

Final Report for Teacher and Student Learning at ONS with Jenifer Kagan

Project SMART Topics in Education: Social Emotional Learning in High Needs Schools

Teacher Participant Names: Lisa Chapman, Mary Ellen Long, Kristin McClary at Grimshaw Elementary

Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan:

We added the following books in addition to original books:

Cool Down and Work Through Anger

Angry Octopus

When I feel Angry

Llama, Llama, Mad at Mama

Anh's Anger

Teachers Pay Teachers: How We Felt Yesterday (Emergent reader that discussed feelings)

Analysis of Data on Teacher Learning: We examined our written reflections and found the following:

As we did each lesson and read/discussed various stories, we realized that children at this age did not have strategies to deal with the many emotions that they may encounter at school. For example, some of their problems were quite simple, such as not knowing what to say to someone when they get upset. Prior to the lessons, some of the students were more physical in solving their problems and after the lessons we saw more students taking time to calm down and then tell their peers how they were feeling.

Other students really benefitted from the objects in our "Cool Down" corner such as stress balls, sparkly bottles, stuffed animals, and often asked to go there when they were upset. We found that giving them a time limit in the "Cool Down" corner helped alleviate the problem of spending too much time there which would be unproductive.

Analysis of Data on Student Learning: We examined our focus student's daily behavior charts and found the following:

On days that they were having a difficult time, or behavior was escalating, we encouraged them to make the choice of using the "Cool Down" corner. We noticed that when the students were using the "Cool Down" corner, that their behavior was improving where previously it would have escalated. In addition, students also began to ask to use the "Cool Down" without being told/encouraged, & were able to make better choices. Students were also better able to express themselves and explain why they were upset, whereas in the past they weren't able to do this and didn't know how to cope with their feelings. Through the use of the many choices of literature, students were able to identify different characters from the story and use it as a comparison to how they were feeling. For example, when we read "When Sophie Gets Angry" students were able to discuss when and how they have felt like the character Sophie. (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

Overall, after reading the literature and introducing the "Cool Down" corner, our students were better able to identify their feelings and got in less trouble because they had strategies to help them cope!!!!

Teacher Participant Names: Patty Kenney, Jana Silvestro, Courtney Diefendorf, Kelly Davidson at C. Grant Grimshaw Elementary

Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan:

We added more literature that would enrich the list of books already included, but in general, we stuck closely to our team action plan.

One Green Apple by Eve Bunting
The Hundred Dresses by Eleanor Estes
Marvin and the Meanest Girl by Suzy Kline
Shiloh by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

These stories all have a strong element of empathy.

Analysis of Data on Teacher Learning: We examined our written reflections and found the following:

We came to the conclusion that all of our students are a work in progress! Empathy does not form over a quick period of time. We feel confident that we provided them with a significant amount of exposure to the concept of empathy. The exposure was through whole group and individual discussion, reading literature, reflective journal responses, and role play. After discussing our written reflections, we found that students who had entered our classrooms showing empathy towards others were more likely to make stronger connections during role play, class discussions and reflections.

Analysis of Data on Student Learning:

We examined and compared our written responses, story boards, graphic organizers, and class discussions and found many similarities with our classes.

A common occurrence we found with both second and third grade students was that although they could identify the conflicts, emotions, and appropriate responses in both written response and verbally, transferring these concepts were proven difficult in real life situations. One example was during a class discussion on "The Invisible Boy," second graders felt so sorry for the main character who was having a hard time making connections with other children. They did not invite him to play. They wrote a written reflection stating they would make him feel better by including him each day at recess. Shortly after, our class had recess and there was a student asking a group of kids to play, and they all responded no. They did not make the connection that they were just as guilty as the children in the story for isolating a child from their group.

We also discovered that many of our students could make personal connections to problems in the stories, offer appropriate solutions, but chose inappropriate solutions in their own situations. For example, in the story *Marvin and the Meanest Girl*, two students relayed that they had been called names, just like the main character. Although responses to how to react were to walk away, ignore, and tell the person to stop, students said they just called names back in their own situations.

Another student example that occurred in class was after empathy videos on Class Dojo (behavior management and parent communication app), discussions and journal reflections, students were able to immediately identify the lack of empathy that was shown within a series of episodes. However, later that same afternoon, two students became upset with their classmates in a math game because they were not winning. This data supports the fact that although this age group is able to identify and explain what empathy is and know the "right" thing to do, when placed in day-to-day situations where the main focus is not on being empathetic, they default back to their habitual behavior/reaction without thinking about standing in someone else's shoes or thinking about how their actions affect others.

We all felt that empathy is something that needs to be taught throughout the year to build a foundation and strengthen the ideas associated with understanding what it is like to be in “another person’s shoes.” Transference can only happen with that strong foundation.

Teacher Participant Name: Lori Mucha

Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan:

I added the book Decibella and worked on using appropriate voice volume because teachers had reported this as being a concern in several of the classrooms that I take students for speech services.

Analysis of Data on Teacher Learning: We examined our written reflections and found the following:

The children loved the book My Mouth is a Volcano and it elicited some great conversation. We spent time reading a social story that talked about interrupting and blurting out. The social story included a strategy that help control interrupting and blurting out. (Stop, Take a deep breath and pretend to breathe out your words into the air, Wait for your talking turn, Take a deep breath and imagine breathing your words back in, Talk) The students love practicing this strategy. The groups did worksheet packet that required them to draw a picture of a time when they were interrupted, a picture of how it felt to be interrupted and a picture of them using a strategy so that they don't interrupt someone else. Again, discussing these pictures helped us to bring up different situations that may have occurred for each student and solutions. I also read the book Decibella with several groups of students. The book gave the groups several opportunities to practice 6 appropriate voice volumes in different situations. We then did a packet in which they were given different situations and they had to pick the appropriate voice volume. We also did a sheet that required them to put the voice volume from quietest to loudest.

Analysis of Data on Student Learning:

After reading My Mouth is a Volcano teachers reported that they saw more of an awareness about interrupting among several of the students and that one of the students on the autism spectrum was much more relaxed and did not always seem so anxious to be the first to share his thoughts in small group discussions.

After reading Decibella I now use these same terms in small group to address voice volume and the students have become familiar with the terms used in the book. They are practicing carrying over the voice level to the classroom. Teachers have reported that these students continue to need to reminders, but they are familiar with the terminology used in the book and are quick to correct voice volume.

Teacher Participant Name(s): Mackenzie McElhannon, Sunshine Ouimette, Simone Thornton

Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan:

Changes occurred as follows:

- Addition of McMahan/ Ryan child advocacy center presentation: The instructor Ms. Ryan presented four lessons focusing on:
 - Module 1: Healthy Feelings
 - Module 2: Safety Around Strangers
 - Module 3: Physical Safety
 - Module 4: Personal Body Safety

- Each module was presented to the children in their classroom setting for 25- 30 minutes including a follow up worksheet and newsletter for each participant.
- The original start and end date of the project was amended due to Cultural Ceremonies, Spring Dinner, Community Give and other projects for various celebrations.
- In addition the first grade students focused on their feelings. As to learn things, our minds must be focused and our emotions need to “feel in balance”. Due to an unforeseen school situation, it was in best practice to discuss emotions and how to cope with them in a positive manner. I did not want students to feel fear, anger, anxiety, frustration or sadness without knowing how to successfully implement strategies and process these emotions.

Analysis of Data on Teacher Learning: We examined our written reflections and found the following:

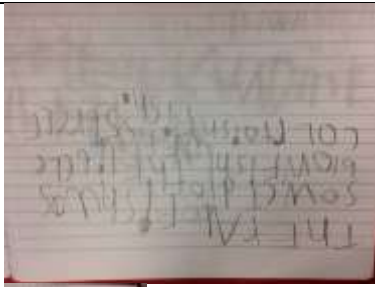
Teacher learning occurred in the following ways:

- Daily discussions after each lesson topic allowed for reflection and review of material presented. The conversation revealed a need to re-address the topic or portions of the presented material that the team felt was not obtained (either through conversation or observation of student written material).
- All material listed was not easily obtained or located in our local school library . In several instances the material had to be changed and another book was used in it’s place. For examples we listed the use of the book: “The Crayon Box That Talked” by Shane Derolf we replaced the book with “Making Friends Is An Art” by Julia Cook we also amended the lesson and added a craft that can be viewed on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MQQyUy2HBrq> and www.elementarymatters.com
- First grade we completed daily worksheets and discussed the “emotion of the week”. Discussions led to what situations make them feel this particular emotion and how do we deal with it. In addition we watched first grade friendly videos on each particular emotion and read books off the website <https://myon.com> together.

Analysis of Data on Student Learning:



We examined our journals and found the following:
Our students love their families and honor their traditional names



We examined our journals and found the following:
Our students love their friends and are really excited to share!!!



We examined our journals and found the following:
Our students listened to the stories and found the meaning.



First grade data will be hard delivered to Professor Kagan. This data will demonstrate that by teaching how to deal with our emotions assists in proper communication and body language. Through our worksheets I found the following:

- *Our students were not always positive what emotion they were feeling and why.
- *Students were very passive about apologizing for a mistake as they were never properly taught how to.
- *Some feelings made us cry for different reasons and that is ALL RIGHT.
- *Helping others at home or in the community make us feel good!
- *Ways to be good friends and how to emotionally deal with friendships.

Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan:

Action:

Cultivate and support student learning with a SEL framework in a third-grade classroom. The students participate in three impulse control activities that reinforce safe, positive learning, and enhances their ability to succeed in school. Each activity consists of students sharing their prior knowledge through pre-discussion conversations as a group, engaging in the activity, and post discussion, where students respond to discussion questions through class discussion and/or written responses.

Changes:

We introduced the new phrase “impulse control” to the students first, showed them the poster and defined it. We then gave examples of times in our lives when we needed to exert impulse control. The students were then given scenarios and asked what they would do in each situation. After the pre-discussion, we started with the “Freeze Game” as the first activity, because it gave them more of an introduction to the concept. The last activity was changed to “Ready, Set, Go!” because it gave them the chance to use all the strategies they had learned.

Analysis of Data on Teacher Learning: We examined our written reflections and found the following:

Our reflection upon the implementation of impulse control activities yielded results that support student learning in a third-grade classroom. The activities of *Freeze Game*, *Principal Wild Says*, and *Ready, Set, Go* reinforce focusing, ignoring distractions, following instructions, completing tasks on time, and developing positive relationships. The implementation of these activities helped students become more aware of their own thinking and actions.

During *Freeze Game*, students practiced controlling their behaviors and resisting something that was tempting to them. The concept of “freeze,” when the music stopped appeared to be rather simple for a majority of the students. With continued practice, some students seemed to build their own confidence and move around more freely because they enjoyed challenging themselves. However, once the added incentive, of donuts was introduced, a few students could not resist the distraction. A couple students who, we least expected reacted without hesitation to the distraction.

The activity *Principal Wild Says*, encouraged students to remain focused on a task and resist distractions from their classmates. Students enjoyed playing the “principal” role and being distracting to one another. This activity, however, seemed to be the easiest for the students to maintain attention. Very few students were distracted by their peers and needed to start over. This also appeared to be associated with competition, as the students reported that they didn’t want to be called out by their peers.

The game, *Ready, Set, Go* challenged students to pay close attention to important information. Many students shared through discussion and their written responses that they had to practice good listening skills throughout this activity. This game also brought out the competitiveness among the students. We discovered that the impulsiveness for a few of the students was based on the idea that they were running from one cone to the other and wanted to beat their classmates. It was always the same couple of students who repeatedly had to start from the beginning as we continued to play the game.

At the end of all the activities we reflected on the behavior of the students in general. When the activities were first presented they were taken lightly and students were more likely to get caught not following the rules. However, as the activities continued and the students had more practice, most became more serious about them and demonstrated much more concentration than they had in the beginning. This was especially true with the last activity, *Ready, Set, Go*, where most of the students were able to maintain attention, had less false starts and were able to cross the finish line together.

Analysis of Data on Student Learning:

We examined the students' responses to post-discussion questions and found the following:

As associated with the *Freeze Game*, all but one student said that it was easy to stop and freeze when the music paused. When asked what helped them freeze the first time, there were a variety of answers some of which included: football practice, playing freeze tag games in the past, and "thinking of my happy place". During the second round of Freeze Game students were enticed with donuts. They all agreed that with the donuts, the game became more challenging. When offered the donuts, students shared that they moved because they wanted the donut when offered and didn't think it was part of the game. During whole group discussion, student responses reinforced the objective of the game. All students had the opportunity and shared experience of trying to maintain focus and accomplish a task even when tempted with a pleasing distraction. In the end, students learned that patience is rewarding too, as each of them enjoyed a donut for their effort with the activity.

The *Principal Wild* activity resulted in whole group, shared discussion. Students were asked to follow directions when encountered with a distraction (i.e. one of their classmates talking to them) and when asked if it was difficult to follow Principal Wild's directions while their classmate was talking to them, 2 said they couldn't concentrate, and the other 8 said that it wasn't very difficult. When asked what strategies were used many said that they didn't look at the distractor and concentrated on listening for the directions. Some said that they totally ignored the distractor as if he wasn't there. When asked if they thought they were ever a "distractor" in class, 5 said "yes", 3 said "sometimes" and 2 said, "No", that they never try to distract other students when they are working.

The last impulse control activity, *Ready, Set, Go* gave students an opportunity to pay close attention to the words spoken to them, ("Go") in order to run to the first cone. Each student's written response indicated that it was hard to wait until the leader was done talking, before they could react. However, if the student did not wait, the speaker could say a different word, and it would be a false start for the student. As a result, the student would have to start over at the beginning. A majority of the students shared through discussion that a strategy they had to use was to be a very good listener. It was difficult because the speaker always used words that sounded similar to "go," especially words with the same first sound. We noticed that the two same students always had the false starts during the activity. In addition, this game brought out the competitiveness among the students, as they had to race to the next cone. Some students who do not normally exhibit impulsive behaviors in the classroom did during this type of activity.

The impulse control activities that the third-grade students actively engaged in reinforced self-control strategies that they need throughout their lives. As they reflected in their writing and class discussion, they began to realize that each of these activities required strategies that they are always encouraged to use for self-control. Also, as they reflected, they began to show an awareness of their own thinking in a way that was new to them. The students had the opportunity to share their ideas and listen to their classmates. They found that some experiences were similar, and some were different. By doing this, they learned new strategies that they could apply in many situations that occur with their peers, teachers, and throughout their lives.

Teacher Participant Name: JoAnne Powless

Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan:

The goal of this project was to increase understanding and management of student emotions. We started our many discussions about how characters emotions affect their behaviors. We then transitioned to conversations about our own emotions and what kinds of things we can do to help calm ourselves or rev ourselves up. The class used GoNoodle as a resource for calming activities if coming from an active recess or more active movement if coming from a recess like computer or music. I guided the classroom conversations to what kinds of things that we can think about when we feel down or stressed. Students came on their own with thinking about fun activities that they get to do when outside out school. This provided the group conversation with many things to discuss and it was great to see how varied the

responses were and how accepting and interested they all were in the topic. I then touched based with Chris and Jeff regarding what they were experiencing in Art Class. In art they were already on a path that discussed what they like about themselves so our writing pieces fit in well with the art project.

Analysis of Data on Teacher Learning:

Students were initially invited to share their activities with their tables, they were given time to each share about their expertise and ask questions of each other. After a few minutes of lively sharing the students then began the brainstorming process about writing down as many quick jots as they could about their topic.

During the next session, students returned to the writing process to tease out three main ideas. It was during this time that I noticed that the students wished to have a table talk time. They liked sharing and they enjoyed that their peers seemed excited and interested to know more about their chosen activity. I began to incorporate more mini talk times before each writing session, I believe that they transitioned much easier into the actual writing part and seemed to do so with more ideas at the ready.

When writing became tedious and frustrating it was helpful to return to earlier conversations about why they chose the topic. Many times, it was a lack of vocabulary and knowledge about how to accurately convey their feelings about the chosen activity. Mini lessons were needed along the way to teach students how to better express their thoughts on a topic they cared deeply about.

While it is common knowledge that to engage students in writing teachers should incorporate their interests. However, I learned that not only writing about interests but to connect their writing to deeper conversations and sharing about themselves seemed to boost self-esteem and confidence in themselves and their writing. This also seemed to connect students to their peers and I found students that do not normally gravitate to each other were able to have enjoyable conversations with one another.

Analysis of Data on Student Learning:

Students were able to choose the activity that they felt amazing while engaged in it. During morning meetings, I began to informally ask, "What would you love to do if you have more time? What types of activities bring you joy? What would you rather be doing right now? What makes you feel amazing while you are doing it?" Students enjoyed sharing each day. During writing time I reminded the students about the previous day's discussions and suggested that maybe if we wrote about the activities we liked while learning about writing process, then writing might be easier. Each student chose one activity to write a five paragraph essay about. The students were the experts in each of their activities and were proud to share their knowledge while learning about the writing process.

Since that time, I have referred back to the essay when writing on a new topic. When I reminded them what they wrote during their activity essay, they were confident and able to transfer good writing structure to the new essay. However, one student did comment, "But this is nothing like that essay, that essay was fun, this one is dumb." The student was struggling to connect with the topic and more writing practice with engaging topics was needed prior to tackling the current (and less tangible) topic.

Teacher Participant Names: Chris Capella, Jeff Capella

Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan:

We added an end of project self-reflection worksheet in order to attain tangible data. The hope was that the data would reflect that through the "What is Good About Me" art project students would have an opportunity to reflect on different aspects on who they are as an intermediate level student. They would be given a chance to try out some new ways to manipulate basic media to communicate who they are.

Analysis of Data on Teacher Learning:

We examined the student's written reflections and found the following:

- Students struggled with the project at first. Time was not on our side to really grasp at first as there were other school projects interceding the potential for progress.
- When given the opportunity to give suggestions that would help them in future ways to create, students asked for more art time (with exclamations!) during the week, and to explore more with mediums like clay, wood and food. Fifty percent cite traditional creative methods to use while 25 percent would like to create with food.
- Creating takes on many forms for students, and it changes their behavior. It makes them feel calm, happy and relaxed. They are willing to spend more time creating in some form and have continued projects in their own settings at home for hours and days at a time.
- It took them a while to warm up to creating a picture that reflected their personality in a positive light. One particular student started to cry and said, "nothing is good about me," and they had trouble drawing. The school counselor and classroom teacher had to be consulted to help with the student's outburst of emotions. When they were told that the artwork could be like drawings they like to do in their free time it all changed. This student lit right up and produced one of the best pieces for the project.
- Students are learning that hard work pays off at this stage of their development. When you try new methods that help increase your skills and stick with it then the results can amaze them, and often do.
- Students really love participating in sports and other recreational activities that are outside.

Analysis of Data on Student Learning:

The Art/MST schedule for this year was not good for most students. They felt rushed and their progress stunted due to limited time in the week. This was evident with staff at the beginning of the year and unfortunately the students resonated with this as well. It was hard to establish a flow to the project and self-discovery. I would have liked to have the opportunity to add in a mindfulness component where students are able to create a toolbox of strategies to help them in the future. I felt bad that we dug in and left them with identifying their gaps but have not given them the opportunity to help build the bridge to these gaps.

In classrooms, we are asked to have word walls displayed and I came to the conclusion that in the art room I should have a sketch wall of images. The fifth grade would benefit from this as they have difficulty coming up with quick ways to visually communicate what they are trying to share with their audience. This class was able to share a little about themselves with us through their anonymous self-reflections. We look forward to more opportunities to help build their self-confidence.

Teacher Participant Name: Ms. Denise Waterman

Evaluation Reporting from the lesson study:

"What data will you collect that shows the impact of your project on student achievement of CCLS? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?"

Social-emotional data collected from this proposal is student and teacher generated and aligned to NY-CCLS for the primary and intermediate grades levels. Data collected for this study includes weekly surveys, classwork, and ELA writing response, accompanied with anecdotal teacher responses to social-emotional observations.

The instructional setting for the social-emotional study was held in the ONS AIS Mathematics classroom in a pull-out situation with Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Grade students.

Social-emotional data collected for the 2016-2017 proposal consisted of quantitative and qualitative data and results. The students were asked how they felt about math during the lesson. Students were asked if they would like to participate in a survey at the conclusion of the math lesson. In general, students were willing to participate in filling out a social emotional math survey. There were two survey formats, one survey had 3 emoji faces representing a range from happy to sad. The second survey had a number line ranging from 1-5, with an emoji face for happy at #5 on the number line and an unhappy face located at the #1. Student had an independent choice on which social-emotional math survey they were to select.

The survey with only 3 emoji faces I labeled primary for my own data and the number line survey as an intermediate survey.

Interestingly, the Second and Third Grader would select the primary survey to fill out and the fourth and fifth graders would select the number line survey.

As the AIS Math instructor I would say with each small group of student, "Let's think about putting aside your prior negative or unhappy math experiences activities. We will only focus on the current math class session at hand. At the conclusion of the math lesson you can share your feelings (social-emotional) toward the math lesson today"

The Social-emotional quantitative data was met and expanded by offering a closing survey following a lesson with students in grades 2-5. Students were asked if "How do you feel about Math today?" This survey was a tool offered as a free and open voice for their expression towards math anxiety. The survey tool followed the math lesson and discussion and I observed students automatically looking for the surveys to fill out and I observed a change in behavior following their ability to account for their own opinions and feeling towards mathematics through the survey tool.

There were 36 student intermediate survey and 30 students responded affirming a positive attitude at the conclusion of the math lesson and 6 students responding a 2-4, on the number line, noted that some levels of anxiety existed. There were 0 student response for total math anxiety results for concluding math lessons. This is an 83% positive result from the student intermediate surveys.

The primary provided social emotional quantitative data from the students in grades 2 & 3. There were 67 surveys with 44 students recording an affirm response. Interestingly there were 23 students recording levels of anxiety and 4 of these were anxious at the conclusion of the math lesson over the 6 weeks study. One conclusion, intermediate students have a broader vocabulary and math foundation to dialogue about difficulties in mathematics. Whereas the primary students have math maturation and vocabulary yet to develop. The primary students appeared to have experience a higher level of math anxiety that was not immediately resolved but over time this does improve their social-emotional attitude in class.

The social emotional qualitative data was met by asking or prompting students to respond verbally and to write to a social-emotional mathematical prompt.

On occasion, the students kept a log book for open-ended summative response for evaluation and recommendation for future work on social emotional math anxiety, and the time to share their feeling about math anxiety and what makes math easy or difficult in the classroom.

As the instructional support teacher for mathematics I did experience a more attentive and relaxed students' groups having the ability to rate their feeling about social emotional math anxiety following an AIS Math daily lesson for students in Grade 2-5.