



## **Moving Towards Mindfulness: Social Emotional Regulation through Movement**

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Whitewater Middle School

This curriculum unit is recommended for:  
Social- Emotional Learning- Middle Grades (6th-8th)

**Keywords:** 6th Grade, SEL, Social-Emotional Learning, embodied, movement, mindfulness, self-awareness, empathy, community, identity, 5 Competencies, Caring Schools, self-management, responsible decision making, relationship skills, social awareness

**Teaching Standards:** See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

**Synopsis:** Building community and empathy in the classroom culture is essential for building the identity of sixth graders. This curriculum provides opportunities to build a classroom culture that allows for further social emotional learning and practices that can be carried throughout the year. Three weeks of lessons are included in this unit that home in on the importance of community, how to build student confidence, identity, and self-awareness, and how to encourage empathy within the classroom and in the greater communities of our students. As humans, we use both physical and cognitive in all our perceptions and reactions. It would be a mistake to neglect using the holistic person to learn about social-emotional learning and self-awareness. Each lesson in this unit emphasizes forms of embodied teaching and learning in ways that allow students to connect their minds and bodies.

*I plan to teach this unit during the 2021-2022 year to 25 students in SEL/6th Grade.*

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## **Introduction**

“Embodied teaching and learning are about building relationships between self, others, and subject matter, living in-between these entities.” (Latta & Buck, 2008)

Often in education the mind and body are disconnected and seen as two separate entities. The system of education and the oppression of movement that it encourages are hindering our students’ interaction with their teachers, classmates, and learning environments. This dis-embodied way of teaching also lends a decreased focus on how the information taught is truly applicable to the student in their own world. Both movement and social-emotional learning (SEL) are applicable to all aspects of the classroom and to life. They allow students a chance to increase self-awareness, which is important for any type of learning to happen. Movement allows students to find techniques that work for them to self-regulate, cope with anxiety, realize what situations elicit emotions for them, and how their bodies and minds react to these. By teaching students to recognize how their cognitive perceptions may interpret various situations and in turn how they react, we can better help students find the self-awareness and techniques that will not only help them within their own lives, but within our relationships of classroom environment, teacher and learner.

## **Rationale**

Mindfulness is very strongly associated with attention and learning. Mindful movement can even improve functioning and attention in individuals who have attention needs such as those with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Once attention, self-awareness, self-management, are increased then mindfulness in how students respond in any situation can be improved as well. Connecting the physical and mental being includes tactile movement, attention to senses, awareness to the way we exist in spaces and impact the spaces and people around us all lead to overall mindfulness. Movement increases mindfulness and attention to self, and decreases anxiety, which in turn assists in building meaningful relationships in and out of school. This form of knowledge is often neglected in academic settings but is truly at the core of how each student interacts with the world around them and in turn, how they learn.

This topic is extremely important across subjects because not only are mindfulness and movement great tools to increase attention, but they increase learner interaction as well. Every student brings a different perspective, strengths, and passions to the table, and I want to continue to be a part of that journey. A student who can learn in embodied ways will know themselves better and interact with learning in a way that is best for them. At Whitewater Middle, SEL techniques also coincide with interdisciplinary themes of Identity, Community, Voice, and Change. For each subject, it will translate well by increasing student interest, motivation, attention, and learning. This is applicable when discussing real-world events with students as well. In an increasingly turbulent world, during a global pandemic, where social media and screens dictate much of how we interact with our environment, the stagnation of movement in the classroom and in life is at an all-time high. By utilizing embodied teaching and learning in SEL, we can put focus back on relationships, self-awareness, efficacy, and face-to-face communication. These aspects will increase learning and increase student self-awareness across all subject areas.

## **Background and Educational Setting**

As a district, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools contains 175 schools and 147,638 students. The minority enrollment is 80% in our district. Approximately 57.5% of students are economically disadvantaged. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools serves a student body that is 37.5% White, 24.9% Black, 27.6% Asian, 6.9% Hispanic/Latino, 0.3% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 37.5% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. 0.1% of students identify as two or more races. Gender differs by 2%; 49% of students are female, and 51% of students are male. 57.5% of students are eligible to participate in the free and reduced-price meal program and 12.9% of students are English language learners. Our district demographics are very diverse and are a clear indicator that our teaching methods and relationships should be as well.

Whitewater Middle School (WMS) is in the outer limits of Charlotte. Students are pulled from all over Mecklenburg County, as we have a STEM partial-magnet program, with a focus in environment and sustainability. There are 53 teachers that work at WMS and 756 students are enrolled, 48% female and 52% male. The student to teacher ratio is 14:1. The student population is composed of over 50% black students. 60% of students are Black, 27% Hispanic, 8% Asian, 4% White, and 1% are multiple races. 100% of students that attend WMS are eligible for free lunch. My students are 6<sup>th</sup> graders, who have now been through two years of interruption due to COVID-19 and have experienced a global pandemic in the school environment. They are 11-13-year old's who have been isolated for long periods of time and had to adapt to virtual learning environments.

However, these statistics and demographics do not reflect the knowledge that our diverse population has to offer. Our students have developed technology skills and excitement for math, science, and technology areas throughout this time. They have explored new ways to communicate in a technological world. While they may have been isolated during the pandemic, they now have a chance to relearn and revisit what it means to have self-awareness and explore growth in their own identities. By changing our idea of what knowledge is, we can include SEL tactics and life-skills in the topics we teach about, to increase engagement and awareness in all subjects. Providing an SEL curriculum that encompasses embodied teaching and learning, and connects cognitive and physical, will lead to students feeling a broader sense of community and belonging within the school, as well as increased self-awareness. This in turn will increase attention and student buy-in across school initiatives and classes.

### **Unit goals**

This unit is across 3 weeks of the year. It focuses on building community and identity for students and incorporates the 5 SEL competencies that CMS requires mastery of each year. The 5 competencies are identified by Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). These are seen below in Appendix I and aim to interact with the broader environments and members of each student's' life. These competencies are used throughout the 3-week curriculum.

By utilizing embodied teaching of SEL topics, students can become more aware of their own physical and cognitive selves. Middle school students truly need this integration, as it is a very physical and cognitively challenging time for them. Going through growth and hormonal changes, while trying to navigate social and emotional situations and become aware of who you are is a challenging time for students. These lessons aim to create awareness of oneself and combine this with relationship building within their school and broader communities.

More specific goals for students will be targeted each week. They can be found below. Goals for this unit are based around building community and identity within the homeroom class. These goals aim to build trust and comfort among classmates, and allow students to identify characteristics about themselves, in order to further realize how they are a part of their community.

*Goals in respect to identity include:*

- *Understanding why names and identities are important and identifying ways that we can be our best selves.*
- *Giving opportunities for students to identify and share passions, aspects of their identities, what situations and emotions they respond to.*
- *How your unique identity and experiences impact how you respond and communicate with others*
- *Furthering self-awareness through mindfulness, embodied learning, and analyzing our responses*
- *Recognizing what organization and schedule/sleep skills work best for our best selves*
- *Recognizing stress and what coping mechanisms work best for us*

*Goals in respect to community:*

- *Understanding what community norms, expectations, and responsibilities are*
- *Recognizing how identity contributes to the classroom community and broader communities as a whole*
- *Sense of how you are a part of creating a productive, safe, and unique school community*
- *Defining a peer support system and understanding how you can provide support for others in your community*
- *Recognizing how we are similar and different, how to create a space that is conducive to everyone's learning*

*Goals in respect to empathy:*

- *Understanding how others feel in various situations (i.e., witnessing bullying)*
- *Recognize & understand emotions and when they change for ourselves and others*
- *Learn how to appropriately communicate feelings and listen to others in return*
- *Define empathy & examples of empathy; know why understanding perspectives of others is important for our school and broader community*
- *Practice Active Listening and other empathetic techniques*
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## **Content research**

*What is SEL and why teach it?*

‘Often called the “missing piece” in school improvement efforts, the field of SEL reflects the growing recognition that healthy social-emotional development advances children’s success in school and life (Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013).

SEL is the best way to ensure students’ success across the board. By teaching the techniques needed to navigate all of life’s situations and know oneself well enough to interact with others in social situations of all kinds, we can ensure the success of students. This time is critical in the growth of any human, as we are extremely social creatures and must be able to evaluate our surroundings and those in them. We must teach these practices to connect academia to the outside world, as learning happens outside of school often. These techniques will help our students learn about their passions, how they interact with the world, and how they can be a part of their various communities.

It is extremely important that we build empathy (Woolrych, Eady, & Green, 2020) amongst our learners in a world that lacks it. We must also build the resilience of our students and discuss how we can all be efficacious in changing situations we do not believe are right. In order to do these things, we must teach how to “effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage their emotions, feel and show empathy for others, establish and achieve positive goals, develop and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions” (Weissberg, Payton, O’Brien, & Munro, 2007).

When teaching SEL, we are thinking about the future as well as the present. What ways can we prepare students now and later in life to be able to solve the problems that lie ahead? What are the skills that people will need to exercise their humanity in a world of machines? In this world of many screens, how can we teach students to love themselves and one another regardless of how many “likes” they get on social media? This is where mindfulness in the practices of SEL comes in. We must use mindfulness to help students practice paying attention with intention.

*What does it mean to teach mindfulness?*

Mindfulness has only recently been a trend in school settings. It is at its core the awareness of the present moment. This means that to be mindful, you must acknowledge your feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations in these moments. In teaching, we often disregard the individual perception of a students’ experience. After a year of virtual learning, I have noticed in the classroom that students struggle in empathic practices and taking on the view of others. At this point in child development, students should be able to recognize others’ emotions, but students today are struggling with this, as social media influences their perceptions, and student interactions have been minimal for the past two years, inside and outside of school. This is extremely important to teach students, as it then allows them to successfully navigate any situations with other people they may come across. It also allows for critical thinking in many contexts. Students who can consistently take on the views of others or ask ‘why?’ in any situation will be able to identify problems and solutions in social situations, at school, at home, and throughout their lives. According to Griffiths (1984) ‘feelings and perceptions depend on each other’, Mindfulness is not only being aware of your cognitive disposition in the present moment, but also your physical being. “It is inappropriate and dangerously misguided to try to

separate head and heart, thought and feeling, and empirical research around the brain's neuroplasticity has demonstrated that experience changes the brain's structures and pathways" (Griffiths, 1984). It has been proven time and time again that the brain and body are connected on all levels. In order to teach SEL, you must consider the connections that exist between the cognitive and physical being. We must also recognize that not all our cognitive and physical reactions will match up, as humans are not always aware of these sensations. It is our job to notice the connections and use SEL techniques and mindfulness techniques to learn how to best use our brains and bodies to react in productive ways. This allows students to look at the root of problems, and then find ways to solve the issues without feeling like they need to resolve to more extreme reactions. These reactions are often interpreted by teachers and parents as acting out or behavioral issues. By understanding mindful practices and finding ones that fit the needs of each individual student, we can instead meet them where they are at and find mindful coping mechanisms. Many mindfulness techniques involve the 5 senses, and involve the physical being used to calm down the cognitive or recognize where the true problem lies. Mindful techniques will be used in coordination with many movement strategies in this SEL unit and will be used as community tools as well.

### *The importance of movement*

Many articles on movement in the classroom are limited to younger grades and ages, or physical health classes. It is difficult to find more research regarding movement uses across any subjects, and in classrooms of students after second or third grade. As age increases, movement appears to decrease (see Appendix II). This is surprising, as research does suggest that all ages can benefit from use of movement, and physical activity. According to the CDC and the U.S. Department of Health, "Children and adolescents ages 6 through 17 years should do 60 minutes or more of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily" (CDC). Much of the research on movement is solely physical. We know that activity in both the cerebellum and prefrontal cortex are increased when movement of any kind is involved in an activity.<sup>5</sup> It is shown to be effective in strengthening the brain, increasing fitness and overall physical health, reducing stress (Appendix II), anxiety and depression, increase on-task behavior, and reach students with disabilities. We also know that children of all ages need to move. Though the previous initiatives called for movement in terms of adolescents' health, we now see that it should be incorporated into many aspects, and not only for physical health. Using movement experiences is essential to teaching concepts- especially academic ones. Teacher perceptions of movement have recently been changing as well, realizing that movement and connecting the mind and body across all aspects can be extremely effective in learning. Not only can movement be used for learning in the moment, but it can be used to prepare students for learning as well. Social-Emotional Learning homes in on this aspect and connects this 'readiness to learn' with being calm and mindful in our own skin. One teacher used movement techniques to 'ready' students for learning and stated, "kids express their emotions through their physical activity, so if you show them a way to handle their stronger feelings ... through [using movement] to calm down, they can learn to deal with their emotions a little better" (Gehris, Gooze, & Whitaker, 2015). Physiologically it makes perfect sense. When you move oxygen throughout your body and to your brain, you connect them physically as well. You need movement to develop the brain and the mind.

Movement also prolongs attention. “In the classroom, students who are motivated by the demands of the classroom situation to pay attention and who are sufficiently aroused can sustain prolonged attention during lectures,” (Lindt & Miller, 2017). We must use movement in teaching past the 1st and 2nd grade levels. Studies show that movement decreases in the classroom the higher the grade level. Evidence shows that the part of the brain associated with “body learning” is linked with cognitive processes, and “exercise, play, and activity are natural stimulants” to our circulatory and neurovascular systems (Jensen 2000, 18). If we know that “any sort of physical activity can improve our motor function and therefore our cognition” (Ratey 2001, 361).

### *Movement integration is interdisciplinary*

Embodied teaching is not just good for SEL techniques. Mindful techniques and movement practices can be integrated into any subject. The beauty of starting the day with embodied teaching in SEL is that it can easily translate through the rest of the day. If teachers in any subject were to implement mindful techniques as brain breaks or resets in the classroom, they can continue the practice through the day. Movement used in any subject increases buy-in, interest, and learning from our students (Lindt & Miller, 2017).. Any method of teaching that incorporates physical activity can strengthen learning and interest levels for learners of all ages and types. The CDC states that immediate responses to physical activities in the classroom were improved attention, better memory, and improved on-task and classroom behaviors. (Piercy & Troiano, 2018) Movement integration is especially important for providing multiple means of instruction and representation, especially in a classroom with so many diverse learners. Movement provides a pathway for student choice and expression within the classroom, and in turn, ownership over learning and self.

## **Instructional Implementation**

### *General teaching strategies*

The general flow of each lesson will include a Greeting/Opening, then an Engaging strategy, and end with an Optimistic Closure (Unpublished Documents- Whitewater Middle School SEL Lessons). The greeting will be a full class greeting activity that will include every student. The engaging strategy will be the main activity used to teach the core concepts and target goals of the lesson. The Optimistic Closure will provide a chance for reflection or a closing activity to culminate the lesson. Each lesson will incorporate one of the following strategies in one of the three aspects listed above.

### Greetings/Openers

- *Question of the day circle up with ‘Speaking ball’*
- *Motion name game*
- *“If you were a \_\_\_\_\_...”*
- *Would You Rather?*
- *Riddles/ Brain Teasers*



- *Mad Libs*
- *Would You Rather?*
- *Draw to Music*
- *4 Corners*
- *What Animals Say about You*

### Engaging Strategies

- *Can You Find Me Bingo!*
- *Choice Board*
- *Speed Sharing*
- *Identity Flag*
- *Class Contract*
- *Charades*
- *Schedule Tracker*
- *I AM poem*
- *Vocabulary Sorting*
- *Scenarios Tableaux/ Snapshots*
- *Discussion*
- *Venn Diagram*
- *4 Corners*
- *Human timeline/spectrum/visual survey*
- *Musical shares*
- *Scavenger Hunt*
- *Voting with Hands to show visual representation*
- *Gallery walks*
- *Opinion groups/Jigsaw*

### Optimistic Closures

- *3 Words*
- *Snowstorm*
- *Meditation, breathing*
- *Yoga/Stretch*
- *Stand Up Discussion/ Share Out*
- *Sticky Note Parking Lot*
- *Partner Reflection*
- *Sleep Tracker*
- *Check-In*
- *Self-Reflection*
- *Goal of the Day*
- *Goal of the Week*
- *Gratitude Note*
- *Letter to your \_\_\_\_\_ (family, friend, self, teacher, etc.)*

### **Instructional Implementation**

**Week 1 (Building Identity, Community, Classroom Culture)**

<i>Lesson &amp; Weekly Objectives</i>	<i>Opener</i>	<i>Engaging Strategy</i>	<i>Optimistic Closure</i>
<p>Lesson 1</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <p>I can name ways I am unique</p> <p>I can pronounce everyone's name in my class</p> <p>I can name things about my classmates &amp; identify ways we can relate to each other</p>	<p><b>Motion Name Game (5-10 minutes)</b></p> <p>Students will go around the room and introduce themselves with a movement one-by-one. After going through the movements/names sequence one time through, the class must repeat each person's name and motion in the order that they learned them.</p> <p>E.g., "My name is Shaniya [CLAP]"</p> <p>"My name is Andreas [JUMP]"</p>	<p><b>Can you find me? Bingo! (15 minutes)</b></p> <p>Students will find others who can check off their bingo card. They must have a different person per box. Once they achieve 5 in a row, they can get BINGO! (Student goal is to talk to as many classmates as possible so that you can cross off every box on the sheet!)</p>	<p><b>3 Words (5 minutes)</b></p> <p>Students will come up with 3 words that describe how they are feeling after the lesson and the morning activities. Go around the room (no opt-out) and ask students to provide their 3 words. This is a quick way to check-in with students post lessons and get a pulse check.</p>
<p>Lesson 2</p> <p>I can name ways I am unique</p> <p>I can pronounce everyone's name in my class</p> <p>I can name things about my classmates &amp; identify ways we can relate to each other</p>	<p><b>If you were a.... (5 min)</b></p> <p>Students will vote on a topic from the following, or choose one of their own:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cereal</li> <li>- Shoe</li> <li>- Music genre</li> <li>- Chip Flavor</li> <li>- Animal</li> </ul> <p>Then, they will share-out what they would be if they were an item in the category.</p> <p>E.g.          "My name is ____ and if I was a _____, I would be _____"</p>	<p><b>Get to Know Me Choice Board (15 min)</b></p> <p>Identity worksheets</p> <p>Students complete worksheets with different boxes that have to do with their identities</p>	<p><b>Stand Up Discussion (5-10 min)</b></p> <p>When students are done, do a "stand up" discussion. E.g., one student begins by saying "My favorite TV show is..." Any students who have a similar one can stand up and then share a new fact about themselves. OR use whiteboards and have students write the answers they put for each question and then reveal their answers at the same time.</p> <p>E.g., What's your favorite TV show? Give students time to write their answers on the whiteboards and then flip them around at the same time to reveal.</p>

<p>Lesson 3</p> <p>I can name ways I am unique</p> <p>I can pronounce everyone's name in my class</p> <p>I can name things about my classmates &amp; identify ways we can relate to each other</p>	<p><b>Would You Rather (5-10 min)</b></p> <p>Students go Left for one option or right for another (choose options that fit your class' personalities or are culturally relevant)</p> <p>Possible Would You Rather Questions to use:  <a href="https://conversationstartersworld.com/would-you-rather-questions/">https://conversationstartersworld.com/would-you-rather-questions/</a>   <a href="https://icebreakerideas.com/would-you-rather-questions/">https://icebreakerideas.com/would-you-rather-questions/</a></p>	<p><b>Speed- Sharing (15 min)</b></p> <p>Students will be asked to line up in front of a partner. They will be given thirty seconds to exchange with the partner, then both sides of the line will move left/right to meet a new person. (Essentially like speed dating but exchanging info) Spend 30 seconds with a new classmate, ask them one of three questions &amp; then switch Q's -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do you like to learn about?</li> <li>2. Who is the most important person in your life?</li> <li>3. What is something you enjoy doing &amp; why?</li> </ol>	<p><b>Mindful Breathing (5 min)</b></p> <p>Teacher will lead mindful breathing with script below:  <a href="https://www.mindful.org/5-minute-mindful-breathing-practice-restore-attention/">https://www.mindful.org/5-minute-mindful-breathing-practice-restore-attention/</a></p>
<p>Lesson 4</p> <p>I can name ways I am unique</p> <p>I can pronounce everyone's name in my class</p> <p>I can name things about my classmates &amp; identify ways we can relate to each other</p>	<p><b>Ball Throw Opener (10 min)</b></p> <p>Students can circle up if room permits. Only the person with the ball at that time has speaking rights. Teacher will start by saying "Hello my name is ___ (teacher name) hello ___ (student's name)" then they will throw a ball to the student whose name they just said.      *Students must throw the ball to someone they have not talked to yet this week*      Next, that student will say, "My name is ___ hello ___ (new student's name)" then they will throw a ball to the</p>	<p><b>Identity Flag (20 min)</b></p> <p>Teachers will model their pre-completed flag and then prompt students to use the template to decorate their own flag.</p> <p>It could (but does not have to) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Your racial/ethnic Identity</li> <li>● Where you're from</li> <li>● Gender Identity/ Pronouns</li> <li>● People you love</li> <li>● Things you love</li> <li>● Your favorite hobbies</li> <li>● Your favorite color</li> <li>● Your morals/values-</li> </ul>	<p><b>Identity Flag Share (5 min)</b></p> <p>Students may volunteer to stand-up share their flags and describe each box. Students not sharing are encouraged to make positive comments and snap/clap for those presenting.</p> <p>Once all flags are completed, teacher asks for those comfortable with displaying their flags. Teacher may opt to make one large class flag or display flags around the room.</p>

	<p>student whose name they just said. (After you speak, hold your hands behind your back so we know who has not had a chance to speak yet.)</p>	<p>what do you believe in?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Your favorite food</li> <li>● Things you are Passionate about</li> <li>● Fun facts about you</li> </ul>	
<p>Lesson 5</p> <p>I can define school values and why they connect to routines and procedures</p> <p>I can explain why our classroom and school procedures are important for my well-being and others</p> <p>I can hold myself accountable to the way my actions impact others</p>	<p><b>Riddles/Brain Teasers (5 min)</b></p> <p>Class with read out brain teasers and then have 1 minute to come up with an answer. Possible riddle questions below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Riddle: What question can you never answer yes to? Answer: Are you asleep yet?</li> <li>2) Riddle: What can't talk but will reply when spoken to? Answer: An echo</li> <li>3) Riddle: What has many keys but can't open a single lock? Answer: A piano</li> <li>4) Riddle: I'm light as a feather, yet the strongest person can't hold me for five minutes. What am I? Answer: Your breath</li> </ol>	<p><b>Class Contract (20 min)</b></p> <p>MY values: Choose your top 5 values from the list Narrow your values to 3</p> <p>OUR values: How do we want to be treated by our teacher? How does our teacher want to be treated by us? How do we want to be treated by each other? What does it mean to have a classroom that feels "safe"? What are ways you can feel safe or unsafe both physically (in your body) or emotionally (in your feelings)? Why is it important that we create a classroom that everyone feels safe and ready to learn?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Narrow down values with class via vote (4-5)</li> <li>- Students put a sticky note on the values they resonate with the most (anchor charts)</li> <li>- On the sticky note: Describe what this value looks like in</li> </ul>	<p><b>Snowstorm (5 min)</b></p> <p>Students write down a 'key point' they learned on a piece of paper. On the teacher's signal, they throw their paper into the air. Each person then picks up a paper and reads it aloud.</p>

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**Week 2 (Building Identity)**

Lesson & Weekly Objectives	Opener	Engaging Strategy	Optimistic Closure
<p>Lesson 1</p> <p>I can identify emotions in myself and others</p>	<p><b>Mad Libs (10 min)</b>            Fill in the words to create a funny story with your classmates!  <a href="https://www.squiglyplayhouse.com/WritingCorner/StoryBuilder/">https://www.squiglyplayhouse.com/WritingCorner/StoryBuilder/</a></p>	<p><b>Emotions Charades (15 min)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students pick an emotion from the emotion wheel (linked below)</li> <li>2. They will act out that emotion</li> <li>3. Students can then guess what their classmates are acting out</li> </ol>	<p><b>Sticky Note Parking Lot (5 min)</b>            What emotions do you personally feel the strongest daily?</p>
<p>Lesson 2</p> <p>I know how to manage my time and prioritize activities</p> <p>I can connect my organizational skills to my success in school</p>	<p><b>Would You Rather (5 min)</b></p> <p>Ask students one to all of the questions below. Assign one side of the room for each option. Students move to the side that they agree with.</p> <p>Would You Rather Question Ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would you rather sleep every night in a room with someone who snores, or in a room with a fly buzzing all night?</li> <li>- Would you Rather have only scary dreams or serious dreams?</li> <li>- Would you rather be always late or always early?</li> </ul> <p>Links to other Would You Rather Question Ideas:</p>	<p><b>Schedule Tracker (20 min)</b></p> <p>What are the things you must do?            What are the things you want to do?            How can we make time for both?</p> <p>Students will receive post-its (one color for WANT TOs &amp; one color for HAVE tos)</p> <p>On the board, there will be a chart with hours in the day. Students will place their sticky notes for what they do during each hour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E.g., Things you WANT to do (video games, time with friends, social media)</li> <li>• Things you MUST do</li> </ul>	<p><b>Yoga// Body Scan (5 min)</b></p> <p>Students can vote on a mindful movement activity to do</p> <p>5-minute Yoga Video:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Standing)  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDX69NN3nXl&amp;t=24s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDX69NN3nXl&amp;t=24s</a></li> <li>• (Chair Yoga)  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fnLKyRJsrs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fnLKyRJsrs</a></li> </ul> <p>Body Scan Video:  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsmfIAyiois">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsmfIAyiois</a></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="https://www.thebestideasforkids.com/would-you-rather-questions-for-kids/">https://www.thebestideasforkids.com/would-you-rather-questions-for-kids/</a></li> </ul>	(schoolwork, family commitments, sleep, eating)	
<p>Lesson 3</p> <p>I know what makes me feel good and what makes me feel bad</p> <p>I know what makes me feel like I belong</p>	<p><b>3 min draw to music-</b> Teacher will play a song Students: Draw whatever the sounds make you feel, or whatever images come to mind.</p>	<p><b>I Am poem (15 min)</b> Options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Haiku: 5 syllables, 7 syllables, 5 syllables about YOU!</li> <li>2) I Am (Fill in the blanks and describe yourself using describing words)</li> </ol>	<p><b>Poem Turn &amp; Talk &amp; Reflection (10 min)</b> How did that poem make you think about yourself differently?</p> <p>What did you learn about a classmate?</p>
<p>Lesson 4</p> <p>I can track my sleep and notice how my sleep patterns impact me</p>	<p><b>4 Corners (10 min)</b> This technique can be used for any of the three sections of the lesson, but it is a great way to take a visual survey. In each of the four corners of the room will be an option or choice for a student to decide on and then travel to that option that best fits their opinion, view, or stance. E.g. 4-5 hours of sleep 6-7 hours of sleep 8-9 hours of sleep 10 + hours of sleep Sleep on my side/back/stomach I like to have lots of covers/some covers/no covers I like to have total darkness/a little light/ a lot of light I get up with</p>	<p><b>Why is sleep important to being your best self? (15 min)</b> Discover: <a href="https://www.scholastic.com/pathways/sleep/index.html">https://www.scholastic.com/pathways/sleep/index.html</a></p> <p>Discussion: What have you noticed about how you feel and act when you don't get enough sleep? How is our community impacted when students do not get enough sleep? Why is it sometimes challenging to get the amount of sleep recommended?</p>	<p><b>Introduce &amp; model Sleep tracker (5 min)</b> <a href="https://cdn.ccclearninghub.org/pdfs/csc/t8/CSC2e_G8_UWC_BLM1_17201.pdf">https://cdn.ccclearninghub.org/pdfs/csc/t8/CSC2e_G8_UWC_BLM1_17201.pdf</a></p> <p>What's your sleep goal?</p>

	alarm/automatically/sunrise/someone wakes me		
<p>Lesson 5</p> <p>I know what my coping mechanisms are when I feel down or unhappy</p> <p>I know what makes me feel good and what makes me feel bad</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I know what makes me feel like I belong</li> </ul>	<p><b>What Animals Say about You (10 min)</b></p> <p>Step 1) Think of the first animal that comes to mind Name 3-character traits that capture its essence (wild, clever, beautiful, etc.)</p> <p>Step 2) Think of another animal! And 3 words that capture its essence</p> <p>Step 3) One more animal! Again, 3 words that capture the essence</p> <p>Your picks analyzed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The first 3 traits represent how you see yourself/ want to be seen</li> <li>The second animal represents how others see you</li> <li>The third animal represents how you really are!</li> <li>Follow up- mini discussion: How accurate was this?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Venn Diagram with a classmate (15 min)</b></p> <p>Students will partner up and compare &amp; contrast things about themselves. Questions to ask below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-What do you like to do in your free time?</li> <li>-How do you relax after a hard day?</li> <li>-What things make you happy?</li> <li>-What things make you sad?</li> <li>-Who do you go to if you're feeling down? Excited?</li> </ul>	<p><b>End on a Positive NOTE! (5 min)</b></p> <p>On a sticky note, write down some good news you have about something going on in your life or coming up. We will place these on our good news anchor chart.</p>

**Week 3 (Empathy, Community, Classroom Culture)**

Lesson & Weekly Objectives	Opener	Engaging Strategy	Optimistic Closure
<p>Lesson 1</p> <p>Define empathy &amp; examples of</p>	<p><b>Optical Illusions (5 min)</b></p> <p>How is your perspective different from your neighbor's?</p>	<p><b>Empathy vocabulary sort (20 min)</b></p> <p>What is empathy? Sort the words and pictures</p>	<p><b>Check-in (5 min)</b></p> <p>Choose 3 words that describe how you feel after this lesson</p>

<p>empathy</p> <p>Know why empathy is important</p>		<p>on a scale of ‘Most sounds/feels like empathy)</p> <p>0-----10</p>	
<p>Lesson 2</p> <p>Understand perspectives of others</p>	<p><b>Question of the day (5 min)</b>          If you were president for a day what would be your first order of business?</p>	<p><b>Scenarios Tableaux/ Snapshots (15-20 min)</b>          Students will be grouped into 4 groups          Students will read scenarios and pick a moment where they feel the most emotion.          Students will provide a still snapshot or tableaux of this moment for the class &amp; describe what it is/why they picked it</p>	<p><b>Discussion Questions (5 min)</b>          How does it make them feel?          How would YOU feel if you were them?          What would you want someone else to do if it were you?</p>
<p>Lesson 3</p> <p>Identify my emotions and understand how they make me act/say/think/feel</p> <p>Know why empathy is important</p>	<p><b>Rose/Thorn (5 min)</b>          On the front of a piece of paper: Write or draw about a time when you were Happy (rose)          On the back of a piece of paper, write or draw about a time that you were REALLY upset (thorn)          What happened? Who was there?</p>	<p><b>Empathy Map (15 min)</b>          Empathy maps can be a powerful tool to build deeper understanding of how our words and actions connect to our thoughts and feelings.  <b>-Empathy maps are divided into four sections: Think, Feel, Say, Do.</b>          -Lead students through an example, using yourself as a model. (Ex: When I feel nervous, I might think I’m making mistakes. When I feel this way, I apologize a lot (say) and often take a deep breath (do).)          On a whiteboard or bulletin, draw a circle at the center and label it “our class”.          Then divide the board into four quadrants, labeled:</p>	<p><b>Write a Letter/Note (10 min)</b>          Who is someone who has made a positive impact on your life?          What is their name?          What is their relationship to you?          How did they make a positive impact in your life?          → write them a letter or short note. What do you want them to know? How would you show them they matter to do?          If possible, give them this letter or note today! Or call them and read it to them! Or send it to them in an email!</p>



		<p>Think, Feel, say, Do.  Each student receives four post-it notes. Ask students to write down one emotion they sometimes feel, a thought they connect to that emotion, an action they take when they have that feeling, and something they might say.  Each student takes turns posting on the board.</p>	
<p>Lesson 4</p> <p>I can relate to my peers and learn from them</p>	<p><b>Brag Circle (5 min)</b>  In a circle, Brag on or give a compliment to someone in the class. The person who received a brag must then pass one on. Everyone gets a brag before moving on.  →  Who has been an awesome friend/student/person this week?</p>	<p><b>Fortune Teller Conversations (15-20 min)</b>  Cut out your fortune teller  Fold it according to the instructions  Number students (odd/Even)  Odds go first!! (5 minutes-even #s will ask first)  Students: Ask classmates to pick a tab on your fortune teller and the odd-numbered students will answer first  After 5 minutes, evens will now answer questions</p>	<p><b>Reflections Question (5 min)</b>  What is one act of kindness you can do this week for someone?</p>
<p>Lesson 5</p> <p>Show empathy and kindness to others</p>	<p><b>Collaborative Storytelling Opener (Fortunately/Unfortunately 5-10 min)</b>  Example: “The man left the bird’s cage open, and the bird flew out.”  Student 1: “Fortunately he caught the bird before it flew away”  Student 2: “Unfortunately: the bird bit the man and he cried out in pain”  → Continue alternating</p>	<p><b>Kindness Share with music (15 min)</b>  1. Students will write their name in the middle of your paper (not huge, but not tiny)  2. Leave your paper on a desk (could be your desk, could be another. ONE paper per desk)  3. You have until the song ends to walk around the room and write some kind words/compliments about</p>	<p><b>Discuss Kindness Reflections (5-10 min)</b>  How did the kindness share make you feel?  Was it easy for you to write something kind about everyone? Why?  Was it difficult for you to write something kind about everyone? Why?  Why is it important to show kindness to others?</p>

	between fortunately and unfortunately statements for as long as possible!	your classmates	
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**Assessments –**

Assessments for this unit are primarily discussion based and informal. Panorama Check-ins may be used as informal assessments of student self-reports. There may be deliverables for some lessons, like the sleep tracker, completed fortune teller, and I Am Poem, but engagement and participation in activities is more important than formal assessments. The assessment is the learning/doing process for each individual student. At the very end of the year, students will complete the Panorama Survey, which will indicate how they feel on a scale about factors discussed in SEL like their self-efficacy, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, empathy, etc. This may include tests, surveys, rubrics, projects, a culminating activity, etc.

# Appendix 1: Teaching Standards

## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) COMPETENCIES

### SELF-AWARENESS

The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset."

- ⇒ IDENTIFYING EMOTIONS
- ⇒ ACCURATE SELF-PERCEPTION
- ⇒ RECOGNIZING STRENGTHS
- ⇒ SELF-CONFIDENCE
- ⇒ SELF-EFFICACY

### SELF-MANAGEMENT

The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.

- ⇒ IMPULSE CONTROL
- ⇒ STRESS MANAGEMENT
- ⇒ SELF-DISCIPLINE
- ⇒ SELF-MOTIVATION
- ⇒ GOAL SETTING
- ⇒ ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

### SOCIAL AWARENESS

The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

- ⇒ PERSPECTIVE-TAKING
- ⇒ EMPATHY
- ⇒ APPRECIATING DIVERSITY
- ⇒ RESPECT FOR OTHERS

### RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.

- ⇒ COMMUNICATION
- ⇒ SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT
- ⇒ RELATIONSHIP BUILDING
- ⇒ TEAMWORK

### RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others.

- ⇒ IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS
- ⇒ ANALYZING SITUATIONS
- ⇒ SOLVING PROBLEMS
- ⇒ EVALUATING
- ⇒ REFLECTING
- ⇒ ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY



JANUARY 2017

COLLABORATIVE FOR ACADEMIC, SOCIAL, AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

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### Competency 1: Self-Awareness

“The abilities to understand one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts.”

Such as:

- Integrating personal and social identities
- Identifying personal, cultural, and linguistic assets
- Identifying one’s emotions
- Demonstrating honesty and integrity
- Linking feelings, values, and thoughts
- Examining prejudices and biases
- Experiencing self-efficacy
- Having a growth mindset
- Developing interests and a sense of purpose

### Competency 2: Self- Management

“The abilities to manage one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations.”

Such as:

- Managing one’s emotions
- Identifying and using stress management strategies
- Exhibiting self-discipline and self-motivation
- Setting personal and collective goals
- Using planning and organizational skills
- Showing the courage to take initiative
- Demonstrating personal and collective agency

### Competency 3: Social Awareness

“The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts.”

Such as:

- Taking others’ perspectives
- Recognizing strengths in others
- Demonstrating empathy and compassion
- Showing concern for the feelings of others
- Understanding and expressing gratitude
- Identifying diverse social norms, including unjust ones
- Recognizing situational demands and opportunities
- Understanding the influences of organizations and systems on behavior

### Competency 4: Relationship Skills

“The abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups.”

Such as:

- Communicating effectively
- Developing positive relationships
- Demonstrating cultural competency
- Practicing teamwork and collaborative problem-solving
- Resolving conflicts constructively
- Resisting negative social pressure
- Showing leadership in groups
- Seeking or offering support and help when needed
- Standing up for the rights of others

### Competency 5: Responsible Decision-Making

“The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations.”

Such as:

- Demonstrating curiosity and open-mindedness
- Learning how to make a reasoned judgment after analyzing information, data, and facts
- Identifying solutions for personal and social problems
- Anticipating and evaluating the consequences of one’s actions
- Recognizing how critical thinking skills are useful both inside and outside of school
- Reflecting on one’s role to promote personal, family, and community well-being
- Evaluating personal, interpersonal, community, and institutional impacts
- 

Throughout the unit, and all SEL, all standards topics are covered. This unit utilizes community, identity, and empathy lessons to teach about self-awareness and relationship skills primarily. The empathy lessons also create a building block for social awareness within the school, greater community and world. All these units encourage mindful techniques and ideas that students may refer to when faced with relationships inside and outside of school. They utilize embodied teaching and learning skills that allow students to connect mind and body in

these practices. Techniques like reflection, activities regarding empathy, emotion, and self-identity, allow students opportunities to pause and think about their identities. They provide space to practice thoughtfully interacting with peers and learning how to actively listen to peers. These lessons contribute to the overall NC state goals of ‘young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.’

(<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/districts-schools-support/nc-social-emotional-learning/nc-sel-implementation> ).

## Appendix II: Supplemental Information

The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a more holistic and equitable way to reach learners. The UDL Guidelines are a tool used in the implementation of Universal Design for Learning framework. This way of teaching and learning aims to create an efficient and representative way of reaching all learners. A link to a deeper look at this framework is also provided below.

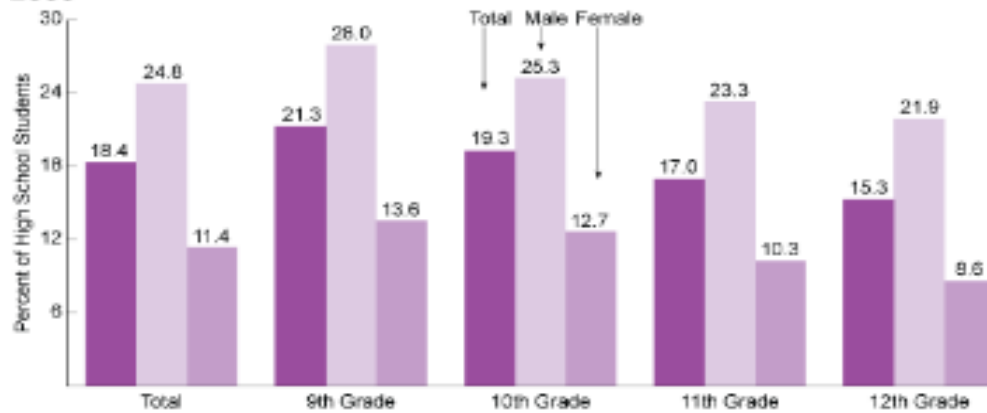
<https://www.cast.org/impact/universal-design-for-learning-udl>  
<https://udlguidelines.cast.org/more/downloads>

The article, “Relationship Between Physical Activity and Stress Among Junior High School Students in the Physical Education Environment.” (Barney, David C., Francis T. Pleban, and Terrance Lewis) Indicates that students feel lower stress levels after physical activity. In the results, student responses indicated that they felt more efficacy in dealing with stressors after participating in physical activities.  
<https://doi.org/10.18666/TPE-2019-V76-I3-8966>

The below graphic exemplifies the CDC recommendations of higher levels of movement in schools even amongst high school students. Shown above are the percent of students by grade level and sex that are achieving physical activity levels.

<https://doi.org/10.1161/CIRCOUTCOMES.118.005263>

Physical Activity\* Among High School Students, by Grade Level and Sex, 2009



\*Met recommended levels of physical activity, which is one hour or more of physical activity every day, most of which should be moderate-to vigorous-intensity aerobic activity.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 1991-2009 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data. Available at: <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline>. Accessed July 2011.

## Student Resources

### *Resources Needed for Week 1*

#### Bingo

- [Further Bingo Directions:](#)

Choice Board Activities:

- [Details About Me](#)
- [Get to Know Me](#)
- [My Love Languages](#)

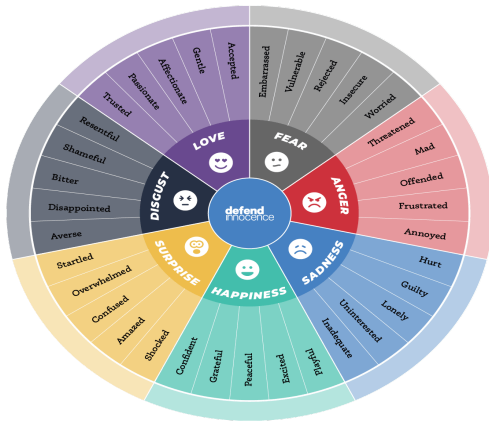
[Mindful Breathing Activity](#)

[Identity Flag](#)

- [Values Document](#)
- [Classroom Contract](#)
- Anchor Charts, Post-it Notes
- Small Paper/notecard for snowstorm

Resources Needed for Week 2

- Post-it Notes
- Charades- [Emotions Wheel:](#)



Post-It Notes

- Paper for 3 min- draw
- [Descriptive Words](#)
- [Who AM I Template](#)
- [Haiku Starter](#)

[Sleep tracker](#)

- [Venn Diagram](#)
- Post-it Notes

Student Resources Needed for Week 3

<a href="#">Empathy cards</a>
<a href="#">Empathy Scenarios</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Paper or Notecard for Rose/Thorn</li> <li>● Post-it's for empathy Map</li> <li>● Paper for Letter</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Fortune Teller</a>
Paper for Kindness Share

### **Teacher Resources**

Competency 1- Self-Awareness

<https://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/bp/Documents/CMS%20Middle%20School%20Self%20Awareness%20Chart.pdf>

Competency 2- Self-Management

<https://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/bp/Documents/CMS%20Middle%20School%20Self%20Management%20Chart.pdf>

Competency 3- Social Awareness

<https://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/bp/Documents/CMS%20Middle%20School%20Social%20Awareness%20Chart.pdf>

Competency 4- Relationship Skills

<https://makingitbetter.connectwithkids.com/files/2018/07/CMS-RelationshipSkillsChart-MS.pdf>

Competency 5- Responsible Decision Making

<https://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/bp/Documents/CMS%20Middle%20School%20Responsible%20Decision%20Making%20Chart.pdf>

NC SEL Implementation-

<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/districts-schools-support/nc-social-emotional-learning/nc-sel-implementation>

NC SEL Vision-

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hqe3KP9ZfMZddfEgrjFhKjBYFShvOBjVuFmVgH\\_M7cc/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hqe3KP9ZfMZddfEgrjFhKjBYFShvOBjVuFmVgH_M7cc/edit)

CASEL Framework (required by NC)-

<https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/>



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