

**Fostering Emotion Regulation in Lower Elementary Children
Through Practical Life Exercises**

Doris Lin

November 30, 2021

Introduction

- Social-emotional learning and student success (Berkovits et al., 2017)
- Self-regulation & normalization (Montessori, 1995)
- Emotion-regulation (Wyman et al., 2010; Berkovits et al., 2017)
- Practical Life (Bettmann, 2015)

Research Question

How can practical life exercises be integrated with the explicit teaching of self-regulation skills in fostering emotion regulation of children in the lower elementary classroom?

Theoretical Framework

- ❑ Maria Montessori's Planes of Development (Montessori, 1995; Association Montessori International, 2021)
- ❑ Normalization (Montessori, 1995; Lloyd, 2008)
- ❑ Normality (Montessori, 1995)

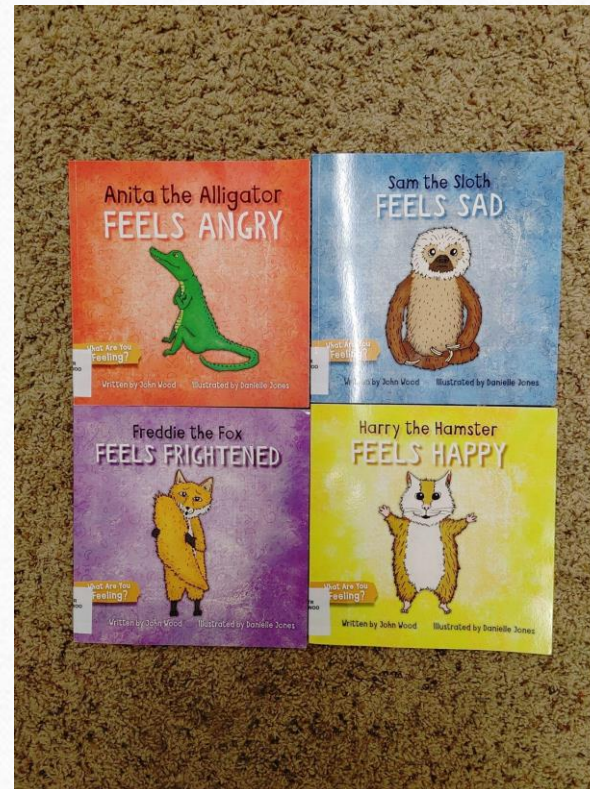
Literature Review

- Self-Regulation (Vohs & Baumeister, 2004)
- Emotion Regulation (Wyman et al., 2010; Cai et al., 2018)
- Emotion Regulation Strategies (Cai et al., 2018; Berkovits et al., 2017; Wyman et al., 2010)
- Practical Life and Self-Regulation (Bettmann, 2015; Linebarger, 2016; Voreis, 2016)
- Practical Life Exercises to Foster Emotion Regulation (Bettmann, 2015; Cai et al., 2018; Bodrova & Leong, 2008)

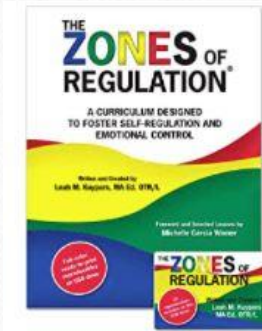
Methodology

- Four weeks (second week of September to first week of October)
- Grade 1 and 2 Montessori Classroom
- 20 students: 13 boys and 7 girls
- The Zones of Regulation (Kuypers, 2011)
 - emotion regulation lessons: read aloud, discussion, activity
- 2, 4, 6, 8 This is How We Regulate (Turner-Bumberry, 2019)
 - feelings thermometer
 - practical life activities: Eye Break, Hand Break, Ear Break & Movement Break

SEL Read-Alouds






Zones of Regulation



Supplementary Reproducible E for Elementary Ages

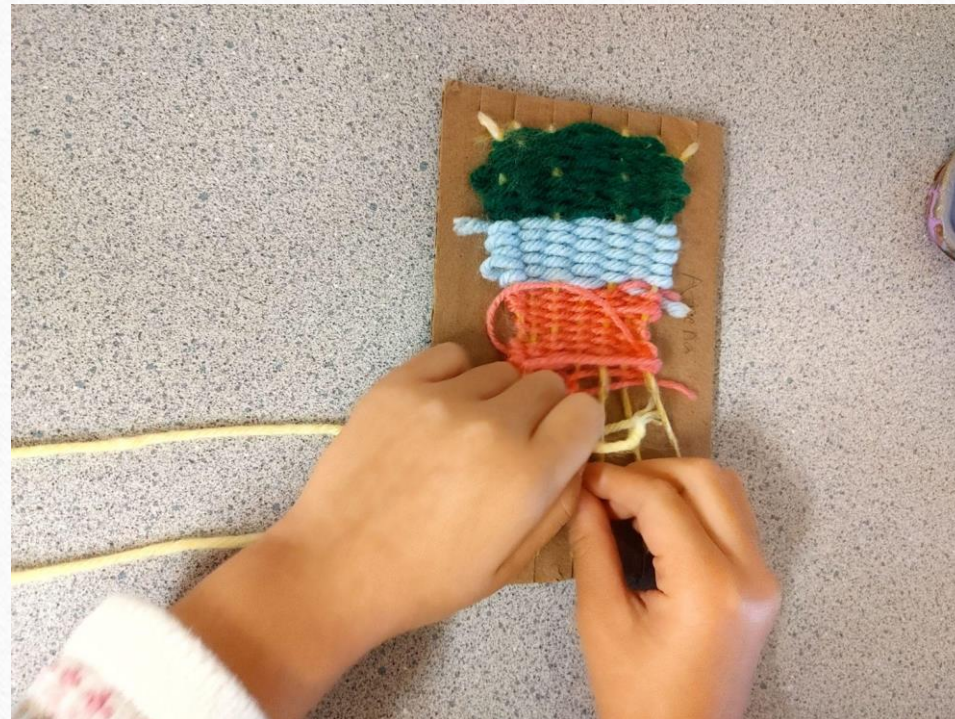
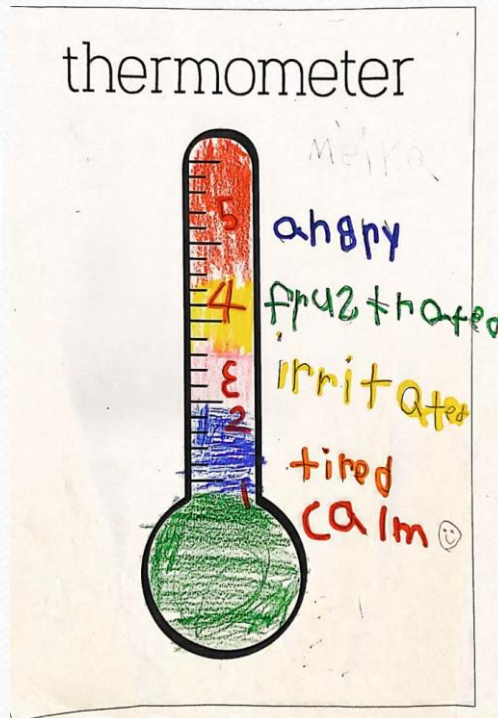
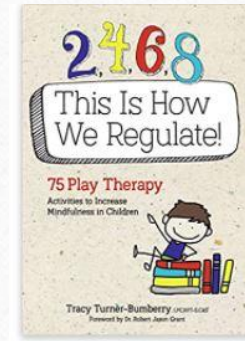
THE ZONES OF REGULATION

The ZONES of Regulation

			
Blue Zone Sad Bored Tired Sick	Green Zone Happy Focused Calm Proud	Yellow Zone Worried Frustrated Silly Excited	Red Zone overjoyed/Elated Panicked Angry Terrified

Copyright © 2021 Think Social Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.
Adapted from *The Zones of Regulation 2-Storybook Set* | Available at www.socialthinking.com

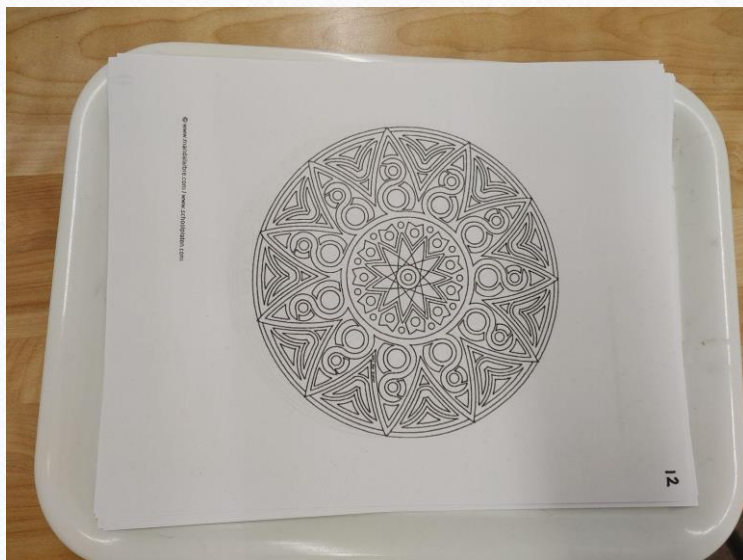
Feelings Thermometer



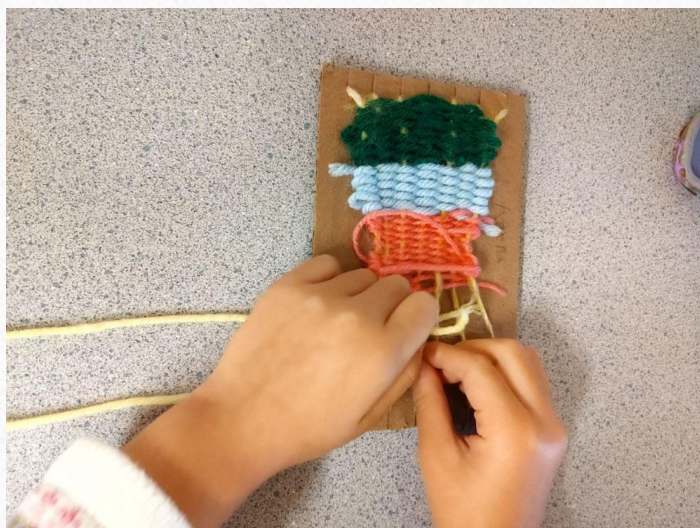
Practical Life Area



Calming Practical Life Exercises



Calming Practical Life Exercises



Data Collection

- Quantitative Data Collection Tools:
 - students' self-assessments (pre-and post-study)
 - parent questionnaire
 - daily feelings check-in
 - tallies of behavior deviations/emotional distress vs. self-regulated moments
- Qualitative Data Collection Tools
 - morning feeling journals (students)
 - observation journal (teacher/researcher)
 - practical life reflection

Quantitative Analysis

- ❑ Student Self-Assessment
- ❑ Feelings Check-In
- ❑ Parent Questionnaire
- ❑ Behavior Deviations versus Emotion Regulation Tallies

My Feelings Self-Assessment

My name is _____

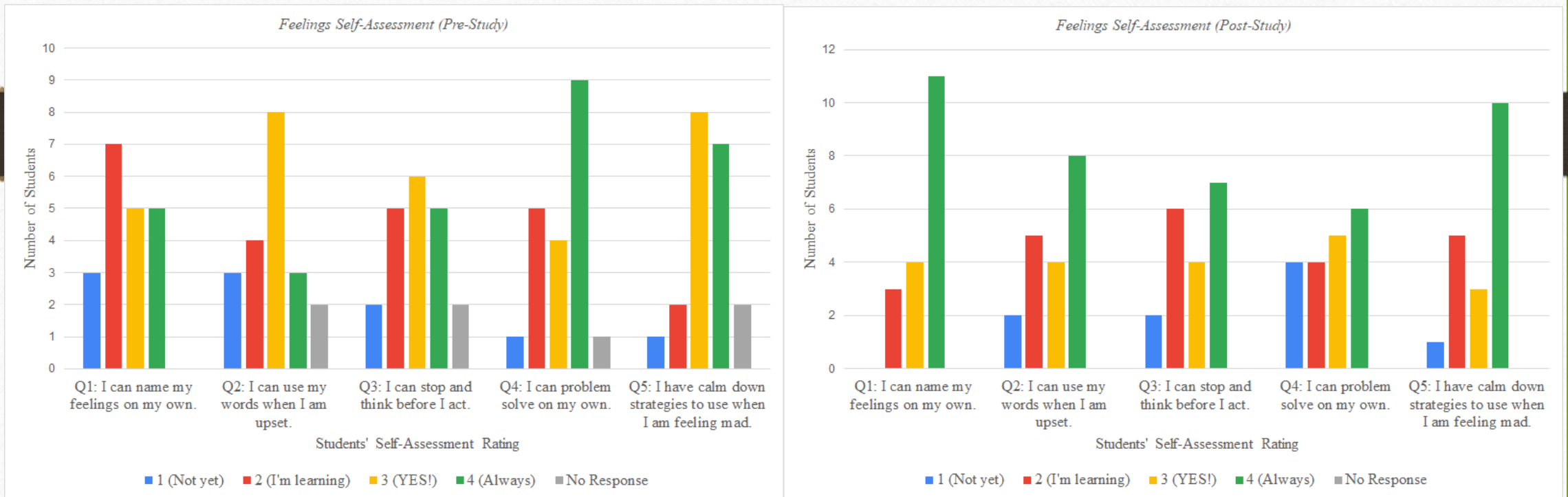
Date: _____

	Not Yet 1	I'm Learning! 2	YES! 3	Always 4
1. I can name my feelings on my own.	☹️	😐	😊	😄
2. I can use my words when I am upset.	☹️	😐	😊	😄
3. I can stop and think before I act.	☹️	😐	😊	😄
4. I can problem solve on my own.	☹️	😐	😊	😄
5. I have calm down strategies to use when I am feeling mad.	☹️	😐	😊	😄

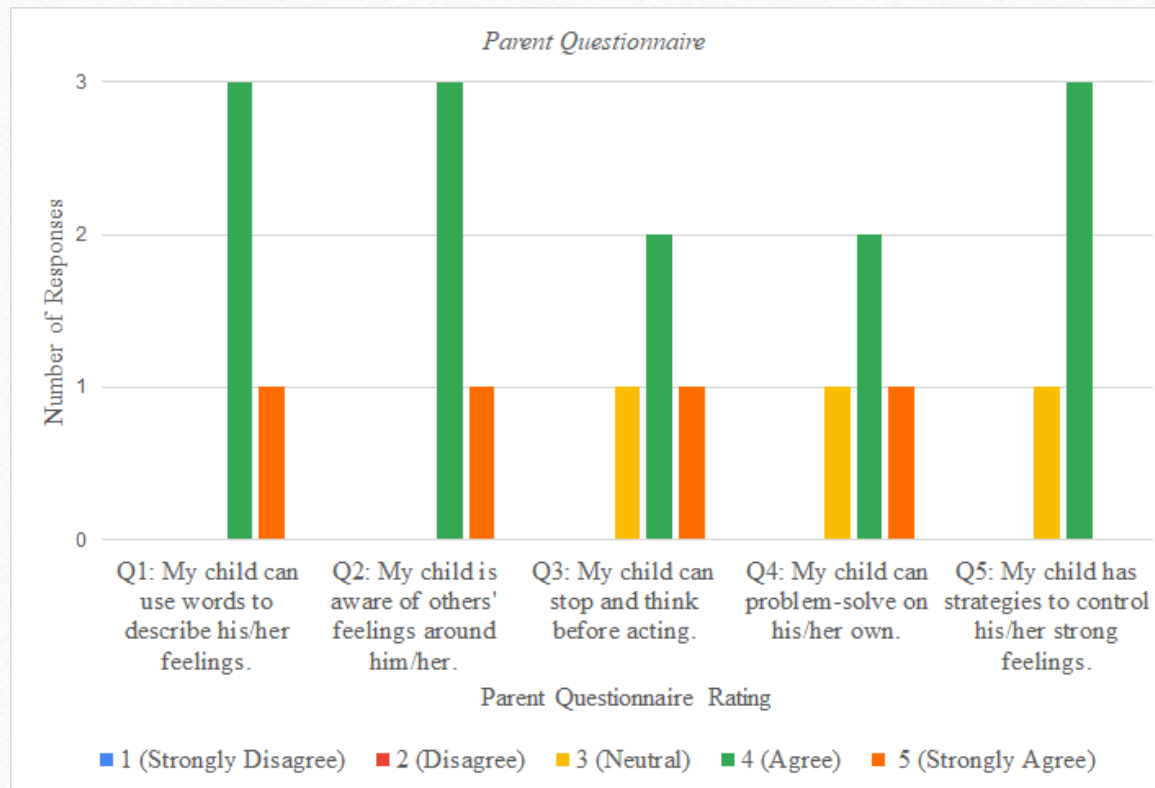
I want to get better at



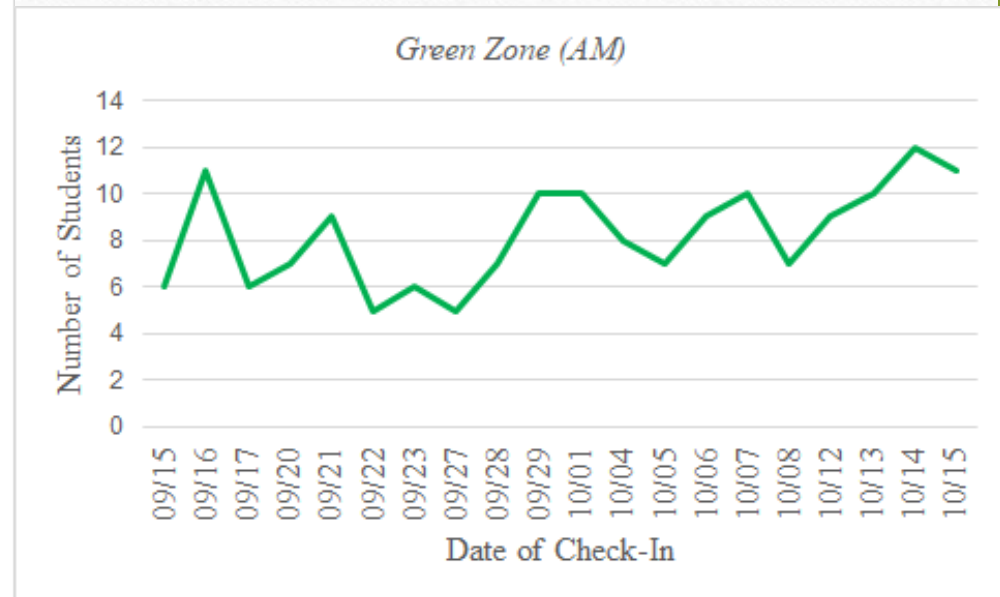
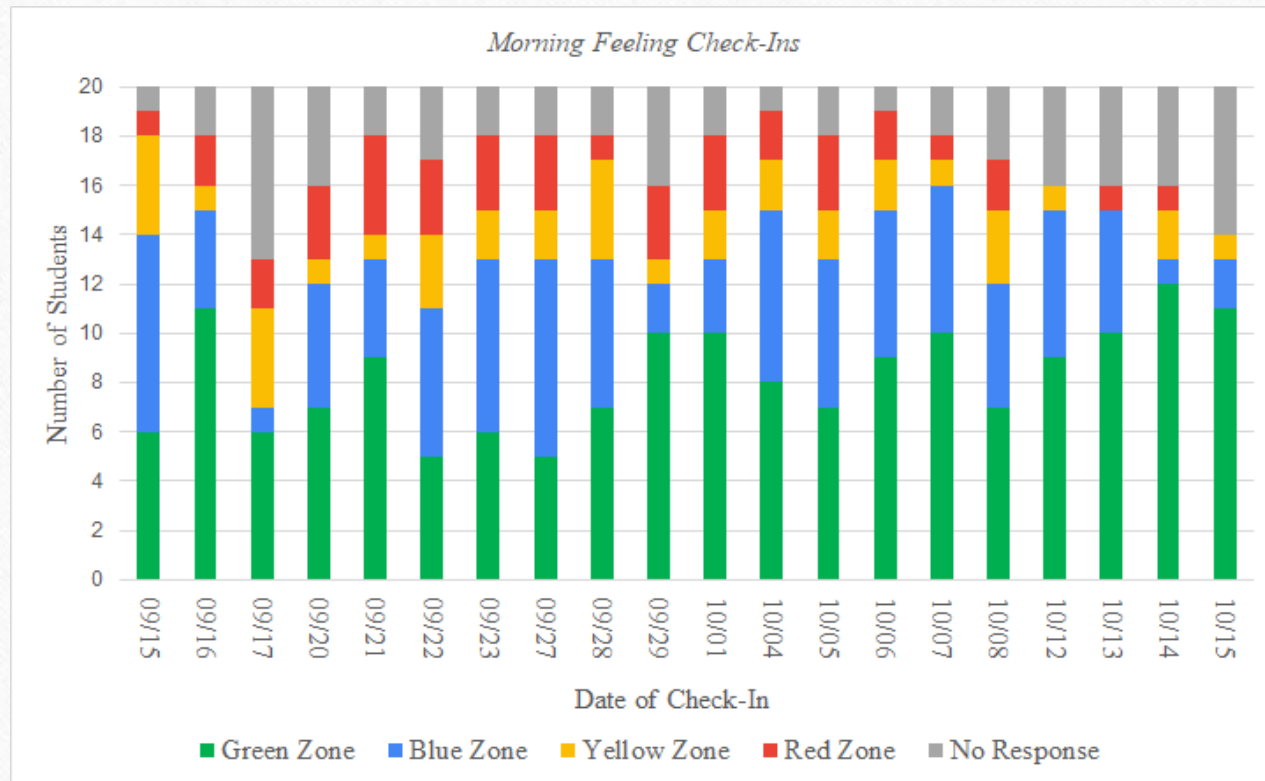
Student Self-Assessment



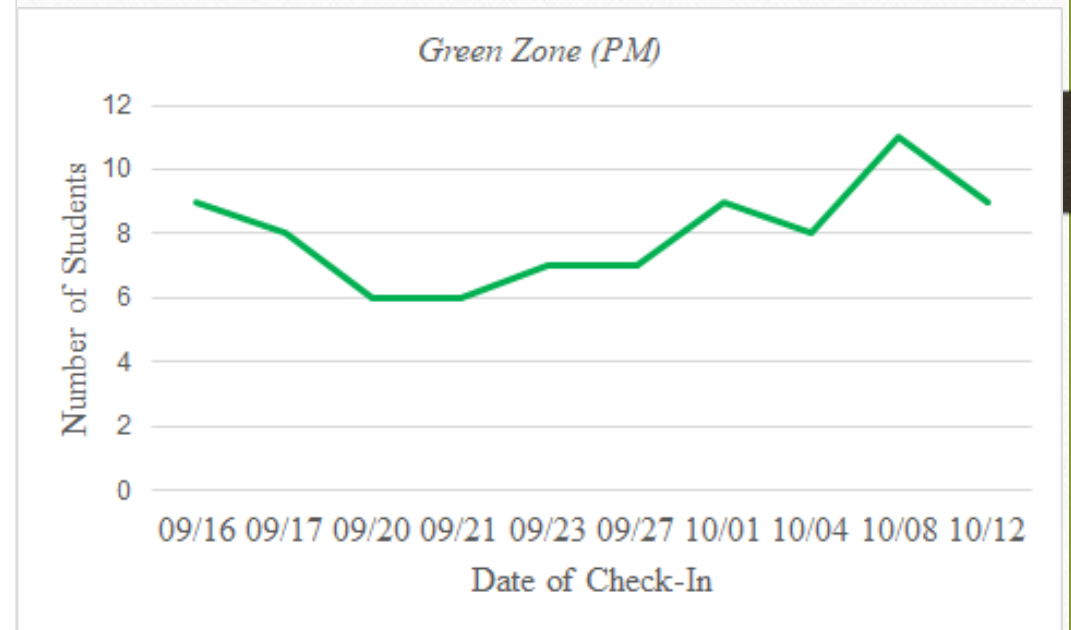
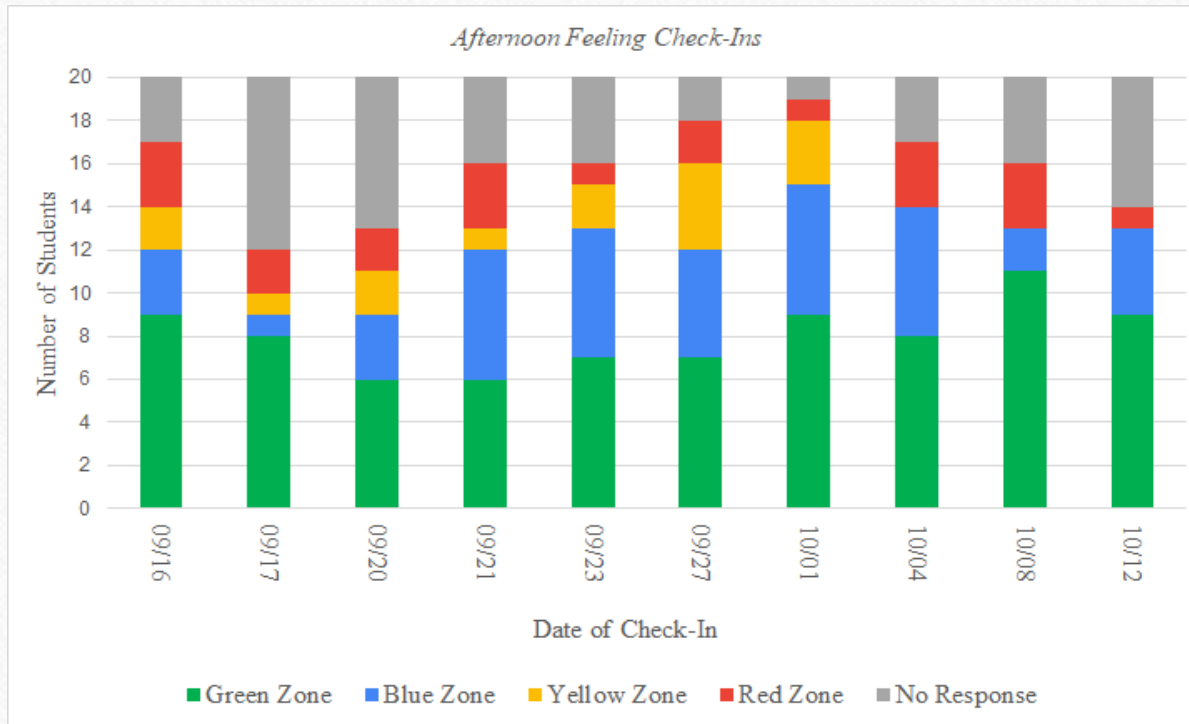
Parent Questionnaire



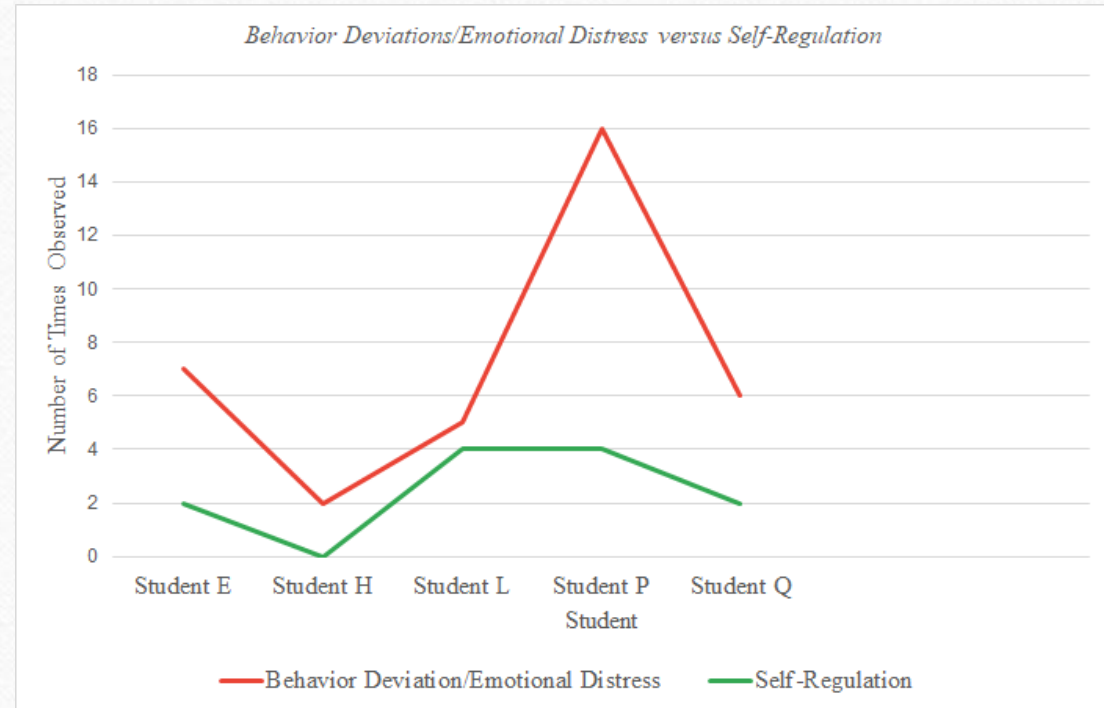
Feelings Check-In (AM)



Feelings Check-In (PM)



Behavior Deviations/Emotional Distress vs. Self-Regulation



Qualitative Analysis

- ❑ Feelings Journal (Students)
- ❑ Observation Journal (Teacher)
- ❑ Reflection of Practical Life Exercises

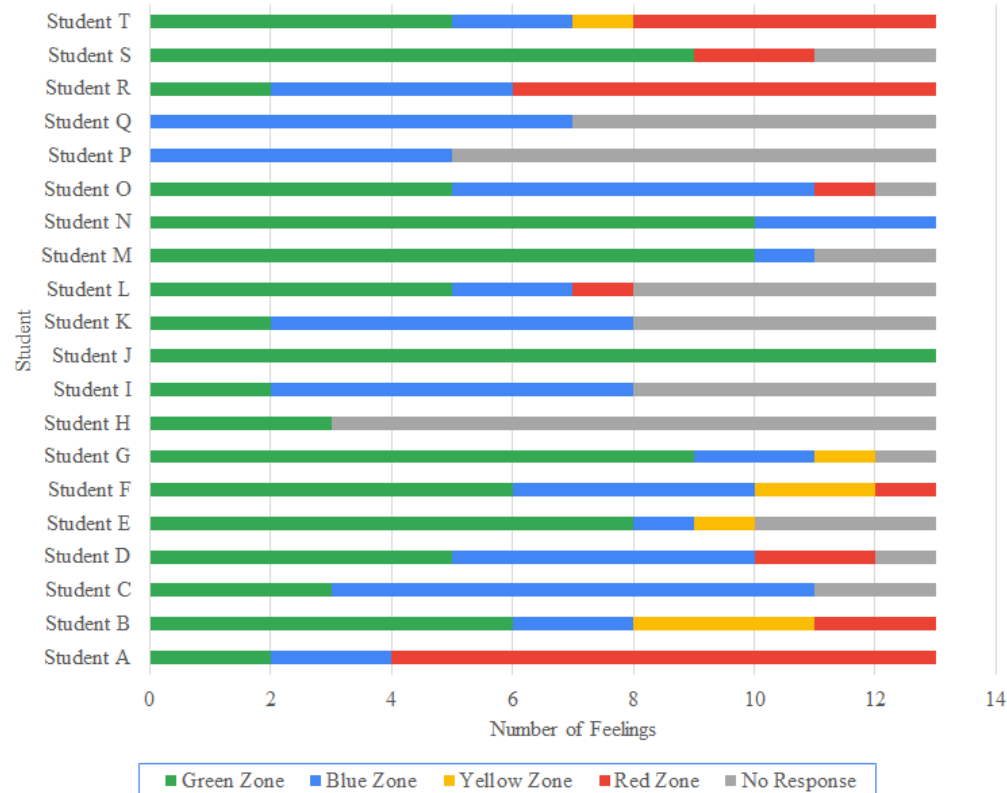
Setp.25
I feel Happy because
last night I had a
good night sleep
I'm in the green Zone.

Oct.4
I feel tired
because I woke up
early I am in the
blue zone
I can read to be
in the green zone

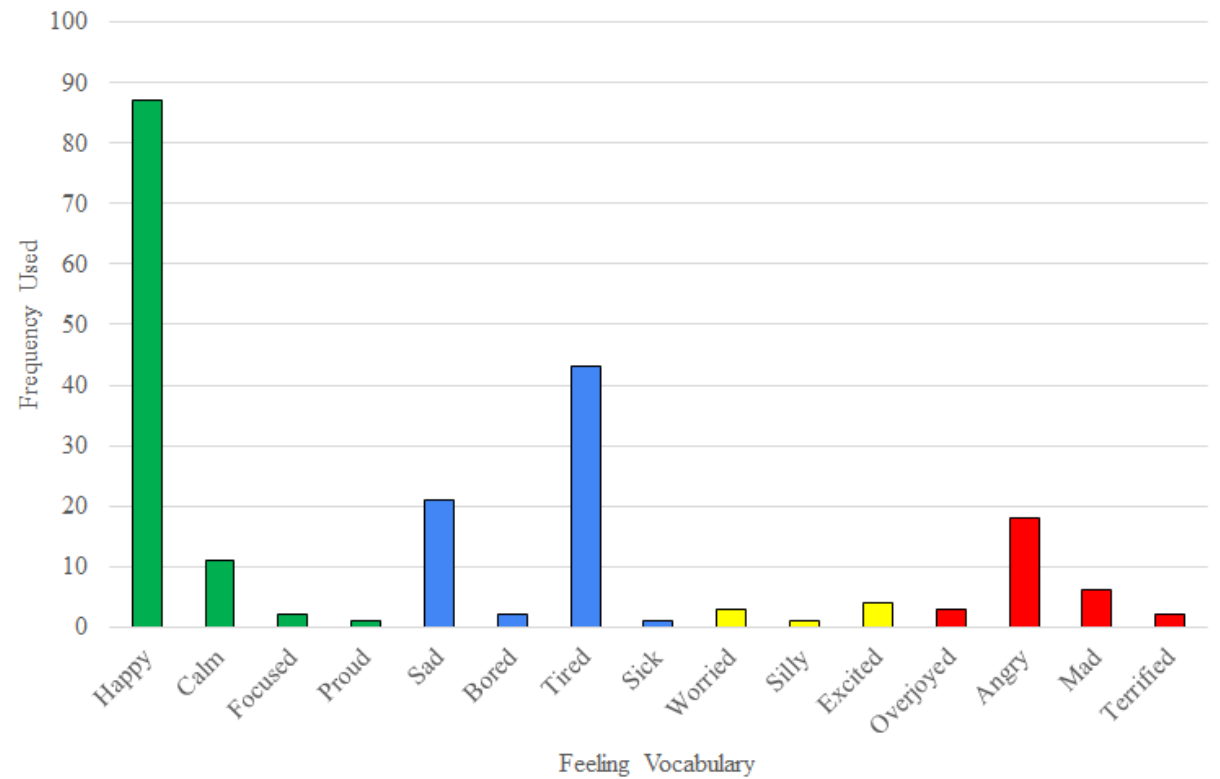
I feel mad because our
m's sister was not slig-myta
I can snish my ball to go take
into the green zone with
the red zone

Feelings Journal

Students' Feelings From September 20th to October 8th, 2021

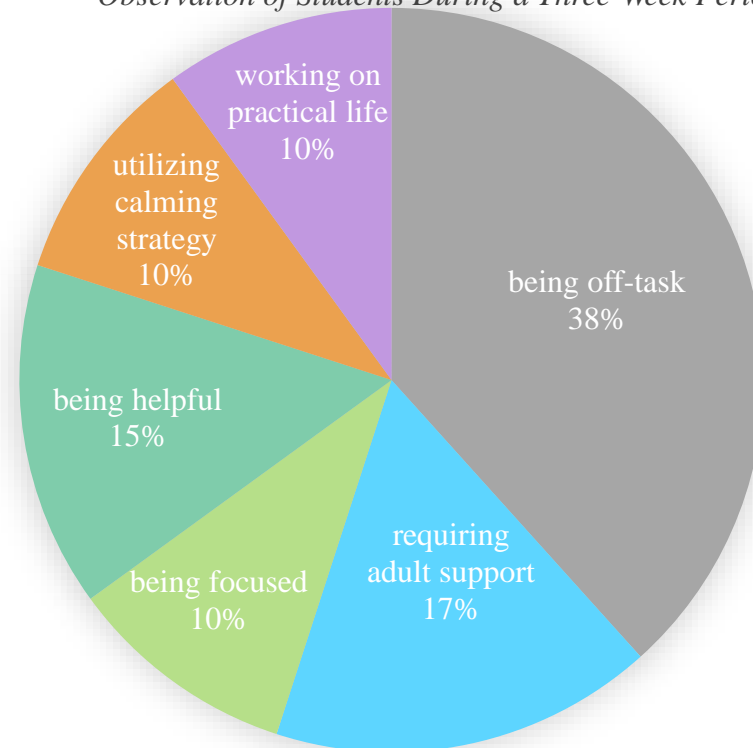


Feeling Vocabulary Frequency



Observation Journal

Observation of Students During a Three-Week Period

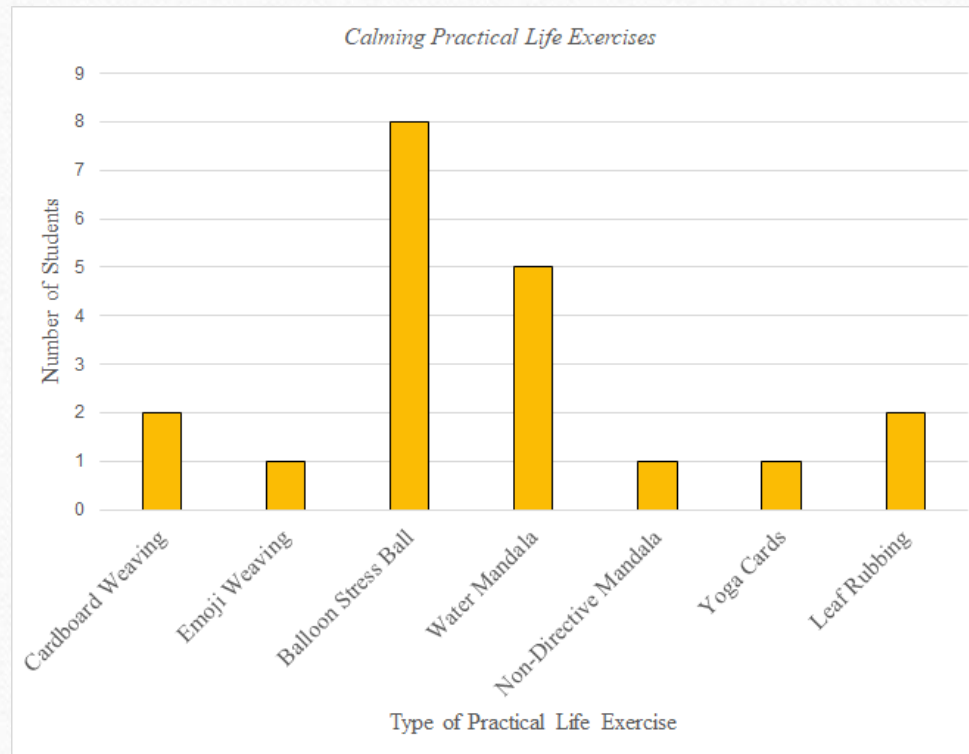


Practical Life Exercises

Reflection
Question:

*A calming activity
for me is*

because _____.



Action Plan

- ❑ introduce social-emotional learning (SEL) lessons in September alongside classroom rules, expectations, routines
- ❑ introduce breaks or calm down strategies in first week of SEL lessons
 - breathing exercises
 - yoga cards
 - gradual presentations of practical life activities (1-2 every week)
 - indirect preparation for weaving

Conclusion

- practical life exercises can be integrated in a meaningful way to teach and foster emotion regulation skills to children in lower elementary classroom
- practical life activities aid in self-control, patience, and concentration (Bettmann, 2015)
- purposefully design practical life exercises to foster emotion regulation
 - children develop a repertoire of calm down tools/strategies in class

Future Research

1. Emotion regulation lessons and practical life activities for children with autism (ASD) and attention-deficit disorder (ADD)
2. Time of day to work on practical life activities for maximum benefit
3. How practical life activities aid with classroom transitions and multi-step instructions

References

American Montessori International. (2021). *The child's development*. <https://amiusa.org/families/chilids-development/>

Berkovits, L., Eisenhower, A., & Blacher, J. (2017). Emotion regulation in young children with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 47(1), 68-79. doi:10.1007/s10803-016-2922-2

Bettmann, J. (2015). Nurturing the respectful community through practical life. *The NAMTA Journal*, 40(1), 63-80.

Bodrova, E., & Leong, D. J. (2008). Developing self-regulation in kindergarten: Can we keep all the crickets in the basket? *YC Young Children*, 63(2), 56-58. Retrieved from <https://pearl.stkate.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.pearl.stkate.edu/scholarly-journals/developing-self-regulation-kindergarten-can-we/docview/197608200/se-2?accountid=26879>

References

Cai, R.Y., Richdale, A. L., Uljarević, M., Dissanayake, C., & Samson, A. C. (2018). Emotion regulation in autism spectrum disorder: Where we are and where we need to go. *Autism Research*, 1- 17. doi: 10.1002/aur.1968

Kuypers, L. M. (2011). *The zones of regulation: A curriculum designed to foster self-regulation and emotional control*. Think Social Publishing, Inc.

Linebarger, L. (2016). *Beneficial effects of practical life activities and normalization* [Master's thesis, St. Catherine University]. Sophia.

<https://sophia.stkate.edu/maed/183>

Montessori, M. (with Chattin-McNichols, J.). (1995). *The Absorbent Mind*. Henry Holt and Company. (Original work published 1967).

Turner-Bumberry, T. (2019). *2, 4, 6, 8: This is how we regulate!* PESI Publishing & Media.

References

- Vohs, K. D., & Baumeister, R.F. (2004). Understanding self-regulation: An introduction. In R. F. Baumeister & K. D. Vohs (Eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation: Research, theory, and applications*. (1st ed., pp. 1-9). The Guilford Press.
- Voreis, M. D. (2016). *Effects of practical life activities on executive function skills in upper elementary Montessori students* [Master's thesis, University of Wisconsin]. <https://minds.wisconsin.edu/bitstream/handle/1793/74963/MarieVoreis.pdf?sequence=1>
- Wyman, P. A., Cross, W., Brown, C. H., Yu, Q., Tu, X., & Eberly, S. (2010). Intervention to strengthen emotional self-regulation in children with emerging mental health problems: Proximal impact on school behavior. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*. 38(5), 707-720. doi:10.1007/s10802-010-9398-x