The Beginning:
What lies at the intersection of SEL and mindfulness practices, individualistic and collectivist cultural approaches and what the difference does it make in how we(teachers) respond to differences.

Why this topic?
　　　My journey with this inquiry began with some vague idea I had in my mind about language and how teachers use it in classrooms. This is because there is constantly so much conversation about the language we use especially as it relates to disability studies and all the language we speak of in terms of community and lifting one another is directly oppositional to the individualistic philosophies that are dominant.
Then, I got an email from the TC record about an article that was talking about Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and how these curricula do not address 'trauma and race'. This really started me wondering how it was possible for any curricula to *really* address trauma. Trauma is so personal and someone's trauma might not resonate with another. When people or programs say something is trauma informed or has a trauma informed philosophy, I am very skeptical – trauma is a ubiquitous human experience, and these statements negate that very truth. How can curricula or an outside in approach address the whole person and the entirety of the trauma experienced?
It also got me thinking about SEL and what I really knew about it. As we read about individualistic and collectivist cultural differences, I began to wonder how ideas of SEL, community building and such, which are collectivist in their very nature, merge with the more dominant individualistic cultural approach in the US. How do students balance the tension between the two in their lives outside of school?

My goals for this inquiry crystallized a little more at this point and I knew I wanted to delve deeper into SEL because of my own background teaching yoga in schools.
   1.   I wanted to know what philosophies it is based on.
   2.   Do SEL practices include mindfulness or other practices based in more of an 'eastern' philosophy? This is a real confusion for many since the outcomes are the same.
   3.   Are SEL curricula restricted only to students or are parents, teachers and administration also included?
   4.   SEL/Mindfulness are both becoming or might have already become buzzwords in the education discourse. There are many options in this space today. What should we use? How do we judge what works?
   5.   How does teacher talk influence the results of these interventions or practices?

Why is this practice important?
"Reflecting the global economic transition during the 18th and 19th Century Industrial Revolution, our current education system seeks to prepare students to excel academically and to eventually be productive in the workplace. It does not, however, teach students the skills, knowledge, and wisdom that they need to flourish in life beyond grades, standardized exams, and productivity reflected in monetary wages. Our current education system does not teach children and adolescents how to live what has perennially and universally been deemed as the good life –   a life infused with meaning, purpose, love, virtue, character,
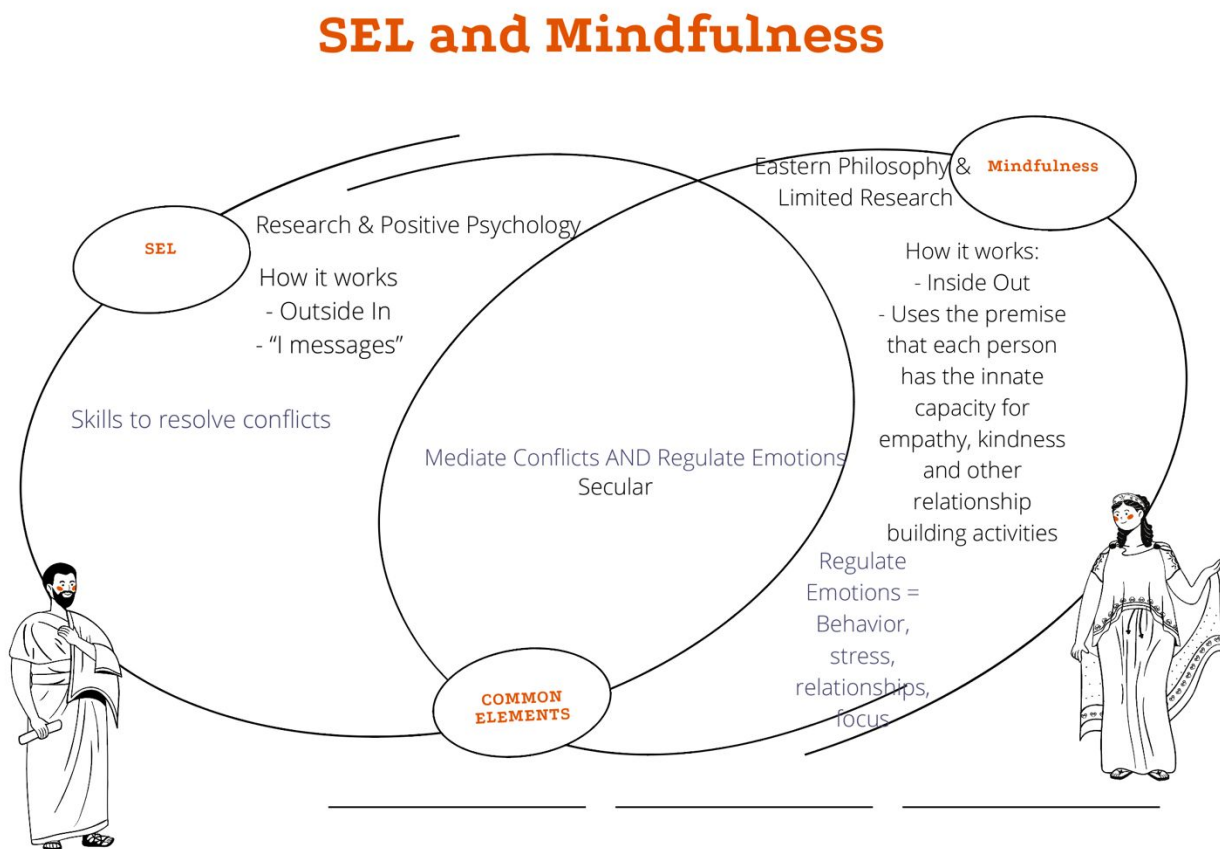
connectedness, health, and a sense of self-efficacy, autonomy, and mastery (Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009). (Adler, 2016,x)"

Essential Question:
Is SEL an effective tool in schools given that we have a massive intersection of individual and collectivist cultural approaches of teachers, students and community? Where does Mindfulness fit into this picture?

Understanding SEL and Mindfulness:
Linda Lantieri, an educator for over 40 years, Program Advisor for the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) – regarded the mothership for SEL practices, has explained the difference as follows:

SEL and Mindfulness

SEL

Research & Positive Psychology

How it works
- Outside In
- "I messages"

Skills to resolve conflicts

Mediate Conflicts AND Regulate Emotions
Secular

COMMON ELEMENTS

Eastern Philosophy & Mindfulness
Limited Research

How it works:
- Inside Out
- Uses the premise that each person has the innate capacity for empathy, kindness and other relationship building activities

Regulate Emotions = Behavior, stress, relationships, focus

1

Resources for the Annotated Bibliography:

1 Lantieri, L., & Zakrzewski, V. (2015, April 7)

1. Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D. & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). *The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. Child Development*, 82(1): 405–432.

   I chose this study because it is a frequently cited and highly regarded study in the field of SEL research.

   Summary: The meta analysis was conducted using 213 school based, universal Social Emotional Learning programs involving 270,034 Kindergarten to high school students. It was the first large scale literature review based meta analysis of SEL programs that focused on multiple outcomes. It also focused on universal outcomes and not population specific programs that exist to support students already demonstrating adjustment problems.
   It included studies
   - Written in English
   - Published or unpublished by December 2017
   - All of which included a control group.
   - 56% of the programs were delivered to elementary-school students
   - 31%) to middle-school students
   - The remainder included high school students.
   - 47% of the studies were conducted in urban schools
   - 53% were classroom-based, either delivered by teachers (53%) or non-school personnel (21%),
   - 26% were multi-component programs.
   - 77% of the programs lasted for less than a year
   - 11% lasted 1 to 2 years
   - 12% lasted more than 2 years
   - All programs targeted at least one SEL skill
     - Self awareness
     - Self management
     - Social awareness
     - Relationship Skills
     - Responsible Decision Making
       (As described by CASEL)

   Some of the questions asked were:
   "What outcomes are achieved by interventions that attempt to enhance children's emotional and social skills?
   Can SEL interventions promote positive outcomes and prevent future problems?
   Can programs be successfully conducted in the school setting by existing school personnel?
   What variables moderate the impact of school-based SEL programs? "

   What moderated outcomes:

In addition to whether the process of implementation was monitored by the studies, this analysis also focused on whether or not each of four recommended practices identified by the acronym SAFE was used to develop students' skills:

(a) Does the program use a connected and coordinated set of activities to achieve their objectives relative to skill development? (Sequenced);

(b) Does the program use active forms of learning to help youth learn new skills? (Active);

(c) Does the program have at least one component devoted to developing personal or social skills? (Focused); and,

(d) Does the program target specific SEL skills rather than targeting skills or positive development in general terms? (Explicit).

Findings:

"Current findings document that SEL programs yield significant positive effects on targeted social-emotional competencies and attitudes about self, others, and school. They also enhanced students' behavioral adjustment in the form of increased prosocial behaviors and reduced conduct and internalizing problems, and improved academic performance on achievement tests and grades." -Durlak et al. 2011, p. 417

Pros:

1. This study is a major source that is used to validate the efficacy of incorporating evidence based SEL programs into standard school curricula.

The results showed that compared to controls students demonstrated enhanced SEL skills and attitudes. They presented more positive social behaviors and also fewer conduct related problems and lower levels of emotional distress.

2. The results support the effectiveness of teacher delivered programs and show that outside staff is not required to implement. The results also did not support having a multiple component program that used both school staff and non school personnel.
3. Another finding from the study that stood out to me was that both emotional skills and social interaction skills need to be taught in tandem to create an effective and more long term intervention.
4. Finally, the most interesting and noteworthy finding from this analysis that is summarily used to demonstrate the effectiveness of SEL based teaching/curricula, might be the increase in academic performance measures .

The study showed an 11percentile gain in academic performance. Also notable is that improvement was noticed only when school staff implemented the programs and not when programs were delivered by non school personnel.

Cons:

1. Being an evidence focused system, the focus directed on the 11% academic achievement or grades seems to undermine the very purpose of these interventions, which are aimed at social and emotional learning for students to enhance their life skills.
2. This also increases the chance of reduced credibility towards other contemplative approaches that do not or may not demonstrate the same gains within the short or even medium term.
3. The 11% gains are a result of a follow up study which only used a small subset of the reviewed studies (16%) and not all 213. This is an important point to note.

4. The study does not factor student diversity characteristics which are very relevant to analyzing the effectiveness of these programs. Factors such as socioeconomic levels, ethnicity, developmental levels, and gender influence the size of the benefit received.

5. The study lists as its own limitation, "Because there is no standardized approach in measuring social and emotional skills, there is a need for theory-driven research that not only aids in the accurate assessment of various skills but also identifies how different skills are related (Dirks, Treat, & Weersing, 2007)."

2. Rowe, H.L., Trickett, E.J. Student Diversity Representation and Reporting in Universal School-Based Social and Emotional Learning Programs: Implications for Generalizability. *Educ Psychol Rev* **30,** 559–583 (2018). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-017-9425-3

I chose this study because it is a critical analysis using a diversity lens which is something that was missing from the previously presented meta analysis. SEL and it's connection to diverse cultural interpretations is a very important idea to be explored and understood.

Summary:
    This review of the meta analysis (Durlak,2011) addresses two extremely important and conflicting movements - diversity and the rise of evidence based practices in education. It analyses the meta analysis with specific emphasis to student diversity characteristics.
The research highlights the need for more nuanced understanding of how the results of SEL programs might be received by different groups of students across diverse characteristics including age.
The reason they selected the Durlak meta analysis is because that research places focus on universal interventions intended for the entire student body, excluding any programs intended for "students demonstrating adjustment problems." This broad applicability potential results in the tendency to generalize results and there fore taking into account diversity is immensely important. Additionally, the meta analysis is a highly regarded and cited paper and it is important to analyze it.

The study limited itself to five characteristics
- Gender
- Race & Ethnicity
- Socioeconomic Status
- Disability Status
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The review highlights the tension that exists between two schools of thoughts on intervention. These are important to analyze because the heterogeneous nature of US schools is closely related to these.
There are those that work under the assumption that existing programs can be altered to accommodate diverse viewpoints since the original interventions are basic enough to be generalized. On the other hand, others view diverse cultures as having particularly specific "underlying processes", which will be vary cross culturally and imposing select evidence based programs accounts to "forced acculturation or the imposition of foreign sets of values, goals and implementation processes." Keeping this front and center, it is critical to note:

The meta analysis studied presented the following:
31% of the meta analysis studies contained no information on student ethnicity
32% no information on socioeconomic status
35% occurred in schools serving a mixed ethnic student body
25% in schools serving diverse socioeconomic status

This review report on 3 key facts:
1. How often and how demographics are reported
2. The frequency and results of moderation and or analyses of subgroups
3. The degree with which the studies part of the meta analysis address and incorporate diversity into how effective and generalizable the programs are.

Findings:

1. The most commonly reported characteristic was gender – 69%
2. The next was race/ethnicity – 64%

Table 1 Number of articles in which one racial/ethnic group represented the majority of the sample

Racial/ethnic group	50–75% of the sample	75–100% of the sample
White	12	22
Black	6	11
Latino	3	1
Native American	0	1

Six articles could not be categorized in this manner because the studies involved multiple schools, each of which had majorities of different racial/ethnic groups

3. SES was reported in 45% but the way it was measured varied a lot.Terms used were Free Lunches, General terms such as economically disadvantaged, impoverished, living situation, parent education level.
4. Disability status was reported in 15% of the articles (35% of these excluded students placed in special education classes.)
5. Sexual orientation was not reported in any.

"It is important for conceptual, ethical, and empirical reasons to understand how diverse groups are affected by efforts to improve their lives...Our analysis was not designed to question the SEL meta-analysis methodology or conclusions. Rather, our goal was somewhat different: namely, to see what kinds of conclusions about generalizability with respect to diversity could be gleaned from examining a large subset of the original papers found in the meta-analysis. Our analysis suggests considerable caution about generalizing the overall positive findings of the meta-analysis to diverse groups of program participants." – Rowe et al. 2018, p. 572

3. Sullivan, T. N., Helms, S. W., Bettencourt, A. F., Sutherland, K., Lotze, G. M., Mays, S., Wright, S., & Farrell, A. D. (2012). A qualitative study of individual and peer factors related to effective nonviolent versus aggressive responses to problem situations among adolescents with high incidence disabilities. *Behavioral Disorders*, *37*(3), 163+. https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A323038322/AONE?u=new30429&sid=AONE&xid=b342f868

I chose this study because it further extends the idea of how important the context is when social emotional skills are being taught. When students are presented with real world situations that require conflict mediation and emotional regulation, we have to take into account factors such as students values and beliefs about social interactions and expression. This will deeply affect how students use SEL skills they are being taught.

Summary:
This is a qualitative study where interviews were conducted with adolescents who identified as having high incidence disabilities, and studies the "described individual and peer factors that would influence their use of effective nonviolent or aggressive responses" to resolve peer problems.

The sample size was 74 students from urban schools with
61% identified with high incidence disabilities
71% with a learning disability
15% with an intellectual disability
14% with an emotional or behavioral disorder
Students were presented with 12 problem scenarios which were taken from prior studies.
Effectiveness of response was rated on a 1-5 scale
(1- Really bad – 5- really good)

A qualitative approach was used to better understand individual participant motivation.

95% - African American
61% Male
Age 11-16 years

Nine themes influences the use of violent or non violent responses to these situations.

Findings:
1. The findings show the importance of context and how important it is to determine whether or not a skill is being used. For example: A student mentioned that he felt aggression was the only solution on the streets. Of the nine themes and sub themes were used to analyze responses, the theme of emotional regulation and problem solving and values and beliefs stood out. The sub-themes of using coping strategies to stay calm, difficulty sharing thoughts and difficulty in anger management directly relate to the need for SEL and contemplative practices.

    "An eighth grade boy explained, "I might try to calm myself down ... I might take a deep breath, my friends might calm me down and ... I'll go to peer mediation…Being nervous, "scared," or "shy" made it harder to seek out adult and peer support. A sixth

grade girl said that it could be difficult for students to seek adult support because "they're afraid of how they feel, about how to express themselves...Regulating anger was described as more difficult in situations where peers said something disrespectful about family members, shared private information, or encouraged a fight. Engaging in active problem-solving strategies (i.e., anticipating consequences and generating alternatives to fighting) was described as difficult in some contexts. A seventh grade boy explained that it was harder to consider potential nonviolent responses if a situation gets to the point that, "you just want to let your anger out instead of going and talking it out." (p. 169)

2. Another crucial finding here also relates to the importance of adult role models. 'Participants in the current study described the importance of, as well as the challenges associated with, seeking adult support. Beneficial adult roles included help with emotion regulation and problem-solving, emotional support, and direct assistance in talking to peers about problems. Participants most likely to endorse seeking adult assistance were those who had benefitted from adult support in the past and had friends who encouraged or in some cases modeled this behavior. Decisions to access school resources were influenced by participants' beliefs that adults would be available, receptive, and supportive, and expectations that adults would not be responsive hindered this behavior." (P.173)

3. A very important and unique finding of this study was the importance of self concept. Students with higher self concept, had an easier time using non violent responses to address problematic situations.

4. Farrell, A., Mehari, K., Kramer-Kuhn, A., Mays, S., & Sullivan, T. (2015, March 21). A qualitative analysis of factors influencing middle school students' use of skills taught by a violence prevention curriculum. Retrieved December 08, 2020, from https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022440515000138

I chose this study as a follow up the previously presented study which analyzed responses from students with high incidence disabilities. As opposed to the previous study, the students in this study received training/intervention through a school based violence prevention program. A majority of such programs are based on SEL principles – the focus is on cognitive, social and emotional skills such as problem solving, anger management and empathy.

Summary:
This is a qualitative study where interviews were conducted with adolescents from two urban schools. All students were in 6ᵗʰ grade classroom where the second step violence prevention curriculum had been implemented earlier in the year or the previous year. This study was conducted 3-12 months after they participated.

The sample size was 141 students from two urban schools:
91 from one school
83% - African American
12% Multiracial

50 from a second school
52% white
32% African American
12% Multiracial
Approximately 54% male

A qualitative approach was used to better understand individual participant motivation.

95% - African American
61% Male
Age 11-16 years

The Second Step program has mixed reviews.Studies have found that it does not lead to reductions in the behaviors amongst participants and some suggest problems with mastery or generalization.
Sometimes initial positive outcomes have not lasted. "A major goal of Second Step and similar school-based interventions is for participants to not only master the skills taught, but generalize them by using them in relevant, real-life situations. Surprisingly little research has tested this assumption." (P. 1)

Findings:
1. Many of their participants expressed the belief that nonviolent responses similar to those targeted by social-emotional interventions such as, talking out the problem, telling an adult, ignoring a challenge, would be ineffective in difficult situations. Other individual level factors such as the beliefs about the acceptability and necessity of fighting, and the belief that fighting was sometimes necessary, usually to defend oneself or in response to insults about family members.
2. Importantly just like in the previous study cited – The school community and specifically teacher response is critical in ensuring students feel comfortable approaching them for resolutions. "They were unlikely to seek help from a teacher if they were having a problem with another student because teachers would not help them and peers would label them a "snitch."
3. The most critical takeaway for me from this study was that "Participants indicated that although they were sometimes able to identify an appropriate response to a problem situation, they were sometimes unable to employ it because of strong emotions such as anger and fear, or because they simply did not think of using it. Emotion regulation is a key skill targeted by SEL interventions." This makes me consider that the issue might be more with the fact that an SEL approach cannot teach self regulation or anger management and these are more inside out skills that need another technique such as mindfulness.

5. Kemeny, M. E., Foltz, C., Cavanagh, J. F., Cullen, M., Giese-Davis, J., Jennings, P., Rosenberg, E. L., Gillath, O., Shaver, P. R., Wallace, B. A., & Ekman, P. (2011, December 12). Contemplative/Emotion Training Reduces Negative Emotional Behavior and Promotes Prosocial Responses. Emotion. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1037/a0026118

I chose this study because the findings from the last two studies in this bibliography point towards the need for and importance of adult support. If an adult is perceived to be non responsive, the student's motivation to look for adult support is significantly hindered. While the previous studies look at SEL based approaches, this study looks at contemplative training for school teachers and the results of this on adult empathy and optimism.
If adults in a building are more positive, empathetic and less responsive this can result in greater gains for students.

Summary:
Eighty two school teachers between the ages of 25 and 60 with no major physical or psychiatric disorders, living with a partner, not taking medication or participating in recreational drug use and not already having a meditation practice.

The study used both a control group and a training condition group.
The training group received 8 weeks of training and the control group received the same but after the follow up assessments were completed.
The final group that completed the process was of 76 participants.

There was a baseline assessment, a follow up assessment and a 5 month follow up.

Findings:
1. Self reported depression, anxiety declined strongly in the training group from pre to post training and continued in the 5 month follow up. The greater the number of times mindfulness was practiced the greater the reported anxiety decrease.
2. Rumination- "a cognitive process that involves repetitive negative thoughts, including a particular focus on past negative experiences and failures (Martin & Tesser, 1996). Rumination can have serious negative emotional consequences, including depression (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1991; Watkins & Teasdale, 2004)." (P.6)
   There was demonstrated decreased rumination both self reported and as laboratory stressor response.
   "These results extend previous research that styles of thinking change following a mindfulness intervention."(p. 7)
3. Empathy, compassion and hostility were measured with a set of tasks. Training participants' ability to recognize subtle facial expressions of sadness increased while those in the control group did not. Training participants' measure of compassion was also elevated and the final task to measure hostility involved a heated debate between participant and their significant other. These were measured and the training group remained stable in their hostility and contempt from pre to post measure. The control group did display more hostility in the post assessment.

This group of teachers had high levels of negative effects and specifically depression, this was reduced in those who received the training and effects were maintained after completion.

6. Shiners-Reichl, K. A., & Stewart Lawlor, M. (2010). (PDF) The Effects of a Mindfulness-Based Education Program ... Retrieved December 8, 2020, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/225878804_The_Effects_of_a_Mindfulness-Based_Education_Program_on_Pre-_and_Early_Adolescents'_Well-Being_and_Social_and_Emotional_Competence

I chose this study to present the effects of mindfulness on pre and early adolescents and their well being and competence. The previous study listed here speaks to the effects on school teachers and I wanted to include one that also speaks to the positive influences of a mindfulness practice on students.

Summary:
246 pre-and early adolescent students in the 4th to 7th grades, from six ME program classrooms and six comparison classrooms (control classrooms) completed pretest and posttest self-report measures assessing optimism, general and school self-concept, and positive and negative affect.
Teachers also rated pre-and early adolescents on dimensions of classroom social and emotional competence.

Findings:
Students who participated in the Mindfulness Education program, compared to those who did not, showed significant increases in optimism and on dimensions of teacher rated classroom social competent behaviors.
Self-concept showed positive benefits for both however the increases were far more impressive in the preadolescents than for early adolescents.

7. Waldemar, J. C., Rigatti, R., & Menzes, C. (2016). Impact of a Combined Mindfulness and Social–Emotional ... Retrieved December 8, 2020, from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Elizeth_Heldt/publication/299999569_Impact_of_a_combined_mindfulness_and_social-emotional_learning_program_on_fifth_graders_in_a_Brazilian_public_school_setting/links/570b9e0708ae2eb94223a4e6/Impact-of-a-combined-mindfulness-and-social-emotional-learning-program-on-fifth-graders-in-a-Brazilian-public-school-setting.pdf

I chose this study because it presents the combined effects of a SEL and Mindfulness program on 5th graders in a Brazilian Public School setting and helps support the essential understanding that both practices are critical to ensure holistic development of a student.

Summary:

132 students with a mean age of 11 were selected for this study. 64 of these students received 12 sessions during 5 months and 68 were part of the control group. The outcomes were measured by a strengths and weaknesses questionnaire, youth quality of life instrument and a Swanson, Nolan and Pelham IV questionnaire.

In Brazil a program combining the two practices was started 7 years ago and sponsored by the Family Institute – INFAPA- a social clinic and post graduate school. This program was built under the guidance of members without outside funding. The mission was to deliver services to underserved populations like Brazilian public schools.

Findings: More specifically, findings indicated that the M-SEL program, relative to a control group (students from the same grade, but from classrooms that did not receive any intervention), was able to produce significant positive effects on four mental
health symptoms— emotional problems, conduct problems, interpersonal relationships, and prosocial behavior. Since mindfulness practices support and align with many theoretical concepts of the SEL approach and can promote the SEL competencies.
The study suggests that the synergy of the two accelerates the benefits that might be expected with a standard SEL program.

Conclusion:
In conclusion, I leave you with this-
While I do not believe that the only goal of schooling is assignment or grade related improvement, this is a criteria that is given tremendous importance in our society. The evidence based practices are more sought out and valued. This is why SEL is the perfect point by which we can introduce a social and emotional learning curricula into everyday schooling for our students. This curricula however, is ineffective for many populations who come from diverse cultural approaches.The individual and collectivist approaches that guide us come into play here. A balance can be found to this problem by balancing the practices presented to students.
Mindfulness rooted in eastern philosophy and SEL rooted in individualist western philosophy can find a meeting place within the student, to suit the student.
The outside in approach alone or the inside out approach when we live in a complex society, can be effective or go only so far.

The addition of mindfulness based practices to SEL approaches together can create a comprehensive model that allows students to address equally important modalities of emotion regulation that will support their social interactions.

The Essential Understanding:
SEL and mindfulness, are two separate areas—they work in tandem when taught and learned together to achieve a common goal- Mediating conflicts and emotional regulation. Thus, choosing one over the other, when we have such diverse cultural approaches, may not actually be the best choice.

Why?
> "We cannot correct historic oppressions and structural inequality that has occurred to all the bodies of the people who come into our classroom. (We) can't fix the history of those, the legacy of that, the trauma of that, but we can start to unwind some of it by the very questions we ask." Celia Oyler, 4:05

> "In this time when we think a lot about resistance to accountability movements and resistance to authoritarian state structures, resistance to white supremacy, we have to think about not just resisting the outside badness but building the inside alternative goodness that are very building of alternative ways of making decisions. Alternative ways of valuing human difference. It is constructive resistance that changes the outcome for all people involved." Celia Oyler, 6:03

How?
I interpret these statements as building resilience and fortitude both in ourselves and our students. This work only comes from BOTH knowing how to mediate conflict as a collective part

of society and being able to regulate our individual emotions when faced with conflict. Understanding that the individual cannot exist without the collective and vice a versa.

This work is complex and is influenced by many factors, such as, the society we live in, where we come from and what we intrinsically believe. If the end goal is to be able to have meaningful relationships and lives that are identified by empathy, ability to manage anger and problem solve, then we must see the value in both the social and contemplative practices.

Additional References:

Adler, Alejandro, "Teaching Well-Being increases Academic Performance: Evidence From Bhutan, Mexico, and Peru" (2016). Publicly Accessible Penn Dissertations. 1572. http://repository.upenn.edu/edissertations/1572

Lantieri, L., & Zakrzewski, V. (2015, April 7). How SEL and Mindfulness Can Work Together. Retrieved December 08, 2020, from https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_social_emotional_learning_and_mindfulness_can_work_together

Oyler, C. (2017, October 22). Dr. Celia Oyler on Critical Inclusivity. Retrieved December 06, 2020, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0dyvAby9S4&feature=youtu.be