of the school's shift towards addressing learners overall emotional needs by emphasizing social emotional learning and well-being, above and beyond only addressing academic performance. This teacher's emphasis on the school having become a place where "the children are the center of everything," speaks to the prioritization of students' social emotional needs above all else.

Chris is the full-time behaviour technician of the school. He is responsible with helping students learn prosocial skills. He has been working for four years. When Mr. Chris was questioned about the school climate, he responded:

"Kids are communicating more, kids are expressing themselves more; when I do mediation with the kids they take the lead in having conversations with each other and they actually use things such as 'I'm feeling a little bit red because of this and so on and so forth. It's been really eye opening and it's amazing."

When addressing responses from the survey (with reference to the Proactive School Climate theme), staff and teachers describe perceiving significant differences in the school's

climate before and after the intervention (see Table 5). Staff members noticed that communication was more present between staff members and students following the study, and feelings of connection with the school itself and with school policies were more prevalent as well. The teachers express gratitude that there was a clear protocol in place that all staff members were expected to follow and respect. There was a greater sense of belonging within the school climate. Teachers felt that there was more of a structure. This helped the teachers feel less stress and anxious because they felt safe. Whereas, those who did not notice the difference from the school climate also did not feel it within their classroom setting.

Table 5

Question 3: Describe in a few words the school's climate before and after the #WeCare approach

Before	After
No clear consequence	Not sure, it seems to be working well.
No communication	Safe
No system set up	Now we have a written plan
Needs a clear protocol	More structure
Needs clear protocol	A lot better
Not a lot of communication	Teacher and students are communicating more
Not sure how to answer this question	I think it is working great.
Needs improvement	Students are connected with the school
There is stress or anxiety	Less stress and anxiety
Needs communication	More Organized

Note: Question 3 of Survey

Another important theme which emerged was the influence of the RULER approach on the pedagogy. Did using the RULER within the class setting have an effect on the teachers' approach to teaching, and if so, what was this effect? If not, what could have used more attention, or what changes could have been made to make it more effective?

Emerging theme two: Pedagogy using the RULER approach. Rita describes using the RULER as a positive experience and her students looking forward to it because they get to express themselves. She states that:

“My students in general have a really hard time expressing themselves. So I find it's been very different now because now they're able to express themselves and they're learning strategies on how to deal with their feelings, their emotions.”

As per stated by Rita, the RULER curriculum provided opportunities for students to express their emotions within a safe learning environment. However, Rita also brings up the point that though she has tried to continue implementing the RULER in her classroom according to the facilitator's training:

"I wish I knew more about it though because I would like to implement it more in my class. I just don't feel comfortable with it yet because it's something new, but I would definitively want to know more about it so I can implement it in my class."

This comment highlights the need for additional training to encourage the teachers to feel more comfortable applying the RULER approach independently with their students.

Ms. Rita explains how she particularly enjoyed doing the Staff Charter and School Charter (appendix D):

"I like the way we got together as a school, the teachers, everybody, the staff, and we did a charter of rights. I think that helped even us because we take it for granted that we want to feel safe, we want to feel all these things, but when we actually sat down and got to write exactly, okay well what do we want to feel when we come into the school, I thought that was fantastic. And even the kids doing it, so we have one for the kids, one for the staff, the teachers, the school, that's really helpful."

Doing the School and Staff Charter was part of the RULER curriculum and pedagogy of the program; the goal was for children and staff members to feel a sense of belonging, to feel safe, to feel accepted, and thereby feel motivated to learn.

Marie-Lynn describes her experience with the RULER approach as a positive learning experience for the students and for herself as a teacher:

"Everyday we talk more about our emotions and it's not only the students themselves. You know how in the morning the kids come and you always have the one that's pouting because something happened on the bus, or someone who's angry because they're frustrated about something at work, not at work but I mean at home, and mommy and daddy were pushing the children to 'go, go, go, you have to go to school and everything' and they come to school with all that build-up, and you have the other one that's excited and saying 'woo I'm going to go to La Ronde this weekend and I can't wait' and 'my birthday is coming'. Now the children have all those emotions but they know they can talk about it and they know how to express their emotions a little bit better. And also I use

the ruler myself to show them that I have emotions, that me too sometimes I'm very excited or very frustrated, and how I can regulate my emotions and everything."

Ms. Marie-Lynn integrated social emotional skills into classroom pedagogy, not only through open discussion and dialogue with students about their emotions, but also through appropriate emotional modelling, and both have become the norm of the classroom. Ms. Marie-Lynn explains how she implemented the RULER in her teaching through emotional modeling:

"The first thing is by modeling it. I have the poster of the ruler method in my classroom and I verbalize openly how I'm feeling: today I'm feeling like I'm very yellowish today and this is why. And as we go along during the year, I will put better words to it or different images. Like say, today I feel like a corgi, and another day I feel like a pit-bull right now, but I would like to go back to feeling like a very little puppy, tamed, or whatever. I'm changing those words so that it's more kid friendly. And they're used to seeing me express myself and saying 'oh, now I need to regulate myself, let's try this strategy or let's try this other strategy'"

Ms. Marie-Lynn helps children recognize, understand, label, express, and regulate their emotions. She models these steps and encourages her students to explore using a similar process; this empowers children to make sense of their situation and the feelings associated with it. Rather than segregating a time in the day to teach social emotional skills, the teacher integrates it holistically into her pedagogy, and is thus able to incorporate it into any teachable moment within the class, as is demonstrated in some of her students' class work (Appendix F).

Mr Chris has implemented the RULER within his interventions with the students as well. He takes every moment as an opportunity to teach them skills to help them solve problems and to develop self-awareness. He works with students of all ages, but especially highlights the benefits of early intervention on students:

"Hmm... Especially with the kindergarten kids and grade one, they're able to point to the RULER and to use the mood meter, for example, and they use it as a way to express how they're feeling because at the time, they don't really know the vocabulary. So they just point and they express 'this is why' and 'this is what happened'. So they're using the ruler, the mood meter, we use the blueprint as well and the meta-moment; I do it with them when they come into the harmony room, and it sinks in more because again it's a visual, especially the reflections that goes alongside of it."

Mr. Chris takes the time to facilitate the RULER throughout all his behavioural interventions and utilizes the Harmony room as a place for children to slow down, to reflect, and to practice self-awareness. Given his role as a behavioural management specialist, he has the opportunity to use the Harmony room more efficiently than teachers, since he has more time to focus on behaviour modification rather than solely on academic achievement.

When analysing the survey responses, teachers and staff were able to incorporate social emotional learning skills in their teaching by using the RULER approach, as demonstrated in Table 6. All ten participants reported implementing at least five of the RULER approach elements in their teaching (recognize, understand, label, express, and regulate emotions).

Table 6

Question 6: Identify social emotional skills you may have incorporated in your teaching

Responders	
1	Understanding and communicating emotions
2	Causes and consequences of emotions
3	Expressing emotions
4	Recognizing emotions and resolving conflicts
5	Recognizing emotions in self and others, having self-worth
6	Understanding the causes and consequences of emotions and learning about self
7	Regulating emotions with strategies
8	Regulating emotion
9	Emotional regulation
10	Labelling expressing and regulating emotions
11	No response

Note: Question 6 in survey.

Another emergent theme was that of behaviour management. The school implemented a new school policy which provided more of a structured behaviour management protocol for dealing with problem behaviours, and this showed up in participants' responses.

Emerging theme three: Behaviour management for the digital child. Ms. Rita explains how the implemented behaviour management protocol has made a difference:

"In the past, there were a lot more issues, a lot more kids in front of the principal's office, a lot more issues. As for now, there's less kids in front of the principal's office, there seems to be less issues; I don't see as many kids having issues."

When questioned on what impacted this change, she responded:

“I think just the fact that there’s a ruler, the kids are taught about their emotions, how to deal with their emotions, just that alone is already going to be a big thing for the behaviour management in the school. And I think having consequences for their actions, that’s definitely a way that we could diminish misbehaviours.”

According to the interview responses, students were responding to the new behavioural management protocol as they were taught about recognizing, understanding, and labeling their emotions. The behaviour management protocol resembled the RULER approach structure, and consequently, students began to implement new ways of solving their problems through practicing better social emotional skills, which could also be applied within their daily lives.

Ms. Marie-Lynn’s feelings about the new behaviour management protocol had parallels with Ms. Rita’s responses in regard to seeing an evolution in ways of dealing with problem behaviour at school. In the past, disciplining students through sending them to the principal was the focus, whereas Ms. Marie-Lynn felt the culture had shifted focus towards helping students solve their own issues independently, and towards practicing appropriate social emotional skills as part of a larger school-wide responsibility.

“Well I’m happy that we have that now, because I think that in the past we didn’t have something common for the whole school. Because the teachers would deal with things by themselves or they would go see the principal but not everything was implemented the same way. We didn’t have common ground, but now we do. I’ve seen various teachers filling those reports; I’ve seen teachers calling for the behaviour techs asking for advice, and I feel that there’s more something that is common to everyone, it’s more regular. It’s not grade six deals one way, grade one deal another way. It seems like all the children are equal in the school. I like that very much. And the children know that if they did something wrong, now it’s not arbitrary to the person that they’re talking to, it’s going to be dealt [with] ...the same.”

Ms. Marie-Lynn describes more consistency now that the behaviour management system is in place; she feels that staff members and teachers experience a sense of ease in knowing what to expect and how to react when a behavioural situation arises. Knowing that the protocol is in place is also benefiting the students, since they are also more aware of the consequences of their actions, and how to intervene before facing these consequences. Ms. Marie-Lynn describes additional interventions which might be needed in order to best help the students:

“I think that for children who are repeating a pattern, we should have something that is helping them more to solve the bigger problem or the bigger issue. Because I see a lot of children who are repeating the same pattern such as being aggressive or violent, and there seems to be a need for them to act a certain way because that’s the way they were raised to get attention or something like that. I think the parents should be more involved. Maybe we should have a tier to the point where the parents should be more accountable. The parents should be coming to school because a lot of parents will deny the child as the problem, they will report or transfer the problem to administration, a teacher, another child, they will blame someone else for the problem of their child, medication, something, rather than acknowledging that there’s a problem. So maybe if they felt welcome themselves and see in the classroom, not feel that they’re being judged, but come and participate with us and see how the school is working and see everybody, see your child in the environment, they may be less prone to blaming the school and realize that it’s a give and take from them to us, that there’s an exchange there.”

Ms. Marie-Lynn explains her beliefs in regard to potential further research possibilities for #WeCare; parents need to learn more about how their children are solving problems so that they are better able to promote and practice social emotional learning skills at home. This would necessitate a liaison between home and school, and a collaborative effort by both parents and the school in using the protocol. Developing these collaborative communication networks between home and school would likely be essential in further developing social emotional learning skills for students, since students are spending just as much time in the home environment as at school; this may represent an additional avenue for research possibilities in the future.

Mr. Chris explains his thoughts on how to improve the behaviour management protocol within the school by having teachers engage more proactively with the students. He also highlights that communication is likely the key to problem solving, which is at the heart of the behaviour protocol philosophy:

“I believe there's always room for improvement. For example, there are a lot of 5-6’s, grade 5-6’s, that have been very much impressing me being able to express themselves to each other; but also as their mediators when they help each other or younger kids, they really are able to go into ‘what is going on’, ‘what about people’s feelings’, ‘what did that person feel’, they are taking perspectives on what’s going instead of just saying ‘oh

well we hate you who cares'. It's more of a conversation, which has been very impressive. When it comes to improvement, I believe that teachers can use more situational stories instead of books maybe because books are third person and first person, instead of showing them a picture and saying 'okay, what's going on here'. I think that could be something that people really implemented where they show a photo of something happening and say 'okay what's this person's perspective and what's that person's perspective?'"

Mr. Chris focuses on the implementation of the behaviour management, which was to be expected, given that he works directly with student behaviour, and has therefore developed his own constructive perspective on how it was applied and could be better put into action in the future. These specific adjustments to the intervention might be investigated during future research studies, for example, comparing the efficacy of using situational stories against using books to determine which would create more changes in behaviour or in perceived SEL skills.

Questions one and two from the survey specifically address behaviour management as shown in Table 7: How would you describe the behaviour management protocol that has been put in place before and after the #WeCare approach? and Table 8: Do you think the behaviour management protocol has improved since last year?

Table 7

Question 1: How would you describe the behaviour management protocol that has been put in place?

Responders	Before	After
1	I do not know what to is in place	Clear
2	Consequence	Efficient, kids friendly.
3	Simple rules	We now use more of a caring approach
4	Giving consequences	Useful
5	Call for assistance	Helpful for teachers and students
6	Unclear	Clear and strength forwards. Becoming conscious of your current emotions-- express them appropriately.
7	I use class dojo	Clear steps and consequences
8	Immediate consequences	Very structured
9	Call for the behaviour tech	Helps to address students with behaviour issues
10	Call tech for help	

Note: Question 1 in survey

Table 8

Question 2: Do you think the behaviour management protocol has improved from last year?

Responders	After
1	Yes, it is more standardized.
2	More responsible
3	Definitely.
4	I don't know
5	Yes
6	Yes.
7	Yes definitely
8	Yes finally being addressed
9	It seems the same
10	I feel things are more organized.

Note: Question 2 in survey

Nearly all the participants (8 out of 10) agreed that they felt there were positive changes in the school due to the behaviour management protocol which has been initiated this year. Within the behaviour management protocol, the main change was the way in which teachers, staff members and students relate to one another. Prior to the #WeCare, teachers and staff members depended heavily on behaviour technicians, calling for assistance or sending students to the principal's office as soon as issues arose in class. After the #WeCare, teachers and staff members described feeling that there was more organization, and increased teacher confidence in making decisions about consequence implementation for students' disruptive behaviours. Teachers felt that there was more structure and that teachers and they were able to use problem situations as learning opportunities, rather than simply focusing on punitive approaches. However, findings from the surveys and interviews revealed that few teachers were able to link the behaviour management protocol directly with being able to help students improve their social emotional skills. More emphasis on the connection between the behaviour management and helping students improve their social emotional skills can be brought forward as a recommendation for next year.

The Harmony Room was another emergent theme which came out of the research, especially in regard to how teachers and staff used this resource to help students learn self-regulation skills.

Emerging theme four: Harmony Room and self-regulation strategies. Ms. Rita provided an example on how the #WeCare program has helped one of her students in particular

and is an effective demonstration of how the RULER, the behaviour management protocol and the Harmony room have contributed to helping this particular child:

“This child was very frustrated, was not expressive at all, couldn’t express his feelings, and what a change over a year that we’ve had the “We Care” program, he’s come a long way. He’s able to express himself, he’ll tell me when he’s feeling stressed; as for before, he couldn’t do that, and when he would feel like that he would hurt himself... He would scratch himself, he would try to do something to hurt himself. As for now, he knows that if he’s feeling that way, he needs to stop what he’s doing, and he does something else. What I have in place, is I have a Lego center because he loves Legos, that’s his calming down center. So he knows right away when he’s feeling frustrated or angry, he’ll stop what he’s doing and go there, and he’ll just start building something, and that helps him to calm down.”

Ms. Rita created a separate “Harmony space” within her own classroom so that students who needed time to themselves to self-comfort or to regulate their emotions could do so without having to leave the room:

“I know one of my students was using the harmony room. He knew that when he wanted some time away from the kids from the class, he was able to go down. He started using the harmony room and by the end of this year he’s already not having to go anymore.”

Ms. Marie-Lynn explained how the Harmony room was used by her students, and changes which could be implemented in the future so that this resource could be a place where children could practice self-regulation skills regularly, rather than as a last-resort resource to be used in situations of distress or emotional crisis:

“My students have not been using the harmony room too much. Some of them have been invited in because they might have been in some situation, but I think because of the work I do in class already, I don’t think it’s much of a demand for them. But, I would like in the future, I’ve been thinking for next year how to use it, but more not necessarily to solve a crisis, but just go visit. And just to go use it and explore a little bit more with it.”

Mr. Chris describes how he assimilated the Harmony room seamlessly into his behaviour management strategies:

“I’ve used it as many times as I can through the Harmony room. For example, I get called into a situation, the student is having a crisis, and I inform the students that there

are two options: either the harmony cave in the classroom, or the harmony room. Usually they choose the harmony room because they don't want to be near their friends, they feel very embarrassed of what's going on. So they come in here, and then we talk about the mood meter, and then I say 'which one of the (pause) challenge/box/pillars would you like to use' so for example if they're in the red, they usually want to go use something in the green to calm them down; if they're in the blue, they like to create something; if it's that they're too excited, they use green to calm down.... that did happen once with a kid in grade six. So, it's been very good."

Mr. Chris also explains how the students have been using it in the process of self-regulating their emotions:

"They use it when they are in crisis; they use it when they just need a moment to themselves. We have students here who are very sad about the situation at home; we use the Harmony room to readjust them so that they're ready for class. We usually use it right after recess, right before lunch, or right before recess, but usually after lunch or recess. As a lot of things do happen during unstructured time, they come to me and ask if they can use it themselves."

Within the Harmony room, there are many tools that students can use to calm down during a difficult moment throughout the day. These tools are targeted to 21st century learners because they offer many different elements of use. It also allows students to have the right to be autonomous in the selection of how they want to self-regulate. Many of these tools include technological tools such as the motion floor promoting creativity and physical movement as stated in Table 3. A limitation of the study is how the staff members seem to feel more comfortable to use the room with their students whereas the teachers do not. A recommendation for a future study would be regarding to how teachers, staff members and parents can use the interactive harmony room effectively to help promote proactive self-regulation skills in students. The theme of students' emotional self-regulation is further addressed in responses to Question 7 of the survey, as outlined below in Table 9.

Table 9

Question 7: How do you teach your students to self-regulate their emotions?

Responders	Responses
1	Being more aware of the strategies they use.
2	Continue encourage to use the harmony room

3	Implement the ruler method a bit more
4	Use their strategies
5	Breathing and calming strategies
6	Using strategies that best suit the situation
7	Implementing the approach by using the 4 pillars
8	Becoming conscious of the student's current emotions
9	Implementing the approach to using a strategy that works best for them
10	Teaching strategies for appropriate moments

Note: Survey Question 8

Most participants focused on teaching their students emotional self-regulation strategies, as well as having the students tune in to become more self-aware of which of these techniques worked best for them; becoming more conscious of which emotions triggered their behaviours was of particular help to students. Learning to use those strategies which are most appropriate in a given moment and situation may be an additional issue which could be addressed for students in future research. Furthermore, it is of note that few participating teachers specifically identified that they used the RULER and the 4 pillars as tools to promote emotional self-regulation strategies. They stated that it needed more training and time to do so. The school's principal believed that with time, as the climate of the school changes more and more, teachers will see the importance of how emotional intelligence is just as imperative cognitive intelligence.

4.2. Summary

While collecting the data, four emergent themes pointed to the importance of changing the cultural climate of the school to encourage students' SEL skills. These themes included: 1) School climate change, 2) Pedagogy using the RULER approach, 3) Behaviour management for the digital child and 4) Self-regulation strategies. These themes are consistent with previous research as presented within the literature review, and are connected with social emotional learning competencies as outlined in CASEL (CASEL, www.casel.org).

Overall, the answers to the survey questions were too vague and could have been formatted differently to retrieve more content from the responses of the participants. It would have been beneficial to have interviewed the principal. It would have been interesting to see what parents thought of the #WeCare approach as well. Understanding the research from a parental perspective would have brought new content to the findings. Future research can be placed on how the interactive room can be used more efficiently to promote social emotional learning skills such as self-regulation and how it is relatable to 21st century learners.

This emphasis on developing the school climate focused particularly on social-awareness and encouraged students to take the perspective of others and to empathize with their feelings (Taylor, Oberle, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2017). Throughout the project, every three months, the school conducted a general assembly and handed out awards to students who had shown progress consistent with the goals of the #WeCare approach (see Appendix P); students were recognized for their responsible decision-making skills, for the ability to make constructive choices about personal behaviour, and for social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms throughout structured class time and unstructured play time (Taylor, Oberle, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2017).

Constructive feedback from the research findings highlighted the need for parents' more active involvement in the #WeCare approach. Information provided to parents included monthly newsletters which were sent home with students (appendix P) and which described the #WeCare approach, along with links to helpful videos and articles to help parents learn more about the RULER, the new behaviour management protocol, and psychoeducation regarding emotional self-regulation strategies. Additionally, the school's website also provided a descriptive background of the approach along with helpful links and videos. However, future research may need to address proactive means of encouraging parents to become involved within the approach, so as to be able to incorporate these strategies at home.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Data analysis presented in chapter four demonstrates why school climate change is a fundamental component for encouraging the development of SEL skills within 21st century learners. Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, and Pickeral (2009) suggest that school climate refers to “the quality and character of school life ... based on patterns of people’s experience of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures” (p. 10). Research is needed to determine how best to implement social emotional learning within schools and to understand how the quality and character of schools will be affected by teaching SEL as an integrated aspect of the curriculum. EM is the first Anglophone school in Montreal to implement a research-based case study investigating this topic. The following research questions were addressed:

1. How does school climate impact social emotional learning?
2. To what extent does SEL programs such as RULER approach influence a teacher’s experience with social emotional learning?
3. How can a behavior management protocol increase problem-solving strategies within the school?
4. What factors related to the Harmony room help the students learn self-regulation skills according to their teacher?

5.1. Overall summary

While coding the data, essential themes connected SEL with the creation of positive learning environments for elementary school students; the emergent themes highlighted through teachers’ and staff members’ responses included: 1) school climate changes, 2) implementing the RULER approach within pedagogy 3) behaviour management for the digital child, and 4) emotional self-regulation strategies. The principal findings explored within the literature review were confirmed in this study. According to respondents, a positive school climate helped teachers teach SEL skills to students through structured behaviour management strategies, implemented within an inviting learning environment.

The case study findings determined that the SEL intervention resulted in a clear change within the school climate, and teachers and staff members reported being able to see and feel a difference within the school. The focus of behaviour management moved away from punishment and enforcement of consequences towards the learning of SEL skills wherein children were able

to learn from their actions. Teachers were more involved in students' well-being, and students and teachers were more intrinsically motivated to learn about SEL.

How does school climate impact social emotional learning?

School climate is a complex and important construct (Van Houtte, 2005). Many researchers and practitioners have studied this topic (Zullig, Koopman, Pattron, & Ubbes, 2010) due to the fact that “school climate is important because context matters and climate is linked to student’s academic performances, social development, and later life outcomes” (Durlak, Domitrivich, Weissberg, & Gullott, 2015, p. 151). As Elias et al. (1997) stated, a caring school climate is “the pivotal mediator” (p. 840) of academic success, hence focus of the present case study included: the way teachers and staff used the intervention to facilitate change of school climate as a whole, implementation of the behavior management protocol, the use of the RULER approach to help implement SEL in the curriculum, and strategies teachers utilized to help students self-regulate their emotions. Developing a school climate which was conducive to students’ SEL skills was a challenging intervention, and the support of the administration was essential since the project was something the principal strongly believed in.

An important element to help promote positive climate change and positive student outcomes is student support (Brewster & Bowen, 2004). Student support involves enduring fair treatment, asking students if they need help, making sure that students understand the content being taught, and directly communicating with students on their academic progress (Osher, Kendziora, Spier, & Garibaldi, 2014). Furthermore, students need to feel cared for and to build positive relationships with the teachers and staff who are responsible for them. Research also links academic achievement to students’ engagement in building school climate, otherwise described as connectedness, school bonding, and school belonging (Durlak, Domitrivich, Weissberg, & Gullott, 2015), and students’ and teachers’ support and engagement were both identified as important aspects within the present case study’s findings. One of the primary changes to school climate identified by teachers and staff members included students being more supported and engaged following the #WeCare intervention approach, and teachers and staff members who participated voluntarily being especially engaged within the process. The principal of EM school strongly believed that it was crucial to begin with a few teachers who were interested, and that these teachers would then encourage others to participate willingly.

Implementation of the RULER, the behaviour management protocol, and the emotional self-regulation strategies for 21st century learners by teachers and staff warrants further review; to continue the process of developing the school climate begun during the intervention, the school will need to be monitored over time with additional recommendations and improvements to the program being applied by administration and staff in the years to come. Resource materials and a longer-term facilitation plan are in place to ensure that the school can continue to build on the work put in place over the duration of the project (see appendix Q). The school's principal is responsible to implement the facilitation plan throughout the school.

How can a behavior management protocol increase problem-solving strategies within the school?

DiPerna, Lei, Cheng, Hart, and Bellinger (2018) assert that the development of social-emotional competence is important for young children's later life success and well-being (DiPerna, Lei, Cheng, Hart, & Bellinger, 2018); schools need to incorporate these skills organically within their curriculums. Within the #WeCare approach, this was achieved through the behaviour management protocol, which implicitly changed the ways in which teachers viewed and related to behaviour management strategies within the classroom. Much of the focus was on supporting teachers developing confidence in moving their behavioural modification strategies away from punishment, towards encouraging students to develop SEL skills and autonomous self-regulation. Throughout the implementation of the #WeCare approach, it was evident that externalized problem behaviours from students could be more effectively managed through addressing the underlying issues driving these behaviours, and that focusing on the skills, attitudes, and values necessary to acquire social and emotional competence would help students self-manage their behaviour more autonomously. The ways in which teachers and staff members react to and intervene with 21st century learners needs to be adapted to cater to the child's experience and #WeCare offers a way to do so. Rather than resorting immediately to consequences for emotional outbursts or problematic behaviours, a discussion occurs between staff and students wherein children are encouraged to communicate their concerns and underlying feelings; while this helps resolve individual situations involving student conflict, it also engenders long-term consequences in helping students develop problem-solving skills. By changing the behaviour management protocol so that teachers and staff members are more attuned to the underlying messages being communicated behind students' negative behaviours,

the school's approach has become more person-centered (Woltering, & Shi, 2016). Although the participants of the #WeCare case study were only made of teachers and staff members, the intervention was primarily designed to help students through "improv[ing] ... teachers' practices, the intervention may improve children's developmental outcomes, specifically the reduction of children's behaviour problems" (Durlak, Domitrovich, Weissberg, Gullott, 2015, p. 239).

Teachers and staff members used what they liked to call "in the moment" strategies to help students learn and develop problem-solving skills, and a great example of this involves the way the school handles unstructured play behaviour. At the end of every recess and lunch, any students who had an issue or an altercation would line up in a separate line and these children would proceed to the Harmony room or a designated area in the school (depending on the number of students) to report their issue, and students would then actively work at solving it as a group. Once the issue was resolved and learning consequences were put in place, the students would be individually asked to return to their classes.

Behavioural management is not the only strategy helping students build social emotional learning skills; when using the RULER evidence-based curriculum, students were able to learn about themselves through recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and ultimately regulating their feelings. Findings suggest that social and emotional learning in schools can be most effectively implemented through a school-wide SEL approach (Durlak, Domitrovich, Weissberg, & Gullott, 2015), and without the entire school's active engagement and connection with the approach, school climate change may not occur. In the end, the readiness of the teachers and staff members to commit to a process of change, and the type of applied interventions are the most significant factors to the eventual success of any process of school climate development.

To what extent does SEL programs such as RULER approach influence a teacher's experience with social emotional learning?

RULER was determined to be the most suitable evidence-based curriculum program for EM School due to the fact that it was based on emotional regulation and SEL skills which teachers and staff members identified as a prioritized area of development needed by students within the school. In order for SEL programs to work within a school, there needs to be a high level of commitment to developing all students' social and emotional competencies, as well as a belief from staff in the potential benefits of these programs (Durlak, Domitrovich, Weissberg, & Gullott, 2015). With time, teachers and staff members were able to see the benefits of applying

the RULER within the school and expressed how they saw a change in their students in terms of their ability to express themselves openly. Participants particularly liked using the mood meter and the *feeling words* curriculum, and commented that these interventions have helped students improve their emotional skills as well as the classroom social environment in general.

In order to cater to our 21st century learners, technology can offer a means of facilitating the development of SEL in teachers' interactions with students, however, these interventions do not come without ethical concerns which must be considered beforehand. For successful implementation of SEL approaches, additional training and administrative support systems need to be put in place for teachers and staff members (Ransford, Greenberg, Domitrovich, Small, & Jacobson, 2009). One of the many reasons RULER was selected for EM was due to the consolidated technological support structure it provided; this structure provided worldwide access to educational content, lesson plans, research, and skill-building strategies which enhanced communication between the program's users, as well as providing a sustainable support structure for future development (Durlak, Domitrovich, Weissberg, & Gullott, 2015). RULER has created a web-based community for educators to share their work, challenges, successes, and creative ideas for future progress (Brackett & Rivers, 2014).

Although teachers and staff members had access to these online communities throughout the project—including having access to online content, videos, and support resources—these resources were not used as frequently as had been anticipated. Since this represents a potential limitation, future research might investigate additional training options or means of encouraging teacher and staff members' usage of available technological resources, in order to more effectively generate change.

What factors related to the Harmony room help the students learn self-regulation skills according to their teacher?

Self-regulation plays an important role in inhibiting undesirable impulses from influencing everyday behaviour (Hofmann, Baumeister, Förster, & Vohs, 2012). New research in brain development and neuroscience has begun investigating the relationship between brain development and behavioural and emotional self-regulation (Castellanos & Proal, 2012). This research suggests that experiential and applied behavioural models may help children develop better self-regulation skills. Numerous neurological models address children's executive functioning (Vohs & Baumeister, 2016) cognitive processes as being involved in children's

conscious control of their thoughts and actions (Hofmann, Schmeichel, & Baddeley, 2012).

The #WeCare approach outcome developed a safe and supportive environment where children were taught how to recognize and manage their own feelings, to understand the feelings of others, and to feel secure in self-regulating their own emotions. Teachers promoted skills of self-regulation and self-control by modeling these behaviors regularly, and by clearly stating their expectations of students in being able to proactively solve their own conflicts and problems; as Durlak, Domitrovich, Weissberg, and Gullott (2015) highlight, “having children be exposed to a climate that promotes self-regulation strategies is beneficial to their development in social emotional learning” (p. 77). Although teachers and staff members actively promoted students’ use of self-regulation strategies, the case study results showed that students did not always use the tools and materials which were made available through the program. Students were encouraged to use the Harmony room and tools provided in class, but a potential limitation to the project could be that these strategies were not consistently applied by all staff members; this needs to be actively encouraged and some teachers felt they did not receive enough training to feel confident in emphasizing self-regulation strategies with their students. Although some teachers and staff felt that there is more to learn and to practice in order to feel confident within the approach, the results suggest that significant integration progress has been made. For the #WeCare approach to be improved upon further, teachers and staff need to continuously provide students with moments to practice these strategies, and to encourage them to independently utilize the harmony room. While teachers and staff were encouraged to refer to the e-course provided to them during the training module for more resources and strategies, further strategies which might intrinsically motivate staff to address these problems could be explored in the future (Pintrich, 1999; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2012) and with the support of teachers and staff members, research has shown that children are more likely to develop their own intrinsic motivation to succeed (Ransford, Greenberg, Domitrovich, Small, & Jacobson, 2009).

5.2 Final discussions

Through SEL, students acquire and apply the capacities, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage their emotions, to set and achieve their own goals, to feel and demonstrate empathy for others, and to make responsible decisions (Weissberg, Durlak, Domitrovich, & Gullotta, 2015). Using the #WeCare approach has helped change the climate of EM school and has taught the teachers and the staff how to implement SEL within their everyday

interactions with students. The case study's findings were consistent with several previous authors' findings (DiPerna, Lei, Cheng, Hart, & Bellinger, 2018; Van Houtte, 2005). However, in order for healthy change to occur, teachers and staff members need to be receptive and motivated to implement these changes (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2012). Teachers and staff members have to feel comfortable changing the ways in which they connect and build rapport with students, and this is largely dependent on intrinsic motivation to do so, on the involvement of administrators, and on the strategic implementation of any intervention. In order to have consistent implementation across all staff members, and to ensure the modified protocol was sustainable over the long-term, the principal was provided with a list describing how to continue the #WeCare approach (see Appendix Q). However, it is largely the teachers and staff who believe in the approach enough to follow these recommended plans, which will ultimately keep it alive through making it their own.

5.3 Future research

Additional research would be required to generalize the findings towards other schools, both with schools which had already applied SEL interventions in the past, as well as across numerous schools at once to measure whether effects were the same within schools with different climates. It would have been especially interesting to have conducted a mixed method approach using a pre- and post-test effect, to confirm that the results of the approach could be attributed solely to the intervention. It would also be useful to compare changes in academic results in conjunction with changes in social emotional learning climate to determine whether any correlation or association between these factors can be found (Durlak, Domitrovich, Weissberg, & Gullott, 2015). Numerous SEL intervention programs promote positive academic, social emotional, and health behaviours, and future studies could determine whether other SEL interventions could in fact be even more effective than the present #WeCare approach (Greenberg et al, 2003).

Understanding the role and involvement of parents in helping to apply the #WeCare approach would also be an interesting avenue to further explore using a qualitative method with parents that would demonstrate interest in the SEL approach. An interesting avenue would be to learn how the strategies that were learned at school were being practiced or applied within the home environment as well. And if so, what effects this might have on the family.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to study any long-standing effects of implementing SEL approaches in schools through using a longitudinal study design. Would schools continue with the approach even after several years? How would the approach evolve over time, or as teachers and administrators arrived or departed from the school? Would findings continue to be consistent with current research?

5.4 Limitations

A major limitation of the present case study is the lack of participation and engagement in the project by some of the participants. Due to unpredictable circumstances, some participants had to leave the study due to falling sick or taking a preventive pregnancy leave. From year to year, teachers change schools, and this decreased the number of participants who were able to be a part of the research over the entire course of the study. From the original 23 staff and teachers who agreed to participate, data was only collected from the 10 participants who remained throughout the entire length of the project.

Another limitation was the fact that the intervention did not have a clear beginning and ending date from the outset of the study. This made it difficult for the author to know when to stop reflecting on the data so as to improve the project, and when to focus on compiling the results and conclude the study. Since the need for ending the research became apparent—both for academic reasons, as well as organizational demands from the school itself— consolidating the events and ideas from over the entire project was particularly challenging, as these evolved throughout the course of the project. A timeline calendar was created (as shown in Table 4) to help guide the course of the research, which took into account the author’s need to remove herself from the intervention setting during the period when she was compiling and writing chapter 4 and chapter 5 of the thesis.

Another limitation is the fact that the approach used within the #WeCare program was a combination of several evidence-based approaches. There is controversy regarding and recommendations to if modifying the SEL based because “it would no longer be conducted under the conditions in which it was evaluated” (Merrell & Gueldner, 2010, p. 92). It is also pertinent to state that all approaches and programs should be adapted to cater to the cultural and demographic needs of the cliental as was done with the #WeCare approach.

Despite these potential limitations, the research data provided rich insight into how to apply an intervention, which might generate positive school climate change for 21st century

learners. Among the most positive findings was the fact that most teachers and staff within the school—whether actively participating in the research or not—were committed to implementing the recommended changes suggested by the program. Furthermore, all interviewed and surveyed teachers and staff members reported that they saw the value of the intervention’s aims and were proud that the research was being conducted at EM School. More research is needed for insight as to how the implementation was conducted, with relation to the efficiency and value, rather than the implementation check, which refers to *if the* program was actually implemented as intended or designed.

School climate affects children’s ability to learn and to meet behavioural and academic demands (Osher, Kendziora, Spier, & Garibaldi, 2014). School climate affects the quality of school life, which includes supports for students, but also for teachers (Ransford, Greenberg, Domitrovich, Small, & Jacobson, 2009). The development of social-emotional competencies is critical for young children’s lifelong success and well-being (DiPerna, Lei, Cheng, Hart, & Bellinger, 2018, p.1). At EM, the majority of teachers and staff members were open to implementing social-emotional development within their foundational teaching methodology. As new research within the field of neuroscience suggests, the onus for developing strong emotional and behavioral self-regulation does not lie only with the child, but also with the child’s teachers, parents, and community (Woltering & Shi, 2016). Through the #WeCare approach, EM is on the right path to helping their 21st century students develop these essential skills for future success.

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APPENDIX A

Ethics Approval

**CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

Name of Applicant: Elizabeth Triassi
Department: Faculty of Arts and Science \ Education
Agency: N/A
Title of Project: #WeCare Shifting School's Climate to Enhance
Emotional Intelligence for 21st Century Learners
Certification Number: 30008031

Valid From: May 29, 2017 to: May 28, 2018

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Pfaus".

Dr. James Pfaus, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee

APPENDIX B

#WeCare Protocol

Ruler approach at Edward murphy

Supported by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence

Create a climate that helps children increase their emotional intelligence through social emotional learning skills. Our goal is to implement a self-perpetuating program called #WeCare, by training teachers and other staff to ensure lasting success for our students.



École Edward Murphy School

6800. Pierre-de-Coubertin, Montréal (Québec) H1N 1T2
Tel.: (514) 259-8883 • Fax: (514) 259-9993

Step one:

Behaviour protocol:

-Types of issues/concerns and consequences-

Tier 1:

Classroom behaviour

Minor disputes between students (able to diffuse on your own)

Line up issues

Hall way issues

Consequence: Letter in the agenda (*see behaviour alert*)

Tier 2:

Theft

Sexual misconduct (intentional unwanted bodily contact of a sexual nature, exposure of private parts or unwanted sexual attention)

Vandalism (school property or personal property)

Name calling (coarse language)

Disrespect towards fellow students or teachers

Major disputes (need assistance from a technician or principal)

Repeated offences of tier 1

Consequences: Incident report (*see incident report*), recess or lunch reflection time, contact parents (phone call)

Tier 3:

Bullying

Aggression

Racism

Repeated offence of tier 2

Consequences: Parents will be contacted and an in-school suspension will be set in place where the student will be assigned to the technician. He or she will be expected to complete work given by their teacher and behaviour strategy booklet (letter home, or phone call, incident report)

*Teacher will be informed of the consequences set in place of tier 1-3.

**Any issues relating to attendance, child welfare, health concerns, child protection please write an incident report. Parents may be contacted. If needed, measures will be taken such as communicating with appropriate resources.*

Ruler approach

- 1) The behaviour technician will be going into the classes once a week for 10 sessions 30-45 minutes to educate your students and yourselves on the ruler approach. Please sign up on calendar.
- 2) A #WeCare committee will be created and will have the following responsibilities:
 - a. House assembly special activities
 - b. Monthly blurb in news letter
 - c. #WeCare certificates
 - d. Facebook announcements
- 3) Staff charter and class charters are created and presented at the first house assembly.
- 4) Teachers are encouraged to incorporate the RULER in their teaching approach.

Harmony Room

Using the harmony room effectively

The Harmony room is not:

A place for students to go when they are not listening in class

A place for students to go when they do not want to their work

The Harmony room is:

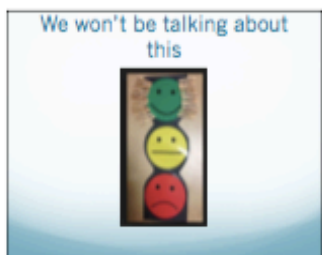
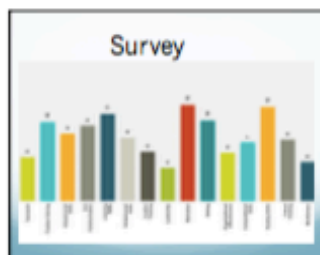
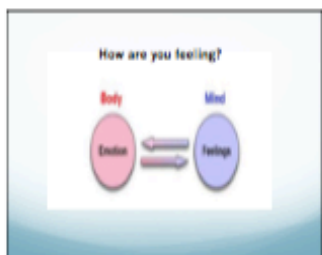
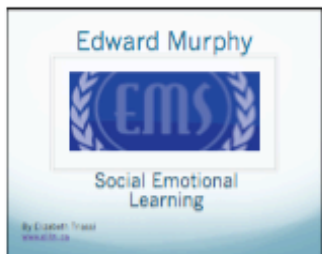
A place for selected students to go to during a booked time to learn social emotional skill and self-regulation skills.

A place where students can go to when in crisis

Teachers are encouraged to schedule time in the Harmony room for an individual or group of students to go to using the sign in sheet. During those times, the behaviour technician will come and pick up the child/children from class and work with them practicing skills for 20-30 minutes.

APPENDIX C

Teacher's Training Workshop



RULER

Answers to the 100+ questions in Emotional Literacy

- R** - Recognising emotions in self and others
- U** - Understanding the causes and consequences of emotions
- L** - Labeling emotions accurately
- E** - Expressing emotions appropriately
- R** - Regulating emotions effectively

The Ruler Method

© Richard G. Anderson et al. © 2010

Red	Blue	Yellow	Green
Angry	Lonely	Surprised	Satisfied
Frustrated	Bored	Ecstatic	Calm
Alone	Shy	Excited	Relaxed
Convinced	Tired	Happy	Rel
Selfish	Worried	Proud	Humble
Furious	Depressed	Delighted	Optimistic
Assayed	Timid	Cherful	Contentable
Spent	Disappointed	Proud	Tranquil
Grossly	Sad	Super	
Tease	Awkward	Joyful	
Upright		Terrible	
Creed			
Amused			
Stressed			

Activity

The Mood Meter

How are you feeling?

Activity

- When you wake up this morning
- When a student did not complete his classwork during a scheduled working period after you gave a thorough explanation.
- After being absent for 2 days.
- The first day of school
- The last day of school
- Before Christmas holidays

Take a Meta-Moment

Safe Space

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3pM5k7m1d>

Teacher's Role

- Continue to connect with the students
- Help build emotional literacy
- Incorporate this in your own classroom's culture
- Implementing it in the pedagogy

<https://vimeo.com/84158583>

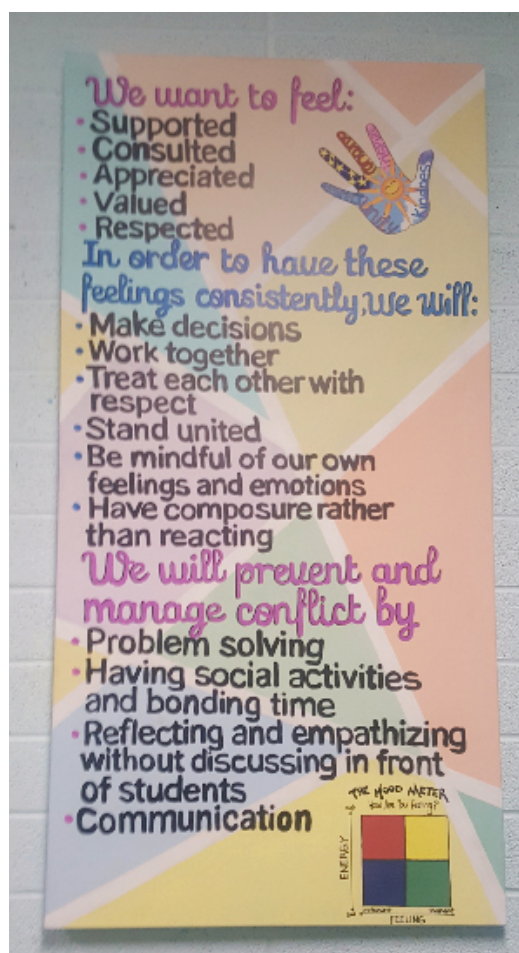
Group work

- How can you incorporate social emotional learning in your pedagogy
- Create and present a mini lecture

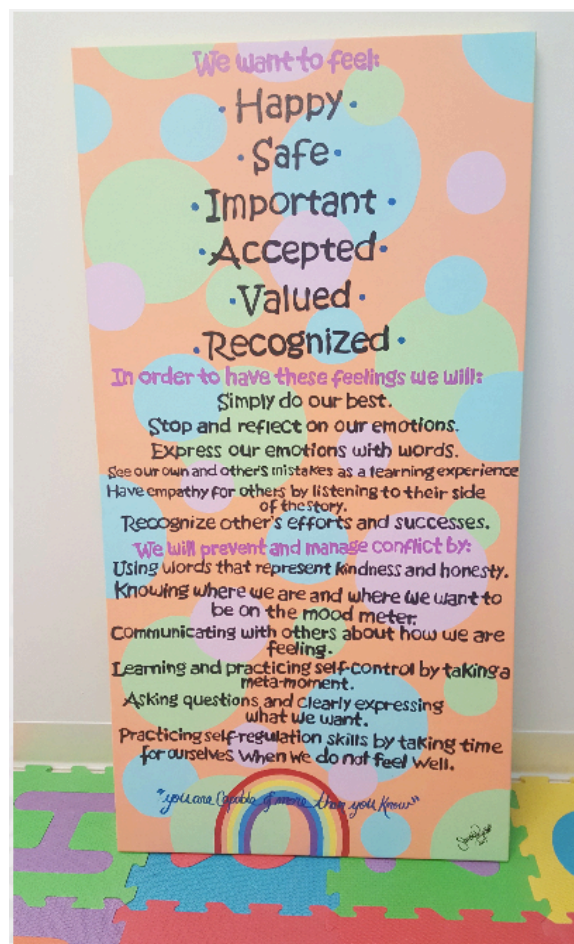
APPENDIX D

School and Staff Charter

Staff Charter:



School Charter:

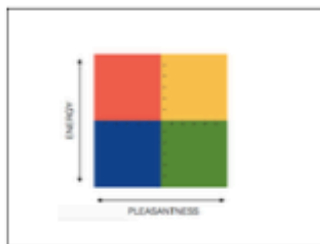
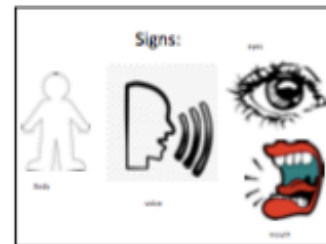
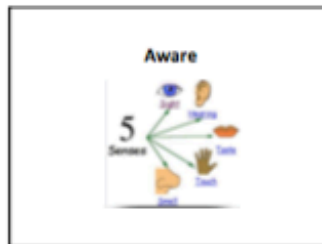
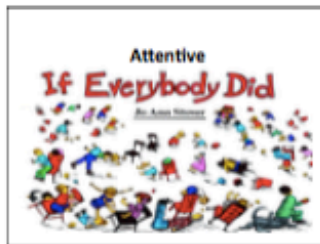
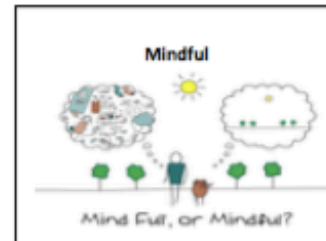


APPENDIX E

#WeCare Session Powerpoint for Students



- Breakdown of sessions**
1. Introduction: moodmeter, feeling and emotions, mindfulness
 2. Meta- moments
 3. Self control and self-regulation
 4. Blue prints



High Energy	Low Energy	High Pleasantness	Low Pleasantness
Surprised	Excited	Happy	Relaxed
Furious	Stressed	Angry	Worried
Frustrated	Disappointed	Lonely	Embarrassed
Awful	Shocked	Amazed	Surprised
Concerned	Worried	Interested	Curious
Sad	Upset	Grateful	Optimistic
Disappointed	Disheartened	Hopeful	Confident
Lonely	Alone	Connected	Relaxed
Awful	Shocked	Amazed	Surprised
Concerned	Worried	Interested	Curious
Sad	Upset	Grateful	Optimistic

Feeling Plot

Red	Blue	Yellow	Green
Angry	Lonely	Surprised	Satisfied
Frustrated	Sad	Excited	Calm
Awful	Blah	Happy	Relaxed
Concerned	Worried	Happy	Zen
Sad	Melancholy	Happy	Humble
Furious	Depressed	Delighted	Optimistic
Amused	Thoughtful	Cherished	Comfortable
Smart	Disappointed	Proud	Tranquil
Grumpy	Sad	Happy	
Tense	Awkward	Joyful	
Uplight		Terrific	
Graced			
Stressed			

activity

<https://www.arts4kids.com/2013/04/20/2013-04-20/>
<https://www.arts4kids.com/2013/04/20/2013-04-20/>
<https://www.arts4kids.com/2013/04/20/2013-04-20/>
<https://www.arts4kids.com/2013/04/20/2013-04-20/>

Behavioral Changes

Anger Rules

It's OK to feel angry BUT

- Don't hurt others
- Don't hurt yourself
- Don't hurt property
- DO talk about it

Where does the photo belong?

Self-regulation

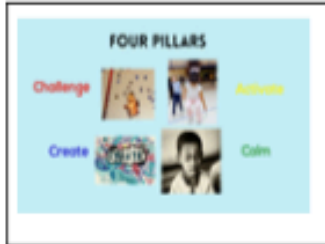
Have self-control

<https://www.arts4kids.com/2013/04/20/2013-04-20/>

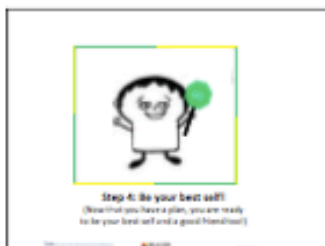
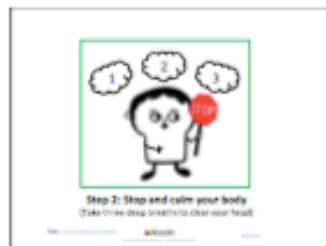
Tools and strategies

© EB-

technological
 tangible
 reliable



CHALLENGE	ACTIVATE	CREATE	CALM
<p>Challenge: Create a goal for yourself that is challenging but achievable. Write it down and post it in a visible place.</p> <p>Activate: Take action on your goal. Break it down into small steps and take them one at a time.</p> <p>Create: Be creative and think of new ways to achieve your goal. Try different things and see what works best.</p> <p>Calm: Take a break and relax. Reflect on your progress and celebrate your successes.</p>	<p>Challenge: Take a break from your goal for a few days. This will help you see if you are truly committed to it.</p> <p>Activate: Take a break from your goal for a few days. This will help you see if you are truly committed to it.</p> <p>Create: Take a break from your goal for a few days. This will help you see if you are truly committed to it.</p> <p>Calm: Take a break from your goal for a few days. This will help you see if you are truly committed to it.</p>	<p>Challenge: Take a break from your goal for a few days. This will help you see if you are truly committed to it.</p> <p>Activate: Take a break from your goal for a few days. This will help you see if you are truly committed to it.</p> <p>Create: Take a break from your goal for a few days. This will help you see if you are truly committed to it.</p> <p>Calm: Take a break from your goal for a few days. This will help you see if you are truly committed to it.</p>	<p>Challenge: Take a break from your goal for a few days. This will help you see if you are truly committed to it.</p> <p>Activate: Take a break from your goal for a few days. This will help you see if you are truly committed to it.</p> <p>Create: Take a break from your goal for a few days. This will help you see if you are truly committed to it.</p> <p>Calm: Take a break from your goal for a few days. This will help you see if you are truly committed to it.</p>



BEST SELF

- What makes you human?
- What are your best qualities?
- How do you make a difference?



Empathy

- What does empathy mean.
- Being in someone else's shoes.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=siUdTEQnU>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p54p-7Yv600>

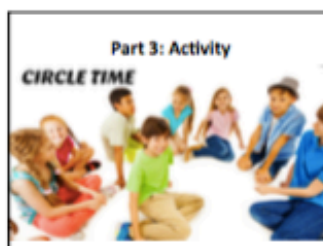
Empathy

- the link between self and others, because it is how we as individuals understand what others are experiencing as *if we were feeling it ourselves*.
- 'feeling for' someone.
- Empathy, instead, is 'feeling with' that person, through the use of imagination.

Song

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPWg298qs_4

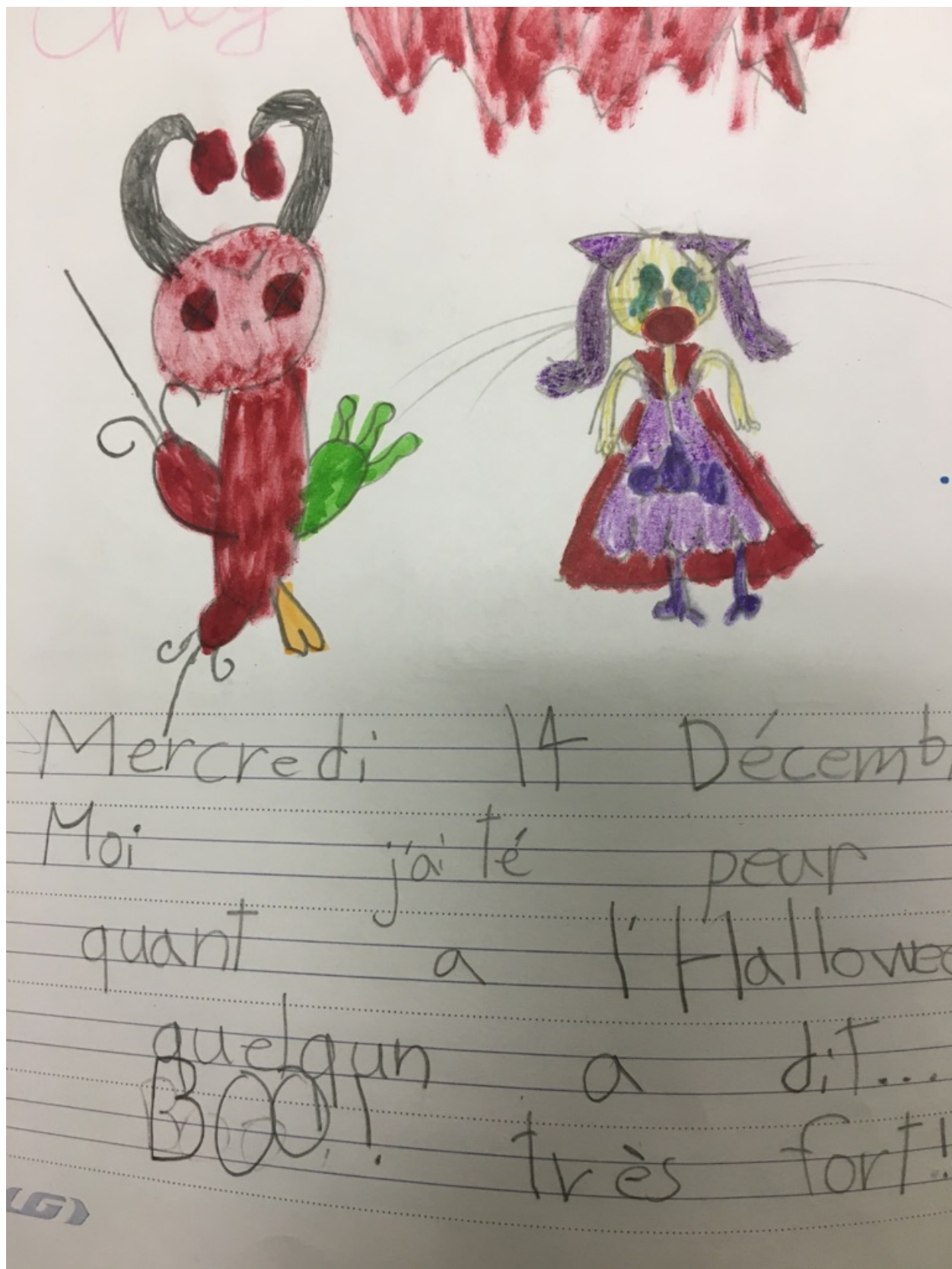
Solve problems with The Blueprint		
Identify	What happened?	
Who was involved?	Who was involved?	Who was involved?
What happened?	What happened?	What happened?
Why did it happen?	Why did it happen?	Why did it happen?
What were the feelings?	What were the feelings?	What were the feelings?
What were the consequences?	What were the consequences?	What were the consequences?
What were the solutions?	What were the solutions?	What were the solutions?
What was the outcome?	What was the outcome?	What was the outcome?



APPENDIX F

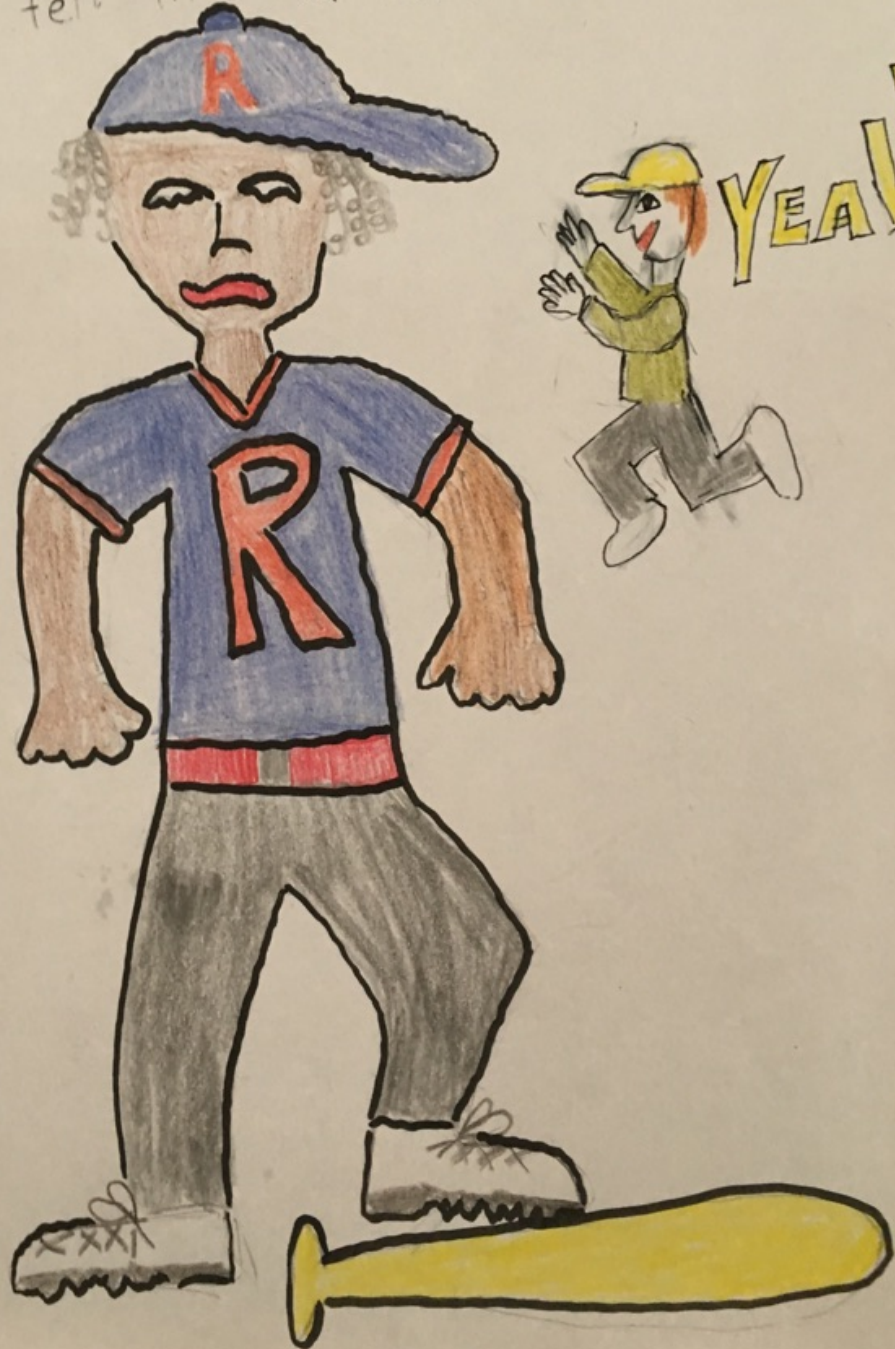
Examples of how teachers applied #WeCare to the Pedagogy





I was very upset when we lost in the finals at baseball. I felt that I did not give my best. I felt like a failure.

We won!



Jimmy

APPENDIX G

Four Pillars

	ACTIVATE	CHALLENGE	CALM	CREATE
In the moment (Immediate)	<input type="checkbox"/> Stretch <input type="checkbox"/> Eat or drink <input type="checkbox"/> Group work <input type="checkbox"/> Group discussions <input type="checkbox"/> Take a walk	<input type="checkbox"/> Brainteasers <input type="checkbox"/> Problem-solving activities <input type="checkbox"/> Have a discussion or a debate <input type="checkbox"/> Brainstorm ideas to solve the problem <input type="checkbox"/> Study hard <input type="checkbox"/> Take a meta-moment <input type="checkbox"/> Take action by talking to someone to help make a difference	<input type="checkbox"/> Use stress balls <input type="checkbox"/> Stress release toys <input type="checkbox"/> Slinky <input type="checkbox"/> Quiet reading <input type="checkbox"/> Breathing techniques <input type="checkbox"/> Yoga meditation <input type="checkbox"/> Positive self-talk <input type="checkbox"/> Mindfulness <input type="checkbox"/> Guided muscle-relaxation exercises <input type="checkbox"/> Find support	<input type="checkbox"/> Create 3D art: <i>Use pencil and markers, paper, paint, clay, moon sand, play-dough, Legos or blocks</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Painting or drawing and talk about it with someone you trust
When in safe place (Long-term)	<input type="checkbox"/> Listen and or sing to upbeat music and dance <input type="checkbox"/> Follow a movement video <input type="checkbox"/> Mini hockey <input type="checkbox"/> Ball games <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise drills <input type="checkbox"/> Karate or punching bags <input type="checkbox"/> Gymnastics or jumping on trampolines	<input type="checkbox"/> Research more about a difficult topic on the computer to solve a problem <input type="checkbox"/> Do a puzzle or strategy building game <input type="checkbox"/> Play a board game <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Listen to calming music <input type="checkbox"/> Pleasant imagery <input type="checkbox"/> Play with little figurine toys <input type="checkbox"/> Petting animals or gentle textures <input type="checkbox"/> Use a pressure pillow <input type="checkbox"/> Resting in a quiet space <input type="checkbox"/> Crisis intervention strategies <input type="checkbox"/> Mindfulness practice	<input type="checkbox"/> Create digital art images, videos or music <input type="checkbox"/> Create a story, poem, music, a song and talk about it with someone you trust <input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX H

Survey Questions & Interview Questions

Survey Questions

- 1) How would you describe the behaviour management protocol that has been put in place?
- 2) Do you think the behaviour management protocol has improved from last year?
- 3) Describe in a few words the school's climate.
- 4) What are the common scenarios that you need to call for assistance.
- 5) What social emotional skills did your students improve in?
- 6) Identify social emotional skills you may have incorporate in your teaching
- 7) How do your students self-regulate their emotions?

Interview questions for teachers and staff members

The interview questions are for individual interviews that will be conducted with four teachers, and the principal separately.

Overall have you seen a change in the school's climate? If so, how?

Have you noticed that the #WeCare approach has affected students in a positive or negative way? Please provide an example.

Describe your experience and the experience of the students having the RULER implemented in your classroom.

Have you implemented the RULER in your teaching. If so how? If not why not?

Do your students use the Harmony room? If so, please provide examples.

Can you describe what you have noticed regarding the behaviour management protocol at EM.

Do you have any ideas on how to improve the behaviour management protocol?

What would you like to see happen next year?

Do you have any additional statements or comments?

APPENDIX I

Consent form



INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Study Title: WE CARE: Shifting School's Climate to Enhance Emotional Intelligence for 21st-century learners

Researcher: Elizabeth Triassi

Researcher's Contact Information: 514-781-8846 etriassi@gmail.com

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Cucinelli

Faculty Supervisor's Contact Information: giuliana.cucinelli@concordia.ca

Source of funding for the study: In affiliation with EM, English Montreal School Board
You are being invited to participate in a case study mentioned above. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

A. PURPOSE

To increase Emotional Intelligence of the students and the teachers by incorporating Social emotional learning strategies throughout the school.

B. PROCEDURES

If you participate, you will be asked to participate in one or more of the following: filling out online survey, participating in a discussion and an individual interview.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

There are no risks associated with this study.

You will benefit from learning about how you can integrate social emotional learning in the school.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

We will gather the following information as part of this research:

- Documentation of meeting discussions
- Online survey responses
- Commentaries from workshops
- Individual Interviews

We will not allow anyone to access the information, except people directly involved in conducting the research. We will only use the information for the purposes of the research described in this form.

The information gathered will be anonymous. That means that it will not be possible to make a link between you and the information you provide.

We will protect the information by keeping it in a password secured computer. Information will also secure by using research software called Dedouse.

We intend to publish the results of the research. However, it will not be possible to identify you in the published results.

I accept that my name and the information I provide appear in publications of the results of the research.

Please do not publish my name as part of the results of the research.

We will destroy the information five years after the end of the study.

F. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

You do not have to participate in this research. It is purely your decision. If you do participate, you can stop at any time. You can also ask that the information you provided not be used, and your choice will be respected. If you decide that you don't want us to use your information, you must tell the researcher before.

As a compensatory indemnity for participating in this research, those who accepted to participate in the individual interview will receive compensation for your time through a 25\$ gift certificate. All expectations will be conducted during working hours. To make sure that research money is being spent properly, auditors from Concordia or outside will have access to a coded list of participants. It will not be possible to identify you from this list.

There are no negative consequences for not participating, stopping in the middle, or asking us not to use your information.

G. PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described.

NAME (please print)

SIGNATURE

DATE

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. Their contact information is on page 1. You may also contact their faculty supervisor.

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or oor.ethics@concordia.ca.

APPENDIX J

Recruitment letter

Dear Staff members,

As you know, we are implementing the #WeCare approach; Shifting School's Climate to Enhance Emotional Intelligence for 21st Century Learners. Those who are interested to volunteer to participate in an individual interview, you are asked to schedule an appointment that best suits your schedule. The interview will be conducted by a third party member that will ask you questions involving your experience with the research project. The interview will be a duration of 40 minutes long and will be audio recorded. You are able to stop at any time. As to your completion of the interview, you will receive a 20\$ gift card. If this is of interest for you please contact Elizabeth at etriassi@gmail.com.

Thank you,

Elizabeth

APPENDIX K

Calendar plan

Tasks	Date	Budget	Collaborators	Comments
Emotional literacy Pilot				
Proposal for Emotional literacy program (pilot project)	01-10-15	N/A	EM	Accepted by the principal
Workshop for teachers introducing the emotional literacy program and the Recruitment for Emotional literacy program.	15-10-15	N/A	Researcher Teachers (20)	One-hour long workshop Six teachers accepted to be part of the pilot project (see PowerPoint)
Application of program	01-01-16	N/A	6 classes	The facilitator went into the class and applied 10-week long 45 min sessions. (See program guide)
Yale two-day training on the ruler approach.	July 13-14 th , 2016	\$13000	Yale centre of Emotional Intelligence EM School:	Principal, receptionist, French Teacher, Special education technician (researcher)
Harmony Room				
Proposal for Harmony room	01-10-15	Salary	Principal, Students	See Appendices: Accepted by principal
Workshop introducing the Harmony room		Salary	Principal Teachers	Done at the same time as the emotional literacy workshop
Development of Harmony room (See video).	10-01-15 to 06-01-16	\$15000	EM EliTri services front line worker	Outside founding
Development of Harmony room e-training course	05-01-16	\$250	Principal, front line worker	With the use of Easy-generator
Task (not for research)				
Online survey for teachers on the behaviour management & Harmony room.	06- 15- 26 th 2016	N/A	Teachers Principal	With the use of Survey monkey Consulting from principal
Reflection and re-planning				
Review of surveys	07-25-16	N/A	Teachers	
Review and recommendations for the following year description of the needs	08-04-16	N/A	Principal, teachers	

Tasks (Action)	Date	Budget	Collaborators	Comments
Emotional literacy				(Evidence)
Meeting to discuss a plan of action	04-08-16	N/A	Principal Staff Head teacher	
Workshop training for teachers (teachers need to complete the pre-course prior to this)	29-08-16	N/A	Teachers Principal	2-hour workshop
Behaviour management protocol See appendix C	04-10-16	N/A	Staff Principal	Using data collected from the survey
Launch of new approach	02-09-16	N/A	Principal Students Teachers Staff	
Teacher assistance in application of approach Academic calendar training	All year	N/A	Teachers Staff	
Harmony room				
An e-training manual on the harmony room and beh protocol	06-2-17	\$256 (software)	Child care workers Technician	
Schedule for Harmony room use	01-09-16	N/A	Teachers	Staff are expected to schedule special use time

Tasks (data analysis and collection)	Date	Budget	Collaborators	Comments
Anonymous survey for teachers and staff	05-06-17	N/A	Teachers, staff, researcher	Survey Monkey
Interviews with teachers and staff	01-06-17	N/A	Teachers, Researchers	Selection of 3 students

Tasks (reflection & re-planning)	Date	Budget	Collaborators	Comments
Review all data	01-06-17	N/A	Researcher	
List of recommendations for the following year Review with principal	01-06-17	N/A	Researcher, Principal, committee	
Creation of video summarizing #WeCare	01-06-17	N/A	Researcher, Principal	

APPENDIX L

Email questionnaire request 2017

Good afternoon,

As you know, we have been implementing the #WeCare approach all year and last year too. Like anything new, change takes time, effort and persistence. Firstly, I want to thank you all for the work you have been doing to help this initiative succeed.

The main goal of this program is to help increase our students' emotional intelligence. This helps them to identify and understand their emotions, to show empathy and to self-regulate. Since you have been working with Elizabeth to help implement the associated strategies, we now need your feedback. The following are questions to help understand the process of how it is helping our students. The questions will emphasize on the behaviour management protocol, the use of the Harmony room and the RULER approach. Please complete the survey at the link below by this Friday, May 12th. The survey is anonymous and should take under 5 minutes.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Y8L9WLF>

Let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you!

Cristina

APPENDIX M

Emerging themes and codes

School Climate:	Social emotional Learning	Behaviour management
How it used to be: Needs more support Complicated Do not feel ready for change How it is: Needs more training Great experience Safe	Self-management Responsible decision making skills Building relationships Self-awareness Social-awareness	Problem-solving Digital child Child wellbeing Increase communication
Pedagogy	Self regulation	
Ruler Approach Recognize Understand Label Express	4 pillars Activate Challenge Calm Create Emotional regulation: Self comforting Distraction Cognitive regulation Cognitive regulation Self-rationalizing Harmony room	

APPENDIX N

Interview Volunteer Student Letter

My name is Stephanie da Costa and I am approaching my third and final year of my Bachelor's degree in Psychology at McGill University. I am interested in disorders that children face such as ADHD, oppositional defiant disorder, autism spectrum disorders, and emotion regulation problems, and seeing the transition of helping them becoming functional in schools or in their homes. I am interested in helping with self-regulation of children's emotions and having them apply it to their everyday lives, especially helping them at school when having to communicate with teachers and classmates. I would like to learn how to develop and implement a program specific to each child to help improve their self-regulation and self-control in terms of learning and improving their behaviours at home. All information that I observe will be confidential and used as a learning tool to further develop my knowledge of this field.

APPENDIX O

Newsletter



The Spirit of Giving at EMS:
We are continuing to collect non-perishable foods, household goods and toys for various foundations. Please give generously! The collection ends on December 14th.

Winter Attire:
The snow and cold weather have arrived! Please ensure that your child has the proper attire; boots, snowsuits, and winter accessories are a must for all students. If you have winter-wear that your child has outgrown, please send them in and we will put them to good use.

Daycare Homework Program:
As part of the EMS daycare, students have access to a homework program throughout the year. All parents have the option to register their children for the daycare program at a cost of \$35.00 per week which offers homework assistance by one of the daycare educators. If you would like to register your child for daycare, please contact Joanne at 514-259-0050.

Our WE CARE Program:
Our emotional intelligence program continues and the students are learning so much about their emotions and behaviours. You may want to ask them what "quadrant" they're in on the Mood Meter and see what they can teach you!

House Assembly:
On December 22nd, we will be holding our first House Assembly of the year! Students are asked to wear a top in their house color for the entire day (with navy blue bottom). If you are unsure what house your child belongs to or what color he or she should wear, please write a note to the homeroom teacher to inquire.

Breakfast with Santa:
As the holidays approach, we at EMS are preparing to welcome Santa Claus himself! On Friday, December 23rd, students will celebrate Santa's arrival to EMS with a special holiday breakfast at 8:30am. It will also be a pajama day so we ask that all students wear their comfiest pjs! We ask that they wear a pajama that includes both a top and bottom rather than a one-piece. Also, tank tops, shorts, and dresses are prohibited and shoes must be worn with their pjs.

Volunteers:
Parents and guardians who are available during the week of December 19th to set up for Santa's arrival are asked to contact PPO by email at emsppo@hotmail.com. We hope you'll join us in spreading holiday cheer!

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JANUARY

Welcome Back!

We take this opportunity to wish all of our students and families a very healthy and happy 2017! We look forward to an exciting and fulfilling second half of the year!

Breakfast with Santa:

Our Breakfast with Santa was a great success! A big thank you goes out to our amazing PPO and Mr. Rocco for helping to organize the delicious and fun-filled event. We also thank Santa himself for spending the day here at EMS and for the wonderful presents he gave to our students.

New Breakfast Program:

EMS is partnering up with The Breakfast Club of Canada to offer a breakfast program for our students. You will be receiving a participation letter this week in your child's agenda. Please complete it and return it by the specified date.

Our WE CARE Program:

As you know, our WE CARE program has been helping our students learn about their emotions and how to manage them effectively. Please see the attached information sheet for suggestions on how to practice these skills at home as a family. Developing these skills can have a significant impact on your child's emotionally, social and academic wellbeing!

Read to Me, Read to You:

Our Read to Me, Read to You tradition continues! This month's event will take place on Tuesday, January 17th at 8:10 am. This is a great opportunity to visit your child's class and see how much they are learning. The students are excited to welcome you!

New Student and Sibling Registration:

Sibling registration will take place the last week of January (January 30th to February 3rd) for any child who already has a sibling registered in our school. Registration for new families will take place the first week of February (February 6th - 10th).

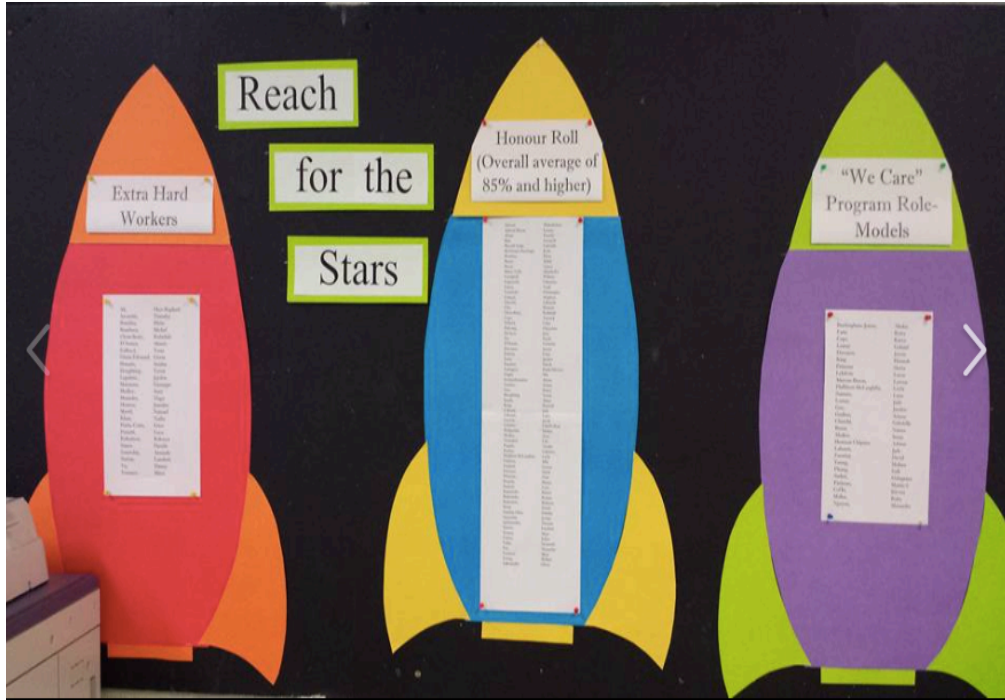
Anyone wishing to register their child should call the office to make an appointment. Also at the time of registration, the following documents (originals) will be required: birth certificate, Medicare card, vaccination booklet, and birth certificate of the parent who attended English school (or English Eligibility Certificate).

Open House:

We will be holding a second Open House date for new families on Monday, January 16th. Interested families can call the front office for their appointment. If you have friends or family member who might be interested, please help us spread the word!

APPENDIX P

Honour roll photo



APPENDIX Q

How to maintain the #WeCare approach within the school climate

Create a committee that involves teachers and staff members. Have them be responsible for:

- House assembly special activities (examples: presentation of class charters, emotion games, video presentations on how their class CARES....)
- Monthly #WeCare blurb in news letter
- #WeCare assembly certificates (see below)
- Facebook announcements (pictures)

Have a teacher and staff member meeting at the beginning of the year describing to the #WeCare: RULER approach, behaviour management protocol, and how to use the Harmony room, review of staff charter.

Every teacher needs to have their class prepare and present their class charter at the first house assembly.

Request that all staff member take the 30 minute #WeCare e-course.

- For teachers:
<https://elearning.easygenerator.com/9ead015d-87fe-4246-bbcc-6663caebcf62>
- They are also welcome to review:
<http://rulercommunity.yale.edu/2017-anchors-institute-powerpoint/>
- related articles:
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0BzUa3GOL4vbTeTFVNjdUZms3SW8>

Request that all staff members to refer to the online RULER community on how to apply ruler in the curriculum

- <http://rulercommunity.yale.edu>
- How to sign up:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B9FjrdJmgZwRSFVNZTNzdkthU0U/view>
- Manual:
<http://rulercommunity.yale.edu/?s=implementation+guide&submit.x=0&submit.y=0&submit=Search>
- or
<https://www.nprinc.com/ruler-products/>

Send out a blurb of the #WeCare approach in the monthly newsletter.

Invite parents to take the e-course:

- <https://elearning.easygenerator.com/2c3feb11-2ec1-4de3-b72a-f8a7790d02b0>

Post an image about the #WeCare approach once a month on Facebook.

Send an email out to teachers on types of qualities to look for when selecting the students for the #WeCare award that will be presented at the school sessional assembly.

Have a schedule put in place for the behaviour technician to do classroom sessions once a week assisting on the RULER approach and to help develop social emotional skills for students (approx. 12 sessions per class).

Have a schedule posted in the Harmony room with times that the behaviour technician is available to supervise children.

Continue with the care rangers (peer mediation program)

Facilitate two - 30 minute follow-up staff meetings (one in January and one March) to review the #WeCare approach and discuss new upcoming projects.

Upkeep the Harmony room annually. Maintain the bubble wall, update the interactive materials that children can use as tools to self-regulate their emotions proactively (refer to the 4 pillars). ****I could send you a list of purchases. I also have materials to donate.*

#WeCare Protocol

Ruler approach at Edward murphy

Supported by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence

Create a climate that helps children increase their emotional intelligence through social emotional learning skills. Our goal is to implement a self-perpetuating program called #WeCare, by training teachers and other staff to ensure lasting success for our students.



École Edward Murphy School

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Behaviour protocol:

-Types of issues/concerns and consequences-

Tier 1:

Classroom behaviour

Minor disputes between students (able to diffuse on your own)

Line up issues

Hall way issues

Consequence: Letter in the agenda (*see behaviour alert*)

Tier 2:

Theft

Sexual misconduct (intentional unwanted bodily contact of a sexual nature, exposure of private parts or unwanted sexual attention)

Vandalism (school property or personal property)

Name calling (coarse language)

Disrespect towards fellow students or teachers

Major disputes (need assistance from a technician or principal)

Repeated offences of tier 1

Consequence: Incident report (*see incident report*), recess or lunch reflection time, contact parents (phone call)

Tier 3:

Bullying

Aggression

Racism

Repeated offence of tier 2

Consequences: Parents will be contacted and an in-school suspension will be set in place where the student will be assigned to the technician. He or she will be expected to complete work given by their teacher and behaviour strategy booklet (letter home, or phone call, incident report)

*Teacher will be informed of the consequences set in place of tier 1-3.

**Any issues relating to attendance, child welfare, health concerns, child protection please write an incident report. Parents may be contacted. If needed, measures will be taken such as communicating with appropriate resources.*

Ruler approach

- 5) The behaviour technician will be going into the classes once a week for 10 sessions 30-45 minutes to educate your students and yourselves on the ruler approach. Please sign up on calendar.
- 6) A #WeCare committee will be created and will have the following responsibilities:
 - a. House assembly special activities
 - b. Monthly blurb in news letter
 - c. #WeCare certificates
 - d. Facebook announcements
- 7) Staff charter and class charters are created and presented at the first house assembly.
- 8) Teachers are encouraged to incorporate the RULER in their teaching approach.

Harmony Room
Using the harmony room effectively

The Harmony room is not:

A place for students to go when they are not listening in class

A place for students to go when they do not want to their work

The Harmony room is:

A place for selected students to go to during a booked time to learn social emotional skill and self-regulation skills.

A place where students can go to when in crisis

Teachers are encouraged to schedule time in the Harmony room for an individual or group of students to go to using the sign in sheet. During those times, the behaviour technician will come and pick up the child/children from class and work with them practicing skills for 20-30 minutes. Teachers are also encouraged to use the room at their convenience with their students as well.