A REGULATION PROGRAM TO PROMOTE SCHOOL READINESS IN COMMON CORE

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A Regulation Program to Promote School Readiness in Common Core

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my loving mother and father who have supported, believed and encouraged me throughout my life journey. Their endless strength, faith, love and support continues to inspire me each and every day. To my mother Linda Armstrong, who has dedicated her life to her family and continues to be there for her husband, children and friends. Her words of encouragement, hope and love have been invaluable along the way. To my father, Joe Armstrong who has taught me to live life to its fullest, pursue my dreams and to let go of fear. His strength, determination, resilience and positive attitude continues to inspire me though some of life’s greatest struggles.

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

A Regulation Program to Promote School Readiness in Common Core
by
Brooke Armstrong
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In 2009 state learning standards were redeveloped to help prepare students in grades K-12 for college and career readiness and career skills of the future. These redeveloped standards known as the Common Core, incorporate higher-level academic skills that focus on critical thinking, problem solving, conceptual and language development skills. As a result, these higher-level learning skills require children to have strong social emotional skills in place. Children who have strong social emotional skills are at an advantage for school readiness tasks. Children from at-risk low socio-economic populations are less likely to develop social emotional skills and are at greater risk for school readiness skills.

Therefore, it is important that a regulation program be implemented in both the home and school environment so that children can develop both social emotional and school readiness skills. The goals of this program were to align parent-teacher curriculum that emphasizes the development of social emotional skills, cooperative learning, perseverance, problem solving, regulation and reflection. These goals were designed to help families support their child's social emotional development and for students to be provided with opportunities and interventions that foster growth in social emotional development and school readiness. The program consisted of two components that focused on educating and collaborating with families and integrating and aligning curriculum with classroom lessons. Such as yoga, art, role-playing and collaborative based learning. Together, teachers and parents worked together to provide children with opportunities for social emotional growth and a future of school readiness and success.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 2009 state leaders, governors and commissioners developed and revised individual state academic learning standards for grades K-12. These realigned standards are referred to as, ‘The Common Core.’ The Common Core standards were redesigned starting from kindergarten, to help prepare children for college and career skills of the future. These newly developed standards place a strong emphasis on children developing problem solving skills, critical thinking, analysis and the use of oral and written language starting from the beginning of their elementary school experience (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

Students, parents and teachers are working on better understanding Common Core and what roles it requires of each participant. For many families and children Common Core has been introduced to a child’s education in the middle or the beginning of a child’s educational journey. There are many questions and changes for both parents and teachers regarding Common Core and student readiness. In addition, despite evidence that positive relationships and communication between parents, students, and staff is important for interventions to be successful (Whitted, 2010), there is little alignment in programs between parent and teacher curriculum. Alignment in Common Core is especially critical for families who come from at risk environments because these students struggle with cognitive abilities (Yan, Evans, & Harvey, 2011).

While there is little research on the outcomes of Common Core, there is evidenced based research on social emotional development and its link to school readiness skills. The implementation of Common Core has a strong emphasis on students’ ability to persevere in problem solving, think critically, and use language to express their feelings and ideas readily on a given topic (Bailey, 2014). These higher-level cognitive skills require children to have a strong social emotional foundation in place by the time they begin elementary school.
Research suggests that children who do not have social emotional skills in place are at a greater risk of experiencing difficulty in concentrating and persisting in challenging academic tasks (Jones & Harcourt, 2013). High risk populations such as low social economic and Title I populations are at an even greater risk of not developing the social emotional skills that help them perform the cognitive tasks that require critical thinking and problem solving (Yan et al., 2011). Children from at risk populations and low economic backgrounds are more likely to experience environmental risk factors that place their social emotional development at risk when compared to middle –income families (Yan et al., 2011).

The proposed program is designed to promote social emotional development and school readiness in the Common Core. The program is important because researchers emphasize that social-emotional learning can help prevent school failure and should be a foundational goal of school programs (Diamond & Aspinwall, 2003). In addition since it is a time of great educational reform, an alignment of curriculum between parents, teachers and students is essential. The goal of this program is to align parent- teacher communication and embed classroom activities that foster social emotional skills to help empower and regulate children in Common Core and everyday life. The program will educate families about the association between social emotional development and achievement in Common Core. In addition, the evidenced based program will use a curriculum that places a strong emphasis on the development of social emotional skills, cooperative learning, perseverance, problem solving, regulation, and reflection. These embedded curricular activities include an incorporation of art, yoga, roleplaying and collaborative project based learning because research suggests that these kinds of regulatory and reflection based interventions are beneficial for children whose social emotional development is at risk (Chiesa & Serretti, 2011). Regulative interventions can help to promote self- awareness, self-empowerment and healthy ways to express feelings as well as resolve conflicts, and reduce stress related symptoms (Malchiodi, 2007).

Parent training in social emotional development is also beneficial, DeRosier and Gilliom (2007) report that increased parental awareness in social emotional development related to a decrease in child externalizing behaviors and an increase in child emotional regulation skills. Research also suggests that children who can effectively use strategies to manage their emotions can result in lowering parental stress and reducing further child
problem behavior (Duncombe, Havinghurst, Hollinghurst, & Franklin, 2012). As a result, research suggests that children who can effectively use strategies to manage their emotions can result in lowering parental stress and reduce further child problem behavior (Duncombe et al., 2012).

It is suggested that as parent training in social emotional regulation strategies can help further regulation between both child and parent. It is important that these interventions are aligned with both the school and home environment. The program will not only educate and collaborate with parents on social and emotional development but it will also bring awareness to families on how these interventions can be aligned and communicated in both the home and school environment. Aligning interventions that work for a child in one environment can assist both the child and adult in making modifications in another environment (Robinson & Fine, 1994). Research has shown that a collaborative approach between parents, teachers and students can provide a positive impact in lives of at risk children and families (Wallbrown, 1982). Many successful partnerships between families are ones that can show respect towards one another, take into account cultural beliefs and have an exchange of communication and ideas. Cook and Friend (1991) suggest that successful collaboration models include parents in the decision making process of their child; teachers and parents exchange information on expertise, resources and education; teachers enable and empower parents to work on behalf of their child. The program will use collaboration strategies for teachers and parents to work together. Teachers and parents will implement regulation and intervention strategies to help children grow and develop social emotional skills and academic readiness.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Many children are entering early elementary school without the skills that allow them to be successful in a school setting (Konold & Pianta, 2005). As expectations of Common Core rise in early education, it is imperative that children have strong social emotional skills in place, in order to attain success in their everyday lives (Brooks & Dietz, 2012). Research suggests that strong growth in social and emotional skills is the foundation of all later growth and development (Barblett & Maloney, 2010). Furthermore, children who have social emotional skills in place show signs of having healthy and positive relationships, effective
social skills, overall happiness, high self-esteem, early school success, and an increase in language and communication skills (Barblett & Maloney, 2010). These skills put children at an advantage in early school years, when implementations of high stake Common Core standards are required. Research suggests children with healthy signs of social emotional development are able to concentrate and persist on challenging tasks, demonstrate listening and problem solving skills and recover from negative or overwhelming experiences while having a positive attitude (Jones & Harcourt, 2013).

In contrast, children who lack social emotional development may find school to require challenging tasks. Badgi and Vacca (2005) state, “Children with little social emotional development skills can become frustrated when performing a difficult task, experience difficulty concentrating, can become easily upset and experience difficulty when moving from one activity to another. These lack of social emotional skills place children at a greater risk for school failure and rejection from their peers” (Bagdi & Vacca, 2005, p.145). This review looks at the importance of social emotional development and its importance to school readiness and success in both the home and school settings.

**Parental Involvement and Social Emotional Development for Children Enrolled in Fulltime Childcare**

Research has shown that infancy to five years of age is a significant time of importance for a child’s cognitive, social emotional, language and brain development (Kiff, Lengua, & Zalewski, 2011). Today many families are working long hours to meet financial demands such as costly childcare and single parent families raising their children with one income. As a result, many children are spending long hours in childcare away from their primary attachment figures (Bagdi & Vacca, 2005).

Tong and colleagues (2009) discuss possible implications that may impact the child-parent relationship and future social development. They examined parent-child relationships of fulltime working mothers with young children who are enrolled fulltime in childcare. While the study found some benefits of childcare enrollment and mothers returning to work, it also drew awareness to potential risks. The study found that a child’s vocabulary development and motor development were impacted when a child was enrolled in low
quality care before the age of one year. Parents who changed their daycare provider within the second year of the child’s life increased a child’s risk for delayed vocabulary and motor development. The study suggested that it was quality of care not quantity of care that impacted a child’s development the greatest. In addition, the study found this to be true of stay at home mothers. It was not the quantity of time children spent with their mothers but the quality of interactions that affected children’s development. By age 2, inconsistent and harsh parenting has a negative impact on a child’s social competence. Results indicated that changes in the parent-child playing routine, contributed to a child’s social competence. Parents who did not sing, read or interact in social situations with their children placed their children at greater risk for delayed vocabulary and gross motor development. Children also showed an increase in verbal communication skills when mothers increased reading interactions with their children. Therefore, the authors proposed that working mothers increase interactions with their children as much as possible in order to reduce the risk of social developmental delay (Tong et al., 2009).

**Curriculum Based Social Emotional Programs**

Although parents can significantly contribute to a child’s social emotional development, educators and programs can also play a role. A review, “Social Competencies and the Early Years Framework,” describes the importance of a social emotional framework that is incorporated into school curriculum (Hemmeter, Ostrosky, & Fox, 2006). The framework provides teachers with developmental baselines to assess students’ social emotional growth and development. Educators then use this framework to incorporate developmentally rich activities that foster social emotional growth into classroom instruction. The authors argue the importance of implementing a social emotional framework, in order to balance standards based curriculum. The article further implies that children who have strong social emotional competence may have advantages for school readiness.

Ashdown and Bernard (2012) conducted a study investigating the outcomes of implementing a social-emotional based curriculum in the early years of elementary school. Social emotional lessons were directly taught to 99 students 3 days a week in the elementary school setting. Lessons taught persistence, perseverance, emotional regulation and resilience through various social emotional teaching practices. The results indicated that the “You Can
Do It” curriculum, showed positive results in young children, aged preschool through grade 1. The study concluded that the program was effective in reducing behavior problems and increasing reading achievement for lower achieving elementary school students (Ashdown & Bernard, 2012).

Ashdown and Bernard further suggest that educators and policy makers need to implement programs into curriculum that promote social emotional development. Implementation of evidenced based programs such as, Second Step, The Incredible Years, and Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies have shown improvement in student learning and social emotional competence, and a reduction in behavior problems (Whitted, 2010).

**INTERVENTION BASED PROGRAMS USING REFLECTION AND YOGA**

Gould, Dariotis, Mendelson and Greenberg (2012) studied a 12 week yoga program implemented across four urban elementary schools. The study also examined the impact of the Holistic Life Foundation on social emotional regulation as well as depressive symptoms. The study also examined gender and grade level differences in program effectiveness. A total of 97 fourth and fifth grade students, 85% African American, participated in the program. All four schools qualified for Title I funding with 81% of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. The program was implemented 4 days a week for 45 minutes a day over the course of 12 weeks. The intervention components consisted of deep breathing exercises and yoga postures. Yoga poses were built on beginning poses and then gradually moved into more advanced movements. At the end of each session the instructors used reflection and mindfulness strategies to encourage students to focus on positive thoughts and bring awareness to their bodily state. Participants were encouraged to practice the poses at home as yoga positions became more advanced.

The study concluded that the program showed signs of success in impacting self-regulation in children. Results indicated that there was a reduction in impulse action stress response levels. That is, the study concluded that receiving the HLF intervention program reduced the Involuntary Engagement stress response measure for both fourth and fifth grade students, including those with depressive symptoms. While research in this area is still
relatively new, it suggests that preventive regulatory interventions such as yoga could be beneficial to at-risk youth.

**Cultural Art Programs for At-Risk Youth**

Stinson (2009) reviewed a number of cultural art programs that have been implemented with at-risk populations. These programs used evidenced based practices to implement activities that promoted problem solving, leadership control, decision making and a reduction of impulse control. The *Theater Based Youth Violence Program*, encouraged children to resolve conflict through role-playing and theater. The program consisted of 140 participants between the ages of eight and eleven years of age. Students participated in the program over a course of 9 weeks. One day a week for 75 minutes, students were accompanied to a local theater where they interacted with a theater group. Students participated in collaborative group discussions as they worked together and actively engaged in role-playing activities that prompted children to problem solve and resolve conflict. The program was evaluated using both quantitative and qualitative measures. Results concluded that students who participated in the program showed an increase in pro-social behaviors and a decrease in internalizing symptoms and hyperactive behavior. The study highlights the positive benefits of using role-playing and collaborative problem solving for at-risk populations.

Programs such as *The National Arts and Youth Demonstration Project* have indicated positive outcomes for at-risk populations as well. The NAYDP program was implemented in five low-income communities in Canada over a 9 month period. A total of 183 youth participated in the program ranging from 9 to 15 years of age. The art program was implemented after school and incorporated visual arts as well as theater and media arts. The program lessons were designed for children to engage in artistic expression as well as in collaborative discussions about various forms of art. Results from the study indicated improvements in social, emotional and behavioral attitudes of youths who participated in the program (Stinson, 2009). In addition, participants in the NAYPD program showed an increase in task completion skills and a decrease in emotional and conduct problems.
TEACHING PYRAMID MODEL AND SYSTEMS THEORY

The proposed program is designed to promote social emotional development and school readiness. The program includes parent education, alignment of parent–teacher curriculum, and classroom activities that foster social emotional skills that will help children succeed in Common Core and cope with everyday stressors. Lessons include art, yoga, roleplaying and collaborative project based learning because research suggests that they may help children learn healthy ways to express feelings, resolve conflicts and reduce stress related symptoms (Malchiodi, 2007). In addition to using evidence-based strategies for parent education and social emotional development, the program is also guided by the systems theory and the Teaching Pyramid Model.

The systems theory was developed by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy and shares commonality with the general systems theory. Both theories focus on working together to achieve a common goal. Von Bertalanffy’s theory establishes the idea that everything has an influence on something else. This theory uses a holistic approach of looking at the world and its influences on the individual (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). The proposed program utilizes the systems theory by implementing multiple systems in order to reach the needs of children.

Building on the basic assumptions of systems theory, this program also incorporates the Social Emotional Teaching Pyramid model. The Teaching Pyramid Model uses a systems based approach by establishing relationships with children and families, creating supportive environments, incorporating social emotional strategies and developing targeted individualized interventions (Hemmeter et al., 2006). The teaching model listed (See Figure 1) will be used to align both the home and school environment to help better serve the needs of student and families.
DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

Common Core is a new way of thinking and learning for students, families and teachers. The new standards require students to think in abstract ways that require critical thinking, problem solving and use of language. These skills may be difficult for students who do not have social emotional supports in place. As a result, a program is needed that aligns materials for parents and teachers with the focus on social emotional development. The program will consist of two components. The first component involves educating and collaborating with families. The purpose of this component is to educate parents on the importance of social emotional development and its association to school readiness and the Common Core. Teachers will also collaborate with families by providing resources, strategies and interventions to help establish both a school and home environment that foster social emotional growth for the child. Evidence indicates that when families receive training on social-emotional development, the effect on children is significantly greater than use of the curriculum alone. Research suggests this education could lead to a shift in family parenting and an increase in nurturing behaviors in the home setting (Webster-Stratton, Reid, & Hammond, 2004).

The second component of the program will focus on promoting social emotional development in the classroom. The purpose of this component is to provide students with
opportunities to work collaboratively with their peers in experiences that require them to problem solve, persevere, regulate and reflect. The goal of this component of the program is that children will be able to learn from these opportunities and apply them both in the home and school settings as well as their everyday lives. Children will participate in activities such as yoga, art, role-playing and collaborative group work activities that help promote social emotional growth and regulation. Research supports that such interventions in academic settings could be beneficial for at-risk children. In addition, research describes the benefits of art and other self-regulatory activities in helping to reduce anxiety and negative mood and to increase self-esteem, positive resolution of conflicts, self-awareness and personal empowerment (Malchiodi, 2007).
CHAPTER 2

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS
The program was implemented at Sunnyside Elementary School in the Chula Vista Elementary School District. Participants were 24 students from ages 7-9 years in the second and third grade and a total of 20 parents. Sunnyside Elementary school has been noted a California Distinguished School. The school consists of a population of 498 students. Student ethnicity consists of 59% Hispanic population, 29% Caucasian, 6% African American, 4% Filipino, 1% Pacific Islander and 1% American Indian. Sunnyside is a Title I school with a total of 40% of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch.

PROCEDURES
The proposed program was designed to educate families about the association between social emotional development and achievement in the Common Core. A goal was to align parent-teacher curriculum that emphasizes the development of social emotional skills, cooperative learning, perseverance, problem solving, regulation and reflection. The program consists of two components that focus on educating and collaborating with families and integrating and aligning curriculum with classroom lessons such as yoga, art, role-playing and collaborative based learning.

EVALUATION
The program was evaluated using Teacher Action Research that incorporates the use of teacher reflection journals, student journals, learning logs and parent interview feedback. Teacher action research can be defined as, “An intentional and systematic inquiry done by teachers with the goals for gaining insight into teaching and learning, becoming more
reflective practitioners, effecting changes in the classroom or school and improving the lives of children (Hiebert & Morris, 2012, p. 4).

**Teacher Reflection Journal and Anecdotal Records**

A teacher reflection journal was used throughout the course of the program. Observations were made by the classroom teacher to record student observations and personal teacher reflections. These reflections focus on responses to the interventions. Notes documented on student behavior and teacher observations. Student comments were documented during art, yoga, roleplaying and invention activities. Documentation on student behavior was also focused particularly on children who had a lack of regulation and social emotional development skills. These systematic writings were then reviewed and coded to find emergent themes as the interventions were put into place.

**Student Journals**

In addition students used personal journals to record their feelings, thoughts and reflections throughout the program. At times the teacher would give specific prompts to the children to write about after the activity. These prompts asked children what they learned, a common theme or message of the activity as well as how they could improve their team relationship building.

**Student Learning Logs**

Students also used leaning logs throughout the program to set and reflect on weekly goals. The students conferenced on these logs with both the teacher and his or her parent each week. Both student learning logs and student journals were collected, reviewed and coded for emergent themes and patterns. Parent feedback was documented in field notes during one on one conferences, adding to the information gathered from the teacher reflection journals after parent workshops were introduced. These notes were also used to code themes and developing patterns.
PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Individual parent teacher conferences were assigned to families who were interested in having interventions in the home setting. Parents were asked the improvement of regulation strategies in the home setting as well as other observations they had noted after behavior regulation interventions were implemented. For families who did not receive targeted interventions in the home setting quarterly parent teacher conferences were scheduled. Parents were asked to provide feedback on their child’s reading comprehension and fluency, homework behavior and their child’s regulatory ability with Common Core tasks in the home.

COMPONENT 1: EDUCATING AND COLLABORATING WITH FAMILIES

Module 1: Educating Families on the Importance of Social Emotional Development

Based on research describing the benefits of parent education on social emotional development (DeRosier & Gillom, 2007) this module includes lessons in which parents are educated on identifying healthy signs of social emotional development and signs of risks. Families are given strategies to use at home that encourage social emotional development. A take home brochure was made distributed to parents outlining the information given in the presentation. In addition, families were given resources in their community to help their children with social emotional skills. At the end of each workshop, to provide more intensive intervention services if needed parents were given the opportunity to ask questions or schedule a private parent teacher conference time.

Module 2: Collaborating and Providing Families with Social Emotional Regulation Strategies

This parent workshop introduces self-regulation strategies used in the classroom setting. Building on the education parents receive on social emotional and behavioral regulation, the workshop helps parents identify ways they can help scaffold and differentiate Common Core learning tasks based on their child’s social emotional needs. Families were introduced to different zones of regulation based upon a color-coding system. This system helps a child point to an expression or say the color of an emotion they are feeling. Families
became acquainted with a list of strategies to help children regulate through difficult emotions while they face difficult learning tasks. Furthermore, families were educated on a list of tools that can be implemented in the home setting. These tools are in alignment with the regulation and behavior system used in the classroom. Regulation charts used in the classroom were distributed to families for further implementation in the home setting. Language frames were also provided to families whose children need further language supports to help them express their feelings. This builds on research that indicates that language skills enhance a child’s ability to regulate emotions and promote positive social interaction experiences (Kam, Greenberg, & Kusche, 2004).

Families were given the opportunity to discuss questions as well as schedule a parent conference for specific questions regarding interventions for their child. This component of the current program establishes a connection between home and school. Research implies interventions should focus on helping families identify the skills and supports the child needs to engage in daily routines in home and community settings. The most successful interventions are those that show consistency across multiple settings within the home, school and daycare environments (Hemmeter et al., 2006). In addition, teachers who encourage parent feedback and commentary are more likely to have a greater sense of understanding of the social context that shapes a student’s performance in school (Greenberg et al., 2003).

**Module 3: Educating Families in Common Core and School Readiness**

In Module 3 parents are also educated on the Common Core standards. In this workshop teachers model scaffolding strategies to help with complex skills such as critical thinking, problem solving and analysis. Parents are shown examples of homework and taught strategies to help implement differentiated scaffolding learning supports.

Parents are provided with question prompts to help scaffold critical thinking through interactive reading. Parents and children are encouraged to engage in interactive reading three times a week for homework. The purpose of this interactive reading is to build parent-child relationships, develop critical thinking and language development. Research on instructional strategies suggest that interactive book reading when combined with activities
and questioning is effective in prompting rich language conversation between students and teachers (Hatcher & Hulme, 1994; Lundberg, 1998). As a result, interactive reading conversations create gains in a child’s oral language development and their listening and comprehension skills (Wasik & Bond, 2001; Whitehurst & Arnold, 1994; Whitehurst & Epstein, 1994). Guided by this research, this program provides parents a list of books at their child’s instructional reading-level that have a message of working and solving a social skill problem. These books are rotated in book bags for the children to read at home with his or her parents. They are also included at the school-book fair for purchase during parent teacher conferences.

Furthermore, sequenced learning supports are put into place to teach parents and children problem solving in math. Parents are taught step-by-step methods to help children annotate math problems and draw out important information when reading word problems. These scaffold supports systematically build upon each other to help children with inquiry-based problem solving. Research indicates sequenced learning activities can significantly enhance preschool children’s phonological awareness and contribute to early reading success (Hatcher & Hulme, 1994; Lundberg, 1998). Furthermore, Byrne, Fielding-Barnsley and Ashley (2000) suggest there is evidence that step-by-step instruction can have lasting effects through the end of elementary school.

**Module 4: Collaborating and Reflecting Between Home and School Environments**

In conclusion, in Module 4, parents are educated on the benefits of reflecting and goal setting with their children. Parents are introduced to a weekly reflection log, where the child sets personal and academic goals at the beginning of each week. Throughout the week, the child and teacher add to the log, recording areas of accomplishments and needed supports. At the end of the week the child and teacher conference on the learning log. Children review their accomplishments and their next steps. The child and teacher will review, reflect and sign the log at the end of each week. Student learning and reflective logs are sent home on Fridays to be reviewed with the student and parent. Logs are returned on Mondays with parent signatures and comments. This log is then used to create a new learning log for the following week.
In the review, “Social Competencies and the Early Years, Learning Framework,” authors stress that reflection is a key component of professional practice that help educators make decisions for future practice. In addition, authors imply that meaningful reflection is an important aspect of understanding the challenges and success of everyday life (Del Carlo, Hinkhouse, & Isbell, 2010; Marsh, Evans, & Williams, 2010). Module 4’s system of goal setting, reflection and communication between child, teacher and parents is guided by research on effective practices.

**COMPONENT II: PROMOTING SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE CLASSROOM**

**Module A: Regulation Through Yoga**
In this Module, students participate in daily morning yoga before the school day begins. Stretching, breathing and regulation is used in yoga as students learn to regulate and focus their bodies and minds. Harrison, Manocha and Rubia (2004) suggest that regulatory strategies such as yoga can be beneficial for students who experience multiple stress factors. Research indicates that yoga can help decrease hyperactivity, inattention, and anxiety and improve peer relations (Harrison et al., 2004). The process of yoga has been shown to stimulate the parasympathetic system in the brain which can help increase concentration, calmness and emotional balance (Brosnan, 1983). Practices such as reflection, deep breathing exercises and yoga can be promising interventions for self-regulation (Chiesa & Serretti, 2011). Furthermore, self regulating exercises such as deep breathing exercises impact cognitive and emotion regulatory abilities that are particularly important to the development of youth who experience persistent environmental stressors. Emerging evidence supports that such adversity may impair the stress response systems that underlie cognitive and emotion regulatory capacities (Skogli, Teicher, Andersen, Hovik, & Øie, 2013).

**Module B: Reflection and Perseverance Through Art**
These lessons include social emotional activities that engage students in learning about particular artists and inventors who have persevered through challenging times. The intention of these lessons is to allow children opportunities to identify emotions and learn from individuals who had strength to carry on and persevere through difficult times. Both
Frida Kahlo and Vincent Van Gogh were chosen for these lessons because of their immense struggles they had during the course of their life. The artist Frida Kahlo’s cultural heritage was also of significance, for Latino students participating in the program.

These activities also relate directly to experiences the students and/or the group may have experienced in learning difficult concepts in the Common Core. Research suggests that art can be used as a form of non-verbal communication to respond when a feeling is too overwhelming or confusing to speak about (Simons et al., 2014). Thus, the art activities help educate not only about the artists and their work, but also about socio-emotional skills such as, perseverance, and emotions regulation in the face of life challenges.

**Art Activities Frida Kahlo and Van Gogh**

The lessons foster social emotional growth as children experience a set of lessons that focus on artists such as Frida Kahlo and Vincent Van Gogh. These lessons focus on Common Core skills such as perseverance, critical thinking and language. Students learn about the lives of the artists and how they overcame hardships and trials. Students then reflect on how these artists used colors and shapes to express feelings and emotions. In addition, students examine the work of these artists and identify how the colors and shapes make them feel. Children learn how culture and other influences contributed to the artists’ uniqueness and artist style. In conclusion students participate in creating art projects that use the artist’s style and artistic method. Furthermore, it provides opportunities to learn about various cultures and their forms of art and expression. In addition children learn expression and regulation strategies they can use through art to help regulate emotions within their school and home environments.

The first unit of study involves lessons where students learn of artists such as Frida Kahlo. Students learn the biography of her life and her struggles as a young girl after her bus accident. Students participate in an activity where they draw a self-portrait of themselves from the perspective of Frida Kahlo. Students place a mirror under their desks and draw a portrait of themselves by keeping their bodies as still as possible while drawing. In collaborative groups children reflect on the experience with their peers. Students may reflect on times they had difficulty learning a new skill and had to persevere in order to move
forward. Together the teacher leads the students in a class discussion reflecting on times when they had to set goals to overcome struggles. Children are also be given time to write in personal journals to record their thoughts and feelings.

Students are also introduced to artists such as Vincent Van Gogh. A lesson teaches how he used colors to communicate his emotions and feelings. As a beginning activity different portraits of his work are displayed around the room. The students participate in a gallery walk where they observe pictures of the artists work. Students use post-its to label how each art piece made them feel and they place them on the edges of the art piece. The class then makes connections between how Van Gogh’s colors used in his art are similar to the Zones of Regulation System used in the classroom.

Module C: Working Collaboratively with Peers

Learning Teamwork and Social Skills Through Inventing

Not only do the children learn about artists who persevered but they will also learn of the hard work of inventors through experiencing trial and error activities. Various types of text are presented to students where they learn about inventors who made several errors before they were able to accomplish their idea or invention. Students are also provided with forms of text where they learn of inventors who created a new idea from a mistake. Children then are given opportunities to work in collaborative teams to accomplish various tasks. Before children engage in the task students generate ideas on what makes a successful team. The teacher charts the students’ ideas and continues to add to the chart as students participate in team building exercises. Students are also given time to reflect on what worked in their teams and how they can improve their teamwork.

Module D: Problem Solving and Reflecting with Peers through Role Play

In this Module, students are given opportunities to further problem solve social challenges through role-playing. Children reflect on challenges they experienced during invention team building or social problems they have experienced in general, at school or on the playground. Students write the problem they experienced on a piece of paper and add it to
the problem-solving box. In order to ensure the integrity of the group, students are told not to write the names of students they have experienced conflict with. The teacher then uses the problem-solving box to identify patterns and areas of further needed social development for the class. Role-playing cards are written out by the teacher for students to act out the problem and come up with a solution as a team. After the children act out the role-playing card the team will receive feedback and adds other problem-solving strategies the group could use to solve the problem.
CHAPTER 3

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of the program was to align parent-teacher curriculum that emphasizes the development of social emotional skills, cooperative learning, perseverance, problem solving, regulation and reflection. These goals were designed to help families support their child’s social emotional development and for students to be provided with opportunities that foster growth in social emotional development and school readiness. The program goals focused on educating and collaborating with families, aligning home and school environments and promoting social emotional development activities in the classroom.

COMPONENT 1: EDUCATING AND COLLABORATING WITH FAMILIES

Module 1 and 2: Educating and Collaborating with Families on Social Emotional Development and Regulation

INCREASED PARENTAL AWARENESS IN SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A goal of the program was to educate families about social emotional development and its association to school readiness. A total of 25 families attended the workshops on social emotional development and school readiness. Preliminary results suggest that the program is successful in increasing parents’ awareness of the importance of social emotional development. Some families reported they felt more equipped to help their children with social emotional skills. A total of 18 out of 25 families reported that they felt better informed and prepared to identify healthy signs of social emotional development as well as early warning or risk signs.
The workshops appeared to not only be successful in teaching parents social emotional teaching strategies, but also in creating a supportive learning environment that could help children receive more intensive individualization interventions, if needed.

A total of 7 out of the 25 families reported they felt more informed on social emotional development but were still concerned about their child’s emotional development. They reported being interested in having an individual conference to discuss further intervention strategies to help their children. The workshops helped to facilitate positive parent-teacher relations and communication and to align social emotional curriculum in the home and school setting.

**Improved Communication and Behavior in the Home**

Based on parent reports, the workshop appeared to be helpful in improving child behaviors. Families who met for individual conferences and implemented interventions that were individualized for their child reported they felt their child was more regulated and calm in communicating his or her feelings, wants and frustrations. In addition problematic behavior problems decreased for 4 out of the 7 students who received differentiated targeted interventions in the home setting. This was indicated by a reduction of behavior reflections recorded in student learning reflection logs, teacher observations and reported by parents in follow up conferences. All 7 students began to use language frames to communicate their feelings more effectively. For example, students began to use language frames to communicate their feelings such as “I felt frustrated when____, I didn’t appreciate it when____, I felt appreciated when____, I felt ___when____, next time I will work on ____.

In two particular cases students verbalized that they needed sentence frames and the Zones of Regulation colored emotion charts to communicate with their parents at home. Both of these students had language delays and were English Language Learners. One child stated, “I can’t talk to my mom because she doesn’t know what the colors mean. I need one of these charts at home.” Families reported that implementing regulation charts helped them better understand what their child was feeling and reduced problematic behavior such as meltdowns, tantrums and talking back. One parent reported that the charts also helped her son be more responsible with chores. She stated that she could tell her child how she was
feeling using the color-coding system and that he understood why his responsibilities at home were important.

**Module 3: Educating Families in Common Core and School Readiness**

Parents also received training in Common Core and how they could help their children in the home setting with the skills required in the classroom. Results indicated that 22 families felt they had a difficult time explaining the concepts of Common Core to their children. Out of the 3 families with parents who felt confident in teaching their children Common Core, 2 of the parents were teachers and 1 was an engineer. These families explained that Common Core math made sense to them and their children. The other 22 families expressed a need for more parent training and Common Core math resources. In addition parents also expressed that their children have taken more accountability for their learning since they know their parent may not understand some of the concepts. Parents reported less behavior problems in the home when their child understood the math concepts and could work on the homework independently.

**Need for More Parent Training in Common Core Math and Resources**

Parents explained that they felt more comfortable helping their child at home with the Language Arts and reading component of Common Core. The majority of parents stated that they struggled with the math concepts, even after they were taught more explicitly in the training. Several parents expressed that teaching these math concepts were difficult for them because it was not the way they learned math when they were in elementary school. Many of the parents also expressed that some of the concepts being introduced they remembered learning in middle and high school and had difficulty simplifying the concepts to explain to their children. Families also expressed that they would like more resources that explain how to teach addition, subtraction, division and fractions that follows the Common Core guidelines.
**Student Accountability and Parent-Teacher Communication**

The majority of families reported that they had less behavior problems in the home when students were able to successfully complete their homework independently. Parents reported that their children showed more accountability and independence with their learning in their math homework over the course of the school year. In addition parents also reported that since their children knew that at times they may not be able to help them with Common Core math that children took more of a responsibility for completing their homework on their own and being accountable for their learning at school. Parents also reported that the Learning Logs were a useful tool to help communication between the teacher, parent and child of what concepts the child was struggling in with math.

**Module 4: Collaborating and Reflecting Between Home and School Environments Through the use of Learning Logs**

An additional goal of the program was to help align both parent, teacher and student communication by using student and teacher learning logs and targeted interventions. The purpose of these logs was to align the home and school environment by helping children to persevere and reflect on their academic and behavior goals. As students set weekly goals the teacher and student conferenced on the goals and the logs were sent home for the parents and children to discuss. These logs were then returned the following week after students shared them with their parents. Students then set new goals or added to their existing goals the following week.

As learning reflection logs were put into place it was observed that student achievement began to increase in the area of reading. Students were also able to better articulate the areas they were struggling with to their parents. In addition parents showed involvement in their child’s goals by adding notes to his or her log and checking out books at the local library.
IMPROVED STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The Teacher Action research journal noted that students began to set goals that were specific to his or her reading growth. Student learning logs showed that a weekly average of 60% of students academic goals were related to increasing their reading achievement. Before learning reflection logs were aligned in the home setting the classroom average reading level was at a 2.8 independent reading level (second grade, eighth month). Over a three month time period the classroom average increased to a 3.3 by the second month and a 3.9 reading average in the third month (third grade, ninth month). On average students made over 1 year and 1 month of growth in his or her reading proficiency. During parent teacher conferences an average of 80% of parents reported they had seen an increase in their child’s interest in reading as well as growth in their child’s reading fluency and comprehension.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

As children began to set specific goals and reflect on his or her reading, it appeared that parents also began to take a more active role when reading with their children. It was observed that 28% of parents began to write notes on the learning logs reminding children to take specific independent reading quizzes at school from books read at home. Parents also wrote notes to ask for lists of books they could check out from the local library. In addition, 3 parents reported that their children added to their goals by creating reports and/or projects to share with the classroom on their independent reading books.

COMMUNICATION AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

It was also observed that students were able to better communicate areas they were struggling in both academically and socially. For example, in one students learning reflection log he wrote, “My goal is to work on fractions. I am confused when putting fractions in order from least to greatest on the number line. I also get confused when the numerator is greater than the denominator.” During conferences 20% of English Language Learners parents reported that their child was able to more clearly communicate the concepts they did not understand on their homework by using sentence frames at home. This was also evident
in the classroom as students used sentence frames in the room to help them explain concepts they were struggling with.

A challenge with student learning logs was communication between non–English speaking families. A total of 15% of the families stay at home guardians did not speak English. Some students indicated that they try to translate the logs for their parents. A total of 3 out of the 4 students would consistently not return their logs with parent signatures. In all 4 families the primary English speaking adult was the father who worked late nights and weekends. This is an area that needs improvement for future implementation so that both guardians can be involved in the process.

**COMPONENT II: PROMOTING SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE CLASSROOM**

**Module A: Regulation Through Yoga**

While a goal of the program was to educate families on social emotional development an additional goal was to help promote cooperative learning and regulation experiences into the classroom setting. The program provided students with cooperative opportunities that allowed them to use social emotional regulation, problem solving and reflection to better prepare children for school readiness and daily life experiences. One intervention that was used to help children with regulation was yoga. The results suggest that this activity helped with improved focus and regulation in the classroom as well as encouraged teamwork and positive peer relationships. In addition students also began to share yoga with their families and enroll in after school yoga programs.

**IMPROVED FOCUS AND REGULATION**

Through the use of teacher journaling it was observed that students improved their focus during this activity over time. During the community circle students reported that it was important to stay focused in yoga and to not give up. Students also wrote about their experience with yoga in their student journals. A total of 21 student responses indicated that they felt more calm and focused when they started yoga in the morning. Out of these 21 students they also reported that they felt they had persevered and become more focused during yoga. Teacher journaling and observations indicated that students were more focused
PEER RELATIONSHIPS AND TEAM WORK

In addition students reported during community circle time that they were more focused when they had a peer next to them that was also focused during the activity or who helped them stay balanced. Some students also reported that they appreciated it when the person next to them helped them stay more focused and balanced. For example one student reported, “I appreciate when my friend puts his arm around me and we balance on one foot together. I don’t feel as wobbly then.”

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND ALIGNMENT

A total of 5 students reported that they practiced yoga poses at home so they could become more balanced during yoga. In addition, 2 students in class enrolled in yoga programs after school.

While many children improved with their yoga poses there were still students who struggled daily with focusing during the activity and maintaining balance. A challenge of this activity is to help all 25 students and differentiate the yoga for each student. However, it could be beneficial to have parents join the yoga circle at the beginning of the year and work with children who struggle with improvement in this area. By removing the children from the large group and having a smaller space where these students can focus and modify their poses may be of benefit.

Module B: Reflection and Perseverance Through Art

Students were also provided social emotional development activities in the classroom by participating in collaborative activities through the use of roleplaying, art and science activities.

A goal of the program was to encourage students’ social emotional development by teaching them to reflect on difficult experiences and persevere. The purpose of teaching
children about artists who overcame great struggles was to provide children with the idea that through perseverance and hard work you can overcome challenges. It was also an important goal of the program for children to reflect on their emotions and recognize the importance of perseverance.

**Students Reflected on the Theme of Perseverance**

Students participated in drawing a self-portrait of themselves in the same position as Frida Kahlo would have painted. Students practiced laying flat on the floor and staring at themselves in a mirror that was taped under their desk as another student held the bottoms of their feet down. The purpose of this drawing position was to familiarize students with the experience of how Frida painted her self-portraits in her bed throughout the majority of her life after her bus accident as a young child. Teacher anecdotal records indicated the most frequent responses and comments from children who were drawing the pictures. These responses included: “This is hard, how did she do this? I can’t do this right, I need help and she had to work really hard.” Student responses were also documented of those who were holding down their partner’s feet. These responses included: “You can do it, don’t give up, you are doing good and keep on trying. Students were asked to write about what they learned from the activity. At least 80% of student journal responses indicated that the lesson learned from the activity was to persevere, to not give up and or to follow your dreams even if you have challenges.

**Activities Encouraged Students Critical Thinking, Reflection and Task Completion Skills**

A total of 72% of student responses involved some type of critical thinking response as they added their reflections about each art piece. These student responses made inferences through using evidence from the pictures and prior knowledge to support their thinking. In the painting, *Weeping Coconuts* 9 students made critical thinking connections by using their feelings and citing details from the painting about the message the artist was trying to communicate. For example using provided sentence frames one student’s response stated, “This picture makes me feel confused. I see Mexico’s flag and it makes me happy. I am
wondering why the coconuts are crying. I think maybe it is because Frida felt sad and hurt”.
It was also observed that many students who struggled with engaging in writing activities
were writing fluently and engaged in the reflection and writing process throughout the
activity.

Module C: Working Collaboratively with Peers

Problem Solving and Reflecting with Peers through Role Play and Inventing

Children were also given opportunities to problem-solve and reflect with their peers
through roleplaying and science inventing activities. Results concluded that these
opportunities helped encourage student problem solving and communications skills and
engaged struggling writers in task completion skills. Roleplaying activities required students
to brainstorm situations they experienced difficulty with in the school and or home
environment. Students wrote their personal experiences anonymously on paper. These
experiences were then placed into a box and student groups drew from one of the experiences
to collaboratively problem solve and generate solutions to address the problem. Students then
acted these experiences out in front of the class with their peers. Students used the class
problem solving strategies as well as brainstormed other alternatives as a collaborative group.
The majority of student responses included a problem that occurred on the school
playground, during lunch recess or after school daycare.

Encouraged Student Problem Solving and Communication

It was observed through teacher journaling that some children began to use their
alternative problem solving strategies on the playground. Some of the students alternative
problem solving strategies were: write it down in your student journal and then share it with
the teacher for a conference if the problem is not resolved, write a letter to the person telling
them how you feel, ask yourself if the person is a true friend and find other friends to play
with if the problems continue.

There was a 24% increase in children writing down a problem they had after recess in
their student journals. These children asked for student teacher conferences before the
following recess to help resolve their problem. Initially, the children needed teacher directed questioning and cueing for them to discuss the problem together respectfully.

As students participated in more roleplaying activities over the course of the semester it was noted that less problematic behavior occurred after recess and lunch times. Out of a total of 6 students who began to journal problems after recess times and schedule conferences 5 of the students began to solve problems on their own. In some instances children would write down a problem in their journal and schedule a teacher and student problem solving conference. When students were called for their conference children explained they had already problem solved and worked it out as a group. One student in particular who struggled with peer relationships wrote in her journal, “I learned I need to be a healthy friend. When I argue with my friends and say mean things it makes unhealthy friendships. I can really use more friends so I will work on having self-control when I get angry. Next time when I feel in the red I will take a deep breath, take a break from the problem or give an “I message” instead of yelling mean things.”

In some instances conferences between children became more problematic with students who did not have regulation skills into place. In these instances children agreed that they needed to take a break from the problem and revisit it later when they had calmed down.

**INCREASED TASK COMPLETION FOR STRUGGLING WRITERS**

During roleplaying activities it was also observed that students who had difficulty with task completion and attention were involved and focused during roleplaying activities. These students also contributed to writing reflection activities in their student journals without having to be prompted by the teacher. Out of 5 children who struggled with task completion in the area of writing all contributed to their writing journals and volunteered to share their thoughts on the activity. Children who struggled with their writing fluency continued to add to their writing journals after four roleplaying activities without prompting.

**FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

As children continued to work in collaborative groups through roleplaying and invention activities it was observed that students needed to be slowly introduced to working with partners who they felt safe with. Initially groups were assigned by dividing table groups
of 8 students into groups of 4. While some groups worked well together and completed the tasks successfully other groups and individual students gave up with the task and failed to participate. In some instances students began to argue over ideas and resources to build their invention or their ideas on how to act out their skit performance. A total of 8 students experienced problems in their groups and eventually became disengaged with the task.

After teacher journaling and reflection it was evident that some students needed smaller groups or students they felt safe with to have a successful experience. It was also evident that more discussion needed to be directed to what makes a successful team and strategies needed to be frontloaded before the activity was introduced.

After the first invention activity students shared and reflected what worked well and what they struggled with. In a community circle the teacher and students charted ideas and strategies of what makes a successful team. Students also shared out areas of the task that frustrated them and alternative ways they could solve the problem. Student journals indicated that at least 8 students were frustrated when someone used all the tape without asking, 9 students expressed that they felt that their partner did not value his or her idea and 11 students felt as though their partner was not respectfully listening to them.

The second invention lesson involved working on the same task and the 8 students who struggled in their groups were reassigned with a partner they felt they could work well with. It was observed that during the second activity that all children were engaged and worked together. In some instances the 8 students who were struggling with the activity joined together to help others who were struggling with the task. Problematic behavior decreased from 30% to 4%. This was evident as students began to share with others, help those who were struggling and work together as a team.

As children began to feel comfortable and successful in their team building groups other students were introduced to their groups. After a total of 4 science teambuilding lessons on the same task other students were then added to groups. The 8 students who were initially struggling with the task continued to work together with their partners, share resources and remain engaged in the task. At least 84% of student journals used the words: teamwork, helped, respect, listened and took turns in their journals. In addition 84% of students indicated that they felt their partner listened to their ideas and that they worked together as a
team during the activity. Student journals also indicated that 16% of students would have preferred to complete the activity by themselves.

In future activities it may be beneficial to pair students who do not have the social emotional development skills in place with peers who they feel comfortable and safe with. By having these conversations with students prior to an activity the teacher and student can agree on a peer buddy that they can feel comfortable and successful with. As students begin to feel successful and safe with their team other members can then be introduced to the group.

**DISCUSSION**

It may be of use to have more parent training in the math component of Common Core in each content area. A valuable tool for parents would be to provide more resources that simplify ways parents can teach Common Core math in the home. In addition, parents and children may need a system that allows them to communicate what to do when a child does not understand a concept at home. Parents and students may need a step by step action plan that is aligned with the home and school environment when a child struggles with a concept on their homework that their parent may not be able to explain to them.

In addition it was also observed that many of the groups during the invention and roleplaying activities began to separate and work independently while other children formed small groups with children they felt safe with. Anecdotal notes indicated that students seemed to value working on this activity and reflecting on the art both independently and in groups they felt comfortable with. Teacher reflections indicated that allowing children the freedom to work independently or engage with their peers during reflective art activities could be a beneficial approach. Teacher reflections also indicated that the reflective process in art was different for each child and that this was an important concept to take into consideration for future activities.

Future modifications such as assigning student specific roles could help students learn different leaderships roles and allow children to work together more effectively. Activities could be modified by having some groups who feel uncomfortable acting in front of the class groups perform the skits as a puppet act hidden behind a puppet curtain. Once children build confidence with theater and acting in class they can begin roleplaying in front of the class
without using puppets and a hidden puppet stage. This could be of benefit for English Language Learners and students who are shy in class.

It is evident that social emotional development is a critical part of a child’s development. The importance of addressing social emotional development allows children opportunities of growth that will help them succeed throughout their daily lives. A balanced child with a secure parent attachment and social emotional skills may be better equipped for school readiness. Social development skills such as developing positive relationships, the ability to regulate emotions, problem solve and communicate feelings effectively are life-long skills. These skills not only prepare students for the classroom, but also for the higher-level tasks required of Common Core.

Results indicated that the importance of alignment and providing families and children with social emotional opportunities can be effective for student communication in both the home and school environment. As children learn to regulate their emotions, problem solve and work together the program showed that this could help child and parent relationships as well as relationships with their peers. Students began to regulate and use problem-solving skills with their peers as they participated in social emotional learning based activities. The program showed a decrease in problematic recess behavior and even a reduction of problematic behavior for some students in the home setting. Parents also became more involved in their students learning and engaged in additional activities such as going to the library and creating projects together at home. Parents indicated that they saw a rise in their child’s reading fluency and comprehensions and student achievement in reading rose to an average of a years worth of growth over a 4 month period. As children learned to regulate and communicate both their feelings and frustrations higher-level learning could then take place. Parents reported they were better able to help their children with the skills they were struggling because they could communicate what they didn’t understand.

A program that focuses on the child, parent and teacher working together as a community to achieve a common goal is of importance for every child. By aligning parent-teacher curriculum and focusing on the development of social emotional skills, cooperative learning, perseverance, problem solving, regulation and reflection it is of great hope the program can better help meet the needs of children and prepare them for the higher level tasks of Common Core.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX

LIST OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND EVALUATION

I. Teacher Action Research Journal/ Anecdotal Records

Parent Workshops and Conferences

Intervention Lessons and Activities

• Yoga
• Art
• Science Inventions
• Zones of Regulation
• Roleplaying

II. Evaluation: Student Journals

Goal: To promote student regulation and social emotional development.

Strategies:

A. Regulation Charts

• Introduce regulation charts in the classroom
• Color-coded feelings charts
• Students learn how to use sentence frames to communicate their feelings based on the
color charts

- Have children refer to these colors and their feelings throughout activities.

B. Yoga

- How yoga can help me regulate and set goals?
- Students learn breathing and stretching poses to help relax and focus
- Students record how yoga makes them feel
- Students are introduced a new pose every week and reflect on how they can improve the pose

C. Art: Frida Kahlo and Vincent Van Gogh

Guiding Questions: What do you think the theme or message was of this activity? How can I learn from artists who persevered?

Van Gogh and Frida Kahlo Gallery Walk: Students reflect on the art and how it makes them feel. Students make connections between the artists’ work and the Colors in the Zones of regulation. Students will learn the life of both artists and reflect on the theme of perseverance. Students will participate in an art lesson that allows them to perform art by using the artists’ techniques.

Effect on children: Focus, regulation and perseverance in activities throughout the school day. Children may be better focused throughout the day yoga is done at the start of school.

D. Reflections on Role Playing and Collaborative Group Work
**Goal:** To help children learn problem solving skills and brainstorm alternative strategies and ideas when working together as a team.

**Strategies:**

Have children brainstorm ideas of what it means to work as a team. Have children use prior knowledge to share out their past experiences. The teacher may create a KWL chart. Where the teacher charts the ideas of what they know about working together as a team (K) what they want to know about working together as a team (W) and finally at the end of each exercise what they learned when working together as a team (L). The questions below can be used as guided discussion questions to use through the process or students may use these as prompts to write and reflect in their student journals.

Guiding Questions: What strategies can I use to help problem solve? How can I work with others successfully? What do I know about working in teams? What do I want to know about working with teams and others? What have I learned from working with teams or from my roleplaying or inventing experience?

- Students anonymously write down problems they have experienced on the playground or with others at school. These problems are written on a piece of paper and placed into a box. Students pick problems to act out in groups and create alternative ways the problem could be solved.
- Students learn about fables and create a fable that teaches a valuable lesson they believe others should learn. These lessons are based on students personal experiences. Students create puppets in collaborative groups and act out skits to the class.
**Effect on children:** May help to reduce behavior problems in the classroom and outside of the classroom during lunch and recess times. Can be used to help children work in collaborative groups and create social emotional development opportunities for children.

**III. Student Learning Logs**

**Goal:** To help encourage perseverance for students in Common Core and to help align the home and school environment.

**Strategies:**

- Students set weekly personal and or academic goals
- Students reflect on goals throughout the week and conferences with teacher
- Logs are sent home for parent and student feedback
- Student return log the following week and adds to his or her goal or begins a new goal.

**Effect:** Can help children improve their academic achievement through goal setting. Children can also be more articulate in explaining areas they are struggling with in their learning. Helps children be more accountable for his or her learning and encourages parent, child and teacher communication.

**IV. Parent Feedback and Conferences**

**Goal:** To help educate families on social emotional development and its importance on school readiness in the Common Core.

**Strategies:**

- Educating and Collaborating with Families on Social Emotional Development
Workshop

- Providing Families With Social Emotional Strategies to Use in the Home Setting Workshop

- Educating Families in Common Core and School Readiness Workshop

**Effect:** More aligned communication between parents, teacher and students.