8-1-2024

A Culturally Responsive Approach to Mindfulness and Mental Health Informal Education

Anastasia Jerbic-Gonzalez

A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE APPROACH TO MINDFULNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH INFORMAL EDUCATION

By

Anastasia Jerbic-Gonzalez

Bachelor's Degree- Dance and Production Management
University of Nevada Las Vegas,
2016

Master's Degree – Curriculum and Instruction
University of Nevada Las Vegas,
2019

Master's Degree – Educational Leadership
American College of Education,
2024

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the

Doctor of Philosophy - Teacher Education

Department of Teaching & Learning
College of Education
Graduate College

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
August 2024

UNLV | GRADUATE COLLEGE

Dissertation Approval

The Graduate College
The University of Nevada, Las Vegas

June 27, 2024

This dissertation prepared by

Anastasia Jerbic-Gonzalez

entitled

A Culturally Responsive Approach to Mindfulness and Mental Health Informal Education

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy –Teacher Education
Department of Teaching & Learning

Katrina Liu, Ph.D.
Examination Committee Chair

Chia-Liang Dai, Ph.D.
Examination Committee Member

Chyllis Scott, Ph.D.
Examination Committee Member

Shaoan Zhang, Ph.D.
Examination Committee Member

Richard Miller, Ph.D.
Graduate College Faculty Representative

Alyssa Crittenden, Ph.D.
Vice Provost for Graduate Education & Dean of the Graduate College

Abstract

The qualitative study examined the mental health aspects of marginalized elementary school students in addition to constructing and implementing a culturally responsive and sustaining mindfulness program to observe if there were improvements regarding emotional regulation and awareness. To achieve this, I constructed a culturally responsive and sustaining mindfulness program, implemented this program, and studied the responses from students. The research questions that fueled this study include: (1) What types of negative emotions do marginalized elementary students experience? What is the root cause for marginalized students experiencing negative emotions during their elementary school years? (2) How can incorporating mindfulness techniques embedded with culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies aid marginalized students in overcoming negative emotions that they experience in elementary school? (3) How can culturally responsive mindfulness programs be sustainable and transformative for marginalized students who frequently encounter negative emotions? (4) What challenges and difficulties are there in developing and implementing such a program? How do I search for and implement solutions? The results from this study showed that the majority of marginalized students consistently felt negative emotions at school, including overwhelming stress caused by academic pressure, nervousness due to previous trauma related to bullying, and anger due to disliking school for numerous reasons. Additionally, creating such a program that incorporated mindfulness and culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies positively impacted students, equipping them with critical reflection skills to discover new techniques to help them overcome negative emotions and build resilience. The main challenge I faced as the researcher when constructing and implementing such a program was ensuring the program incorporated effective and meaningful activities that embraced all student cultures.

Keywords: mindfulness, culturally responsive teaching, culturally sustaining pedagogy, transformative learning, negative emotions

Acknowledgements

I want to thank my entire committee for their endless support and efforts in challenging me as a doctoral student. Dr. Liu, words cannot describe how grateful I am to have you as my mentor. You have worked with me for several years to help me develop my knowledge as an educator and positively grow as a person, student, and teacher; thank you for your commitment to always helping me grow. Dr. Dai, thank you for all your support and insight into mental health informal education. Your expertise has allowed me to grow as a doctoral student while advancing my knowledge in the overall health and health programs related to K-12 students. Dr. Miller, thank you for all your support in helping me further develop my study and dissertation. Your expertise in music education has allowed me to incorporate such elements into my study, which positively impacted my participants. Dr. Scott, thank you for all your efforts in helping me develop my dissertation to ensure everything was up to par. Dr. Zhang, thank you for always supporting me as a student, and I am excited that you are a part of this committee. Lastly, I would like to thank my entire family and friends for all their love, support, and encouragement throughout my educational journey.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter One: Introduction

There is a growing concern regarding how school districts provide effective and equitable mental health programs for all K-12 learners (Roffey et al., 2016), especially in the context that marginalized learners have battled inequity and lack of opportunities in the U.S. school systems for decades (Howard, 2019). As student diversity rapidly evolves, most large urban school districts have 70% of students identifying as a person of color (Villegas et al., 2012). Clark Public School Review (2022) found that 78% of Clark County School District's (CCSD) student enrollment was minority driven, with the majority being Hispanic children. According to the Nevada Department of Education (2022), for the school year of 2021-2022, Clark County had a total of 310,556 enrolled students, 47.19% being Hispanic, 15.74% Black, 21.6% White, 7.55% Two or More Races, 5.95% Asian, 1.63% Pacific Islander, and 0.33% being Indian Native American. Compared to the high diversity in its student population, the teacher population has remained primarily White. CCSD recently released their employee personnel demographics for the school year 2022-2023: Whites comprise 66.7% of their administrative personnel, 64.6% of licensed teachers, and 34% of support staff. With our student population rapidly diversifying, educational leaders need to make an effort to ensure that all students from all backgrounds receive a high-quality, equitable education, even in its newest mental health informal education genre. In order to become aware of what our diverse student population needs, leaders must also become aware of the challenges that follow marginalized students throughout their educational experiences, how those challenges impact their mental health and overall well-being, and implement effective and equitable approaches to address their mental health needs. This chapter will discuss these challenges in detail and how mindfulness-based practices can aid K-12 students in further developing positive mental health, building resilience, and increasing their

overall well-being. I hope that by crafting a unique mental health program that couples mindfulness and culturally responsive pedagogies, educational leaders will be able to provide a healthy and inclusive learning environment for all students.

Stress and Trauma of Marginalized Students In and Outside of School

Researchers who specialize in ethnic studies and psychology have shown that African American and Latino students are highly aware of their racial identities and how society perceives them; unfortunately, they are exposed to experiencing an increase in discrimination due to their racial backgrounds (Flores-González et al., 2014; Sanders-Phillips et al., 2014; Umaña- Taylor et al., 2014). Researchers have found that racial discrimination causes harm to the mental, emotional, and physical health status of students of color (Walker et al., 2017). One of the greatest obstacles that affect a student's performance in the classroom is stress (Beilock, 2011), which can be experienced emotionally, physically, or mentally. The Brain Science of Trauma suggests that stress stems from trauma and chronic activation of the brain's stress response system, which reduces capabilities of memory consolidation, concentration, sustained attention, and the ability to retain or recall information (Kamentz, 2017). Avoiding life's stressors is impossible; many people incorporate coping mechanisms into their daily routines to combat stress (Cano et al., 2006). Gross (1998) explains that by regulating their emotions, individuals also engage in actions and coping mechanisms that can be utilized when stressful situations arise. Many marginalized individuals have additional layers of stress that they have to deal with, such as racial discrimination, and they utilize various coping mechanisms to survive extreme stress (Oláh, 1995; Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 1999).

Individual trauma is defined as the

> "Results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being" (Chafouleas et al., 2016, p. 7).

Researchers have found that students of color experiencing racism or race-related stress decrease their mental and emotional health and well-being while increasing the experience of race-related stress, which is particularly found in those who identify as African American, Asian American, and Latino students (Sellers et al., 2003; Utsey et al., 2002). The American Psychological Association (2016) reported there is a connection between discrimination and extreme health disparities amongst people of color in comparison to whites due to the structural elements in the U.S., such as poverty, institutionalized racism, and the criminalization of people of color which has greatly impacted their livelihood, well-being, and mental and emotional health (Darling- Hammond, 1995; Jencks, 1980; Lopez et al., 1998; Lucas, 2001). Chafouleas et al. (2016) recommended that in order to help students who have been exposed to stressful events that may lead to trauma, professionals need to be conscious of which students may be at risk for experiencing trauma, provide interventions that support different experiences of trauma, and analyze current data that focuses on students' responses to school-based trauma interventions or create a trauma-sensitive school culture.

Overarching Term for Trauma

My study used negative emotions as an overarching term to include the side effects that stem from trauma, such as stress, anxiety, anger, and depression. The reason my study did not use the term trauma is because I observed the emotional reactions to trauma, which may include negative emotions. Due to a growing concern in education regarding the issues related to mental

health in K-12 students (Roffey et al., 2016), anxiety and depression are two of the most common hurdles students must overcome during adolescence (Spruit et al., 2020). For individuals who experience anxiety, there has always been an academic conflict between concentration and memory, which are critical factors for academic success (Bernal-Morales et al., 2015). When students experience stress, anxiety, or depression, their mental health is at risk, impacting their educational experiences, academic performance, and learning outcomes. Stress, anxiety, and depression have been known to impair a student's working memory, making it strenuous to retain new information and increasing difficulties when recalling previously learned information (Leavitt et al., 2020). This information is concerning because working memory is where meaning is made and how students build on prior knowledge. Students who are overwhelmed with these types of negative emotions have the potential to cause harm to their well-being and severely impact their academic abilities.

Root Causes of Trauma for Marginalized Students

To positively impact marginalized students in mental health informal education, professionals must provide students with an equitable and culturally responsive mental health curriculum designed to improve and strengthen their mental awareness and provide them with tools to help heal their emotional wounds. Becoming aware of marginalized students' challenges and their unique educational and individual needs will aid professionals in creating and providing effective tools and mental health programs. Researchers have revealed that marginalized students deal with many scenarios that affect their mental health and well-being (Jones et al., 2021). Challenges such as experiencing unpleasant events, educational inequities, microaggressions, and racial battle fatigue have crippled students physically, emotionally, and mentally (Brown et al., 2019). For example, marginalized individuals more often feel the effects

of racial battle fatigue due to their experiences of having to navigate their emotions and reactions to unpleasant and harmful racial encounters (Jones, 2021). Far too often, people of color feel enormous energy lost as they cope with continuous racial microaggressions (Smith et al., 2007). Since specific ethnic groups carry the burden of historical trauma, like slavery, racism, and oppression, it leads to more trauma that stems from systematic oppression, targeting people of color (Ortega-Williams et al., 2021). For instance, the historical trauma African Americans experience continues to produce physical, psychological, social, and economic inequality across generations (Sotero, 2006).

Many hostile scenarios can expose children to trauma and lead them to experience negative mental, physical, and emotional health. Trauma can stem when a child is exposed to abuse, neglect, natural disasters, the death of a family member or loved ones, and accidents involving life-threatening injuries (Croft et al., 2019). Some individuals may experience trauma in a single event, while others encounter continuous traumatic experiences (Amaya-Jackson, 2000). One form of trauma that many children are unknowingly exposed to is generational trauma, which is the continuation of trauma experienced by one family member continuing to pass down their negative behaviors of violence and abuse to their children (Croft et al., 2019). Intergenerational transmission of trauma creates a cycle where children are consistently exposed to violence and abuse, creating a norm of trauma in their lives, resulting in poor mental, emotional, and physical health and social behaviors (Widom & Maxwell, 2001). Various mental disorders and behavioral problems can result from direct or indirect exposure to trauma (Fairbank et al., 2001). For example, the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (2022) reported that one in four girls and one in thirteen boys had been sexually abused during their childhood, and one in seven children experienced abuse or neglect in the past year.

Once an individual is exposed to traumatic events, additional consequences can form, including continuous stress, anxiety, depression, and behavioral issues (Pine & Cohen, 2002). Trauma has been broadly experienced across the U.S. student population; however, there is a disproportionate concentration among marginalized individuals and lower-income community members (Keels, 2020). Marginalized students face a great deal of stress, anxiety, and depression due to their inequitable opportunities within their educational and life experiences, which lead individuals to experience unpleasant events resulting in exclusion (Hoyt et al., 2021). Data shows that 80% of children who live in high-poverty or high-crime neighborhoods have experienced at least one traumatic event that can greatly impact their development as a child, which equates to approximately twenty-five percent of school-aged children overall (Gerrity & Folcarelli, 2008). The National Survey of Adolescents, endorsed by the United States Department of Justice, projected that adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 who live in the U.S. have experienced extreme events leading these individuals to experience and live with trauma; it showed five million had endured serious physical assault, 1.8 million had experienced sexual assault, and 8.8 million had witnessed interpersonal violence during their lifetime (Kilpatrick et al., 2003; Kilpatrick & Saunders, 1997). Racial and cultural groups are overrepresented in low-income populations and at a higher risk of experiencing trauma than those who are not marginalized (Gerrity & Folcarelli, 2008). Therefore, diverse students who attend urban schools are more likely to experience more stress, depression, and anxiety than their white peers, leading marginalized students to experience further exclusion and marginalization within schools and their academic journey due to a lack of understanding and support from educators (Jones et al., 2021).

School Related Trauma

To understand why it is important to conduct this research, it is imperative to understand the background experiences of marginalized students and how these experiences have consequences that can impact their mental and emotional health and well-being. Marginalized students have experienced social injustices and inequalities due to the dominance of a superior culture (Linder et al., 2019). Students in K-12 schools typically find themselves under great pressure to perform in personal, academic, and family domains, leading many students to feel high levels of stress (De Anda et al., 2000). Addressing the achievement and opportunity gaps in education (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Milner, 2010) also includes addressing students' stress levels, which are inequitably distributed, as well as the social and economic resources that force many disadvantaged students to find ways to navigate a path of survival and hopefully achieve well-being in doing so (Betts et al., 2000). In viewing the educational experiences of marginalized students, many learners do not experience an equitable education, nor do they encounter an educator with whom they can relate to (Villegas et al., 2012). Haycook (2000) states that students who attend high-poverty schools are twice as likely to be taught by teachers who are not certified to teach in their field than students who attend lower-poverty schools. Studies have shown that students who identify as a person of color, come from low-income neighborhoods, and academically perform lower are more frequently taught by less qualified educators (Darling-Hammond, 2004).

As a result of educational inequities, minoritized individuals have less access to high-quality learning and development opportunities with cultural relatability compared to their white peers (Yosso, 2005). Unfortunately, most administrators and educators are falling short when accounting for how minoritized students experience and respond to oppression within their academics (Linder et al., 2019). Cultural conflicts arise from the inconsistency in teaching and

learning because it focuses on a singular lens, excluding views from opposite races, genders, geographic locations, and socioeconomic statuses between teachers and students (Milner, 2010). After analyzing the statistics, most teachers and administrators are still classified as white, middle-class, monolingual females who have not experienced what it is like to grow up with the same challenges as a person of color, an immigrant, or an individual who is experiencing poverty (Paris, 2012). Due to this, most teachers have a different cultural lens of reference and points of view than their students (Gillette, 2018; Yosso, 2005). In addition to students having difficulties relating with their teachers, there is also an overrepresentation of marginalized students in special education programs and those who experience over-disciplinary issues, which lingers with these marginalized students as they embark throughout their educational voyage (Annamma & Handy, 2020; Skiba et al., 2014).

How teachers perceive their students can ultimately affect a student's academic experience and outcome. Unfortunately, over-representation in special education programs has become an unjust norm for marginalized learners and students of color (Jordan, 2005). Researchers have identified factors for why diverse students experience overrepresentation in schools: test bias, poverty, lack of quality in their general education, and inadequate professional development for collaborating with diverse learners (Kreshow, 2013). These factors fuel inequitable learning opportunities for marginalized students when they try to thrive academically. Additionally, African Americans are more likely to be labeled with characteristics of disabilities in comparison to other ethnicities (Jordan, 2005). Studies revealed that students of color are three times more likely than whites to be labeled with mental retardation, two times more likely to be labeled emotionally disturbed, and one and a half times more likely to be labeled with a learning disability (Kreshow, 2013). These statistics reveal how minoritized

students do not receive equal opportunities for an equitable education compared to white students.

Marginalized students have also dealt with a large amount of disproportionate disciplinary actions within their educational quest (Skiba et al., 2014). Research has shown that students from diverse backgrounds have been over-disciplined and criminalized in schools, resulting in higher suspension and expulsion rates for students of color than white students (Sissoko et al., 2023). Marginalized students are more susceptible to unique traumatic events that typically stem from their identity, background, and socioeconomic status (Woods-Jaeger et al., 2022). African American and Latino students are frequently reprimanded more severely than white students for the same infractions (Gansen, 2021). African Americans represent 18% of preschool students yet account for 48% of preschool children suspensions (Gansen, 2021). It has also been noted that African American students are much more likely to be referred to law enforcement or arrested for a school-based offense than students from other ethnicities (Hines-Datiri, 2015). African American girls are also suspended more often than any other race (Chen, 2019). Thirty-seven percent of young African American females do not have a high school diploma, and less than one-third of them proceed to higher education (Crenshaw et al., 2015). Far too often, teachers and administrators interpret the behaviors of marginalized students as a sign of delinquency instead of viewing it as an adolescent struggling in one aspect of their life: mentally, physically, or emotionally. Due to marginalized students encountering more microaggressions than their white counterparts, researchers have stated that these encounters have the potential for them to be more at risk of developing racial battle fatigue, leading many to experience poor mental, physical, and emotional health and well-being (Sue et al., 2007).

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transexual, and queer (LGBTQ) students are constantly experiencing negative and unsupportive learning environments that have hindered their academic performance, which has led these students to experience greater social difficulties, poor academic performance, homelessness, and a significantly higher rate of suicide (D'Augelli et al., 2001). It is not uncommon for LGBTQ students to experience discriminatory treatment from faculty and staff. Unfortunately, 56% of students who identified as LGBTQ regularly hear homophobic remarks, and 64% hear transphobic comments regarding their gender expression from school officials (GLSEN, 2015). LGBTQ students are three times more likely to feel depressed and attempt suicide because of their frequent interactions with experiencing harm, harassment, and violence at school than their heterosexual schoolmates (Jarpe-Ratner et al., 2022). The effects of experiencing these forms of trauma and inequities in education have led many marginalized learners to develop poor mental health as they are more susceptible to feelings of stress, anxiety, and depression. Actions of dropping out, missing school days, adopting low confidence in academic abilities, and resorting to illegal activities and substance abuse have been linked to students who experience these forms of inequities in education (Saleem et al., 2022).

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being (CDC, 2022). Students who lack positive mental health can experience shifts affecting their thinking, feeling, and acting. González-Valero (2019) noted that between 2005-2015, there was an 18.4% increase in the number of cases of depression found in students. During COVID-19, the school closures not only affected students and their learning but also greatly impacted those receiving mental health services from a school setting prior to the unleashing of the pandemic (Martin & Sorensen, 2020). By studying past effects of

previous catastrophes, researchers explain how we need to become more equipped to deal with the outcomes that present themselves, as many individuals may be more prone to experience serious mental health challenges after experiencing such events (Reardon, 2015). The National Association of School Psychologists estimated there will be an overall doubling to a tripling number of students who exhibit social, emotional, and behavioral challenges at school due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (NASP, 2020). Unfortunately, many students showed increased poor mental behaviors such as stress, anxiety, and depression (Hoyt et al., 2021). Supported by the 2020 data from The American Psychological Association, 81% of students between the ages of 13–17 had experienced more intense stress during the COVID-19 pandemic. This data also revealed that Gen Z teens between the ages of 13-17 are experiencing elevated levels of stress and depression (APA, 2020). Before COVID-19, American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) youth were already experiencing more adversity as they were exposed to more physical abuse and domestic violence in their homes than non-AIAN youth (Tsethlikai et al., 2020). Once the pandemic arose, AIAN youth witnessed an increased amount of domestic violence and abuse, resulting in even greater risks of negative outcomes such as mental illness, suicide attempts, drug use, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Tsethlikai et al., 2020). This global pandemic placed increased pressure on schools to provide mental health support, including schools that serve racially and ethnically marginalized students and those living in lower-income communities (Keels, 2020). Nationwide, schools decided to implement social-emotional learning programs to help students navigate their emotions and educate individuals about positive mental health.

Negative Consequences Stemming from Trauma

With proper support and intervention, many children can have the opportunity to overcome unpleasant and traumatic experiences; however, unfortunately, many youths go without the support and intervention needed for this to occur (Gerrity & Filcarelli, 2008). Therefore, students must have the proper resources, tools, and services. Children left untreated for trauma can experience severe consequences in their academics, childhood, and adulthood (Croft et al., 2019). When students experience trauma, it disrupts the development of core cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral competencies needed to succeed in school (Keels, 2020). Children exposed to trauma were shown to have significantly higher levels of emotional and behavioral issues than children who were not (Aviles et al., 2006). Many children who have experienced trauma are labeled as being disruptive in the classroom because they cannot manage their emotions and behavior (Pine & Cohen, 2002). Students who have experienced or witnessed violence have also been linked to lower grades, increased school absences, and higher dropout and expulsion rates (Hurt et al., 2001; Putnam, 2006). Research confirmed that children exposed to experiences of injustice and domestic violence at an early age have the potential to develop a lower intelligence quotient (Putnam, 2006). Trauma significantly increases poor school performance, risks of having mental health issues, difficulties in engaging and keeping social relationships, and promotes ill behavior, which could lead to physical ailments (Gerrity & Filcarelli, 2008). Therefore, this makes it more difficult for students with trauma to perform at their best academically and acquire good social skills.

Researchers Gerrity and Filcarelli (2008) have shown that children who do not receive treatment for trauma are more likely to experience life in poverty into adulthood, engage in criminal activities, substance addiction and abuse, mental health problems, and disturbances in their overall health. Research reveals that at least 75% of youths in the juvenile justice system

have been victimized in the past and experienced traumatic events, leading them to acquire the negative consequences and behaviors that stem from trauma (Ford et al., 2006). Exposure to abuse and violence impinges on the normal development of adolescents, as it is noted to have severe effects on their brain development and physical and emotional health (US General Surgeon, 1999). Researchers discovered that adolescents who experience continuous stress from trauma show long-term negative effects on their brain and physical health (Brown & Spencer, 2013; Buwalda et al., 2011). Since many marginalized students are more likely to experience racism, microaggressions, and racial battle fatigue, many also develop physical and psychological health issues (Woods-Jaeger et al., 2022). Students who have experienced racial battle fatigue reported symptoms of muscle tension, body and headaches, increased heart rate and breathing, stomach and bowel issues, extreme fatigue, high blood pressure, anxiety, and lack of sleep due to disturbing dreams, being on edge, and paranoia (Smith et al., 2007).

Why Conduct this Research

Fosha et al. (2009) discusses the importance of critically thinking about how individuals reflect upon their emotional regulation and how we can use this reflection to repair, heal, and grow from the emotional wounds and scars left by past experiences.

> How do we regulate emotion in a healthy way? How do we foster environments conducive to its flourishing and reciprocity, the stuff of communication and resonance, of optimal health and effectiveness of action, of resilience, and of caring relationships? How do we do so without becoming flooded and overwhelmed? How can we use emotion to repair, heal, grow, and learn? How do we use emotion to mend ruptures caused by emotion? (p. viii).

Research has linked significant decreases in overall physical and psychological well-being among people of color (Branscombe et al., 1999; Schmitt et al., 2014), including adults and adolescents (Huynh & Fuligni, 2010; Seaton & Yip, 2009) due to the negative social interactions of experiencing experience of poverty and racial discrimination which can negatively impact an individual's physical and mental health (Dovidio et al., 2006; Keyes, 1998). Now that communities are transitioning to a post-pandemic lifestyle, it is time for researchers to focus on constructing an effective mental health program that can be utilized in K-12 schools. Such a curriculum for K-12 students' needs to be constructed in a way that provides all students with the opportunity to obtain the tools and develop the skills needed to contribute to acquiring positive mental health and restoring an individual's overall well-being. Creating a culturally responsive and sustaining mindfulness program and studying its effects on elementary students can benefit many students dealing with negative emotions, build resilience, and restore a sense of overall well-being. It is important to conduct this research because our student population desperately needs a curriculum that supports the mental health and well-being of all students. My study connected mindfulness and culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies to bring forth a curriculum that professionals can utilize in the classroom and begin to work with all students in providing a holistic healing process that restores the overall well-being of our youth while building resilience and awareness.

Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Pedagogies

"Culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies are designed to cultivate student's voices, entrepreneurial inclinations, and inventive spirits" (Ladson-Billings, 2021, p. 353). Culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies embody and embrace linguistic and cultural diversity to achieve equity and social justice within our school system (Paris, 2012).

Acknowledging, incorporating, honoring, and respecting the cultural practices of students is imperative to the development and growth of a program embedded with culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies (Paris, 2012). Developing cultural competence is a factor that occurs when educators can foster a safe learning environment that provides space for inclusion, equity, and understanding to grow and flourish through sustaining and valuing student's language and cultural practices (Ladson-Billings, 1995). For culturally sustaining pedagogies to be effective, it demands an increase in responsiveness and relevance to the "cultural experiences and practices of young people as it supports individuals in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities" (Paris, 2012, p. 95). The goal is to support practices that embrace multilingualism and multiculturalism from a student's perspective. When educators are able to incorporate culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies into their practice effectively, students can benefit by developing a higher level of cultural competence and connectedness through understanding and embracing each other's cultures.

Mindfulness

Joseph Goldstein, a vipassana meditation teacher, describes mindfulness as a technique used to observe where the mind is while taking notice of the present moment without judgment or interference (Kabat-Zinn, 2015). According to Weiss (2004), mindfulness is meant to aid individuals in clearly understanding and viewing themselves and others in hopes that they become more fulfilled and joyful in their lives. Weiss (2004) continues to describe mindfulness as a practice that frees oneself from mental build-up and begins viewing the world with positive emotions because one is deeply connected from within, even when times are difficult to see the good in all. This practice is about taking time to be in the present moment and preparing the mind to focus intently on what is happening without viewing the present moment with a

distortive lens of judgment (Bercholz & Kohn, 1993). Mindfulness-based practices (MBP) engage in self-examination to better understand who we are, how we view the world, and our place on earth. In this deep self-reflection, one should also focus on cultivating an appreciation for each of life's moments through gratitude. Key elements of mindfulness include breathing, meditation, and awareness (Weiss, 2004). From a Buddhist psychological perspective, mindfulness is an intimate connection through paying attention moment-by-moment to cultivate knowledge and positive emotions, such as kindness and compassion, while promoting positive behaviors that embody the principle of not harming another or oneself (Grossman, 2008). In analyzing mindfulness from a perspective of Buddhist philosophy, the Noble Truths, have helped form how mindfulness is understood today: "(1) Attention to Present, (2) Receptivity to Experience, (3) Proclivity to Question, and (4) Cultivation of Compassion (5) Respond with Wisdom" (Schonert-Reichl & Roeser, 2016, p. 184).

In focusing on the present moment, individuals will begin to recognize the constant flow of appearing and disappearing while constantly evolving and changing perceptions (Katagiri, 2008). Many individuals are fueled by ego and the need to control (Chodron, 2012). Being in the present moment engages individuals in a process that aids them in detaching from the ego and loosening strings of control. When individuals can focus on the present moment, they can observe and reject concepts connected with negative and neutral feelings while understanding their perceptions of themselves (Weick & Putnam, 2006). Hanh (2008) shares, "We only have one moment to live, and that is the present moment. If we come back to the present moment, we will be in contact with innumerable wonders in and around us" (p. 65). How people view the present moment is not just about the current moment. Instead, it connects with the entire universe and how individuals view it. In grasping this idea, it is evident that we are part of a larger picture

in that our reality constantly evolves and changes according to every moment's conditions (Katagiri, 2008). Receptivity deals with how a person reacts and responds to experiences. Another goal of mindfulness is to observe things as they are and let go of things that no longer serve our well-being (Suzuki & Dixon, 1970). When an individual's mental equanimity is off balance, it can cause a shift in behaviors, emotions, thoughts, and perceptions (Anālayo, 2021). Mental equanimity can be balanced and nurtured through mindfulness meditation by allowing individuals to react positively and be receptive to experiences, negative or positive, as the individual will not be negatively affected (Anālayo, 2021). From here, the individual can begin to observe that it is not about seeking answers to questions, but instead, it is about observing and making small distinctions that collectively build on questions in which the answer may become an ongoing response (Batchelor, 2000). Combining compassion with mindfulness evolves once individuals meditate on their character and become deeply aware of their thoughts, beliefs, and feelings (Gunaratana, 2002). Compassion is then used to embrace an attitude of forgiveness, love, and acceptance as it rebukes violence, aggression, and harm from and toward individuals (Schonert-Reichl & Roeser, 2016). Finally, responding with wisdom is developed as individuals practice mindfulness, which cultivates a space to become aware of how we respond and notice that instant reactions do not need to occur immediately after a negative experience. Mindfulness allows an individual to choose wisely and decide which patterns of emotions can be embraced and which should be stranded (Goldstein, 2008). In doing this, the process of reflection becomes a more natural response to situations, and the habit of reacting to situations before thinking diminishes.

Statement of the Problem

A literature review was conducted to better understand the context of mindfulness in K-12 schools, how mindfulness-based practices are being utilized in an elementary school context, and its impact on marginalized elementary students. Although all the studies reviewed focused on marginalized elementary students and incorporating mindfulness practices, only one study discussed the importance of incorporating culturally responsive pedagogies to help marginalized students achieve an impactful mindfulness experience (Jones & Lee, 2020). The studies that were examined also did not provide much detailed information regarding the process of constructing and facilitating such an intervention, participant characteristics, and researcher engagement. Sustainability was also another point of inquiry in the sense of whether students used mindfulness techniques independently after the intervention was completed. Additionally, many of these studies utilized preconstructed, one-size-fits-all programs, which poses the question: Are these programs impactful on marginalized students? Due to mindfulness educational programs being in their early stages, it would be more impactful for researchers to report on their experience as program creators, facilitators, and researchers, as well as their self-reflection and development. It is time for researchers, policymakers, and educators to focus on implementing effective mental health informal education curriculum in classrooms that are also inclusive to marginalized students so all students can work on achieving positive mental health and well-being (Baweja et al., 2015). Doing this would give more insight into developing such programs specifically for marginalized students and encourage other professionals in the field to experiment with mindfulness in the classroom. With more information being accessible to professionals, they would be able to decipher which programs do or do not work, how to modify them, understand the role of facilitators and researchers, and conduct more research to positively impact mental health informal education.

My study filled these gaps by aiding students in developing positive mental health through conducting a self-study that provided more detailed information about the experience and effects of constructing and conducting a culturally responsive mindfulness program. Additionally, my study has the potential to inspire others interested in this field to construct or duplicate mindfulness studies and observe their effectiveness, which can aid in the process of evolving mental health informal education research.

Purpose of the Study

My study aimed to advance educational research in mental health informal education for K-12 schools by utilizing holistic mindfulness techniques embedded with culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies to improve marginalized students' overall well-being. Researchers have discovered that mindfulness-based programs have helped elementary students reduce their anxiety and depression and increase their well-being (Birnbaum, 2005; Black & Fernando, 2014; Burke, 2010; Carmody & Baer, 2008). The information supporting this claim was gathered from published, peer-reviewed journal articles from three databases: ERIC, Education Full Text, and Professional Development. Although current research has reported successful outcomes when implementing mindfulness as a form of intervention for stress, anxiety, and depression in students (Thompson & Gauntlett-Gilbert, 2008), there is still a need to conduct more studies to determine if a culturally responsive approach to mindfulness-based interventions would be effective in aiding marginalized students who have experienced negative emotions. The purpose of furthering mental health informal education research is to aid K-12 students in accessing high-quality, effective mental health education, programs, tools, and techniques.

Research Questions

1. What types of negative emotions do marginalize elementary students experience? What is the root cause for marginalized students experiencing negative emotions during their elementary school years?
2. How can incorporating mindfulness techniques embedded with culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies aid marginalized students in overcoming negative emotions that they experience in elementary school?
3. How can culturally responsive mindfulness programs be sustainable and transformative for marginalized students who frequently encounter negative emotions?
4. What challenges and difficulties are there in developing and implementing such a program? How do I search for and implement solutions?

Overview of The Theoretical Frameworks Used

By utilizing Critical Race Theory as an overarching framework, I observed the inequities in education for marginalized students and how they impact their mental health and well-being. Intersectionality furthered my understanding of the multiple layers of inequities marginalized students may have experienced and how those layers further impact their socialization and mental health (Fagrell Trygg et al., 2019). Microaggressions are one of the leading causes for marginalized students to experience racial battle fatigue (Smith et al., 2007). Racial battle fatigue (RBF) uncovers the inequities and racism that marginalized individuals consistently encounter, eventually leading many marginalized students to experience poor mental health (Smith, 2004). Constructing and utilizing a culturally responsive and sustaining mindfulness program provided a unique intervention to guide individuals in healing their emotional pains while building resilience and positively improving their overall well-being. Critical reflection for transformative learning aided me in examining the effectiveness of the intervention's design and

implementation. The goal was to provide techniques to help marginalized individuals improve upon their negative emotions and have them develop the skills needed so that if or when they occur again, they can overcome these emotions more rapidly and build resilience for the future. Each of these theoretical frameworks were strategically used to analyze the data collected and generate the findings. A deeper discussion regard each of these theoretical frameworks is provided in chapter two.

Overview of Research Design

My study was a qualitative self-study that examined the process of developing and facilitating a culturally responsive and sustaining mindfulness intervention (CRSMI) and studying its effectiveness. This study lasted a total of ten weeks. For the first two weeks, I interviewed and observed teachers from the third grade to understand the classroom environment and how teachers incorporated their student's cultural backgrounds while supporting their overall health and well-being. Once I understood the participants' backgrounds and their classroom environment, I began to decipher which culturally responsive activities combined with mindfulness practices would be most impactful for my participants. The mindfulness intervention officially launched with student participants during the third week and lasted until week ten. I had dual roles as the researcher and facilitator of CRSMI in my study. Participants met weekly for one hour to engage in various culturally responsive and mindfulness activities, which were crafted to build awareness, healing, resilience, and overall well-being. Throughout this study, I collected and analyzed interviews, observations, and participant journal entries, which were used to construct the findings.

Significance of the Study

Intersectionality comes into play when marginalized students identify with multiple layers of characteristics, furthering the complexity of their marginalization (Fagrell Trygg et al., 2019). In learning about the multiple layers that contribute to a person's identity, individuals must be aware that although traumatic and unpleasant events can happen to anyone, marginalized individuals are more likely to experience race-related trauma due to their intersectional identities (Woods-Jaeger et al., 2022). In addition, many marginalized individuals experience many forms of racism, which can perpetuate racial battle fatigue, leading many individuals to deal with the aftermath of negative emotional outcomes such as stress, anxiety, anger, or depression (Sue et al., 2007). The difficulties in navigating how to overcome negative emotions that stem from trauma can be complicated for many. Luckily, schools recognize this problem, and many have begun implementing different forms of mental health programs, such as trauma-informed care, music therapy, mindfulness-based practices, and social-emotional learning in various establishments (Aviles et al., 2006; Baweja et al., 2015; Chafouleas et al., 2016). Although a licensed counselor can only administer trauma-informed care and music therapy, teachers have become more involved in wanting to help provide emotionally safe spaces for their students by incorporating mindfulness-based practices and social-emotional learning into the classroom (Singh et al., 2017). As classroom teachers become more involved in cultivating safe spaces for students to explore their mental and emotional health and well-being, concerns about whether teachers feel equipped to do so may arise. To overcome such concerns, teachers must first become aware of who they are and any hidden biases they may have and become trained on how to facilitate a culturally responsive mindfulness program. Once teachers address these factors, they can then provide all students with an impactful mental health program that works with and supports culturally diverse learners in building resilience and improving their overall well-being.

Defining Key Terms

- Negative Emotions- for my study, negative emotions were defined as an outcome that stems from stressful, frightening, or distress events that lead an individual to developing emotions of stress, depression, anger, or anxiety.
- Racial Battle Fatigue- racial battle fatigue is based on the experiences of people of color who have experienced constant emotional fatigue from a buildup of race-related stress and tensions (Smith, 2004).
- Mindfulness- "mindfulness can be thought of as moment-to-moment, non-judgmental awareness, cultivated by paying attention in a specific way, that is, in the present moment, and as non-reactively, non-judgmentally, and as open-heartedly as possible" (Kabat-Zinn, 2015, p. 1481).
- Mindfulness-Based Practices- for my study, mindfulness-based practices involve engaging in activities that invoke mindfulness, such as breath awareness mediation, body scan mediation, and movement and thought awareness.
- Culturally Responsive Teaching- culturally responsive teaching is a pedagogy that acknowledges the importance of incorporating a student's cultural references in all aspects of the learning process (Gay, 2000).
- Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy- culturally sustaining pedagogies explores, honors, and nurtures the cultural background of students' and communities' by evolving their identities and languages (Will & Najarro, 2022).
- Transformative Learning- transformative learning is when an individual engages in a systematic process of critical reflection, actively searching for alternative solutions based

on the insights gained from critical reflection and implementing those solutions to produce transformative changes (Liu & Ball, 2019).

Summary of Chapter One

Chapter one provided an introduction to this qualitative case study and focused on examining marginalized students' educational experiences and how negative experiences and challenges can affect the mental and emotional health and overall well-being of a student, and explored how constructing a mindfulness-based intervention coupled with culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies can aid marginalize student in overcoming educational and life challenges, build resilience and increase overall well-being. This chapter also included several sections related to the background of the problem, problem statement, purpose of the research, research questions, importance of the study, and defining key terms.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

A comprehensive literature analysis was conducted to understand mindfulness-based programs, how this practice has been implemented in K-12 schools, its impact on marginalized students, and identify any gaps within current research on mindfulness-based programs. Findings suggest that although school-based mindfulness interventions hold a promising future for students to achieve positive mental health (Zenner et al., 2014), further research must be conducted to fill in existing gaps regarding the effectiveness of mindfulness-based practices and convince stakeholders that mindfulness-based programs are a positive addition to school curriculums and must be incorporated.

Literature Review Methods

A systematic literature search was conducted through EBSCOhost by selecting three databases: ERIC, Education Full Text, and Professional Development. The search terms "mindfulness" and "schools" resulted in hundreds of articles considered for review. This search did not include specific terms of "yoga" or "meditation" to focus solely on mindfulness-based practices. Studies examined for consideration had to meet the criteria of being published in a peer-reviewed journal and incorporated mindfulness techniques or activities that took place at K-12 schools. A screening process then took place to ensure that the articles pulled would be able to answer questions related to K-12 education and mindfulness-based practices:

1. How were mindfulness-based practices integrated into schools?
2. What was the effects of the intervention.
3. What was the impact of the interventions with a focus on marginalized students.

The search process was limited to keywords: (a) mindfulness-based interventions and (b) K-12 schools, elementary school, middle school, high school, or secondary school. A total of

ninety articles were auto-generated before filters were applied. After applying this filter, peer review and duplicates were removed, which resulted in sixty-one articles generated. These articles were carefully examined to provide further results. Each of the sixty-one articles underwent a title and abstract screening process, resulting in thirty-two potential articles left to review in further detail. Of the thirty-two, twenty articles met the criteria for the systematic review, and all were cited. A summary of the search process I described above is provided in Figure 2.1. Additionally, Table 2.1 provides a detailed review of all twenty articles. This table includes information regarding the purpose and study's design, length of intervention, background of participants and facilitator, and the type of mindfulness utilized in their research.

Figure 2.1

Literature review search process from three databases: ERIC, Education Full-Text, and Professional Development

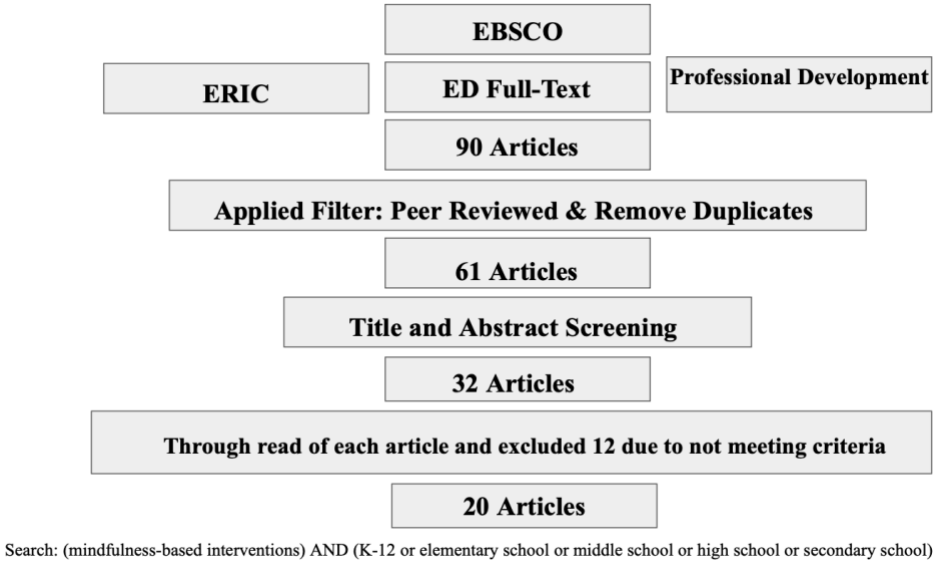


Table 2.1

Literature review of the twenty articles pulled from three databases: ERIC, Education Full-Text, and Professional Development

Author	N(Female)	Target Population	Purpose & Study Design	Intervention Length/ Facilitator	Type of Mindfulness Practice
Bannirchelvam et al., 2017	4(4)	General Education, 3rd-6th Grade in Melbourne	Purpose: To observe the effectiveness of mindfulness as to how students experience such a program, if they were motivated to use mindfulness techniques in the future, and understand how students utilize this technique. Study Design: Qualitative	First 6 sessions 1x/weekly lasting 1st school term. Then did session 7 & 8 during the second and third term. Facilitator:	Mindfulness Intervention Emotional Regulation
Beauchemin et al., 2008	71%(29%)	General Education, 9th-12th Grade	Purpose:Observe if mindfulness meditation will decrease anxiety in high school students, promote social skills, and improve academic performance Study Design:Pre-post no Control Design	Sessions were 5-10 mins 5x/week for 5 weeks Facilitator: Trained Teacher	Mindful Breath Work
Black & Fernando, 2014	409(N/D)	General Education, Low Income, 95.7% Ethnic Minority, Kinder-6th Grade	Purpose: Observe student behavior like: paying attention, self-control, respect for others Study Design: Quasi-Experimental	15 mins. 3x/week for 5 weeks, then transition to 12 mins. 1x/week for 7 weeks: Total 12 week intervention Facilitator: Classroom and mindfulness teacher	Mindfulness School Curriculum
Burke, 2010	71%(24.1)	Children and Adolescents Academic Level: 1 Preschool study, ,6 elementary studies, 8 high-school studies of these studies 9 were clinical samples and 6 were non clinical samples. Setting: 4 school-based, 5 clinic, 3 did not state, 2 community center, 1 home-based	Purpose: Analyze empirical research that incorporates mindfulness techniques with children and adolescents. All were feasible and acceptable with no adverse effects Study Design: Systematic Review discovered studies used Randomized Control groups, Specify Randomization, and Multiple Baseline Design	2 studies 1x/week for 6 weeks 5 studies 1x/week for 8 weeks 1 study 1x/week for 24 weeks 1 study 1x/week for 25 weeks 1 study for 24 months 5 studies Facilitator: N/D	All studies trained participants in Mindfulness Meditation Practices
Dunning et al., 2019	N/D(N/D) Total: 3,666	Children and Adolescents, General Education, 6/33 were Minority, Low SES, or African American	Purpose: Analyze 33 empirical research studies that incorporate mindfulness intervention on children and adolescents in measuring their social and negative behavior, Depression/Anxiety/Stress, and Attention Study Design: Systematic Review Studies included controlled groups and experimental designs	Sessions were 40-60 minutes on average Studies lasted on average 8-10 weeks Facilitator: N/D	Mindfulness Technique: Breath Awareness, MBCT, Mindfulness Eating,Mindfulness Kindness, MBSR, CBT,
Emerson et al., 2020	N/D(N/D) Total: 4848	Children and Adolescents	Purpose: Analyze 31 empirical studies that incorporate mindfulness-based interventions on children and adolescents. Study Design: Systematic Review 17/31 Quantitative 14/31 were Mixed Methods	N/D Facilitator: 17/31 classroom teachers or psychologists	Mindfulness-Based Interventions
Emmeelbeygie et al., 2020	3(2)	Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD,) 3rd Grade	Purpose: Observe student's emotional response and ability to express needs Study Design: Multiple-Baseline Design	40-45 minutes 1x/week for 8 weeks Facilitator: Clinician	Mindfulness Intervention Practice: Breathing and Meditation
Felver et al., 2019	33%(67%)	General Education, Ethnically Diverse, At-Risk, 9th-12 Grade, 11% had an IEP, 30% ESL	Purpose: Evaluate the effectiveness of Learn to BREATHE mindfulness program on ethnically diverse at-risk high school students. Study Design: Quantitative	6 sessions over a 9 week period Facilitator: Authors	Mindfulness program Learning to BREATHE
Jeongil & Kwon, 2018	3(2)	Children with Intellectual Disabilities (ID), Elementary Students	Purpose: Observe student's performance, behavior, and awareness of participant's behavior, body, mind, and environment. Study Design: Multiple-Baseline Design	45 minutes 2x/week 25 sessions for 13 weeks Facilitator: Professor in Special Education, Doctoral student in Buddhist studies, and a rehabilitation professional	Mindfulness Program: Breathing, Body Scan, and Meditation
Jones & Lee, 2022	243(123)	General Education- 39.5% African American, 36.6 Caucasian, 13.6% Mixed Race, 6.2 Latinx, 2.5% Asian/Pacific Islander. 68% were students of color, Kinder-5th Grade	Purpose: Test L.A.U.G.H. digital mindfulness intervention and observe student connectedness with school Study Design: Quasi-Experimental	20 mins 1x/week for 12 weeks Facilitator: (N/D)	Digital Mindfulness Program
Keller et al., 2017	28(64%)	General Education, Low SES, 89% Hispanic and 11% African American, 4th Grade	Purpose: Observe mindfulness intervention on general education classroom, academics,and attitudes Study Design: Experimental (two groups)	During 90 min reading/writing class, 27 sessions 10 weeks. One group had 10 mins/day of mindfulness the other group 0 mins Facilitator: Trained teacher in mindfulness	Mindfulness techniques: Breathing and Meditation
Keller et al., 2017	18(7)	Students with Learning Disabilities (LD) 38% ELL students,17 Hispanic, 1 African American, 2nd-5th Grade	Purpose: Observe student's ability to self-correct, emotional regulation, body awareness, and academics Study Design: Experimental (two group)	Experimental Group had 30-45 mins of literacy combined with mindfulness 5x/week for 5 weeks Facilitator: (N/D)	Mindfulness techniques: Breathing and Meditation
Klingbeil et al., 2017	N/D(N/D) Total: 6,121	Children and Adolescents	Purpose:Analyze 76 studies that included mindfulness-based interventions with youth Study Design: Control, Experimental,Quasi-Experimental	Sessions varied between 6 to 12. Mins. per session varied between 30-90. Majority of studies did not have a follow up	Mindfulness Techniques Including: Yoga, Mediation, Breath work, MBSR, MBCT, Awareness, variety of programs constructed with mindfulness
Liu Tang et al., 2023	112(189)	Middle School Students in Chinese School	Purpose: Analyze mindfulness course to observe if mindfulness decreases stress and improves resilience. Study Design: Cluster Randomized Controlled trail	10 Sessions 1x/week for 10 weeks	Mindfulness Course
Malboeuf-Hurtubise et al., 2018	14(57.1)	Special Education, Elementary Students	Purpose: Observe student's awareness and self-evaluation Study Design: Quasi-Experimental	50 mins 1x/week for 8 weeks Facilitator: Therapist	Mindfulness Meditation
Metz et al., 2013	64%(36%)	General Education, Suburban district, 10th-12th Grade Students	Purpose: Assess the effectiveness of mindfulness-based program Learn to BREATH and observe/assess student emotional regulation Study Design: Quasi-Experimental	15 to 25 minutes 1x/week for 16 weeks	Mindfulness program: Learn to BREATHE
Mezo et al., 2020	53(23)	General Education, Low SES, 6 students had IEP, 47 African American, 4 identified as multicultural, 1 Caucasian, Kinder-4th Grade	Purpose: Test revised mindfulness measurement CAMM vs CAMM-R Study Design: Quasi-Experimental	Academic year long intervention Facilitator: (N/D)	Mindfulness Measurement
Singh et al., 2017	3(1)	Children with Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities, 4th-6th Grade	Purpose: Observe student's emotional response for SoF mindfulness program Study Design: Multiple-Baseline Design	One Academic Year Facilitator:Teachers	Soles of the Feet Mindfulness program, Walking mindfulness
Thompson & Gauntlett-Gilbert, 2008	N/D	Children and Adolescents	Purpose: Systematically review current studies that have incorporated mindfulness with children and adolescents Study Design: Systematic Review	Found 18 schools that implemented different variations of mindfulness programs. Limited research was found regarding intervention length & facilitator background	Mindfulness Programs includes: Mindful Breath, Body Scan, Walking Mindfulness
Zenner et al., 2014	49.7(50.3) Total:1348 Students	General Education, combination of students with Learning Disabilities, low SES, Diverse population, At Risk student population Grades 1st-12th	Purpose:Observe and analyze empirical studies that had mindfulness as an intervention and observe impact on student's cognitive performance, Stress and coping,Factors of Resilience, Emotional Problems. Studies were based in USA, 7/24 in Spain, 1/24 Australia, 1/24 Canada, 1/24 Hong Kong Study Design: Systematic Review and Meta Analysis 19/24 experimental 5/24 Pre-post	N/D Facilitator: Teacher 7/24, Non-School Trainer 15/24, Teacher and Non-School Trainer 2/24	Mindful Meditation Techniques: Breath Awareness 24/24. Working with thoughts and emotions 21/24, Psycho-education 20/24, Awareness 20/24. Group Discussion 18/24. Body-scan 14/24,Home Practice 12/24, Kindness Practice 11/24, Body Practice Yoga 6/24, Mindful Movement 5/24, Additional Material 10/24

Results

Although mindfulness has been extensively studied with adults for several decades, research regarding mindfulness techniques and children only began in the 1990s. The first literature review on mindfulness techniques and their effectiveness with children was published in 2008 by Thompson and Gauntlett-Gilbert. Thompson and Gauntlett-Gilbert (2008) discovered that there was a plethora of research studying mindfulness on adults; however, there was only a limited number of empirical studies within their review that focused on children. This led Thompson and Gauntlett-Gilbert to conclude that more research needed to be done to better understand how mindfulness can play a role in the lives of children in education (Thompson & Gauntlett-Gilbert, 2008). Burke (2010) published a systematic review that focused on two specific mindfulness interventions, Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy, and their effects on children and adolescents. Burke (2010) reviewed a total of fifteen studies and confirmed that mindfulness-based interventions could be feasible with children; however, this practice needs to begin to conduct more empirical research that shows its effectiveness. Since then, advancements in research have been made in further observing and testing if mindfulness is an effective intervention amongst children and adolescents. Zenner et al. (2014) published the first systematic review and meta-analysis of mindfulness-based interventions in schools, including twenty-four studies. Zenner et al. (2014) discuss how there was a growing interest in incorporating mindfulness in schools due to its positive effects in measuring cognitive outcomes such as increased attention and resilience, and decreased stress. Klingbeil et al. (2017) replicated and extended the findings of Zenner et al. (2014) and found seventy-six studies, and forty-six were conducted in a school setting. Klingbeil and associates (2017) agreed that mindfulness is gaining more attention and traction in schools. They found

that, by comparing the forty-six school-based studies, there were minimal positive effects related to the internalized and externalized problems and social competencies. Later, a meta-analysis by Dunning et al. (2019) found that with the growing popularity of mindfulness interventions, they wanted to focus their analysis on the efficacy of mindfulness-based interventions for children and adolescents with studies that utilized randomized controlled trials. This group of researchers found across all the studies analyzed that mindfulness is effective and has the potential to create a positive impact on students who struggle with attention, depression, anxiety/stress, and negative behaviors (Dunning et al., 2019).

Lastly, Emerson and colleagues (2020) systematically reviewed how MBI was implemented in schools and noted that each study revealed how mindfulness could be a feasible and effective program for youth; however, there are many ways to implement and measure the effectiveness of mindfulness-based programs. Many of the studies reviewed showed a need to include more consistency when implementing all three tenets of mindfulness, such as body scanning, mindful movement, and mindful sitting, in addition to having a clear form that effectively measures results. These systematic and meta-analyses were utilized to better understand how mindfulness is implemented in schools with children and adolescents and whether this intervention is effective. Even though these reviews gave great insight into the effectiveness of mindfulness programs, I conducted a deeper analysis to better understand the impact of mindfulness on marginalized students. Therefore, the twenty articles, excluding the six systematic reviews and meta-analyses, were analyzed, specifically focusing on mindfulness interventions and marginalized students. Of those articles seven specifically focused on students receiving a mindfulness-based intervention and seven articles specifically talk about students who had either learning, intellectual, or developmental disabilities as their participants

(Esmmaeelbeygi et al., 2020; Felver et al., 2019; Jeongil & Kwon, 2018; Keller et al., 2019; Malboeuf-Hurtubise et al., 2018; Mezo et al.,2020; Singh et al., 2017). Nine articles intentionally focused on collecting data from a general education classroom which included students who identify as a person of color, ethnic minority, at-risk youth, or with low socioeconomic status (Bannirchelvam et al., 2017; Beauchemin et al., 2008; Black & Fernando, 2014; Felver et al., 2019; Jones & Lee, 2022; Keller et al., 2017 & 2019; Liu et al., 2023; Metz et al., 2013; Mezo et al., 2020). Only one study had 100% of participants who identified as having a learning disability or being a person of color, and 38% of these participants were English language learners (Keller et al., 2019). This is important to note because, when analyzing intersectionality, these students have multiple layers that contribute to their marginalized experiences. Although LGBTQ students were incorporated in the search, zero articles were retrieved with students who identify as LGBTQ. Of the twenty studies, twelve reported positive results and satisfaction from participants; one reported a mixture of satisfied participants, while some rejected the intervention (Keller et al., 2017), and another had reverse effects in which most participants were unsatisfied with the intervention (Malboeuf-Hurtubise et al., 2018). Further insight into each of the studies reviewed is described below.

Implementation of Mindfulness-Based Practices in K-12- Schools

Preparing educators to engage in mental health informal education combined with culturally sustaining mindfulness practices has the potential to aid marginalized students in overcoming negative emotions as they increase positive mental health. Many schools have introduced mindfulness-based programs and techniques such as meditation, mental, emotional, and physical awareness, yoga poses, and breathwork to help students manage their emotions and focus on the present moment. In regards to how mindfulness-based programs are implemented in

the classroom, the literature shows that there is increasing use of mindfulness being utilized in special education classrooms (Esmmaeelbeygi et al., 2020; Jeongil & Kwon, 2018; Keller et al., 2019; Malboeuf-Hurtubise et al., 2018; Mezo et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2017) art, social-emotional learning classes, and general education classrooms (Bannirchelvam et al., 2017; Beauchemin et al., 2008; Black & Fernando, 2014; Felver et al., 2019; Jones & Lee, 2022; Keller et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2023; Metz et al., 2013; Mezo et al., 2020). As far as the geographical regions and districts, mindfulness-based practices have been implemented in many school districts from urban communities, with student populations being predominantly children of color with low socioeconomic backgrounds (Black & Fernando, 2014; Felver et al., 2019; Keller et al., 2017; Keller et al., 2019; Mezo et al., 2020) to rural (Singh et al., 2017) to middle and upper-class communities (Felver et al., 2019). Since mindfulness is originally derived from Eastern traditions, it is common to see mindfulness being taught and studied internationally and nationally. Although mindfulness-based practices are fairly new to Western culture, schools that choose to participate in incorporating mindfulness techniques have been predominantly public. Most private schools have yet to be receptive to incorporating mindfulness practices into classrooms because most private schools incorporate a religious foundation and view mindfulness as an infringement on their religious beliefs since it was derived from Buddhism (Klingbeil et al., 2017).

Schools utilizing mindfulness-based practices have chosen to operate them as a freestanding element or couple them with other social-emotional learning (SEL) programs. Many schools that chose to invest in SEL programs have been noted to combine some aspects of mindfulness within lessons. If mindfulness instruction is given this way, the classroom teacher may or may not receive basic training in mindfulness elements. Zolkoski and Lewis-Chiu (2019)

recommend that teachers establish their own mindfulness practice before introducing this technique to students. To do this, they recommend that educators carve out personal time to allow them to engage in their mindfulness practice. This could consist of practicing mindfulness for 15 to 30 minutes daily and focusing on their breath. By doing this, many individuals will understand the specific challenges when focusing on the present moment and recognize their emotions, thoughts, and feelings about the past, present, and future (Zolkoski & Lewis-Chiu, 2019). As the mind naturally drifts into the past or future, it is important to gently bring attention to this and guide oneself back to their breath and be in the present moment. Zolkoski and Lewis-Chiu (2019) also provide a plethora of resources to help educators establish their practice, along with tips on implementing mindfulness in the classroom. Resources include guided meditation mindfulness videos, audio recordings, books, and articles (Zolkoski & Lewis-Chiu, 2019). Additionally, if an educator chooses to advance their knowledge and practice, they can also become a certified mindfulness instructor. Although this certification is not required for K-12 teachers, it may be required and useful if an individual wants to teach mindfulness at an independent establishment or studio. Once an educator understands mindfulness better and consistently practices mindfulness exercises, Zolkoski and Lewis-Chiu (2019) believe they are ready to facilitate this practice in a classroom environment.

Mindfulness Based Practices Impact on Marginalized Student

Black and Fernando (2014) conducted a five-week study to understand the impact of a mindfulness-based program on a classroom, focusing on the behavior of elementary students who identify as lower-income and ethnically diverse. Although classroom disruptions can occur at any point in the day, a teacher must understand how to minimize distractions and effectively bring students back to a place where they can focus and learn. This study utilized mindfulness-

based techniques to help students engage in the present moment and discovered that students' behavior improved after implementing this program for 15 minutes three times per week (Black & Fernando, 2014). Felver et al. (2019) tested the effectiveness of the mindfulness intervention, Learning to BREATHE, on ethnically diverse and at-risk high school students during their health class. Findings from this study suggested that this specific mindfulness program was an effective strategy that helped students develop resilience (Felver et al., 2019). Keller et al. (2017) studied the effects of implementing a mindfulness-based intervention with twenty-eight 4th-grade students from lower socioeconomic status who identified as ethnic minorities. Keller and colleagues (2017) reported that although students received the mindfulness intervention, some responded differently, as some rejected the intervention, and others embraced mindfulness. Liu and colleagues (2023) recognized that many adolescents are challenged with how to effectively deal with stress and took mindfulness-based interventions and applied them in a Chinese school setting to observe their effectiveness. After this ten-week study and only engaging in ten sessions, their study resulted in students showing an increase in psychological resilience and a decrease in stress (Liu et al., 2023). Mezo et al. (2020) utilized the Child and Adolescent Mindfulness Measure tool (C.A.M.M.) to evaluate the psychometric properties of mindfulness in school settings of African Americans and other students of color from low socioeconomic status. In observing C.A.M.M., Mezo et al. (2020) thought C.A.M.M. should be revised to better assess students from diverse backgrounds regarding mindfulness. Mezo and colleagues (2020) discovered that although both C.A.M.M. and their revised measuring tool, CAMM-R, performed well, they noted that educators and facilitators of mindfulness must remember to recognize students' backgrounds and experiences as they may play a role in their mindfulness practice.

Jones and Lee (2020) understood the principle of recognizing, appreciating, and incorporating students' diverse backgrounds as they fueled their study in measuring the effects of incorporating an art-based mindfulness intervention, L.A.U.G.H., while infusing culturally responsive pedagogies with diverse elementary students. L.A.U.G.H. was an app created to engage students in traditional mindfulness techniques, such as being mindful and focusing on one's breath, while integrating art-based interfaces that encourage students to focus on self-directed activities. By noticing how technology is becoming more integrated into classrooms, Jones and Lee (2020) felt that utilizing mindfulness applications may provide a resolution for students from low S.E.S. backgrounds to access high-quality programs that aid them in achieving positive mental health. Jones and Lee (2020) acknowledge the difficulties of marginalized individuals and how many students of color do not have the same educational experiences or feelings as other students who are not of color. It has been reported that students from diverse backgrounds are more likely to experience lower levels of connection with their schools because they are at a higher risk of experiencing stereotypes and discrimination (Daley & Rappolt-Schlichtmann, 2018). Due to this factor, it is even more imperative to incorporate culturally responsive pedagogies into mindfulness programs as it has been shown to aid individuals in achieving greater mental health and higher levels of connectedness (Jones & Lee, 2020). Jones and Lee (2020) reported that of the 243 elementary students who were predominately students of color, they observed significant improvements after eight weeks of intervention as African and Asian Americans began to feel more connected with their school.

Mindfulness-based interventions have also aided students with learning, intellectual, and developmental disabilities. Esmmaeelbeygi et al. (2020) conducted a study to observe the effects of a mindfulness intervention on three third-grade students with specific learning disabilities.

This study concluded that mindfulness intervention positively improved all students' emotional responses and increased their ability to express their needs (Esmmaeelbeygi et al., 2020). Jeongil and Kwon (2018) worked with a small group of elementary students who identified as having intellectual disabilities. All participants showed improvements in their performance and behaviors, specifically with an increased result for on-task behaviors and a clearer awareness of their behavior, body, mind, and environment (Jeongil & Kwon, 2018). Keller et al. (2019) conducted a study with eighteen elementary students in second through fifth grade who had learning disabilities and were identified as students of color. Their study was designed to observe if mindfulness-based training and techniques could improve literacy scores and attitudes in children with learning disabilities. Results showed improvements in self-corrections, metacognitive strategies, reading level, phonemic awareness, self-expression, fluency, spelling, positive effects on emotional and body awareness, and self-efficacy (Keller et al., 2019). Singh et al. (2017) sought to provide telehealth training to teachers in rural locations about mindfulness interventions, specifically Soles of the Feet (SoF). Teachers were trained to use this mindfulness program and incorporate SoF in the classroom to observe if it improves the behaviors of students who have intellectual and developmental disabilities. Teachers reported that all students improved with their emotional responses, and their physical and verbal aggression dramatically reduced after 12 months of follow-up (Singh et al., 2017). Lastly, Malboeuf-Hurtubise et al. (2018) study was the only study to report the reverse effects of engaging students with learning disabilities with a mindfulness-based intervention. After conducting the intervention, participants in this study had a reverse effect and became more aware of their academic and social skills and limitations. Due to participants becoming more aware of their abilities, it was noted that although there was an improved self-evaluation, there was also a factor of decreased satisfaction in

participants as the researchers seemed to show that they were not expecting this outcome (Malboeuf-Hurtubise et al., 2018).

Benefits

Studies based on mindfulness have shown that this form of intervention is effective and has the potential to aid children in dealing with and overcoming negative emotions and achieving positive mental health (Felver et al., 2019; Jeongil & Kwon, 2018; Jones & Lee, 2022; Liu et al., 2023). Mindfulness is helpful because it allows individuals to shift their attitude towards a mindset that encourages them to let go of negative emotions, beliefs, or thoughts about themselves (Birnbaum, 2005). Utilizing compassion as an element within mindfulness can also aid individuals during the healing process (Brown et al., 2007). Compassion allows individuals to open up and become consciously aware of multiple choices and then compare the best way to respond to what is occurring simply by focusing on the inward and outward of oneself (Williams et al., 2007). Some individuals have adopted more self-control, emotion regulation, and compassion when viewing themselves after experiencing mindfulness practice (Brown et al., 2007). Mindfulness has helped people develop stronger feelings of gratitude and acceptance while improving self-awareness skills that further their understanding of how many elements can shape their thoughts and behaviors (Gause & Coholic, 2010). As a result, people can begin to make meaning of their lives and situations while becoming connected with their spiritual beliefs and practices (Gause & Coholic, 2010). With only five weeks of mindfulness-based intervention, Black and Fernando (2014) reported that students' behaviors changed into becoming more caring and respectful to others while embracing a sense of calmness and self-control, which increased students' self-satisfaction and emotional regulation. This practice has been found to decrease anxiety, depression, and aggression by simply drawing awareness to one's actions and feelings,

naturally improving one's self-regulation (Howells et al., 2016). As for the physical health benefits, when practitioners integrated Yoga asanas with mindfulness, researchers found that it helped regulate the sympathetic nervous system (SNS) and hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) system and recorded a decrease in blood pressure (BP), heart rate (HR), and cortisol levels (Pascoe & Bauer, 2015).

Facilitating mindfulness from a holistic perspective creates opportunities for people to deepen a connection with themselves and any buried wounds they may have (Cortright, 2007). Individuals who attend mindfulness-based cognitive therapy have also experienced positive and successful results. For example, Segal and colleagues (2002) discussed how Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) aided many individuals who had a relapse of major depressive episodes. They recommended mindfulness meditation as an intervention because it can help break downward cycles associated with depression, relapse, and self-destructive thoughts. In addition, MBSR has been promoted to clinicians as an effective intervention that aids in reducing stress and anxiety for diverse populations (Praissman, 2008). This intervention has taught individuals how to become more behaviorally aware and still, resulting in reduced impulsive reactions and encouraging them to analyze the situation, potential outcomes, and the best solution (Gause & Coholic, 2010). Nevertheless, students exposed to mindfulness from a school-based approach could have the opportunity to develop skills to help alleviate stressors, improve their social and emotional well-being, and experience positive school experiences and interconnectedness.

Challenges, Limitations, and Gaps

Although mindfulness has been proven to be an effective intervention for treating people who experience problems with depression, anxiety, and stress (Bishop et al., 2004; Carmody et

al., 2008; Hoppes, 2006; Lau & McMain, 2005; Segal et al., 2002), some professionals continue to argue that studies dealing with mindfulness are inconsistent with their methods of constructing such programs for children and adolescents, delivery, measuring, and replicating the same process (Grossman, 2008). Even though self-rating questionnaires have been developed to measure mindfulness (Grossman, 2008), argues that mindfulness can be difficult to quantify as this is an intervention that is constantly evolving with the mind, body, and spirit. When trying to measure mindfulness accurately, challenges can arise as the respondents may differ in their understanding of scale items, and there can be inconsistencies with the extent of knowledge facilitators have concerning Buddhist thinking, mindfulness, and depth of experience (Gause & Coholic, 2010). Discussions about a facilitator's qualifications should be conducted before engaging in this intervention to eliminate confusion and problems before facilitating this practice (Black & Fernando, 2014). Studies also vary regarding the quality of facilitators' preparation for carrying out a mindfulness-based program, as some have noticed how this could affect the entire delivery of the intervention and the results of a study (Gause & Coholic, 2010).

In viewing these limitations and challenges, literature continues to show that mindfulness can be a great practice for helping students achieve positive mental health and decrease stress (Segal et al., 2002; Pascoe & Bauer, 2015). However, a limited amount of the literature reviewed discussed how facilitators develop their mindfulness intervention and craft it to meet the participants' unique needs. Even though most of the analyzed studies gathered basic participant information such as gender, age, grade, ethnicity, and if a student has learning accommodations, a limited number of studies incorporated their student's backgrounds into the intervention (Jones & Lee, 2020). Since mental health is becoming an important topic in school, cultivating an inclusive environment where meaningful learning can occur is vital, and to do this, educators

must bring their student's backgrounds, experiences, and prior knowledge into this practice so that all students can reap the benefits of mindfulness, build resilience, and sustain positive mental health.

Being that mindfulness is a personal journey, it is crucial to note that the main element missing from all mindfulness programs is a culturally responsive and sustaining teaching, as this element can be used to support all students from all backgrounds. Therefore, facilitators need to learn how to construct a mindfulness program that is interwoven with culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies to better help understand the uniqueness of every individual and aid them in working through past negative experiences that have impacted their mentality, persona, and overall well-being (Black & Fernando, 2014). In analyzing Keller et al. (2017) study, although they had a population of ethnically diverse elementary students and a well-thought-out mindfulness program, results showed how some students were receptive to the intervention and others were not. Jones and Lee (2022) mention that when working with a diverse population, it is critical that individuals are aware of, acknowledge, respect, and support their background and prior experiences. Voight and researchers (2015) note how Black and Latinx students are more likely to experience racial and ethnic disparities due to a lack of feelings towards school connectedness, safety, and creating relationships with other educators.

As schools continue to work with and teach a more ethnically diverse population who may have experienced traumatic events due to their race, culture, and heritage, it is important to take this already healing practice and transform it into a practice that can meet the unique needs of all students. My study enhanced mindfulness practices by creating a practice that combines mindfulness and culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies to better support marginalized students when engaging in mindfulness interventions and building resilience. Because this has

yet to be done, it is important that as the researcher, designer, and facilitator of this program, I take the time to understand my students, their experiences, and the root cause for them experiencing negative emotions while attending school. In crafting this mindfulness intervention that supports their unique needs, I was able to inquire more about how this culturally responsive and sustaining mindfulness program impacted marginalized students and how such a program has the potential to guide students into engaging in a transformational experience while sustaining positive mental health.

Future Research

After reviewing the literature, it is evident that school-based mindfulness interventions hold a promising future for students in advocating for their mental, emotional, and social health (Keller et al., 2019; Esmmaeelbeygi et al., 2020; Liu Tang et al., 2023). Jones and Lee (2020) recommend incorporating digital platforms to allow all students to access high-quality mindfulness-based interventions. Expanding on their recommendation, digitalizing mindfulness programs can also offer a variety of accommodations and customizations to serve students better and help them achieve mindfulness. As students take a digital get-to-know-you survey, they can introduce themselves to mindfulness, provide individualized exercises and lessons, track their progress, and advance their intervention based on their unique needs. Finally, in analyzing the current research studies presented, most researchers agree that to have more buy-in from stakeholders, more rigorous research should be conducted to analyze the effects of school-based mindfulness programs (Burke, 2010; Zenner et al., 2014). Therefore, future research should measure short and long-term effects in multiple genres of schools (public, charter, and private) with a wide variety of student populations and observe how mindfulness impacts a student's academics, social behavior, and motivation (Burke, 2010). By taking these considerations into

account, future researchers can construct more studies incorporating an evolved version of mindfulness-based programs that can advance research and practices in mental health informal education.

Theoretical Frameworks

In this study, I utilized Critical Race Theory as an overarching framework to observe the educational inequities marginalized students experience and how these inequities impact their mental health and well-being. Additionally, self-reflection was a key component used to support CRT, as individuals can then begin to "examine their positionality in society, our role(s) in power systems, and evaluate how issues affect our personal lives. It involves questioning how we both uphold and can interrupt power systems" (Berila, 2015, p. 20). Intersectionality was used to further my understanding by analyzing the multiple layers marginalized students may have and how those layers further impact their socialization and mental health (Hernández & Villodas, 2020). It is noted that microaggressions are one of the leading causes for marginalized students to experience racial battle fatigue (Hernández & Villodas, 2020). Racial battle fatigue uncovers the inequities and racism that marginalized individuals consistently encounter, which eventually leads many marginalized students to experience poor mental health (Smith et al., 2020). Incorporating culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies with mindfulness allows the facilitator to transform the classroom and relationships with students by creating connections that acknowledge, value, and honor cultural differences while developing a higher level of cultural competence (Alim & Paris, 2017). Critical reflection for transformative learning provides a platform where I can challenge and reconsider basic assumptions, leading to a catalyst for advancement in social justice and educational equity (Liu & Ball, 2019). My study utilized mindfulness coupled with culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies to provide a unique

intervention geared towards guiding individuals in healing the emotional pains that some marginalized students may have while improving their mental health and overall well-being. The goal was not only to provide techniques to help all students improve upon their negative emotions but also for them to develop the skills needed for when they face future challenges so they can overcome negative emotions at a more rapid rate, build resilience for the future, and increase their overall well-being.

Critical Race Theory

To develop a positive sense of racial/ethnic identity that is not based on superiority or inferiority, it is crucial for individuals to first work together in developing a race-conscious society (Tatum, 1992). Ladson-Billings (2000) explained how we acquire knowledge not only through the way we perceive the world but also through the systems of understanding the world. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) were the first individuals to utilize critical race theory to examine how and why there is inequity within our school system and how these inequities negatively impact students of color. In analyzing our school systems through this lens, Ladson-Billing and Tate (1995) were able to expose how race and racism operate in our school system, leaving many students of color to experience inequitable learning opportunities, widening learning gaps, and higher dropout and incarceration rates, which fuels educational injustice for marginalized students. To understand racial disparities in our school system, there is a need to first understand the systems that are put in place, which will provide a new lens on how to analyze how people of color lack opportunities educationally, socially, and economically in comparison to White individuals.

Unfortunately, there is a dominant and oppressive viewpoint that the beliefs, experiences, and epistemologies of White individuals (Scheurich & Young, 1997) are considered to be the

norm and are placed at the forefront when comparing, measuring, assessing, and evaluating society (Foster, 1999). Dillard (2000) explains how a combination of racial, ethnic, and cultural heritage shapes people's experiences. Unfortunately, society's perspectives on race and racism are so ingrained in North American society that many individuals view racism as normal (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) unveil how living in poverty and attending schools located in impoverished areas contribute to a pattern that fuels institutional and structural racism (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). The inequitable opportunities that lead to constant disparities in our school systems include lack of school funding, access to enrichment curriculum and courses, unfair student discipline treatment, and misdiagnosing students to special education.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) evolved from critical legal studies in the 1980s, which was designed to observe the role of race and account for racism perpetuating in the U.S. (Delgado, 1995). CRT aims to eliminate racism, sexism, and poverty while empowering People of Color and other marginalized groups that have suffered from inequalities (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). CRT challenges dominant groups whose interests involve meritocracy, color blindness, viewing race as neutral, and that there is equal opportunity for all through exposing their plan of self-interest, power, and privilege (Solórzano, 1997). Solórzano and Yosso (2001) view CRT as a platform that "challenges the dominant discourse on race and racism as it relates to education by examining how educational theory and practice are used to subordinate certain racial and ethnic groups" (p. 2). There are five tenets to CRT: (1) Recognizing the intercentricity of race and racism and analyzing how intersectionality adds to understanding the various layers of identity such as gender, class, status, etc. (2) Challenging the dominant ideology which is based on white perspectives, meritocracy, color blindness, race-neutral, equal opportunity (3) A

commitment to actively advocating for social justice regarding the systemic issues that relate to race, class, and gender oppression (4) Centrality of Experiential Knowledge which provides a platform for people of color to tell a counter-narrative that involves storytelling, narratives, testimonials (5) Transdisciplinary Perspective which provide boundaries and spaces to further analyze race and racism and how these elements impact people of color (Ladson-Billings, 2021b). Critical race theorists intend to reveal racism and injustice in every form by exposing the unspoken consequences of systemic policies related to racism. Therefore, these theorists work towards disrupting and transforming policies, laws, theories, and practices by exposing racism and fighting for true equality (Milner, 2007).

CRT provides a platform for the voices of those who have been silenced by society to finally be vocalized, as it values the lived experiences of People of Color by listening to their counter-stories, including counter-narratives of their family histories and testimonies (Bell, 1992; Miller et al., 2020; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Counter-narrative is a method used in CRT that allows people of color to share a narrative that may not align with the dominant narrative, embracing the voice of those who have been silenced for decades (Lopez, 2003). CRT sheds light on the importance of narratives and counter-narratives, particularly stories "told by people of color," and how this should be embraced in an educational setting (Lopez, 2003, p. 84). By creating spaces for counter-narratives to emerge, marginalized communities and individuals will become empowered to tell stories that often differ from the traditional narrative (Chapman, 2007). Counter-narratives also create opportunities for all individuals to learn from others and explore a lens that the dominant group often blocks. Dixson and Rousseau (2005) elaborate on this concept and add that "the assertion and acknowledgment of the importance of the personal and community experiences of people of color as sources of knowledge" (Dixson & Rousseau,

2005, p.10) becomes a transformative component to counter-narratives that focus on implementing actions for equity (Miller et al., 2020).

CRT has now begun to magnify how individuals view, interpret, and experience education, assuming that race and racism are permanent in U.S. society (Bell, 1992). The systemic issues that are embedded within the United States of America run over into our education system, leading to educational inequity among certain groups of people, particularly people and communities of color (Ford, 1996). This observation is made when individuals utilize intersectionality as a tool for examination and take the time to understand how racism intersects with the additional layers of an individual's identity, such as gender, class, sexuality, language, culture, immigrant status, religion, and accent (Crenshaw, 1991). Through the advancement of CRT's framework and understanding how intersectionality also plays a role in the multiple layers of an individual's identity, researchers can better examine the multiple ways in which many other ethnicities have experienced and responded to racism.

Microaggressions

Many marginalized students experience microaggressions due to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, and economic status (Solórzano, 1998). Chester Pierce first introduced the concept of microaggressions in 1969. He explained how microaggressions are

> Subtle, innocuous preconscious, or unconscious degradations, and put-downs, often kinetic but capable of being verbal and kinetic. Although microaggressions may seem harmless, the cumulative burden of a lifetime of microaggressions can theoretically contribute to diminished mortality, augmented morbidity, and flatted confidence (Pierce, 1995, p. 281).

Microaggressions are one of the leading causes that fuel stereotypes, such as people of color are uneducated, do not belong in society, are prone to criminal behaviors, and deserve to be socially marginalized (Constantine & Sue, 2007). Sue et al. (2007) were able to characterize three types of microaggression: "one, microassaults, generated from intentional and explicit derogatory verbal or nonverbal aggression; two, microinsults, which include rude and insensitive put-downs relating to an individual's race, ethnicity, or identity; and three microinvalidations, which are remarks that dismiss the history and realities of people of color" (p. 274).

Peirce and colleagues agree that microaggressions are one of the lead vehicles in fueling racist behaviors and interactions (Pierce et al., 1978). Manning Marable (1992) defined *racism* as "a system of ignorance, exploitation, and power used to oppress African Americans, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Americans, American Indians, and other people based on ethnicity, culture, mannerisms, and color" (p. 5). This definition sheds light on the multiple identities and experiences of individuals who face racism daily. Stereotyping can also lead to individuals experiencing microaggressions; for example, a common stereotype of African Americans includes not being intelligent, emotionally, financially, occupationally stable, lazy, loud, and having carefree attitudes (Davis, 1989). Pierce (1988) explains that because people of color are more likely to experience microaggressions, it also contributes to the development of increased stress, resulting in individuals experiencing feelings of threats and perceived racism. Therefore, "microaggressions can take hold of an individual's life in the sense of space, time, energy, and mobility, in addition to creating mental barriers that result in low self-confidence and self-image" (Pierce, 1988, p. 31). Due to the toxic nature of racial microaggressions, many individuals have reported an increase in stress and the development of poor mental health (Smith et al., 2020). Stressors and poor mental health stem from victims who are placed in positions of having to

decipher whether the microaggression was intended to be an insult or an unconscious remark and then contemplate how to respond to it, if they do at all (Davis, 1989). Far too often, marginalized individuals are consistently put in positions where they expend additional time and energy defending themselves against microaggressions and encountering counterarguments of being too sensitive (Davis, 1989). The reality is that, over time, microaggressions can result in extreme stress, leading to poor mental, emotional, and physical health and well-being (Carroll, 1998). This being said the self-esteem of the victim of microaggressions suffers dramatically because they constantly hear unpleasant images about themselves from others (Davis, 1989). Once an individual has experienced countless microaggressions, Smith (2004) identifies the victim as experiencing "racial battle fatigue" and has the risk of developing habitual negative emotions.

Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF)

Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF) is a common component that many marginalized students encounter, which increases their chances of developing negative emotions that can potentially impact their overall mental and physical health and well-being (Hernández & Villodas, 2020). Smith (2004) coined the term Racial Battle Fatigue based on the experiences of marginalized individuals who experienced constant emotional fatigue from a buildup of race-related stress and tensions. Individuals who have experienced RBF reported feelings of isolation, resentment, depression, anxiety, and not feeling valued (Smith, 2004). Due to the constant buildup of dealing with racial tensions and encounters, many individuals first experience an overwhelming feeling of emotional exhaustion, which is a precursor to mental and emotional fatigue and burnout, making it impossible to navigate how to overcome stressors (Maslach et al., 2001). Research supports that these experiences may lead to more severe mental health issues, including suppressed anger, increased alertness and paranoia, low self-confidence, anxiety, depression,

hopelessness, extreme fatigue, distancing themselves from others, and loss of self-consciousness in school settings (Kohli, 2016; Solomon & Lambie, 2020).

Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Pedagogies

Many educational programs lack culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies because they are not naturally embedded within current curriculums, and educators need appropriate training to implement this pedagogy into their classroom culture (Ladson-Billings,1995). To successfully impact marginalized students' learning experiences, educators must pave a path for classroom inclusiveness and promote diversity (Alim et al., 2017). In preparing educators to facilitate mental health informal education programs, a key element is exposing and training them on culturally responsive and sustaining mindfulness practices and techniques that incorporate transformative learning for students and facilitators (Liu & Ball, 2019). When developing this curriculum, the facilitator must also consider the perspectives and current understandings of different ethnic groups to create an inclusive learning environment with multiple representations (Gay, 2000). Providing culturally responsive pedagogies to educators allows them to create meaningful and impactful learning experiences as they connect new learning with students' prior experiences and knowledge while acknowledging, appreciating, and incorporating their students' backgrounds and experiences into the classroom's curriculum (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Gay, 2000). To effectively build a culturally responsive practice, educators must obtain a broad set of strategies and tools that complement diverse students (Alim & Paris, 2017). As mentioned, many educators encounter difficulties connecting with marginalized students due to differences in life and personal experiences. Researchers discovered that even before the pandemic, many educators felt unprepared to meet the social and emotional needs of students experiencing and coping with trauma (Baweja et al., 2015). Currently, there is

an overwhelming number of white teachers working with a majority non-white student population (Berchini, 2019). It is also noted that white individuals are more likely to live in racially sheltered communities that limit the opportunity to interact with people of color (Charles, 2003). Such confinement deprives them of moments to build connections and better understand the day-to-day realities, interests, concerns, and struggles of racial minorities (Villegas et al., 2012).

With our student demographics diversifying more every year, educators need to make more of an effort to become equipped to connect with students from different backgrounds other than their own. When teachers reflect pedagogically on diversity and how their experiences impact a learner's learning, they are then able to build a challenging and responsive practice for diverse children (Darling-Hammond, 2007). In recognizing the cultural divide between educators and students, professionals can prepare teachers to effectively teach diverse learners while embracing and incorporating their ethnicity, language, and social class into the classroom (Zeichner, 2003). When educators are not trained in culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies, they are more at risk of mislabeling marginalized students as disruptive, disrespectful, or even viewing their classroom as chaos due to the clash in cultures and lack of cultural competence (Alim & Paris, 2017). When educators place importance on collaborating with students by embracing their life experiences, cultures, and what makes them unique, they can connect on a deeper level with their students, families, and community (Paris, 2012). Having culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies at the forefront of mental health informal education will allow educators to transform their classrooms and relationships by creating connections with students who are not from the same background (Alim & Paris, 2017). Teachers will also be able to sustain these relationships by providing a more inclusive, positive

academic experience and outcome. Educators who master these skills invest in becoming cultural brokers as they have taken the time to comprehend the different cultural systems, form the ability to interpret cultural symbols from multiple points of reference, regulate cultural differences harmoniously, and effectively construct bridges that facilitate the instructional practice (Darling-Hammond, 2007). The more educators become cultural brokers; the more paths are created for marginalized students to experience less mislabeling, confusion, and lack of connection to the curriculum and embrace an inclusive classroom culture that makes everyone feel welcome and want to learn.

Critical Reflection for Transformative Learning

Critical reflection is a necessary component of my self-study. Liu (2015) defines critical reflection as

> A process of constantly analyzing, questioning, and critiquing established assumptions of oneself, schools, and the society about teaching and learning, and the social and political implications of schooling, and implementing changes to previous actions that have been supported by those established assumptions for the purpose of supporting student learning and a better schooling and more just[ice] society for all children. (p. 10-11).

Liu's (2015) hermeneutic cycle of critical reflection for transformative learning includes six stages that fuel consistently analyzing assumptions that lead to transformation. These stages are (1) Assumption analysis, (2) Contextual awareness, (3) Imaginative speculation, (4) Reflective skepticism, (5) Reflection-based actions, and (6) Reflection on the effect of reflection-based actions (Liu, 2015). Each stage builds on one another to challenge individuals to engage in a critical reflection process that transforms their learning, thoughts, beliefs, values, and positionality. To gain the full benefits of engaging in critical reflection for transformative

learning, the individual must consistently reexamine their assumptions regarding their knowledge and understandings associated with various social, political, and cultural stances (Liu, 2015). The key factor leading to transformative learning is taking action, which will aid the process of achieving educational equity and restoring justice in our education system (Liu, 2015).

Mindfulness as an Intervention

Individuals who attend schools in high-poverty areas tend to experience increased racial tensions and social marginalization (Teasley & Homer, 2020). Pearman and Lefever-Davis (2012) recommend that school professionals craft safe spaces for marginalized students so that they have the opportunity to learn more about mental health in addition to developing strategies to help them overcome racial tension and challenges they may face in the future. Marginalized groups often suppress their emotions when dealing with stressors related to racial tension (Liljestrom et al., 2007). This suppression contributes to their emotions that are tied to pain, anger, sadness, and anxiety. When individuals choose to suppress their emotions, over time, it can result in them neglecting or denying their true emotions, which often leads many to experience burnout (Chang, 2009). Mental health professionals agree that suppression is not a viable coping strategy or option because it could damage our cognitive reasoning and critical thinking skills (Gross, 2002). Gilbert's (2000) social mentality theory provides a platform to examine the physiological underpinnings of an individual's inner negative stress levels and how they activate the body's defense system. When this happens, signals are sent to the brain that something does not feel right and to be on edge. Therefore, when an individual feels as though they are being attacked by racism or microaggressions, the nervous system kicks in, releasing cortisol and adrenaline as the individual is now engulfed in a fight-or-flight mentality (Will,

2020). Once an individual engages in a fight-or-flight mentality, the insula, a part of our brain that allows us to view situations from many perspectives, becomes distorted and no longer works as designed. This causes stressful situations to feel more intense and continue feeling worried, anxious, angry, or depressed. The default mode network (DMN) in the brain's midline then becomes overly activated as the individual starts to overthink or worry about past and future events (Germer, 2009). Most marginalized individuals who have experienced microaggressions and racism tend to develop an overactive DMN, which simulates feelings of anxiety, paranoia, anger, or depression because they are replaying these negative experiences and worry about when the next racial aggression will occur (Berry et al., 2021).

Creating a safe space for marginalized students to engage in a mindfulness intervention can allow them to process their past experiences while providing a platform for them to reflect on any unpleasant experiences over time, helping them realize that continuing to hold on to these memories can negatively impact their mental health and well-being (Solomon et al., 2022). Researchers who have utilized mindfulness as an intervention report that participants had increased emotional regulation and empathy in addition to feeling comfortable talking about their experiences of racial tension (Damian et al., 2021). Therefore, incorporating practices that involve mindfulness and self-compassion will aid individuals when they embark on this journey, providing opportunities for them to understand their suffering, where it stems from, and work towards overcoming negative emotions. Robins and colleagues (2012) agree that mindfulness has a promising future as they see its potential in aiding individuals who have experienced racial inequities by further developing self-regulation and compassion skills while working through various unpleasant life events. When practicing mindfulness, many facilitators utilize techniques that further develop self-awareness and compassion to help individuals better understand how to

reflect, regulate, and build resilience through practicing conscious awareness (Carmody & Baer, 2008; Kabat-Zinn, 2003). When individuals are able to self-regulate their emotions, it also entails that they can manage their emotions in a healthy mannerism in most situations (Gross, 2002). Researchers have discovered many psychological health benefits, such as increased overall emotional regulation, awareness, fulfillment, and self-worthiness when practicing mindfulness and self-compassion together (Neff & Vonk, 2009). Neff (2003) explains how self-compassion contains three main tenets that overlap throughout one's experience when practicing mindfulness and self-compassion: self-kindness, humanity, and conscious mindfulness. Each component fights against the pressure of becoming encapsulated with self-judgment, isolation, and over-identification (Neff, 2003). Therefore, self-compassion plays an important role in developing emotional self-regulation and reducing emotional fatigue as it aids individuals in becoming more conscious and accepting of all thoughts and emotions, including the more painful ones, rather than blocking or suppressing them (Neff, 2003). As one begins to practice mindfulness techniques such as self-kindness and compassion consistently, they are then able to embark on a journey that embraces forgiveness and acceptance in relation to their pain without engaging in self-judgment and experience a decrease in depression, anxiety, and negative thoughts and feelings (Raes, 2010). Utilizing mindfulness as a holistic practice can broaden one's lens of life experiences and aid individuals who feel oppressed in a healing process by generating a sense of safety, which can help them counteract negative emotions that were generated by the body's defense threat system (Neff, 2009).

Summary of Chapter Two

Chapter two provided a detailed review of the current research topic, mindfulness-based practices in K-12 schools, and its impact on marginalized elementary students. An in-depth

understanding of mindfulness was provided through definitions and explanations of how mindfulness-based practices are beneficial in a classroom setting. Discussions regarding gaps found within the literature and the lack of incorporating culturally responsive pedagogies when working with marginalized students when conducting mindfulness-based practices were also reviewed. After analyzing the literature, my focus turned from reviewing the effectiveness found when implementing mindfulness in schools to what are the effects of the program I constructed and observing its impact on marginalized students.

Chapter Three: Method

A thorough systematic review was completed in the previous chapter to understand how mindfulness techniques are utilized in K-12 schools and how mindfulness-based programs impact marginalized students. The methods constructed were designed to support my research study and answer the following research questions: (1) What types of negative emotions do marginalized elementary students experience? What is the root cause for marginalized students experiencing negative emotions while attending elementary school? (2) How can incorporating mindfulness techniques embedded with culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies aid marginalized students in overcoming negative emotions that they experience in elementary school? (3) How can culturally responsive mindfulness programs be sustainable and transformative for marginalized students who frequently encounter negative emotions? (4) What challenges and difficulties are there in developing and implementing such a program, and how does the researcher search for and implement solutions? Detailed information regarding the theoretical framework and research context, including participants, sampling, recruitment, program development, implementation, data collection, data analysis, and ethics, are discussed.

Purpose of the Study

In navigating the complexity of urban schools, educational researchers are uniquely positioned, as there can be many modalities for embodiment that can occur throughout the learning and educational process (Evans et al., 2009). Due to learning being a cognitive and emotional practice, professionals need to be aware of how students are emotionally engaging with their learning environment and how they connect with their peers and teachers, as these elements could affect their emotional and mental well-being if they are experiencing multiple negative experiences (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007). A construction of literature

regarding the effectiveness of mindfulness-based programs in K-12 classrooms was conducted and has proven to help treat students who have experienced negative emotions and reduce stress, anxiety, and depression (Emerson et al., 2020; Gause & Coholic, 2010; Howells et al., 2016). The information supporting this claim was gathered from published, peer-reviewed journal articles from three databases: ERIC, Education Full Text, and Professional Development. Although current research has reported successful outcomes when implementing mindfulness as a form of intervention for anxiety and depression in students (Esmmaeelbeygi et al., 2020; Jones & Lee, 2020; Keller et al., 2017; Singh et al., 2017), researchers also discuss how there is still a need to conduct more studies to determine if mindfulness-based interventions would be effective amongst all students in helping them become aware of and regulating their emotions (Burke, 2010). My study aimed to advance mental health informal education research for K-12 schools by utilizing holistic mindfulness techniques to aid marginalized students who have experienced or developed negative emotions and help them build resilience by providing students with the proper tools and techniques to help them become aware of and overcome negative emotions. The purpose of furthering mental health informal education research is to aid K-12 students so all students can access high-quality, effective mental health education, programs, tools, and techniques. My study contributed to the following:

1. Filled in gaps relating to constructing and facilitating such a program.
2. Provided valuable information that can improve mental health programs in K-12 classrooms.
3. Help guide teachers on how to better support students in accessing high-quality mental health programs that are culturally relatable.

Research Method: Self-Study

This qualitative self-study research intended to improve mental health informal education by constructing a mental health program that utilizes mindfulness and culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies to aid marginalized students in overcoming negative emotions and building resilience. Qualitative research was appropriate for this study because I was interested in gathering rich, detailed information to understand the unique needs, perspectives, positionality, and experiences of the participants and teachers of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A qualitative study is also appropriate because I was able to further explore participants' perceptions of their past and current experiences (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016).

Self-study was chosen to be a part of the research design due to its alignment in goals with myself in that there was a need and want to expand my understanding to further develop new knowledge in hopes of improving myself as a professional, my practice, and impact the profession. Approaching this study through this lens not only impacted me but also allowed me an opportunity to create more meaningful experiences that can aid a multitude of individuals with the intent of developing, sharing, improving, and wanting to increase the knowledge of educators who are also interested in conducting future research in mental health informal education. Researchers show that self-study research also has the potential to influence and encourage professionals within the field of education and further develop new knowledge that others can use to expand, evolve, and transform our education system (Tidwell et al., 2020). Through exploration, experimentation, and venturing out of one's comfort zone, true creativity and innovation are more likely to transpire while developing a professional identity.

Hauge (2021) explains how there are four aspects that correlate with learning and developing knowledge, which stems from conducting self-study-based research. The first aspect is to build change and make improvements that positively affect the researcher, institution, and

industry. Second, the researcher will build an interconnected relationship with multiple elements involved in the study, including colleagues, students, mentors, literature, and research about the research area of interest. This action supports and maximizes the growth of the research. Third, there is an opportunity to develop new modalities, theories, and practices. Lastly, there is still a need to professionalize and formalize this form of research and make it available for other professionals to access (Hauge, 2021). Making it more accessible can aid the process of transforming self-study research into a more meaningful and applicable practice for other researchers and teacher educators to utilize in the future.

My study was designed to study my journey in constructing, implementing, and facilitating such a program while upholding a high moral commitment to improving the practice of mental health informal education. Due to the fluid relationship needed between the research and practice, I understood how I needed to be mindful of how all of these elements were interconnected. Bullough and Pinnegar (2004) identify self-study as a process in which the researcher simultaneously practices teaching and conducts the research study by embracing the different roles needed to further develop oneself, knowledge, and educational practice. Embarking on this research adventure, Hamilton and Pinnegar (2015) elaborate on the role of the researcher as their focus should be to uncover their experiences within the practice and then navigate their understanding through an in-depth critical reflective process which exposes connections about the known and unknown elements of the context, participants, and research. To invoke this level of critical reflection, I needed to be pliable in every aspect of my study. One of the purposes of self-study is the ability to ask critical questions that lead to uncovering more information about the context of education as a whole and then reflecting on these experiences and new knowledge that leads to improving their practice and invoking change (Hauge, 2021).

By engaging myself in a systematic process of reflection, I was able to ensure that I thoroughly examine my practice and study, which led to a deeper and more impactful study and self-understanding.

Even though self-study can be an impactful experience for the researcher, participants, and educational institution, various challenges can occur throughout the process (Tidwell et al., 2020). Some challenges include analyzing oneself with a critical lens concerning their work and practice, ensuring the entire process is conducted rigorously, and understanding how inner conflict could arise throughout various parts of the study (Hauge, 2021). There is also a heavy emphasis on the importance of searching for the gaps and contradictions between the researcher's beliefs, thoughts, ideas, and teaching practices (Harris, 2007; Whitehead & Fitzgerald, 2007). Therefore, there needs to be a moral obligation for the researcher to be mindful in placing specific personal characteristics at the forefront, such as being vulnerable, honest, credible, and having integrity (Keltchermans & Hamilton, 2004). Since there is a high level of self-examination and reflection, researchers note how the researcher must also understand that when critically examining their practice, research, and context, it is not meant to be viewed with a lens of scrutiny; however, it should be viewed as an opportunity for positive self and institutional growth and improvement (Grant & Butler, 2018).

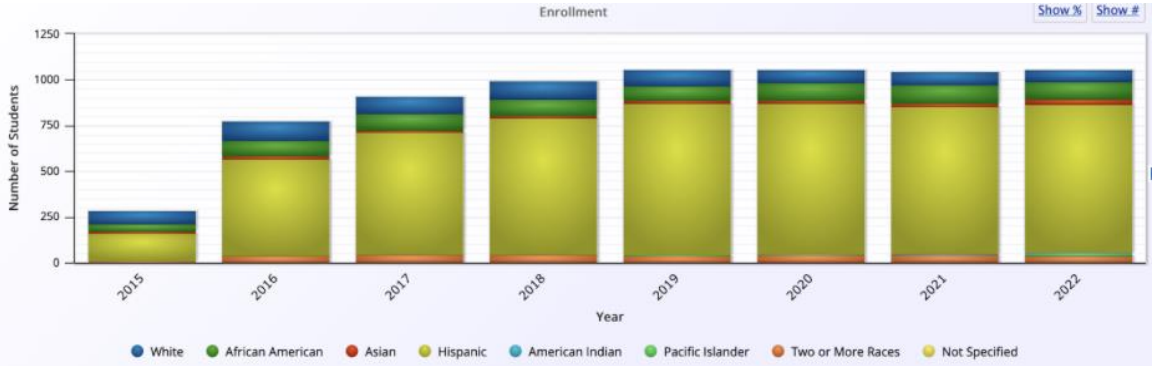
Research Context and Participants

This study was conducted at a Title 1 school on the east side of a large urban school district in the Southwestern United States. According to the Public-School Review (2023), this school serves preschool through 8th-grade students and currently has 1,049 students enrolled; 51% identify as female and 49% as male. The student-to-teacher ratio is 23:1, with a minority enrollment of 93% (School Digger, 2023). The student demographic population at this school

includes Hispanic: 76.9%, African American: 9.1%, White: 6.1%, Two or more races: 4.0%, Asian: 2.7%, Pacific Islander: 1.0%, and American Indian: 0.2% (School Digger, 2023). Figure 3.1 provides a detailed description of the student demographic population from 2015-2022. In analyzing Figure 3.1, it is important to note the dramatic increase in Hispanic students enrolled at this school since 2015 (School Digger, 2023). Being that this is a Title 1 school, it provides free breakfast, lunch, and after-school snacks to 100% of the student population (Public School Review, 2023).

Figure 3.1

School's Student Demographics from 2015-2022



Adapted from School Digger, 2023

Participants

For my study, I was the facilitator of a culturally responsive and sustaining mindfulness program while also being the observer. Students are considered crucial participants in a self-study because they mirror the researcher's outcome and development throughout the study

(Hauge, 2020). My study used purposeful sampling to identify and select participants who could contribute rich information based on their case (Patton, 2002). Screening criteria for this study included participants between the ages of 8-9 and participants who experience a range of emotions. Participants for my study were selected from four third-grade classrooms on this school's campus. Third grade was chosen because although research on mindfulness and education has focused on all grade levels of students, professionals believe that the best time to build a foundation of learning and create a habit that is rooted in lifelong learning is better done with younger students who are early on in their education (Erwin & Robinson, 2016). Therefore, learning about positive mental health and creating a culture where students can comprehensively understand and practice mindfulness, what it means to have positive mental health, and build personal confidence and resilience is better done with this grade level.

Each third-grade class consisted of 26-29 students per classroom, totaling, on average, 110 students for the entire third grade. After the participants secured their spots in this study, I began to interview their classroom teachers to understand the participants' backgrounds and how their teachers utilize their culture in the classroom while also supporting their overall health and well-being. Table 3.1 provides a detailed description of the background of the student participants in my study as it highlights the alias name of the participant, their classroom teacher, ethnicity, gender, and details regarding whether they have an IEP or are an ELL student and bilingual. Table 3.2 describes the teacher participants and their backgrounds, such as aliases, years of teaching experience, demographics, and gender. Lastly, Table 3.3 is a detailed attendance tracker of when the student participants attended sessions and how many interviews they completed throughout the entire study. Table 3.3 was organized chronologically based on who participated in the most to the least amount of sessions.

Table 3.1

Student participant backgrounds

Participant Alias	Classroom Teacher	Ethnicity	IEP	ELL	Gender	Bilingual
Ari	A	Hispanic	Y	Y	Female	Yes
Patricio	M	Hispanic	N	Y	Male	Yes
Jackie	M	Hispanic	Y	Y	Female	Yes
Emilia	A	Hispanic	N	N	Female	Yes
Carlitos	B	Hispanic	N	Y	Male	Yes
Abi	B	Hispanic	Y	Y	Female	Yes
Aki	A	Filipino	N	N	Female	Yes
Kristiana	M	Hispanic	Y	N	Female	Yes
Yessi	A	Hispanic	N	N	Female	Yes
Junior	A	Hispanic	N	Y	Male	Yes
Alma	B	Hispanic	N	Y	Female	Yes
Rene	B	Hispanic	Y	Y	Male	Yes

Table 3.2

Teacher participant backgrounds.

Teacher Alias	Year of Teaching Experience	Demographics	Gender
Mrs. B	10	Caucasian	Female
Ms. M	3	Hispanic	Female
Ms. A	4	Asian	Female

Table 3.3

Attendance tracker and record of completed interviews for student participants.

Participant	Interviews Completed	W1-1/17	W2- 1/24	W3- 1/31	W4- 2/7	W5-2/14	W6- 2/21	W7- 2/18	W8- 2/28
1 Ari (8/8)- 100%	**1,2,3**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2 Patricio (8/8)- 100%	**1,2,3**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3 Jackie (7/8) - 87%	**1,2,3**	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
4 Emilia (7/8)- 87%	**1,2,3**	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
5 Carlitos (5/8)- 62%	**1,2**	X	X	X		X		X	
6 Abi (5/8)- 62%	**1,3**	X	X		X			X	X
7 Aki (5/8)- 62%	**1,2**	X		X	X	X		X	
8 Kristiana (5/8)- 62%	**1,2**	X	X	X		X		X	
9 Yessi (2/8)- 25%	**1**		X		X				
10 Junior (2/8)- 25%	**1,2**		X			X			
11 Alma (2/8)- 25%	**1**	X	X						
12 Rene (1/8)- 12%				X					

Sampling and Recruitment

Recruitment and sampling occurred with third-grade students at a Title 1 school on the city's east side. After I received my institutional review board approval from the local university to conduct an eight-week study with a third-grade group of student participants, I contacted the school's administration to seek approval from this campus to conduct an eight-week after-school intervention program that occurred once a week, and each session was an hour long. This study was voluntary and needed parent approval before students could officially participate. After the school's administration granted me permission to conduct my study, all third-grade students

received a letter of participation that needed to be signed and completed by their parents or caretakers to be eligible to participate in my study. This study was capped at twelve participants; therefore, participation was determined on a first-come, first-serve basis. I also collected additional participation forms in case a participant were to drop out of the study within the first week, and they could be replaced with another student participant. After all participants were selected, prior to the eight-week intervention starting, I took two weeks to interview the participants' classroom teachers and observe their classroom environment once for thirty minutes. Once the intervention started, the study was eight weeks long, meeting weekly for one hour, totaling eight sessions. The intervention occurred during after-school hours from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Students were not compensated for their participation as this showed that they truly wanted to participate in the study based on their free will. Requirements for students participating in the study were that they need to be enrolled and an active elementary student at this school and participants were willing to participate for the entire duration of the study.

Data Sources and Collection Procedures

A detailed description of the eight-week program is demonstrated in Appendix E. This description includes times blocked for activities, participant reflections, and when interviews took place with the student participants during the eight-week intervention. Although the majority of this program was already constructed prior to its launch, I was also aware that some activities may need some adjustments in order to enhance some of the culturally responsive and sustaining elements to further support the participants in their mindfulness journey. Doing this helped support my goal of creating a meaningful and impactful learning experience for all of my participants. My study utilized three triangulated data sources: observation, semi-structured interviews, and bi-weekly journals to explore and uncover the participant's and my experiences

with the culturally responsive and sustaining mindfulness program. Observation notes and audio and video recordings were collected throughout the study to compare data and determine themes. Interviews and observations with the participants' classroom teachers were semi-structured and occurred two weeks before the eight-week intervention began. Semi-structured interviews with student participants were conducted during weeks one, five, and eight. The semi-structured interviews aimed to understand the student's backgrounds and experiences while tracking their progress throughout the intervention. Each participant had a preconstructed journal distributed to them at the end of each session. These journals helped participants engage in a critically reflective process that led them to engage in a transformative learning experience as they were encouraged to write or draw about their experiences, thoughts, and feelings. Journals were collected at the end of each session so I could progressively analyze the data, code themes, and ensure participants actively participated during the intervention and critical reflection process. I also had a customized pre-constructed journal to help fuel the critical reflection process through the lens of a researcher, program designer, and facilitator throughout the intervention.

Research Question One Data Sources

To answer research question one, which related to understanding what types of negative emotions marginalized students experience and the root causes, I utilized four resources: interviews with participants and their classroom teachers, classroom observations, field notes, and participant's journals. I utilized semi-structured interview questions when interviewing participants to provide them with space and time for them to explore, express, and discuss events in which they felt negative emotions relating to sadness, stress, anger, or anxiety. The interview questions related to this research question are: (1) What emotion do you feel like you experience the most when you are at school and why? (2) If you are feeling down, how do you make

yourself feel better? (3) Describe how you control your emotions. (4) Do you find it easy to explain your emotions to others, if so, who are the people you talk most to about your emotions? (5) Describe what you do to keep a positive attitude. These questions provided great insight for me to better understand the participant's perspectives and positionality when they experience negative emotions at school.

When observing teachers' classroom environments, I utilized an observation protocol that focused on two domains: emotional and cultural support. The dimensions connected with emotional support were positive climate, teacher sensitivity, regard for student perspective, negative climate, and behavior management. The dimensions connected with cultural support were relating content to students' backgrounds, opportunities to explore counter-narratives, and promoting equality and diversity. I observed each classroom teacher for thirty minutes before the eight-week program began to gather evidence regarding these specific areas. When I observed the classrooms, I utilized the observation protocol table to document my evidence and connect events in the classroom to the various dimensions listed. The observation protocol table allowed me to take field notes of the participants and their teachers to determine if the classroom environment had the potential to impact their emotional well-being.

Lastly, I utilized the pre-constructed participant journals to provide a space for students to feel comfortable sharing their emotions. Some of the prompts that connect to emotional recognition were when students had to reflect on a time when they were the happiest and draw a picture of how they felt at that moment, then write a few sentences about that moment. Additionally, students were asked to list examples of positive and negative emotions and then write about how mindfulness can help us overcome negative emotions. Lastly, when practicing mindfulness and connecting it to their emotion, students could use three clouds to write down

thoughts that came up when they practiced mindfulness and two clouds to write down things they did to bring their focus back to the present moment. These specific journal prompts allowed students to explore, interpret, and express their emotions.

Research Question Two Data Sources

To answer research question two, which related to how can incorporating mindfulness techniques and culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies aid marginalized students in overcoming their negative emotions, I utilized two resources, including the participant's preconstructed journals and field notes, to track the program's effectiveness. During sessions four and six, the journal prompts helped participants express if this bridge between mindfulness and culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies was effective. Session four focused on participants discussing how foods they eat from home relate to their emotions. Their journal prompt for this section was to draw their favorite food in the rectangle and write descriptive words about how it made them feel when they ate their favorite foods in the heart shapes. Additionally, sessions six and seven focused on individually supporting the students by having them become refueled with seeds of empowerment. For example, in session six, students were asked to fill in five shapes with motivating statements related to what they needed to tell themselves. In session seven, students wrote a positive letter to their future selves.

I also took field notes that stemmed from observing and tracking the participants throughout the sessions to understand how they were able to enhance their emotional regulation while using culturally responsive and sustaining mindfulness techniques. This occurred through our session's weekly check-ins, during the intervention activities, and when I analyzed their journal responses.

Research Question Three Data Sources

To answer research question three, which related to how culturally responsive mindfulness programs could be sustainable and transformative for marginalized students, I utilized three resources, including the participant exit interview, student participant journals, and field notes I took that related to the entire program analysis. The exit interview included three questions: (1) Describe how practicing mindfulness has helped you. (2) Which techniques do you think you will continue to practice? (3) If you could improve this program, what would you change? These questions provided answers to understanding how the student participants felt about this program and its effectiveness. Since the interview questions were designed to be semi-structured, participants could answer honestly about how they felt about their learning experience regarding mindfulness and how they can apply this practice throughout their lives to overcome negative emotions and build resilience.

I also analyzed the participant's pre-constructed journals to determine the transformation and sustainability. When looking at the transformation aspect, each session progressively builds on aspects that help students recognize and regulate their emotions. During session eight, students were asked to write down five things they could use mindfulness for in the future. Additionally, students wrote down what they did or did not like about the program and what they wanted to continue practicing. This was important because I wanted students to feel comfortable expressing their true opinions about this program and how to improve it. Lastly, the field notes taken throughout the study were analyzed and coded to determine how this program can be transformative and sustainable for marginalized students who encounter negative emotions.

Research Question Four Data Sources

Research question four pertains to my challenges when constructing such a mindfulness program and what I did to overcome such problems. I collected data related to my critical reflection

process to answer these questions throughout this study. The data collected included my journal reflections, field notes, and audio recordings of sessions to better understand what I could do to make this program successful. Throughout this study, I would take time after each session to sit with the data and utilize Liu and Ball's (2019) hermeneutic cycle of critical reflection for transformative learning to dissect my construction of the program, the chosen activities, and the effectiveness of each session. I consistently reflected on the data from my field notes and audio recordings to fuel my reflection process. Table 3.4 provides a detailed list of the types of evidence I collected to answer each research question for my study.

Table 3.4

Data Collection Resources Per Question

Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4
-Interviews with participants and their classroom teachers -Classroom observations -Field notes - Participant's preconstructed journals	-Participant's preconstructed journals -Field notes	-Participant's exit interview - Participant's preconstructed journals -Field notes	-Researchers journal reflections -Field notes -Audio recordings

Interviews

Interviews with classroom teachers were semi-structured and occurred two weeks before the eight-week intervention. Interviews with student participants were semi-structured and were

conducted three times throughout the study. Interviews lasted up to seven minutes per participant. The first interview was completed during week one. The theme of this interview was to get to know the participants and their backgrounds. The second interview was completed during week five. The theme of this interview was to understand what types of emotions participants typically experience most while they are at school, what they were doing while they experience these emotions, and how they react when these emotions occur. When participants could communicate their emotions, I gained more insight into their emotional spectrum and was able to provide them with more tools and techniques that could aid participants in overcoming negative emotions while building resilience. The last interview was completed during week eight. The theme for this interview was reflection and integration for transformative learning. This interview gave me more insight into what the participants liked or did not like throughout the intervention and what aspects of the intervention they planned on continuing to integrate into throughout their lives. Appendix B obtains detailed information regarding interview questions for teachers and participants.

Observations

Observations took place prior to and throughout the entire study. After I interviewed the teachers in week one, during week two, I observed three of the four third-grade classrooms for thirty minutes before the intervention began. Having observed the third-grade classrooms before the intervention occurred allowed me to understand the classroom dynamics of student-teacher relationships, classroom environment, and students' emotional behaviors. Observations continued throughout my study as I observed how participants responded to the various mindfulness activities throughout the eight-week intervention. All observations were documented through field notes and audio recordings.

Journaling

Participants were given a pre-constructed journal with prompts relating to various activities done in the intervention. Participants were encouraged to write or draw out their responses to the prompts throughout the study. Journaling was an important artifact of the participants and this study because it allowed me to understand how participants engage with the mindfulness intervention and how mindfulness is helping them overcome negative emotions while building resilience. Appendix C includes the participant journal prompts, which lists a detailed description of each preconstructed journal prompt used in this study.

Overview of the Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Mindfulness Intervention Program (CRSMI)

As the constructor of the culturally responsive mindfulness program utilized in this study, it is necessary to provide a description of the 8-week Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Mindfulness Intervention (CRSMI) program that was implemented for this study. CRSMI was designed to utilize mindfulness techniques that supported the overall health and well-being of an individual while also incorporating culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies to further aid individuals in developing increased pride, confidence, and cultural competence. Each week was strategically designed to have students understand their overall emotions, how negative emotions can impact their overall well-being, and how to overcome such emotions while developing confidence, pride, and self-efficacy. The lesson plans created for CRSMI can be found in Appendix E. Week one focused on having the students understand their overall emotions and interviewing the participants to start building a genuine relationship with each of them. Participants engaged in an activity called Act it Out and Charades, where they could show how

they react to different types of emotions. I then interviewed each participant to get to know who they are and start building a trusting relationship with my participants.

Week two focused on discovering what mindfulness was while incorporating culturally responsive activities. During week two, students started with an activity called Museum of Me, which had them bring artifacts of an item from home that either represented their background, culture, or heritage so we could better understand who they are as individuals. Afterward, I led all the participants into a guided mindfulness meditation incorporating gratitude and proud practice. This activity allowed participants to focus inward on who they are, express gratitude for things that they appreciate, and vocalize qualities that they are proud of. Week three focused on body awareness and mindfulness as students practiced movement and breathwork. After this activity, we closed the session with a cultural dance party, which involved the students forming a dance circle and dancing to their favorite songs that they hear when they are home. Week four focused on mindful consumption and meditation. We started this session by discussing our favorite foods that we eat at home and how they tie to our cultural backgrounds. Then, students engaged in a mindfulness activity focusing on how we consume food, how it makes us feel, and how it enhances the foods we eat when we take time to be mindful when consuming them.

During week five, students engaged in a mindfulness meditation that focused on embracing love and kindness. Once we finished this mediation, I started individually interviewing participants to better understand their negative emotions and the root causes of such emotions. Students who were not being interviewed were creating and coloring in mandalas. Week six allowed students to utilize musical instruments and movement to express the emotions they experience at school. Week seven focused on building a positive self-image and resilience as participants shared more positive attributes about their families and backgrounds, participated

in positive affirmations, and practiced mindfulness stretch and appreciation mediation. Week eight was the final week, starting with a gentle movement mediation encompassing breathwork, mindfulness, and light movement. Then, we transitioned to our final exit interview, which allowed participants to describe how they felt about this program. Every week we met, there was a journal prompt that students completed at the end of every session. The weekly journal prompts can be found in Appendix C. To ensure that every session was designed intentionally to answer each research question, a table was constructed to break down each activity within the intervention and understand how the data gathered can contribute to answering all research questions in this study. This table can be found in Appendix F.

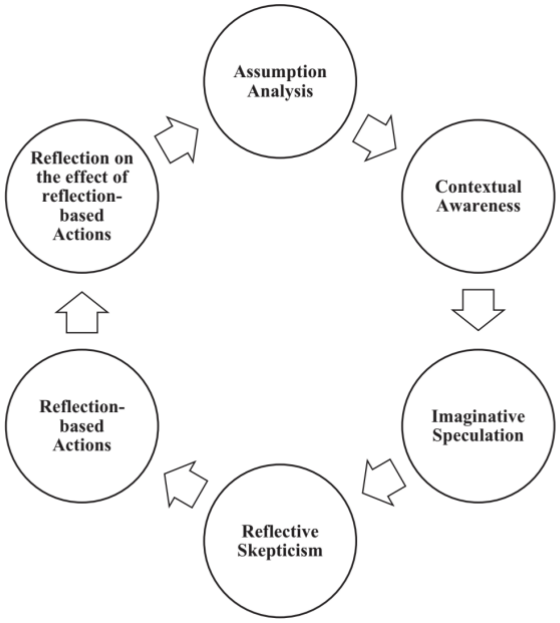
Critical Reflections

When measuring my growth as the researcher and ensuring that I took time to critically reflect throughout the study, I used a systematic process that was developed by Liu (2015) to ensure that I consistently practiced critical reflection and developed a transformative learning experience. A diagram of this process is shown in Figure 3.2 (Liu & Ball, 2019). Liu and Ball explain that engaging in this systematic process positions the researcher to become more transparent and vulnerable throughout the research process by placing their assumptions, perceptions, beliefs, and ideologies at the forefront of the audience (Liu & Ball, 2019). Since my study was a self-study, I needed to develop thought-provoking questions that fuel deeper reflections of experience in order for me to develop and achieve a transformative learning experience. Questions that fueled my critical reflection process included: How do my values impact my teaching practice? What prior assumptions I have about my students might be wrong? What challenges do I have in my practice, and how do I work through these challenges to provide a successful outcome? What is my definition of a successful outcome? How do I

encourage participants to be more reflective when observing themselves? How do I become aware of issues that arise in my practice so that I may be fully aware of them? How am I creating meaningful and impactful learning experiences for marginalized students? By crafting reflective questions, I was able to gradually adopt a more reflexive attitude toward my practice and study. These questions also aided me in further immersing myself in a systematic reflective process that led to transformative learning and growth. Figure 3.2 is a detailed model of the hermeneutic cycle of critical reflection for transformative learning designed by Liu and Ball (p.7).

Figure 3.2

The Hermeneutic Cycle of Critical Reflection for Transformative Learning



Note: Created by Liu and Ball, 2019, p. 7

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted systematically to discover meanings that resonated with the data (Hatch, 2002). To analyze the data effectively, I had an organized system that included following procedures and protocols that helped me organize the data after being collected. Researchers state that data can be acquired from recordings, reflective journals, interviews, observations, and field notes, which are then categorized, interpreted, and coded to determine the patterns and findings (Bogden & Biklen, 2007). Utilizing a narrative analysis aided my process when coding such data as it helped categorize sections of the narratives from participants and be used to support the analysis and findings (Liu, 2020).

When coding my data, I used a Priori coding system to discover the themes and findings. This form of coding aided me in identifying and developing themes by marking sections with a label to support thematic development. Priori coding was applied when existing codes were categorized in narrative sections. By utilizing this form of coding, I could gain a deeper understanding of the participant's experiences while providing the proper support to engage in critical reflection and transformative learning (Liu, 2020). When coding this data, I analyzed it through a lens that supported culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies, critical race theory, tenets of mindfulness, and critical reflection for transformative. Domains of themes include classroom climate, culturally responsive, mindfulness with subcategories such as negative climate, positive behavior management, regard for student perspective, teacher sensitivity, exploring counter-narratives, equity and diversity, awareness of mindset, patience, and acceptance.

Once the data was coded, a thorough thematic analysis was conducted to identify patterns that could be developed into themes. This comprehensive approach to analysis was particularly

beneficial when comparing themes from various perspectives. The constant comparison of the data allowed for inductive comparison of the evidence, leading to the discovery of themes that significantly contributed to the generation of the findings (Charamaz, 2014). The thoroughness of this process is reflected in Appendix D, which provides an outline of the Priori coding table, organized in a manner that mirrors Liu's (2020) format.

Positionality

Since this research was conducted through a lens that focuses on self-study, it is imperative as a reader to know my background, qualifications, and experience regarding mindfulness interventions and how I understand culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies. My educational background includes being a state-licensed educator who has taught at this school for seven and a half years. I have six years of experience designing fine arts-based curriculums that focus on improving students' content knowledge, personal health, and well-being. I am a certified Pilates and mindfulness instructor who has developed many educational programs for various schools and colleges. These programs include mindfulness yoga, dance, fitness, health education, and innovative arts movement. In my free time, I have consistently practiced various forms of mindfulness techniques and practices such as vinyasa, yin, Bikram, restorative yoga, breath and movement awareness, mindfulness meditation for love and compassion, vipassana, and guided meditation for the past twelve years.

Being Hispanic, I understand how important it is for educators to acknowledge, incorporate, and appreciate diverse learners' backgrounds, knowledge, and culture. Having previously experienced disparate treatment when I was first pursuing higher education, I understand what it feels like when minoritized students are treated unfairly, discriminated against, and humiliated among their peers and faculty members. Having gone through such

hardship of experiencing great trauma that had stemmed from various forms of harassment from a previous professor, I have grown to understand how important it is to have positive mental health and seek help when needed.

In understanding culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies, I have studied in-depth multicultural education, diversity, inclusion, and equity in leadership and classrooms when completing two master's and doctoral programs. As the lead researcher, I constructed the culturally responsive and sustaining mindfulness program used in this study and collected data based on participants' classroom teachers, participants of the study, and my experiences throughout the intervention to report the findings. The data collected from my study includes semi-structured interviews, field notes, observations, and journals. I also oversaw securing all data, such as journals, recordings, and transcriptions, while upholding high standards of validity and transparency.

Trustworthiness and Limitations

To ensure reliability was consistent and upheld throughout the entire study, I thoroughly documented all procedures that were completed in addition to confirming the findings with participants in order to clarify if there were any misinterpretations prior to the completion of the study. Specific steps were taken to ensure the participants were treated equally, respectably, fairly, and with no harm. Due to this study being strictly voluntary, I respected participants' decisions if they chose to participate, not participate, or withdraw at any time from the study. The journals, interviews, and observations were only reviewed by me and were not disclosed to anyone outside the study. I protected the participants' privacy, confidentiality, and physical, emotional, and mental health throughout the entire study. Due to this study using a mental health curriculum that discusses negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, or anger and relating

such content to third-grade student participants, it was understandable if some of the participants felt uncomfortable when sharing these private emotions and scenarios. Therefore, I approached this intervention with a high level of respect and sensitivity toward all participants when sharing information about their lived experiences. If a participant wanted to keep any information private, I did not press the participant for more information. Participants were able to skip or not answer questions if they felt they were uncomfortable answering them. I also had a critical friend that I could go to for brainstorming and critically reflect on the activities designed for this program to decipher if they were effective or not.

Minimal risk is something that a normal person would expect to encounter in their daily life. However, high risks can be considered as placing participants at risk of civil or criminal liability, damaging their financial standing, employability, or reputation, and causing emotional or physical damage. My study focused on participants' completing journal reflections, interview protocols, and engaging in culturally responsive mindfulness activities. The identities of my participants were only to be known by myself. During my study, participants may have felt vulnerable when answering interview questions that were related to their emotions. Interview questions were not intended to harm the participant but to understand their backgrounds and feelings and record their progress. The possibility of causing physical, mental, or emotional harm was small because the questionnaire, reflection, and interview did not include sensitive or intrusive questions. Instead, questions will revolve around emotional and mental check-ins. Such as: How was your day? What type of emotions did you experience throughout your day? What led to those emotions? On a scale of 1-10, how did the emotion make you feel once you recognized what was happening? How did you overcome any negative emotions that came up in

the day? On a scale of 1-10, how do you feel after overcoming that emotion? The reversibility of causing harm is guaranteed.

The risk of losing data and breaking confidentiality was low because I only distributed participants' journals when I saw the participants and collected them at the end of each session. I was also sure to secure all of the participant's personal information in a locked box that only I could access. The names of participants were changed to keep participants' identities anonymous. It was highly unlikely that the research conducted in this study caused any potential legal, financial, social, or personal effects on subjects of accidental data disclosure. I was also available to respond to any complaints or other negative reports if the participants decided to make any.

Summary of Chapter Three

Many mindfulness-based programs in schools are currently in their early stages, and there is a need to conduct more studies that help further the development of mental health informal education programs and ensure their effectiveness. My study benefited myself, the participants, and future studies on mental health informal education. Chapter three provided an overview of my study and justification for using a qualitative self-study approach for this research design. A detailed discussion about the research context, participants, and explanation of the data sources, data collection, and data analysis was provided. Lastly, my role as the researcher and facilitator was reviewed, and my study's ethics, trustworthiness, and limitations were discussed.

Chapter Four: Findings

The four research questions that guided this study were (1) What types of negative emotions do marginalized elementary students experience? What is the root cause for marginalized students experiencing negative emotions during their elementary school years? (2) How can incorporating mindfulness techniques embedded with culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies aid marginalized students in overcoming negative emotions that they experience in elementary school? (3) How can culturally responsive mindfulness programs be sustainable and transformative for marginalized students who frequently encounter negative emotions? (4) What challenges and difficulties are there in developing and implementing such a program? How do I search for and implement solutions?

After conducting an eight-week culturally responsive mindfulness intervention with third-grade students, it was concluded that half of the participants had developed various negative emotions that directly stemmed from an academic setting. Some of the reasons for developing such negative emotions are linked to factors that include previously experienced bullying, feeling suppressed and not being able to express themselves, and the overwhelming amount of academic pressure that was placed on students. After providing participants with an eight-week culturally responsive and sustaining mindfulness program, many students began to become more aware of what factors were triggering their negative emotions and utilized mindfulness tools to help relieve feelings of stress, anger, and anxiety. Findings concluded that participants developed an understanding of how to overcome such negative emotions, build resilience, and transform their mindsets into feeling better about who they are and their backgrounds. This finding suggested that culturally responsive mindfulness programs can be sustainable and transformative for marginalized students who frequently encounter negative

emotions. Lastly, the challenge I had to overcome when constructing, implementing, and facilitating such a program was ensuring that I was continuously incorporating meaningful activities that supported the cultural background of every participant. I will now report the findings from each research question in more detail.

Findings for Research Question One

Research Question One intended to explore the types of negative emotions marginalized students experience at school and the root causes of such emotions. Although there were twelve student participants in this study, only eight students participated in interview two, which was designed to understand the emotions students experienced at school. Six of those eight student participants reported consistently feeling negative emotions at school. These six participants described negative emotions as stress, anger, sadness, anxiety, nervousness, and annoyance. Of these six students, two have IEPs, and four are English language learners. It is also important to note that all twelve student participants are bilingual, speaking either Spanish or Filipino. Although this study did not intend to compare the negative emotions between male and female students based on their reports, it showed differences in the types of negative emotions that males and females experience at school. When analyzing the male participants, it is important to highlight that three of the four male students completed the interview, which correlated to understanding the types and root causes of negative emotions they encounter in a school setting. Of these three, each male participant discussed how they consistently experienced negative emotions at school including anger, stress, anxiety, and sadness. When further discussing why they felt these emotions, they each had their reasoning.

Uncovering the Types of Negative Emotions

Patricio described how he sometimes felt out of control and experienced "big feelings" such as anger, frustration, boredom, and sadness at school. He described the school as a "prison," always feeling trapped and bored because of how teachers strategically planned each part of the day, leaving little space for free time. This also fueled him to feel that he was not able to express himself the way he wanted, resulting in him feeling emotions of anger, sadness, and trapped "like how prisoners are in a prison cell" (Particio, Interview Two). Although Patricio reported experiencing negative emotions, he also mentioned that when teachers provided game-based learning activities for students with rewards such as candy, he felt more enjoyment at school, and his negative emotions dissipated.

Carlitos described that he mostly felt anxiety at school because of the academic pressure to be successful: "I don't know if I'm gonna pass that lesson or if I'm doing it right, and when I am tired, it adds more stress" (Carlitos, Interview Two). Carlitos also mentioned how his ADHD provides an additional layer to his stress as it impacts his mindset, especially when he does or does not take his medication. He further described how his teacher has many stress-relieving toys behind her desk. However, she does not let many students use them when stressed.

> "My teacher has a bunch of stress toys behind her desk where if somebody is stressed, she gives it to them, but 99% of the time she doesn't let students use it because a bunch of people ask her for the stress toys, so now she says no because she thinks they are faking it" (Carlitos, Interview Two).

During the interview with Carlito's teacher prior to the start of the study, his teacher was extremely proud that she incorporated a calming corner this year, which included students being able to use the stress reliever toys whenever they needed it to help regulate student behaviors, stress, and emotions. However, Carlitos' observation demonstrated how students had different

experiences using the stress toys. Not allowing students to use the stress toys and labeling them as being dishonest can increase students' experience of tension and negative emotions during school hours. Without an outlet for students to relieve such feelings, Carlitos believed the stress and anxiety that many students experience become bottled up and, at times, can explode because they have had to suppress their negative emotions. Carlitos explained that he only feels positive emotions, such as happiness, when they play dodgeball during physical education, as this is his favorite game; however, this is also a rare event.

Lastly, Junior described feeling stressed and "kind of angry" at school: "I don't like going to school that much because of the homework" (Junior, Interview Two). Junior felt that the academic pressure of homework and doing math, reading, and writing every day for so long became overwhelming and draining, making him dislike school. Since every day is structured to incorporate reading, writing, and math, he felt that it is too much pressure, making him unable to enjoy his time at school and experience negative emotions more often. Junior also mentioned how he "sometimes" feels happy when they go to specials because it is a break from the academic demands. He explained how breaks like this are needed so he can relax, but even when specials are structured and they are engaging in an activity that he does not enjoy, it can still leave him feeling angry.

When analyzing the female participants' responses to the second interview, only three of the five female participants expressed negative emotions during school, which was interesting because all the male participants interviewed described how they felt negative emotions at school. The emotions expressed by the three female students were annoyance and nervousness. In diving deeper as to why these female students felt these emotions, all three explained different reasons for being nervous at school. Ari stated that she felt nervous because she had experienced

bullying by other classmates during recess, as other students would go up to her and continuously say mean things to her. Ari disclosed that even though the bullying behavior had subsided, and she was then not being bullied, she continued to feel nervous that she may have to endure bullying again in the future. This traumatic event left Ari feeling on edge and nervous the majority of the time when she was at school. Unfortunately, having developed such trauma related to bullying, she also developed high levels of nervousness, which ultimately led her family to seek additional professional help from a doctor. This doctor was committed to working with Ari by helping her develop breathing strategies to help calm her nervousness, which she said she used regularly to help calm the negative emotions when they arose. Ari shared, "the doctor told me when I feel nervous to trace my fingers with my other hand. When I trace up to inhale, and when I trace down to exhale." This exercise is wonderful because many professionals state that individuals can calm their emotions and re-regulate their mindset by taking a few deep breaths (Gramann, 2014). By doing this, Ari took a minimum of five deep inhales and exhales, which helped her readjust her mindset and let the nervousness dissipate when they arose.

Kristiana described that she felt nervous only when she was taking tests. Although it is common to be nervous when taking tests, this emotion came up frequently for her because her class had weekly tests and sometimes in multiple content areas. Kristiana also explained how sometimes the tests could be extremely hard for her, which created more anxiety. Aki described how she felt a combination of nervousness and annoyance. Her nervousness mainly stemmed from wanting to do well in school and worried about failing. During our first interview, Aki told me how she gets straight As, tends to get good grades on everything, and she received various awards throughout the school year. Aki also expressed that she constantly feels annoyed by the other students in her class because "everyone at school is always loud and crazy" (Aki, Interview

Two). Noticing she came from a different racial background from most of the students in her class, Aki mentioned how she constantly feels annoyed with the majority of the students because they are a distraction in the classroom due to being "really loud and crazy" (Aki, Interview Two). Being constantly annoyed makes it hard for her to concentrate and learn, leading her to feel increased academic pressure because she was afraid to fail. Jackie and Emilia were the only two participants during our second interview who expressed experiencing only positive emotions when they were at school. Jackie described the school as her happy place because she enjoyed her teacher and when they play games in the classroom. Emilia stated that she enjoyed coming to school because she can socialize with her friends and enjoyed her classroom.

Classroom Environment and Teachers Perspectives

After listening to the responses from the student participants, it became apparent that there may be more root causes for marginalized students experiencing negative emotions, as it could relate to their classroom environment. Before the launch of the eight-week program, I interviewed and observed the student participants' teachers to uncover if there were any other findings aside from what the participants might disclose. After interviewing the three third-grade teachers, they each consistently expressed how they cared for all their students equally.

> For me, it does not matter if a student has an IEP accommodation, behavioral accommodation, or if they are a different culture from my own; the big thing they need to know is that I have their back and I am willing to do anything to help them succeed academically and socially. I truly love all my students equally and would do anything in my power for any of them. (Mrs. B, Interview)

Similarly, Ms. A shared, "I try to provide an inclusive classroom by just making all my kids feel like they're loved. I try not to favor any other student more than the other" (Ms. A,

Interview). Mrs. B. added that it was a challenging year because she had many students who have learning accommodations compared to the other third-grade classes, which led her to create a calming corner located behind her desk with a basket of stress-relieving toys. Mrs. B explains, Mrs. B explains,

> When students are experiencing an overwhelming amount of stress or anger, I let them go to the calming corner where they can take some time to regroup, calm down, and talk to me about what is going on. Together, we are able to work through these struggles and find new ways to help them manage their emotions (Mrs. B, Interview).

Ms. A explained that when students were frustrated or had big emotions, she allowed them time to sit with such feelings; once the child calmed down, Ms. A then approached them to see if they would like to talk about whatever caused them such distress. Ms. M tried to incorporate SEL learning strategies with her students so they can better understand their emotions and their triggers. The teachers also explained how they noticed that students begin to feel negative emotions if they are challenged academically or disagree with a close peer.

However, after observing these teachers, I noticed that all but one teacher had fostered a positive and inclusive learning environment. Mrs. B and Ms. M had an upbeat attitude throughout their instruction, constantly encouraging students when working through math problems independently. Mrs. B would get her student's attention by saying, "Chicken Macaroni!" and students repeated, "Chillin with my homies." Mrs. B would circulate the room while students worked on their math problems and aided anyone who needed help. When it was time to check their answers and students got the correct answer, Mrs. B would say, "Let's use our fabulous spray," and everyone would invisibly sprayed themselves with fabulousness. The energy in this classroom was positively infectious. Ms. M embraced her students' cultural

backgrounds by allowing them to speak in their native language and translate assignments for each other. She also taught the class in English and Spanish with pride. When observing this classroom, it was easy to tell that the students thoroughly enjoyed their classroom environment, as they constantly smiled and felt valued and proud to speak their native language in the classroom.

Ms. A's observation was extremely insightful because she stated in her interview that,

> I feel like my students feed off of my energy because I'm a very chill teacher. I try to set the mood with very relaxing music when they are working, and I give them a lot of freedom as long as they can show me that they can handle it and be responsible (Ms. A, Interview).

However, when observing Ms. A's classroom, although the students had a lot of freedom, it was also apparent that many students were not completing their work. Instead of circulating the room, Ms. A would call out to students in an annoyed and stern tone so all students could hear, "Valeria, why do you have zero minutes? You're on the wall for recess. Roman- zero lessons?!" (Ms. A, Observation). It was noticeable that the students she called out were embarrassed and felt bad about themselves. Shortly after she called out students for not completing their work, a student from a different third-grade class was brought into her classroom. As the aide brought this student to the door, both the aide and Ms. A made a spectacle out of him, fostering a negative classroom climate. The aide publicly shamed this student by saying loudly, "He was supposed to go to your classroom 20 minutes ago, but he was too afraid to walk in." The whole class was silent, and all eyes were on this student. Ms. A looked at the boy, then shook her head with disappointment, and the aide said sternly, "Go!" The boy was instructed to sit next to the teacher on the floor. The expression on this child's face filled with sadness, shame, and

humiliation. Once he sat down, all the students returned to normal behavior as if nothing unusual had happened. As concerning as this sounds, it seems as though this behavior from both teachers was a classroom norm.

Findings for Research Question Two

Question two aimed to discover how incorporating mindfulness techniques embedded with culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies could aid marginalized students in overcoming the negative emotions that they experience in elementary school. After understanding the participants' backgrounds, the types of negative emotions they encounter, and the root causes fueling their negative emotions, it was necessary to incorporate culturally responsive and sustaining activities into this mindfulness program to create meaningful, transformative learning experiences for the participants. By embedding culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies into this mindfulness program, it provided students with a platform to further develop their cultural competence, experience true inclusion, validation, and empowerment, to further grow their self-efficacy and overall well-being.

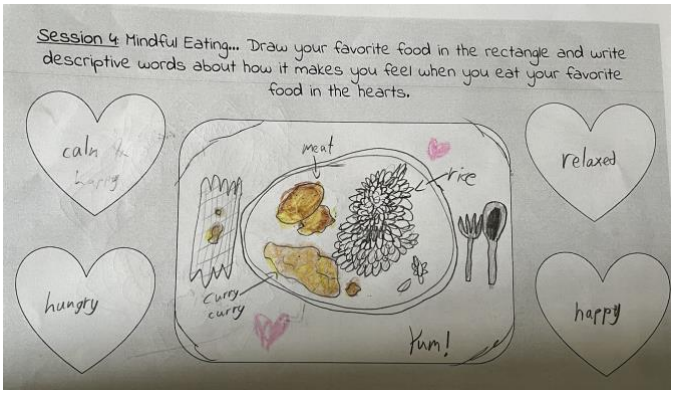
Developing Cultural Competence

Participants developed their cultural competence by becoming more aware of how their cultural backgrounds and values enhanced their identities, in addition to respecting other cultures. Aki said, "I like it when people want to talk about my interests, my life, and my culture" (Aki, Interview One). Participants also had time throughout each session to share their lived experiences as they were connected to the mindfulness activities. During this time, everyone actively listened to hear the other participants' experiences and further discussed where their families are from, the foods they enjoy eating, and what beliefs or morals they were raised with. Kristiana stated, "My parents were born in Texas, and I was born in the USA. I am

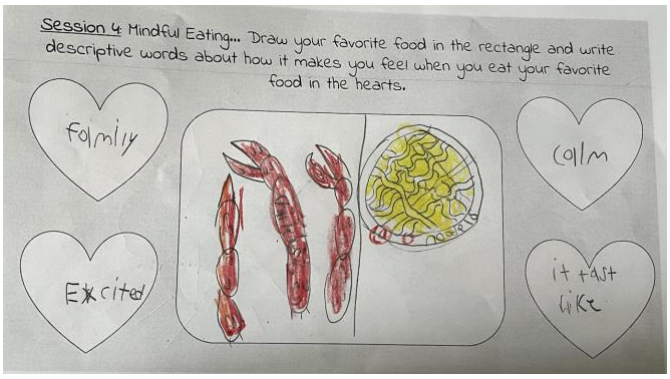
half Mexican and half American. My parents are Mexican, so that makes me Mexican." Many participants also enjoyed session four, which focused on mindful eating. This session had participants discuss their favorite foods, why they enjoyed them, and how they made them feel. In listening to the participants, many shared customary foods and how they felt loved and happy when they ate them as they shared these moments with their families. "When I eat spaghetti with my family, it makes me feel loved, happy, excited, and proud" (Ari, Journal Session Four). "Noodles and lobster remind me of my family, and it makes me feel calm" (Patricio, Journal Session Four). "At my grandma's house, we eat a lot of meat, rice, and curry curry. It makes me feel happy, calm, relaxed, and hungry" (Aki, Journal Session Four). Figure 4.1 provides artifacts from students' participant journals regarding their connections to their cultural backgrounds, the foods they eat at home, and how they feel when they share these moments with their families.

Figure 4.1

Artifacts of participants sharing more about their cultural backgrounds, foods they eat at home, and how it makes them feel when they are sharing this food with their families.



(Aki, Journal Entry Four)



(Patricio, Journal Entry Four)

Developing Positive Self-Images and Resilience

The seventh session focused on building a positive self-image and resilience. Although participants forgot to bring pictures of their families, we were able to discuss their cultural heritage, traditions, and values. Many students were excited to share things about their families, what they eat, and the holidays they celebrate. Carlitos discussed how his family is from Cuba and they eat a ton of Cuban food like arroz con pollo, platanos maduro, ropa vieja, and bistec. Patricio discussed how being Mexican, they make and eat tamales at home and during the holidays. Aki discussed how her family celebrates the Lunar and Chinese New Year. On the Chinese New Year, her sister and she always receive a red envelope from their parents. Since many other students were unfamiliar with this tradition, all the participants were eager to know more about how she celebrated this holiday. In having Aki discuss the holidays and traditions her family participated in, many other participants also shared how they celebrate Christmas, Easter, Dia de los Santos, and Dia de los Muertos. Through listening and sharing, students developed their cultural competence, appreciation, and respect for each other and their different backgrounds. Jackie stated, “Even though my family does not celebrate Chinese

New Year, I love how they use the colors red and gold and have the dragon dance down the streets during that festival" (Jackie, Session Seven). This comment led the other participants to comment on how spectacular the festivals were, which resulted in Aki feeling happy and proud of her background.

Providing a safe space for participants to freely talk about who they are, their backgrounds and their experiences fostered an inclusive learning environment that catalyzed transformative learning. By doing this, participants had the opportunity to learn from their peers in meaningful ways, which aided them in further understanding the importance of acknowledging and respecting each other as individuals and their backgrounds. Participants felt seen, heard, understood, and valued throughout the sessions. By incorporating mindfulness techniques, participants became aware of their emotions and developed more confidence, resilience, self-efficacy, and overall well-being.

As the facilitator, it was my duty and responsibility to get to know each of my participants genuinely. Taking the time to let them express their feelings, thoughts, emotions, and knowledge was paramount to ensuring all participants felt heard, valued, and appreciated. When participants began to feel empowered and proud of their identity, they began to push through barriers and wanted to use their voices to share their stories and counter-narratives. This was extremely powerful for the participants, ultimately improving their self-perception, self-efficacy, and overall well-being. During sessions six and seven, participants were instructed to write motivating statements that could help them stay encouraged and a positive letter to themselves. The journal entries from all the participants were moving and monumental:

> "I'm always happy and kind. I'm Beautiful. I'm strong and powerful" (Aki, Journal Session Six).

"I'm free. I'm Brave. I'm Loved by my mom" (Jackie, Journal Session Six).

"I am loved" (Patricio, Journal Session Six). "I am kind. I am rich. I am loving. I am loved. I am beautiful" (Ari, Journal Session Six).

"I am positive to myself. When I need to do a test and if I don't know, I can say I can do this, and I am smart" (Emilia, Journal Session Seven).

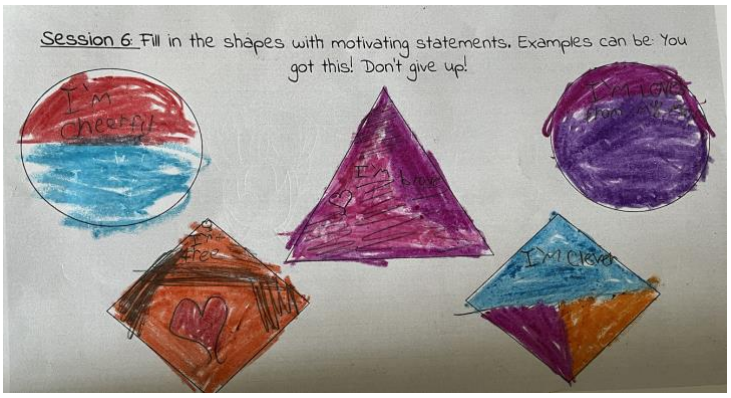
"Remember that you are smart, and you got this. Never ever ever ever give up. You are kind, happy, and a kind person! I never knew that you are so strong and powerful, alone and together. I really love how you never give up alone and by yourself. You will be successful forever and now. You're beautiful and really smart, so never give up, ever" (Aki, Journal Session Seven).

During our sessions, participants began to build that self-confidence, which allowed them to feel valued and empowered, ultimately positively impacting their overall well-being. Figure 4.2 provides artifacts from students' participant journals regarding how they express a new narrative about themselves.

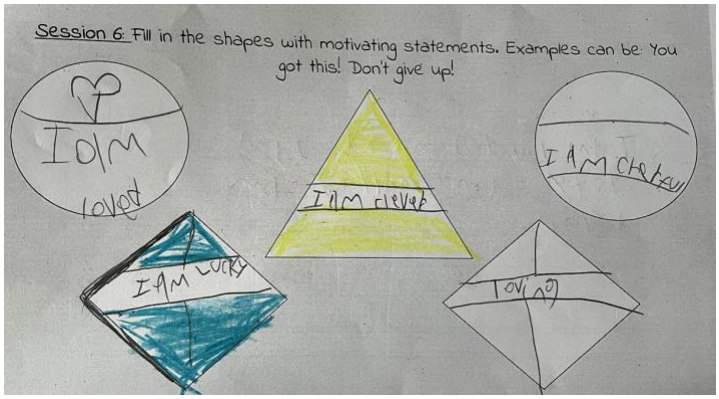
Figure 4.2

Participants expressing a new narrative about who they are, how they value themselves, and building a foundation for empowerment.

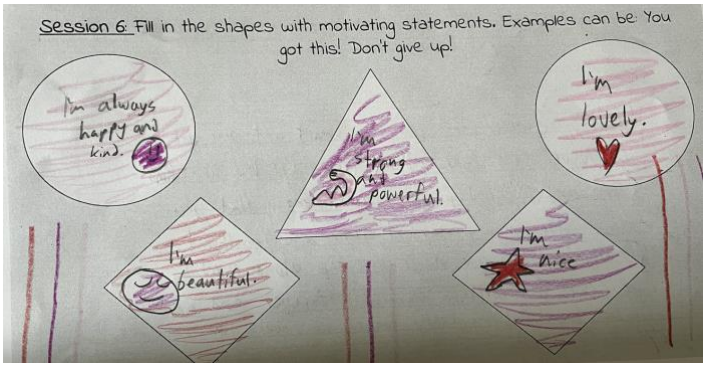
.



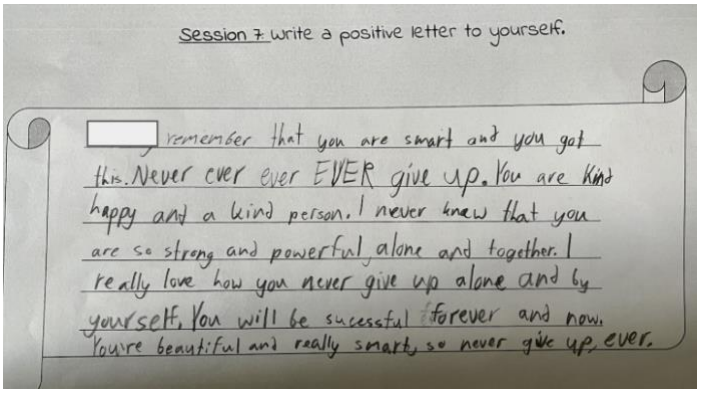
(Jackie, Journal Session Six)



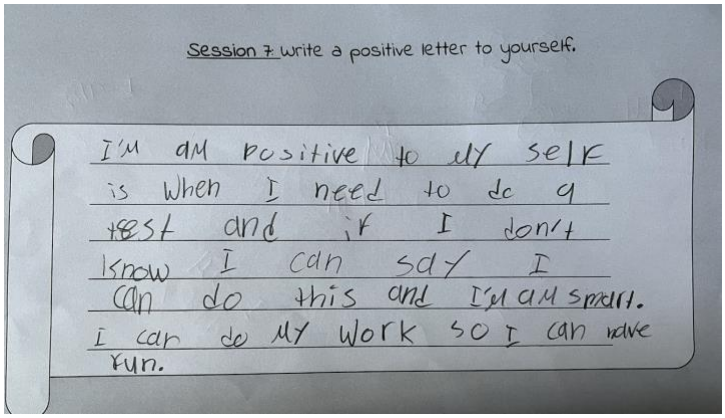
(Patricio, Journal Session Six)



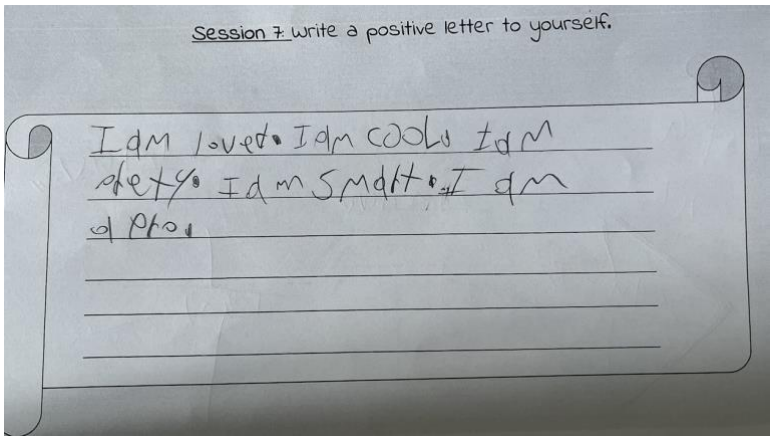
(Aki, Journal Session Six)



(Aki, Journal Session Seven).



(Emilia, Journal Session Seven)



(Patricio, Journal Session Seven)

Findings for Research Question Three

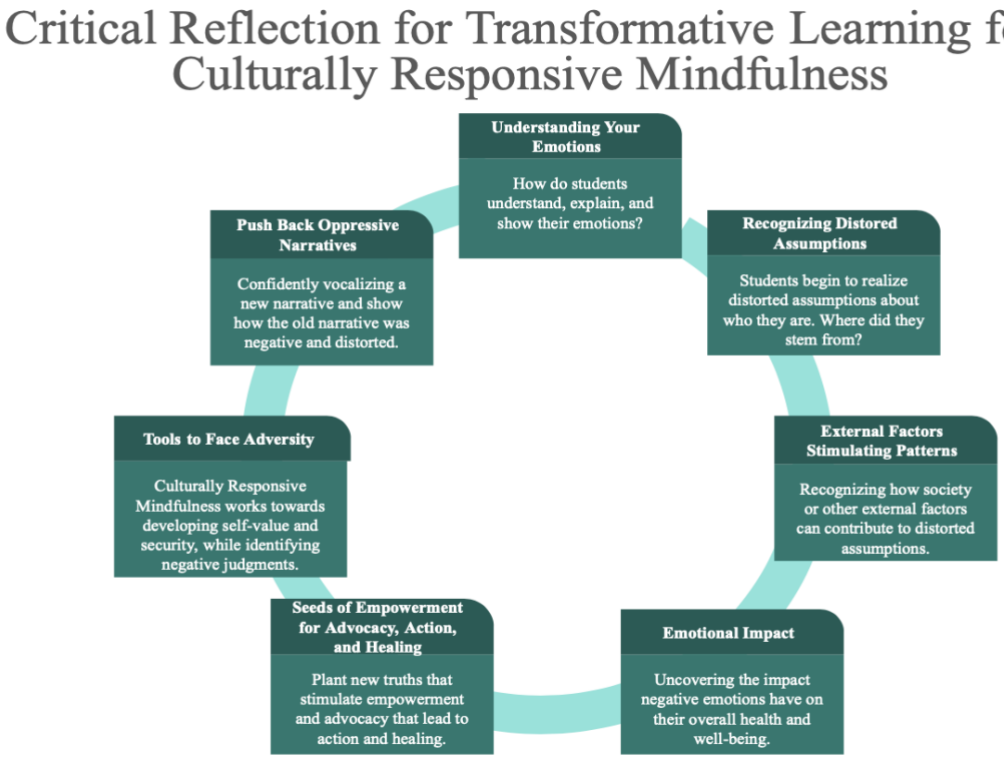
Question three explored how culturally responsive mindfulness programs could be transformational for marginalized students who frequently encounter negative emotions. Much research has been conducted to show that mindfulness is an effective practice that can aid individuals in decreasing stress, anxiety, and depression, improve relaxation and awareness, and reduce destructive behaviors and emotional reactivity (Gramann, 2014; Gust, 2024). Incorporating culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies while facilitating mindfulness practices can aid all students in further developing their cultural competence and respect for themselves and others, address the unique needs of marginalized students, and positively impact their overall well-being. Findings from my study showed that six out of eight participants experienced negative emotions while at school. For culturally responsive and sustaining mindfulness programs to become sustainable and transformative for marginalized students, these programs must be intentional and strategically designed when being crafted and implemented. The facilitator must also have extensive training and experience in mindfulness and culturally responsive teaching practices and understand that a cycle of constant critical reflection needs to happen for transformative learning to occur.

As the creator and facilitator of this culturally responsive and sustaining mindfulness intervention, I utilized the hermeneutic cycle of critical reflection for transformative learning that Liu and Ball (2019) designed to fuel this transformation. Liu and Ball's framework aids individuals in challenging and reconsidering basic assumptions, which have the potential to fuel action and change, leading to social justice and educational equity (Lui & Ball, 2019). Having studied Liu and Ball's (2019) cycle of critical reflection for transformative learning, I applied critical reflection for transformative learning while implementing the culturally responsive

mindfulness program used in my intervention. Figure 4.3 is a model of the hermeneutic cycle of critical reflection for transformative learning for culturally responsive mindfulness intervention that I created for this study. This model was inspired by the creation of Liu and Ball's (2019) hermeneutic cycle of critical reflection for transformative learning (Liu & Ball, 2019, p. 7).

Figure 4.3

Critical Reflection for Transformative Learning for Culturally Responsive Mindfulness Intervention.



Adapted by: Liu and Ball, 2019, p. 7

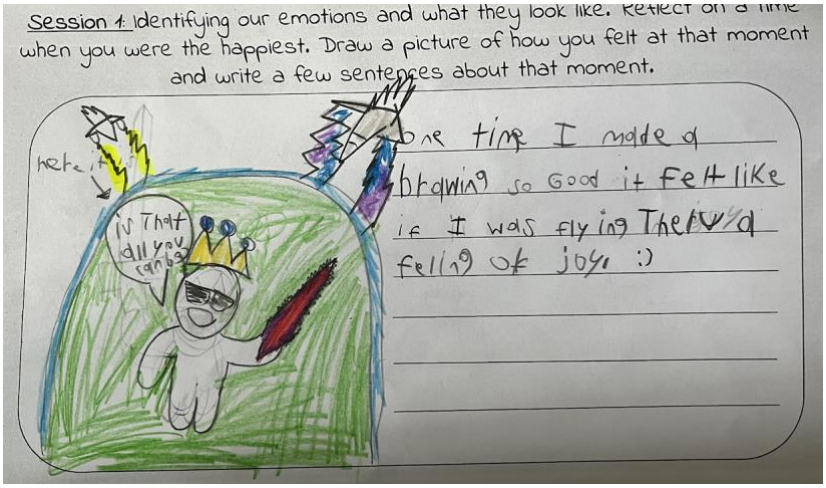
Understating Emotions

Participants showed how they understood and interpreted their emotions through various mindfulness exercises and journal entries. Our first session focused on participants acting out a variety of emotions and being able to identify specific emotions. As the participants stood in a circular shape, facing outwards, I would call out random emotions and have students act out how they showed these emotions. When I shouted out anger, many participants began scrunching their faces, putting tension between their eyebrows, stiffening their bodies, and holding tension throughout their limbs. All the participants displayed this emotion in "normal" behavior except one participant. As I circled the participants, Carlitos stood in a regular posture, not holding tension, or acting frozen. I asked Carlitos to make sure he was acting out what he feels like when he is angry. He then looked at me and said, "I don't know how. I don't get angry often, so I don't know what to do" (Carlitos, Session One Activity). I then assured Carlitos that I understood his interpretation and continued circulating the space, observing other participants. Shortly after this exercise, it was important that we discussed how we all interpret and show emotions differently depending on personality and background. We also discussed what factors trigger specific emotions like anger or stress in a school setting. In their journals, participants had opportunities to describe a time when they felt the happiest during week one and identify positive and negative emotions in week two. Jackie describes her happiest memory as being with her family and seeing everyone work together to help each other at home. Patricio stated, "One time, I made a drawing so good it felt like I was flying, and I felt joyful" (Patricio, Journal One). "Positive Emotions: Calm, Happy, Relaxed, Excited, Joyful, Brave. Negative Emotions: Jealousy, Mad, Nervous, Angry Sad, Frustrated" (Yessi, Journal Two). "Negative Emotions: Mad, Sad, Scared, Worried, Unhappy" (Kristiana, Journal Two). "Negative Emotions: Angry, Jealous, explosive anger"

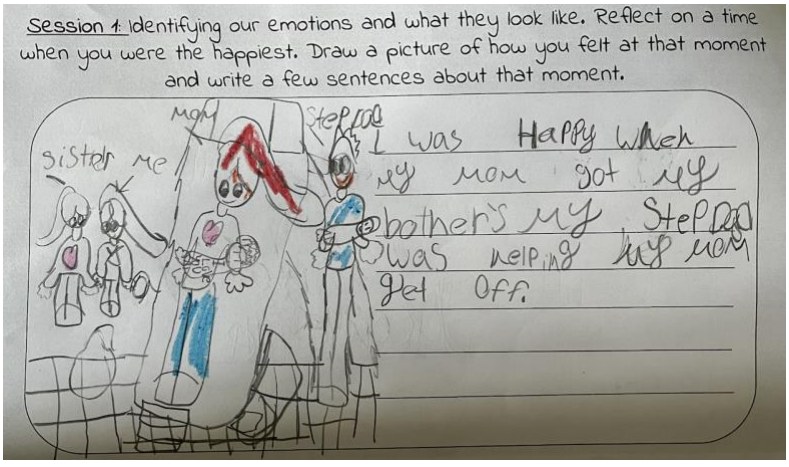
(Patricio, Journal Two). Figure 4.4 shows artifacts from the student participant's journals regarding how they understand and interpret various emotions.

Figure 4.4

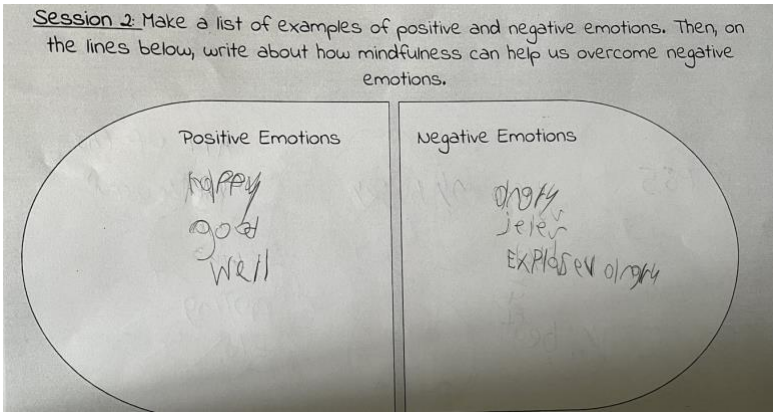
Artifacts from participants as they are able to express their own interpretations of various emotions.



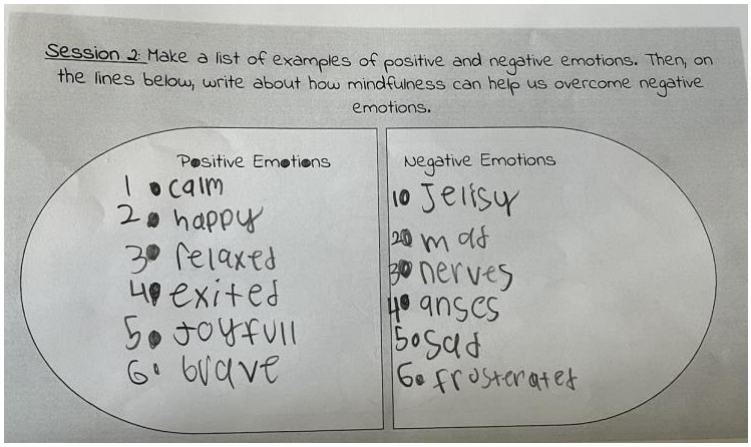
(Patricio, Journal Entry One)



(Jackie, Journal Entry One)



(Patricio, Journal Entry Two)



(Yessi, Journal Entry Two)

Recognizing Distorted Assumptions

Having interviewed participants and focusing on their self-interpretation, students had the opportunity to discuss any distorted assumptions and images about themselves. In sessions two and three, participants began to learn how to build a foundation in mindfulness and body awareness. In our first interview, I asked Kristiana if she could change one thing about her classroom, what it would be? Kristiana discussed how she wished her birthday was on the birthday board with all the other students. She continued to explain how the teacher put the

birthday board up at the beginning of the school year and forgot to put her birthday in the September slot. When Kristiana went to advocate for herself and inform the teacher that she forgot to put it on there, the teacher responded to her that she would add her name later. After a month had passed and no changes had been made to that board, Kristiana asked again if the teacher would put her name on the birthday board. She told me that she felt as though the teacher did not care to make these changes, and after repeatedly asking the teacher to do this and not seeing any changes, Kristiana felt invisible, saddened, and unvalued. Having interviewed Kristiana in January and watching her describe to me what happened, I realized that anyone could feel her pain, sadness, and feelings of being unvalued as she continued to stare at that board, reminded of the negative emotions she encountered daily when entering the classroom.

Many participants discussed feeling nervous, stressed, or anxious at school during our second interview because they did not want to fail, regardless of whether they consistently got good grades in the past. I asked Aki about the types of emotions she felt at school. She said annoyed, smart, nervous, and joyful. As I asked further for why she had these feelings, she explained how she felt smart because she received straight A's and awards; however, shortly after, she mentioned how she also felt "nervous that I am going to fail" (Aki, Interview Two). Having been an honor roll student and receiving good grades, many would think that she wouldn't be nervous about failing; however, being a marginalized student who was considered at one point an ELL student made her continue to feel various pressures from society. Patricio also described in our second interview that school felt like a "prison" and that he was trapped and could not express himself. Ari explained during our second interview how multiple classmates had bullied her, and it got so bad that her family had to intervene and meet with the principal to rectify the situation. She never understood why so many people were so mean to her and would

intentionally say “mean things during recess” (Ari, Interview Two). Although she was then not being bullied, she continued to feel nervous when she was at school and questioned why she was bullied and why people were mean to her in the first place. Carlitos explained during our second interview how he struggles with having a negative attitude and his academic insecurities, “I am not good at math, I usually fail math” (Carlitos Interview Two).

Identifying External Factors and the Emotional Impact

After participants were able to understand their emotions and recognize what type of distorted assumptions the society has about them and they had about themselves, we then began working on identifying external factors that, for some students, stimulated a pattern for them to adopt distorted assumptions and images about themselves. Simultaneously, once participants could identify distorted assumptions and images about themselves, we were also able to uncover the negative emotional impact that factors like this can have on an individual. Even though most of the participants described experiences of having negative emotions related to a school setting, it was pivotal for them to understand how negative emotions can impact their mental health and overall well-being.

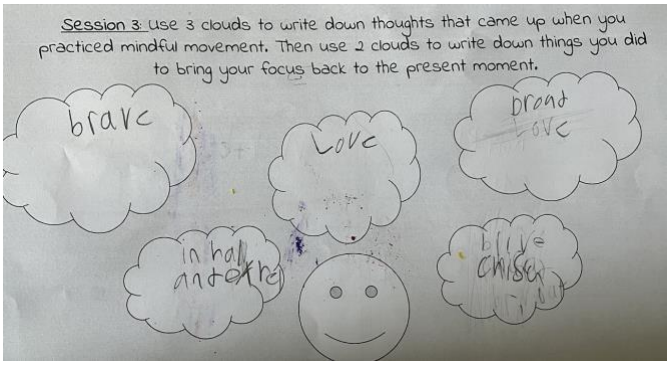
Seeds of Empowerment and Healing

After identifying these factors, it was time to plant seeds of empowerment, help participants further develop advocacy skills, take action for the future, and heal the emotional wounds they have been carrying. This was done by having participants engage in activities built on mindfulness, creativity, and expression. Sessions two through seven were specifically designed to utilize mindfulness and culturally responsive activities through creative outlets to help participants learn about who they are, understand mindfulness, and experiment with multiple faucets for expression. In session two, participants engaged in a Museum of Me activity

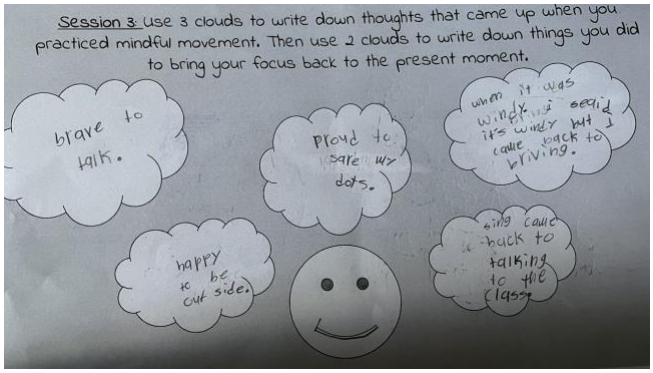
(Liu et al., 2024), which was linked with positive affirmations to heighten their confidence about who they are and where their family comes from. “I am proud of who I am” (Ari, Session Two). “I am like my curly hair” (Yessi, Session Two). In session three, we moved on to body and mind awareness through practicing yoga poses, meditation, and guided breathwork. Towards the end of this session, students could write down thoughts that came up during our mindfulness practice. “Brave, Love, Proud” (Ari, Journal Three). “All of this might be useful” (Carlitos, Journal Three). “Brave talk, I noticed the wind and came back to my breath” (Emilia, Journal Three). During session four, we discussed our favorite foods, and many participants discussed foods they eat with their families and from their cultural backgrounds. Participants would get more excited when they heard their peers talking about foods they eat at home, such as tamales, steak and rice, and chicken nuggets. They were proud to share what they ate at home and were more excited to talk about their family’s traditions. Figure 4.5 shows artifacts from the student participants’ journals regarding understanding their thoughts when practicing mindfulness techniques.

Figure 4.5

Artifacts from participants to understand their thought process when it comes to engaging in mindfulness activities.



(Ari, Journal Entry Three)



(Emilia, Journal Entry Three)

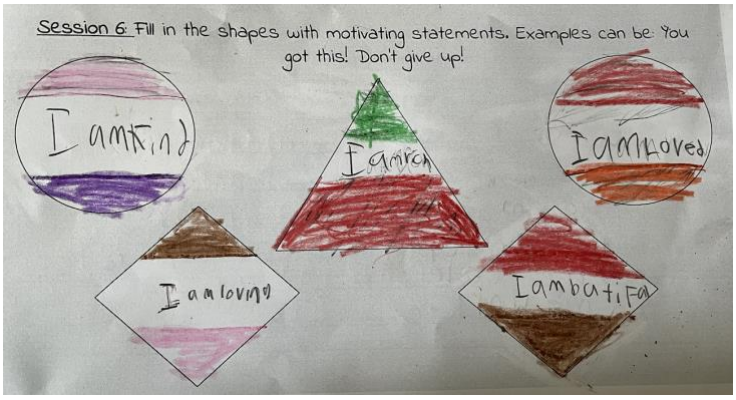
In session five participants engaged in a quick meditation that focused on self-love and kindness. As I conducted our second interview during this session, students who were not being interviewed could explore their creativity by creating and coloring in mandalas. Mandalas are a common tool used in art therapy and relaxation strategies to help individuals declutter and relax their minds. Doing this exercise while interviewing participants allowed them to relax and feel more comfortable opening up about the different types of emotions they feel at school. Session six incorporated various musical instruments for students to use to help them express their negative emotions. Participants were extremely happy to use the provided instruments in ways that could help them express their feelings. Although it might have seemed like chaos was unleashing in the room because participants were banging on the instruments and shaking them as hard and loud as they could, each participant explained how it felt so good to release how they felt without being judged. Lastly, session seven worked on building up their positive self-image and resilience. This was the session where anyone could tell that all the students grew tremendously and found a new sense of confidence and voice. Figure 4.6 shows artifacts from

student participants' journals regarding their new narrative that embraces positive self-image, love, kindness, and efficacy.

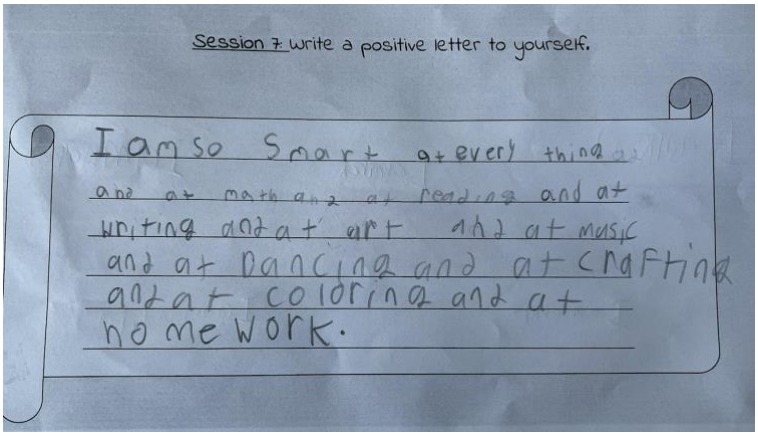
> "I'm free, I'm brave, I'm loved by my mom, I'm cheerful, I'm clever" (Jackie, Journal Six).
>
> "I am kind. I am smart. I am helpful. I am happy" (Emilia, Journal Six).
>
> "I am kind, I am rich. I am loving. I am loved. I am beautiful" (Ari, Journal Six).
>
> "I am so smart at everything: math, reading, writing, art, music, dancing, crafting, coloring, and homework" (Ari, Journal Seven).
>
> "I am positive to myself. When I need to do a test and if I don't know, I can say I can do this and I am smart" (Emilia, Journal Seven).
>
> "Aki, remember that you are smart, and you got this. Never ever ever ever give up. You are kind, happy, and a kind person! I never knew that you are so strong and powerful, alone, and together. I really love how you never give up alone and by yourself. You will be successful forever and now. You're beautiful and really smart, so never give up, ever" (Aki, Journal Seven).

Figure 4.6

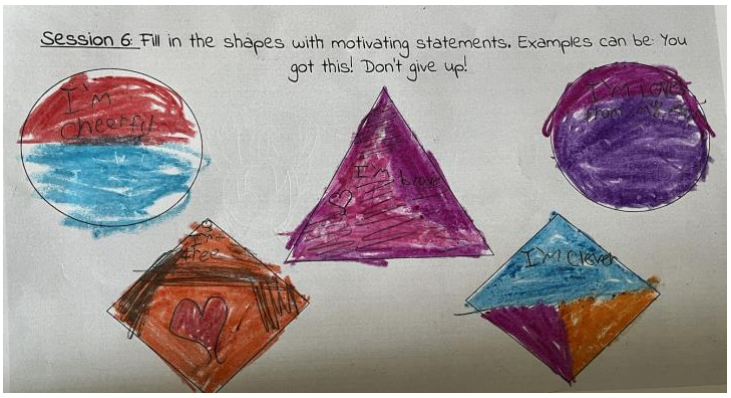
Artifacts from participants that promote a counter-narrative and seeds of self-efficacy.



(Ari, Journal Entry Six)



(Ari, Journal Entry Seven)



(Jackie, Journal Entry Six)

Facing Adversity by Pushing Back Oppressive Narratives

Having planted seeds of empowerment in our participants, it was time to ensure they were equipped with the proper tools, resources, and skills to face adversity and life's obstacles. To ensure participants were equipped with tools and resources in session eight, participants completed an exit interview that allowed them to share how they felt about this program and what things they choose to continue to practice in their lives. Many participants stated that they want to continue working on breathwork, trying their best in all that they do, helping and being kind to others, being respectful and honest to others, and working on emotional regulation. Now that participants were exhibiting a new sense of empowerment, confidence, and advocacy, they could recognize that they could face adversity, push back oppressive narratives, and overcome any obstacles life gives them, having gathered so many skills and resources that can help them along the way. After undergoing much transformation, participants were finally ready to push back the negative, oppressive narratives that had been attached to their identities. Participants began confidently vocalizing their new narrative, highlighting positive attributes, and developing a growth mindset. This happened through having practiced mindfulness, positive affirmations, incorporating culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies, and confidently addressing and pushing back on false narratives. The false narratives could include I am not smart enough, if I am being bullied, it is because something is wrong with me, I am going to fail, and I am not good enough. Now, participants are able to proudly say I am beautiful, I am smart, I can do all things, I am talented, I am successful, I am valuable.

It is necessary to follow this hermeneutic cycle to ensure that culturally responsive and sustaining mindfulness programs become transformative and sustainable for marginalized

students. This cycle gently guides and aids students in becoming aware of who they are and how to identify factors that negatively impact their self-perception and equips them with the confidence, tools, and courage to push back against oppressive narratives. Toward the end of the intervention, participants uncovered and described how culturally responsive mindfulness can be useful in addition to what they want to continue practicing independently after completing the intervention.

Findings for Research Question Four

Research question four intended to explore the challenges I faced in developing and implementing such a program and how I came up with solutions to overcome such challenges. By utilizing the hermeneutic cycle of critical reflection for transformative learning designed by Liu and Ball (2019), I engaged in a more transformative reflection process that aided in the construction of my program while also stimulating growth both professionally and personally. I used this framework to fuel my reflective process throughout my journey as the creator, facilitator, and researcher of developing, implementing, and evaluating such a program. The challenges that arose related to ensuring that I was incorporating meaningful activities that supported the cultural backgrounds of every participant.

Program Development

When I was first developing this program, I knew there was a need to ensure that every session incorporated elements of valuing and honoring the participant's cultural backgrounds along with practicing mindfulness techniques. I wanted to ensure that every time we met for our sessions, students would have opportunities to incorporate their life experiences and counter-narratives while utilizing mindfulness strategies to help them reflect on their lived experiences and address any negative emotions they may have encountered at school. I overcame this

challenge by collaborating with my mentor, Dr. Liu, and brainstorming about various activities that can help incorporate culturally responsive activities into this program. Our discussion of incorporating an activity such as Museum of Me, led me to further develop additional culturally responsive activities such as Proud Practice, Cultural Dance Party, Mindful Consumption, Outlets for Expression, and Building Positive Self-Image. Museum of Me is an activity where participants are asked to bring an artifact from home representing their language, culture, or heritage and share more about their home life and where their family comes from. Museum of Me was the first culturally responsive activity embedded in this mindfulness program, and the participants thoroughly enjoyed it. One participant brought small wooden carved figures and explained how they came from Mexico, which was where the participant's family was from. When this happened, other participants chimed in, mentioning how their families were also from Mexico. Another participant said that she wore a cross necklace because her family believes in Jesus. Many other participants also nodded their heads and said we do, too. Participants who forgot to bring in an item could tell the group what they wanted to bring in if they had remembered. Some of these responses included pictures of their families in other countries like the Philippines and Cuba, art supplies, and a music player.

Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Activities

Since the Museum of Me was a successful activity that many participants enjoyed engaging in, I knew that every culturally responsive activity embedded in this program had to be just as impactful, if not more. That is when I came up with proud practice. Proud practice is similar to positive affirmations but also incorporates statements relating to the participants' cultural and diverse backgrounds. The difference between proud practice and positive affirmations is that during proud practice, participants phrase every statement with, "I am proud

that ____." During positive affirmations, we start every statement with "I am ___." As we all sat together, we went around the circle and began to say at least one thing we were proud of. Many students began to sit up taller, speak more confidently, and have a smile on their faces. Some responses included the following: I am proud to be Filipino. I am proud to have wavy hair. I am proud to be Latino. I am proud that I speak Spanish. I am proud that I work hard. I am proud of myself for always trying. This practice allowed participants to vocalize how they feel about themselves and recognize that they should be proud of who they are and where they come from. The cultural dance party allowed the students to let loose and dance to their favorite songs they listened to at home or by themselves. Some of the songs that were played were songs that they heard at home and others that they enjoyed listening to with friends. The songs played were Oye Mi Amor by Mana, Titi Me Pregunto by Bad Bunny, Bidi Bidi Bom Bom by Selena, and Timber by Pitbull. When the participants began to hear the music being played, they all had huge smiles and were jumping up and down and dancing all over the room. We formed a dance circle, and each participant got to go in the middle of the circle and show their best dance moves. Everyone cheered them on and supported their peers. During mindfulness consumption, participants reflected and shared some of their favorite foods that they eat at home and how it made them feel when they were eating these foods. Participants were excited to hear that some of their peers ate the same foods and learned more about foods they had never tried.

Outlets of expression utilized various musical instruments and allowed participants to freely express and experiment with instruments to help describe their emotions. The musical instruments included tambourines, maracas, and rhythm sticks. All of the students commented on how they use these same instruments during music class, and some participants stated that they had the same instruments at home, like the maracas and tambourine. For some of the participants

the sounds of these instruments also made them think of different Spanish songs they heard at home. Lastly, in building a positive self-image, participants brought in pictures of their families and attached positive meanings to their photos. After we finished sharing photos of our families, we talked about the different traditions we have with our families and then ended with positive affirmations.

Critical Reflection for Transformative Learning

These activities were crafted to support mindfulness and culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies that allowed the participants to transform their mindsets to develop self-worth, advocacy, confidence, and empowerment. Evaluating the effectiveness of each activity was key to ensuring that I was effectively providing my participants with meaningful and impactful activities that could help stimulate personal growth and increase their well-being. At the end of every session, I asked all participants what they liked or did not like about anything we did during that session. All the participants had something positive to say about their experience each time I met with them. After every session, I continued to utilize Lui and Ball's (2019) cycle of critical reflection for transformative learning to ensure that I was checking if I had any misassumptions about my participants and their experiences. Once I started getting to know my participants, I wanted to be sure that I was also viewing them with proper contextual awareness by understanding and honoring their cultural backgrounds, lived experiences, heritage, beliefs, and traditions. Having gotten the opportunity to get to know each of my participants genuinely, I began to engage in the third and fourth steps in Liu and Ball's cycle: imaginative speculation and reflective skepticism. I then began to imagine all of the various types of situations, experiences, and feelings my participants had disclosed to me and further

explored how intersectionality and negative societal narratives play a huge role in the lives of my participants.

Having constant revelations of new insight into the lives of my participants furthered my stance in continuously re-examining my assumptions, beliefs, and perspectives about how to formulate a meaningful curriculum that embraces mindfulness and culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies. Having committed myself to developing such a program, stages three through five in Liu and Ball's (2019) cycle were imperative. The fifth step in this cycle, reflection-based actions, allowed me to propel activities rooted in culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies while incorporating mindfulness strategies to aid the process of promoting positive mental health and well-being. I made sure to also reflect on the effects of these actions. If I noticed something was ineffective with the participants, I would find new ways to address the topic. The only aspect participants vocalized during session two was that they did not enjoy talking about their negative emotions. Although this was still early in the intervention, I considered this feedback, and instead of phrasing negative emotions as it relates to them specifically, I generalized it until I was able to build more repertoire with my participants. When it came time for our second interview, which took place during the fifth session, participants felt more comfortable telling me about their experiences and emotions. I was able to discover what negative emotions they experienced during school and the root causes of those emotions by taking the time to build a trusting relationship with my participants.

Summary of Chapter Four

Chapter four aimed to discuss the findings related to the four research questions. The findings reveal that over half of marginalized students experience negative emotions when they are at school. These negative emotions include anger, sadness, nervousness, anxiousness, and

annoyance. Participants explained that they felt these emotions because of not being able to express themselves during school, not enjoying the structured schedule of a school environment, worries about failure or future scenarios involving bullying, and a dislike toward other student behaviors, which were considered to be loud and crazy. Findings showed that incorporating mindfulness techniques embedded with culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies can aid marginalized students in learning how to overcome negative emotions and embrace who they are as individuals. This program also helped participants understand how to regulate their emotions and further their self-value, advocacy, and confidence.

Findings from this study showed that given time, consistency, and proper tools and resources for participants to utilize, students wanted to continue practicing mindfulness techniques to help them overcome negative emotions. Additionally, having worked on building a foundation of empowerment, many participants expressed how they want to continue practicing mindfulness techniques. Lastly, findings showed that my challenges throughout this study were ensuring that they provided participants with a well-designed, culturally responsive mindfulness program. I utilized Liu and Ball's (2019) hermeneutic cycle of critical reflection for transformative learning to fuel a process of consistent critical reflection to improve the design and implementation of the culturally responsive mindfulness program.

Chapter Five: Discussion

This study aimed to discover what types of negative emotions marginalized elementary students encounter at school and the root causes for such emotions. Additionally, I constructed, facilitated, and observed the effects of implementing a culturally responsive mindfulness program with elementary students to aid them in overcoming negative emotions and sustaining positive health and overall well-being. Chapter five aims to discuss how the findings correlate with current research, in addition to discussing possibilities for future studies and implications related to this practice.

Discussion of Findings for Question One

The findings indicated that eight of the twelve participants discussed the various emotions they felt at school. Of those eight, six of the students reported consistently feeling negative emotions at school. These six participants described negative emotions as stress, anger, sadness, anxiety, nervousness, and annoyance. The participants who expressed that they were nervous or anxious related it to academic pressures as they wanted to succeed in school. Only one participant felt nervous because she had experienced bullying in the past. Another participant stated that she felt annoyed at school because she felt all the students in her classroom were "too loud and too crazy," making her feel annoyed and frustrated. All male participants said they experienced stress because they felt the classroom environment could be academically overwhelming. Two of the three male participants said they consistently feel angry at school and do not like it. Only two of the eight interviewed participants did not express negative emotions during their interview. These two participants expressed happiness because they enjoyed coming to school, being with their friends, learning new content, and enjoying their teacher. Although two of the three teachers demonstrated a positive classroom environment, one teacher showed a

negative classroom climate as she vocalized student's deficiencies in front of the entire class and then allowed a teacher's aide to humiliate a child in front of the class for getting kicked out of a different third-grade class for behavior problems.

The findings from the first research question correlate to what the literature says about marginalized students who are more likely to experience negative emotions at school (De Anda et al., 2000). Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for marginalized students to experience unpleasant events and educational inequities, such as microaggressions, and racial battle fatigue, which have begun to cripple marginalized students physically, emotionally, and mentally (Brown et al., 2019). Since marginalized students consistently deal with stress, anxiety, and depression due to their inequitable opportunities within their educational and life experiences, many of these students experience exclusion, which further enhances their negative emotions and impacts their overall health and well-being (Hoyt et al., 2021). Research states that in order to address the achievement and opportunity gaps (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Milner, 2023), we must address students' stress levels, which are inequitably distributed, in addition to the social and economic resources. This leads many disadvantaged marginalized students to have to navigate a path of survival and hopefully achieve overall well-being in the midst of battling such challenges (Betts et al., 2000).

Research states that marginalized students who attend schools located in urban communities are more likely to experience more stress, depression, anxiety, and exclusion due to a lack of understanding and support from educators (Jones et al., 2021). Many K-12 marginalized students feel there is a greater pressure to perform at a high level personally and academically, which causes many students to experience high levels of stress (De Anda et al., 2000). This stress can also stem from the disparities found within the classroom setting, as many

marginalized students do not have access to an equitable education, in addition to facing challenges when it comes to having a teacher with whom they can relate (Villegas et al., 2012). The lack of consistency that emerges in the teaching and learning environment can result in marginalized students experiencing cultural conflicts because the educator is focused on teaching from a singular lens, leading many students to feel silenced and excluded when it comes to expressing their views from an opposite race, gender, geographic location, and socioeconomic status (Milner, 2010). Marginalized students also deal with a large amount of disproportionate disciplinary actions within their educational experiences (Skiba et al., 2014). In analyzing the data from my study, one out of the three teachers exhibited a negative classroom environment by humiliating students based on students not completing their work and publicly shaming a student from another class for being reported as having poor behavior and being kicked out. Seeing how the students reacted to this teacher's discipline, it seemed that her reactions were part of the classroom norm, which is unacceptable to shame and humiliate students publicly. Research has shown that marginalized students have been over-disciplined and criminalized in schools (Sissoko et al., 2023), leading many students to be labeled as "bad students." Since marginalized students encounter more microaggressions than their white counterparts, researchers have linked these encounters to more risk of developing racial battle fatigue, leading many marginalized students to develop poor mental, physical, and emotional health and well-being (Sue et al., 2007).

In observing these students and their identities, I noticed that all participants are minoritized, bilingual, and have been or are still English language learners, and some have learning accommodations. Research has shown that students from diverse backgrounds tend to be over-disciplined and criminalized in schools (Bryan, 2022; Sissoko et al., 2023). In this study,

all male participants expressed feeling stressed and angry at school. Patricio discussed how, at times, he experiences explosive anger when he cannot hold in his frustrations. Carlitos explains that he experiences extreme stress and wishes he could use his teacher's stress-relieving toys to help him alleviate the academic pressure he endures. Carlitos also sees many other students in his class feeling stressed and do not have an outlet to relieve this pressure. Between the lack of culturally responsive teaching strategies implemented in the classroom curriculum, the ridge schedule that does not allow students much free time throughout the day, and the lack of teachers understanding the overall needs of their students, many individuals can experience negative emotions during school and a lack of connection. When teachers do not understand why students feel angry at school or choose to ignore them when they are stressed, more students are susceptible to experiencing negative emotions. If students act on these emotions, they are more likely to be reprimanded, which eventually, a teacher can label them as "bad students."

Literature also states that many marginalized students experience microaggressions due to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, and economic status (Solórzano, 1998). Being that Ari expressed nervousness and much pain from having experienced bullying in the past, she explained how she still deals with the trauma and mental exhaustion from having to worry about other students bullying her in the future. From what Ari explained to me and what the literature says, she experienced forms of microaggressions such as microassaults, generated from intentional and explicit derogatory verbal or nonverbal aggression, and microinsults, which include rude and insensitive put-downs relating to an individual's race, ethnicity, or other identities (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). Having experienced these forms of microaggressions, it is important to note that racial battle fatigue stems heavily from microaggression and racism. Individuals who have experienced RBF reported feelings of isolation, resentment, depression,

anxiety, and not feeling valued (Smith, 2004). Being that our participants are in the third grade, it is important to understand their vocabulary and how they described feeling extreme nervousness, which also relates to anxiety, and ongoing sadness, which can also relate to forms of depression.

Overall, the findings of the current study confirm what has been previously found by other researchers, that marginalized students are more likely to experience negative emotions such as stress, anger, and anxiety when at school. These reasons stem from many factors, such as academic pressures, educational opportunity gaps, lack of a rich and engaging curriculum, and previous experiences related to bullying. Having more insight into how students feel when they are at school is imperative to improve school culture and ensure teachers provide students with equitable and inclusive learning opportunities within the school system. If professionals continue to disregard the feelings of their students, it could lead more students to experience exclusion, negative emotions, increased trauma, and inequitable learning opportunities.

Discussion of Findings for Question Two

Regarding research question two, the findings showed that embedding mindfulness with culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies aided many students in overcoming negative emotions and planted seeds of empowerment, advocacy, cultural competence, and confidence. Since every session had a culturally responsive component, participants were excited to share more about their families, cultural background, and find new ways to relate to each other. When participants discovered that many of them felt the same types of negative emotions, they did not feel judged but instead felt unified and recognized that it was okay to experience negative emotions as long as they had the tools and support system to be there for each other. Students were more engaged in each session because they could bring their experiences, knowledge, and background to the class. Providing students a platform where they could express their thoughts

and tell stories about their experiences led many participants to want to share more instead of being silenced in the classroom and gave them a sense of pride and confidence about who they are and where they come from.

Research states that to impact marginalized students and their learning experiences effectively, educators must create an inclusive classroom culture that promotes diversity and equity (Alim et al., 2017). For educators to successfully construct a culturally responsive practice, they must have a high level of cultural competence and be able to strategically plan a set of strategies that complement diverse students (Alim & Paris, 2017). By continuously discovering new ways to incorporate diverse students' backgrounds in the classroom, there is also a need to provide a space for students to vocalize their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and knowledge without being judged. Researchers also state that placing culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies at the forefront of education will allow educators to transform their classrooms by creating meaningful relationships and connections with diverse students (Alim & Paris, 2017). Incorporating culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies in the classroom and curriculum can help students become more engaged and excited as they can relate more to the content, which could help them become less bored, angry, and frustrated in the classroom. Additionally, educators must take time to critically reflect on any reservations or biases they may have about various cultures and backgrounds and work on overcoming them.

Researchers have developed Critical Race Theory to help examine how race intersects with our laws and society (Bell, 1973; Crenshaw, 1991; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Utilizing CRT to examine these aspects from an educational stance can aid teachers in better understanding the deficiencies within our school system and society. Having educators informed on critical race theory can provide teachers with a platform to better understand the various

systems of oppression, intersectionality, and the importance of counter-narratives, as well as advocate for social justice. I also suggest that while individuals are examining the tenets of critical race theory, they should also be mentored and guided through the hermeneutic cycle of critical reflection for transformative learning (Liu & Ball, 2019) to help them identify their own biases, understand their thought process and how it could relate to race and racism, and led them to take action against oppressive thoughts, behaviors, and actions.

Ultimately, researchers have proven regarding the effectiveness of implementing culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies in a classroom environment have shown to be highly effective in creating meaningful learning, relationships among peers and their facilitator, and positively impacting their experience (Alim et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond, 2007; Gay, 2000). Participants enjoyed coming to each session and were excited to share more about themselves and their backgrounds while also wanting to learn from each other. Although participants mentioned that they did not like discussing their negative emotions, they were able to recognize that everyone experiences a wide range of positive and negative emotions. Using culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies embedded with mindfulness aids participants in recognizing their emotions, what triggers them, and how to utilize mindfulness tools to bring them out of negative emotions while not creating negative labels attached to their identity.

Discussion of Findings for Question Three

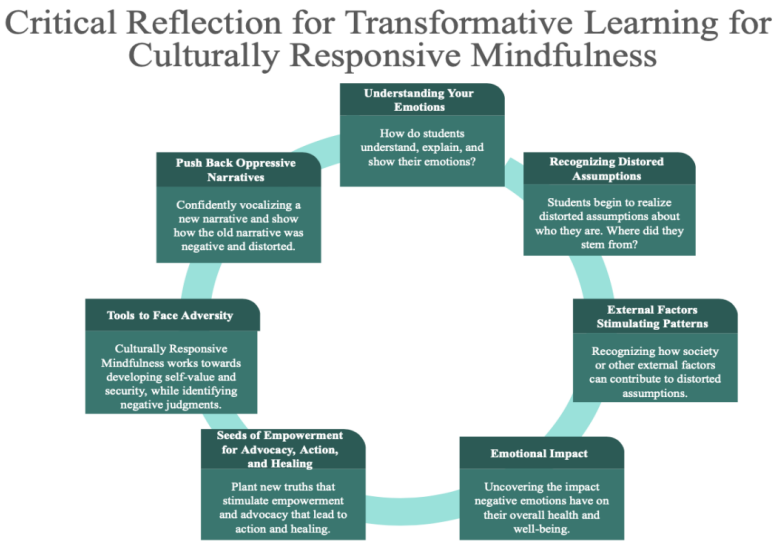
Regarding research question three, the findings showed that a culturally responsive mindfulness program can be sustainable and transformative for marginalized students who frequently encounter negative emotions. In analyzing the entire progression of this program and the participant's responses from sessions seven and eight, participants enjoyed participating in this program and developed valuable tools that they plan on using in the future. Participants

expressed that they would like to continue to practice box breathing, creating mandalas while working on their breathwork, and recognized how mindfulness can help them become more aware of and develop respect for others and themselves. All participants stated that they enjoyed practicing mindfulness because it made them feel good and relaxed.

To ensure this culturally responsive mindfulness program was transformative and sustainable, I utilized Liu and Ball's (2019) hermeneutic cycle of critical reflection for transformative learning as a framework to develop a similar cycle that focused on culturally responsive mindfulness programs to develop such results. Liu and Ball's (2019) framework builds from Dewey's (1933) concept of critical reflection, which involves repeatedly reexamining our thoughts and assumptions to understand how our perspectives intertwine with social, political, and cultural stigmas. Learning becomes transformative when we recognize our distortions, challenge these assumptions, and create new knowledge and understanding of the content. Since participants are relatively young, they needed a framework that supported critical reflection but related to the overall health and well-being of children. Figure 10 is the model of the hermeneutic cycle of critical reflection for transformative learning for culturally responsive mindfulness intervention that I created for this study.

Figure 5.1

Critical Reflection for Transformative Learning for Culturally Responsive Mindfulness Intervention



Adapted by: Liu and Ball, 2019, p. 7

The cycle of critical reflection for transformative learning while using culturally responsive mindfulness is a seven-step process that gently works with and guides younger students on how to critically reflect on their experiences. The following steps include: (1) Understanding your emotions, (2) Recognizing distorted assumptions, (3) External factors stimulating patterns, (4) Emotional impact, (5) Seeds of empowerment for advocacy, action, and healing, (6) Tools to face adversity, and (7) Push back oppressive narratives. Step one allows students to understand, explain, and show their emotions. It is imperative that facilitators keep an open mind when allowing students to demonstrate various emotions because it can give the observer great insight into how the individual interprets emotions and how they will act in

various situations. It is also important to not correct the student into interpreting emotions the way the facilitator would. Step two involves recognizing distorted assumptions about who they are and where they have stemmed from. During this step, the facilitator needs to work with students to open up about who they are and how they feel about themselves. In this study, some participants said they felt they were not good at school, bad at math, and not good or smart enough. It is important that when a student brings up a negative assumption, the facilitator asks them who told them such things or how they think they came to that conclusion. By asking these simple questions, students can begin to reflect on what led them to reach such a verdict on their abilities and who they are. During our first and second interview, Carlitos stated that he felt he was not good at math, so I asked him why he thought that. He began to explain how he failed many of his math tests. I then asked him why he failed many math tests in the past. He took a moment and then responded that it is hard for me to concentrate because I have ADHD and math, in general, is hard. Carlitos had a perception that he could never do well in math because he had difficulties understanding the content and had failed many previous math tests.

Step three involves examining and recognizing any external factors that could potentially fuel distorted assumptions. External factors can propel a pattern of constantly immersing oneself in a negative narrative that society has placed on the individual, consciously or subconsciously. External factors can also be viewed as opportunity gaps, inequitable learning opportunities, racism, discrimination, bias, and the intersectionality layers of individuals and how that plays a role in society. When working with younger individuals, it is important to note that many of them may not be familiar with such concepts or know how to articulate them explicitly. As the facilitator, it is important to be aware of and observe how these external factors can play a role in

the student's life and how external factors could be consciously or subconsciously hindering that person based on their awareness.

Step four is understanding the emotional impact of negative emotions and thoughts on an individual's overall health and well-being. Tied to this step is also recognizing what situations trigger the negative emotions to arise. By understanding how deeply engaging in situations that invoke a negative emotional response can be detrimental to an individual's overall health and well-being can aid individuals in learning how to detach from such engagement. For example, Carlitos feels that he is not good at math every time he enters math class. He already thinks that he isn't going to do well, that he will more than likely fail, and that he doubts himself before they even begin the lesson. This negative thought process evokes negative emotions, leaving Carlos to feel stressed, overwhelmed, and nervous whenever he is learning about math. It is also important to note that engaging in such mental strain and having to sit through an hour of math and then continue the rest of the day can also leave Carlitos feeling tired and mentally exhausted, impacting the rest of his academic day. When students recognize how much negative emotions can impact them, many want to find solutions to overcome the negative emotions.

In step five, we begin to work with students to create new seeds of empowerment for advocacy, action, and healing. Step five involves confronting these negative emotions without judgment and planting a new narrative through positive affirmations, proud talk, placing value back into the individuals, and explaining that they can do anything they want, even if they need to advocate for the resources to do so. Step six utilizes the aspects within the culturally responsive mindfulness program to aid students in developing self-value and security with who they are as individuals. Part of step six is also being aware of negative judgment, where it stems from, and having the confidence and tools to fight against it. Lastly, step seven actively pushes

back any oppressive narratives, whether constructed by oneself, others, or society. This step is when students vocalize a counter-narrative, shifting their mindset and advocating for themselves. The entire cycle of critical reflection for transformative learning for culturally responsive mindfulness is imperative to follow because it gently helps individuals become aware of their emotions, understand the root causes for such emotions and its impact on the overall health and well-being of an individual, and rebuild that individual to actively push back against oppression.

Discussion of Findings for Question Four

Regarding research question four, the main challenge that circulated around me was ensuring meaningful, culturally responsive, and sustaining pedagogies were incorporated into the program's design. Being that I was familiar with Liu and Ball's (2019) hermeneutic cycle of critical reflection for transformative learning greatly aided the process of engaging in constant critical reflection. Following such a cycle allowed the me to effectively design such a program in addition to implementing culturally responsive and sustaining mindfulness activities. Creating genuine, trustworthy relationships with all participants encouraged them to share more information about their lived experiences, cultural backgrounds, and beliefs. By placing importance on following the hermeneutic cycle of critical reflection for transformative learning (Liu & Ball, 2019) to stimulate my critical reflection process with the design, implementation, and effectiveness of this program, I was able to further engage in meaningful, transformative learning experiences professionally and personally. This study fueled my understanding of the importance of incorporating culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies in the classroom and utilizing critical reflection to stimulate transformative learning experiences.

Since many educational programs are deficient when it comes to incorporating culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies, educators must engage in additional and appropriate

training to implement such a pedagogy into their classroom culture (Ladson-Billings,1995). To equip educators to facilitate mental health informal education programs, there is a great need to expose and train professionals on culturally responsive and sustaining practices in addition to techniques that incorporate critical reflection for transformative learning (Liu & Ball, 2019). Equipping educators with tools embedded in culturally responsive pedagogies will allow them to construct meaningful and impactful learning experiences, connect new learning with prior experiences and knowledge, and incorporate their students' backgrounds and experiences into the classroom's curriculum and culture (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Gay, 2000). When educators are unfamiliar with culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies, they risk mislabeling marginalized students as disruptive and disrespectful and interpreting their classroom as chaotic due to a lack of cultural competence (Alim & Paris, 2017). Because of these challenges, marginalized students are more likely to experience unpleasant educational inequities, microaggressions, and racial battle fatigue, resulting in many students experiencing extreme distress, which can impact their physical, emotional, and mental well-being (Brown et al., 2019). Researchers have linked diverse students who attend schools in urban communities to experience more stress, depression, and anxiety than their white peers, resulting in further exclusion and marginalization due to a lack of understanding and support from their educators (Jones et al., 2021). This is also why educators must be informed and trained on how to personally and professionally engage in critical reflection for transformative learning and tenets of critical race theory to better support marginalized students within their academic journey.

Research has shown that K-12 marginalized students are more susceptible to finding themselves under more pressure to perform at a higher standard, leading many students to feel high levels of stress (De Anda et al., 2000). Since marginalized students' stress levels are

inequitably distributed, in addition to the social and economic resources, many disadvantaged youths are struggling to find ways how to navigate and overcome these challenges while maintaining positive mental health and well-being (Betts et al., 2000). Research has shown that students attending schools in high-poverty locations are twice as likely to be taught by unqualified teachers to teach in their field (Haycook, 2000), in addition to teaching from a singular lens that does not capitalize on cultural relatability (Yosso, 2005). When this happens, cultural conflicts can arise, leading marginalized students to experience further exclusion due to the lack of views from opposite races, genders, geographic locations, and socioeconomic statuses between teachers and students being represented in the classroom (Milner, 2010).

Since everyone acquires knowledge through the way they perceive the world and the systems we have constructed (Ladson-Billings, 2000), educators must take time to understand the complexity of how race and racism function in today's society and educational system. Critical Race Theory provides a platform to challenge dominant groups who continue to fuel concepts such as meritocracy, color blindness, viewing race as neutral, and equal opportunities for all (Solórzano, 1997). Ladson-Billing and Tate (1995) were able to utilize CRT to expose how race and racism operate in our school system and how this racism leaves many marginalized students to experience inequitable learning opportunities, which further widens learning gaps, and could potentially increase dropout and incarceration rates, resulting in marginalized students to be immersed in this toxic cycle of educational (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). When educators can further understand how intersectionality and oppressive actions are fueled either consciously or subconsciously, in addition to acknowledging the importance of the centrality of experiential knowledge and transdisciplinary perspective, professionals will then be able to transform their perspectives and understand how race and racism function within our systems.

Utilizing Liu and Ball's (2019) hermeneutic cycle of critical reflection for transformative learning to facilitate deep-rooted reflections, enlightenment, and transformation, which can aid individuals in further developing their cultural competence and exposing their own biases and work towards reversing such perspectives. Ultimately, becoming more aware of the various challenges marginalized students face and incorporating culturally responsive pedagogies into the classroom allows teachers to create more meaningful and impactful learning experiences for students since teachers will be more efficient at connecting students' prior experiences and knowledge while acknowledging, appreciating, and incorporating their backgrounds and experiences into the classroom's curriculum (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Gay, 2000).

Implications

Implications of this study result in the potential for positive social and societal change and advancement. When analyzing it from a social perspective, individuals can function more effectively because they have developed an improved sense of well-being, increased self-awareness and emotional regulation, and greater development of cultural competence, which can enhance their compassion and empathy for others. Being that teachers would be facilitating such a program, they can also benefit greatly because they will develop critical reflection skills, understand how to foster a healthy, inclusive, equitable learning environment when navigating cultural differences, and break a cycle that fuels systemic racism, biases, and stereotyping students because they will have developed more cultural competence. Incorporating such a program in schools will impact societal change and advancement because students will have developed self-awareness and understanding, cultural competence, empathy, and compassion for others, which can help build a better society. By doing this, our society can transform into

promoting educational equity, inclusion, cultural competence, empowering communities, and improving the overall well-being of all individuals.

Implications for education policy regarding culturally responsive mindfulness programs involve supporting culturally responsive teaching pedagogies, which can promote educational equity and inclusivity by developing cultural competence. Such a program can also uncover the inequities and systemic issues marginalized students face within our education system. By teaching and practicing cultural competence, individuals can develop more knowledge, compassion, and respect for other cultures. Additionally, culturally responsive and sustaining mindfulness programs can positively impact mental health informal education by supporting the overall development of students socially, emotionally, academically, mentally, and spiritually.

The implications associated with educational teaching practices in a K-12 setting involve teachers creating more inclusive and equitable learning opportunities, building healthy relationships with students, families, and the community, proactively addressing various forms of trauma and stresses that students may have, and fostering a healthy and positive learning environment. Teachers can create more inclusive and equitable learning environments because they will be able to incorporate strategies and activities that acknowledge and honor their student's backgrounds, which will lead to students having more access to meaningful learning opportunities and developing their cultural competence. This will propel healthy relationships among teachers, students, families, and the community because it is built on respect, trust, compassion, and empathy as educators practice active listening, transparency, open communication, and empathy for all individuals. Such a program will also provide a platform for educational professionals to aid students in proactively addressing their stresses and traumas by providing them with the proper tools and resources to help them develop skills to support their

mental health and overall well-being while overcoming adversity. Lastly, culturally responsive and sustaining mindfulness programs can aid teachers in fostering a healthy and positive learning environment because they place students and their overall well-being at the center of their learning. By understanding that individuals need to be in balance to function at a high level, there is also a need to focus on their social, emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. Having a program that addresses students' overall well-being and incorporates their backgrounds to make it a unique learning experience is what makes this program transformational.

Implications for future practice include understanding the importance of relationship-building among the facilitator and students. Much of the success of my program and study stemmed from my great relationship with all of my participants for the past several years. Having previously taught at this school for six and a half years and taught some of my participants when they were in kindergarten and 1st grade allowed me to connect with the students much easier for the duration of the study. As I already had a solid foundation built on trust and appreciation, many of my participants were willing to open up to me and allow me into their world so quickly. Future researchers need to take the time to build a trusting relationship with their student participants in order to understand their strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, consider extending this study from eight to sixteen weeks and visiting students twice a week to build a trusting relationship. By doing this, a facilitator who has not built a prior relationship with the participants can take their time to help students feel that they can trust them and are comfortable sharing their feelings regarding negative emotions.

The implications of culturally responsive and sustaining mindfulness programs in regard to future research can lead to many advancements in mental health informal education and a better understanding of students' growth and development mentally and emotionally. Currently,

mental health informal education is becoming popular due to the COVID-19 outbreak, leading many individuals to focus on the importance of mental health. Culturally responsive mindfulness programs can aid individuals in better understanding their mental health status and how to impact their overall well-being positively. When students are given the opportunity, tools, and resources to learn more about who they are, they can enhance their self-awareness and emotional regulation. This can lead individuals to develop a more positive and healthy well-being that supports their entire existence.

Limitations

Since this study is entering into the infancy of mental health informal education, there were numerous limitations. First, only one thirty-minute classroom observation was assigned per third-grade teacher, which was conducted before the eight-week mindfulness program launched. Having only observed the participants' teachers for a short time did not allow me to gather more insight into the full picture of what the classroom and learning environment looked like for students and their impact on students' emotions. To overcome this limitation, I suggest that future researchers conduct at least four classroom observations spread out over ten weeks for at least two hours per observation. One of these observations should occur prior to the start of the intervention, and another observation should occur after the intervention has concluded. By doing this, the researchers will be able to connect patterns within the classroom with students' emotions, gather more sustaining data, and determine the type of classroom climate and the effectiveness of the intervention.

The second limitation was attendance. Although I was able to recruit the intended twelve participants for this study, attendance became a challenge during the fourth week when it became noticeable that half of the participants did not show up, and absences became more apparent as

the study progressed. Being that all participants were voluntary, and this study took place an hour after dismissal in addition to a new season of sports launching in the fourth week, many participants wanted to engage in other activities. Once the absences became noticeable starting the fifth week, I arrived just before the students were dismissed at 2:45 p.m. to remind them to stay after school so they could participate in the study. Some students said their parents had to pick them up early due to a change in their work schedule, and others joined the soccer and track teams. To keep a higher level of attendance in the future, I suggest for future researchers to pre-screen participants to ensure that they will be available for the entire duration of the study in addition to incentivizing.

Future Research

Several recommendations are made for future research on mental health informal education with an emphasis on supporting marginalized students. The current research involved collecting data from twelve student participants and three classroom teachers. Due to the reality of relatively low attendance, results from this study are not generalizable. Therefore, future research should ensure the attendance of all participants to ensure enough data is being collected on the participants. To help ensure participants attend the study with minimal absence, meeting with parents in person to discuss the study will be helpful. Providing participants with incentives could also aid the process of recruiting and securing participants for the full duration of the study.

Additionally, to determine the climate of these classrooms, more and longer observations should be conducted to support patterns and findings regarding the classroom environment climate, as well as how teachers are connecting with their students academically, socially, and emotionally. Although some insight was constructed during these short single observations, the

data cannot be generalizable. To avoid this element, future researchers should consider extending the time and frequency of observing each classroom for a minimum of two hours and at least four times. By doing this, researchers will be able to gather a sufficient amount of data that can lead to patterns and make such findings more generalizable.

Conclusion

The findings from this study demonstrated that most marginalized elementary students feel negative emotions such as stress, nervousness, anger, and annoyance when at school. Some of these reasons for experiencing these negative emotions include the stress from the academic pressure to succeed, nervousness related to being a survivor of bullying, and annoyance caused by constant disruptive classmates. Findings suggested that providing marginalized students with mindfulness techniques embedded with culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies can aid students in overcoming negative emotions and building self-value, confidence, and resilience. Additionally, such a program can be sustainable and transformative for marginalized students as they are continuously given a safe space to practice such techniques and are able to express themselves. I encountered difficulties when constructing and implementing such a program, which involved ensuring that the mindfulness program consisted of effective, meaningful, culturally responsive activities that led to transformative learning.

After conducting such a study, limitations included needing more time to observe the classroom environments and ensure participant attendance. The time spent observing the participants' classroom teachers was not long or frequent enough to make generalizable statements. Participant attendance also became a limitation during week four when many participants started to join the new season of sports offered at the school. Regarding future

research, researchers should consider such limitations and continue to study programs that can positively impact mental health informal education and students' overall well-being.

Appendix A: Classroom Observation Protocol

Domain	Dimension	Evidence
Emotional Support	Positive Climate	
	Teacher Sensitivity	
	Regard for Student Perspective	
	Negative Climate	
	Behavior Management	
Cultural Support	Relating Content to Student Backgrounds	
	Opportunities to Explore Counter-Narrative	
	Promoting Equality and Diversity	

Descriptions:

Positive Climate: promotes positive emotional connections and relationships among teachers and students, with warmth, respect, and enjoyment displayed through verbal and nonverbal interactions.

Teacher Sensitivity: the teacher being receptive to the academic and social/emotional needs and development of each student and the entire class.

Regard for Student Perspective: student's ideas, beliefs, and opinions are valued, and the teacher is able to capitalize on the social, emotional, academic, and developmental needs and goals of the student.

Negative Climate: showing an attitude of negativity among teachers and students in the class.

Behavior Management: encompasses the teacher's use of effective methods to encourage positive behaviors while preventing and redirecting misbehavior.

Relating Content to Student Backgrounds: students' backgrounds are reflected in curriculum content, activities, and curriculum.

Opportunities to Explore Counter-Narrative: students are exposed to different narratives regarding classroom content and able to share their own narrative from their backgrounds.

Promoting Equality and Diversity: Avoiding stereotyping, creating an inclusive environment, accommodating all learning styles and abilities regardless of the students' background identity, and reducing race and gender barriers.

Appendix B: Interview Protocol for Teachers, Parents, and Participants

Teacher Interview Questions

1. Describe your teaching experiences.
2. What is the biggest challenge you have faced as a teacher?
3. Do you feel like your education has prepared you for teaching in the classroom?
4. Describe how you provide an inclusive and equitable learning environment for your students.
5. What characteristics do you think of when observing your students in the classroom?
6. What negative emotions do you observe from your students? What are the causes of their negative emotions?
7. What strategies have you implemented to help them deal with their negative emotions?
8. How do you incorporate and embrace your students' backgrounds in the classroom?
9. How do you communicate with family members of your students?

Participant Interview Questions #1:

1. Describe your home life.
2. What are your hobbies or things you like to do?
3. What are things you like to do in your free time?
4. What are things that you like to do with your family?
5. What do you want to be when you grow up?
6. If you could change one thing about your classroom, what would it be and why?

Participant Interview Questions #2:

1. What emotion do you feel like you experience the most when you are at school and why?
2. If you are feeling down, how do you make yourself feel better?
3. Describe how you control your emotions.
4. Do you find it easy to explain your emotions to others, if so, who are the people you talk most to about your emotions?
5. Describe what you do to keep a positive attitude.

Participant Interview Questions #3

1. Describe how practicing mindfulness has helped you?
2. Which techniques do you think you will continue to practice?
3. If you could improve this program, what would you change?

Appendix C: Participant's Pre-Constructed Journal Prompts

Journal Session	Prompt
Session 1	Identifying our emotions and what they look like. Reflect on a time when you were the happiest. Draw a picture of how you felt at that moment and write a few sentences about that moment.
Session 2	Make a list of examples of positive and negative emotions. Then, on the lines below, write about how mindfulness can help us overcome negative emotions.
Session 3	Use 3 clouds to write down thoughts that came up when you practiced mindful movement. Then use 2 clouds to write down things you did to bring your focus back to the present moment.
Session 4	Mindful Eating… Draw your favorite food in the rectangle and write descriptive words about how it makes you feel when you eat your favorite food in the hearts.
Session 5	Mandalas! Use mindfulness techniques to color this mandala then create your own mandala and have a shoulder partner color it in.
Session 6	Fill in the shapes with motivating statements. Examples can be: You got this! Don't give up!
Session 7	Write a positive letter to yourself.
Session 8	Planning for the future, write 5 things of how can mindfulness help you throughout your life?
Session 8	What did you like and did not like from participating in this study? Which mindful practices do you want to keep incorporating throughout your life?

Appendix D: Priori Coding Table Adapted from Liu (2020)

Codes	Explanation	Evidence
Technical Reflection	The technical application of educational knowledge and of basic curriculum principles for the purpose of attaining a given end	
Practical Reflection	An interpretive understanding both nature and quality of educational experience, and of making practical choices	
Critical Reflection	A reflective rationality of the social, moral, and political dimension of schooling and questions about which educational goals, experiences, and activities lead toward just and equitable forms of life	
Assumption Analysis	Analysis of taken for granted and distorted assumptions and assessment of their accuracy and validity	
Contextual Awareness	An awareness that assumptions are socially and personally created and that reflect the culture and time in which they happen	
Imaginative Speculation	An exploration of alternative solutions to replace previous actions that are supported by distorted assumptions	
Reflective Skepticism	Teachers develop a critical cast of minds to doubt the claims made for the universal validity or truth of an idea, practice, or institution	
Reflection-Based Actions	Implementation of the alternative solutions as a result of	

	previous steps	
Reflection on Reflection-Based Actions	Further reflection on the action developed and taken in the previous step, both in terms of efficacy for student learning and in relation to the social–political context of schooling	

Note: Created by Liu, 2020

Appendix E: Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Mindfulness Intervention (CRSMI)

Session/ Topic	*Duration of Intervention: 4:30pm-5:30pm*
Session 1: Understanding our Emotions and Interview	**Objective:** This session aims to understand participants in how the interpret emotions and conduct 1st interview **Intro Activity: 15 minutes** *Act it out!* *Part 1: (5 minutes)* Participants will get into a circle facing their bodies outwards. The researcher will call out emotion, and all participants will act out that emotion. Emotions may include happy, sad, excited, nervous, curious, etc. Participants will act out the emotion for about 10 seconds, and then the researcher will switch to a new emotion. The researcher may repeat emotions throughout the activity. This activity aims for the researcher to understand better how the participants understand and interpret various emotions. *Part 2:* (*15 minutes)* Participants will play a version of charades by trying to guess what emotion the person is trying to convey to the group silently. The researcher will whisper emotions into the "actors" ear as the students guess the emotion. The participant who correctly guesses the emotion will act out the next emotion the researcher gives. **Interview: 40 minutes** The researcher will interview each participant. The purpose of this interview is to individually understand each participant better in the sense of who they are and learn about their background. Interview questions given to all participants are: 1. Describe your home life. 2. What are your hobbies or things you like to do? 3. What are things you like to do in your free time? 4. What are things that you like to do with your family? 5. What do you want to be when you grow up? If you could change one thing about your classroom, what would it be and why? Participants who are not being interviewed will be journaling about what is their happiest memory. They can either draw a picture of their feelings and write more about that moment.

	Materials: printed journal packets, crayons, markers, and pencils. **Session Closure: 5 minutes** Participants who want to share their journal entries with the whole group can do so. Some reflective questions to fuel whole group discussion: How did it make you feel when you were thinking about your happy memory? Was it hard to choose which memory to focus on? **Culturally Responsive Element:** Participants are able to express their own understanding of emotions without being told how to identify that emotion. Being aware that different cultures display various norms for how to show emotions. This relates to counter narrative. **Role of the researcher during the activity**: Say random emotions and observe how students interpret the emotion. E.g., Happy, sad, angry, worried, excited, anxious. Make field notes and video record activities.
Session 2: Discovering Mindfulness and Building a Foundation	**Objective:** This session aims to introduce participants to mindfulness and build a foundation to understanding mindfulness. **Intro Activity: 20 minutes** *Museum of Me* Participants will bring in artifacts that represent their language, culture, and heritage from home that help us understand more about who they are. We will go one-by-one to share what we brought in, the significance of the item, and how it relates back to yourself. **Guided Mindfulness Meditation: 20 minutes** *Part 1:* Participants will be introduced to mindfulness and the concept of mindfulness. Participants will engage in mindful breath activity guided by the researcher. The goal is to guide participants into recognizing their state of being while focusing on the present moment without judgment. *Part 2:* Gratitude practice- participants will say something that they are grateful for they can like this to their homelife, culture, or heritage. Example: I am grateful for my abuelita. I am grateful for having a family that loves me.

	<u>Whole group:</u> 5 minutes Positive Affirmations Proud Practice Participants will say something that relates to who they are that they are proud of. Participants can link this back to their personality traits, homelife, culture, or heritage. Examples: I am proud to be Black. I am proud to have curly hair. I am proud that I speak two languages. **<u>Materials:</u>** printed journal packets, crayons, markers, and pencils. **<u>Participant Journal:</u> 5 minutes** Make a list of positive and negative emotions. **<u>Closure:</u> 10 minutes** Participants who want to share their journal entries with the whole group can do so. Some reflective questions to fuel whole group discussion: What is mindfulness? What was one thing that you enjoyed about today's session? What was one thing that you did not enjoy about today's session? **<u>Cultural Resonsponsive Element:</u>** Museum of Me- students bring in artifacts that represent their language, culture, and heritage from home that help us understand more about who they are. Proud and gratitude practice tying back to who they are and associating a positive image about themselves and for those around them.
Session 3: Body Awareness & Mindfulness	**<u>Objective:</u>** This session aims to have participants become aware of their body and movement. **<u>Intro Activity:</u> 30 minutes** Participants will engage in a walking and sensation awareness mindful meditation. Participants will start with a quick breath and focus and then walk around the room. The researcher will then guide participants as they slowly walk through the space to be mindful of what is going on in their mind and body. Next, participants will engage in a stretch and movement activity as the researcher guides them in various stretches as they begin to recognize their body reactions and sensations to the stretches. All movements will incorporate mindful breath work.

	<u>Cultural Dance Party:</u> 10 minutes Participants will hear different genres of music that stem from their cultural background and heritage. When participants hear the music, they will be encouraged to allow their body to move freely in the space to music. Different sounds of music may inspire participants to move differently. **<u>Materials:</u>** printed journal packets and pencils. **<u>Participant Journal:</u> 10 minutes** Use 3 clouds to write down thoughts that came up when you practiced mindful movement. Use 2 clouds to write down things you did to bring your focus back to the present moment. **<u>Closure:</u> 10 minutes** Participants who want to share their journal entries with the whole group can do so. Some reflective questions to fuel whole group discussion: What were the thoughts that were coming into your mind when doing this exercise? How did you bring your focus back to the present moment? **<u>Cultural Resonsponsive Element:</u>** Using music from participants backgrounds and heritage to fuel mindfulness movement.
Session 4: Mindful Consumption and Mediation	**<u>Objective:</u>** This session aims to have students reflect on their favorite foods while engaging in a mindfulness mediation of consumption. **<u>Pre-Activity Whole Group Discussion:</u> 15 minutes** What types of food do you like to eat? What type of food do you eat at home? What feelings do you feel when you think of your favorite foods? Does it bring back any memories of when you ate your favorite food? **<u>Intro Activity:</u> 25 minutes** *Part 1 (10 minutes)* Participants will simultaneously act out through miming how they would prepare to make their favorite food. This includes gathering the food, preparing the food in the

	kitchen, and eating the food. *Part 2 (20 minutes)* The researcher will guide participants in a mindfulness mediation regarding favorite foods and consumptions. **Materials:** printed journal packets, crayons, markers, and pencils. **Participant Journal: 10 minutes** Draw your favorite food in the rectangle and write descriptive words of how it makes you feel when you eat your favorite food in the hearts. **Closure: 10 minutes** Participants who want to share their journal entries with the whole group can do so. Some reflective questions to fuel whole group discussion: What did you learn about different cultures and how food plays a role in that culture? **Cultural Resonsponsive Element:** Participants' will share more about their culture and foods that associate with backgrounds, heritage, and culture creating an inclusive and positive environment.
Session 5: Mindful Mentality Embracing Love & Kindness and Interviews	**Objective:** This session aims to create awareness of our internal thoughts about ourselves and learn how to transform our thoughts into self-love and kindness and conduct 2nd round of interviews. **Intro Activity: 10 minutes** The researcher will guide participants into a mindfulness practice of love and kindness, closing with positive affirmations. **Interviews: 40 minutes** The researcher will interview each participant. The purpose of this interview is to individually understand each participant better in the sense of who they are and learn about their background. Interview questions given to all participants are: 1. What emotion do you feel like you experience the most when you are at school and why?

	2. If you are feeling down, how do you make yourself feel better? 3. Describe how you control your emotions. 4. Do you find it easy to explain your emotions to others, if so who are the people you talk most to about your emotions? 5. Describe what you do to keep a positive attitude. Participants who are not being interviewed will write down a positive message and exchange that message with another participant. They can write down a compliment about a person's culture, their heritage, or background. Example: You are perfect the way you are. I admire you. I think you are brave. After participants are finished with writing and giving their message to another participant, they will start journaling in creating their own mandala. **Materials:** printed journal packets, crayons, markers, and pencils. **Closure: 10 minutes** Participants who want to share their journal entries with the whole group can do so. Some reflective questions to fuel whole group discussion: How do you feel after experiencing today's activity? How can we use our knowledge of self-love and kindness to help others? **Cultural Resonsponsive Element:** Students will brainstorm together to think of ways in which we can help overcome negative emotions. Participants write down positive messages that positively compliment a person's culture, their heritage, or background.
Session 6: Outlets for Expression Music, Dance, and Movement	**Objective:** This session aims to utilize mindfulness in conjunction with music, movement, and dance to help students express themselves and emotions while positively embracing their cultural backgrounds. **Activity:** *Part 1 (20 minutes)* This activity is set up to have students explore the sounds of different musical instruments and observe how they can connect a sound to emotion. Participants will start by sitting comfortably, as they close their eyes, and become aware of the present moment by listening to the

	noises around them. By bringing our awareness to the present moment, participants can focus on the different sounds they will hear throughout this time. The researcher will then play various instruments three to four times while participants sit with their eyes closed. Finally, the participants will fully focus on their breath and listen to the noises around them. Once the researcher finishes playing all the instruments for the group, they will have a quick discussion. Participants will be put in small groups so they can explore each instrument on their own. There will be three students in each group, creating four groups. Each group will be assigned an instrument and experiment freely with the different noises they can make from the instrument. Each group will spend 3 minutes at each station and then rotate. Instruments will consist of tambourine, mirka, ukulele, and rhythm sticks. *Part 2 (20 minutes)* The researcher will pass out silk scarves to each participant, go over the rules when using scarves, and have participants get used to holding and creating a movement with the scarves. Participants will begin with a mirroring exercise as they mirror the researcher's movement with the scarf while music plays. The researcher will explain how different sounds in music can make you feel certain emotions, leading you to explore different types of movement. Once participants can mirror the researcher effectively, participants will move on to the next part of the activity, which allows participants to move freely. The researcher will play a mixture of songs as the participants will be able to create movement with the scarves to each song. Students should remember that the scarves symbolize their emotions reacting to the music they hear. Songs may provoke a student to move their scarf rapidly or slowly. While the song is playing and students are moving, the researcher will say out loud think of the emotion that comes to mind when you hear this song. **<u>Participant Journal:</u> 10 minutes** Fill in each shape with a positive statement: You got this. You can do all things. Nothing is impossible. **<u>Closure:</u> 10 minutes** Participants who want to share their journal entries with the whole group can do so. Some reflective questions to fuel whole group discussion: Which instrument did you enjoy most or least? How did each instrument's noise make you feel? What feelings came up while you got to move freely throughout the space?

	When did you notice those emotions? **<u>Cultural Resonsponsive Element:</u>** Using music and instruments to fuel cultural acceptance and integration.
Session 7: Building Positive Self-Image and Resilience	**<u>Objective:</u>** This session aims to use mindfulness to build positive self-image and resilience in participants. **<u>Pre-Activity:</u> 10 minutes** Participants will bring pictures of them and their families and share a positive comment about themselves and their background (this can include family, cultural heritage, upbringing, etc.) **<u>Activity:</u> 20 minutes** The researcher will guide participants on a mindfulness stretch and appreciation mediation. The researcher will constantly be saying positive affirmations while participants are meditating on these affirmations and using the "I statement" Example: I am powerful, I am smart, I am amazing, etc. **<u>Participant Journal:</u> 10 minutes** Participants will write themselves a positive letter of encouragement. **<u>Closure:</u> 10 minutes** Participants who want to share their journal entries with the whole group can do so. Some reflective questions to fuel whole group discussion: Let's brainstorm some ideas that can help us become more resilient and prepared for when negative experiences happen? What can we tell ourselves or others to stay encouraged? How can we overcome negative experiences? **<u>Cultural Resonsponsive Element:</u>** Incorporating pictures of their families and background into the practice to show honor, appreciation, and positivity for their cultures.
Session 8: Reflection & Integration for Transformative Learning and Interviews	**<u>Objective:</u>** This session aims to have students reflect on their past sessions, plan for a future of engaging in mindfulness and conducting final interviews. **<u>Activity:</u> 10 minutes**

	The researcher will guide students in their final movement mediation encompassing breath work, light movement, and mindfulness of the present moment. **Interviews: 40 minutes** The researcher will interview each participant. The purpose of this interview is to individually understand each participant better in the sense of who they are and understand what they have learned throughout these sessions. Interview questions given to all participants are: 1. Describe how practicing mindfulness has helped you? 2. Which techniques do you think you will continue to practice? 3. If you could improve this program, what would you change? Participants who are not being interviewed will complete two journal entries. First entry has them list 5 things they can do to plan for a future with mindfulness. Second entry has them document what they liked, did not like, and what they want to keep in their life regarding mindfulness practices. **<u>Closure:</u> 10 minutes** Participants who want to share their journal entries with the whole group can do so. Some reflective questions to fuel whole group discussion: Who wants to share what they wrote in their journal? **<u>Cultural Resonsponsive Element:</u>** Incorporating past experiences into the reflection process and learning how to incorporate mindfulness to become aware and more resilient for the future.

Appendix F: CRSMI Curriculum Outline to Answer Research Questions

Week	**Major Activity**	**Monitoring and observing Student Negative Emotions** *(Question 1)*	**How do you implement Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Teaching** *(Question 2)*	**How to support student mental health** *(Question 2)*	**How to support student critical reflection and transformative learning for the future** *(Question 3)*	**How to support your own critical reflection and transformative learning** *(Question 4)*
Week 1: **Understanding our Emotions and Interview**	-Act it out Pt. 1 circle of emotions -Pt. 2 charades for emotions -Interview	Act It Out will allow students to express how they interpret various emotions. It will help the research better understand the students' reactions to various emotions. It is important for us to understand what it looks like when we are happy, sad, angry etc.	There is no right or wrong answer for how students interpret emotions. They may pull meaning through their cultural background, previous experience, and prior knowledge. All ways of how students express and understand emotions should be	Being aware of our emotions in general can help us better understand our feelings and mental state.	Participant Journal 1: allows students to reflect upon their emotions and their happiest memories. Understand how they felt in that moment and why that moment is so special to the student.	Researcher Journal 1: allows researcher to reflect on how students understand emotions, how they express various emotions, and what ties are made to their emotions and cultural backgrounds

			honored and respected. The interview allows the researcher to better understand the student in more depth.			
Week 2: **Discovering Mindfulness and Building a Foundation**	-Museum of Me -Guided Mindfulness Meditation Pt.1 understanding mindfulness & Pt.2 Gratitude practice - Introducing positive affirmations	Journal 2: help students distinguish the difference between positive and negative emotions. Students may even want to reflect on what causes the negative emotions to occur.	Museum of Me will allow students to bring artifacts that represent their culture, heritage, and languages. The sharing will help them feel their culture, languages are listened to and valued. Gratitude practice allows students to express gratitude towards something that is meaningful to them and	Positive affirmations help students vocalize positive attributes about themselves and who they are.	Journal 2 allows for students to process emotions and think deeper about the differences of positive and negative emotions	Researcher Journal allows the research to reflect on how students differentiate positive and negative emotions and their understanding for interpreting emotions.

			links with their identity			
Week 3: **Body Awareness & Mindfulness**	-Body Awareness meditation and movement -Cultural Dance Party	Observing how student interact with the body awareness movement mediation can help alleviate negative emotions and activate the parasympathetic nervous system	Creating a cultural dance party when music from a variety of cultures will be played and students get to experience a variety of movement while positively embracing different cultures and honoring their own	Body awareness movement and mediation will activate the parasympathetic nervous system allowing the mind and body to relax and generate neuroplasticity	Participant Journal allows students to reflect upon the session and thoughts that arose during the mediation practice. The more mindful we are about our thoughts that come up we are able to regulate and control them, so they do not distract us or invoke irrational thoughts.	Researcher Journal allows the researcher to reflect on how the students are engaging with mindfulness and movement and how incorporating various cultural music and dances can make students feel (embraced, accepted, proud)
Week 4: **Mindful Consumption and Mediation**	-Miming -Mediating on Consumption -Discussion about foods, cultures, and backgrounds	How do students emotionally connect with food, themselves, and their culture?	Embracing student's cultural backgrounds and foods that tie to their backgrounds to better students and their connections to their culture	Using mediation to connect deeper with ourselves and how amazing our body is.	Students will gain more pride when discussing their favorite foods that stem from their cultural background developing a positive self-image of who they are and where they come from	Researcher Journal: How does food connect with the students, their culture, and how they view their culture? Are they proud and excited?

Week 5: **Mindful Mentality Embracing Love & Kindness and Interviews**	-Positive affirmations tied to Love and Kindness meditation -Interviews	Interviews will allow students an opportunity to share their anxiety and triggers that lead to experiencing negative emotions	Counter narrative is utilized to give students a voice to vocalize more about their emotions and what triggers them to experience negative emotions	Providing a platform for students to explore why they feel negative emotions is a healthy practice that can stimulate more growth and awareness. Love and kindness meditation fuel self-love and appreciation, ignite the parasympathetic nervous systems, and increase neuroplasticity. Positive affirmations help develop healthier associations with themselves and those around them	Participants Journal will allow student to use art/color therapy techniques to relax their minds and reflect on their emotions	Researcher Journal Where do students negative emotions stem from, how do triggered impact their self-image and how they view themselves
Week 6: **Outlets for Expression Music, Dance, and Movement**	Outlets for impression: Pt 1- Instruments Pt 2- Scarfs	Connecting music and movement to our emotions to express our feelings	Instruments used (tambourine, mirka, ukulele, and rhythm sticks) stem from various cultural backgrounds and	Music therapy techniques use instruments and props to help students express their emotions and develop a	Participants Journals to develop their own positive affirmations through reflecting on	Researcher Journal how did incorporating musical instruments and props

			how they incorporate these instruments in music genres. This teaches students how to incorporate and use tools to stem cultural competence and acceptance	deeper understanding of working through their feelings.	what they want or need to hear/read.	impact students in connecting with their emotions, feelings, cultures, and self-identity?
Week 7: **Building Positive Self-Image and Resilience**	-Positive pictures -Stretch and Mindfulness using positive affirmations - Positive letter of encouragement	Students will be able to make positive connections to their life, background, and who they are, while minimizing negative thoughts, associations, or feelings	Incorporating pictures of families and backgrounds help tie more positive connections of who they are and that their backgrounds and cultures are important and embraced with positivity.	Creating positive connections to embrace pride and love for their background and culture. Increasing the parasympathetic nervous system and neuroplasticity through mindfulness meditation and movement Positive affirmations increase and develop positive self-image	Participants Journal: they get to reflect on experience and write a positive letter to themselves for encouragement for the future. Brainstorm will help each other search for transformative solutions and resources - What can we tell ourselves when we aren't feeling good about who we are? How do we overcome negative experiences?	Researcher Journal: connecting a platform of positivity between the student, their background, their cultures, and self-love

Week 8: **Reflection & Integration for Transformative Learning and Interviews**	-Mediation -Interviews	Seeing what students have learned from this program and if it helped them with becoming aware of their emotions and transitioning from negative emotions	Counter narrative allow students to express their thoughts and feelings about mindfulness and how it impacted them and how they view themselves	Activating the parasympathetic nervous system before interviews will allows students to be calm and grounded increasing positive mental health	The interview will uncover how students felt about the entire program, what they have learned about the program and what they will want to continue practicing	Researcher Journal will better understand what tools were most useful for elementary students developing more mindfulness to their emotions, themselves, and who they are as individuals

Note: Created By: A. Jerbic-Gonzalez & K. Liu, 2023

References

Alim, H. S., Baglieri, S., Ladson-Billings, G., Paris, D., Rose, D. H., & Valente, J. M. (2017). Responding to cross-pollinating culturally sustaining pedagogy and universal design for learning: Toward an inclusive pedagogy that accounts for dis/ability. *Harvard Educational Review*, *87*(1), 4-25.

Alim, H. S., & Paris, D. (2017). What is culturally sustaining pedagogy and why does it matter. *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world*, *1*, 24.

Anālayo, B. (2021). Relating equanimity to mindfulness. *Mindfulness*, *12*(11), 2635-2644.

Annamma, S. A., & Handy, T. (2021). Sharpening justice through DisCrit: A contrapuntal analysis of education. *Educational Researcher*, *50*(1), 41-50.

Anxiety and Depression Association of America (2022). https://adaa.org/professionals

Amaya-Jackson, L. (2000). Posttraumatic stress disorder in children and adolescents. In B. Sadock & V. Sadock (eds.). Kaplan and Sadock's comprehensive textbook of psychiatry. Lippincott, Williams, and Wilkins, 2763–2769.

Aviles, A. M., Anderson, T. R., & Davila, E. R. (2006). Child and adolescent social-emotional development within the context of school. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health, 11*(1), 32–39.

Bannirchelvam, B., Bell, K. L., & Costello, S. (2017). A qualitative exploration of primary school students' experience and utilization of mindfulness. *Contemporary School Psychology, 21*, 304-316.

Batchelor, S. (2000). Verses from the center: A Buddhist vision of the sublime. Riverhead Books.

Baweja, S., Santiago, C.D., & Vona, P. (2015). Improving implementation of a school-based program for traumatized students: Identifying factors that promote teacher support and collaboration. *School Mental Health, 8,* 120–131.

Beauchemin, Hutchins, T. L., & Patterson, F. (2008). Mindfulness meditation may lessen anxiety, promote social skills, and improve academic performance among adolescents with learning disabilities. *Complementary Health Practice Review, 13*(1), 34–45.

Beck, G. (1996). From Kant to Hegel—Johann Gottlieb Fichte's theory of self-consciousness. *History of European Ideas*, *22*(4), 275-294.

Beilock, S. (2011). Back to school: Dealing with academic stress.

Bell, D. A. (1992). Faces at the bottom of the well: The permanence of racism. Basic Books.

Berchini, C. (2019). Reconceptualizing whiteness in English education. *English Education*, *51*(2), 151-181.

Bercholz, S., & Kohn, S. C. (1993). *The Buddha and his teachings*. Shambala Publications.

Berila, B. (2015). *Integrating mindfulness into anti-oppression pedagogy: Social justice in higher education*. Routledge.

Bernal-Morales, B., Rodríguez-Landa, J. F., & Pulido-Criollo, F. (2015). Impact of anxiety and depression symptoms on scholar performance in high school and university students. *A fresh look at anxiety disorders*, *225*.

Berry, O. O., Londoño Tobón, A., & Njoroge, W. F. (2021). Social determinants of health: the impact of racism on early childhood mental health. *Current Psychiatry Reports*, *23*, 1-10.

Betts, J. R., Reuben, K. S., & Danenberg, A. (2000). *Equal resources, equal outcomes? The distribution of school resources and student achievement in California*. Public Policy Institute of California.

Birnbaum, L. (2005). Connecting to inner guidance: Mindfulness meditation and transformation of professional self-concept in social work students. *Critical Social Work, 6*(2).

Bishop, S. R., Lau, M., Shapiro, S., Carlson, L. Anderson, N. D., & Carmody, J. (2004). Mindfulness: A proposed operational definition. *Clinical Psychology: Science & Practice.*

Black, D., & Fernando, R. (2014). Mindfulness training and classroom behavior among lower-income and ethnic minority elementary school children. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 23*(7), 1242-1246. *11*, 230-241.

Branscombe, N. R., Schmitt, M. T., & Harvey, R. D. (1999). Perceiving pervasive discrimination among African Americans: Implications for group identification and well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *77*(1), 135.

Bryan, N. (2022). Black boys and mental health in urban communities. The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Critical Perspectives on Mental Health. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-12852-4_92-1

Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). Research for education: An introduction to theories and methods. Pearson.

Brown, S. L., Johnson, Z., & Miller, S. E. (2019). Racial microaggressions and black social work students: A call to social work educators for proactive models informed by social justice. *Social Work Education, 38*(5), 618-630.

Brown, K. W., Ryan, R. M., & Creswell, J. D. (2007). Addressing fundamental questions about mindfulness. *Psychological Inquiry, 18*(4), 271 - 281.

Brown, G. R., & Spencer, K. A. (2013). Steroid hormones, stress, and the adolescent brain: A comparative perspective. *Neuroscience, 249*, 115–128.

Bullough, R. V. & Pinnegar, S. (2004). Thinking about the thinking about self-study: An analysis of eight chapters. In J. Loughran, M. L. Hamilton, V. K. LaBoskey, and T. Russell (Eds.). *International Handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices*. Kluwer Academic. (313–342).

Burke, C. A. (2010). Mindfulness-based approaches with children and adolescents: A preliminary review of current research in an emergent field. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 19,* 133–144.

Buwalda, B., Geerdink, M., Vidal, J., & Koolhaas, J. M. (2011). Social behavior and social stress in adolescence: A focus on animal models. *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews, 35,* 1713–1721.

Cano, A., Mayo, A., & Ventimiglia, M. (2006). Coping, pain severity, interference, and disability: The potential mediating and moderating roles of race and education. *The Journal of Pain, 7*(7), 459–468.

Carmody, J., & Baer, R. A. (2008). Relationships between mindfulness practice and levels of mindfulness, medical and psychological symptoms, and well-being in a mindfulness-based stress reduction program. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 31*(1), 23– 33.

Carmody, J., Reed, G., Kristeller, J., & Merriam, P. (2008). Mindfulness, spirituality, and health-related symptoms. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research 64*, 393-403.

Carroll, G. (1998). Environmental stress and African Americans: The other side of the moon. Greenwood Press.

Clark County School District. (2022). 5-Year Clark County School District employee ethnic distribution comparison by work location. Retrieved from

https://ccsd.net/resources/human-resources-division/employee-groups-5-yr-ethnicity-comparison-10-01-22.pdf

Chafouleas, S. M., Johnson, A. H., Overstreet, S., & Santos, N. M. (2016). Toward a blueprint for trauma-informed service delivery in schools. *School Mental Health, 8*(1), 144–162.

Chang, M. L. (2009). An appraisal perspective of teacher burnout: Examining the emotional work of teachers. *Educational Psychology Review, 21*(3), 193–218.

Chapman, T. K. (2007). Interrogating classroom relationships and events: Using portraiture and critical race theory in education research. *Educational Researcher, 36*(3), 156–162.

Charles, C. Z. (2003). The dynamics of racial residential segregation. *Annual Review of Sociology, 29*(2), 167-207.

Charmaz, K. (2014). Constructing grounded theory (2nd ed.). Sage.

Chen, G. (2019). Students of disproportionately disciplined in schools. Public School. https://www.publicschoolreview.com/blog/students-of-color-disproportionately-disciplined-in-schools

Chodron, T. (2012). *Living beautifully with uncertainty and change*. Shambhala.

Constantine, M. G, & Sue, D. W. (2007). Perceptions of racial microaggressions among black supervisees in cross-racial dyads. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 54*(2), 142–153.

Cortright, B. (2007). *Integral psychology. Yoga, growth, and opening the heart*. State University of New York Press.

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and the violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review, 43*(6), 1241–1299.

Crenshaw, K. W., Ocen, P., & Nanda, J. (2015). Black girls matter: Pushed out, overpoliced and underprotected. https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/faculty_scholarship/3227

Creswell, J. W. & Poth, C. N. (2018). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among the five approaches. Sage.

Croft, J., Heron, J., Teufel, C., Cannon, M., Wolke, D., Thompson, A., & Zammit, S. (2019). Association of trauma type, age of exposure, and frequency in childhood and adolescence with psychotic experiences in early adulthood. *JAMA Psychiatry*, *76*(1), 79-86.

Daley, S. G., & Rappolt-Schlichtmann, G. (2018). Stigma consciousness among adolescents with learning disabilities: Considering individual experiences of being stereotyped. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, *41*(4), 200-212.

Damian, A. J., McAfee, C., Yoo, S., & Mendelson, T. (2021). Exploring the psychosocial impact of a mindfulness workforce development program on instructors of color: A qualitative descriptive study. *International Journal of Yoga Therapy*. *31*(1).

Darling-Hammond, L. (1995). Inequality and access to knowledge. Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education, *26*(465-483).

Darling-Hammond, L. (2004). Inequality and the right to learn: Access to qualified teachers in California's public schools. *Teachers College Records, 106,* 1936-1966.

Darling-Hammond, L. & Bransford, J. (2007). Preparing teachers for a changing world. *What teachers should learn and be able to do.* John Wiley and Sons.

D'augelli, Anthony R., Scott L. Hershberger, & Neil W. Pilkington. (2001). Suicidality patterns and sexual orientation-related factors among lesbian, gay, and bisexual youths. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior 31*(3): 250–264.

Davis, P. (1989). Law as microaggression. *Yak Law Journal, 98*(S), 1559-1577.

De Anda, D., Baroni, S., Boskin, L., Buchwald, L., Morgan, J., Ow, J., & Weiss, R. (2000). Stress, stressors and coping among high school students. *Children and Youth Services Review, 22*(6), 441-463.

Delgado, R. (1995). Critical race theory: The cutting edge. Temple University Press.

Dillard, C. B. (2000). The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen: Examining an endarkened feminist epistemology in educational research and leadership. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 13*(6), 661–681.

Dixson, A. D., & Rousseau, C. K. (2005). And we are still not saved: Critical race theory in education ten years later. *Race, Ethnicity and Education, 8*(1), 7-27.

Dovidio, J. F., Piliavin, J. A., Schroeder, D. A., & Penner, L. (2006). *The social psychology of prosocial behavior.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers. Retrieved from http://psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/2006-06192-000

Dunning, D. L., Grifths, K., Kuyken, W., Crane, C., Foulkes, L., Parker, J., & Dalgleish, T. (2019). Research review: The effects of mindfulness-based interventions on cognition and mental health in children and adolescents' meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *60*(3), 244–258. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.12980

Duval, S., & Wicklund, R. A. (1972). *A theory of objective self-awareness*. Academic Press.

Emerson, L. M., de Diaz, N. N., Sherwood, A., Waters, A., & Farrell, L. (2020). Mindfulness interventions in schools: Integrity and feasibility of implementation. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 44*(1), 62–75. https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025419866906

Erwin, E. J., & Robinson, K. A. (2016). The joy of being: Making way for young children's natural mindfulness. *Early Child Development and Care, 186*(2), 268-286.

Esmmaeelbeygi, H., Alamdarloo, G., Seif, D., & Jabbari, F. (2020). The effects of mindfulness intervention on the social skills of students with specific learning disabilities. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education,12*(2), 115-124.

Evans, J., Davies, B., & Rich, E. (2009). The body made flesh: Embodied learning and the corporeal device. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *30*(4), 391–406. https://doi.org/10.1080/01425690902954588

Fagrell Trygg, N., Gustafsson, P. E., & Månsdotter, A. (2019). Languishing in the crossroad? A scoping review of intersectional inequalities in mental health. *International Journal for Equity in Health*, *18*(1), 1-13.

Fairbank, J. A., Ebert, L., & Caddell, J. M. (2001). Posttraumatic stress disorder. In P. B. Sutker & H. E. Adams (ed.). *Comprehensive handbook of psychopathology*. Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers. 183–209.

Felver, J. C., Clawson, A. J., Morton, M. L., Brier-Kennedy, E., Janack, P., & DiFlorio, R. A. (2019). School-based mindfulness intervention supports adolescent resiliency: A randomized controlled pilot study. *International Journal of School & Educational Psychology*, *7*(sup1), 111-122.

Flores-González, N., Aranda, E., & Vaquera, E. (2014). "Doing Race" Latino youth's identities and the politics of racial exclusion. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *58*(14), 1834–1851.

Ford, D. Y. (1996). Reversing underachievement among gifted Black students: Promising practices and programs. Teachers College Press.

Ford, J. D., Chapman, D. P., Mack, M., & Pearson, G. (2006). Pathways from traumatic child victimization to delinquency: Implications for juvenile and permanency court proceedings and decisions. *Juvenile and Family Court Journal, 5*(1), 13–26.

Fosha, D., Siegel, D. J., & Solomon, M. (2009). *The healing power of emotion: Affective neuroscience, development & clinical practice*. WW Norton & Company.

Foster, M. (1999). Race, class, and gender in education research: Surveying the political terrain. *Educational Policy, 13*(1), 77-85.

Freire, P. (1973). Pedagogy of the oppressed. Seabury Press.

Gansen, H. (2021). Disciplining difference(s): Reproducing inequalities through disciplinary interactions in preschool. *Social Problems (Berkeley, Calif.), 68*(3), 740–760. https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spaa011

Gause, R., & Coholic, D. (2010). Mindfulness-based practices as a holistic philosophy and method. University of Calgary. *Faculty of Social Work, 9*(2).

Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. Teachers college press.

Germer, K. C. (2009). *The mindful path to self-compassion: Freeing yourself from destructive thoughts and emotions*. Guilford Press.

Gerrity, E. & Folcarelli, C. (2008). *Child Traumatic Stress: What Every Policymaker Should Know*. National Center for Child Traumatic Stress.

Gilbert, P. (2000). Social mentalities: Internal "social" conflict and the role of inner warmth and compassion in cognitive therapy. In P. Gilbert & K. G. Bailey (ed.). *Genes on the couch: Explorations in evolutionary psychotherapy*. Brunner-Routledge.118–150.

Gillette, M. (2018). Walking into the community: Community partnerships as a catalyst for institutional change in higher education. *Lift us up, don't push us out: Voices from the front lines of the educational justice movement*, 118-127.

GLSEN (2015). *The 2015 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth in our nation's schools*. Retrieved from https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2015%20National%20GLSEN%202015%20National%20School%20Climate%20Survey%20%28NSCS%29%20-%20Full%20Report_0.pdf

Goldstein, J. (2008). A heart full of peace. In M. McLeod (ed.). *The best Buddhist writing 2008*. Shambhala.19–27.

Gramann, P. (2014). An exploration of the effects of pranayama breath procedures on work, relationships, health, and spirituality. Journal information?

Grant, M. R. & Butler, B. M. (2018). Why self-study? An exploration of personal, professional, and programmatic influence in the use of self-study research. *Studying Teacher Education, 14*(3), 320–330.

Gross, J. J. (1998). The emerging field of emotion regulation: An integrative review. *Review of General Psychology, 2*(3), 271–299. https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.2.3.271

Gross, J. J. (2002). Emotion regulation: Affective, cognitive, and social consequences. *Psychophysiology, 39*(3), 281– 291.

Grossman, P. (2008). On measuring mindfulness in psychosomatic and psychological research. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 64*(4), 405-408.

Gunaratana, B. H. (2002). *Mindfulness in plain English*. Wisdom.

Gust, C. J. (2024). Yoga for improved physical and psychological health: Understanding potential self-regulatory and neurophysiological mechanisms of an ancient practice. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine Journal*.

Hamilton, M. L., & Pinnegar, S. (2015). Considering the role of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices research in transforming urban classrooms. *Studying Teacher Education, 11*(2), 180-190.

Hanh, T. (2008). Nothing to do, nowhere to go: Practices based on the teachings of Master Linji. In M. McLeod (ed.). *The best Buddhist writing 2008*. Shambhala. 54–68.

Harris, P. (2007). Developing an integrated play-based pedagogy in preservice teacher education: A self-study. *Studying Teacher Education, 3,* 135–154.

Hatch, J. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings.* State University of New York Press.

Hauge, K. (2021). Self-study research: Challenges and opportunities in teacher education. Teacher Education in the 21st Century-Emerging Skills for a Changing World. *Intechopen*.

Haycook, K. (2000). No more settling for less. Education Trust.

Hernández, R. J., & Villodas, M. T. (2020). Overcoming racial battle fatigue: The associations between racial microaggressions, coping, and mental health among Chicana/o and Latina/o college students. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *26*(3), 399.

Hines-Datiri, D. (2015). When police intervene. *The Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*, *18*(2), 122–133. https://doi.org/10.1177/1555458915584676

Hoppes, K. (2006). The application of mindfulness-based cognitive interventions in the treatment of co-occurring addictive and mood disorders. *CNS Spectrums: The International Journal of Neuropsychiatric Medicine,* 11, 829-851.

Howard, T. C. (2019). Why race and culture matter in schools: Closing the achievement gap in America's classrooms. Teachers College Press.

Howells, A., Ivtzan, I., & Eiroa-Orosa, F. J. (2016). Putting the 'app' in happiness: A randomized controlled trial of a smartphone-based mindfulness intervention to enhance wellbeing. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 17*(1), 163–185. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-014-9589-1

Hoyt, L. T., Cohen, A. K., Dull, B., Castro, E. M., & Yazdani, N. (2021). Constant stress has become the new normal: Stress and anxiety inequalities among US college students in the time of COVID-19. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, *68*(2), 270-276.

Hurt, H., Malmud, E., Brodsky, N. L., & Giannetta, J. (2001). Exposure to violence: Psychological and academic correlates in child witnesses. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, 155*(12), 1351–1356.

Huynh, V. W., & Fuligni, A. J. (2010). Discrimination hurts: The academic, psychological, and physical well-being of adolescents. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 20*(4), 916–941.

Immordino-Yang, M. H., & Damasio, A. (2007). We feel, therefore we learn: The relevance of affective and social neuroscience to education. *Mind, Brain, and Education, 1*(1), 3–10.

Jarpe-Ratner, E., Marshall, B., Choudry, M., Wishart, M., Reid, B., Perez, E., & Fagen, M. (2022). Strategies to support LGBTQ+ students in high schools: What did we learn in Chicago public schools? *Health Promotion Practice, 23*(4), 686-698.

Jencks, C. (1980). *Structural Versus Individual Explanations of Inequality: Where Do We Go from Here?* JSTOR. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/2065261

Jeongil, K., & Kwon, M. (2018). Effects of mindfulness-based intervention to improve task performance for children with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities 31*(1) 87-97.

Jones, A. M. (2021). Letters to their attackers: using counter storytelling to share how Black women respond to racial microaggressions at a historically White institution. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 1-13.

Jones, T. M., Williford, A., Spencer, M. S., Riggs, N. R., Toll, R., George, M., & Bruick, S. (2021). School mental health providers' perspectives on the impact of COVID-19 on racial inequities and school disengagement. *Children & Schools*, *43*(2), 97-106.

Jones, J. M., & Lee, L.H (2022). Art-based Mindfulness at School: A Culturally Responsive Approach to School Mental Health. *Psychology in the Schools 59*(10), 2085-105.

Jordan, K. (2005). Discourses of difference and the overrepresentation of black students in special education. *The Journal of African American History, 90*(1/2), 128-149.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). Mindfulness-based interventions in context: Past, present, and future. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 10*(2), 144–156.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2015). Mindfulness. *Mindfulness, 6*(6), 1481-1483.

Kamenetz, A. (2017). How to apply the brain science of resilience to the classroom. NprED. https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/06/12/530893427/how-to-apply-the-brain-science-of-resilience-to-the-classroom

Katagiri, D. (2008). Each moment is the universe. Shambhala.

Keels, M. (2020). Building racial equity through trauma-responsive discipline. *Educational Leadership, 78*(2), 40-45.

Keller, J., Ruthruff E., Keller P., Hoy, R., Gaspelin, N., & Bertolini, K. (2017). Your brain becomes a rainbow: Perceptions and traits of 4th-graders in a school-based mindfulness intervention. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education 31*(4), 508-529.

Keller, J., Ruthruff, E., & Keller, P. (2019). Mindfulness and speed testing for children with learning disabilities: Oil and water? *Reading & Writing Quarterly 35*(2), 154-178.

Keltchermans, G. and Hamilton, M. L. (2004). The dialectics of passion and theory: Exploring the relation between self-study and emotion. In J. J. Loughran, M. L. Hamilton, V. K. LaBoskey, and T. Russell (ed.). *International Handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices*. Kluwer Academic. 785-810.

Keyes, C. L. M. (1998). Social well-being. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 121–140.

Kilpatrick, D., & Saunders, B. E. (1997). *The prevalence and consequences of child victimization: Summary of a research study.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice.

Kilpatrick, D. G., Ruggiero, K. J., Acierno, R., Saunders, B. E., Resnick, H. S., & Best, C. L. (2003). Violence and risk of PTSD, major depression, substance abuse/dependence, and comorbidity: Results from the National Survey of Adolescents. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 71*(4), 692–700.

Klingbeil, D. A., Renshaw, T. L., Willenbrink, J. B., Copek, R. A., Chan, K. T., Haddock, A., Yassine, J., & Clifton, J. (2017). Mindfulness-based interventions with youth: A comprehensive meta-analysis of group-design studies. *Journal of School Psychology, 63*, 77–103. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2017.03.006

Kohli, R. (2016). Behind school doors, the impact of hostile racial climates on urban teachers of color. *Urban Education, 53*(3), 307– 333.

Kreskow, K. (2013). Overrepresentation of minorities in special education. Education Masters.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal, 32*(3), 465-491.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *Qualitative Studies in Education, 11*(1), 7-24.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2000). Racialized discourses and ethnic epistemologies. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (eds.). *The SAGE Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Sage. 257–277.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in U.S. schools. *Educational Researcher*, *35*(7), 3–12. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X035007003

Ladson-Billings, G. (2021a). Culturally relevant pedagogy: Asking a different question (Culturally sustaining pedagogies series). Teachers College Press.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2021b). Critical race theory—What it is not! In *Handbook of critical race theory in education* (pp. 32-43). Routledge.

Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. F. (1995). Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education. *Teachers College Record*, *97*(1), 47-68.

Lau, M. A., & McMain, S.F. (2005). Integrating mindfulness meditation with cognitive and behavioral therapies: The challenge of combining acceptance and change-based strategies. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry-Revue Canadienne de Psychiatrie, 50*(13), 863-869.

Leavitt, V. M., Brandstadter, R., Fabian, M., Katz Sand, I., Klineova, S., Krieger, S., & Sumowski, J. F. (2020). Dissociable cognitive patterns related to depression and anxiety in multiple sclerosis. *Multiple Sclerosis Journal*, *26*(10), 1247-1255.

Liljestrom, A., Roulston, K., & Demarrais, K. (2007). There's no place for feeling like this in the workplace: Women teachers' anger in school settings. In P. Schutz & R. Pekrun (ed.). *Emotion in education*. Academic Press. 275– 291.

Linder, C. Quaye, S. J., Lange, A. C., Roberts, R. E., Lacy, M. C., & Okello, W. (2019). A student should have the privilege of just being a student: Student activism as labor. *Review of Higher Education, 42*(5), 37–62. https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2019.0044

Liu, K. (2015). Critical reflection as a framework for transformative learning in teacher education. *Educational Review*, *67*(2), 135-157.

Liu, K. (2020). *Coding and Analyzing Narratives to Foster Critical Reflection for Transformative Learning* (pp. 119-128). Springer International Publishing.

Liu, K., & Ball, A. (2019). Critical reflection and generativity: Toward a framework of transformative teacher education for diverse learners. *Review of Research in Education, 43*(1), 68–105.

Liu, Tang, W., Xiao, R., Zhou, W., Huang, H., Lin, R., Tan, C., & Teng, X. (2023). Reducing psychological stress of Chinese adolescents by mindfulness-based intervention: The mediating role of resilience. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, *52*(2), 351–370.

Lopez, G. R. (2003). The racially neutral politics of education: A critical race theory perspective. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 39*(1), 68–94.

Lopez, G. E., Gurin, P., & Nagda, B. A. (1998). Education and understanding structural causes for group inequalities. *Political Psychology*, *19*(2), 305–329.

Lucas, S. R. (2001). Effectively maintained inequality: Education transitions, track mobility, and social background effects1. *American Journal of Sociology*, *106*(6), 1642–1690.

Mace, F., & Kratochwill, T. (1985). Theories of reactivity in self-monitoring. *Behavior Modification, 9*(3), 323-343.

Malboeuf-Hurtubise, C., Joussemet, M., Taylor, G., & Lacourse, E. (2018). Effects of a mindfulness-based intervention on the perception of basic psychological need satisfaction among special education students. *International Journal of Disability, Development, and Education 65*(1), 33-44.

Marable, M. (1992). *Black America*. Open Media.

Martin, E. G., & Sorensen, L. C. (2020). Protecting the health of vulnerable children and adolescents during COVID-19–related K-12 school closures in the US. *American Medical Association, 1*(6) pp. e200724-e200724.

Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52*(1), 397– 422.

Metz, Frank, J. L., Reibel, D., Cantrell, T., Sanders, R., & Broderick, P. C. (2013). The effectiveness of the learning to BREATHE program on adolescent emotion Regulation. *Research in Human Development, 10*(3), 252–272.

Mezo, P.G., Herc, H.C., Pritchard, J.K., & Bullock, W.A., (2020). Evaluation and a proposed revision of the CAMM among underrepresented elementary school children. *Assessment for Effective Intervention 45*(3), 235-39.

Miller, R., Liu, K., Ball, A. (2020). Critical counter-narrative as transformative methodology for educational equity. *Review of Research in Education, 44*(1), 269-300.

Milner, R. (2007). Race, culture, and researcher positionality: Working through dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen. *Educational Researcher, 36*(7), 388–400.

Milner, R. (2010). Start where you are, but don't stay there: understanding diversity, opportunity gaps, and teaching in today's classrooms. Harvard Education Press.

Milner, R. (2023). The Race Card: Leading the Fight for Truth in America's Schools. Corwin Press.

National Association of School Psychologists. (2020). Providing effective social-emotional and behavioral supports after COVID-19 closures: Universal screening and Tier 1 interventions. https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/covid-19-resource-center/crisis-and-mental-health-resources/providing-effective-social%E2%80%93emotional-and-behavioral-supports-after-covid-19-closures-universal-screening-and-tier-1-interventions

Neff, K. D. (2003). Self-compassion: An alternative conceptualization of a healthy attitude toward oneself. *Self and Identity, 2*(2), 85–101.

Neff, K. D. (2009). The role of self-compassion in development: A healthier way to relate to oneself. *Human Development, 52*(4), 211–214.

Neff, K. D., & Vonk, R. (2009). Self-compassion versus global self-esteem: Two different ways of relating to oneself. *Journal of Personality, 77*(1), 23–50.

Oláh, A. (1995). Coping strategies among adolescents: a cross-cultural study. *Journal of Adolescence*, *18*(4), 491–512. https://doi.org/10.1006/jado.1995.1035

Ortega-Williams, A., Crutchfield, J., & Hall, J. C. (2021). The colorist-historical trauma framework: Implications for culturally responsive practice with African Americans. *Journal of Social Work*, *21*(3), 294-309.

Pascoe, M.C., & Bauer, I.E. (2015). A systematic review of randomized control trials on the effects of yoga on stress measures and mood. *Journal of Psychiatry Resources, 68,* 270–282.

Patton M.Q., (2002). Qualitative research and evaluation methods. 3rd Sage Publications.

Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational researcher*, *41*(3), 93-97.

Pearman, C. J., & Lefever-Davis, S. (2012). Roots of attrition: Reflections of teacher candidates in Title I schools. *Critical Questions in Education, 3*(1), 1–11.

Pierce, C., Carew, J., Pierce-Gonzalez, D., & Wills, D. (1978). An experiment in racism: TV commercials. In C. Pierce (ed.). *Television and education*. Sage, 1978. 62–88.

Pierce, C. M. (1988). Stress in the workplace. In A. F. Coner-Edwards & J. Spurlock (ed.). Black families in crisis: The middle class. New York: Brunner/Mazel. 27–34.

Pierce, C. M. (1995). Stress analogs of racism and sexism: Terrorism, torture, and disaster. In C. V. Willie, P. P. Rieker, B. M. Kramer, & B. S. Brown (ed.). *Mental health, racism, and sexism*. University of Pittsburgh Press. 277–293.

Pine, D. S., & Cohen, J. A. (2002). Trauma in children and adolescents: Risk and treatment of psychiatric sequelae. *Biological Psychiatry, 51*(7), 519 –531.

Pinnegar, S. & Hamilton, M. L. (2009). Self-study of practice as a genre of qualitative research. Springer.

Praissman, S., 2008. Mindfulness-based stress reduction: A literature review and clinician's guide. *J. Am. Academy Nurse Practice. 20,* 212–216.

Prentice, M., Jayawickreme, E., & Fleeson, W. (2019). Integrating whole trait theory and self-determination theory. *Journal of Personality, 87*(1), 56-69.

Public School Review. (2023). Mater Mountain Vista. https://www.publicschoolreview.com/mater-mountain-vista-profile

Putnam, F. W. (2006). The impact of trauma on child development. *Juvenile and Family Court Journal, 57*(1), 1–11.

Raes, F. (2010). Rumination and worry as mediators of the relationship between self-compassion and depression, and anxiety. *Personality and Individual Difference, 48*(6), 757– 761.

Reardon, S. (2015). Hurricane Katrina's psychological scars revealed. *Nature* 524, 395–396.

Renshaw, T. L., Fischer, A. J., & Klingbeil, D. A. (2017). Mindfulness-based intervention in school psychology. *Contemporary School Psychology, 21*, 299–303. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40688-017-0166-6

Robins, C. J., Keng, S. L., Ekblad, A. G., & Brantley, J. G. (2012). Effects of mindfulness-based stress reduction on emotional experience and expression: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 68*(1), 117– 131.

Roffey, S., Williams, A., Greig, A., & MacKay, T. A. W. N. (2016). Mental health and wellbeing in schools: Concerns, challenges, and opportunities. *Educational and child Psychology*, *33*(4), 5-7.

Ryan, R. M. (1995). Psychological needs and the facilitation of integrative processes. *Journal of Personality, 63*, 391-A21.

Saleem, F. T., Howard, T. C., & Langley, A. K. (2022). Understanding and addressing racial stress and trauma in schools: A pathway toward resistance and healing. *Psychology in the Schools, 59*(12), 2506-2521.

Sanders-Phillips, K., Kliewer, W., Tirmazi, T., Nebbitt, V., Carter, T., & Key, H. (2014). Perceived racial discrimination, drug use, and psychological distress in African American youth: A pathway to child health disparities. *Journal of Social Issues*, *70*(2), 279–297.

Scheurich, J. J., & Young, M. D. (1997). Coloring epistemologies: Are our research epistemologies racially biased? *Educational Researcher*, *26*(4), 4-16.

Schmitt, M. T., Branscombe, N. R., Postmes, T., & Garcia, A. (2014). The consequences of perceived discrimination for psychological well-being: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin*, *140*(4), 921.

Schonert-Reichl, K., & Roeser, R. (2016). Handbook of Mindfulness in Education Integrating Theory and Research into Practice. Mindfulness in Behavioral Health. (1st ed.). Springer.

SchoolDigger (2023). Mater Academy Mt. Vista. https://www.schooldigger.com/go/NV/schools/0000100851/school.aspx?utm_content=vc-close

Seaton, E. K., & Yip, T. (2009). School and neighborhood contexts, perceptions of racial discrimination, and psychological well-being among African American adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *38*(2), 153–163.

Segal, Z. V., Williams, J. M. G., & Teasdale, J. D. (2002). Mindfulness- based cognitive therapy for depression: A new approach to preventing relapse. Guilford Press.

Sellers, R. M., Caldwell, C. H., Schmeelk-Cone, K. H., & Zimmerman, M. A. (2003). Racial identity, racial discrimination, perceived stress, and psychological distress among African American young adults. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, *44*(3), 302– 317. https://doi.org/10.2307/1519781

Singh, N. N., Chan, J., Karazsia, B.T., McPherson, C. L., & Jackman, M.M. (2017). Tele-health Training of Teachers to Teach a Mindfulness-based Procedure for Self-management of Aggressive Behavior to Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. *International Journal of Developmental Disabilities. 63*(4), 195-203.

Sissoko, D. G., Baker, S., & Caron, E. H. (2023). Into and through the school-to-prison pipeline: The impact of colorism on the criminalization of Black girls. *Journal of Black Psychology. 49(*4), 466-497.

Skiba, R. J., Chung, C. G., Trachok, M., Baker, T. L., Sheya, A., & Hughes, R. L. (2014). Parsing disciplinary disproportionality: Contributions of infraction, student, and school characteristics to out-of-school suspension and expulsion. *American Educational Research Journal, 51*(4), 640-670.

Smith, W. A. (2004). Black faculty coping with racial battle fatigue: The campus racial climate in a post-civil rights era. In D. Cleveland (ed.). *A long way to go: Conversations about race by African American faculty and graduate students at predominantly white institutions*. Peter Lang. 171–190.

Smith, W. A., Allen, W. R., & Danley, L. L. (2007). Assume the position . . . you fit the description: Psychosocial experiences and racial battle fatigue among African American male college students. *American Behavioral Scientist, 51*(4), 551–578.

Smith, W. A., David, R., & Stanton, G. S. (2020). Racial battle fatigue: The long-term effects of racial microaggressions on African American boys and men. In *The international handbook of black community mental health*. Emerald Publishing Limited.

Solomon, C., DiLorenzo-Garcia, A., & Johnson, S. (2022). Safe healing circles: Mindful self-compassion interventions to address racial battle fatigue with teachers of color. *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, 61*(2), 105–117.

Solomon, C., & Lambie, G. (2020). Hispanic teachers' experiences with occupational stressors while working in Title I elementary schools. *Journal of Latinos and Education, 19*(2), 148– 163.

Solórzano, D. G. (1998). Critical race theory, racial and gender microaggressions, and the experiences of Chicana and Chicano scholars. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 11*(1), 121-136.

Solórzano, D. G, & Delgado Bernal, D. (2001). Examining transformational resistance through a critical race and LatCrit theory framework: Chicana and Chicano students in an urban context. *Urban Education, 36*(3), 308-342.

Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2001). From racial stereotyping and deficit discourse toward a critical race theory in teacher education. *Multicultural Education, 9*(1), 2-8.

Solórzano, D. G, & Yosso, T.J. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for educational research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 8*(1), 23-44.

Sotero, M. (2006). A conceptual model of historical trauma: Implications for public health practice and research. *Journal of Health Disparities Research and Practice, 1*(1), 93–108.

Spruit, A., Goos, L., Weenink, N., Rodenburg, R., Niemeyer, H., Stams, G. J., & Colonnesi, C. (2020). The relation between attachment and depression in children and adolescents: A multilevel meta-analysis. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review, 23*, 54-69.

Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C, Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A. M. B., Nadal, K. L., & Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist, 62*(4), 271-286.

Suzuki, S., & Dixon, T. (1970). *Zen mind, beginner's mind* (1st ed.). Walker/Weatherhill.

Tatum, B. D. (1992). Talking about race, learning about racism: The application of racial identity development theory in the classroom. *Harvard Educational Review, 62*(1), 1–24.

Taylor, E., Gillborn, D., & Ladson-Billings, G. (2023). *Foundations of critical race theory in education*. Taylor & Francis.

Teasley, M., & Homer, B. (2020). Racial disparities in the education system. In *Encyclopedia of Social Work.*

Thompson, M., & Gauntlett-Gilbert, J. (2008). Mindfulness with children and adolescents: Effective clinical application. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 13*(3), 395-407.

Tidwell, D. L., & Jónsdóttir, S. R. (2020). Methods and tools of self-study. *International handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices,* Springer International Handbooks of Education. 377-426.

Tsethlikai, M., Sarche, M., Barnes, J., & Fitzgerald, H. (2020). Addressing inequities in education: Considerations for American Indian and Alaska Native children and youth in the era of COVID-19. Society for Research in Child Development. https://www.srcd.org/research/addressing-inequities-education-considerations-american-indian-and-alaska-native-children

Umaña-Taylor, A. J., Quintana, S. M., Lee, R. M., Cross, W. E., Rivas-Drake, D., Schwartz, S.J., Ethnic and Racial Identity in the 21st Century Study Group. (2014). Ethnic and racial

identity during adolescence and into young adulthood: An integrated conceptualization. *Child Development, 85*(1), 21–39. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.1219

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (1999). *Mental health: A report of the Surgeon General.* Author.

Utsey, S. O., Chae, M. H., Brown, C. F., & Kelly, D. (2002). Effect of ethnic group membership on ethnic identity, race-related stress and quality of life. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 8*(4), 366–377. https://doi.org/10.1037/1099-9809.8.4.367

Villegas, A.M., Strom, K., & Lucas, T. (2012). Closing the racial/ethnic gap between students of color and their teachers: An elusive goal, equity & excellence in education, *45*(2) 283-301.

Vanassche, E. & Keltcherman, G. (2015). The state of the art in self-study of teacher education Practices: a systematic review. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 47*(4), 508-528.

Voight, A., Hanson, T., O'Malley, M., & Adekanye, L. (2015). The racial school climate gap: Within-school disparities in students' experiences of safety, support, and connectedness. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 56*(3–4), 252–267. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-015-9751-x

Walker, R., Francis, D., Brody, G., Simons, R., Cutrona, C., & Gibbons, F. (2017). A longitudinal study of racial discrimination and risk for death ideation in African American youth. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, *47*(1), 86–102.

Weick, K. E., & Putnam, T. (2006). Organizing for mindfulness: Eastern wisdom and Western knowledge. *Journal of Management Inquiry, 16*(3), 275.

Weiss, A. (2004). Beginning mindfulness: Learning the way of awareness. New World Library.

Whitehead, J. & Fitzgerald, B. (2007). Experiencing and evidencing learning through self-study: New ways of working with mentors and trainees in a training school partnership. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 23*(1), 1–12.

Widom, C. S. & Maxfield, M. G. (2001). An update on the cycle of violence. *Research in Brief.* U.S. Department of Justice, NCJ 184894. Retrieved from http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/184894.pdf

Will, M. (2020). How Covid-19 is hurting teacher diversity. Education Week.

Will, M., & Najarro, I. (2022). What is culturally responsive teaching? Education Week.

Williams, K., & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, A. (1999). Coping strategies in adolescents. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, *20*(4), 537–549. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0193-3973(99)00025-8

Williams, M., Teasdale, J., Segal, Z., & Kabat-Zinn, J. (2007) The mindful way through depression: Freeing yourself from chronic unhappiness. The Guilford Press.

Woods-Jaeger, B. A., Hampton-Anderson, J., Christensen, K., Miller, T., O'Connor, P., & Berkley-Patton, J. (2022). School-based racial microaggressions: A barrier to resilience among African American adolescents exposed to trauma. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, *14*(S1), S23.

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 8*(1), 69-91.

Zeichner, K. (2003). The adequacies and inadequacies of three current strategies to recruit, prepare, and retain the best teachers for all students. *Teachers College Record 105*(3).

Zenner, C., Herrnleben-Kurz, S., & Walach, H. (2014). Mindfulness-based interventions in schools: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology, 5*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00603

Zolkoski, S. M., & Lewis-Chiu, C. (2019). Alternative approaches: Implementing mindfulness practices in the classroom to improve challenging behaviors. *Beyond Behavior, 28*(1), 46-54.

Curriculum Vitae

Anastasia Jerbic-Gonzalez
Email: Anastasia-elizabeth00@hotmail.com

EDUCATION

Anticipated Summer 2024	Doctor of Philosophy in Teacher Education University of Nevada Las Vegas Las Vegas, Nevada Advisor: Dr. Katrina Liu
Graduated March 2024	Master of Educational Leadership American College of Education Indianapolis, Indiana
Graduated Fall 2019	Master of Curriculum and Instruction University of Nevada Las Vegas Las Vegas, Nevada
Graduated Fall 2016	Bachelor of Dance and Production Management University of Nevada Las Vegas Las Vegas, Nevada

Areas of Interest: *Informal Education Mental Health*, *Preservice and Inservice Teacher Education, Teacher Preparation, Leadership, and Curriculum and Instruction Design*

LICENSURE & CERTIFICATE

State of Nevada Teaching License-All Elementary Subjects K-8th	*Expires 4/2026*
Educational Administration Endorsement	*Expires 4/2026*
Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS)	*Certified*
Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)	*Certified*
Prolonged Exposure (PTSD)	*Certified*
Psychological First Aid Training (PFA)	*Certified*
Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR)	*Certified*
Project Lead the Way STEM K-5th	*Certificate*
Project Based Learning	*Certificate*
STEM Leaders Academy Session One	*Certificate*
Code.org Computer Science Fundamentals	*Certificate*
Certificate Bureau of Education & Research	*Certificate*
101 Strategies for Strengthening Your Physical Education Program	*Certificate*
Pilates Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced Floor, Reformers, Trapeze Table, and Small Equipment	*Certificate*

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor 2023-2024	Classroom Management for Undergraduate Students *University of Nevada Las Vegas*
Teacher 2022-2023	Health and Dance Instructor for Middle School grades *Middle School Teaching Experiences*
Instructor 2022 Spring	Educator, Innovative Arts Movement Trio Upward Bound Nevada State College Henderson, Nevada *Secondary Education Teaching Experience*
Teacher & Mentor 2020-2022	Lead Educator, STEM Pre-K through 5th grade Mater Academy Mt. Vista Las Vegas, Nevada *Preschool Teaching Experiences*
Teacher 2018-2020	Educator, Yoga and Mindfulness for kindergarten, Technology for 2nd-4th grade, Dance Instructor for 6th- 8th grade. Mater Academy Mt. Vista Las Vegas, Nevada *Elementary and Middle School Teaching Experiences*
Teacher 2017-2018	Educator, Double Dose Mathematics and Fitness Instructor for 6th- 8th grade Mater Academy Mt. Vista Las Vegas, Nevada *Middle School Teaching Experiences*
Teacher Jan 2017- May 2017	Educator, Teacher of record for 3rd Grade Mater Academy Mt. Vista Las Vegas, Nevada *Elementary Teaching Experiences*

SERVICE

Mater Academy Mt. Vista, Las Vegas, NV
Member: STEM Initiative Program- *School Year 2021-2022*
Director: Theatrical, Kindergarten Yoga and Dance Program- *School Year 2017-2020*

HONORS AND AWARDS

2021 Mater Academy Mt. Vista, 5 Year Milestone of Employment
2020 Mater Academy Mt. Vista, Teacher of the Month

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Through University of Nevada Las Vegas
EPY 702 Research Methods

EPY 718 Qualitative Research Methodology
EPY 719 Advanced Qualitative Research Methodology
EPY 721 Descriptive and Inferential Statistics
CIG 760R Inquiry into Teacher Education
CIG 761 Theoretical Foundations of Education
CIG 762 Instructional Strategies and Learning to Teach in Higher Education
CIG 763 Advanced Research in Teaching and Teacher Education
CIG 790* Doctoral Research Seminar
CIG 791* Internship in Curriculum and Instruction
CIT 772 Technology and Teacher Education
CED 703 Expressive Arts
Certificate Bureau of Education & Research- 101 Strategies for Strengthening Your Physical Education Program
CITI Program- Basic Course: Social Behavioral IRB

PUBLICATIONS

Raskin, A.M., Jerbic, A. (2021). Yoga A Possible Solution to Student Anxiety & Depression. *Academia Letters,* Article 4466. https://doi.org/10.20935/AL4466.

SKILLS

Bilingual:	Spanish and English
Computer Literate:	Microsoft, Mac, Microsoft Office, Presentation Software, Social Media, Spreadsheets, SPSS, Zoom, Skype, Google Applications, Canvas