

Spring 2019

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Recommended Citation

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Building Empathy through Social-Emotional Learning in Advisory

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MCI590- Graduate Seminar Capstone

INTRODUCTION

Imagine if you will, a society of hate, where every culture lives within their own community, without any interaction with anyone outside of their own culture. Seems like the beginning of a dystopian novel-right? This could very well be the reality of the future without proper social emotional learning and empathy building programs for the youth of America. Establishing empathy skills in combination with social-emotional learning at the middle school level is challenging but necessary for success of all learners. This raises concerns for students of diverse cultural backgrounds in this age group, because they provide unique experiences and challenges for establishing empathy within the classroom. The need for a comprehensive and effective curriculum focused on building empathy and developing social-emotional skills for adolescents is long overdue and necessary for many middle schools. Lessons included in this project will focus on understanding empathy, mutual cooperation and respect within society, human rights and protection, cultural diversity, preservation of culture, and leadership. These skills are essential to the academic, behavior, and emotional needs of middle school learners. The six-week curriculum included will model twenty-five minute lessons intended for an advisory like setting, where small groups of students work with the same teacher daily to establish a trusting community and build skills necessary for future societal success.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Empathy is best defined as “a person’s ability to recognize and share the emotions of another person, fictional character, or sentient being” (Burton, 2015, n.p.). Ultimately, the major question boils down to ‘Is it possible to teach empathy?’ This researcher believes yes, by means of empathy skill building and social emotional learning, since empathy involves “seeing

someone's situation from his perspective, and ... sharing his emotions" (Burton, 2015, n.p.). Michele Borba, an educational psychologist and former teacher, developed nine competencies that help educators focus in on the most important aspects of empathy education, some of which include "emotional literacy, moral identity, perspective taking, and practicing kindness" (Borba, 2018, p. 24-26). These competencies help drive a curriculum for all grade levels, but are especially applicable to the middle school level, as many focus on role-play and scenarios where students must learn to solve peer and community conflicts peacefully. Borba further suggests that educators must use seven guiding principles for effective empathy education, which are "ongoing, woven-in, meaningful, internalized, student-centered, respectful relationships, and empathic leadership" (Borba, 2018, p. 27). Three of these seven principles are extremely important for adolescent engagement; lessons that are ongoing, which build upon one another will help keep middle school students focused on the goal. Secondly, getting students to internalize the lessons as "life-habits" rather than a single lesson will only encourage continued peaceful change within the hallways. Finally, building lessons that are student-centered, "drive the lessons and experiences" in a more meaningful and connected way for adolescents to accept. Ultimately, like any content based lesson, students have to care about the outcome and see its usefulness in order to engage fully with the concepts.

Furthering investigation of program effectiveness, researchers from a variety of Universities and Colleges have conducted a variety of projects on the overall effectiveness of SEL programs while considering the cultural needs of individual student bodies. David Yeager, of the University of Texas at Austin, focuses on the importance of SEL programs for adolescents at the middle school range, between grades 5-8. While there is immense research about the success of SEL for elementary aged children, there is far less research on the needs of continued

SEL for young adults. Yet, this is an age group that struggles with higher incidence of risk factors such as drug use, bullying, and depression. These risk factors can be lessened through the benefits of SEL instruction, including increased mental health, lower rates of violence, and improved school climate that increases school engagement and motivation. Yeager suggests, “Adolescence is a period of tremendous learning exploration, and opportunity. Yet it’s also a time when behavioral and health problems can emerge or worsen with negative consequences that last long into adulthood” (Yeager, 2017, p. 74). This being said, it is clear that students need to continue working on their social and emotional skills to help build empathy and lessen delinquency. Adolescence is the time where most students are in need of guidance and practice with appropriate social behaviors; “SEL programs try to help adolescents cope with their difficulties more successfully by improving skills and mindsets, and they try to create respectful school environments that young people want to be a part of by changing the school’s climate” (Yeager, 2017, p. 74). SEL programs that focus on changing the mindset of adolescents are far more successful than programs that simply give examples of what students should do in sample scenarios.

Let’s be clear about one thing: teaching adolescents how to deal with a high range of emotions and social situations is hard- in fact, many say this level is the hardest to teach as the students are always finding ways to rebel or push the limits of a teacher’s sanity. Does this mean we should give up? No. Does this mean we should ignore the hard to deal with issues and topics within our classrooms? No. What it does mean is we need to build SEL curriculums that meet the needs of our individual student populations, while constantly trying to find new ways to keep students engaged in the process. Research suggests that many SEL programs fail overtime or show negative consequences long-term due to “ineffective programs [that] focus on factors that

matter less, such as knowledge of risks, planning, or goal setting” and a lack of understanding as to how adolescents are different from children and teenagers (Yeager, 2017, p. 75). Effective programs for this age level must include choice and proof that the students’ opinions are respected, not only by their peers, but also adults. The greatest difference between this age group and the others is puberty; adolescents of different cultures hit puberty at different ages. This means educators must know the demographics of the school they serve and apply this knowledge when choosing or writing a SEL program. Generally, middle school aged students “experience increased motivation to engage in social learning situations relevant to status and respect,” meaning most decisions are largely influenced by their peers (Yeager, 2017, p. 75). With this in mind, the importance of changing student mindset becomes key to success, since one’s mindset drives his/her acceptance of skills they will learn.

Furthermore, there is a high need for a culturally compatible SEL program within the middle school age group. Many sociocultural variables, such as race/ethnicity, family income, gender, and developmental disabilities must be taken into consideration when developing an effective SEL program for your school. One avenue for direct instruction is through SEL skill building that includes self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships, and responsible decision-making with social awareness directly connected to empathy building (CASEL, 2019). Focused within a diverse, urban, title 1 school district, the need to understand African American, Caucasian American, and Latino American students’ cultural and emotional differences is key. Researchers Garner, Mahatyma, Brown, and Vesely evaluate these three cultures against one another for long-term effects of certain SEL programs within the CASEL report; many times throughout their study subtle changes occur based on the above listed sociocultural variables. A key finding from this research suggest that “most low-income and

minority children do not develop long-term social and emotional difficulties... studies have even shown that economic disadvantaged and ethnic minority status are associated with higher rather than lower prosocial competence” (Garner, Mahatyma, Brown, and Vesely, 2014, p. 169).

Programs ultimately need to consider the individual students and how they will best benefit from SEL education; as in any educational initiative, differentiation is a must.

Additionally, literature indicates that SEL must attune to the cultural needs of the student population. Culturally diverse schools can provide students with many opportunities and issues socially; “one way to address these issues is to require those implanting the programs to learn more about their own cultures as part of their training to encourage perspective-taking and cultural sensitivity between individuals [in this case students] of different cultures” (Garner, Mahatyma, Brown, and Vesely, 2014, p. 180). Similar to Yeager, this team recognizes the need to address adolescent concerns within context of the specific community they live as well as the need of educators to be flexible with the delivery of SEL, often allowing the students to lead the direction of discussion.

Finally, literature clearly identifies the need for SEL programming to be developmentally appropriate. Since the goal is to build a building wide SEL program, that meets the needs of all learners, it is important to consider the research findings of Chunyan Yang and George G. Bear, who examine learning approaches and student engagement across elementary, middle school, and high school students, all of which need slightly different approaches to SEL for efficacy. Student perception is the focal point of this research, and in order to engage all levels, educators need to consider three key factors: teacher-student relationships, student-student relationships, and the social-ecological theory (Yang, Bear, and May, 2018). These factors each

breakdown into different developmental theories that are essential for curriculum development at each building level.

For example, within the context of teacher-student relationships, “the social-cognitive and self-efficacy theories [show] students’ perceptions of their relationships with teachers have significant impact on their interest in school and self-efficacy”, most notably true with younger students (Yang, Bear, and May, 2018, p. 47). In middle and high school students, peer relationships tend to be a driving force of engagement, as suggested within the social-control theory that states, “when students feel they are more attached to their fellow students, they are more likely to subscribe to the academic behaviors and attitudes that their school community advocates” (Yang, Bear, and May, 2018, p. 47). The entire school community plays an essential role in teaching the students; from parents, to teachers, coaches, and counselors, students need to hear similar messages from all in context of SEL. This is where the third factor comes in through the social-ecological theory, which “views student engagement as a multilevel construct that is influenced by ongoing and reciprocal interactions between individuals and the different layers of the school context” (Yang, Bear, and May, 2018, p. 48). If one thing is clear, SEL education should begin in primary school and not stop until a student graduates, under the guidance of the entire school community. All research reviewed here suggests the need for more effective middle and high school SEL programs, that will encourage students to adopt the different cultural perceptions of their peers for empathy building and growth as a society. Therefore, this project will focus on the SEL skill of social awareness that emphasizes empathy building through mutual cooperation and respect within a society, human rights protection, cultural diversity, preservation of culture, and leadership to advance learned skills into potential actionable steps.

RATIONALE/NEEDS STATEMENT

Susquehanna Township School District has one of the most diverse student populations within the public schools in central Pennsylvania; in fact, one of our district's mission statements includes diversity as one of our greatest strengths. This being said, there are numerous challenges that are associated with high level of diversity in each building. Teaching students to be empathetic of another's culture is always at the forefront of most English Language Arts lessons. While students are generally empathetic of their friends, there is minimal empathy outside of immediate peer groups. It is clear, especially in the middle school that students are in need of social emotional learning, with a clear focus on cultural empathy. Since each content area has a specific curriculum already defined, these lessons will take place during advisory, which will be taught by all building teachers. In 30 minute lessons, students will have an opportunity to greet one another, share something related to the lesson's topic, complete an activity, and reflect upon their progress as a student of empathy and SEL. The curriculum set forth can be adjusted by grade level, so students build upon the skills each year they are in the middle school. Most lessons are reflections of the nine competences for teaching empathy, as described by Michele Borba in the October 2018 edition of Educational Leadership.

Since research shows "educating empathy...requires ongoing, embedded work guided by strong school leaders who are empathetic themselves," using an ongoing advisory model is best for continued practice school wide (Borba, 2018, p. 24). Allowing all teachers to be involved in teaching empathy only strengthens the school as a whole; no matter what teacher a student is with when crisis strikes, they should feel as if the leader is empathetic and able to assist him/her. We have established a strong sense of community within advisory groups this year, so this six week unit will work best to teach within the first month of school next year (allowing 2 weeks or so for beginning, getting to know you advisory plans). Planning for next year will allow for each

grade level to plan accordingly for how they would like to adapt the curriculum to meet the individual needs of their grade level so that each year students are building upon their empathy skill sets. Prior to instruction, teachers will need to attend professional development on the nine competencies in which the curriculum is based. These included “emotional literacy, moral identity, perspective taking, moral imagination, self-regulation, practicing kindness, collaboration, moral courage, and growing changemakers” (Borba, 2018, p.24-27). Once teachers feel comfortable with the competencies, teams or grade levels can determine how to best adapt plans to allow for student-centered lessons.

Finally, empathy education with SEL embedded, should continue throughout the school year in both advisory and content-specific classes. Students should have opportunity to practice building empathy in a variety of ways, continuously adding to their toolkit of skills. Throughout the school year, teachers should aim to focus and build upon Borba’s principles of effective empathy education, which include “(1) ongoing, (2) woven-in, (3) meaningful, (4) internalized, (5) student-centered, (6) respectful relationships, and (7) empathic leadership” (p. 27). These principles allow for the flexibility that Susquehanna Township’s diverse population needs. Allowing students to engage in empathy building and SEL education will only strengthen the school as a whole, helping us to become more successful at our mission of “World-Class, every day, in every way”.

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES/VALUES, SKILLS

Research clearly shows the need for continuous SEL and empathy education throughout the secondary grade levels. With a focus on building strong, trusting relationships, learning self-regulation, and engaging in meaningful discussions, advisory seems the best time to instill the foundations of SEL and empathy. Students will learn the foundations and basic competencies of

empathy and SEL in a small, trusting environment, so they can help lead instruction in a direction that is engaging and meaningful for their individual needs. Susquehanna Township students face a great deal of cultural bullying, depression, violence, and general crisis. Many preventative measures and counseling programs have been tried, but failed; the need for education in social emotional learning with a focus on empathy building could very well be the solution that succeeds. Using the research suggested by CASEL and other researchers, ongoing education in these skills is a must to benefit the society as a whole.

Ultimately, students need to engage in a multicultural education program, which builds empathy for cultural diversity and caring consciousness over time. According to Ndura, students must bridge these gaps in consciousness by learning a “(1) deep understanding of one’s own cultural identity, orientations, and dispositions... (2) a genuine interest in understanding other’s narratives resulting from their identities, orientations, and dispositions; (3) unshakable conviction that human interdependence is a constant reality that shapes the journey of self and others; (4) commitment to and active engagement in the individual and collective task to transform structures, institutions, and social relations to maximize opportunities for the self-actualization” (Ndura, 2013, p. 213). This knowledge is essential for students to succeed in a diverse educational setting and to build a community of respect and empathy for cultures unlike their own by beginning to understand the perceptions of others unlike themselves. Implementing the knowledge, attitude, and skills of multi-cultural education building wide in advisory “provides numerous models of the kinds of attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors that reflect a peace-filled life, and that provide inspiration for the work carried out in schools and communities to establish peace-filled environments” (Ndura, 2013, p. 216). Maximizing our efforts with the entire community in mind only strengthens the culture of the building; students are greatly affected by

their families and lives outside of school, so it only makes sense that we use a model that includes global perspectives and outcomes.

Moreover, students will embark in a six week curriculum to build foundational skills early in the school year; they will continue to practice and discuss building empathy within the hallways and classrooms of the building throughout the remainder of the school year. Over time, the district hopes to see a significant decrease in violent behaviors, low academic performance, and mental health issues. As these decreases occur, students will continue to practice what they learn in the curriculum during formative assessments (reflections). Throughout the six-week curriculum, students will complete a variety of performance tasks such as self-assessments, reflections, role-play, class discussions, and a community service project. These indicators will demonstrate the gains students make in knowledge, attitude, and skills through the use of reflexive pedagogy, which encourages the student “to slow down his or her response by studying...what, why, and from whence it comes- before responding with more self-awareness and discernment...and often negative response, uses the tools to step back with some dispassion and study his or her own response and assess it for insight and potential change in the future” (Rothman, 2014, p. 111). Constantly reviewing and encouraging self-reflection will decrease the number of fights and amount of violence within the school and community. As students practice skills that encourage this knowledge and attitude shift, they are engaging in a “multi-cultural education [that] is critical to the quest for peace and nonviolence because it nurtures a vision that focuses citizens of the world on the common good” (Ndura, 2013, p. 216). These gains will ultimately benefit not only the school community, but hopefully the entire Susquehanna Township community as well.

SIX-WEEK CURRICULUM

Unit Desired Results
<p>Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Standard - CC.1.3.9-10.G</i> Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment. • <i>Standard - CC.1.2.8.G</i> Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g. print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea. • <i>Standard - CC.1.2.9-10.G</i> Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person’s life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account. • <i>Standard - CC.1.2.8.J</i> Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. • <i>Standard - CC.1.4.8.V</i> Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration. • <i>Standard - CC.1.5.8.A</i> Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions, on grade-level topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly. • <i>Standard - CC.1.5.8.C</i> Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media formats (e.g. visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g. social, commercial, political) behind its presentation. • <i>Standard - CC.1.5.8.D</i> Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound, valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume and clear pronunciation.
<p>Unit Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Communication- presentation, listening, negotiating o Self-efficacy- discipline, achievement, motivation o Cooperation- group, problem solving, critical thinking o Mediation- peer, adult, self o Conflict Resolution- peacefully, peer, rumors
<p>Unit Essential Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is empathy and why is it important to the educational setting? • How can I use empathy to better understand my peers? • How do differences in culture effect one’s ability to show empathy? • How does empathy help solve conflicts between peers?
<p>Performance Tasks: Students will engage in a variety of assessments that challenge them to work collaboratively on building empathy within the school and in extension the community. They will participate in individual journaling, class discussions, and role-play to show an understanding of the concepts or ideas we discuss. By the end of the six weeks, students will develop a plan for a community service project focused on strengthening a problem within the community by using empathy as a part of the solution.</p>
<p>Student Self- Assessment/Reflection: During the first lesson, students will answer a variety of questions on an empathy assessment scale and evaluate how they may react to certain sample</p>

scenarios; this will be used as a pre-test. Students will complete verbal or written reflections at the end of each lesson. The reflections are often times written in a journal that students will keep throughout their time in middle school, so they can track how he/she has worked to build empathy from 6-8th grade. Finally, students will repeat the empathy assessment scale and scenarios, ultimately comparing their answers from the pre-test to those of the post-test. Ideally, students will show growth in empathetic feelings and conflict resolution.

Teaching for Understanding

	Acquire Knowledge	Make Meaning	Transfer
Essential Questions	What is Empathy? What rights do all humans have? What is cultural diversity and how can it strengthen a school?	What can I learn from other cultures? How does diversity strengthen my own ability to be empathetic?	How can I perceive a situation through the eyes of another person to have empathy?
Learning Activities	Academic vocabulary matching, defining terms in your own words, apply terms to role play scenarios	Cultural research study, compare/contrast scenarios, anti-bullying campaign, kindness practice, moral imagination	Mediation, Collaboration for solutions of school's needs, self-regulation, community service project or PSA
Materials	Laminated vocabulary matching sets, graphic organizers, pencils, role-play scenario scenes	Computers, culture demographics of district, video interviews of cultural perception differences, poster board, markers, sample scenarios	Mediation forms/graphic organizers, list of problems/needs for school, computers, community partners, posters, markers
Accommodations	Scenarios based off grade levels, some actual incidents, others fictional	Resource list for research to guide students	Pre-arranged businesses/companies who are willing to work with students

Weekly Lesson Plans

Week 1	Lesson Essential Question	Desired Results (SWBAT)	Assessment (by end of lesson)	Accommodations/contingency plan

Monday	What is empathy?	<p>Greeting: Good morning _____, I'm happy you're here today!</p> <p>Sharing: What is one thing that makes you feel good or appreciated?</p> <p>Activity: Emotion pictures- students will receive a card with an emotion; they must act out what emotion is on their card for peers to guess. After each skit, class will discuss what actions may make someone feel that emotion.</p> <p>Reflection: Write how empathy effects your daily life in your empathy journal.</p>	Define empathy in own words with an example	Assessment task completed in journal reflection
Tuesday	Why is empathy important in a school?	<p>Greeting: Hi ____, I like your ____.</p> <p>Sharing: How have you showed empathy to a peer this school year?</p> <p>Activity: empathy video and discussion- students will watch video and list 3 things that the characters could have done better to build empathy in the situation.</p> <p>Reflection: How often do you witness situations like the video in the hallways of STMS? What can we do to make this better?</p>	Explain why students need empathy and one way they can build empathy in the hallways.	Assessment task completed in journal reflection
Wednesday	How does empathy strengthen a society?	<p>Greeting: Find the student who has the term or definition that matches the card you're holding. (vocabulary match greeting)</p> <p>Sharing: Describe a time in public where you witnessed an argument or</p>	List and explain one benefit to empathy within a community or society.	Assessment task completed in journal reflection

		<p>disagreement. What happened? Why do you think this occurred?</p> <p>Activity: On the line, behind the line- step on the taped line if you ever experienced the type of injustice the teacher reads aloud. After each statement, look who has and hasn't experienced the scenario- any patterns?</p> <p>Discuss as a class.</p> <p>Reflection: How do we learn to cooperate with others even though we may disagree on something?</p>		
Thursday	How does one's morals influence empathy?	<p>Greeting: Hi, how are you feeling today?</p> <p>Sharing: What is one moral that your parents/teachers instilled in you? (no repeats!)</p> <p>Activity: Right, Middle, Left= right if you agree, middle if you are undecided, left if you disagree with the moral scenarios read by teacher off card. Discuss agree/disagree once students move after each example.</p> <p>Reflection: Who is someone who has similar morals in the classroom as you? Why do you think this is?</p>	List one moral they have and why; explain why humans are connected through common morals.	Assessment task completed in journal reflection
Friday	How do I self-regulate my emotions?	<p>Greeting: Happy Friday ____, I hope you have a happy day today!</p> <p>Sharing: describe a time when your emotions got the best of you.</p> <p>Activity: Emotion charades- each student will</p>	Define self-regulation and complete an emotion check for beginning of day.	Assessment task completed in journal reflection

		<p>choose a card from a bag that has an emotion on it; they will act out the emotion for their peers to guess with facial expressions only.</p> <p>Reflection: Practice self-regulation with the events of your morning so far-how do you feel? Why do you feel this way? Do you think your emotion will change throughout the day? Why?</p>		
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Week 2	Lesson Essential Question	Desired Results (SWBAT)	Assessment (by end of lesson)	Accommodations/contingency plan
Monday	What rights do all humans have?	<p>Greeting: Mood Monday Morning M____ (add a M to the beginning of the person’s name)</p> <p>Sharing: What do you think all humans should have the right to do?</p> <p>Activity: Split into groups of 5 and research 1 of the first amendment rights. Explain how this right is granted or limited within the school and why. Share group’s opinion on this right and explain possible solutions to guarantee these rights for all humans.</p> <p>Reflection: Did you learn anything new as each group explained their findings on the first amendment rights? If so, what? If not, what was most interesting for you today?</p>	Describe 1 st amendment rights as well as human rights/morals.	Reflections in journals
Tuesday	How do you identify?	<p>Greeting: Tood Tuesday Torning T____ (add a T to</p>	Analyze what identities best	Reflections in journals

		<p>the beginning of the person’s name) Sharing: How do you identify by means of culture, gender, sexuality, etc.? Activity: Peer interview- interview a partner about their identity and how they came to identify this way. Be sure to share your honest, respectful opinions/support with each other. Reflection: After hearing how some peers identify, do you feel differently about your own identity? Were you shocked by anything that was shared today? Why?</p>	describe how you feel.	
Wednesday	How does immigration benefit a society?	<p>Greeting: Wood Wednesday Worning W____ (add a W to the beginning of the person’s name) Sharing: If you could live in any other country, where would it be? Activity: Immigrant’s story: watch the youtube interview of a Mexican Immigrant explaining his experience immigrating to the USA. Discuss his experience in comparison to other stories head in the news. Reflection: What is one difficulty facing immigrants today?</p>	Explain how immigration benefits a society culturally.	Compare US immigration to that of other countries if time permits.
Thursday	How can we prevent bullying?	<p>Greeting: Thood Thursday Thorning TH____ (add a Th to the beginning of the person’s name)</p>	Describe how bullying can be prevented within the school setting.	Students will use personal experiences to determine best

		<p>Sharing: Share a time when you or someone you know got bullied.</p> <p>Activity: Same scenario solutions- students will work in partners to come up with a peaceful solution to a sample bullying scenario. The solution should show some sort of empathy for the other side as students explain or role-play the scenario’s solution for their peers.</p> <p>Reflection: Since so many students seem to be victims of bullying, why do you think so few students stand up for each other when they witness it in the hallways?</p>		solutions for bullying.
Friday	How can you spread kindness?	<p>Greeting: Food Friday Forning F____ (add an F to the beginning of the person’s name)</p> <p>Sharing: What was the last kind thing you did for a peer or family member?</p> <p>Activity: Random acts of Kindness: each student will get a stack of post-it notes to write a kind message on. As a group, we will stick the notes on random lockers throughout the hallways to pass kindness around the building.</p> <p>Reflection: Why should you strive to be kind every day?</p>	Practice spreading kindness by spreading positive messages throughout the school hallways.	Advisory will split into 3 groups of about 3-4 students to cover all three grade level hallways with random kindness notes.

Week 3	Lesson Essential Question	Desired Results (SWBAT)	Assessment (by end of lesson)	Accommodat ions/ contingency plan
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Monday	How does food help connect humans?	<p>Greeting: Find someone of the same race/culture as you and say good morning.</p> <p>Sharing: What are three common foods in your culture?</p> <p>Activity: Breakfast food samplings- students will try different foods common of cultures in the building.</p> <p>Reflection: Which foods did you like? Dislike? Why?</p>	Explain how breakfast differs in certain cultures as well as describe some foods that are culturally significant.	Students will be encouraged to try all foods, but not forced due to allergies or food insensitivities.
Tuesday	How does religion effect one's ability to empathize?	<p>Greeting: Hola, _____</p> <p>Sharing: Do you belong to a religious group? If so, which one?</p> <p>Activity: Mini-research: research a religion (not your own) and share the major beliefs of that religion with the class.</p> <p>Reflection: Did you learn anything new today? How can we use this new knowledge to help build empathy?</p>	Describe the major beliefs of a religion that is not your own.	Journaling for reflection.
Wednesday	What are common stereotypes of the cultures in our school?	<p>Greeting: Salaam, _____</p> <p>Sharing: Name a common stereotype that you've heard about your own culture.</p> <p>Activity: Mehndi designs- students will draw mehndi designs as a sign of acceptance/support of our Hindu peers.</p> <p>Reflection: What can we do to minimize the stereotypes surrounding different cultures?</p>	Show awareness of stereotypes by explaining why they are wrong for a culture. Show support for our peers by participating in wearing mehndi designs on hands.	Students can use washable or sharpie markers for designs
Thursday	How are holiday's different in certain cultures?	<p>Greeting: Find a partner and create a one of a kind greeting.</p> <p>Sharing: Model your greeting for the rest of class; everyone repeat with their partner!</p>	Describe the traditions of a holiday you don't celebrate but is important in another culture.	none

		<p>Activity: Read/share- read about a holiday that you pull randomly from a bag; be prepared to share this with your peers as a mini presentation</p> <p>Reflection: What is a holiday you learned about that seems interesting and you may want to try and celebrate on your own?</p>		
Friday	How does being multicultural benefit a person?	<p>Greeting: Namiste, _____.</p> <p>Sharing: Based on everything we've learned this week, what culture do you want to learn more about? Why?</p> <p>Activity: Flags from around the world- students will create a poster flag that represents their own culture or one they hope to learn more about. The flag can be one that already exists or one they design on their own.</p> <p>Reflection: What elements of the culture are represented in your flag?</p>	Explain the importance of understanding or accepting multiple cultures.	Reflection completed verbally in a whip around format.

Week 4	Lesson Essential Question	Desired Results (SWBAT)	Assessment (by end of lesson)	Accommodations/ contingency plan
Monday	What does poverty look like?	<p>Greeting: What's up _____</p> <p>Sharing: Define poverty in your own words- what does it mean? How does it look? How does it make people feel?</p> <p>Activity: Weekly budget- students will each be given an amount on a notecard. This amount represents how much money they have to spend within 1 week. The</p>	Describe ways poverty effect students in school and different supports in place to assist them	Reflection completed in journal

		<p>notecard will also tell them how many people are in the family and what additional expenses, if any, exist that week. This information will be used for students to build a budget for each day of the week; students should list each day of the week and everything they spend money on, including meals, clothes, etc.</p> <p>Reflection: Based on your budgeting activity, what did you realize about people below the poverty line? OR Where do you feel your family fits socioeconomically; how does this effect your daily life?</p>		
Tuesday	How does racism effect students in this school?	<p>Greeting: Howdy partner! (lasso your partner as you greet them)</p> <p>Sharing: If you could be any character from a book or movie, who would you be and why?</p> <p>Activity: Racism in public schools- read a brief article together as a class and discuss how we can come together as a school community to solve racial issues within the hallways.</p> <p>Reflection: What connections can you make between the school in the article and STMS?</p>	Analyze solutions to racism within the school environment.	Connections shared in whip around format for reflections
Wednesday	What is a conventional family?	<p>Greeting: Good morning, I'm happy to see you today!</p> <p>Sharing: Describe your family- who lives with you? Do you split time with 2 households?</p>	Focus on their emotions today and self-regulate if needed based on events of the morning.	Class discussion for reflection

		<p>Activity: Mindful meditation- students will meditate silently trying to focus on their inner feelings.</p> <p>Reflection: Is there such a thing as a conventional family? Are there benefits to diverse family make-ups?</p>		
Thursday	How does crisis effect students both positively and negatively?	<p>Greeting: Hi, today I'm (emotion), how are you? Response and then pass greeting on.</p> <p>Sharing: What comes to mind when you think of a crisis?</p> <p>Activity: Crisis intervention scenarios- watch 3 short youtube clips on a crisis situation- have students analyze how they would react if this happened to them. Discuss possible reactions and how to support peers to get through the crisis.</p> <p>Reflection: What crisis, if any, have you experienced in your life? How has this helped or hindered you in school?</p>	Analyze how certain crisis situations effect students differently and how that may affect one's ability to focus in school.	Reflections completed in journal
Friday	What preferences/ beliefs drive identity?	<p>Greeting: Find a partner you've never greeted before and greet them using the class mantra: "Hi ____, I hope you find some happiness today!"</p> <p>Sharing: What do you know about the LGBTQ+ community?</p> <p>Activity: Take identity quiz- students will answer a variety of questions about preferences and morals to determine what may best describe their identity.</p>	Determine how his/her preferences/ beliefs help determine their identity.	Write reflection in journal and share with class if student wants.

		Reflection: What were your results to the identity quiz? Were you surprised by anything?		
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Week 5	Lesson Essential Question	Desired Results (SWBAT)	Assessment (by end of lesson)	Accommodations/contingency plan
Monday	How can you empathize with another culture's struggles?	<p>Greeting: Ankle shake greeting- grab each other's ankles and shake them while saying good morning.</p> <p>Sharing: What is something you struggle with on a regular basis?</p> <p>Activity: Find a partner who shared something you've experienced or overcome in the past. Talk with each other about how your experiences are similar and different. Give advice and support to one another based on the scenario.</p> <p>Reflection: How did it feel to provide support to a peer in need?</p>	Imagine him/herself in a different culture to gain perspective to help build empathy.	Students may work in groups larger than 2 if needed (problems may be similar)
Tuesday	How does a culture preserve their beliefs over time?	<p>Greeting: Floppy fish greeting- extend hands to tap each other's forearms while saying hello.</p> <p>Sharing: What is one thing you believe in that has been passed down within your family/culture?</p> <p>Activity: Research 2 cultures that students identify within our classroom; make a t-chart comparing/contrasting how each culture preserves its traditions/celebrations, etc.</p> <p>Reflection: Did you find anything in you research</p>	Compare/contrast two culture's ability to preserve traditions, stories, etc.	Share reflections with a partner prior to leaving.

		that was similar or shockingly different?		
Wednesday	What roles do elders play in most cultures?	<p>Greeting: Fist pump good morning</p> <p>Sharing: Who is the oldest member of your family? What is one thing you learned from them?</p> <p>Activity: List the following family roles and define what roles these people commonly do within your own culture. (mom, dad, grandma, grandpa, aunt, uncle, oldest sibling, middle child, youngest sibling, other?)</p> <p>Reflection: Looking at what the other students in the room produced on their list, how similar/different are your culture roles?</p>	Define roles of elders and others within a culture to aid in preservation of that culture.	Compare/contrast reflection completed as a class discussion with student volunteers leading conversation.
Thursday	How do peers influence each other?	<p>Greeting: Greet your neighbor in a funny voice</p> <p>Sharing: Name a time when you did something because your friends were doing it too.</p> <p>Activity: As a class, come up with a new club that promotes kindness, empathy, compassion, and inclusion of diverse cultures for STMS. What are the goals of this club, how often will it meet, and how will meetings run?</p> <p>Reflection: If this club became a reality, would you join? Why/why not?</p>	Analyze the power of peer influence in bullying and other scenarios.	Reflection completed in journal.
Friday	Why is it important to belong to a culture?	<p>Greeting: Microwave-greet the person next to you by waving your pinky at them and say Hi, how are you ____.</p>	Explain how a culture helps define our connections and morals with other humans.	Students can show handshake to administration and challenge

		<p>Sharing: Name a club, team, or organization that you belong to and feel welcomed in.</p> <p>Activity: Create an advisory specific hand-shake that you can do in passing in the hallway to show support and acceptance of this group of kids. Practice with each member of the class.</p> <p>Reflection: How does this handshake serve as a symbol of acceptance/belonging?</p>		them to learn each advisories handshake.
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Week 6	Lesson Essential Question	Desired Results (SWBAT)	Assessment (by end of lesson)	Accommodations/contingency plan
Monday	What can we do as a school to build empathy in the community?	<p>Greeting: Baseball greeting- the teacher will call out single, double, triple and students will shake hands with the student who is that many kids away from them. (single- person next to you, double, person 2 people away, etc.)</p> <p>Sharing: What is one thing you wish could be different about our community?</p> <p>Activity: Working in groups of 2-3, decide on an issue facing the Township community. Define the problem and how it may be fixed if empathy is a part of the solution.</p> <p>Reflection: Why do you feel this problem is the greatest within the community?</p>	Evaluate and plan a community service project to build empathy within the community.	Continue working on community service plans tomorrow.
Tuesday	What can we do as a school to build	<p>Greeting: Pass the ball greeting- pass a ball in the circle, saying hello to the</p>	Evaluate and plan a community	Continue working on community

	empathy in the community?	<p>person you pass to; as they catch it, they will respond.</p> <p>Sharing: Tell us about a time when you saw a disagreement in public.</p> <p>Activity: Using the problem defined by your group yesterday, begin writing a plan of action for a community service project that will draw attention to the issue while working to solve the problem. These ideas should be possible within the time constraints of school and student lead.</p> <p>Reflection: Out of your possible solutions, which do you and your group feel is the strongest? Why?</p>	service project to build empathy within the community.	service plans tomorrow.
Wednesday	What can we do as a school to build empathy in the community?	<p>Greeting: 1 minute mingle greet- Say good morning to as many people as you can in one minute.</p> <p>Sharing: Describe a time when you saw someone do something kind for another person in public.</p> <p>Activity: Draft a proposal for your community service project to share with the teachers, students, and administration at STMS. You are writing with the intent to persuade the school community to choose your project to improve the empathy in the community. Use the model project proposal as guidance for your own.</p> <p>Reflection: What elements of persuasion did your group use in the proposal?</p>	Evaluate and plan a community service project to build empathy within the community.	Turn in final draft of community service project plan by PM advisory if not able to finish this AM.
Thursday	What types of peer	<p>Greeting: Under-over greeting- give high fives</p>	Determine the best plan of	Answer reflection

	mediation is helpful in our school?	<p>either over your head or under your legs alternating every other person.</p> <p>Sharing: How do you think students can influence adults to have empathy?</p> <p>Activity: Watch a brief peer mediation video as a class. In groups of 4, practice peer mediation with a sample disagreement. Role play the scene where 2 people are fighting and 2 people are mediating.</p> <p>Reflection: Do you think peer mediation is an effective way to deal with disagreements in our school? Why/why not?</p>	action to mediate problems between peers.	questions in journal.
Friday	How can we continuously build empathy between peers at STMS?	<p>Greeting: Compliment greeting- say good morning to someone in the room and give them a compliment.</p> <p>Sharing: Have you witnessed empathy between two people in the hallway? If so, what happened?</p> <p>Activity: Write a promise statement for continuing to spread kindness and empathy throughout the school year. Decorate this promise and hang it on the mural for your grade level. Be sure to make a specific promise that promotes kindness/empathy.</p> <p>Reflection: How has your understanding of building empathy changed from week 1 to now? What goal do you have for yourself to help build empathy within the school?</p>	Evaluate the progress from beginning to end of the empathy lessons and plan for how we can continue to grow as a school community in building empathy.	Complete reflection in journal

MEASURES/OUTCOMES

Measuring success in this curriculum is built in via the reflections which can serve as a formative assessment for each advisory teacher to direct their lessons. These reflections are recorded in advisory journals that teachers can read at any time; this may encourage students to talk about issues they witness or ways they see empathy making a difference in the school's climate. These journals can be used as a guide for teachers to direct instruction or the school as a whole to shift focus in other advisory lessons that may help a variety of students. Students can use the same journal throughout the year to track personal and school level progress.

Additionally, the self-regulation practice and observation of students using these skills outside of the classroom are clear indicators of successful outcomes. Furthermore, as teachers make contact with parents about academics, they can also discuss social and emotional behaviors observed at home. This insight from parents may help many teachers provide specific lessons in skills students need additional practice. Both student self-regulation and reports from home can determine successful or not outcomes.

Ultimately, measuring outcomes may best happen through the monthly SOAR climate surveys both students and teachers across the district fill out. These surveys ask students how safe they feel in their classrooms, hallways, cafeteria and on the bus; ideally, from August to May, all participants will mark continued growth towards feeling accepted and safe. These surveys as of now do not include a section for comments, but as both teachers and students will have a working knowledge of empathy competencies and SEL, it may be best to add a section for commenting about witnessed success, failures, and suggestions for continued improvement. In this capacity, the survey will provide data administrators can use to measure outcomes, while

reading personal stories from all members of the community on what is really happening throughout the building. Giving everyone a chance to share their voice only confirms what is taught throughout the empathy lessons; everyone has an opinion and can make a difference as long as we learn to be accepting of others.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTINUATION

Advisory occurs every morning of the school year, so lessons on kindness, compassion, and building empathy should continue on a regular basis as the year progresses past the six-weeks of curriculum above. Re-teaching these skills and concepts is just as important as allowing time for students to practice and reflect upon how these skills have made the school a better community of acceptance and peace. Since students are creating community service projects towards the end of this curriculum, many students can make these project outlines into realities; finding community partners and moving forward with their project goals could easily be a weekly activity as the year progresses. These projects are also a great opportunity for students to collaborate as some projects will probably be more successful than others; students may choose to join a peer's project efforts rather than continue with their own if necessary.

Furthermore, the school district can help continuation by pulling data from the monthly SOAR surveys which evaluates students' perceptions of safety, engagement, and general climate in school. From the beginning of the year to the end of the year, we should see immense growth in students' perceptions of the hallway climate towards positivity and acceptance. Ideally, we hope students always feel safe in school, but with more empathy practiced by all members of the school community, this should also increase. Additionally, once a year, students are required to fill out a youth survey which helps them determine what they may do in their future. This survey has questions about general interests, school provided services, and community activities;

ultimately this data could make sure we continue to meet the needs of each individual student by providing programs, classes, and other services they may deem important. Both surveys can be used on an individualized level or building-wide level to make the climate better overall.

Continued growth towards empathy building through SEL and advisory must be an ongoing attempt by all teachers, administrators, and students in the district; over time, hopefully the district will see less mental health concerns and a more peaceful community for years to come.

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APPENDIX

Advisory Lesson PowerPoint: https://hannasd-my.sharepoint.com/:p/g/personal/kdobyms_hannasd_org/EQ3N_LfhmOhJv4uu5ptY98oB1VLEPXOgp2Am80rbOL1Sgg