

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in a Field Course: Preservice Teachers Practice SEL-Supportive Instructional Strategies

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This action research study examined social-emotional learning (SEL) strategies taught during a year-long elementary teaching credential field course to examine (a) what SEL strategies look like in practice, and (b) what training effects might be seen among twelve preservice student teacher (PST) participants. Part of a two-course clinical practice study, this paper focused solely on the research done in the field course during the 2013-2014 academic year. Drawing from program-based and integrated SEL literature, the strategies studied supported (a) active engagement in learning, (b) equitable access to instruction, including diversity and differentiated strategies, and (c) learner-centered classroom discipline. Frequency analysis of lesson plan data suggested that PSTs implemented positive disciplinary SEL strategies most frequently, followed by active engagement, diversity scaffolds, and differentiated accommodations. Coding and analysis of the PSTs' year-end written self-assessments also shed light on ways in which SEL instruction might have had positive effects on participants' developing SEL skills and professional habits of mind.

In recent decades, American schools have experienced an increase in student violence, bullying, drug use, and campus unrest (Center for Disease Control, 2015; Duplechain & Morris, 2014; Modecki, Minchin, Harbaugh, Guerra, & Runions, 2014). The National Center for Educational Statistics (2016) found that one in five public school students have been a victim of school bullying. It has also been found that bullying victims often suffer ridicule, name calling, physical aggression, and exclusion by their peers. These experiences make bullied children more vulnerable to a higher-than-average incidence of school maladjustment, anxiety, depression, and suicide (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2016). Working in an increasingly unsafe school environment, classroom teachers have reported feeling stressed and overwhelmed by unsatisfactory relationships with students, parents, and colleagues and often complain about poor work conditions (Musu-Gilletti, Zhang, Wang, Zhang, Kemp, Diliberti, & Oudekerk, 2018). In fact, during the 2015-2016 school year, a report by the National Center for Education Statistics

(2018) stated that “forty-three percent of public school teachers agreed or strongly agreed that student misbehavior interfered with their teaching” (p.vii). Further, eleven percent of elementary teachers reportedly experienced threats of injury or physical attack by a child in their school (p.v).

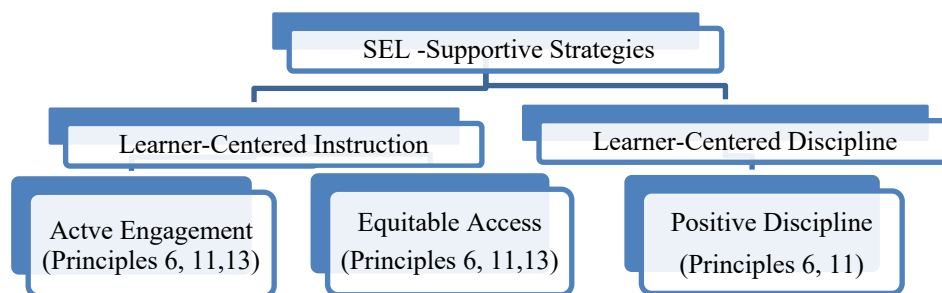
In 1994, a group of prominent American educators, researchers, scholars, and child advocates met to study school climate improvement and interventions. At this meeting, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) was conceived with the goal of providing a clearinghouse for SEL research, practice, and policy-making. Over the past two decades, CASEL has continued to function as the premier clearinghouse for innovative SEL research. Today, CASEL recruits expert scholars to investigate new ways to address some of the personal and social challenges facing America’s public school children, their teachers, and their schools (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) Guide, 2013; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellenger, 2011; Elias et al., 1997; Jones & Bouffard, 2012; Payton et al., 2000; Yoder, 2014; Zins et al., 2004). Social-emotional learning refers to the process of “developing social and emotional competencies in children” (CASEL, 2013, p. 9) including the skills, behaviors, and attitudes that people need to manage their personal, social, and cognitive behaviors (Yoder, 2014). The following five SEL competencies have been widely identified in the literature:

- self-awareness: recognizing and assessing one’s emotions and thoughts and their influence on performance, behavior, confidence, and optimism;
- self-management: regulating one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in various situations to effectively manage stress, impulses, motivation, and goal realization;
- social awareness: interacting socially, ethically and empathetically with people of differing perspectives, cultures and backgrounds;
- relationship skills: maintaining positive relationships with diverse individuals and groups by effectively communicating, listening, cooperating, negotiating and problem-solving;
- responsible decision-making: using ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, and the well-being of oneself and others when making choices. (CASEL, 2013)

Social-emotional learning is not a new educational concept having surfaced in public schools during the 1960’s when research on the affective domain of learning was being popularized (Krathwohl, Bloom & Masia, 1964). During the 1970’s, humanist educational

psychologists such as Carl Rogers (1979) began connecting affective-emotional strengths to children’s academic success. Gardner’s (1983) theory of multiple intelligences and Goleman’s (1995) research on emotional literacy provided additional evidence linking children’s social-emotional competencies to improved cognitive performance. During the early 1990s, the American Psychological Association (APA, 1993) convened a task force to synthesize a century of research on the psychology of learning in order to determine key tenets of human learning. As a result of this work, fourteen learner-centered psychological principles were established and grouped around four learning factors, including (a) metacognitive and cognitive, (b) affective and motivational, (c) developmental and social, and (d) individual differences. The principles of learner-centered theory provided a theoretical framework for SEL implementation in schools (McCombs, 2004). Significant to this study, principles six, eleven, and thirteen helped to establish the rationale for selecting the SEL instructional and disciplinary strategies targeted in this study. Principle six details the impact of classroom environment on learning, including teachers’ instructional and disciplinary practices. Principle eleven recommends that teachers establish positive social interactions, interpersonal relationships, and communication with students to improve climate, safety, and children’s learning. Principle thirteen addresses the need for teachers to consider children’s linguistic, cultural, social, and socioeconomic backgrounds in designing instruction that is responsive to the strengths and needs of the whole child. In fact, the concept of culturally relevant teaching “shares a substantial degree of common ground with SEL, including prioritizing self-awareness, perspective taking, student-teacher connections, student interaction and collaborative learning, and family and community partnerships” (Fleming & Bay, 2004, p. 105). Figure 1 (below) shows the relationship between learner-centered theory and the SEL strategies examined in this paper.

Figure 1. Alignment of Learner-Centered Principles and SEL Strategies



School and district-wide programs have been the primary SEL delivery vehicles in America's preschool through twelfth-grade classrooms and have shown some positive results in advancing children's emotional awareness, stress-management, empathy, problem-solving and decision-making, particularly among high-risk students (Durlak, et al., 2011). Some researchers, however, have reported limitations in the program-based model including its lack of continuous skill practice; limited long-term retention of skills; poor teacher buy-in; and inconsistent follow-up and support after program administrators exit schools (Elias et al., 1997; Fleming & Bay, 2004; Johnson, Poliner, & Bonaiuto, 2005; Jones & Bouffard, 2012; Jones, Bouffard, & Weissbourd, 2013; McCombs, 2004; Patti & Tobin, 2003; Zins et al., 2004).

A group of researchers have responded to SEL program shortfalls by proposing a "new approach" to SEL implementation in which classroom teachers are trained to integrate SEL-supportive strategies and disciplinary methods "into their daily interactions and practices with students" (Jones & Bouffard, 2012, p. 1). Further, a growing number of SEL researchers have advocated embedding SEL instructional curriculum into preservice teacher preparation courses to help further the integration of SEL into routine classroom learning (CASEL Guide, 2013; Dresser, 2013; Durlak et al., 2011; Elias et al., 1997; Elias & Arnold, 2006; Fleming & Bay, 2004; Jones & Bouffard, 2012; Jones et al., 2013; McCombs, 2004; Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013; Zins et al., 2004).

The authors of this paper, a field experience instructor (Sugishita) and a language methodology professor (Dresser) teaching in San José State University's elementary teacher training program, collaborated on the current two-semester SEL study during the 2013-2014 academic year. The twelve preservice teachers (PSTs) who participated in the study were enrolled in both courses simultaneously during the first semester and took only the field course in the second semester. The sample was comprised of eleven females and one male and included one Asian, and eleven White participants. Following the clinical practice training model, each instructor taught SEL content in tandem with their assigned course curriculum. The SEL content was coordinated between the two instructors in order to minimize SEL input duplication and the theory-to-practice gap that has been found in teacher preparation program courses [National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), 2010].

This article focuses solely on the SEL instruction and strategies offered in the two-semester field experience course. The paper begins with an overview of SEL

implementation literature, including both the traditional program approach and the nascent movement to embed integrated SEL-supportive instructional and disciplinary strategies into teachers' classroom work. As pictured in Figure 1 (above), three types of instructional and disciplinary SEL strategies are described and operationalized, including those that help teachers advance (a) active student engagement, (b) equitable access to learning, and (c) positive classroom discipline in their daily work. The article closes with descriptions of the study methodology, results, conclusions, and recommendations. Two study questions guided the research completed in the year-long field experience course including (a) what do SEL-supportive instructional and disciplinary strategies look like in classroom instruction, and (b) what SEL training effects might be observed in preservice teachers' lesson plans and year-end reflections?

SEL Program Implementation

Historically, SEL curriculum has been implemented in schools through district adoptions of program-based interventions targeting specific issues such as bullying, drug use, or school violence. Such intervention programs introduce research-based SEL strategies into classrooms by using outside agents who work with teachers and other school personnel to implement targeted SEL curricula. The Collaborative for Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) studied over two-hundred preschool and elementary school programs to determine their effectiveness in meeting a wide range of SEL intervention goals (CASEL Guide, 2013). CASEL only reviewed programs that (a) had well-designed multi-year curriculum addressing all five SEL competencies, (b) included ongoing training and support, and (c) were supported by evidence-based research including at least one quasi-experimental or randomized controlled trial with pre- and post- measures (p. 16). For each of the 19 CASEL-recommended SEL programs, the Guide provided evaluation data regarding sample grade-range, demographics, study design, and children's academic, social, and behavioral outcomes, including any reduction in conduct or emotional problems.

Although the CASEL (2013) study found many successful aspects and outcomes of SEL programs, some limitations in the program-based approach can be found in the literature (Elias et al., 1997; Fleming & Bay, 2004; Johnson, Poliner, & Bonaiuto, 2005; Jones & Bouffard, 2012; Jones et al., 2013; McCombs, 2004; Zins et al., 2004; Patti & Tobin, 2003). For example, some

teachers have reported that program-based SEL instruction was not well integrated into their daily teaching schedule and often felt like an “add-on” to their regular curriculum (Elias et al., 1997; Patti & Tobin, 2003). Articulating this concern, Elias et al. (1997) wrote that “a major obstacle to SEL program success occurs when the skills taught are not part of the regular curriculum, but instead are “add-ons” to planned classroom instruction” (p. 79). Other limitations such as short program duration and a lack of teacher support and followup have been noted by SEL researchers (Jones & Bouffard, 2012; Weissberg, Resnick, Payton, & O’Brien, 2003). Isolated program instruction also was found to inhibit long-term behavioral change by reducing opportunities for children to apply and practice new SEL skills while in settings such as the playground or lunch room (Johnson, Poliner, & Bronaiuto, 2005). Recognizing these limitations, a number of researchers have advocated that teachers embed SEL-supportive strategies into their daily instructional and disciplinary practices as an alternative or adjunct to program-based interventions (Jones & Bouffard, 2012; Jones et al., 2013; Lopes & Salovey, 2004; Patti & Tobin, 2003).

Integrated, Teacher-Led SEL

Integrated SEL instruction enhances children’s “social and emotional competence through instruction and structured learning experiences throughout the day” (Elias et al., 1997, pp. 2-3). Harvard University researchers Jones and Bouffard (2012) recommended that SEL instruction be “time-efficient, low-cost, and integrated with (rather than distracting from) academic curricula” (p. 1). Patti and Tobin (2003) suggested that SEL be infused into each component of an instructional lesson, including the content input, procedural strategies, and classroom management. For example, teachers might open the day with a structured “gathering” or morning routine wherein children would be given opportunities to interact with and get to know their peers while also practicing specific SEL-targeted social, communication, and listening skills during the meeting and throughout the school day. Implicit or informal instructional time may be used to deliver structured mini-SEL lessons during procedural directions, teacher modeling, management instruction, or group activities to target SEL skills related to improving children’s communication, listening, self-management, and social interactions (Lopes & Salovey, 2004). In preparation for cooperative groupwork, teachers could model effective peer interactions or provide written sentence starters to scaffold communication.

In addition, respectful, cooperative, and helpful behaviors might be role played to teach children social awareness and self-awareness skills. By using SEL-supportive strategies and skill-based SEL mini-lessons, teachers might help support children's academic and SEL competencies without adding time or curricular demands to their academic schedules.

Whether SEL instruction reaches children through program administration or integrated, classroom-based instruction, teachers are on the front-lines of implementation. In fact, a nascent movement to incorporate SEL training into preservice teacher preparation programs through the adoption of dedicated SEL teaching standards is underway (Fleming & Bay, 2004; Kendziora, Weissberg, Ji, & Dusenbury, 2011; Yoder, 2014). Although some claim that SEL content is incompatible with performance-based teaching standards and that little instructional time exists to cover additional state standards in credential training programs, others argue that many state teaching standards already require that candidates gain SEL teaching and disciplinary instructional skills (Fleming & Bay, 2004). Fleming and Bay (2004) studied existing state standards and determined that the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (IPTS) were "typical of teacher standards across the nation" (p. 99). Using the IPTS as a model, the researchers speculated that 91 % of state teaching standards already address SEL competencies and that 90% of those standards incorporate multiple SEL competencies. They concluded that teachers who view "SEL as an approach to classroom instruction, rather than as a single-period, add-on program, may help foster a sense of ownership and investment among teachers in infusing SEL principles in everyday classroom activities" (p. 107).

It should be noted that there is currently a gap in the literature on teacher-led SEL instruction, particularly regarding studies of preservice teachers practicing evidence-based SEL strategies. That said, studies such as the one done by Dresser (2013) describing how preservice teachers were taught to weave SEL into elementary teaching content, have contributed to the promotion of integrated or teacher-led SEL instruction. The field experience component of the current study, however, was different in that it looked at specific strategies that preservice teachers might learn in their credential practicum courses in order to help support the development of children's SEL competencies during regular classroom instruction.

What do Integrated SEL-supportive Strategies Look Like?

A challenge to incorporating general, classroom-based SEL instruction into preservice training courses includes the difficulty of identifying the evidence-based, SEL strategies that lead to children's social-emotional competency development. In other words, the daunting question that many teachers and teacher educators face is, "What do SEL strategies look like?" To help address this question, the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (CGTL), under the direction of Nicolas Yoder (2014), published a seminal research brief entitled, "Teaching the whole child: Instructional practices that support social-emotional learning in three teacher evaluation frameworks" (Yoder, 2014). The CGTL identified ten "teaching practices that promote students' social-emotional competencies" gleaned from a review of CASEL's 19 effective SEL programs and from studies by eight prominent SEL researchers and research groups (Yoder, 2014, p. 10). To highlight the embryonic state of integrated SEL research, the CASEL investigators explained that after conducting "an extensive literature review on social emotional learning . . . [only] eight scholars focused on describing general instructional SEL practices" (p. 10). After examining all of the programs in CASEL's list, five empirically researched SEL programs were studied. The five programs chosen included the Caring School Community (K-6th), Raising Healthy Children (K-6th), Responsive Classroom (K-6th), Steps to Respect (3rd-6th), and Tribes Learning Community (K-12th). Four of these programs sampled predominately African-American and Hispanic populations or those labeled "diverse" and the fifth sampled suburban Caucasians (CASEL, 2013). In terms of performance outcomes, the Caring School Community program showed positive results across all four performance categories including (a) improved academics, (b) improved behavior, (c) reduced conduct problems, and (d) reduced emotional challenges. The other four programs had mixed outcomes along these variables. Although positive, all outcome effect sizes were relatively small; however, according to Jones and Bouffard's (2012) assessment, "even small effects can have meaningful implications," especially among high-risk students (p. 6).

The ten core SEL-supportive instructional and disciplinary practices recommended by the CGTL included (a) balanced instruction, (b) cooperative learning, (c) classroom discussions, (d) academic press, (e) responsibility and choice, (f) competence-building, (g) self-reflection/assessment, (h) student-centered discipline, (i) positive teacher language, and (j) teacher warmth and care. Each of these "core" practices embodies "satellite" strategies, a term used in this paper to refer to learner-centered strategies that support core SEL practices. For

example, balanced instruction includes active engagement strategies, direct instruction, whole group learning, and small or individualized learning (Yoder,2014), each of which is supported by many satellite strategies. The caveat, however, is that teachers must know how to support core SEL practices through the nuanced use of appropriate satellite strategies. For instance, whole group instruction would not be considered SEL-supportive instruction unless the teacher also included satellite strategies such as student interaction, engagement activities, questions, or peer discussion during the instruction. This concept is made clearer in the next section, which presents literature on the core SEL practices targeted in this study and the satellite strategies that were used to operationalize targeted practices.

SEL Strategies for Active Engagement

Yoder (2014) identified active engagement strategies as a factor in balanced instruction, which is one of CGTL’s ten recommended SEL practices. Engaging or active strategies involve students in a lesson or activity by talking, writing, or doing something to advance children’s participation (Price & Nelson, 2007). Active engagement encourages children to stay on task and be more attentive and involved in the instruction. In these ways, children become more aware of the effects of their own actions on others, which support self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship-building, and decision-making competencies.

Active strategies that are integrated into whole class, small-group, and individualized learning support another core SEL practice that Yoder calls “competence-building.” Competence building is a form of SEL-supportive instruction in which “teachers help develop social-emotional competencies systematically through the typical instructional cycle: goals/objectives of the lesson, introduction to new material/modeling, group and individual practice, and conclusion/reflection” (Yoder, 2014, p. 17). For example, instead of “lecturing” on a topic during direct input, a teacher might plan an engaging debate in which children would be taught how to respectfully listen to opposing sides and perspectives, discuss consequences and obstacles, and perform role-plays to act out different solutions (Yoder, 2014). In this example, debates, listening activities, peer interaction, and role-plays are examples of active SEL satellite strategies that can support several competencies including responsible problem-solving, decision-making, communication and listening skills, and respectful relationship-building. Examples of other SEL active learning strategies include games, play, manipulative activities,

simulations, role plays, and projects that trigger concentration, focused attention, and a sense of group belonging, attachment, and responsibility among participants (Elias et al. (1997). In general, activities that engage children's spontaneity, humor, flexibility, creativity, and playfulness can promote SEL competencies by helping to "develop positive attitudes of altruism, kindness, and respect for others" (Elias et al., 1997, p. 77).

SEL for Equitable Access: Diversity Strategies and Differentiation

Academic press is another of Yoder's (2014) core SEL strategies which he defines as "meaningful and challenging work, and academic expectations [that] focus on the teacher's belief that all students can and will succeed" (p. 17). Using the example of a second-grade math teacher, Yoder describes academic press in practice by writing that "the teacher provides students with challenging problems, encourages them to struggle. . . and scaffolds the development of perseverance in solving problems. Some students are provided double-digit subtraction, and some students are provided single-digit subtraction until each student has mastered the material that is challenging for him or her" (p. 17). Academic press is framed by learner-centered principle thirteen (APA, 1993) which suggests that teachers get to know each child's background and needs in order to provide appropriate scaffolds and accommodations so that they might become successful and confident students and citizens. Two instructional practices that were examined in this study met Yoder's definition of academic press including diversity scaffolds and differentiated accommodations.

Diversity scaffolds make content and learning more accessible to all students by supporting students' linguistic, cultural, behavioral, academic, and stylistic differences (Price & Nelson, 2003, 2007). Price and Nelson (2003) offer several examples of diversity strategies, many of which have been successfully used in researched SEL programs, including repetition, review, modeling, visuals, graphic organizers, mnemonic devices, divergent questions, steps and strategies, sentence frames, and conversation cues. These SEL satellite strategies prepare learners for success and can play a part in advancing children's motivation, confidence, and positive attitudes toward school.

Another practice that supports academic press is differentiated accommodations which are described as practices that are "proactively planned by the teacher to be robust enough to address a range of learner needs, in contrast to planning a single approach for everyone"

(Tomlinson, 2001, pp. 2, 4). Differentiated instruction involves a teacher's use of accommodations to support children's unique strengths and needs by personalizing the content taught; the process of learning; the kind of assessment used; and/or the environment in which learning occurs. For example, a teacher might provide targeted students with individualized reading texts during a whole group activity or offers specialized input and assessments, based on their individual performance levels. Differentiation can also involve delivering altered content instruction to targeted individuals or small groups or personalizing children's access to time or materials during an assessment. For example, an SEL-trained teacher might offer high- or low-need students with leveled texts during a reading lesson or provide personalized access to time or materials during an assessment or during one-on-one instruction. Higher learners might work on individualized projects or be assigned as a peer tutor. In these ways, SEL teachers can draw from an arsenal of accommodations to meet the academic and social-emotional needs and strengths of the diverse learners in their classrooms.

Positive and Caring Discipline Strategies

Learner-centered classrooms embrace the use of developmentally appropriate, non-punitive, and proactive disciplinary strategies to increase student buy-in and motivate children to self-regulate and independently problem-solve (Mc Combs, 2004; Yoder, 2014). Learner-centered principles six and eleven (APA, 1993) recommends that teachers use instructional and disciplinary practices to help create caring teacher-student and peer relationships, communication, and classroom climate. Various learner-centered approaches appear in SEL program literature under labels such as "responsive classrooms," "caring learning community," and "democratic classrooms" (Elias, et al., 1997; McCombs, 2004; Patti & Tobin, 2003; Yoder, 2014). For example, democratic classrooms provide sound and fair discipline and shared rule-making (Patti & Tobin, 2003), while "caring communities" focus on nurturing self-discipline, moral values, and empathy for others (McCombs, 2004). Hallmarks of "responsive classrooms" include proactive management, student choice, and supportive teacher language (Yoder, 2014). As mentioned earlier, culturally responsive teaching is foundational to successful SEL implementation because it demands that teachers address diverse student needs in a manner that is both equitable and caring. According to Kusché and Walberg (2006), the more positively children feel about their teachers and vice versa, "the more positive the effect on cortical

development and learning” (p. 31). Conversely, “the perception of negative feelings from teachers. . . will likely cause significant interference with regard to motivation, attention, retention, and so on” (p. 31).

Positive and caring teacher language is one feature of “pedagogical care,” a term that Noddings (1992) used to describe supportive teacher (a) modeling, (b) dialogue, (c) practice, and (d) confirmation. These elements suggest that teachers can attain the ideal of pedagogical care by (a) modeling care in their interactions, (b) engaging in positive dialogue with children, and (c) by acting in ways that affirm children’s merits as students and their worth as human beings. Teachers can convey care and support to their students by using language that promotes children’s self-confidence, motivation, and self-awareness. For example, teachers can personally welcome children into the classroom with a friendly greeting or begin lessons in ways that excite attention or allude to a target child’s individual interests and skills. To emotionally support students during oral questioning, teachers can offer hesitant responders assuring comments such as, “Take some time to think about it,” “We’ll check in with you when you are ready,” or “Would you like to choose a friend to respond?” (Hirsch, 2010). Teachers can share personal stories from their own lives or use think alouds to humanize their instruction and promote a sense of community and safety in the classroom. Finally, caring instructors can convey support and acceptance of all children by maintaining a positive teacher stance and exhibiting actions that confirm every child’s worth as a learner and human being (Sugishita, 2002).

Qualitative Action Research Methodology

Qualitative research is typically characterized by the inclusion of (a) participant observation done in natural settings; (b) researchers’ subjectivity and knowledge of the participants’ perspectives; and, (c) mutable questions and theories (Jacob, 1993). More narrowly, classroom action research is the study of a “real school situation” (Schmuck, 1997, p. 28) in which narrative and descriptive approaches are used to “understand the way things are and what it means from the perspectives of the research participants” (Mills, 2003, p. 4). Belonging to the family of qualitative research methods, classroom research is a form of systematic inquiry done by teacher practitioners to (a) investigate an area of interest or concern (b) gather data from participating students (c) analyze and interpret the data, and (d) form an action plan for continued action (Mills, 2003; Sugishita, 2004). Having gathered data from our own student-participants,

the authors assumed the roles of course instructors, participant-observers, and qualitative action researchers.

In this study, “quasi-statistics” (Maxwell, 2010) such as frequency, means, and median values were obtained during the analysis of lesson plans. The use of some quantitative analysis, however, does not imply the reliability and validity presumed by empirical studies that use large, random samples, and careful adherence to the norms of statistical research.

Clinical Practice Component

Clinical practice is a preservice training model in which candidates’ academic and theoretical instruction is completed along-side actual classroom practice (NCATE, 2010). The language methodology professor who proposed the clinical practice portion of the current study had already published a paper on the effects of SEL in language instruction (Dresser, 2013) and was interested in extending her SEL research to include a field practice component. Whereas, the field instructor examined the participants’ SEL training during both the 2013-2014 semesters of the study, the language arts instructor-researcher was only involved in the Fall, 2013 semester, hence the clinical model component only framed the first half of the study. Although not realized in both semesters, it was hoped that the collaboration between course instructors during the implementation phase of the study might minimize the theory-to-practice gap that some researchers and course instructors have noticed in teacher preparation courses. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2010) described this program issue by writing that “teacher education has too often been segmented with subject-matter preparation, theory, and pedagogy taught in isolated intervals and too far removed from clinical practice. But teaching, like medicine, is a profession of practice, and prospective teachers must be prepared to become expert practitioners. . . in order to achieve this we must place practice at the center of teaching preparation” (p. 2). The clinical practice component of this study represented an example of how methodological and field instructors might work together to improve the efficacy and effectiveness of training during preservice teacher preparation.

Participants and Context

Twelve of the fifteen PSTs enrolled in the field experience course during the fall, 2013 and spring, 2014 semesters participated in the current study. The same participants were also

enrolled in the fall, 2013 language methods course. All of the enrollees in this convenience sample voluntarily signed a university-approved Institutional Research Board (IRB) agreement which guaranteed their anonymity; offered no monetary remuneration, and ensured them of no ill effects should they decide to decline participation or refuse to continue in the study at any time during the study. The study participants included eleven females and one male, seven of whom were under thirty years of age, while five were over thirty. There was one Asian and eleven White participants in the cohort. The participants completed their practicum assignments in kindergarten-through-fifth grade classrooms located within the borders of four Northern California school districts in a region known as Silicon Valley. Table 1 (below) shows the school contexts in which the PSTs implemented the lessons that were analyzed.

Table 1. Participants' School Placement Data

# of PSTs per School	Grade Levels	School Demographics H=Hispanic A=Asian B=Black W=White O=Other	% Eligible Free/ Reduced Lunch	Child:Teacher Ratio
4	1 st , 2 nd , K, K	72% H, A, B, O 28% W	53%	22:1
2	4 th , 4 th	81% A, H, B, O 19% W	81%	15:1
2	2 nd , 2 nd	96.9% H, A 3.1% W	90.1%	30:7
1	4 th	98% H, A, B, O 2% W	84%	20:1
1	1 st	84% A, H, B, O 16% W	49%	22:1
2	2 nd , 3 rd	82% A, H, B, O 18% W	26%	17:1

Data Collection

Three different forms of data were collected from each field student during the fall, 2013 and spring, 2014 field course, including (a) three “Teaching Beginning Reader Project” (TBRP) word-processed lesson plans, (b) TBRP lesson observation documents, and (c) one word-processed, year-end self-assessment reflection paper. Over two-hundred pages of lessons plans and observation notes and thirty-three pages of reflections were paginated, coded, and analyzed.

Below is a description of each data source, as well as information regarding data preparation, procedures, and instrumentation.

Fall 2013 Semester: Teaching Beginning Reader Project (TBRP)

The TBRP is a reading intervention project that was supported by instruction offered in both the language methods course and the field practicum course. The project was mandated for completion by all PSTs in SJSU's elementary education department during the fall, 2013 semester. The TBRP was designed as a cycle of classroom inquiry in which PSTs (a) studied their placement classroom contexts and students, (b) administered appropriate reading diagnostic assessments, (c) identified one-to-four low performing readers, (d) designed three intervention lesson plans, (e) implemented lessons in their field placement classrooms and, (f) identified next-step remediation. Before the middle of the fifteen-week fall semester, after the participants administered diagnostic reading tests to their students per their language methodology course instructor, they identified one-to-five target readers and designed intervention lessons plans in the field course. Soon after, the lessons were taught in one-to two-week intervals in the PSTs' assigned field practicum classrooms.

In accordance with the clinical practice training model, language-based SEL instruction was coordinated with field-based SEL training during the first fifteen-week semester of the study. Instructional curriculum and specific SEL training taught in the field course, included (a) input on general and SEL instruction and discipline strategies (b) assigned readings from from the text, *Daily Planning for Today's Classroom* (Price & Nelson, 2003, 2007) (c) review of the TBRP project parameters, and (d) seminar discussion, video-viewing, group and peer activities during seminars. Whole class discussions offered clarification, questions, and modeling of general and SEL strategies. For example, the PSTs viewed video clips of SEL teaching practices in which strategies were identified, demonstrated, and later demonstrated in small groups. In one seminar, a carousel activity led PST grade-level groups to chart and share the SEL-supportive strategies that each member had included in one of their TBRP lesson plans. The group activity concluded with a whole class debrief in which children's needs were matched to key SEL-supportive strategies. The PSTs shared their rationale for choosing particular SEL strategies relative to specific student needs or strengths. These activities supported participants in the revision of their lesson plan drafts before final classroom implementation.

In the language methodology course, the instructor reviewed (a) the TBRP assignment relative to reading remediation strategies, (b) reading assessment tests, administration, and analysis [e.g., the Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM) and anecdotal notes], and (c) affective, family, and cultural considerations in language instruction. For example, during one session, the PSTs shared their childhood memories of reading aloud to the whole class. Many PSTs in the language course were second-language learners who, as children, experienced discomfort in oral reading and admitted to still feeling anxious when asked to read aloud. As an SEL exercise, the candidates reviewed the vocabulary found in a selected text and were allowed to practice reading to a small group before reading to the whole class. This experience helped them to realize the importance of using SEL strategies such as pre-reading exercises, teacher-student oral reading, and small group learning to help reduce children's classroom anxiety.

A five-component lesson plan template was designed by both research authors to be used for the TBRP lessons. In addition to identifying the content and English Language Learner (ELL) standards, the template required PSTs to connect standards to appropriate content, diversity, and behavioral lesson objectives. The body of the lesson template required (a) a focus-motivation, (b) direct input procedures and learning task, (c) guided practice, (d) independent practice, and (e) a lesson close. Additional prompts asked participants to describe how their lesson plan addressed (a) positive behavior management, (b) equitable and accessible formative and summative assessments, (c) key academic language demands, and (d) improved access through diversity strategies and differentiated practices. In these ways, the lesson template acted as a graphic organizer to help PSTs design lessons that were standards-based and able to meet the diverse academic and SEL needs of the whole child.

Evaluation notes from two of the three TBRP lessons were completed by the PSTs' assigned classroom mentor teachers during their lesson implementations. Only the third lesson was observed and assessed by the field instructor and collected as data for this study. The field instructor's observation notes were examined to determine whether the PSTs' planned SEL engagement practices, access strategies, and discipline procedures matched what was actually taught. Although the observation notes helped to validate how accurately the lesson plans reflected what was taught, data from the notes were not included in the frequency distribution figures discussed in the Results section of this paper.

Second Semester: Year-end Self-assessment Reflections

The reflection assignment was designed and collected by the field instructor and included prompts that asked participants to share their assessments of their own (a) areas of greatest professional development and growth (b) areas of personal growth, and (c) notable teaching strengths and next steps. None of the question items included references to SEL practices in order to avoid prompting participants to discuss SEL in either positive or negative ways. Each PST submitted a word-processed, two-to-three page, single spaced narrative for analysis.

The year-end self-reflection papers were included as data in the design of this study in order to gain an understanding of any long-term effects of SEL instruction on the participants' SEL practices and "habits of mind" (Costa & Kallick, 2008). The importance of habits of mind in teacher development rests on the idea that new skills and knowledge are best honed in the context of challenges faced in natural, real-life classroom settings. It was the researchers' belief that SEL skills and understanding might best be captured during the days, weeks, and months of practicum classroom practice that followed the initial SEL instruction received during the first semester of the field and language courses. Specifically, it was hoped that the reflection papers would shed light on the PSTs' habits of mind relative to their understanding of the rationale for using SEL strategies and how those practices might influence children's long-term academic and social-emotional development.

Data Analysis

Quantitative TBRP Lesson Plan Data

The TBRP lesson plans were analyzed by (a) color coding examples of the three categories of SEL strategies; (b) using "quasi-statistics" (Maxwell, 2010) to determine the frequency of participants' SEL strategy-use; and (c) creating a frequency distribution chart of class performance. Data coding followed three guidelines. First, acceptable SEL strategies had to be appropriate in the context of the instructional objectives to receive a point credit. For example, if a PST used a game to engage children in learning a concept that was not related to the instructional objective, s/he would not receive credit for using that active engagement strategy. Secondly, PSTs were not given multiple credits for repeated use of the *same* strategy within the three-lesson sequence. This meant that if a participant offered children manipulatives such as individual white boards and magnet letters to complete a learning task, a point would be

given for effectively using one SEL active engagement strategy. If the PST used this exact strategy more than once, however, s/he would not receive a point for each time it appeared in the three TBRP lesson plans. In short, frequency totals represented the number of times a participant appropriately used *different types* of SEL-supportive satellite strategies. Finally, a special rule was set for counting participants' use of differentiated instruction. Recall that instructional differentiation involves tailoring the content, process of instruction, assessment process or product, and/or the learning environment to accommodate for individual or group needs and strengths (Tomlinson, 2001). Because the TBRP was designed as a reading intervention project, all of the lessons were delivered to targeted individuals or small groups of children and the content taught was tailored to their unique strengths and needs. For this reason, all participants were awarded two points in the differentiation category for offering (a) small or individualized instruction and, (b) tailored content based on children's specific needs.

Although this study was grounded in qualitative action research, "quasi-statistics" (Maxwell, 2010) in the form of quantitative frequency counts, means, and median values were determined during the analysis of lesson plan data. The TBRP observation notes were also reviewed and compared to the lesson plan data. By examining the lesson plans alongside the observation notes, the field researcher determined whether a credited strategy was actually implemented and if the implementation was appropriate and worthy of receiving quantitative credit. In short, data from the observation notes did not impact PSTs' frequency totals unless an SEL strategy was included in a written plan and *not* implemented, in which case, credit for the strategy would be rescinded. Fortunately, such instances were not observed.

To establish some face validity for the satellite strategies that were accepted as examples of the targeted SEL practices, a range of scholarship on instructional methodology, curriculum development, and SEL research and literature were examined (Elias et al., 1998; Johnson, Poliner & Bonaiuto, 2005; Jones & Bouffard, 2012; McCombs, 2004; Patti & Tobin, 2003; Price & Nelson, 2003; Tomlinson, 2001; Yoder, 2014; Zins et al., 2004). For example, to determine the PSTs' ability to incorporate SEL-supportive active engagement, equitable access and positive discipline strategies into their lesson plans, the field researcher read and coded the data using a color-coding system. The benchmark for SEL strategies accepted for credit in the coding process was based on whether the strategy met the definitional criteria suggested in the existing literature and was appropriately applied in the context and goals of the participants' lessons. For example,

strategies that promoted “active engagement” had to involve children by talking, writing, or doing something that advanced children’s physical and/or intellectual involvement in the lesson as defined by Price and Nelson (2007). Examples of active engagement strategies included those that used realia, whiteboards, sorting activities, choral reads, questioning, magnet letters, games, questions, word sorts, partner talks, hand gestures, or group brainstorming.

Two core SEL strategies supporting equitable access to learning included (a) diversity strategies and (b) differentiated instruction. Diversity strategies scaffold instruction to account for differences in children’s linguistic, cultural, behavioral, academic, and stylistic needs and strengths. Examples of diversity strategies included the use of visual reinforcement, content reviews, teacher modeling, examples, picture/word cards, charts, memory tips, and step-by-step instructions, word-strips, charted steps, picture word cards, iPad visuals, modeling, and sentence frames (Price & Nelson, 2003, 2007). Differentiated instruction increases equitable access and accommodates for unique behavioral and learning differences by individualizing the content taught; the process of learning; the kind of assessment used; and/or the environment in which the instruction occurs. Examples of differentiated accommodations that were accepted for credit included providing additional support during assessments; offering challenging words to higher learners; increasing challenge for higher-performing learners; and, adjusting content demands for the lower learners.

Finally, from the body of literature on positive discipline strategies, select SEL-supportive strategies were taught in the field course and coded during analysis. Specifically, the coding criteria in this category included evidence of teachers’ use of (a) positive language and (b) strategies to create a fair climate in the classroom. The use of positive language was coded when participants wrote into their lesson plans dialogue such as positively-framed questions, positive reinforcement statements, and praise for good behavior, performance, or attitudes. Entries that helped to establish a positive climate included the use of clear directions, management reminders, checks for understanding of rules and procedures, or reminders of next steps. In the field course, these types of comments were required to be written into lesson plans and verified by observation notes.

Qualitative End-of-year Reflection Data

Narrative responses from the end-of-year assessments were read and analyzed by the field researcher as a way to unveil the PSTs' (a) understanding and use of SEL engagement, diversity, differentiation, and positive discipline strategies, and (b) any changes in their "habits of mind" regarding their SEL teaching responsibilities. Text entries that referenced any of these topics were highlighted during analysis. For example, one participant discussed her recent use of SEL strategies by writing that she "learned that ...strategies like TPR [Total Physical Response], partner work, visual-Power-Point presentations have a deep impact on the students' learning" (Sugishita, 2014, p. 8). Although this entry reflected the PST's SEL strategy-use and "habits of mind," it did not change her frequency totals which were drawn solely from TBRP lesson plans and verified by observation notes.

Study Results

The frequency data that were drawn from the TBRP lesson plans and analyzed in this study are summarized in Table 2 (below). The table reveals how often the participants' TBRP lessons included strategies that advanced active engagement; children's access to learning (diversity and differentiation strategies); and positive discipline. It is important to remember that the TBRP lessons were drafted and implemented by the PSTs within the initial weeks of the first semester of the study. It is also important to mention that the following description of findings contains some quantitative descriptions and language which, due to the small size of the sample and the use of convenience sampling methods, do not suggest empirical significance or transferability of findings to other sample populations.

Table 2. Frequency of Strategy Use in TBRP Lessons

fScores	Active Engagement	Improved Access		Positive Discipline
		Diversity	Differentiation ¹	
19				
18				
17				
16				
15				
14				
13				
12				
11				
10				
9				
8				
7				
6				
5				
4				
3				
2				
Mean	8.25	6.50	4.25	9.66
Median	7.50	7.00	4.00	10.00

¹ Participants started with two differentiation credits.

PSTs' Use of Active Engagement Strategies

The lesson plan frequency data suggested that nine of twelve PSTs used between seven and fifteen different types of interactive and engaging practices in their three TBRP lessons, with three participants using four or fewer SEL-supportive active learning strategies in their lessons. Participant's use of engagement strategies ranged between four and fourteen strategies with a mean of 8.0 and a median of 8.25. The distribution was positively skewed suggesting that more of the PSTs' scores were clustered below the mean than above, probably due to three outliers on the high end of the distribution. Six of the PSTs' scores were clustered around the mean of 8.0 engagement strategies in their TBRP lessons.

The variety of strategies used was also a finding of interest in this category. For example, participants who used engagement strategies most often, also chose SEL practices that were more varied and tailored to children's individual needs and strengths. For example, Maddie (all participant names are pseudonyms) was the high scorer in this category and kept her students

actively engaged by using realia, whiteboards, sorting activities, choral reads, questioning, playing cards, magnet letters, “word family” games, and salt trays to write words. These strategies required children to manipulate materials and communicate with peers during the lesson which improved learning and promoted academic self-confidence and personal self-awareness. The next high scorer, Becca, gained the attention and interest of her students by using interactive magic tricks, card games, whiteboards, manipulative cards, questions, word sorts, partner talks, hand gestures, “invisible” microphones, and group brainstorming in her TBRP lessons. Although all PSTs used some SEL-supportive active strategies in their lessons, their choices were not always personalized to children’s unique needs as in the previous examples. Tina used only three generic strategies to engage her students including a picture walk, student questioning, and a choral read in her three TBRP lessons. Likewise, Gary implemented a word hunt, choral read, partner practice, and questioning to engage his students. Both of these PSTs entered the course without previous classroom experience, as compared to Maddie, whose prior work experience as a substitute teacher and science fair coordinator could have made her adoption of SEL strategies less challenging.

A review of the end-of-year self-assessments showed changes in the participants’ early use of SEL strategies versus their use of SEL over the ensuing months of their practicum training. Five participants wrote that their area of “greatest growth” resided in their ability to use active engagement strategies. Rena, whose engagement frequency score was below the mean early in the year, shared that she began to use “images, word wall, realia, video clips, pair sharing, partner work, and checks-for-understanding (CFUs)” in her instruction and noted that her mentor teacher didn’t use any of these engagement strategies, but “encouraged [her] to do so” (Sugishita, 2014, p. 17). These comments suggested that, during the year of their practicum training, some PSTs tried new ways to engage students in fun, active, and collaborative ways and, in so doing, might have also modeled SEL instruction for their mentor teachers.

PSTs’ Use of Strategies to Improve Access

Diversity scaffolds and differentiated instruction are both vehicles of “academic press,” named as one of CGTL’s 10 recommended SEL strategies (Yoder, 2014). Diversity strategies are scaffolds designed to improve access to content and help equalize learning for students with linguistic, cultural, behavioral, academic, and stylistic differences. Some scaffolds that

participants were taught to use included visual-and-verbal repetition, mnemonic devices, steps and strategies, graphic organizers, sentence frames, and conversation cues to bridge the academic and social-emotional needs of focus students. In this category, the participants used between two and nine different diversity strategies, with a mean of 6.50 and median of 7.0. The distribution was negatively skewed, suggesting that the majority of students performed above the mean in providing scaffolded instruction in their lessons. Nine of the twelve PSTs used between six and nine different diversity scaffolds in their three TBRP lessons with three participants using four or fewer scaffolds. For example, Tara used ten different scaffolds including visual reinforcement, content reviews, teacher modeling, examples, picture/word cards, charts, memory tips, and step-by-step instructions. Tina incorporated nine scaffolds into her lesson sequence including word strips, charted steps, learning strategies, picture word cards, iPad visuals, modeling, and sentence frames into her lessons. Unfortunately, not all of the PSTs were able to equalize access for all children by using diversity strategies at this skill level. Among the participants who scored between two and four in this category, Kris used modeling, visuals, and examples and Darbie used only pictures and modeling.

The self-assessment data suggested that all of the PSTs felt they had grown in using strategies that supported academic press. Specifically, half of the participants discussed their growth in using both diversity scaffolds and differentiated instruction strategies, with the remaining participants only citing diversity strategies as an area of growth. Lisa, one of the participants who described her growth in both areas of equal access, wrote that “there is no “one size fits all” in teaching to a class of thirty students (Sugishita, 2014, p. 20). She went on to describe how she made accommodations for children’s individual needs and strengths through differentiated instructional techniques. She also reflected on “how much [she had] grown in scaffolding worksheets and activities” (p. 20) in her lessons to make content accessible for individual children. Tina described a number of specific diversity and differentiated instructional strategies that she used in her practicum lessons. She summarized her view of a teacher’s professional responsibilities by writing that her “strongest asset in terms of professional preparation is being able to plan lessons for a diverse range of students” (p. 30).

Remembering that all participants began with two credits in the area of differentiated instruction, 92% of the PSTs incorporated five or fewer differentiated accommodations in their TBRP lessons. The frequency distribution for this skill area ranged from three to eight

differentiated accommodations, with a mean of 4.08 and a median of 4.0. The fact that the mean was higher than the median suggested that an outlier score slightly elevated the mean. The positively skewed distribution suggested that PST performance clustered on the low side of the range. In fact, of the three SEL-supportive instructional strategies examined in this study, performance was the lowest in the area of differentiation skills, with most PSTs only using two or three accommodations for special learners, above the two that were required by the TBRP criteria. Kris, who was the high-end outlier in the area of differentiation, adjusted her assessment criteria by allowing focus students access to additional materials and pictures during the assessment; providing challenging words to higher learners; changing the content of assessments for different learners; and, not assessing on spelling for some students. Kris also provided more challenging vocabulary to higher-performing students within the small group and adjusted content demands for low readers. Examples of other accommodations used by PSTs included allowing children to draw or point to responses instead of having to write them, and allowing children to read privately to the teacher rather than reading aloud to the whole group.

In summary, the PSTs were able to implement diversity strategies in their TBRP lessons more frequently than differentiation accommodations. The majority of PSTs only incorporated three or fewer specialized diversity or differentiated strategies into their TBRP lessons at the start of the year. By year-end, however, eight of twelve participants felt they had grown in their ability to differentiate instruction. For example, Tina was only able to use one additional accommodation in her three TBRP lessons early in the year, yet at year-end she wrote that “students are academically diverse [which] taught me the importance of differentiating lessons and assessments to help these students meet their needs” (Sugishita, 2014, p. 29).

PSTs’ Use of Positive Discipline Strategies

Learner-centered classroom communities are dependent on many positive teacher qualities including teachers’ positive language and positive, caring discipline. Participant scores in this area ranged from two to nineteen with a mean of 9.6 and a median of 10.00. The higher median suggested a clustering of scores on the higher-end of the distribution. In fact, eight of the twelve participants had between nine and thirteen different positive discipline examples in their TBRP lessons. For example, many students used positive and caring language during their instruction such as praise for effort, encouragement during difficult tasks, and greetings to make

students feel safe and welcome. Maddie encouraged her students by closing her lesson with the statement, “Great job today; let’s look at what you [wrote]!” (Sugishita, 2014, p. 96). She also helped to create a relaxed and fun learning environment by making statements such as “let’s work with some other fun words!” Tara offered struggling students’ assurance by saying, “it’s okay if you don’t know the answer. . . we’re here to learn!” (p. 101)

A positive learning environment can be advanced by providing scaffolded instruction and personalized learning environments for children of diverse needs. To check each child’s comprehension, Sarta asked all of her students to use white boards to respond to questions before ending her instructional input. She used this assessment data to decide her next-day’s instruction. Lisa’s lesson plan indicated that she would use quiet hand motions to redirect individual children’s attention during a lesson. She reasoned that this practice would avoid singling out low-performers. Rena personalized her teaching by sharing her own learning challenges and at the same time, equalized power in her classroom by establishing a learning community in which she and her students held equally important and respected roles.

As significant to the PSTs’ use of specific positive discipline strategies in their lesson plans, was evidence that, by the end of the year, their reflections described growth in their ability to create positive classroom environments through the use of scaffolded instruction and positive actions and words toward children. Tera’s self-assessment revealed her realization that students’ learning did not just depend on the “quality of textbooks or an effective teacher,” but also on the comfort and safety children feel at school and the strength of their relationship with adults and peers there (Sugishita, 2014, p. 9). Gary reflected that “students may bring their outside issues, including anger or resentment toward the world, with them into the classroom” but good teachers strive to “see beyond the veneer of hostility and break through to the real person inside” (p. 7). Finally, Beca, not only described how she created a positive learning climate in her classroom, but also connected that achievement with children’s improved “self worth, confidence, and willingness to take academic risks” (pp. 31-32). Although not counted into their frequency totals, these excerpts reflected the PSTs’ a growing awareness that teachers’ use of positive discipline and caring can be important in supporting childrens’ academic *and* social-emotional growth and well-being. These changes in the PSTs’ professional “habits of mind” were also regarded as positive markers of their developing understanding of SEL instruction.

Discussion

A broad goal of this study was to explore the feasibility of adding an SEL component to a university, credential department field experience course, taught by one of the researchers. This involved addressing two questions: what strategies might promote children's socioemotional competencies and how effectively might PSTs use SEL strategies taught in their field course? Data included participants' TBRP lesson plans, observation notes, and year-end self-assessment reflections. The study findings suggested that, after the initial month of SEL seminar instruction, the PSTs were able to use all of the targeted strategies taught in the practicum course, to varying degrees.

The frequency distribution chart (see Table 2) suggested that the PSTs used learner-centered discipline strategies more frequently than any other SEL practice with a mean of 9.66 and a median of 10.00. These positive results, however, might have been influenced by factors in the PSTs' classroom placements. For example, mentor teachers' discipline practices often influence student teachers' discipline, particularly early in the placements and among less experienced candidates. Since most of the mentors were experienced and well-respected veterans who could model best practices, this contextual element might have been an external variable favorably affecting PSTs' scores. On the other hand, school setting and culture might also have influenced PST performance. Nine of the twelve participants were placed in high-need schools, possibly presenting some PSTs with greater challenges around children's socioeconomic, cultural, and linguistic needs. In spite of this, the PSTs assigned in schools with high at-risk populations, scored above the mean in their use of positive discipline practices. These results might suggest that teachers trained to use positive and supportive instruction and discipline practices, could have a greater-than-average influence on the success of children with special needs or strengths (Jones & Bouffard, 2012). Another possible upside of training PSTs to use SEL strategies in practicum classrooms is that they might model SEL strategies for their mentor teachers and thereby propagate interest in teacher-led SEL in schools.

The mean scores in active engagement and diversity strategies were 8.25 and 6.50, respectively. Because these areas of instruction are commonly covered in courses prerequisite to the field course, the PSTs relative strengths in using active and diversity strategies might have been affected by differences in their previous knowledge. On the other hand, fewer credential courses offer detailed instruction on differentiation, which could account for the PSTs' reduced

performance (M 4.25) in this area. Fortunately, many of the PSTs' final reflections suggested that differentiation was an area in which they felt they had grown professionally during their year of field course instruction.

Finally, many of the participants' self-assessments suggested changes in their "habits of mind" (Costa & Kallick, 2008) concerning their professional teaching responsibilities and the need to address every child's unique needs and strengths. Because the TBRP was an action research study and the researchers had to adhere to university guidelines for the project, they could not alter the TBRP materials that were used as data. Therefore, it's important to consider whether the parameters of the TBRP might have influenced the results of the study. For example, the TBRP required that participants identify one to five children with reading difficulties. Since PSTs only had to address a small number of students while implementing the targeted SEL strategies in their TBRP lessons, their performance might have been higher than if they were teaching whole class groups.

Conclusions

This paper began with a short overview of the growing violence and unrest in today's schools (Center for Disease Control, 2015; Duplechain & Morris, 2014; Modecki, Minchin, Harbaugh, Guerra, & Runions, 2014) and the devastating consequences that such conditions have had on America's young children (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2016) and their teachers (Musu-Gilletti, Zhang, Wang, Zhang, Kemp, Diliberti, & Oudekerk, 2018; National Center for Education Statistics , 2018). The lack of safety in our nation's classrooms has created a pressing need for interventions that can help children deal with the societal, socioeconomic, personal, academic, and socioemotional challenges that plague so many of their lives. CASEL (1994) began a national effort to study SEL and advance new ways to help teachers better service and protect the students in their classrooms. Unfortunately, even though many SEL programs have been in schools for well over a decade, research suggests that few participating teachers continued to use SEL instruction after program administrators left their campuses (Elias et al., 1997; Fleming & Bay, 2004; Johnson, Poliner, & Bonaiuto, 2005; Jones & Bouffard, 2012; Jones, Bouffard, & Weissbourd, 2013; McCombs, 2004; Patti & Tobin, 2003; Zins et al., 2004).

The alternative to program-based SEL, teacher-led or integrated SEL instruction, might

offer a brighter future for teachers and their students. The results of including SEL strategies in a field experience practicum course were promising. The strategies were woven into the course curriculum without adding a burdensome amount of time or new content to the existing field course requirements. It is hoped that more credential program professors and field instructors will conduct clinical investigations on integrated SEL instruction, in future studies. For example, by using the clinical model, university field instructors and methodology professors can collaborate to teach SEL theory and strategies via dual-course assignments like the TBRP. By offering SEL content instruction in both courses, simultaneously, and providing coaching during SEL classroom implementation, PSTs have the opportunity to learn SEL strategies in more meaningful and enduring ways. Finally, by conducting SEL research in public school classrooms, veteran teachers and school administrators might be given an opportunity to observe the possibilities of teacher-led SEL through the work of their student teachers. Overall, the researchers were encouraged with the findings of this study and hope that by teaching preservice teachers to use integrated SEL strategies, this practice might one day become an everyday part of teacher's work and disprove complaints that "preservice teacher education programs are not adequately preparing teachers to deal with student social, emotional and behavioral problems" (Schonert-Reichl, Hanson-Peterson, & Hymel, 2015, p. 406).

Looking to future classroom-based SEL studies, it's hoped that some of the research limitations of this study might be ameliorated. This small practitioner-led study was limited by its use of convenience sampling, small sample size, as well as its lack of generalizability and replicability. Because the study focused on preservice teachers, children's work was not examined, nor were new connections made between the use of strategies and children's SEL competencies. Further, various environmental conditions in the PSTs' placement classrooms might have influenced study results. In spite of these limitations, the authors hope that this research might make a small contribution to the nascent body of work on teacher-led SEL classroom strategies and inspire future studies of integrated SEL.

In closing, the authors hope that future teacher educators will consider including SEL instruction in their credential courses and that classroom teachers will realize the human benefits of using SEL strategies in their daily teaching. Words taken from participant Krissy's course reflection provides some evidence to affirm this hope:

One major thing that I have learned in this class is the social, behavioral, and academic needs of *all* students. Each student brings something different to the classroom. Some are academically higher than others, some have behavioral problems, and all have different emotional needs. As a teacher I have learned to be aware of all of these different needs and how to address them. It is crucial that none of these students gets looked past or forgotten. (Sugishita, 2014, p. 23).

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