Documenting a School’s Journey in
How to Learn about Self-Regulation and Integration

by
Andrea J. McComb
M.Ed. (Educational Administration), University of Victoria, 1997
B.Ed., University of British Columbia, 1987

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

in the
Transformational Change Program
Faculty of Education

© Andrea J. McComb 2014
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Summer 2014

All rights reserved.
However, in accordance with the Copyright Act of Canada, this work may
be reproduced, without authorization, under the conditions for
“Fair Dealing.” Therefore, limited reproduction of this work for the
purposes of private study, research, criticism, review and news reporting
is likely to be in accordance with the law, particularly if cited appropriately.
# Approval

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Andrea McComb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Doctor of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of Thesis:</td>
<td>Documenting a School’s Journey in How to Learn about Self-Regulation and Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examinining Committee</td>
<td>Chair: Milton McClaren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professor Emeritus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolyn Mamchur</td>
<td>Senior Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Kaufman</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gervase Bushe</td>
<td>Internal/External Examiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beedie School of Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimberly Schonert-Reichl</td>
<td>External Examiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of British Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Defended:</td>
<td>August 7, 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Partial Copyright Licence

The author, whose copyright is declared on the title page of this work, has granted to Simon Fraser University the non-exclusive, royalty-free right to include a digital copy of this thesis, project or extended essay[s] and associated supplemental files (“Work”) (title[s] below) in Summit, the Institutional Research Repository at SFU. SFU may also make copies of the Work for purposes of a scholarly or research nature; for users of the SFU Library; or in response to a request from another library, or educational institution, on SFU’s own behalf or for one of its users. Distribution may be in any form.

The author has further agreed that SFU may keep more than one copy of the Work for purposes of back-up and security; and that SFU may, without changing the content, translate, if technically possible, the Work to any medium or format for the purpose of preserving the Work and facilitating the exercise of SFU’s rights under this licence.

It is understood that copying, publication, or public performance of the Work for commercial purposes shall not be allowed without the author’s written permission.

While granting the above uses to SFU, the author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in the Work, and may deal with the copyright in the Work in any way consistent with the terms of this licence, including the right to change the Work for subsequent purposes, including editing and publishing the Work in whole or in part, and licensing the content to other parties as the author may desire.

The author represents and warrants that he/she has the right to grant the rights contained in this licence and that the Work does not, to the best of the author’s knowledge, infringe upon anyone’s copyright. The author has obtained written copyright permission, where required, for the use of any third-party copyrighted material contained in the Work. The author represents and warrants that the Work is his/her own original work and that he/she has not previously assigned or relinquished the rights conferred in this licence.

Simon Fraser University Library
Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada

revised Fall 2013
Ethics Statement

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this work, has obtained, for the research described in this work, either:

a. human research ethics approval from the Simon Fraser University Office of Research Ethics,

or

b. advance approval of the animal care protocol from the University Animal Care Committee of Simon Fraser University;

or has conducted the research

c. as a co-investigator, collaborator or research assistant in a research project approved in advance,

or

d. as a member of a course approved in advance for minimal risk human research, by the Office of Research Ethics.

A copy of the approval letter has been filed at the Theses Office of the University Library at the time of submission of this thesis or project.

The original application for approval and letter of approval are filed with the relevant offices. Inquiries may be directed to those authorities.

Simon Fraser University Library
Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada

update Spring 2010
Abstract

This research study documents a school's journey in how to learn about self-regulation and integration. The purpose of this co-operative inquiry was to make the new knowledge in neuroscience accessible to our community, and to find ways of operationalizing our learning into action.

A co-operative inquiry methodology was selected. Three phases of the inquiry model were completed. Documentation was collected through artefacts, a Thoughtstream Survey, reflections, a dialogue circle and field notes. The initial data analysis was done through the documentation process, the intermediate analysis was done in the reflective process and the advanced data analysis provides the overarching themes throughout the study.

Creating an integrated learning community requires explicit and intentional relationship building. Crafting a container for participating fully in a discovery of self and others involves seeing learning as a journey and engagement in co-operative activities. Discovering interdependence entails developing relational strategies that both build identity and connections. Participating in community events provided the lived emotional experiences from which we built our metacognitive thinking and reflection. Participating in attuned relationships lead us to the discovery of wise action grounded in the “we.”

Keywords: integration; self-regulation; dialogic process; co-operative inquiry; documentation; social and emotional learning
To all of the families that have touched my life,
especially my own.
Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Carolyn Mamchur’s vision and courage for creating a doctoral program on Transformational Change; you inspired us and believed in us. Dr. Charles Scott opened my world to dialogue. Dr. Milt McLaren saw the potential and the practical in my ideas. Dr. David Kaufman gave guidance with encouragement towards innovation. Joanie Wolfe contributed her expertise to formatting.

My husband Mike approached this journey like a half marathon, crossing the finish line hand in hand. My children, kept my spirits up. My parents and siblings held me in their hearts while my dog lay at my feet for many hours. I am grateful.
Table of Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction ............................................................................................................. 1
1.1. Purpose .......................................................................................................................... 2
1.2. Context ........................................................................................................................... 3
1.3. Value ............................................................................................................................... 4
1.4. Inside Researcher ........................................................................................................... 6
1.5. Methodology .................................................................................................................. 7
   1.5.1. Participants .............................................................................................................. 7
   1.5.2. Phases of Inquiry ................................................................................................... 9
   1.5.3. Stages of Each Inquiry Cycle ............................................................................... 9
   1.5.4. Qualitative Analysis .............................................................................................. 11
1.6. Limitations ..................................................................................................................... 11
1.7. Thesis Organization ....................................................................................................... 12

Chapter 2. Literature Review .................................................................................................. 14
2.1. Introduction ................................................................................................................... 14
2.2. Educational Shaping Forces .......................................................................................... 15
   2.2.1. A Healthy Mind ...................................................................................................... 17
   2.2.2. Dual Coding ......................................................................................................... 18
2.3. A Dynamic Developmental Theory ................................................................................. 19
   2.3.1. Self-Regulation ................................................................................................... 19
   2.3.2. Integration ............................................................................................................ 21
   2.3.3. Attuned Relationships and Attachment .............................................................. 24
   2.3.4. Brain Plasticity and Sensitive Periods ................................................................. 28
   2.3.5. Memory and a Cohesive Narrative ..................................................................... 32
2.4. Summary of Content .................................................................................................... 34
2.5. Introduction to the Process ........................................................................................... 35
2.6. Purpose and Perspectives ............................................................................................. 35
2.7. Dialogical Organizational Development ....................................................................... 36
2.8. Examples in Practice ..................................................................................................... 36
2.9. The Learning Journey Metaphor................................................................. 37
2.10. Cooperative Learning .............................................................................. 38
2.11. Learning Team Structure ......................................................................... 39
2.12. Events ........................................................................................................ 40
2.13. Summary .................................................................................................... 42

Chapter 3. Methodology ..................................................................................... 43
3.1. Introduction.................................................................................................. 43
3.2. Paradigm ...................................................................................................... 43
  3.2.1. Worldview .............................................................................................. 44
  3.2.2. Training and Experiences .................................................................... 45
  3.2.3. Psychological Attributes ....................................................................... 47
  3.2.4. The Nature of the Problem ................................................................. 48
  3.2.5. The Audience ....................................................................................... 48
3.3. Question ....................................................................................................... 49
3.4. Ethical Approval .......................................................................................... 49
3.5. Participants and Recruitment ...................................................................... 50
3.6. Research ...................................................................................................... 51
  3.6.1. Stage 1: Propositional and Practical Knowing ........................................ 52
         Theory and Research: Curricula ............................................................... 52
  3.6.2. Stages 2: Engagement .......................................................................... 53
         Events ....................................................................................................... 53
         Strategies and Structures of Inquiry ......................................................... 54
  3.6.3. Stage 3: Going Deeper .......................................................................... 54
         Documentation .......................................................................................... 54
         Thoughtstream Survey ............................................................................ 55
         Dialogue Circle ....................................................................................... 56
         Reflective Journals ................................................................................... 57
  3.6.4. Stage 4: Reflection ............................................................................... 57
         Qualitative Analysis ................................................................................... 57
  3.6.5. Findings ................................................................................................ 58
3.7. Trustworthiness ........................................................................................... 59
  3.7.1. Fairness ................................................................................................... 59
  3.7.2. Ontological Authenticity ....................................................................... 59
  3.7.3. Educative Authenticity .......................................................................... 59
  3.7.4. Catalytic Authenticity ............................................................................ 60
  3.7.5. Tactical Authenticity ............................................................................ 60
3.8. Challenges and Changes ............................................................................. 60
Chapter 4. Phase 1 Inquiry: Connecting to Self ............................................ 62
  4.1. Propositional/Practical Knowledge (Theory, Research) ......................... 63
    4.1.1. Self-Regulation .................................................. 64
    4.1.2. Integrating Brain Functions ..................................... 64
    4.1.3. Attunement ....................................................... 65
    4.1.4. The River of Well-Being ...................................... 65
    4.1.5. Building Relationships with the Brain in Mind ......................... 66
    4.1.6. Whole Brain Strategies ......................................... 66
  4.2. Engagement (Events and Strategies) .............................................. 68
    4.2.1. Code of Conduct ................................................ 68
    4.2.2. Staff Research Snippets ....................................... 69
    4.2.3. Parent Book Club .............................................. 69
    4.2.4. Learner Profiles ................................................ 70
    4.2.5. Kindness Project ............................................... 70
  4.3. Going Deeper (Artefacts and Documentation) .................................... 71
    4.3.1. Our Motivations for Learning .................................. 72
         Thoughtstream Survey Question 1: Motivation for Learning .......... 72
         Students ........................................................... 73
         Parents ............................................................... 74
         Teachers ............................................................. 74
    4.3.2. Compelling Vision .............................................. 74
         Teachers ............................................................. 75
         Parents ............................................................... 76
         Whole Community .................................................. 76
    4.3.3. The Kindness Project .......................................... 78
         Students’ Reflection of Kindness Project .......................... 78
         Principal’s Reflection to the Kindness Project ....................... 79
  4.4. Reflection (Summary Links to Research) .......................................... 80
    4.4.1. Crafting an Integrative Container ................................ 80
    4.4.2. Developing Self-Awareness .................................. 82
    4.4.3. The Being of the Leader ...................................... 83

Chapter 5. Phase 2 Inquiry: Connecting to Each Other ............................. 85
  5.1. Propositional/Practical Knowledge (Theory, Research) ......................... 86
    5.1.1. The Dynamic Developmental Approach ................................ 87
    5.1.2. Memories .......................................................... 87
    5.1.3. The Fun Factor .................................................. 88
    5.1.4. The Healthy Mind Platter ...................................... 89
  5.2. Engagement (Events and Strategies) .............................................. 89
    5.2.1. The Buddy Project .............................................. 89
    5.2.2. Literature Lessons .............................................. 90
         Hope Is an Open Heart ............................................ 90
         One Love ............................................................ 90
         See a Heart, Share a Heart ....................................... 91
    5.2.3. Remembering to Remember Books .................................. 91
    5.2.4. Hearts and Minds Art Show .................................... 91
5.3. Going Deeper (Artifacts and Documentation) ........................................ 92
  5.3.1. Thoughtstream Survey Question 2: Learning Tools .......................... 93
  5.3.2. Thoughtstream Survey Question 3: Engagement .............................. 95
  5.3.3. Student Learning Stories ............................................................. 96
  5.3.4. Teachers’ Reflections ..................................................................... 98
  5.3.5. Parents’ Reflections ....................................................................... 99
  5.3.6. Buddy Journals ............................................................................ 99
  5.3.7. Hearts and Minds Art Show Summary ............................................ 101
  5.3.8. Fun Factor .................................................................................. 104
     Parent Book Club Reflection ............................................................ 104
  5.3.9. The Healthy Mind Platter .............................................................. 104
     Teacher Reflection ............................................................................. 105
     Book Club Reflection ........................................................................ 105
5.4. Reflection (Summary Links to Research) .............................................. 106
  5.4.1. Understanding Connection ............................................................ 106
  5.4.2. Engagement through Events ......................................................... 109
  5.4.3. The Being of the Leader ............................................................... 111

Chapter 6. Phase 3 Inquiry: Connecting to the World and the Environment .... 115
6.1. Propositional/Practical Knowledge (Theory, Research) .......................... 116
  6.1.1. Building Advanced Thinking ......................................................... 117
  6.1.2. Multi-causal Thinking ................................................................. 117
  6.1.3. Reflective Thinking ..................................................................... 117
  6.1.4. The Me–We Connection .............................................................. 118
  6.1.5. Positivity .................................................................................... 118
6.2. Engagement (Events and Strategies) ...................................................... 118
  6.2.1. The Simon Fraser Conference ..................................................... 119
  6.2.2. Building the Nature Spiral ......................................................... 121
  6.2.3. Young Entrepreneurs for Charity ............................................... 121
  6.2.4. The Dialogue Circle for Reflection .............................................. 122
6.3. Going Deeper (Artifacts and Documentation) ........................................ 122
  6.3.1. Thoughtstream Survey Question 4: Learning ................................. 124
  6.3.2. Thoughtstream Survey Question 5: Changes ................................. 125
  6.3.3. Student Concept Framework for Conference .................................. 128
  6.3.4. Earth Day Spiral ......................................................................... 130
  6.3.5. Young Entrepreneurs ................................................................. 131
  6.3.6. The Learning Journey Dialogue Reflection ................................... 132
6.4. Reflection (Summary Links to Research) .............................................. 134
  6.4.1. Building Complex Thinking ........................................................ 134
  6.4.2. Morality ..................................................................................... 136
  6.4.3. The Being of the Leader ............................................................. 137
Chapter 7. Discussion and Conclusions ................................................................. 139
7.1. Conceptual Framework for Enduring Understandings ........................................ 140
  7.1.1. Explicit and Intentional Relationship Building ........................................... 140
  7.1.2. Crafting a Container of Self-Awareness .................................................. 141
  7.1.3. Relational Strategies .............................................................................. 142
  7.1.4. Wise Action ....................................................................................... 143
  7.1.5. Social and Emotional Learning .............................................................. 143
7.2. Dialogic Organizational Development and Inquiry ............................................... 145
  7.2.1. Vulnerability: The Being of the Leader ................................................... 146
  7.2.2. Courage ............................................................................................ 148
7.3. Questions and Recommendations for Further Research ....................................... 149
7.4. Recommendations for Practice ........................................................................ 150
7.5. Summary .................................................................................................. 152
7.6. Epilogue ................................................................................................... 152

References ............................................................................................................. 154

Appendix A. Strategies, Structures and Tactics .......................................................... 159
  Cooperative Strategies .................................................................................... 159
  Fishbowl ......................................................................................................... 159
Appendix B. Learning Team Structure ...................................................................... 160
Appendix C. Consent Forms .................................................................................... 161
  Student Participants ......................................................................................... 161
  Parental Consent for Student Participation .................................................... 163
  Parent Participants .......................................................................................... 165
  Staff Participants ........................................................................................... 167
  Expert Participants ......................................................................................... 169
Appendix D. Curricula Overview for All Participant Groups ....................................... 171
  How We Learned ............................................................................................ 171
  What We Learned .......................................................................................... 173
Appendix E. Thoughtstream Survey Analysis ............................................................. 176
  Question 1. Why did you want to learn about self-regulation? ......................... 176
  Question 2. What learning tools are you finding most valuable for your participation: research snippets, newsletter posts, book club, student leadership activities, displays, assemblies, shared lessons, the Integration blog, twitter, or student’s stories? ........................................ 178
  Question 3. If you are not engaged in the learning, how can we invite you to participate? ....................................................................................... 181
  Question 4. What have you learned? ................................................................ 183
  Question 5. List any changes you have noticed in yourself or in the school community .................................................................................. 185
Appendix F. Dialogue Circle Transcript ..................................................................... 188
Appendix G. Dialogue Circle Responses ................................................................. 204
  Expert Responses ........................................................................................... 204
  Expert Response Summary ............................................................................. 220
List of Tables

Table 1.1. Participation in Research ................................................................. 8
Table 1.2. Stages of Each Inquiry Cycle ............................................................. 10

List of Figures

Figure 4.1. Words Contributed by Students, Parents, and Teachers
Describing the Kind of School We Want ......................................................... 77
Figure 4.2. The Kind of School We Want: Wordle .............................................. 77
Figure 4.3. Student Artwork: Reflections on Kindness Project .............................. 78
Figure 5.1. Grade 4 Student’s Story Response .................................................... 98
Figure 5.2. Heart Art ......................................................................................... 101
Figure 5.3. Grade 4 Boy Art Show Reflection .................................................... 102
Figure 5.4. Grade 4 Girl Art Show Reflection .................................................... 103
Figure 5.5. Classroom Time Healthy Mind Platter Graph .................................... 105
Figure 6.1. Connected: Conference Framework ............................................... 128
Figure 6.2. Connected: Installation .................................................................. 128
Figure 6.3. Student Earth Day Writing .............................................................. 131
Figure 6.4. Farmer’s Market Stands ................................................................. 132
Figure 6.5. Student Brainstorm: Planning for Dialogue Circle ............................ 133
List of Acronyms

CASEL        Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning
EdD          Doctor of Education
IQ           Intelligence Quotient
MDI          Middle Years Development Instrument
OD           Organizational Development
PLC          Professional Learning Community
SFU          Simon Fraser University

Glossary

Dialogic Organization Development
An emerging theory of organizational development that “is open to infinite possibilities constrained only by the human imagination and collective will” (Bushe & Marshak, 2009, p. 352).

Integration
“The fundamental mechanism of health and well-being. Integration is the linkage of differentiated parts of a system” (Siegel, 2012b, p. 16-1).

Self-Regulation
“The ability to stay calm, focused and alert” (Shanker, 2012, p. 7).
Staff Collaborative Collage:

Seed, Blossom, Fruit
Chapter 1.

Introduction

Each time we succeed in raising a child with a healthy mind, we’re also contributing to a smoothly functioning, democratic, optimistic, and economically successful society. We increase the odds that the world of the new millennium will be made up of individuals who have empathy and compassion for others, can work in groups, create new breakthroughs, become intellectually robust, and even rear children with healthy minds themselves. (Greenspan, 1999, pp. 12-13)

As the research base grows in regards to learning through contributions from neuroscience, cognition and psychology, schools often lag in response through informed action as described by de Corte (2010):

The research base on learning grows but, rather than guiding change, learning scientists lament that too many schools do not exemplify their conclusions. At the same time, far too much research on learning is disconnected from the realities of educational practice and policy making. There is, as it has been called, a “great disconnect.” (p. 21)

With new findings in neuroscience, cognitive science, and developmental psychology, educators are faced with decisions about what research has merit. Self-regulation is a topic that is gaining a great deal of attention in British Columbia through the work of Stuart Shanker and the Canadian Self-Regulation Initiative. Nancy Perry has worked for years on researching self-regulated learning and works alongside educators to understand and enrich her research and learning experiences in classrooms. Kim Schonert-Reichl has been researching social emotional learning and resiliency and has designed an instrument to engage communities in discussing how to best meet the developmental needs of children. Daniel Siegel has written extensively on what he calls interpersonal neurobiology which is a combination of perspectives to
describe neurodevelopment in response to relationship; he offers practical parenting strategies for fostering integration.

Self-regulation is a complex topic that can be defined from a variety of perspectives. It is an emerging topic in both the media and presentations at staff development conferences. Presenters are repackaging their messages to highlight the aspects of self-regulation in the education market. Educators make decisions about the materials and methods used in classrooms. As the market expands it becomes important for educators to make wise decisions based on a solid philosophical stance. This thesis is designed to delve deeper into the research to surface our beliefs, assumptions, and mindsets about the complex topic of self-regulation, so we can build our capacity to make wise decisions about how to create environments and develop relationships that promote healthy functioning children in both heart and mind.

1.1. Purpose

This thesis, Documenting a School’s Journey in How to Learning about Self-Regulation and Integration, took its roots during a student reflection on the school code of conduct in the spring of 2012. It was designed as a reciprocal process of coming together to learn about self-regulation. The goal was to make meaning together through shared experiences, reflection, and dialogue. An action research study was conducted that was not designed to measure or evaluate students, parents, or teachers’ ability to self-regulate and integrate. It was designed to act as a process to learn about self-regulation and integration from new research and to apply that new knowledge to our context. Our learning was celebrated by honouring the process, making learning visible through documentation, and further sharing the cycle of thoughtful learning and reflection.

Research suggests the better students are able to self-regulate, the better success they have in mastering new skills. But the emphasis today on instant gratification means a growing number of children are coming to school without that ability and teachers need new strategies to help them develop it. (Steffenhagen, 2012, para. 8)
There is a growing body of research about self-regulation and at this time many schools and districts are investing time and energy into figuring out how this important research can be operationalized.

1.2. Context

Yearly, principals are required to consult with parents, teachers, and students in a review of the school’s code of conduct. A group of 20 students, two from each class, joined together to review our code of conduct. After three meetings, where we discussed a broad range of controversial topics like punishment, justice, fairness, and trust, the students wanted to take the lead in spreading their understandings with the rest of the school. Throughout the year, leadership students shared their messages at school assemblies, by making announcements, and planning fundraisers and theme days. They wanted to model their actions after those they had seen but build on one central theme to make the learning, “stick.” To summarize their ideas in my words, they wanted to talk about behaving when teachers and parents are not around, how to not get caught up in doing things you know you are not supposed to do, how to handle it when you have done something wrong and you do not want to get in trouble, and how to deal with feelings like anger, disappointment, sadness and frustration. In children’s language they were describing, self-regulation.

The staff, during our yearly goal setting session identified a very similar thread. In response to the question, “What do our students need?” The area that rose to the top of their priority list was self-regulation. The staff also expressed a desire to support the students’ ideas and to let the leadership students design the learning journey.

In hearing from both staff and students that self-regulation is a key idea that they wanted to learn about, I reached out to include parents because the parent/child relationship is central to learning self-regulation. “How our kids make sense of their young lives is not only about what happens to them but also about how their parents, teachers, and other caregivers respond” (Siegel & Bryson, 2011a, p. xi). Essential also to any school goal is the inclusion of parents in the process of change. Comer and Haynes (1991) outline an ecological approach to parent involvement:
We believe that parent involvement programs are the most effective when they are part of an integrated ecological approach to school enhancement. They work best when they are based on child development concerns and when they are implemented within a broader context of improved relationships among the significant adults in the lives of children. If constructed and implemented well, parent involvement programs … provide the linkage between home, community, and school that is essential to the healthy growth and development of children. (p. 277)

Any plan must include a place for parent learning along with student and staff learning.

1.3. Value

The conclusion from research is clear. “Numerous meta-studies show that self-regulation is more important than IQ when it comes to predicting a child’s ability to do well in school, make healthy friendships and work towards personal goals” (Shanker, 2012, p. 7). The students, teachers, and I all agreed that self-regulation was an important idea and quality but the real question was how to foster growth in that area. If we could unlock our learning to be able to provide opportunities, language, community, and environments that promote self-regulation, we would be providing the key to success for our students because, “The better a child can stay calmly focused and alert, the better he integrates the diverse information coming in from his different senses, assimilates it, and sequences his thought and actions” (Shanker, 2014, para. 1).

The importance of including parents in our learning is emphasized by the Government of Canada report entitled “The Well Being of Canada’s Young Children,” (Early Childhood Development, 2012):

Well-functioning families are characterized by mutual support and understanding. Members of well-functioning families are free to voice their needs and concerns, solve problems together, and have low levels of conflict. Children who grow up in these kinds of families tend to have higher self-esteem, view their families as being more cohesive and supportive, and have better relationships with their parents overall.

The quality of interactions between parent and child is also an important factor in early childhood development. Adopting a positive parenting style can contribute to secure emotional attachment between parent and child
and can foster early patterns of positive communication. Positive parenting is correlated with better academic achievement in children, prosocial behaviors, higher levels of self-esteem, and the development of healthy relationships later in life. (p. 48)

The parent/child relationship is central to the well-being of a child but as they grow older the community becomes important as well and this is described in the Government of Canada report on Early Childhood Development (2012):

The neighbourhoods and communities children group in can have a significant influence on their development. As children enter middle childhood, they begin to explore their surrounding communities, engage in extracurricular activities outside of the home, and their circle of contacts expands to include a greater number of people (i.e. teachers, coaches, community members and classmates). While family relationships are still central, these other relationships play an important role in children’s development and their ability to interact with others. (p. 61)

The Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) measures experiences of children ages six to 12 in relation to developmental assets that support and optimize childhood development. I have selected key aspects to describe the self-report instrument from the Human Early Learning Partnership (n.d.) website. The MDI looks at measures of development in five areas.

- **Social & Emotional Development**: optimism, empathy, happiness, pro-social (caring, helpful, cooperative) behavior, self-esteem
- **Connectedness**: availability of supportive adults in school, families, and neighbourhoods, and a sense of belonging with peers
- **School Experiences**: academic self-concept, school climate, victimization at school (experiences with physical, verbal, social, and cyber bullying)
- **Physical Health & Well-Being**: general health, body image, nutrition and sleeping patterns
- **Constructive Use of After-School Time**: time spent in youth organizations, school/non-school sports/lessons, time spent watching television, time spent playing video games

("MDI Measures of Development" table, para. 1)

According to the 2011 MDI results, our school community is rich with possibilities for thriving and resilient children. In our small rural, elementary school in the lower mainland students are well-loved and well cared for; they get enough food and sleep,
they are active and engaged, they have adults in the school and community with whom they connect and they connect well with their peers. During our staff reflection of the MDI results, the teachers and I were still worried when so many children cannot manage big emotions like disappointment, when we see sensory sensitivities getting in the way of a child’s ability to settle into their learning, when they are met with a challenge it is rare to see a child dig deep and persevere, and we are seeing a growing number of students who are anxious (Staff Reflection, Spring 2012).

1.4. Inside Researcher

To lead the school community in this journey, I had to learn as well. I was not an expert and was engaging authentically in the learning. I wanted to document this journey to see what motivated people to learn, what made an impact, and how the learning was disseminated. I began reading, attended a learning team which included teachers, principals, coordinators and Dr. Nancy Perry, a researcher from University of British Columbia.

I had not found many practical ideas to implement but rather had gained an understanding that to develop self-regulation a child must experience attuned relationships. This was a place of vulnerability for me, I was embarking on a learning journey, and I was taking a whole community with me. Living with that vulnerability for the duration of my research over this year truly gave me a beginners mind. I believe this situated me in a presence and a way of interacting with the content, the communities, and individuals in a dialogical way.

I had to lay out a curriculum that was both linear and responsive because I did not know what directions our learning would take us. Good lesson design starts with having a clear vision of the end in mind; in this case I had a compelling vision of the way of being together, but I could not clearly define what exactly would constitute success.

During the research life cycle I had multiple roles. I was the principal of the school, a teacher of an intermediate class part time, the person who ran leadership for
the school, a supervisor on the playground, and a learner on a learning team. I had to acknowledge my lead role and my learner role throughout this journey.

1.5. Methodology

This action research study is grounded in the qualitative tradition as it narrates the learning journey. It is a co-operative inquiry which focuses on documentation as a process of making our learning journey visible to both ourselves and accessible by others. It is not meant as a recipe but as an example of how our community came together to learn and act upon that learning. This co-operative inquiry acts as the infrastructure to integrate new theoretical learning into practice. Lessons from this learning journey will be shared in the profession.

This study is situated in the social constructivist tradition in that it defines knowledge as, “not something people possess somewhere in their heads, but rather, something people do together” (Gergen, 1985, p. 270). The documentation included examples from students, parents, teachers and the principal. The documentation shared the multiple perspectives and experiences from each group for further reflection.

1.5.1. Participants

The participants in this study include a whole school community, parents, students, teachers, and the principal (Table 1.1). Through the emergent design and co-operative meaning making, the participants were co-researchers (see Table 1.1).
Table 1.1. 
**Participation in Research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>• Involved in an EdD program called Transformational Change through SFU.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Principal of a small elementary school in the lower mainland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teacher of the Grade 4/5 class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Participant in a district learning team about self-regulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The team included a UBC researcher, 2 members staff development, 2 principals, about 10 teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>• About 15 parents participated in the book club throughout the year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• At school-wide events most children had a least one parent participate and some had both.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Seven parents attended the SFU Conference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• All parents received monthly newsletters, links to the blog, and access to participate in the Thoughtsream Survey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>• We had about 15 staff: 12 teachers and 3 support staff included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• At staff meetings we engaged in the reflective process and research snippets throughout the year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• All staff members engaged in the school-wide events and shared lessons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>• The school had a population of 175 students from kindergarten to Grade 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The main group of students doing the leading of the learning for the different projects came from the Grade 4/5 classes (70 students) the most significant participation was from my own class of 27 students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• All students were invited to join in on various events and they self-selected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some organizing committees were 10 while others were 35.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Code of Conduct Group: 20 students, 2 from each division.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Memory Group: 5 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I was the principal of the small elementary school, a teacher in the Grade 4/5 class and the lead researcher as I documented the journey as part of my thesis for the Transformational Change EdD program at Simon Fraser University.

The elementary school ranged in grades from kindergarten to Grade 5. The school population was about 175 students the year of the research. The research included students from the whole school through events. The code of conduct group included two students from each of the eight classrooms. The leadership group was ever changing. I would call for any students who wanted to participate in organizing an event to meet in the library. The memory group was consistently about ten students and
the other activities could have as many as 30 organizers, so the groups varied in size. The buddy project largely drew from my own class and members from the other intermediate classes were welcome to join in when they had an interest to do so. For the reflections however, I ensured that students had signed consents to participate in the research for their work to be included.

The parents were largely included through the book club, newsletters, a blog, and the events. The book club ran six times throughout the year and had a core group of about 15 people. Two people were unable to make the meetings but would read our reflections on the blog and respond to me through email. During the events, most children had at least one parent participate and some had extended family join us as well.

The 12 teachers were included through the research snippets at monthly staff meetings throughout the year. They also had access to the newsletters and blog. As well they participated in the school wide events and reflections. The teachers often extended lessons and added to displays after the events.

1.5.2. Phases of Inquiry

This study was designed over three phases of inquiry (Table 1.2). The first phase explored the connection to self through insight and self-awareness. The second phase explored connection to each other and the final phase focused on building connection with the world and nature.

1.5.3. Stages of Each Inquiry Cycle

Reason (1988) discusses Heron’s co-operative inquiry model as including four stages: Stage 1 as “propositional and practical knowing, Stage 2 as “engagement” with the content and actions, Stage 3 as “going deeper” into the experiential knowledge, and Stage 4 as “reflective” linking back to theory or research (pp. 4-5) (Table 1.2). Propositional and practical knowledge was defined by the curricula, strategies, and structures. We engaged in our learning through events then documented the experiential
To conclude each phase of inquiry, I reflected on our learning and linked it back to the research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1: New Learnings</th>
<th>Phase 2: Connection to Each Other (Empathy)</th>
<th>Phase 3: Connection to the World &amp; Nature (Moral Reasoning) April-June</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Self-regulation &amp; integration</td>
<td>• The Dynamic Developmental Approach</td>
<td>• Building Advanced Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attunement</td>
<td>• Memories</td>
<td>• Multi-causal Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The River of Well-Being</td>
<td>• The Fun Factor</td>
<td>• Reflective Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Whole Brain Strategies: Connect &amp; Redirect, Name It to Tame It, Engage Don’t Enrage</td>
<td>• The Healthy Mind Platter</td>
<td>• The Me–We Connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Positivity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 2: Events</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Code of Conduct Review</td>
<td>• The Buddy Project</td>
<td>• The SFU Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Book Club (six meetings throughout the year for parents)</td>
<td>• Literature Lessons</td>
<td>• Building a Nature Spiral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Research Snippets at Staff Meetings (one meeting per month)</td>
<td>• Remembering to Remember</td>
<td>• Young Entrepreneurs for Charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learner Profiles</td>
<td>• The Hearts and Minds Art Show</td>
<td>• The Dialogue Circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Kindness Project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 3: Documentation</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Thoughtstream: Motivation</td>
<td>• Thoughtstream: Learning Tools &amp; Engagement</td>
<td>• Thoughtstream: Learning &amp; Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Compelling Vision of Our Quality World</td>
<td>• Student Learning Stories</td>
<td>• Conference Framework &amp; Reflections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Kindness Project Assembly and Works</td>
<td>• Reflections</td>
<td>• Young Entrepreneur Reflections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Buddy Journals</td>
<td>• Dialogue Circle Responses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 4: Reflection</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Crafting a Container</td>
<td>• Understanding Connection</td>
<td>• Building Complex Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developing Self-Awareness</td>
<td>• Engagement through Events</td>
<td>• Moral Reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Being of the Leader</td>
<td>• The Being of the Leader</td>
<td>• The Being of the Leader</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1.2: Stages and Phases of the Inquiry Cycle**

*Knowledge.*
1.5.4. Qualitative Analysis

The documentation included in each phase represents the initial coding of data. The documentation included group reflections, individual reflections, responses, and work samples. The reflection at the end of each inquiry cycle represents the intermediate stages of coding, where links between the lived experiences and new learning were made. In the final chapter, the advanced stages of coding are represented in the reflective analysis building a coherent narrative of our learning journey.

1.6. Limitations

This research study is grounded in the action research genre as a co-operative inquiry. It is not a typical action research design because it does not identify a problem and then measure growth. We were coming from a place of abundance and together chose a learning goal that was meaningful and worthy of our time. This shift in epistemology was awkward because defining the significance of our work became a narrated journey rather than a quantifiable measure. Most action research projects I have been involved in the past were firmly grounded in complexity theory. In search of a grounding framework, I found the dialogic organizational development theory much more fitting for our process. Further documentation of dialogic processes in education could bring strength to an emerging way of working together.

The documentation honoured the subjective experiences of each person who participated and may simply be a story without broader significance to the education field. I saw such a profound growth in the students’ abilities and confidence; it would be interesting to know if those perceived developments will have a lasting significance and if so what that look like in terms of outcomes.

Since this study does not outline a template or a recipe, it would be difficult to replicate. The journey has benefited my school community and I hope that once it is shared with others it can have a guiding worth. I am struck by the notion that this is our work, yet I struggle with measuring its significance. It is not a template or a recipe, but
action aimed at changing mindsets, conversations, and thinking. In times of such significant change I wonder if the action logic of the leader can be linked to wise action of teachers.

1.7. Thesis Organization

Chapter 2 is a review of the literature as it relates to both the content and process of our learning together. The content explored represents our new learning and covers the complex topic of self-regulation and integration. Self-regulation and integration are defined and framed within a dynamic developmental approach that shifts us from our behavioristic and mechanistic philosophical underpinnings to a more dynamic relational approach that honours the development of the heart and the mind.

In Chapter 2, the process of our learning includes strategies and structures within a dialogical approach to shifting our mindsets versus measuring our progress. The process is outlined was co-operative and emergent as it was done in relation.

Chapter 3 reviews the methodology of this co-operative inquiry. This qualitative methodology is grounded in the social constructivist tradition. Documentation was the initial coding of collected artifacts throughout three cycles of inquiry. At the end of each phase of inquiry intermediate coding linked the learning back to the new learning. In the advanced stages of coding, I used the main categories from the integration of data sources to create the storyline for the most significant aspects of our learning journey.

There were three phases to the research, each inquiry cycle is represented in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. Each chapter includes the new theory and research presented, the events and strategies we participated in together, the presentation of selected pieces of documentation, and reflection that links our learning back to the research. Within these three phases documentation of real life moments were made visible. Documentation was gathered from four main audiences: parents, teachers, students and the principal as researcher. The documentation is presented as descriptions of events, moments, reflections, anecdotes, and blog posts.
The first phase of the inquiry cycle which focused on building a connection to self is presented in Chapter 4. This chapter largely outlines how we crafted the container for our work together. Attention is paid to understanding our learning styles, creating a compelling vision, establishing restorative practices for discipline, and the use of cooperative learning structures. In this chapter we engage in learning about self-regulation, integration and begin to learn strategies to promote reflective action grounded in self-awareness and insight.

The second phase of the inquiry cycle which focused on building connections with each other is presented in Chapter 5. Central to this chapter is the role of events which provided us with opportunities for cooperative work, and action which gave us the lived experiences to reflect upon to enrich our journey.

The final phase of the inquiry cycle which focused on building connections with the world and nature is presented in Chapter 6. Central to this chapter is the wise action and reflection of the journey which were shared through a dialogue circle and conference presentation.

Chapter 7 discusses the advanced stages of coding and the themes that emerged from our learning as a group. The themes provide a conceptual framework for working within a relational approach to self-regulation and integration. The conceptual framework represents the content of our learning. Consideration is given to the Dialogic Organizational Development theory in reflecting on the process of this learning journey. This chapter discusses the limitations of the study as well as outlines further questions and recommendations for further study.
Chapter 2.

Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

Erik de Corte (2010) authored a chapter in the *The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inspire Practice* in which he cites Ann Brown as stating in her American Educational Research Association presidential address, “Enormous advances have been made in this century in our understanding of learning and development. School practices in the main have not changed to reflect these advances” (p. 43). In looking at embedding new research into practice, this thesis provides an example of both what we learned and how we went about the learning process. In this literature review, the new learning is introduced and it is followed by a justification of the choices made in regards to designing the learning journey.

In the process of researching self-regulation and integration for this thesis, it became increasingly difficult to situate the theory and discoveries within a discipline. The new research calls into question competing theories such as a behaviorist versus developmental views of child development, the interplay of emotions and reason, the role of relationships in cognitive development, and new advances in neuroscience.

I have narrowed the content for exploring self-regulation and integration by focusing on the new pieces of research that have prompted me to transform my practice and participate in this co-operative inquiry. After grounding this work in a dynamic developmental theory, I expand on the definition of self-regulation, provide a metaphor for child development and explore the notion of integration. I then discuss three pieces of research that have prompted me to design this thesis. I explore the role of attuned
relationships and attachment, new findings about brain plasticity and its relationship to sensitive periods, as well as the role of memory in creating cohesive narratives.

Having grounded the link between the importance of relationship in learning how to self-regulate and integrate, I then consider the organizational development practices to align the process and the content of our learning. In describing the journey, I first link the social constructivist perspective and the purpose of this research in the dialogic organizational development model. I differentiate the dialogic organization model from diagnostic models, as well as delineate the strong similarities in process. I then explain the journey metaphor and how it relates to documenting our learning together. As well, I give theoretical rationale for the selection of cooperative learning structures, the learning team structure and explain the role of events in making this journey happen.

2.2. Educational Shaping Forces

The elevation of the cognitive over the emotional aspect of our minds has deep-seated origins. Ever since the ancient Greeks, philosophers have elevated the rational side of the mind above the emotional and seen the two as separate. Intelligence, in this view, is necessary to govern and restrain the base passions. This concept has been profoundly influential in Western thought; indeed, it has shaped some of our most basic institutions and beliefs. (Greenspan & Benderly, 1997, p. 2)

Within many of the shaping forces of educational thought, the development of the cognitive side of learning has been the primary focus while the emotional aspects of learning and the role of developing a physically healthy brain have been somewhat ignored until recently. Shanker (2008) discusses the polarity over the nature/nurture debate and the mind/brain debate, as both sides have aspects that are true (p. 22). The purpose of defining and reflecting on these philosophies is to understand the complex interactions between the two and what possible actions a practitioner would take once defining their view. Shanker cites Fogel, explaining:

there is a growing sense today, however, that we have finally seen the emergence of a framework that is indeed capable of synthesizing both sides in the mind/brain debate: of understanding how psychological and neurobiological processes influence each other, and how the relationship between them grows over time (Fogel, 1993). (p. 22)
The new framework discussed by Fogel above, is grounded in what Shanker calls a dynamic developmental pathways model. To summarize Shanker, genetic and/or environmental factors can impact the way a child takes in the sensory input which can influence the types of ways a child interacts with their environment, both in what they seek as experiences and how they receive those experiences, which in turn has an impact on the types of neural pathways that are specialized and strengthened (p. 2).

In considering both sides of the nature/nurture debate, Hood (2012) identifies historical influences,

the 18th-Century English philosopher, John Locke, described the mind of a newborn infant as a blank piece of paper upon which experience would write itself and the 19th-Century American philosopher, William James, thought the newborn’s world was a chaotic jumble of confusion. (p. 35)

He goes on to clarify a more current view in which evolution and natural selection has primed a brain for taking on new information. He notes:

Like your laptop computer delivered through the mail, babies come with a brain operating system that has evolved to learn certain things about the world and ignore other stuff that is not of use to them. And the most important things to a human baby are other humans. (p. 35)

Shanker (2008) grounds this debate in the practical:

We look at this issue at both the psychological and the neurobiological level, and the complex interactions that take place between the two. This research provides us with a unique opportunity to explore both sides in the nature/nurture debate, but given that our mandate is to benefit children in very practical ways. (p. 22)

In bringing these debates to the surface for consideration, practically we can decide if our actions, strategies, and interventions measure up to our new learning and discoveries about brain development and the role of nurturing relationships. It can also help us when we strive to understand the complexity of the child who is not thriving in the learning environment, suggesting more possibilities to explore, explain, and select actions that best meet the needs of the child.
Many of the historical philosophies of education focus on cognitive development. Recent theories about attachment and neurobiology are bringing to the forefront of educational thought that the mind develops in relationship. Greenspan asserts that, “this single-minded emphasis on one kind of evolutionary fitness has caused us to neglect the softer, nurturing side of our evolutionary inheritance, which actually creates the tools that enable us to achieve mastery” (Greenspan, 1999, p. 12).

This dynamic systems model does not define learning and development as linear with a direct cause and effect relationship but as an interconnected system where multiple factors simultaneous affect each other (Shanker, 2008).

Our new observations suggest that emotional interactions play a far more critical role in intellectual functioning. They can help us go beyond Howard Gardner’s important idea of separate, multiple intelligences, or Antonio Damasio’s research on the brain which suggests that emotions are important for judgment but somehow separate from academic capacities or overall intelligence. Even Jean Piaget, the pioneering cognitive psychologist, overlooked this vital connection. (Greenspan, 1999, p. 9)

2.2.1. A Healthy Mind

Greenspan and Shanker (2004) refer to building healthy minds as a “balance of functional and emotional capacities that support healthy mental functioning” (para. 15). To summarize Shanker (2008) the functional and emotional capacities include the ability to: manage emotions, attend to the world, form attachments, interact, solve problems, think logically, think reflectively and think strategically (p. 25).

Siegel and Bryson (2011a) associate healthy mental and emotional functioning as: flexible, adaptive, and stable and work towards self-knowledge and understanding of the world (p. 13). They believe regulation comes from integration and describe it using the metaphor of, “the river of well-being.”

Imagine a peaceful river running through the countryside. That’s your river of well-being. Whenever you’re in the water, peacefully floating along in your canoe, you feel like you’re generally in a good relationship with the world around you. You have a clear understanding of yourself,
other people, and your life. You can be flexible and adjust when situations change. You’re stable and at peace.

Sometimes, though, as you float along, you veer too close to one of the river’s two banks. This causes different problems, depending on which bank you approach. One bank represents chaos, where you feel out of control…. As opposed to being out of control, rigidity is when you are imposing control on everything and everyone around you. You become completely unwilling to adapt, compromise, or negotiate.”
(Siegel & Bryson, 2011a, p. 11)

2.2.2. Dual Coding

To better explain the dynamic nature of the intellectual and emotional experience on the developing mind is the notion of dual coding. Dual coding refers to the process by which our minds code experiences through both emotional and cognitive functions. So each experience can be cross-referenced on an emotional level or a cognitive level.

Each sensory perception therefore forms part of a dual code. We label it both by its physical properties (bright, big, loud, smooth, and the like) and by the emotional qualities we connect with it (we might experience it as soothing or jarring, or it might make us feel happy or tense). This double coding allows the child to “Cross-reference” each memory or experience in a mental catalogue of phenomena and feelings and to reconstruct it when needed. (Greenspan & Benderly, 1997, p.21)

Lake (2012) states Wink’s and Putney’s view of Vygotsky as challenging the idea of an objective mind; that he believed our minds are influenced by feelings and subjective experience (p. 19). Vygotsky utilized play as a teaching tool for cultivating thought and creativity in order to illicit an emotional connection because he believed:

Any function in the child’s cultural development appears twice, or on two planes. First it appears on the social plane, and then on the psychological plane. First it appears between people as an interpsychological category, and then within the child as an intrapsychological category…. Social relations or relation among people genetically underlie all higher functions and their relationships. (Vygotsky as cited in Lake, 2012, p. 49)
2.3. A Dynamic Developmental Theory

2.3.1. Self-Regulation

In a now famous experiment on self-regulation by Mischel et al. (1989), children were told they can have one marshmallow now or several if they wait until the experimenter comes back into the room... around 30% of 4 year olds were able to wait. The children who were able to wait had higher academic achievements later in life, lower antisocial behavior and reduced susceptibility to drug use. (Mishel, Shoda, & Rodriguez as cited in Shanker, n.d., p. 2)

An article in the Vancouver Sun written by Steffenhagen (2012) outlines the Self-Regulation Project in British Columbia being led by Surrey superintendent, Mike McKay. The goal of the project was to apply brain research in designated classrooms with the support of Stuart Shanker and his research team. In this article McKay states, “The work is expected to help educators understand why efforts over many decades to improve chances of success for some children have not always been successful.” He also notes, “This is something that’s becoming fundamental to the way we do business. We are having to reinvent education.” In the same article, Adele Diamond, a University of British Columbia professor said, “Teaching children self-regulation will have impacts far beyond the classroom, including improved mental health and lower crime rates.”

Perry (2011) links self-regulation to school success:

Recent research involving very young children links self-regulation before school to success in school (Duncan et al., 2007; McClelland & Tominey, 2011) and primary teachers judge skills associated with regulating learning, behavior, and affect are essential for children’s adjustment to and success in school (Rimm-Kaufmann & Chiu, 2007; Rimm-Kaufmann et al., 2009).

Shanker (2012) defines “optimal self-regulation as the ability to stay calm, focused and alert” (p. 7). Understanding self-regulation is complex. It involves understanding how the brain takes in information from its surroundings and how that information is processed. Shanker (2010) describes this through a 5-domain model that involves arousal states, emotions, behavior, and—as the child grows older—thinking skills (p. 4).
To summarize, Shanker (2010) describes the relationship between these five domains as interdependent. He suggests thinking about them through a lens of dynamic systems theory because each domain impacts the other. A child’s ability to self-regulate involves a complex interplay between the domains and the integration of sensory information in the mind to be able to translate the incoming information into a sequence of thoughts and actions. “The better a child can stay calmly focused and alert, the better he integrates the diverse information coming in from his different senses, assimilates it, and sequences his thought sand actions” (p. 5).

1. Biological (e.g., how well the child regulates her arousal states)
2. Emotional (e.g., how well the child monitors and modifies her emotional responses)
3. Cognitive (e.g., how well the child can sustain and switch her attention; inhibit impulses; deal with frustration, delay, distractions; sequence her thoughts)
4. Social (e.g., the child’s mastery of rules of appropriate behavior; how well the child can co-regulate and thereby develop prosocial attributes)
5. Reflective thinking skills.

(p. 5)

The key to understanding the complex nature of self-regulation is to recognize the bottom-up and top-down interactions of all these levels, which together facilitate a child’s ability to take in and process information.

(p. 5)

The five domains are reflected in Greenspan and Greenspan (2010) who use the metaphor of a learning tree to describe the essential ingredients for learning. To summarize, the learning tree has: roots which represent the ways children take in information and plan actions, a trunk which represents the development of thinking skills and their application to academic learning as well as relationships, and branches which represent academic skills of reading, math, speaking, writing an organizing (p. xv).

This dynamic developmental model differs from historical models like Piaget in that it honours both the cognitive and emotive aspects to learning as well as it moves from a biological determinist position to one that honours the impact of a nurturing environment on development. To summarize Lake (2012), Piaget’s cognitive
developmental model attributed an individuals’ development through stages as preceding learning (p. 41). This is grounded in behaviorism:

A school of psychology that is focused on measurable and observable behaviors in subjects that are motivated by external stimuli and operant conditioning. In educational contexts, behaviorism views learning as a set of habits acquired individualized and measured with standardized methods of testing. (p. 40)

Lake (2012) referred to a variation to the developmental theory in which Vygostky stated learning preceded development. “Learning begins on what he [Vygostsky] calls an ‘interpersonal plane’ through interaction with others, then moves to what he called an ‘intrapersonal plane,’ as concepts are internalized by the individual” (p. 19). “The transformation of an interpersonal process into an intrapersonal one is the result of a long series of developmental events” (Vygostsky as cited in Lake, p. 19).

The dynamic developmental model honours the genetic biological conditions of a child as well as the nurturing, environmental conditions a child lives within as partners in the developmental process. To further understand this dynamic I will define integration, expand upon the role of mirror neurons in developing attuned and attached relationships, connect new understandings about brain plasticity to the already mentioned sensitive periods, and explore the integrative potential of cohesive narratives in memory.

2.3.2. Integration

To best explain the role of integration, I am beginning with a short description of brain development and neural functioning. This helps to understand the integrative function of the brain and suggests the importance of a dynamic developmental theory for laying the groundwork for facilitation through sensitive periods and the role of relationships in developing a healthy mind.

To summarize Bruer (1997) in outlining what neuroscientists know about synaptic growth, critical periods and environments, he begins by comparing the newborn brain and adult brain. The adult brain has more synaptic connections than a neonate.
Changes in a newborn are rapid and they grow synapses which exceed adult levels. Synaptic overproduction is followed by what Bruer calls “an experience-dependent pruning process” (p.5). This overproduction and pruning process are complete near puberty. Bruer cautions about overgeneralizing neuro-scientific claims about sensitive or critical periods because not all areas of the brain reach maturity at the same time. He also states that, “normal children in almost any environment acquire these capacities at approximately the same age” (p. 7).

To summarize Hood (2012) brain imaging has brought to light that different regions of the brain have different functions such as: the brain stem regulates vital body functions, the midbrain deals with arousal, the limbic system is concerned with drives and raw emotion and the cortical systems house the connections of higher order representations and consciousness (p. 12). Hood (2012) describes:

- sensory neurons respond to information picked from the environment through our senses. Motor neurons replay information that controls our movement outputs. But it is the third class of neuron that makes up the majority—the interneurons, which connect the input and the output of the brain onto an internal network where all the really clever stuff happens. (p. 5)

Dynamic developmental theory does not try to control, negate, or dismiss some parts of the brains activity instead; it aims to describe the integrative nature of the connectivity of brain regions and purposes. Thelen and Smith (2003) describe two assumptions of the dynamic approach, “development can be envisioned as a series of evolving and dissolving patterns of varying dynamic stability, rather than an inevitable march towards maturity” (p. 344) and “behavioral change occurs over different timescales” (p. 344). Hood (2012) goes on to explain that “much of the change in early development can be attributed to not only the emergence of higher brain centers, but also the integration between these systems and their control over lower mechanisms (p. 13 ).

Siegel and Bryson (2011a), Hood (2012), Greenspan (1999) and Shanker (2008) describe the neural development of the brain as integrative. The individual parts of the brain through use and experience create connections and wiring in the brain that provide the neural circuitry for connection. To summarize Siegel and Bryson (2011a) in
describing different types of integration, they define horizontal, vertical, and memory integration. First there is left brain and right brain or horizontal integration (p. 36). The right brain is described as emotional, nonverbal, experiential, and autobiographical and the left brain is logical, linguistic, and literal. There is also an upstairs and a downstairs brain or vertical integration (pp. 64-65). The downstairs brain receives the stimuli from the senses and can take a flight or fight response in our reptilian part of the brain; it moves to the upstairs brain where higher level thinking can make sense of the stimuli and attach meaning. Siegel and Bryson (2011a) also describe integration of memories and trauma into our lives (pp. 90-91); to summarize, helping children make sense of a story by narrating it and emphasizing different parts of a story help some of the unexamined traces of memory make sense as they may be triggers in the future. Greenspan and Benderly (1997) explain, “a new understanding of how the mind develops in the earliest stages of life has emerged, one that integrates the child’s experience of emotional interactions with the growth of intellectual capacities and, indeed, the very sense of self.” (p. 10).

Hood (2012) describes, “the power is not in the number of neurons but in the amount of connections” and “by integrating information from diverse areas, the brain can generate rich, multidimensional experiences” (p. 13). Keeping in mind the cautionary notes from Bruer (1997) as he reminds us that normally children move through developmental stages in most environments and so not to overgeneralize neuro-scientific claims and apply them to our practice (p. 4). Greenspan (1999) encourages a holistic, relational approach to supporting child development,

the more you are able to encourage the integrated growth of your child’s mind and brain, the more successful you’ll be in laying the groundwork for his becoming an intelligent, logical, socially adept, empathic adult. These important qualities spring out of the fertile soil of your continuing interactions. (p. 11)

Integration has been described as the connectivity of the areas of the brain. Siegel (2012b) expands upon the notion of integration as occurring within the brain, within the person and relationships.

Integration is not the same as blending. Integration requires that we maintain elements of our differentiated selves while also promoting our
linkage. Becoming a part of a “we” does not mean losing a “me.” Integration as a focus of intervention among a range of domains of integration becomes the fundamental basis for how we apply interpersonal neurobiology principles to the nurturing of healthy relationships. (pp. 2-5)

When applying the term integration to the brain it means to see each area of the brain as distinct and connected to other areas. In applying the term integration to the person it acknowledges the different aspects of a person as distinct yet integrated into a whole. The concept of integration goes beyond the individual seeing each person as a whole and the integrative processes that connect them with others. Hood (2012) acknowledges this, “we are our brains, but the brain itself is surprisingly dependent on the world it processes and, when it comes to generating the self, the role of others is paramount in shaping us” (p. 4).

2.3.3. Attuned Relationships and Attachment

In the words of the distinguished developmental psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner: …in order to develop normally, a child requires progressively more complex joint activity with one or more adults who have an irrational emotional relationship with the child. Somebody’s got to be crazy about that kid. That’s number one. First, last, and always. (National Scientific Council of the Developing Child, 2009, p. 1)

Bronfenbrenner’s words outline the need for attuned and attached relationships in the healthy development of a child. These relationships are built on a foundation of reciprocal relationships through everyday interactions. In returning to the nature/nurture balance, we are born with predispositions to seek attached relationships which in turn nurture our development.

The “serve and return” interaction between parent and baby—in which young children naturally reach out for interaction through babbling, facial expressions, and gestures and adults respond with the same kind of vocalizing and gesturing back at them—builds and strengthens brain architecture and creates a relationship in which the baby’s experiences are affirmed and new abilities are nurtured. (National Scientific Council of the Developing Child, 2009, p. 2)

The National Scientific Council of the Developing Child, describes nurturing interactions as the ‘serve and return’ between parent and baby, while Hood describes it
as 'reciprocal communication'. Both authors are underlining the importance of relationships in the developing brain.

Reciprocal communication enables experience to change the brain’s architecture. We know this from animal research, in which the effects of early environments have been shown to influence the connectivity to the brain. For example, if you raise rat pups in isolation, without much to see or do, their brains are lighter and have few cortical connections compared to the brains of pups raised in an enriched environment where there are lots of other rats with which to play. (Hood, 2012, p. 21)

This natural ability of a newborn to reach out to adults means we come into this world ready to connect. Hood (2012) describes the mutually rewarding experience of connection, “social bonding with babies is a chemically coordinated event that engages the reward centers of both brains—mother and child” (p. 48). He goes on to say, “it would appear that young babies are naturally inclined to get a rise out of adults by copying them—or at least responding in a way that adults think is an attempt to imitate” (p. 39).

Brain imaging studies reveal that when mothers look at pictures of their own smiling baby in comparison to those of other babies, the circuits in the reward centers deep in their brain, an area known as the nucleus accumbens, light up.” (Hood, 2012, p. 39)

Some Italian neuroscientists, in their work with macaque monkeys discovered mirror neurons. According to Iacoboni (2007) “The mirror neuron system may be a cornerstone of the neural systems that allow social behavior, and its basic properties may be the key to understanding of the nature of the cognitive processes that make us ‘reach other minds’” (p. 237). Cozolino (2013) cited Iacoboni as stating that, “Mirror neurons lie at the crossroads of sensory, motor, somatic, and executive networks, allowing them to interweave inner and outer experiences with goal-directed behaviors” (p. 142). The discovery of mirror neurons in monkeys has helped define this natural phenomenon of bonding between mother and child. Siegel and Bryson (2011a) summarize the Italian neuroscientists who studied the brain of the macaque monkey. The researchers discovered that the monkey’s motor neurons fired the same way if it ate the banana as it did if it watched a scientist eat the banana. Identifying this neural
activity led others to hypothesize that these mirror neurons, “may be the root of empathy” (p. 123).

This mirror neuron activity can have positive or negative impacts on the developing brain. Siegel and Bryson (2011a) explain that humans can “mirror not only the behavioral intentions of others, but also their emotional states” (p. 124). Cozolino (2013) considers both sides of the mirror neuron activity:

emotional attunement also has a downside; it makes us susceptible to being “infected” by the feelings of others. Fears, anxieties, and phobias can all be passed from one person to another, especially from parents and other adults to children, via facial expressions and bodily postures as well as words, deeds, and beliefs (Hornik et al., 1987; Mineka & Cook, 1993; Platek et al., 2003; Walden & Ogan, 1988). (p. 148)

In understanding the role of mirror neurons as the basis for attunement which is defined by Siegel (2012b) as, “the circuitry of our own nervous system is such that if we attune, we come to create resonance in which our observing self takes on some of the features of that which we are observing” (p. 23). This resonance or attunement is what Siegel identifies as the “basis of secure attachment” (p. 23). John Bowlby, the British psychiatrist, was one of the first to describe this early social attachment behavior (as cited in Hood, 2012, p. 47). Bowlby (1988) defines:

attachment behavior is any form of behavior that results in a person attaining or maintaining proximity to some other clearly identified individual who is conceived as better able to cope with the world. It is most obvious whenever the person is frightened, fatigued, or sick, and is assuaged by comforting and caregiving (pp. 25-26).

Ainsworth and Bell (1970) define it as, “an affectional tie that one person or animal forms between himself and another specific one—a tie that binds them together in space and endures over time” (p. 50).

Attachment is considered a basic, in-born, biologically adaptive “motivational system” that drives the infant to create a few, selective attachments in his life. These attachments provide a relationship in which the infant will: (1) seek proximity to the attachment figure; (2) have a sense of a safe haven—in which when he is upset the attachment figure will soothe his distress; and (3) develop an “internal working model of a secure base”—an internal schema of the self with the other, self-with-
attachment-figure—that will provide him with a security enabling him to explore the word, have a sense of well-being, and to soothe himself in times of distress in the future.” (Bowlby as cited by Siegel, 2001, p. 69)

Bowlby’s (1988) research centered around orphaned children who were institutionalized after world war two and he found that, “of the many types of psychological disturbance that are traceable, at least in part, to one or another pattern of maternal deprivation, the effects on parental behavior and thereby on the next generation are potentially the most serious” (p. 36). As Hood (2012) describes, the Harvard Romanian Orphan Studies conducted by Nelson, the orphans were largely neglected and showed impairments and retardation. When British families adopted the orphans and provided them with loving and caring homes, the children develop normally after 4 years, if they were younger than 6 months when they were adopted. If they were adopted after the 6-month mark, the children had impaired recovery and many showed disturbed behavior, hyperactivity and had trouble forming relationships. This describes the fundamental need for attachment in early development (pp. 56-57).

At each succeeding state of development, we have found that emotional interactions like a little baby’s smile leading to a hug enable the child to understand how the world works, and eventually to think, solve problems, and master academic challenges. Emotions are actually the internal architects, conductors, or organizers of our minds. They tell us how and what to think, what to say and when to say it, and what to do. We “know” things through our emotional interactions and then apply that knowledge to the cognitive world. (Greenspan, 1999, p. 14)

“We are not only wired to connect, but we are also wired to attune to, resonate with, and learn from others” (Cozolino, 2013, p. 13). The National Scientific Council of the Developing Child (2009) “stated simply, establishing successful relationships with adults and other children provides a foundation of capacities that children will use for a lifetime” (p. 1). They go on to define the role of relationships is to, “engage children in the human community in ways that help them define who they are, what they can become, and how and why they are important to other people” (p. 1). They expand the relationships to include community beyond the family:

healthy development depends on the quality and reliability of a young child’s relationships with the important people in his or her life, both within
and outside the family. Even the development of a child’s brain architecture depends on the establishment of these relationships. (p. 1)

The expanded notion of relationship to include community speaks to the need for schools to look at the quality and dynamics of the relationships created with children for their healthy development.

### 2.3.4. Brain Plasticity and Sensitive Periods

A central dogma of 20th-century neuroscience was that the brain didn’t change that much after childhood. But as researchers began to take a closer look at adolescent brains, they were amazed by the amount of neural change taking place. Not surprisingly, they found considerable plasticity from the onset of puberty into the early twenties. (Cozolino, 2013, p. 33)

I begin the discussion of plasticity and sensitive periods with a critical look from Bruer (1997) who cautions educators from applying and overgeneralizing neuroscientific research to practice. He strongly suggests we look to cognitive psychology for direction as it applies to observable behavior and cautions about interpreting neuroscientific findings that are mostly done on animals and involve highly complex understandings of brain functioning. Bruer begins by discussing critical periods as related to the process of synaptogenesis, which is the:

> period of synaptic overproduction is followed by a period of synaptic elimination or pruning. This experience–dependent pruning process, which occurs over a period of years, reduces the overall number of synaptic connections to adult, mature levels, usually around the time of sexual maturity for the species. The mature nervous system has fewer synaptic connections than were present during the developmental peak. (p.5)

Bruer (1997) further clarifies the process of synaptogenesis as being related to critical periods and that there are different critical periods for different functions for example:

The human language function also seems to have several critical periods. Based on behavioral, not neuroscientific evidence, the critical period for phonology begins in infancy (Kuhl, 1994) and most probably ends around age 12. There also appears to be a lengthy critical period for acquiring
syntax that ends at around age 16. In contrast to phonology and syntax, there is no critical period for learning the lexicon. Our ability to acquire new vocabulary continues throughout our lifetimes (Neville, 1995). (p. 8)

Hood (2012) discusses this same process and relates it to potential for encountering experience:

It turns out that the overproduction and subsequent culling of connections may be a cunning strategy to shape the brain to its environment. A massive connectivity means that the brain is wired up for every potential pattern of activation that it may encounter from experience. But remember, only neurons that fire together wire together. (p. 20)

Bruer (1997) also emphasizes that our brains are adaptive and can grow normally from most environments, “in short, experience—expectant brain plasticity does not depend on specific experiences in specific environments, and for this reason, does not provide much guidance in choosing toys, preschools, or early child-care policies (p.8). Bruer underplays the need for specialized environments for normal growth and development. He does not omit the impact of neglect or deprivation. Hood (2012) qualifies this, “the truth is that deprivation has to be quite severe before permanent loss occurs because most daily environments are sufficiently complex to provide enough input for hungry young brains to process” (p. 27).

Additionally, Bruer (1997) dismisses an often misinterpreted notion of critical periods in education when he states that neuroscientists no longer:

interpret the critical period phenomenon as "a window nature temporarily throws open then slams shut." Rather, they now tend to interpret critical periods in terms of subtle, possibly gradual, changes in brain plasticity—changes in the brain's ability to be shaped and changed by experience that occur over the life-time of the animal. (p. 8)

Bruer (1997) does see applicability in understanding critical periods to support, “an educational moral or policy recommendation about the importance of diagnosing and treating children's sensory systems” (p. 9). He encourages educators to define this understanding in terms of “neurodevelopment changes with changes in infants’ behaviour and cognitive capacities (p. 6).
Hood (2012) prefers the label “sensitive period” versus “critical period” as it pertains to education because, “the brain has a remarkable capacity to recover, although it is worth noting that sensitive periods apply only to some of our human abilities and not others” (p. 23). Shanker (2008) explores the notion of, “cascading constraint as means of understanding this interaction” (p. 27). Shanker illustrates the role of intensive therapy and neural changes:

Following a study by MEHR1’s Director of Neuroscience, however, which showed that an intensive therapy program on aggressive 8–12 year-olds produced striking neurological changes in a significant number of the subjects (Stieben et al., 2007), we have become very mindful that to speak of “cascading constraints” is not at all the same thing as to speak of “cascading closures.” Granted, the more entrenched a neural pattern becomes, the more effort required to promote a neural reorganization. Yet, every day we are learning more about the ongoing plasticity of the brain and the kinds of experiences that can tap into this potential (see Doidge, 2006).

Cozolino (2013) touches upon this same notion of the importance of neuroplasticity when he discusses teaching, “unteachable” students, “the brain is wonderfully flexible and surprises even the savviest neurologists with its neuroplastic prowess” (p. 93). Siegel and Bryson (2011a) note:

one of the surprises that has shaken the very foundations of neuroscience is the discovery that the brain is actually “plastic,” or moldable. This means that the brain physically changes throughout the course of our lives, not just in childhood, as we had previously assumed. (p. 7)

Shanker (2008) points to what enables a child to develop:

At any given point of development, the child’s brain may constrain what is possible in her zone of proximal development, but it is the child’s motivation, interest, curiosity, pleasure, etc. that enable her to exert the effort required for that next step in development, which in turn forces her brain to develop the new connections needed for the task. (p. 29)

Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development, referred to by Shanker, is defined by Lake (2012) as, “the developmental space between a learner’s actual and potential levels of thinking, problem solving, acting and being” (p. 37). Chaiklin (2003):
“the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86, emphasis in the original) or “what the child is able to do in collaboration today he will be able to do independently tomorrow” (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 211; see also, 1998b, p.202).

The film, *Scaffolding Self-Regulated Learning in Primary Classrooms* (Davidson Films, 2011), describes how Jerome Bruner built on Vygotsky’s collaboration and guidance, and conceptualized the notion of scaffolding. In the film they emphasize the Vygotskian conceptualization of, “the learning process as a shared activity, not one directed exclusively by teacher or student. Both parties take responsibility for learning” and “progressively shifts from the teacher to the child as the child becomes more capable and independent.” Scaffolding moves a child from the assisted to the independent levels of learning. Scaffolding can be provided through mediators such as, clocks or alphabet strips which represents what you want to the child to be able to know or do, and they must stand out in the environment. Using language such as, what Vygotsky calls, “private speech” which is the how children process by repeating to themselves or practicing before reading. Eventually they develop inner speech where they can repeat instructions in their heads and not aloud. Shared activity such as, learning with a teacher or a more knowledgeable peer where the child uses the strategies of the more knowledgeable person before using them independently. Shanker (2008) gives an example:

Adele Diamond reported in Science (Diamond, 2007) that a preschool program that uses dramatic play, visual aids, and peer interaction during reading and math instruction to teach children with ADHD important cognitive and social-emotional skills had a powerful effect on enhancing their ability to screen out distractions, to resist responding impulsively to a question, and to think creatively and reflectively (Diamond, Barnett, Thomas, & Munro, 2007; see also Rueda, Rothbart, McCandliss, Saccomanno, & Posner, 2005; Kerns, Esso, & Thompson, 1999).

Jerome Bruner’s concept of scaffolding as a way of sharing experience with children as a way of supporting them and then progressively establishing independence establishes the role of relationships in child development (Davidson Films, 2011). Embedded in Greenspan’s (1999) developmental theory is the notion that is never too
late to move through the developmental stages with the support of nurturing relationships:

We can best help our children develop tools for mastery, or a competitive edge, by continually offering them nurturing emotional interactions. These nurturing experiences have helped us create individuals who can build complex, cooperative societies. They will enable those who follow us to develop the tools of reasoning, self-reflection, and cooperation that they will need to master the challenges of the twenty-first century. (p. 12)

Cozolino (2013) explains that the brain is a social organ with adaptive capacity so relationships are the key to rebuilding the brain (p. 40).

2.3.5. Memory and a Cohesive Narrative

“When children are told they were once lost in a shopping mall, they can give vivid recollections about the event even though this event never actually happened” (Hood, 2012, p. 81). Siegel and Bryson (2011a) outline two myths about memory, one is that “memory is a mental file cabinet” (p. 67) and the other is “memory is like a photocopy machine” (p. 69). To summarize Siegel and Bryson, memories are associations that link similar experiences from the past through neural connections and can influence your present (p. 68).

Memory is information stored as a pattern of electrical activity that “represents” the original pattern at the time it was formed. This representation is what memories are—although human memories are not rigid but dynamic and continually changing as new information is encountered. (Hood, 2012, p. 226)

Siegel and Bryson (2011a) define two types of memories implicit and explicit. To summarize, implicit memories encode emotions, sensations, and perceptions, and prime the brain to respond in certain ways (p. 75). “The problem with an implicit memory,” according to Siegel and Bryson, “is that when we aren’t aware of it, it becomes a buried land mine that can limit us in significant and sometimes debilitating ways” (p. 76). “Whereas, implicit memory is an unconscious experience, explicit memory, “is a conscious recollection of a past experience” (p. 71). Siegel and Bryson suggest the need to support children in integrating their memories by framing their painful memories
into a cohesive narrative, “when you give your children lots of practice at remembering—by having them tell and retell their own stories—you improve their ability to integrate implicit and explicit memories” (p. 83). This is supported by Hood (2012), “by scaffolding their children’s early experiences, the kids were able to organize their experiences into a meaningful story. This is because it is easier to remember stories that relate to us when we become a main character” (p. 84).

The way children remember is partly aided by parents reminiscing with their children. As we learned earlier, we know that if parents talk over events with their young children, then the amnesia barrier that is typically reported in 2- to 3-year-olds can be pushed back much earlier. This indicates that the framework of interpretation provided by the adults helps the child to make sense of his experiences and form better memories.

(p. 241)

Creating narratives with children is important for painful memories as well positive memories. Siegel and Bryson (2011a) describe the importance of remembering, “The more you can help bring those noteworthy moments into their explicit memory—such as family experiences, important friendships, or rites of passage—then the clearer and more influential those experiences will be” (p. 84). The authors expand this notion of creating cohesive narratives to the adults:

By integrating your implicit and explicit memories and shining the light of awareness on difficult moments from your past, you can gain insight into how your past is impacting your relationship with your children….Then you can bring your former experiences into the present and weave them into the larger story of your life. When you do that, you can be free to be the kind of parent you want to be. You can make sense of your own life, which will help your kids do the same with theirs. (p. 91)

Greenspan (1999) also noticed the best way to support children who have difficulty with analytic reasoning or thinking “was by creating opportunities to have more “lived emotional experiences” and to reason about them” (p. 8). Greenspan and Benderly (1997) elaborate:

Unless a child masters the level we call two-way, intentional communication, normally achieved by an eight-month-old infant, his language, cognitive, and psychosexual and social patterns ultimately develop in an idiosyncratic, piecemeal, disorganized manner. Words, if spoken, lack meaning and are unclear and unpurposeful. Pronouns are
confused. Rote learning, such as songs repeated endlessly for no reason, dominates. Emotional and social interactions remain unconnected and focused on the child’s own body or inanimate objects. (p. 43)

2.4. Summary of Content

Within this literature review there are two main sections, the first section describes the content of our new learning. As a school community we set out to learn about self-regulation and integration. We used Shanker’s (2012) definition of self-regulation, “as the ability to stay calm, focused and alert” (p.7). I built on the notion of self-regulation with a discussion on integration to describe the integrative nature and the connectivity of brain regions. The individual parts of the brain through use and experience create connections and wiring in the brain that provide the neural circuitry for connection. Within the journey of learning about self-regulation and integration I explored the nature/nurture and the emotional/rational relationship of the mind and grounded the debate in a dynamic developmental perspective.

This new learning linked neuroscientific discoveries such as dual coding, mirror neurons, plasticity and the integrative structure of the brain with attachment theory, and a larger discussion of sensitive periods, the role of relationships and the importance of creating shared narratives. We are born with predispositions and brain circuitry, like mirror neurons, to seek attached relationships which in turn nurture our development. This in essence enlightens us as parents and educators to approach the heart/mind, or nature/nurture debate with a balanced and open approach since development throughout life is described as a dynamic. Our experiences, our attachments, our everyday relationships make a difference to our ability to take in sensory information, process it and think about it. With this new learning comes the deep consideration of school policies and practices which are explored in the second part of the literature review when I discuss, how we approach discipline, compliance, and learning which all have an impact on the quality of our relationships and ultimately can support the developing mind.
2.5. Introduction to the Process

The second section of the literature review now considers the process for engaging in our learning together. I begin by aligning the purpose of the research and perspectives with dialogical organizational development. I then provide examples of educational-based inquiry initiatives. The learning journey metaphor is explained followed by the rational for selecting approaches like cooperative learning, the learning team structure, and the role of dialogue and events throughout the inquiry.

2.6. Purpose and Perspectives

This research study was not designed to measure or evaluate students, parents, or teachers’ ability to self-regulate and integrate. It was designed to act as a process to learn about self-regulation and integration from new research and applying that knew knowledge to our context. The co-operative meaning making and the actions that grew from the inquiry created the basis for selecting a constructivist epistemology, meaning “that human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as construct or make it” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 38). This study is situated in the social constructivist tradition in that it defines knowledge as, “not something people possess somewhere in their heads, but rather, something people do together” (Gergen, 1985, p. 270). The act of documentation is a mechanism for understanding the world through, “social artifacts, and products of historically situated interchanges among people. From the constructionist position the process of understanding is not automatically driven by the forces of nature, but is the result of an active, cooperative enterprise of persons in relationship” (p. 267).

One of the most important similarities in Dialogic OD practices is that they assume organizations are socially co-constructed realities and, as such, there is nothing inherently real about how people organize, no ultimate truth about organizations to be discovered, and no model of the right way to organize independent of the people who make up any particular organization. (Bushe & Marshak, 2009, p. 360)

Bushe and Marshak (2009) define dialogic organizational development (OD) as a model that, “is more interested in seeing what emerges than defining “what is” to prescribe “what ought to happen” (p. 354). To summarize Bushe and Marshak (2009)
dialogic OD is based in a constructionist, interpretive approach with an emphasis on constructing dialogic containers and collective inquiry in the aim to affect consciousness, mindsets and belief systems versus behavior (p. 364). Dialogic organizational development supports the purpose, the process, the methodologies and methods of this co-operative inquiry.

2.7. Dialogical Organizational Development

Bushe and Marshak (2009) identify four characteristics of dialogic OD (pp. 361-362). First, “change processes emphasize changing the normal, everyday conversations that take place in the system (Barrett et al., 1995)” (p. 361). Second, “there may or may not be a data collection phase, but when there is, there is seldom the assumption that an objective reality or set of facts exist to be discovered or discerned” (p. 361). In this inquiry the data collected is documented everyday moments connected to narratives that link them to our new learning. The third characteristic of dialogic OD defines, “the aim is to generate new images, stories, narratives, and socially constructed realities that affect how people in the system think and act” (p. 361). Throughout the inquiry process the documentation includes images, conceptual frameworks, reflections, and individual or group reflections or stories. Finally, the, “values of collaborative decision making, giving people the opportunity to freely make informed choices and using the change process to develop and build capacity in the system” (p. 362). All of the strategies and structures used in this inquiry were chosen to foster collaboration and to be generative or reflective in nature.

2.8. Examples in Practice

In searching the literature for examples of dialogic OD studies in education, I found instead great examples of studies that use dialogical processes that ground themselves in complexity theory. The main difference between these studies and this thesis is the form of measurement. Most of the examples came from work done around professional learning communities (PLC’s).
Each of these PLC change initiatives share a model that emphasizes collaboration, shared leadership, shared mission and values, sharing collective knowledge, collective inquiry and on-going continuous improvement. The essential difference between this change strategy, although there are many similarities, is the data collection and measurement of progress based on student achievement. I discuss the PLC change models because of their linkages to discursive, conversational based approaches, which are central to this inquiry. I also, delineate the difference in our purpose, PLC’s focus on shared data and measured improvement, whereas this inquiry is not establishing measured data but a shifting mindset and a shared narrative.

2.9. The Learning Journey Metaphor

The metaphor of learning as a journey aligns with philosophies and perspectives of this thesis. It provided a way of talking about our learning in a detached and reflective capacity. The journey metaphor acknowledges differences, avoids a comparative stance, and is open to an individual and a group response. The journey metaphor also subtly places an emphasis on how we work together, the process, versus seeing learning as a product or an event.

When learning is seen as a journey, movement along the continuum becomes the goal. Each student has a goal to keep moving on his or her journey, whether artistic, emotional, intellectual, physical, or social. The concept of the learning journey acknowledges the strengths, needs, and development of every student—we all have things we are good at, and we all have things we need to work on. It is important that, while on their journeys, everyone moves along the continuum of development, feels good about their accomplishments, and has some fun in the process. (Brownlie & King, 2011, p. 31)

Brownlie and King (2011) describe the journey metaphor as fitting philosophically with creating safe and inclusive classrooms because, “classrooms built with collaboration, open-ended learning methodology, and respect for all individuals as they proceed on their respective journeys” (p. 39). Using the journey metaphor selecting the country to be discovered is the content of self-regulation and integration, our destination is shared learning, the travel journal is the co-created narratives and documentation and we still need to describe the vehicle that will take us safely from here to there. In the
design process I selected strategies and structures that would craft the container for dialogue. I selected strategies and structures from co-operative learning, dialogue, an inquiry process familiar in my school district called learning teams, and used events to provide a catalyst for engagement.

From the perspective of Bushe and Marshak’s (2009) dialogic organizational development model, “change happens when people become aware of the variety of stories people have about themselves and each other and understand their own part in creating unproductive patterns of interaction” (p. 353). They refer to Oliver’s work on reflexive consultancy which, “considers how people can introduce transformation in meaning and action without silencing, oppressing, or marginalizing the multiple beliefs, discourses, and values found in any given organization” (p. 353). To work with students, I base the selection of strategies and structures on Choi, Johnson, and Johnson’s (2011) work in cooperative learning. To work with the parents and teachers, I selected a structure familiar to the teachers, called the Learning Team. I also participated in a district learning team for my own learning needs.

2.10. Cooperative Learning

“If you observe effective teachers over time, you will see they are highly creative, weaving a variety of concepts and processes into a deep understanding of what is being learned” (Bennett & Rolheiser, 2001, p. 6). I highlight cooperative learning because I rely on these structures, tactics and strategies for creating the containers for dialogue. As Siegel and Bryson (2011a) have suggested, integration is not blending but the honouring of differences and linkages. “In Buber’s view, dialogue can only be grasped as an ontological phenomenon—a meeting of one whole being with another whole being” (Gordon, 2011, p. 208).

Buber was a trailblazer in philosophical anthropology, the science of the human being, in that he discovered a new realm, which until then had been largely ignored by philosophers—the realm of between person and person. He stressed that something essential can happen between two persons that is fundamental to each of the individuals as such and greatly significant for the collective world that binds them.  

(Gordon, 2011, p. 208)
Greenspan (1999) emphasizes reciprocal relationships, Siegel and Bryson (2011a) attuned relationships.

The essential question in designing the learning journey is how to strengthen the individual so they feel safe in the act of sharing their thinking and ideas, as well as be able to honour the differences in others. Choi et al. (2011) espouse a social interdependence theory, “the basic premise of social interdependence theory is that the way participants’ goals are structured determines how they interact, and the interaction pattern determines the outcomes of the situation” (p. 978). When positive interdependence is present it promotes interaction and pro-social behaviors, where individuals can encourage others, facilitate efforts to achieve collective goals and conversely, when negative interdependence is present it promotes oppositional interaction and individualistic behaviors, where individuals lead their life in their own way where they put their interests above the group (Choi et al., 2011, pp. 978-981).

Bennett and Rolheiser (2001) discuss the three basic elements in Choi et al.’s work: individual accountability, face-to-face interaction, and positive interdependence that are developed using the cooperative learning strategies selected in this inquiry (p. 157). The following cooperative strategies: four corners, fishbowl, and our own creation, the dialogue circles are described in more detail in Appendix A.

2.11. Learning Team Structure

Dialogic OD practice as a “conscious intent to engage the whole system in dialogue and synergistic relationships in such a way that: mental models are surfaced; new knowledge, structures, processes, practices, and stories are collaboratively created and shared; and diverse stakeholder voices and perspectives are heard.”

(Bushe & Marshak, 2009, p. 361)

The main organizing structure for parents, teachers, and me is used extensively for professional learning within the district. I have quoted the district website to describe the underpinnings of this structure.

Professional Learning: Breakthrough means focused, ongoing learning for each and every teacher. You can’t have personalization and precision
without daily learning on the part of teachers, both individually and collectively (Fullan, Hill and Crevola, 2006). Professional learning communities emphasize three key components: collaborative work and discussion amongst the school’s professionals; a strong and consistent focus on teaching and learning within that collaborative work; and gathering assessment and other data to inquire into and evaluate progress over time. Professional learning communities lead to measurable improvements in student learning. They create and support sustainable improvements that last over time because they build the professional skill and capacity to keep the school progressing (Hargreaves, 2003). We believe the classroom is the center, continuous learning is vital, a culture of inquiry is critical, professional dialogue is powerful and the principles of sustainability are foundational. Our objectives are to think systemically, foster innovation and creativity, build capacity, provide stability, build relationships and sustain hope and possibility with the vision of improving life chances for all students as we work toward developing the characteristics of a learning organization within School District. (School District 43 users’ secure website; see Appendix B for a detailed description of the learning team structure)

The district learning team structure is embedded in complexity theory and uses discursive strategies for on-going, collaborative learning. Central to this model is the idea of tracking student results as in the PLC models discussed earlier in this chapter. In this research we used the structure and communicated our learning using the documented stories instead of student achievement data.

2.12. Events

From a complexity theory perspective, “when certain forces come together, patterns will emerge” (p. 9), Bennet and Rolheiser (2001), see the role of the teacher as responding creatively to the spontaneous changes in patterns. They tie their definition to their definition to intelligence, “the ability to successfully respond to a situation or solve a problem when no set pattern for responding exists” (p. 9). To create opportunities for no set pattern to exist, we needed to orchestrate new events for which we had no protocol. The leadership students and I took the lead on the vision, the planning and the facilitation of events throughout the year. These events allowed us to experience new ways of coming together and sharing our learning together. This process is described by Boyd and Bright as “opportunity-centric” by Bushe and Marshak (2009) who describe
the value of this approach as starting from “common aspirations and shared visions, making engagement in the change process more appealing” (p. 354). Bruer (1997) states that “we make connections best when new information is embedded in meaningful life events and in socially interactive situations (p. 4).

Shields (2007) describes Bakhtin’s concept of the carnivalesque which seems to describe this process. A “carnival sense of the world,” according to Bakhtin, “possesses a mighty life-creating and transforming power, an indestructible vitality” (p. 98). The school has many events each year where we come together in celebration, where our roles can be blurred, where the unexpected can happen. These students in taking the lead and seeing their ideas into being were acting in generative sense of the carnivalesque. “Everything we do as educators, whether we have realized it or not, implies this notion of regeneration and possibility, of wholeness and interconnection that is characteristic of Bakhtins’s carnival” (p. 125). We were inviting our community into the school to participate in ways that were unexpected, to join in the learning together with us, to see unpolished acts that took their impetus from learning and sharing versus performing. “For Bakhtin the promise of carnival is that it presents the possibilities in all their fullness. There are no dichotomies, no absolutes—only the ever-changing opportunities presented when one is freed from fear and constraint and able to live life joyfully” (p. 125).

“Bakhtin’s concept implies the need to build on all of life’s experiences and realities and to permit them to become fodder for conversation and exploration in a classroom” (Shields, 2007, p.108). Through the activities the students were creating and implementing, we were building a lived experience with an emotional connection that formed memories for us to write our relationship story. Shields connects the carnivalesque to a way of living, “we have learned that when we live in carnivalesque ways, we are living dialogically—open to difference, to other, to possibility” (p. 128). This connects back to Siegel and Bryson’s (2011a) idea of honouring differences and not losing the “me” in the “we” (p. 121).

Looking at the carnivalesque from a dialogic organizational development perspective:
interventions are more choreographed events that create a “container” or enabling conditions within which stakeholders can share their views of social reality and seek common agreements in real time. (Bushe & Marshak, 2009, p. 356)

These participative events stood apart from our normal ways of being in an:

attempt to circumvent the power of entrenched interests to equalize the variety of interests represented in the system, giving them as much equal footing in the co-construction of new relational and organizational realities as possible. (p. 358)

2.13. Summary

This literature review had two main purposes, one to create an overview of new learning in neuroscience and how it relates to practical applications within a school community and second, to create a theoretical rationale for how we engaged in our learning journey together. The pieces of new research mainly, dual coding, mirror neurons, plasticity and integrative structure of the brain were embedded in a dynamic developmental approach. The role of attuned relationships was emphasized as developing attachment and the source of learning.

The second section of the literature review considered the process for engaging in our learning together. I began by aligning the purpose of the research and perspectives with dialogic organizational development. I then provided examples of educational-based inquiry initiatives and delineated how those examples were similar and slightly different in their goals to what we designed in our community. The learning journey metaphor is explained followed by the rational for selecting approaches like cooperative learning, the learning team structure, and the role of dialogue and events throughout the inquiry.
Chapter 3.

Methodology

3.1. Introduction

Children can give us the strength of doubt and the courage of error. They can transmit to us the joy of searching and researching... the value of research, as openness toward others and toward everything new that is produced by the encounter with others. (Rinaldi, 2003, p. 2)

This chapter outlines the research methodology used to design this study as well as the methods used for data analysis. I begin with connecting my paradigm with the qualitative traditions to provide a rationale for the selection of the action research genre, more specifically co-operative inquiry, and how that serves the emergent needs of my research question. The audiences are introduced as participants and at times as co-researchers. The research design is described outlining the curricula, the strategies, and the events that generated data collected. The process of data collection through the action research cycles is articulated with a description of documentation, a Thoughtstream Survey and dialogue circle. The methods used to analyze the data through coding and theme generation are described, as well as the structures developed to strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings. The final summary narrates the challenges and changes that were encountered throughout this emergent experience.

3.2. Paradigm

Piantanida and Garman (2009) pose the question, “What am I committed to understanding, and how do I engage in the world to pursue this commitment?” (p. 3). The process of answering this question brings into alignment, the stance of the researcher, or what Creswell (1994) describes as, “a worldview, an outlook, that favors
the qualitative or quantitative ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and methodological assumptions” (p.8).

The purpose of this research study was to document a learning journey. The purpose of documentation was to make visible the moments of significant learning for a community as we began taking new research about brain development and weaving our new learning into our practice. By documenting our learning journey, we demonstrate the process of our collaboration and the knowledge that has become the product of our collaboration.

This research study was not designed to measure or evaluate students’, parents’, or teachers’ ability to self-regulate and integrate. It was designed to act as a process to learn about self-regulation and integration from new research and applying that knew knowledge to our context. The co-operative meaning making and the actions that grew from the inquiry created the basis for selecting a qualitative methodology.

Creswell (1994) outlines the reasons for selecting a paradigm as the researcher’s worldview, the training and experiences of the researcher, the researcher’s psychological attributes, the nature of the problem, and the audience of the study (p. 8).

3.2.1. Worldview

You may note that each expression of knowledge is, in a sense, an inquiry: We discover through describing, doing, watching, reasoning, playing, dreaming, and talking. According to Dewey (1938), inquiry is the tool that serves discovery, that is, the investigation and solution to the problems of humans. The point and purpose of inquiry are to be found in (1) the interconnectedness between inquiry and (2) the situation in which it is used and in its capacity to serve the use goals of growth and of the community. (Rallis & Rossman, 2012, p. 27)

Inquiry originates from a constructivist epistemology, meaning “that human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as construct or make it” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 38). This study is situated in the social constructivist tradition in that it defines knowledge as, “not something people possess somewhere in their heads, but rather,
something people do together” (Gergen, 1985, p. 270). The act of documentation is grounded by:

the terms in which the world is understood are social artifacts, products of historically situated interchanges among people. From the constructionist position the process of understanding is not automatically driven by the forces of nature, but is the result of an active, cooperative enterprise of persons in relationship. (p. 267)

The social construction of knowledge both grounds the methodological stance of this study as it does the theoretical stance of the knowledge claims. This alignment is best described by Gergen (1985) “they invite us to consider the social origins of taken-for-granted assumptions about the mind-such as the bifurcation between reason and emotion, the existence of motives and memories, and the symbol system believed to underlie language” (p. 267).

The ontological perspective of this study takes the view that, “multiple realities, exist, such as the realities of the researcher, those of individuals being investigated, and those of the reader or audience interpreting a study” (Creswell, 1998, p. 76). In this cooperative inquiry, I see myself as the researcher from the inside. I am part of this naturalistic setting and culture; I acknowledge my place as the principal in leading this change but situate myself as a collaborator who is collecting, sharing and reflecting back the learning of the community. I have tried to capture the stories that narrate key learning moments, or the development of new insights, and the sharing of observations within our culture. The narratives that are shared through the documentation process come from my perspective and have been shared back to the community to gain trustworthiness. The purpose of sharing our story is to stand as an example of how to translate new research findings into practice by establishing shared meaning, setting intentions and reflecting on our stories.

3.2.2. Training and Experiences

In the process of defining my worldview, I rely on several experiences in my personal and professional life that have influenced my stance, my way of being, and my actions as a leader, a learner, and a person.
As a child, I learned the hard way. At times the warnings sent my way proved accurate and at times I was successful. I recall clearly being told my drawings for a stool I was going to build was flawed because it would not stand with two legs. I persisted with my straightforward plan and experimented with different legs until I found that two widely based fire logs were sufficiently sturdy to balance, and I built a little leather stool, which could also be described as a bench. I was not so lucky in crossing the creek on a raining day with warnings that the slippery log would not be safe.

That experimental mindset has carried through my professional life. From 2000 to 2002, I was part of the Learning for Success, action research project headed by Susan Close. She introduced us to universal design, and the six most powerful actions to improve student learning. As a team in our school, we worked with backwards design, strong instructional strategies, and measured the growth of our students. This was all done as a co-operative team within our school that a few times per year connected in with collaborators from around the province. Being part of that research set me on a journey of inquiring into my practice and using student results to inform my reflection as well as critical friends.

From Learning for Success, I developed an inquiry project in my inner city school called Artful Reading. We used the arts as an emotional connection to reading to improve comprehension. We were surprised by our results in that we did indeed improve reading comprehension but we also noted that the students started to identify themselves as readers and artists.

The Network of Performance Based Schools began in 2007 and I was part of several school teams over the years using performance standard language to make assessment criteria visible to students. These teams were structured in much the same fashion as the Learning for Success in that we had a co-operative school team that fed into a provincial team.

In 2007, I began using the inquiry design to create the school growth plan. We would begin with a big idea question and then design our individual responses to the question. Each staff member developed a plan of action, some did it together and some
had individual actions. We then co-operated around our data and made meaning of our work together.

I then became very interested in the Appreciative Inquiry as a way of moving from a deficit mindset to an abundant mindset and, in 2010, embarked on researching the archetypical stories of principals at the end of their careers. There are parts of those narratives that stay with me today in my practice.

As a creative thinker and an artist I see that I am curious and open to new ideas. I see change as a normal way of being. I often integrate ideas, philosophies, contexts, and learning from a variety of genres, contexts, points of view and thinking. This makes articulation through co-operative meaning making my preference as I am never certain.

3.2.3. Psychological Attributes

Creswell (1994) identifies the researcher's psychological attributes as an important factor in considering the qualitative design; “the qualitative design is one in which the “rules” and procedures are not fixed, but rather are open and emerging. This design calls for an individual who is willing to take the risks inherent in an ambiguous procedure” (p. 8). Reason (1988) further explores the skills necessary for the researcher to engage in co-operative inquiry as being: able to work with democratic groups, skilled practitioners in the area of study, experienced in inquiry process, competent conceptualizers, and attentive (p. 18).

As the insider researcher and the principal of the school, I have a history of leading learning with parents, teachers, and students. My tendency is to structure the learning as a co-operative inquiry, where we discover our topic, design ways of engaging with our learning and then capturing the significant moments for reflection. In this research study, I entered as a lead learner; I did not have a great deal of background expertise in the content area of self-regulation and integration. I was authentically engaging in new learning along with my community.
3.2.4. The Nature of the Problem

In this research study the knowledge existed in theoretical literature to support the importance of self-regulation and integration, yet the knowledge had not translated widely into practice in schools. The nature of the problem in this co-operative inquiry was to make the new knowledge in neuroscience accessible to our community, and to find ways of operationalizing our learning into action. This is best described by, “what Shotter variously refers to as knowledge-in-practice, knowledge-held-in-common with others, or the kind of knowledge one has ‘from within’ a situation, group, social institution, or society” (as cited in Schwandt, 1997, p.110).

3.2.5. The Audience

In co-operative inquiry, the relationship between researchers and subjects/participants is bilateral and they work together as co-researchers and co-subjects designing, managing, and drawing conclusions from the research. The developers of this approach characterize it as research with people rather than on people and oriented toward helping those involved in the inquiry to understand their world, develop new and creative ways of looking at things, and learn how to act to change the things they want to change. (Schwandt, 2007, p. 46)

Essentially in this research study there were four audiences: the students, the parents, the teachers, and me, as the principal. The students identified the need for learning about self-regulation during a yearly review of the school code of conduct in the spring of 2012. In this student group there were two children from every class ranging from kindergarten to Grade 5. The students identified the need to behave even when teachers and parents were not around because it would create a sense of safety for them within themselves and the school. They identified the desire to be part of the learning journey in both identifying the virtues to be taught and the process of meaning making with the rest of the school.

The teachers in their reflection of school goals and identification of future goals also identified self-regulation as a key aspect to focus on in supporting children toward improved learning and resiliency. The teachers also took into account the voice of the student reflection and agreed with the students’ desire to lead the learning. The
teachers also wanted to ground their learning in research and asked that each staff meeting they be introduced to new research.

The parents are very involved in our elementary school. They were supportive of the student and teacher learning goals and wanted to be part of the same meaning making process.

As the principal, I embarked on researching the most current material in regards to self-regulation. I too, had to design a learning journey for myself to engage in the content and bring it to the school community in an understandable, practical and generative way.

3.3. Question

The purpose of this study was to document a school’s journey in learning about self-regulation and integration. Research in the area of self-regulation has flourished due to the advances in neuroscience and translating that theory and knowledge into practical applications for parents and teachers is at the crux of this study. The goal was to learn about self-regulation and integration, to make meaning together, to try some suggested strategies, and to document our learning journey along the way for further reflection to generate ideas and models. Through learning together and creating a shared story, we put theory into action. Our documented journey, once shared, will suggest a continued direction for learning as a community. It is a story that can be shared with other schools which have chosen similar inquiry goals.

3.4. Ethical Approval

Consent for this study was given through the School District (November, 2012) and the minimal risk approval was given through Simon Fraser University Office of Research Ethics (December, 2012). Amendments to my study details were approved after redesigning the final data gathering session in (June, 2012). Originally I had designed a world café to gather ideas and themes from the community. With all of the
activities that had been rich in co-operative meaning making, the students and I developed the idea of using a dialogue circle for the students to share their learning journey for a group of experts in social emotional learning, resiliency, staff development, and innovation. The experts then created the fifth participant group.

3.5. Participants and Recruitment

There were four main participants groups in this study: the students, the parents, the teachers, and me, the principal. Within the emerging nature of the co-operative inquiry one more group was added called, the experts.

The students were organized into the code of conduct group which consisted of two students from every class, kindergarten to Grade 5, selected by their teachers because they missed class time to participate in reflection and goal setting around the school’s code of conduct. The school also had an active leadership group that organized school-wide events. The leadership group self-organized around different initiatives. As well as being the principal, I was also a Grades 4 and 5 teacher for 2 full days per week. My class was largely made up of students who were part of the leadership group and I extended the invitation to be involved in the research to each child in the class.

Students were invited to attend a meeting where I explained the purpose of the research and the role they would have in the process. I explained they were not required to participate and they could change their mind at any time. The students were provided with a letter of consent to sign as well as a set for their parents to sign. The parents were also invited to an information meeting to further explain the research.

All parents were invited to be part of a book club that was advertised during Parent Advisory Meetings and school newsletters. Parents unable to attend the book club meetings were invited to participate in an on-line reflection of the book, as well were kept up to date on ideas from the book club through a blog and newsletters.
Invitations went out to parents wanting to participate in the book club, or who were interested in learning through the online blog and newsletters, to attend an information meeting to further explain the research. This information meeting was then repeated at the first book club meeting to ensure they all understood the research design, that their participation was voluntary, and each person was given a consent to sign.

Teachers interested in the research were invited to stay for an information meeting following a staff meeting. Every teacher would have the opportunity to learn together, participation in the research was defined as giving consent for using stories, reflections, and documentation to further our meaning making together. Teachers were given the consent forms and had the option of signing or not signing. They were told that it would not in any way impact their employment or performance reviews.

Included in Appendix C are the informed consent forms given to each group as well as a copy of the study details presented at the introductory meetings.

3.6. Research

To structure this research study I aligned with John Heron’s model of co-operative inquiry. This model includes three forms of knowing as summarized by Reason (1988, p. 4): propositional knowing which describes the ideas and theories introduced, practical knowing which describes “how to” or new skills and abilities, and finally experiential knowing which describes the tacit, intuitive and holistic knowledge derived through encounters. Reason outlines the cooperative inquiry (p. 5), as a 4-stage cycle: Stage 1 is agreeing on what is to be researched and the type of action that will be taken, Stage 2 is engaging with content and actions while observing and noting the experiences, Stage 3 is deeper engagement in the realm of experiential knowledge, and Stage 4 is to reflect on the experience by developing ideas and models.

In the following sections of this chapter I will outline the curricula (the what) and the strategies of inquiry (the how). The research was conducted over three phases or cycles of inquiry. Within each phase we completed the four stage cycle of deciding what
new theory and research was to be discovered (propositional and practical knowing), engagement with new content through events and strategies (engagement), collecting artefacts and documentation o into our understandings (going deeper), and finally summaries that link back to the research (reflection).

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 tell the story of the three research phases. I organized the content for learning into three phases, connection to self, connection to others, and connection to the world and nature. Following the tradition of action research and using the model of co-operative inquiry, I have structured each of the following chapters to reflect the cycles of inquiry. Shields explores the practical knowledge, the action and engagement, the documentation that took us deeper into our learning and the reflection of that learning for the first cycle of our inquiry, connecting to self. Chapter 5 uses the same model to explore the second cycle of inquiry, connecting to each other and finally Chapter 6 uses the same model to explore the third cycle of inquiry, connecting to the world and nature.

3.6.1. Stage 1: Propositional and Practical Knowing

Theory and Research: Curricula

To design the learning journey, we first had to select resources. In consultation with district personnel in staff development, we selected as our main resource, Siegel and Bryson's (2011a) book, *The Whole Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child’s Developing Mind*. It was selected because it is grounded in practical strategies in the research on interpersonal neuroscience. It is in this book that we discovered the expanded definition of self-regulation to include integration.

From this book three curricula were designed, one for students, one for parents and one for staff which are included in Appendix D. The student curriculum focused on the pro-social skills that are integral to self-regulation and integration. The learning was achieved through co-creating learning sequences, events, and strategic actions within the school. Throughout the journey this document was altered and redesigned as we co-constructed our journey together. The document in the Appendix D is the final version of our journey.
The parent curriculum took the form of a book club. At the start of each session we did a written reflection of what we had tried, thought about, wondered from our last session. We discussed those ideas. I then presented some of the key ideas from our next chapter and we set intentions for our actions that were reflected upon in our next meeting. At the end of each session we decided together what would be posted on our blog to share with parents that were unable to attend. These reflections were also elaborated upon in the school newsletters. The curriculum in Appendix D is the final version of our journey.

The teacher curriculum followed the same format. We started each session reflecting on the intentions we set in the last meeting. New content about the book was presented; we called these “research snippets.” The research snippets included information about self-regulated learning from Nancy Perry, self-regulation from Stuart Shanker and his Canadian Research, developmental theory from Stanley Greenspan, as well as documentation from our journey. The curriculum in Appendix D is the final version of our journey.

As the principal and researcher, I designed a curriculum for myself. I joined a professional learning team where I engaged with teachers, principals, staff development leaders, and Nancy Perry a researcher in Self-Regulated learning from University of British Columbia. This reflective journey included surfacing my philosophical journey from the beginning of my career. I traced the journey my shifts in thinking about teaching and learning, and tried to uncover the reasons I selected the sources I did to share with staff, parents, and students. As I learned more, I had to challenge some of my widely held assumptions and come to learn of my own naïveté. The account of curriculum activities is included in Appendix D.

3.6.2. Stages 2: Engagement

Events

In each of the three cycles of inquiry, there were significant learning events. In the background we are engaging in our on-going learning through book clubs and “research snippets.” We needed a vehicle for sharing our learning as we drew each
cycle of inquiry to a close. In the first cycle, we culminated our learning with presenting the Kindness Project that included student created songs, skits, and a video. The second cycle culminated with the Hearts and Minds Art Show that included participatory stations that shared the learning of all the participants. The third cycle culminated in two events, one called The Spiral, our gift to nature, and another was our Farmer's Market, our gifts to charity. By this time the students were fully engaged in their learning and we co-created the idea of presenting our learning journey at an SFU Conference, as well as re-invented the culmination of the entire research project in which we designed the Expert Dialogue Circle to share with experts in the field our learning journey.

**Strategies and Structures of Inquiry**

Central to this co-operative inquiry approach are the strategies and structures I used to engage the community. The book *The Whole Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child’s Developing Mind* by Siegel and Bryson (2011a) gave us a content organizer. Second, the *Learning Team Model* (Appendix B; designed by Dr. Sharon Jeroski) that was the basis for my learning is the common structure of inquiry in this school district; it was used as the basic structure for the parent book club and the teacher research snippets. Thirdly, defining our quality world, based on Glasser (1990), helped us create a compelling vision of the kind of people and culture we wanted to become. Fourthly, the use of cooperative strategies (Appendix A) created a sense of valuing strengths and differences in others. Fifthly, the dialogue circle was the structure used as a way of co-creating student initiatives and giving them voice (see Appendix D). And finally, the metaphor of the learning journey as described by Brownlie and King (2011) to define our orientation of the ongoing, cyclical nature of living and learning together (p. 31).

3.6.3. **Stage 3: Going Deeper**

**Documentation**

The documentation materials we use attest not only to our path of knowledge regarding children but also to our path of knowledge about the child and humanity, and about ourselves. They also attest to our idea of the teacher as researcher, of school as a place of research and cultural elaboration, a place of participation, in a process of shared construction of
values and meanings. The school of research is a school of participation. 
(Rinadli, 2003, p.3)

The British Columbia Ministry of Education (2007) in its “Early Learning Framework: From Theory to Practice” uses the term pedagogical narration to define documentation as:

the process of observing, recording, and, individually and collectively, interpreting a series of related ordinary moments in your practice. The process should be ongoing, cyclical and based on the art of critical reflection on the part of a community of learners. Keep in mind that it “is contextual and involves children in a process of co-construction with teachers” (Dahleber, Moss, & Pence, 1999). (p. 13)

Documentation is further described in the framework as:

observing and interpreting what children do and why they do it probes the connection between thinking and questioning, and shows or makes visible the way children are making meaning of their learning or of their interaction with the world. As one interprets and analyzes an ordinary moment/observation, intriguing questions and insight can be gained without requiring absolute certainty about the particular situation or occurrence. Documenting can range from jotting a few notes, to taking pictures, to capturing a moment on videotape. (p. 12)

Documentation was the main strategy used throughout the inquiry process to make meaning and generate thoughtful reflection. In my field notes, I took note of ordinary moments where I saw a link to theory, or a link to our learning about self-regulation and integration. I shared those moments back to our community through pictures, narratives being thoughtful about making the direct links to the research.

**Thoughtstream Survey**

Thoughtstream is a software system designed to engage stakeholders through online engagement. Individuals’ thoughts can be gathered on a topic and then sorted by the researcher. The questions asked can be open ended. Once the thoughts are sorted and converged, reports can be generated.
I designed five open-ended questions to understand motivation, learning, perceived growth, effectiveness of strategies for disseminating knowledge, and engagement.

1. Why did you want to learn about self-regulation?
2. What learning tools are you finding most valuable for your participation: research snippets, newsletter posts, book club, student leadership activities, displays, assemblies, shared lessons, the Integration blog, twitter, or student’s stories?
3. If you are not engaged in the learning, how can we invite you to participate?
4. What have you learned?
5. List any changes you have noticed in yourself or in the school community.

I sent the questions to our entire school population including parents and teachers (218 in total). I sent the questions to every parent even if they were not involved in the research or book club. Enough information was made accessible to everyone through newsletters and school wide events that I had hoped some learning would be discovered. We had 35 responses to the survey; there was a 15% participation rate.

The Thoughtstream Survey process includes a valuing exercise at the end, once all of the themes have been converged. I chose not to do this valuing step and, instead, brought the converged ideas to the staff and asked for their deliberation of the findings. I then reflected on the Thoughtstream Survey Analysis and the staff responses, reports, and reflections (see Appendix E).

**Dialogue Circle**

As the research study was in its final phase, the students and I decided to change the final event for sharing our documentation. We had hosted so many events throughout the year and felt that we had learned so much but wanted to understand if our learning had any greater significance than to ourselves. We co-created our own version of a dialogue circle, with some ground rules for honouring and respecting one another at first and in the end respectful dialogue was our normal way of being together.
The students self-reflected on their learning journey for the year. They decided on some key questions they wanted me to use as prompts in the circle. In the dialogue circle they shared their reflection about their individual learning journeys. We then invited experts in social emotional learning from University of British Columbia, resiliency researchers from University of British Columbia, staff development experts from the district, a leader in innovation, a teacher and a student educational assistant. We asked them to listen to the students’ dialogue about their learning journey and find the themes. They were then asked what significance our learning journey had to them. Finally we asked how our learning connected with their research, or practice. As a celebration every person shared key words at the end of the dialogue to express what they experienced.

The student dialogue was tape-recorded; I transcribed it myself, and coded it for themes. I then gathered the themes from the researchers. I then coded the expert thoughts about significance. Finally, I sorted and categorized the expressive words at the end. The analysis of the Dialogue Circle is included in Appendix F.

Reflective Journals

Throughout this inquiry, students, staff and I wrote in a journal to set intentions or reflect on learning. The parent reflection was done in collaboration as a whole group. In the analysis stage, I read and reread the reflections searching for links to codes or writing that strengthened the meaning making process.

3.6.4. Stage 4: Reflection

Qualitative Analysis

Creswell (1994) describes qualitative analysis as including, collecting information from the field, sorting the information into categories, formatting the information into a story or picture, and actually writing the qualitative text (p. 153).

Throughout the research cycles, the act of documenting and linking ordinary moments to theory through what Plantanida and Garman (2009) refer to as thinking pieces, “a semiformal document that is more structured and public than an entry in a
personal or professional journal, yet less polished than a formal paper” (p. 19). In grounded theory, Birks and Mills (2011) referred to memoing as, “a series of snapshots that chronicle your study experience and the internal dialogue that is essential when conducting any research, particularly that with an interpretive component” (p. 41). Memoing became the most significant activity for me as a researcher because, “embryonic ideas can be explored and new insights gained through the contribution of all those involved in a study. The process I refer to as pedagogical documentation in essence became memoing which was shared publicly in newsletters and on my blog. This method proceeded throughout the research.

In the initial stages of coding of data sources like, reflections, field notes and documentation, it was a reflexive activity of ongoing analysis and was represented in the memos. I used the same initial coding with the Thoughtstream Survey and Dialogue Circle. I read the transcripts line by line or sometimes chunk by chunk and noted what I thought was being represented. I then compiled these ideas into categories and wrote a reflection.

3.6.5. Findings

In the intermediate stages of coding, I began to look for connections between the different data sources. I looked for emerging categories and sub categories. I looked for relationships between categories and began working towards a conceptual framework. I also brought the Thoughtstream Survey coding back to the staff for feedback. With the dialogue circle, I compared my coding with the expert coding and student reflections.

In the advanced stages of coding, I used the main categories from the integration of data sources to create the storyline for the most significant aspects of our learning journey. Woven throughout this data are the theoretical underpinnings of process and content of our story.

In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, the documentation is included in the engagement process of going deeper into the experience. The memos are included in the reflective aspect of cycle of inquiry. Chapter 7 then describes the main themes that have emerged from this analysis.
3.7. Trustworthiness

Schwandt (2007) defines trustworthiness as, “that quality of an investigation (and its findings) that made it noteworthy to audiences” (p. 299). He refers to Lincoln and Guba’s authenticity criteria for judging qualitative inquiry that has its origins in constructivist epistemology. The criteria are described as: fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical authenticity. I describe these criteria based on a summary of Lincoln and Guba’s descriptions (as cited in Schwandt, 2007, p. 14).

3.7.1. Fairness

Fairness of this inquiry refers to the extent to which participants were invited to share in the meaning making process and the extent to which I as the researcher represent their ideas and reflections in a balanced and inclusive way. By sharing pedagogical documentation throughout the inquiry publicly, participants were continually connecting with the meaning making process. The documentation often included a story, a work sample, or a co-created summary of our learning together.

3.7.2. Ontological Authenticity

The ontological authenticity of this inquiry refers to the extent to which the participants had the opportunity to become enriched or more informed as a result of the inquiry. The very open process used in this inquiry offered everyone in our community and beyond the opportunity to participate and therefore the opportunity for enrichment. Having the opportunity and engaging in that opportunity are distinctly different entities. In one of my reflections, I was disappointed with the few numbers of people taking the opportunity to learn.

3.7.3. Educative Authenticity

The educative authenticity of this inquiry refers to the extent to which the participants develop a greater understanding and appreciation of the learning and
growth of other participants. Despite the perceived low levels of participation, those that did engage in the learning had very powerful and meaningful reflections.

3.7.4. **Catalytic Authenticity**

The catalytic authenticity refers to the degree to which the inquiry inspires action and new learning. Although the research has drawn to a close, the spirals of inquiry and action are still evident in our school community. The research sparked new inquiries and has had an effect in the culture of our school.

3.7.5. **Tactical Authenticity**

The tactical authenticity refers to the degree of empowerment participants experience as a result of participating in the inquiry process. This is the area of most profound learning. The students especially demonstrated this empowerment in their documented stories.

3.8. **Challenges and Changes**

The main challenge I faced as a researcher was in the notion of stance. “Study connotes a shift in stance” (Piantanida & Garman, 2009, p. 3). As a lead learner and participant it was difficult to have:

> the ability to achieve some distance from those on-the-ground events. We use the metaphor of “getting on the balcony” above the “dance floor” to depict what it means to gain the distanced perspective you need to see what is really happening. If you stay moving on the dance floor, all you will see will be the people dancing with you and around you. Swept up in the music, it may be a great party! But when you get on the balcony, you may see a very different picture.

(Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009, p. 7)

Piantanida and Garman (2009) describe “the stance of doing” (p. 4) as related to efficiency goals; as wanting quick and practical answers that are straightforward rather than “a quest for deeper, more nuanced understanding of dilemmas for which there is no correct action, only difficult tradeoffs among less ideal alternatives” (p. 5).
I found myself often guided by listening and relying on my intuition. At times, I would have to reorient myself with the purpose and the decisions that I made to get me to where I was in the process of deliberation.

As an inside researcher, I was very sensitive to how much time was spent with staff in regards to the research. We engaged in the creation of the goals together and then I lost half of my staff to lay-offs. The new staff members were not part of the goal setting activities in the spring so therefore inherited the work of others. As much as we focused our work on the needs of the children, the questions and understandings were not part of the knowledge base of the new staff members. I faced regularly the concern that I did not want to be self-serving, so perhaps entered into the realm of instructional leader more gently than if it was not my research study. I know that those that were part of the goal setting in the spring seemed more engaged in the learning and those that were not part of the process were not as engaged.

I found that getting started with the parent group was a place of vulnerability for me. In the meeting where I introduced the research study, I felt nervous, this rarely happens to me in this type of meeting. I shared with the parent group how I was feeling and wondered aloud why I was experiencing these feelings. This was the first of many vulnerable moments in the research journey. I came to notice this vulnerability and trust that what followed was authenticity. Authenticity of connection, co-operation from a place of not knowing the outcome but being open to the learning we were engaged in together.
Chapter 4.

Phase 1 Inquiry: Connecting to Self

As was described in the methodology, this co-operative inquiry spanned over three cycles. Each cycle includes: grounding in the propositional or practical knowledge from research, engagement activities to introduce new learning through events and strategies, going deeper into our learning through documentation and finally reflecting on our learning by linking it back to the research. Chapter 4 narrates the first inquiry cycle in which we focused on developing connections to ourselves.

The new research covered in this cycle of inquiry was done through the co-operative structures and strategies. The parents participated in a book club, the teachers were provided research snippets in a learning team format, and I was part of district learning team. The students were exposed to the content through school leadership events, school-wide lessons, and classroom strategies.

Daniel Siegel's notion of integration stood at the forefront of the organization of the cycles of inquiry. Integration is defined by Siegel (2011) in his video clip called, The Human Mind and the Cultivation of Well-Being, as the harmony that is created by the “honoring of differences and the promotion of linkages within a system like a school or classroom, a family, a relationship or within an individual's mind.” He maintains that “integration is made visible through kindness to self, others, our communities and environments.” Thus the names of the three cycles of inquiry: connecting to self, connecting to each other and connecting to the world and our environment.

In his video, Siegel (2011) reviews the nine functions of the prefrontal cortex that represent the integrative physical aspect to the brain. The nine functions include: body regulation, attuned communication, emotional balance, response flexibility, fear modulation, insight, empathy, morality, and intuition. Within the new research and
content, most of these nine functions will be explored either through strategies or, in the instance of intuition, it may be woven into the honouring aspects of the discursive nature of our coming together. Central to the three cycles of inquiry are insight, empathy, and morality. Connecting to self involves insight, asking questions about, “who I am now, how was I before, and who do I want to become?” (Siegel, 2011). Connection to each other involves empathy, asking questions that support knowing who I am, helps me understand that you are also a person with an internal world and subjective experience. Connecting to the world and nature involves morality and the understanding that “you are part of a larger whole” (Siegel, 2011).

The strategies that have been selected from Siegel and Bryson’s (2011a) book, The Whole Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child’s Developing Mind, supported our work in suggesting actions that can improve our ability to foster relationships, reflect, and develop resilience. In the first cycle of inquiry, strategies and events were selected to support integration within the brain and insight. In the second cycle of inquiry, strategies and events were selected to support the creation and maintenance of relationships and empathy. In the third cycle of inquiry, strategies and events were selected to reach out beyond our school to the world and nature and moral reasoning.

4.1. Propositional/Practical Knowledge (Theory, Research)

During the first cycle of inquiry, all groups were being introduced to the definition of self-regulation and the concept of integration. From there we went on to define attunement and the metaphor of the “the river of well-being” (Siegel & Bryson, 2011a, p. 11). Central to these ideas is the role of relationships in shaping the experiences of the developing brain. The adult groups set relational intentions to become mindful of the concepts covered when interacting with the children. For the students, we began doing activities that brought moments of reflection to the ideas covered.
4.1.1. **Self-Regulation**

Shanker’s (n.d.) definition of self-regulation as “the ability to manage your own energy states, emotions, behaviours and attention, in ways that are socially acceptable and help achieve positive goals, such as maintaining good relationships, learning and maintain wellbeing” (para. 2). We extended the definition to include the characteristics of self-regulated learning as being defined by (Perry, 2012), as involving metacognition, motivation for learning and strategic action. Metacognition involves knowing yourself as a learner, knowing your learning styles, and your strengths and weaknesses. Motivation for learning involves having interest, seeing the steps toward a goal, meeting challenges, not being defeated by errors. Strategic action includes selecting strategies and deciding if they are working or not, and knowing how to follow through on a strategy.

4.1.2. **Integrating Brain Functions**

Another implication is that integration is a lifelong process not a final product. As integration is a verb, not a noun, we can continually move toward an integrative flow. As a river continuously flows, our life unfolds in the direction of continual emergence. Integration is the intention and the direction of life, not a final product or fixed endpoint of a journey. Integration truly is the journey, not the destination.

(Siegel, 2012b, p. 17-2)

The goal of the book, *The Whole Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child’s Developing Mind*, by Siegel and Bryson (2011a), is to give parents and teachers strategies to foster integration, which is the cornerstone for children learning to survive and thrive. The 12 strategies that nurture healthy brain development in children are designed around every day experiences.

The strategies focus on the concept of integration, which means connecting the different parts of your brain that have different roles, so it can work together as a whole. There is horizontal integration relating the left brain (logical, sequential, and organized) and the right brain (emotional, intuitive). There is also vertical integration relating the upstairs brain (leading relationships and connections) and the downstairs brain (survival, fight or flight responses). There are also areas of the brain the help make decisions and hold memories.
Neuroscientists have discovered that our brains continue to grow and develop largely through experiences. Children are born with a temperament and are shaped by experiences. Parents have a great deal of influence in helping to develop resiliency in their children through experiences.

4.1.3. Attunement

“The circuitry of our own nervous system is such that if we attune, we come to create resonance in which our observing self takes on some of the features of that which we are observing” (Siegel, 2012b, p. 23). This resonance or attunement is what Siegel identifies as the “basis of secure attachment” (p. 23). In working towards facilitating self-regulation through relationships, the notion of attunement brings forth the essence of a relationship that is felt but difficult to define.

4.1.4. The River of Well-Being

The river of well-being is a metaphor for integration. Regulation comes from integration. Siegel and Bryson (2011a) describe regulation as the peaceful feeling you get when you are in a good relationship with the world and you have a clear understanding of yourself and others. “Imagine a peaceful river running through the countryside. That’s your river of well-being” (p. 11). When people are in this integrated state they are flexible and stable. They go on to define dysregulation as being either too rigid or too chaotic. Where a person becomes controlling or scattered. When a person is dysregulated they have difficulty adapting.

Imagine a peaceful river running through the countryside. That’s your river of well-being. Whenever you’re in the water, peacefully floating along in your canoe, you feel like you’re generally in a good relationship with the world around you. You have a clear understanding of yourself, other people, and your life. You can be flexible and adjust when situations change. You’re stable and at peace. Sometimes, though, as you float along, you veer too close to one of the river’s two banks. This causes different problems, depending on which bank you approach. One bank represents chaos, where you feel out of control… As opposed to being out of control, rigidity is when you are imposing control on everything and everyone around you. You become completely unwilling to adapt, compromise, or negotiate. (Siegel & Bryson, 2011a, p. 11)
This metaphor of regulation is descriptive of so many moments and can act as a reference point, giving us language to be descriptive of ourselves and understand others.

4.1.5. Building Relationships with the Brain in Mind

To summarize Siegel and Bryson’s (2011a) first chapter the brain has a central role in every aspect of our lives and it is significantly shaped by the experience parents provide in a child’s upbringing. I stretch this notion to the school because the relationships children have within the school community must also have significant shaping effects on the child’s developing brain. Siegel and Bryson state, “What you do as a parent matters” (p. 4) and so what we do as a school matters.

…by understanding a few simple and easy-to-master basics about how the brain works, you’ll be able to better understand your child, respond more effectively to difficult situations, and build a foundation for social, emotional, and mental health. (p. 4)

4.1.6. Whole Brain Strategies

Part of our learning included strategies suggested by Siegel and Bryson (2011a) which are included in their book, The Whole Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child’s Developing Mind. In the first phase of inquiry we focussed on three main strategies that were selected so we could begin to support children in managing big emotions.

The first strategy we worked with was called, “Connect and Redirect” (Siegel & Bryson, 2011b, para. 7). When a child is emotional they suggest connecting to and acknowledging the child’s feelings before trying to logic with them. By connecting and acknowledging their emotions the child is better able to calm themselves and access the logical side of their brain to solve their problem. Oftentimes we tell a child what to do or how to correct a behavior before they are ready to engage in listening and learning from the event.
The second strategy we worked with was called, “Name It to Tame It” (Siegel & Bryson, 2011b, para. 8). When a child has a big emotion it is best to help them make sense of the experience by naming the emotions and telling the story of the event. This helps them gain familiarity with the range of emotions and make sense of what is happening versus denying or dismissing the event or emotions.

The third strategy we worked with was called, “Engage, Don’t Enrage” (Siegel & Bryson, 2011b, para. 9). When a person is in a state of high stress our responses make a difference. If we threaten or give ultimatums at this point we can trigger them into a higher state of threat. By asking more questions you collaborate with the person in engaging higher level thinking. This ultimately leads to decisive action versus reactive responses.

**Connect and Redirect.** When your child is melting down or blowing up emotionally, avoid immediately appealing to his logic. Saying, “Why are you acting this way? I don’t have any snacks in the car” is problematic because it addresses an emotional, right brain to right brain. By telling him, “I can tell that you’re really disappointed about the snacks” in a soothing tone of voice, you acknowledge his feelings in a calm manner. Then, once he is more in control and receptive, redirect by bringing in the left-brain lessons and, if necessary, setting some boundaries.

**Name It to Tame It.** When a scary or painful experience produces big, out-of-control emotions, don’t dismiss and deny them. Instead, help him tell the story of what happened. Telling a story helps his left brain make sense of all of those unfamiliar emotions that his right brain is experiencing, and this will help him to feel more in control. Storytelling allows both sides of the brain to work together, preventing disintegration.

**Engage, Don’t Enrage.** In high-stress situations, engage your child’s upstairs brain, which is where his higher-order thinking takes place. Rather than triggering the more primitive and reactive downstairs brain with the “Because I said so!” card, ask questions, collaborate, and even negotiate. The more you can appeal to the upstairs brain and engage him in critical thinking and processing, the more your child will think and act and decide, rather than simple reacting to what he’s feeling. 

(para. 7-9)
4.2. Engagement (Events and Strategies)

To craft the container for our inquiry we reviewed our code of conduct carefully to bring to the forefront responsiveness and restoration versus reward and punishment as the educative factors to impact student learning when they make mistakes as suggested by Brownlie and King (2011, p. 15). The staff began by defining the kind of school we wanted to be and how we wanted to impact our environment as teachers. The teachers were introduced to new concepts reviewed above using the learning team format. The parents engaged in a book club where we explored our reasons for wanting to learn and covered new content from the introductory chapters of the book. With the students we began with learner profiles and cooperative learning strategies to help them see themselves as learners and appreciate similarities and differences. Through the cooperative learning strategies they began to use the skills to engage in dialogue. Documentation was used to highlight the qualities of kindness, to support the students in learning how to see attributes in themselves and others and describe those attributes through concrete actions.

4.2.1. Code of Conduct

This entire study began during a code of conduct review by the students in June 2012. Our school code of conduct includes the necessary aspects as defined by the ministry of education and the school district. Each year principals review the code of conduct with students, parents, and teachers. The students pointed to themselves as needing to live up to the code of conduct when adults were not directly supervising them. This was identified as well by the teachers. The parents were interested in learning more about how to support their children. This led to a more systematic review of the code of conduct with emphasis on restorative practices, and strategies to be used in the moment with children to engage them in problem solving, describing their emotions and selecting individual solutions for making things right or getting to a workable emotional level. In their book called, Learning in Safe Schools: Creating Classrooms Where All Students Belong, Faye Brownlie and Judith King (2011) outlined activities for creating a code of conduct for a school. Many of these were activities the students had brainstormed. The
authors describe how to create an inclusive code of conduct, which will impact school culture.

Developing a code is only the beginning. Time, instruction, and discussion must accompany the code if students, staff, and parents are to live by the code. Keeping the code alive means calling upon the school community to reflect constantly on their beliefs and values and to “walk the talk. (p. 15)

The book outlined several strategies that we used to keep our message alive in the school. In the book, they were referring to the code of conduct but we easily used the relational strategies (monthly meetings of multi-age groups, monthly assemblies, use of a common language, honouring parents, staff and students who help make the school a safe and caring place to be, reflection journaling) outlined in the book to spread the learning about self-regulation.

4.2.2. Staff Research Snippets

We began each staff meeting with a writing reflection prompt. Teachers wrote their personal reflections and then we discussed any ideas that came out of that reflection. We sat in a circle with access to a smart board. When the discussion came to a natural close, I introduced strategies from Siegel and Bryson’s (2011a) book, The Whole-Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child’s Developing Mind. I supported Siegel and Bryson’s strategies with research on self-regulated learning from Perry and developmental theory from Greenspan. After discussing new research, the teachers wrote an intention for their practice as a result of their new learning. I extended this with modelling a lesson that could be used with the children that linked the content of our learning with a story and activity. Teachers were invited to use the lesson but it was not an expectation.

4.2.3. Parent Book Club

Essential to any school goal is the inclusion of parents in the process of change. Comer and Haynes (1991) outline “an integrated ecological approach to school enhancement” (p. 277). In this approach they describe the key to effective parent
involvement includes providing linkages between the school and home based on child development concerns that are key to us all.

We believe that parent involvement programs are the most effective when they are part of an integrated ecological approach to school enhancement. They work best when they are based on child development concerns and when they are implemented within a broader context of improved relationships among the significant adults in the lives of children. If constructed and implemented well, parent involvement programs ... provide the linkage between home, community, and school that is essential to the healthy growth and development of children. (p. 277)

Any plan must include a place for parent learning along with student and staff learning.

4.2.4. Learner Profiles

In the intermediate classes most of the students were part of leadership within the school. The other classroom teacher and I collaborated on designing lessons about knowing yourself as learner. We began with a multiple intelligence inventory where the students self-assessed and graphed their results. We then did some science activities to determine dominance in the left or right hemisphere of the brain. The science activities were combined with an inventory and reflection. Several quadrant activities were designed to have students express their typologies, characteristics, and preferences through metaphor (for example are you a sailboat, a cruise ship, a speedboat or a canoe). These activities along with whole class reflections brought into focus students' temperaments, communication styles, strengths, and weaknesses. They also had opportunities to see the similarities and differences in one another.

4.2.5. Kindness Project

We began the kindness project with a lesson that was shared with the teachers. We did the activity as a staff and the staff shared it with students and then the students extended the activity to parents during one of our celebrations. The story, Each Kindness by Jacqueline Woodson, emphasizes that each of us creates a ripple effect with how we are in the world and even the smallest of gestures of kindness have the power to build a better world. We all held a stone in our hand and thought of the person
we wanted to be and the effect we wanted to have on ourselves, each other and our environment, then without speaking we each took turns dropping our stone into a bowl of water and noting the ripples we created. We then reflected on how we want to be in the world and what effect we want to have.

The leadership students then began documenting kindness in our school and asking students about how they are kind. From this inquiry they produced a video, a song, a readers theatre written by one of the students and shared it in an assembly. Students wrote reflections and teachers posted them on bulletin boards. Students shared some messages over the announcements.

4.3. Going Deeper (Artefacts and Documentation)

Creswell (1994) describes qualitative analysis as collecting information from the field, sorting the information into categories, formatting the information into a story or picture, and actually writing the qualitative text (p. 153).

Throughout the research cycles, the act of documenting and linking ordinary moments to theory through what Piantanida and Garman (2009) refer to as thinking pieces, “a semiformal document that is more structured and public than an entry in a personal or professional journal, yet less polished than a formal paper” (p. 19). In grounded theory, Birks and Mills (2011) referred to memoing as, “a series of snapshots that chronicle your study experience and the internal dialogue that is essential when conducting any research, particularly that with an interpretive component” (p. 41). Memoing became the most significant activity for me as a researcher because, “embryonic ideas can be explored and new insights gained through the contribution of all those involved in a study” (p. 41). The process I refer to as pedagogical documentation in essence became memoing which was shared publicly in newsletters and on my blog. This method proceeded throughout the research.

Documentation is further described in the Early Learning Framework as:

observing and interpreting what children do and why they do it probes the connection between thinking and questioning, and shows or makes
visible the way children are making meaning of their learning or of their interaction with the world. As one interprets and analyzes an ordinary moment/observation, intriguing questions and insight can be gained without requiring absolute certainty about the particular situation or occurrence. Documenting can range from jotting a few notes, to taking pictures, to capturing a moment on videotape.

(BC Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 12)

Documentation was the main strategy used throughout the inquiry process to make meaning and generate thoughtful reflection. In my field notes, I recorded ordinary moments where I saw a link to theory, or a link to our learning about self-regulation and integration. I shared those moments back to our community through pictures, narratives being thoughtful about making the direct links the research. This section includes the initial stages of coding data sources like: reflections, field notes, and documentation. This was a reflexive activity of ongoing analysis and was represented in the memos. I used the same initial coding with the Thoughtstream Survey.

4.3.1. Our Motivations for Learning

To begin the documentation journey into this inquiry, we defined what we wanted to learn and why we wanted to learn about self-regulation and integration. To answer this question, I have included documentation from question one from the Thoughtstream Survey, student responses during the code of conduct review, teacher responses during our growth plan process, and the parent reflection during our first book club meeting.

Thoughtstream Survey Question 1: Motivation for Learning

The first question on the Thoughtstream Survey that went out to all parents and staff was, “Why did you want to learn about self-regulation?” (For a more detailed summary of themed responses refer to Appendix E.) Predominantly four themes emerged from the responses: personal curiosity, task orientation, student need, and a self-reflection consisting of people who wanted to reach greater understanding of themselves and their students.

The responses of those who were curious ranged from wanting to understand the meaning to understanding how self-regulation works in relation to children. As well there
was a desire to understand how self-regulation and integration are relevant to today’s classrooms.

The responses of those who saw it as a task assigned were under the impression I was telling them to do it. As it was the basis for our school goal which was co-created by the staff the year before, we were following through on the action plan for our learning as was defined in that collaborative process. Some of the teachers were new to our school, so they were not part of the initial design process.

Several people identified self-regulation as a student need as well as a need within themselves and thought it was important to understand this important life skill for future success. They saw self-regulation and integration as having a life-long effect on relationships and life balance.

Other respondents took a more reflective approach to their practice. They were looking for strategies for helping students and themselves to self-regulate in socially appropriate ways. One person wanted to understand the widely held expectations for children and to assess if his/her expectations were appropriate. One respondent felt that the learning would help them keep up-to-date with educational change, while another referred to “knowledge as power.”

**Students**

The minutes from the spring 2012 Code of Conduct Review use as much student language as possible. For communication purposes I changed some of their wording to make it easier to communicate with teachers and parents.

Our goal is to be good people by practicing good habits and fostering trust, respect and independence. We need the older students to be good role models, so we can learn to be good role models too. We want people to: do what they say they will do, listen when they are asked to do things, respect adults and each other, make good choices, and if you can do it when your teacher is there, you can do it when they are not there.

The habits we think are important are: listening, following through, kindness, helpfulness, honesty, trustworthiness, and using good judgment.
We can do that by: taking care of ourselves, taking care of each other, taking care of our school and taking care of our environment.
(Code of Conduct Review, Spring 2012)

Parents

As a school community we explored the content of the book, *The Whole Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child’s Developing Mind*, by Siegel and Bryson (2011a) in relation to our everyday experiences working with children. The parent book club came together to discuss the introduction of the book. The reasons for participating in the book club were: it is a new opportunity for me to learn, the book sounded interesting, these are great new strategies to try, the book is applicable, it helps to understand adults as well as kids, the need for strategies to get from chaos to calm, the strategies give direction to build new pathways, and loved Neufeld and Maté’s (2004) book called *Hold on to Your Kids: Why Parents Need to Matter More*, which sparked parents’ interests.

The parents discussed the most common forms of dis-regulated behavior they see at home was sibling conflict. Conflict, they described as: bickering, comparisons, inability to listen to one another, and ownership. They felt that much of the sibling conflict came from a place of wanting power, or feeling the need to belong. At times, depending on the child, it could be that the child does not yet have the words to describe and express their feelings so they end up feeling frustrated as well. The parents felt that they could see common patterns in the conflicts, so perhaps they could help co-regulate earlier in the conflict to model expressive strategies, and language to bring the children together. (Book Club Meeting Summary, 2012)

Teachers

Our teachers are learning about self-regulation and integration so that they can help students: manage big emotions, process disappointment, and support co-regulation and move to self-regulation in students (Staff Goal-Setting Process, Spring 2012).

4.3.2. Compelling Vision

Exploring the connection to self involves insight by asking questions about who I am now, how I was before, and who do I want to become.
I’m not sure how much of a role leadership plays in identifying the preferred future, versus orchestrating a process for identifying a preferred future, but in either case, I’m pretty sure that transformational change doesn’t happen without a widely held image of a preferred future.

(Bushe, 2012, p. 6)

Bushe describes the quality of imagining a preferred future as “possibility centric” (p. 5). This connects to Siegel’s (2012) integration in that each person’s insight was honoured and linked to the ideas of others allowing linkages to strengthen and making room for multiple subjective experiences.

**Teachers**

The teachers reflected on their compelling image of quality school, and this is a summary of what they described. A quality school has: time for collaboration, a supportive staff, a shared vocabulary for discipline and management, a shared philosophy and pedagogy, a principal with leadership skills, adequate and up to date supplies, resources, technology and staff, and well-behaved students (Staff Meeting Summary, October 2012).

The staff reflected on the kind of teacher they want to be, three are selected to be shared.

I would like to be strong, independent, positive, and inspiring. I want to be the teacher that years from now, my students will remember and sometimes talk about. I want to raise mindfulness in children and help them have great values. I want each of them to feel special, confident, and believe in themselves. I want them to know that they can make a difference. (Teacher Reflection, November 2012)

I want to be a positive person who is compassionate. I would like to spread kindness and happiness. I would like to lead by example. I want laughter and joy to be with me even when times are hard. I’d like to be the kind of person my mom was, content, enjoying a cup of tea, watching my garden grow and my kids play. (Teacher Reflection, November 2012)

In the career I have chosen, I would like to be a positive, role model. I am in a unique position where I can be very influential, with the actions I take and the words I say. It is important for me to always be conscious of that and to provide the guidance and support my students need. (Teacher Reflection, November 2012)
Parents

As a parent or caregiver in a child’s life, “Your ultimate goal is to raise kids in a way that lets them thrive. You want them to enjoy meaningful relationships, be caring and compassionate, do well in school, work hard and be responsible, and feel good about who they are” (Siegel & Bryson, 2011a, p. vii).

As parents we want to find that harmony for ourselves, for our children and as a family. We see the signs of rigidity and chaos in so many of our relationships; it is interesting to note and reflect on within ourselves. It is hard to know with issues of sibling dynamics how much we should be involved and how to get involved to help them grow and not add to complexity.

We want our children to have strong: values, work ethic, and relationships. We try to foster: positive self-esteem, a can-do attitude, and a sense of drive, so they feel worthy and confident. We hope they participate in loving relationships with a sense of empathy and compassion. We challenge them to find a sense of purpose so they will persevere by taking an active role in their lives and find fulfillment. We want them to be happy, moral, helpful, and reliable. We want them to grow to be emotionally sound.

(Book Club Meeting Summary, 2012)

Whole Community

Figure 4.1 shows the collection of words; those words were put into a Wordle (Figure 4.2).
Figure 4.1. Words Contributed by Students, Parents, and Teachers Describing the Kind of School We Want

Figure 4.2. The Kind of School We Want: Wordle
4.3.3. The Kindness Project

During their code of conduct review, the students identified kindness as an important quality for us to promote through leadership activities (Figure 4.3). The simple school rules convey as well that we need to take care of ourselves, each other, our school and community. This aligns with Siegel’s (2011) notion of “integration made visible is kindness” to self, others, our communities and environments. Through our documentation we were making kindness visible.

Students’ Reflection of Kindness Project

Figure 4.3. Student Artwork: Reflections on Kindness Project

“I’m walking [student’s name] to her class”

“Someone fell down and I am helping them up.”

“This guy is helping the other guy because he got hurt.”

The Kindness Project concluded with an assembly that highlighted a movie created by the students with examples of how each person is kind. Two students wrote a song while one of the teachers accompanied them on her guitar. We had three children write and perform a reader’s theater with a twist to Snow White, where kindness prevailed. A few children read their kindness writing.

In reflecting on our Kindness Project, I have summarized some of the students’ thoughts from their writing and group work.

We learned that kindness is: treating others the way you want to be treated, using positive words, listening when someone else is talking, treating everyone equally, and letting people see the best in you.
We can be kind by: making friends, helping, sharing, taking chances, being good to the earth, working together, inviting people in to play, and getting involved in volunteering because we make a difference in the school.

We still need to learn: to not leave anyone out, to listen and use kind words (only some students still need practice), and to learn from experiences and not to lose patience.

We are kindness leaders by: helping, standing up for people, and volunteering.  

(Summary of Student Writing, Fall 2012)

**Principal’s Reflection to the Kindness Project**

It’s about taking the time to notice the good things in our lives and get more from these. What’s more, if parents remember to talk about the things they’re grateful for, this can also help their children learn to think about the good things and hopefully get the benefit of a gratitude habit for the rest of their lives.  

(Action for Happiness, “Why do it,” para. 4)

At first the work went slowly largely because the students did not know how to define kindness in a concrete way. We were looking for real life examples and the children were defining it as being nice and picking up garbage. I saw acts of kindness every day. This is where the documentation story takes effect. I had to give examples of the kind acts I saw, so that students could broaden their definition in concrete terms.

Here is an excerpt from my reflection

As I reflect on this beautiful little school, I am especially grateful for our students. They bring the joy, curiosity, and purpose to this special place. When we asked students about their acts of kindness, they spoke about being nice. Kindness to them is quite normal and it took a great deal of effort for them to recognize their giving spirit. The leadership team collected snippets and examples of kindness throughout the school and throughout the age groups. They created a video, a song, and a skit to perform at a Kindness Assembly to raise awareness through the school.

It does not mean we do not have conflict. On a daily basis we all can experience strong emotions, disappointment, have disagreements or feelings of frustration. It is how we respond to those emotions that hold the power for each of us.

As the adult, the role model, and caregiver, I have learned to remind children that their feelings need to be felt and they will pass, before we try to problem solve. When children have had a chance to tell their story, make sense of their part, guess at the feelings of the
other; they are ready to work with the other person, “knee-to-knee, eye-to-eye,” to talk it through. Children feel more powerful if they have a say in how to solve a problem. I am there to walk beside them. When they look into the eyes of another, they understand what it means to, “mean it, for real,” and then it makes it easier to “accept an apology.” When a student is in conflict, they need to focus on their own actions, say what they have done or how they feel; the other person is charge of himself or herself. When stories do not jive, we create an “and” story so both people feel acknowledged. We always focus on, “how can we make it better,” “how can we make a difference to this,” and what support they need. I believe that when children learn how to move through conflict, they are not as fearful and have a more positive approach and when they acknowledge their kindness they create more.

4.4. Reflection (Summary Links to Research)

In the intermediate stages of coding, I began to look for connections between the different data sources. I looked for emerging categories and sub categories. In this section of the inquiry cycle, I am summarizing the categories that emerged from the selected documentation. These categories are then connected to theory or research to better understand and describe the phenomena.

In this cycle of the inquiry we were focusing on connecting to ourselves. As the facilitator of the process I selected strategies and activities that would help frame our vision for what we wanted to do and become, as well as provide the relational skills necessary for coming together collaboratively for learning. In this phase we essentially crafted the container for our learning together. While connection to self involves insight, asking questions about, “who I am now, who I was before, and who do I want to become?” (Siegel, 2011). In the first cycle of inquiry strategies and events were selected to support integration within the brain and self-awareness.

4.4.1. Crafting an Integrative Container

In his video The Human Mind and the Cultivation of Well-Being, Siegel (2011) talks about complexity theory as it relates to systems which could be minds, families, schools and/or communities. He describes those complex systems as non-linear, having internal and external constraints that are self-organizing. He points to “integration as the
basis of well-being” in these complex systems. “The extent to which parents honor the differences in their children and promote compassionate communication develops attuned relationships, which is the basis of attachment” (Siegel, 2011). In this way the school principal, who honours the voices and opinions of teachers, parents and students and promotes communication between them, creates an inclusive school.

Through the documentation of communication, I was able to bring the captured thinking and work with ideas between groups. For example the staff read the following response to the Thoughtstream Survey:

There is often, a disconnect, between home and school life and it’s so important we are all on the same page and working together to foster social and emotional well-being in our children. Quite often parents feel disconnected from what is being taught at school and it’s difficult to create consistency in both environments. Learning about self-regulation as a family helps our children succeed at home and at school. (Thoughtstream Survey Response, 2013)

This response inspired the staff to want to make a difference to the notion of disconnection as evidenced by their response, “There is a disconnect between home and school, what can we do to strengthen the connection?” (Staff Reflection to Thoughtstream Survey Themes, 2013). There was also an acknowledgement that people really do want to help their children as demonstrated by this quote, “Lots of people want to help their children with this strategy” (Staff Reflection to Thoughtstream Survey Themes, 2013).

The sharing of reflections and thinking between groups strengthened the feeling of connection and purpose. We want the same things for our children and we struggle with the same questions. As well, the children wanted many of the same things for themselves.

In this first cycle of inquiry we had to craft the container for our work together. Bushe (2013) describes how “…containers emerge from the processes taking place in the group—they are co-constructed. Everyone in the group has a part to play, although the facilitator, as leader, has a special role” (p. 14). This seems to fit so well with the
concept of integration as the co-construction represents the linkages between each individual who has a role in the group as well as ideas and thinking.

4.4.2. Developing Self-Awareness

Most significantly the growth in self-knowledge was demonstrated by the students. During the dialogue circle the students described their developing self-awareness. I have combined and summarized several of their responses here.

By knowing yourself, you can see in others. It is a way of connection, and a way of learning. By knowing how you feel, you can get stronger. Knowing yourself helps with career decisions and goal setting. You can practice, so you can conquer your fears. You are always learning about yourself. Commitment and actually following through with things is important. Knowing your preferences and talents, you realize everybody is different. Growing, strengths can help other people out, and working on your weaknesses makes you stronger.

(Fusion of Dialogue Student Responses, 2013)

The experts who witnessed the student dialogue circle made the following observations:

The students are discovering themselves and opening up to really see others. They are developing self-regulation skills through self-awareness. They are reflecting on themselves at different stages of life. They are developing social awareness and understanding their learning process through cognitive awareness.

(Fusion of Expert Responses to Dialogue Circle, 2013)

I also saw reflections in the Thoughtstream Survey that expressed the notion of teachers and parents exploring themselves before turning to the other.

Self-regulation is a tool that we can nurture in our students. As someone who often dismisses my own emotion and simply puts them on the “back burner” without truly understanding them, I thought that self-regulation would be a good skill to learn to teach to my own students. Having them be increasingly aware of their own thoughts, feelings and emotions helps to identify ways to understand these feelings and overcome them in positive and constructive way.

(Thoughtstream Survey Response, 2013)

I learned that it is hard to work on your own regulation. It is hard to see your own faults, but it is easy to point out others. I am now trying to not say the first thing I think of when I am upset with others. I
have also started with my own kids if they have made me really upset, I now tell them that I will talk to them later, after I have had a chance to calm down. Working with the kids, you can now tell some of the kids that they are getting too silly and they know that they need time by themselves. Other kids just tell you that they need time by themselves as they know they need that time to settle down. (Thoughtstream Survey Response, 2013)

These two quotes underline how important it is for the adults to be self-regulated so they can support the children in their own regulation. These two responses demonstrate that the new learning was first applicable to ourselves and our own self-awareness and then we can turn to the other. This was further explored in our Book Club, “We want to find that harmony for ourselves, for our children and as a family. We see the signs of rigidity and chaos in so many of our relationships; it is interesting to note and reflect on within ourselves” (Book Club Reflection, 2012).

I think it is powerful that those who responded recognized that self-regulation is as much about the adults self-regulating as the students. The greatest conversations we have had in our desire to gently begin to explore this topic, have been around our own self-awareness. When we as adults made shifts in our responsiveness to children or students or within peer groups, we were gentler and more person-centered.

4.4.3. The Being of the Leader

In discussing self-awareness, I want to begin to explore the role of the leader in facilitating a co-operative and emergent process. Since this thesis explores the big idea of transformational change, I think it is important to explore the leadership narrative. This will evolve throughout the inquiry cycles. As Bushe (2012) describes “containers are co-constructed through the being of the leader in relation to the group” (p. 7).

At the onset of the research I found myself often guided by listening and relying on my intuition. At times, I would have to re-orient myself with the purpose and the decisions that I made to get me to where I was in the process of deliberation.

As an inside researcher, I was very sensitive to how much time was spent with staff in regards to the research. We engaged in the creation of the goals together and
then I lost half of my staff to lay-offs. The new staff members were not part of the goal setting activities in the spring so therefore inherited the work of others. As much as we focused our work on the needs of the children, the questions and understandings were not part of the knowledge base of the new staff members. I faced regularly the concern that I did not want to be self-serving, so perhaps entered into the realm of instructional leader more gently than if it was not my research study. I know that those that were part of the goal setting in the spring seemed more engaged in the learning and those that were not part of the process were not as engaged.

I found that getting started with the parent group was a place of vulnerability for me. In the meeting where I introduced the research study, I felt nervous, this rarely happens to me in this type of meeting. I shared with the parent group how I was feeling and wondered aloud why I was experiencing these feelings. This was the first of many vulnerable moments in the research journey. I came to notice this vulnerability and trust that what followed was authenticity. Authenticity of connection, co-operation from a place of not knowing the outcome but being open to the learning; we were engaged in truly learning together.

To reference back to Siegel (2011), a system that is integrated “celebrates differences and promotes linkages.” To paraphrase Siegel, a system that is too rigid relies too heavily on linkages and can become stagnant, and a system that values only differences becomes too chaotic. Bushe (2013) notes that, “when the facilitators actions take away the sense of ownership others have for what is taking place within the container, they are being too controlling” (p. 14). At first many of the staff had no ownership because they were new and had not been a part of the process. In this regard I felt they were invited into the learning but lacked the commitment and purpose. With the parent book club, I felt vulnerable because I was not the expert at first. The book club quickly became very safe and intriguing because we all had the stories of the children in common, they were our purpose, and we all shared in experiences with them. I felt the most possibility with the students as I felt the freedom to work collectively and creatively.
Chapter 5.

Phase 2 Inquiry: Connecting to Each Other

As was described in the methodology, this co-operative inquiry spanned over three cycles of inquiry. Each cycle consisted of grounding in the propositional or practical knowledge from research, engaging in the new learning through events and strategies, going deeper into our learning through documentation and finally reflecting on our learning by linking it back to the research. Chapter 5 narrates the second inquiry cycle in which we focused on creating connections with each other.

The new research continued to be shared with staff through research snippets during staff meetings and to parents during our book club discussions. To share new learning and understandings, the student leaders began a buddy project which used school wide lessons linked to literature. The students also started documenting memories and we culminated our learning in a celebration called the Heart and Mind Art Show.

Daniel Siegel’s notion of integration stood at the forefront of the organization of the cycles of inquiry. In his video clip called, The Human Mind and the Cultivation of Well-Being, Siegel (2011) defines integration as the harmony that is created by the “honoring of differences and the promotion of linkages within a system like a school or classroom, a family, a relationship or within an individual's mind.” He maintains that “integration is made visible through kindness to self, others, our communities, and environments.” Thus the names of the three cycles of inquiry: connecting to self, connecting to each other and connecting to the world and our environment.

In his video, Siegel (2011) reviews the nine functions of the prefrontal cortex that represent the integrative physical aspect to the brain. To summarize Siegel, the nine functions include: body regulation, attuned communication, emotional balance, response
flexibility, fear modulation, insight, empathy, morality, and intuition. Within the new research and content, most of these nine functions will be explored either through strategies or, in the instance of intuition, it may be woven into the honouring aspects of the discursive nature of our coming together. Central to the three cycles of inquiry are insight, empathy, and morality. Connecting to self involves insight, asking questions about, “who I am now, how was I before, and who do I want to become?” Connection to each other involves empathy, asking questions that support knowing who I am, helps me understand that you are also a person with an internal world and subjective experience. Connecting to the world and nature involves morality and the understanding that “you are part of a larger whole.”

The strategies that have been selected from Siegel and Bryson’s (2011a) book, *The Whole Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child’s Developing Mind*, supported our work in suggesting actions that can improve our ability to foster relationships, reflect, and develop resilience. In the first cycle of inquiry, strategies and events were selected to support integration within the brain and insight. In the second cycle of inquiry, strategies and events were selected to support the creation and maintenance of relationships and empathy. In the third cycle of inquiry, strategies and events were selected to reach out beyond our school to the world and nature and moral reasoning.

## 5.1. Propositional/Practical Knowledge (Theory, Research)

During the second cycle of inquiry, we planned many events and shared experiences to bring us into connection with each other. Since relationships take a central role in the developing brain we began to research the relational aspects of developmental growth. I relied upon the dynamic developmental approach as defined by Greenspan. I introduced Siegel and Bryson’s (2011a) whole brain strategies surrounding memory and the importance of fun.
5.1.1. **The Dynamic Developmental Approach**

To summarize the developmental model, Greenspan and Greenspan (2010) use the metaphor of the learning tree (p. xv-xvii). The learning tree has roots that represent the ways children take in information and plan actions. This can be described as the way our senses take in information through sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. The learning tree has a trunk which represents the development of thinking skills and their application to academic learning as well as relationships. The trunk is the integrative process that reformulates the sensory input into thoughts. The learning tree has branches that represent the academic skills of reading, math, speaking, writing, and organizing. These represent the skills that show our thinking. This dynamic developmental model honours both the cognitive and emotive aspects to learning and the impact of a nurturing environment as well as the genetic biological conditions of a child’s developmental process.

5.1.2. **Memories**

Siegel and Bryson (2011a) outline two myths about memory, one is that “memory is a mental file cabinet” (p. 67) and the other is “memory is like a photocopy machine” (p. 69). To summarize Siegel (2011), memories are associations that link similar experiences from the past through neural connections and can influence your present (p. 68).

Siegel and Bryson (2011a) define two types of memories implicit and explicit. To summarize, implicit memories encode emotions, sensations, and perceptions, and prime the brain to respond in certain ways (p. 75). “The problem with an implicit memory,” according to Siegel and Bryson, “is that when we aren’t aware of it, it becomes a buried land mine that can limit us in significant and sometimes debilitating ways” (p. 76). “Whereas, implicit memory is an unconscious experience, explicit memory, “is a conscious recollection of a past experience” (p. 71). Siegel and Bryson suggest the need to support children in integrating their memories by framing their painful memories into a cohesive narrative, “when you give your children lots of practice at remembering—by having them tell and retell their own stories—you improve their ability to integrate implicit and explicit memories” (p. 83). This is supported by Hood (2012), “by scaffolding
their children's early experiences, the kids were able to organize their experiences into a meaningful story. This is because it is easier to remember stories that relate to us when we become a main character” (p. 84). By reminiscing with children, parents help create the framework for memories. Children learn to interpret by how adults tell the stories that make sense of their early experiences.

Creating narratives with children is important for painful memories as well positive memories. Siegel and Bryson (2011a) describe the importance of remembering, “The more you can help bring those noteworthy moments into their explicit memory—such as family experiences, important friendships, or rites of passage—then the clearer and more influential those experiences will be” (p. 84). Siegel and Bryson expand this notion of creating cohesive narratives to the adults, “by integrating your implicit and explicit memories and shining the light of awareness on difficult moments from your past, you can gain insight into how your past is impacting your relationship with your children....” (p. 91). If the adults make sense of their own lives, they are better able to support their children in making sense of their lives.

Greenspan (1999) also noticed the best way to support children who have difficulty with analytic reasoning or thinking “was by creating opportunities to have more “lived emotional experiences” and to reason about them” (p. 8).

5.1.3. The Fun Factor

In schools as well as in families it is important to have fun together. Siegel and Bryson (2011) say “experience strengthens the bonds between you and teaches your kids that relationships are affirming, rewarding, and fulfilling” (p. 132). To summarize play helps children build connections with others, and gives children the lived experience of being in a loving relationship. McLellan (2012) elaborates, “the brain has mirror neurons which enable us to mirror what we see others doing, feeling, etc. So it’s our job to model the kinds of relationships we want our kids to have” (para. 2).
5.1.4. The Healthy Mind Platter

The Healthy Mind Platter was created by Dr. Dan Siegel and Dr. David Rock. It outlines some simple guidelines for making sure we have the ingredients for good mental habits within each day. We all need, kids and adults included, enough sleep time, physical activity, time to connect, time on our own, time to focus intently, down time and time to play.

This platter contains the seven essential daily mental activities necessary for optimum mental health in daily life. These seven activities make up the full set of 'mental nutrients' that your brain needs to function at its best. By engaging regularly in each of these servings, you enable your brain to coordinate and balance its activities, which strengthens your brain's internal connections and your connections with other people. (Rock, 2011, para. 4)

5.2. Engagement (Events and Strategies)

To build our relational skills for connecting with each other, the students began the buddy project. Throughout the Buddy Project we designed school wide lessons linked to literature. We kept a journal of our favorite memories and celebrated our work in a Hearts and Minds Art Show. These shared experiences gave us the opportunity to identify and practice our relational skills and lived experiences upon which to build memories. During our staff meetings we continued with the research snippets and focussed our intentions and reflections on specific students and ourselves. The parents continued to learn in the book club format and were invited into participate in our school wide events. Documentation was used to highlight the qualities of empathetic action through a relational approach to learning through shared experiences.

5.2.1. The Buddy Project

The most significant strategy used in this inquiry phase was what we called the Buddy Project. The idea originated from an excerpt in Greenspan and Greenspan’s (2010) book called, The Learning Tree, which describes the Sidwell Elementary School project. The Grades 4 and 5 students from my class took the lead as buddies. Each class joined us for common lessons. Each buddy leader from my class was tasked with
knowing the lesson and how they were going to guide their buddy through the learning. As a class we selected the common lessons from the books *Hope is an Open Heart* by Thompson (2008), *One Love* by Marley (2011), and *See a Heart Share a Heart* by Telchin (2009) and created a lesson plan. The buddy leaders met before each class. During those meetings we anticipated what might happen and how we could handle different situations and transitions. After each lesson, we would gather and reflect on how it went and discussed any challenges the buddy leaders had while working with the children. The reason we embarked on this strategy stemmed from the belief that as they learned to recognize feelings in the children they were working with, the better they would be able to reflect on their own feelings. In working with the younger children they were motivated and interested, they had to contemplate strategic action, reflect on their success, and think about what they may do next time, which are all the elements of self-regulated learning.

### 5.2.2. Literature Lessons

**Hope Is an Open Heart**

We chose the book *Hope is an Open Heart* by Lauren Thompson (2008). It is a story about how young people have felt and survived difficult situations; the main idea of the story is how to heal from big emotions. For each class in the school we created a lesson plan, a different activity for each age group. Each of the art lessons included a heart to be made into gift cards for a fundraiser. The class talked about how to introduce ideas and teach the younger students. They read the story and one on one guided their buddy through the art lesson.

**One Love**

The book *One Love* is written with the words of the Bob Marley song by his oldest daughter Cedella Marley (2011). It is a song that celebrates togetherness. The students then wrote about what they loved and who gave them the gift.
See a Heart, Share a Heart

We chose the book *See a Heart, Share a Heart* by Eric Telchin (2009), because we love the outdoors and often made art out of found objects from our forest. This book is filled with hearts made from found things. Many of the hearts are made out of natural materials. We encouraged students to bring a cookie tin of collected objects that they could make into a heart and then we photographed them.

5.2.3. Remembering to Remember Books

The leadership students who were part of the memory group documented significant moments in the school. They would come together and collect pictures and write a memoir of different events. They also went to each class and asked what memories were special for them so far this year. They kept binders of the collected memories.

5.2.4. Hearts and Minds Art Show

The Hearts and Minds Art Show was an art exhibit, a fundraiser, and a showcase for our memory books. The art was displayed around the perimeter of the gym. On the inside of the gym we set up interactive stations for students and parents. We had a Wishing Well where students and parents wrote on post it notes what they hoped for our school. We had a Ripple Effect Station where people could think about the type of person they wanted to be and the effect they wanted to have on others as they were invited to drop their stone into a pool of water and watch the ripples. A Grade 1 boy had the idea that we could create a heart from painted stones and people could put positive messages on their stones and then they were arranged in an installation as a heart. There was a, See a Heart, Share a Heart Station, where people were given an option of a variety of found objects that they could arrange in a heart and the hearts were photographed. We also had a Gratitude Station where people wrote their gratitude messages. The art exhibit included all of the art from the Buddy Project lessons. Every student also created a burlap banner and contributed to a group painting. The staff also did a group painting that was auctioned off to raise money for a child in need in our neighborhood. We had songs sung, videos presented, and a dances performed.
Teachers all had something to contribute, as something their class did or could perform. The students all ran the interactive stations. We did not put out seating because we wanted people to participate in interacting with our content as well as our work. We were showing what we had learned, this was our documentation.

5.3. Going Deeper (Artifacts and Documentation)

Creswell (1994) describes qualitative analysis as collecting information from the field, sorting the information into categories, formatting the information into a story or picture, and actually writing the qualitative text (p. 153).

Throughout the research cycles, the act of documenting and linking ordinary moments to theory through what Piantanida and Garman (2009) refer to as thinking pieces, “a semiformal document that is more structured and public than an entry in a personal or professional journal, yet less polished than a formal paper” (p. 19). In grounded theory, Birks and Mills (2011) referred to memoing as, “a series of snapshots that chronicle your study experience and the internal dialogue that is essential when conducting any research, particularly that with an interpretive component” (p. 41). Memoing became the most significant activity for me as a researcher because, “embryonic ideas can be explored and new insights gained through the contribution of all those involved in a study.” The process I refer to as pedagogical documentation in essence became memoing which was shared publicly in newsletters and on my blog. This method proceeded throughout the research.

In the initial stages of coding data sources such as reflections, field notes and documentation, it was a reflexive activity of ongoing analysis and was represented in the memos. I used the same initial coding with the Thoughtstream Survey and Dialogue Circle. I read the transcripts line by line or sometimes chunk by chunk and noted what I thought was being represented. I then compiled these ideas into categories and wrote a reflection.

In the intermediate stages of coding, I began to look for connections between the different data sources. I looked for emerging categories and sub categories. I looked for
relationships between categories and began working towards a conceptual framework. I also brought the Thoughtstream Survey coding back to the staff for feedback. With the dialogue circle, I compared my coding with the expert coding and student reflections.

Documentation is further described in the Early Learning Framework as:

observing and interpreting what children do and why they do it probes the connection between thinking and questioning, and shows or makes visible the way children are making meaning of their learning or of their interaction with the world. As one interprets and analyzes an ordinary moment/observation, intriguing questions and insight can be gained without requiring absolute certainty about the particular situation or occurrence. Documenting can range from jotting a few notes, to taking pictures, to capturing a moment on videotape.

(BC Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 12)

Documentation was the main strategy used throughout the inquiry process to make meaning and generate thoughtful reflection. In my field notes, I recorded ordinary moments where I saw a link to theory, or a link to our learning about self-regulation and integration. I shared those moments back to our community through pictures, narratives being thoughtful about making the direct links the research. This section includes the initial stages of coding data sources like: reflections, field notes, and documentation. This was a reflexive activity of ongoing analysis and was represented in the memos. I used the same initial coding with the Thoughtstream Survey.

5.3.1. Thoughtstream Survey Question 2: Learning Tools

In response to the question, “What learning tools are you finding most valuable for your participation: research snippets, newsletter posts, book club, student leadership activities, displays, assemblies, shared lessons, the Integration blog, twitter, or student's stories?,” all of the ways were used by the participants that responded, but it remains clear that the messages did not disseminate as widely as I had hoped for the degree of effort and work put into it.

The book club was interconnected with the themes in the newsletters and connected to the research snippets provided to staff and parents. The book club was the first for me with parents and it was a very positive experience for everyone. It is
difficult to find times when people will commit to participating so we developed the blog to provide additional access. The blog was not read widely and the posts were made available in school newsletters. The blog was accessed more by other professionals not related to our school. I found this enriching in the fact that it linked my learning to others interested in the same topics. The book club was the catalyst for creating the newsletter posts, and blog posts and focusing the learning stories that were shared. One respondent said:

I thought that participating in the book club was the best. It gave you a chance to hear how other people handled different situations. It also gave you perspective about some trying times with your kids. You also realized that everyone seems to have similar problems and you were not alone with the stresses of raising children.

(Thoughtstream Survey Response, 2013)

People valued the shared experiences. The shared events, displays, and shared stories that were done throughout the school provided the ongoing opportunities for students to become reflective, self-regulated, and self-aware. One respondent said:

I think school projects, classroom creativity and student leadership. I have seen all of these things in action and the result and they all bring a sense of personal and social responsibility, self-awareness and the chance to shine. When you are given these opportunities, the tools to self-regulate are embedded within.

(Thoughtstream Survey Response, 2013)

Another respondent said:

The displays were so powerful to see their stories of respect, kindness, helpful and kindness among the students and staff as well. It really gave me to appreciation to their thoughts and how they were acting out to help others.

(Thoughtstream Survey Response, 2013)

I am hearing the value of engagement:

The level of engagement in the school community has been 10 out of 10.

(Thoughtstream Survey Response, 2013)
Sharing in our work has been powerful:

I find many of the learning tools we have discussed so far very valuable. Most beneficial to me are student leadership activities and shared lesson plans. Being able to share lesson plans, and then reflect upon them helps to deconstruct different lessons and strategies on how to improve upon them. (Thoughtstream Survey Response, 2013)

The staff responded to the Thoughtstream Survey themes by demonstrating a desire to join the parents in the book club. Some of their responses made me aware that some had missed many of the learning opportunities provided to them because they were not reading the newsletters. They wanted to engage but had not understood it was there for them.

5.3.2. Thoughtstream Survey Question 3: Engagement

Another question on the Thoughtstream Survey asks, “If you are not engaged in the learning, how can we invite you to participate?” Respondents wanted another book club, some evening meetings, to be kept in the loop, made aware of what is happening, and continue the sharing assemblies. Many of the responses say they want more newsletters, more emails, make me aware. This is a common theme, along with the request that things be held in the evening. With several of the events we did an evening opening to accommodate working parents. In those evening meetings and openings we had very low turnout. The Hearts and Minds Show had selections from every child in the school and we had three families visit during the evening. Whereas with the Young Entrepreneurs’ Farmers Market, we had only the Grades 4 and 5 students highlighted and almost every family plus a good part of our extended community attended. One respondent put it this way, “With all the initiatives and ways to connect, it’s impossible not be engaged, if a person is not engaged with the school this year, it’s because they don’t want to be” (Thoughtstream Survey Response, 2013).

I share my response from my field notes:

The sharing assemblies and school wide projects seemed to get the most involvement. Parents were unclear that many of our activities were designed around sharing an experience together versus performing for them. During our Hearts and Minds Show, I insisted we
would stop putting out seating for people so we could get across the idea of active participation. This is a change, a shift, it started to catch on. For our Earth Day Spiral, we painted extra stones for the visitors to participate, anticipating the desire to be included. One boy who initiated the idea, held his moms hand and they lead the way to create and walk the spiral. One grandmother who had brought a younger sibling was heard saying, “This was the best assembly I have ever been too, I can’t believe what we just did.” (Field Notes, 2013)

In regards to the newsletters, nobody reads the newsletters. People read the calendar but not the details. I started putting learning stories in the newsletters. Slowly the older students started to read them because they wanted to see if they were going to be highlighted. My class would be talkative about what I selected to write about the day after the newsletter was emailed out. I do not believe their parents always read them but the students certainly did. The stories I put in the newsletter used real life examples from our school of the Siegel and Bryson (2011a) strategies we were learning about in the book club.

Every newsletter included links to the blog that covered all of the summaries of our book club so that people who worked full time could access it online. I know a few parents followed closely. I know a few parents opened all of the links I sent out that may interest and further their learning. One parent would respond by email.

5.3.3. Student Learning Stories

The learning stories are explained by the following letter that accompanied a student reflection, my reflection, and pictures. The note explains the process and the purpose.

The Grades 4 and 5 students have a reflection book. In this book they reflect on their development as leaders within the school and how different strategies work when they are working with people. We are sharing a reflection of their learning to date this school year. I have also written a reflection for each of them and there is a place for you to share your ideas as well. My hope is that the students will feel significant and noticed for their contributions to the classroom, school and their families as a result of this activity.

(Note Home to Parents, February 2013)
I am including the documentation of one Grade 4 student to give an example of the process.

I’ve learned a lot of stuff this year. I can hold a lot of information in my head because I am a really smart person. I am also a good runner. I think I’m doing pretty good at school. The subjects I specialize in are math and spelling. I think I’m pretty good at science too. I think I’m getting along well with others and the class. I have learned that Christopher Columbus has sailed to the Caribbean. Then there was a time I learned how to write the date in metric notation. Also, I have learned a lot about the water cycle. I know I have great friendships with my friends. (Grade 4 Reflection, February 2013)

My reflection to the same Grade 4 student:

Child reflected early in January, “I was the oldest in my old class but now my teacher says I’m the youngest. I haven’t really helped anyone yet so I don’t have a story. I think I need size and strength for some things.” His next two reflections are stories of how he felt good for helping a younger student. He recognized the strengths in them.

He is proud of all he has learned about himself as a learner. He recognizes how bright he is, “I can hold a lot of information in my head because I am a really smart person.” He is discovering that he is a good runner, and that he has good friends. He has surrounded himself with a nice friendship group that share in his imagination.

He is excited about learning and is curious about what is coming next. He is setting goals for himself. (Teacher Reflection, February 2013)

His mother and father responded:

Child is a very loving, caring and considerate boy. He is so thoughtful of others. He is clever, witty, and inspiring. He is also very independent. He’s very inquisitive as he is so curious about many things. Over the past year, we have seen Child’s mature in his personality, in his understandings about things in life and his surroundings, in his sense of humor and his growing independence. We admire Child’s intelligence, willingness to learn, his fun personality. We hope Child continues to do well in school, grows great friendships, stays active and keeps in good health. We hope for a bright and successful future in whatever he decides to do. We love Child very much and are so blessed to have him as our son.

(Parent Reflection, February 2013)

The Grade 4 child’s final thinking about the process is depicted in Figure 5.1.
5.3.4. Teachers’ Reflections

At the start of the session we reflected on the students we saw making progress. One teacher wrote about a child who would perform for attention, who was now beginning to see his effect on others and was checking himself more frequently. Another child who had difficulty managing big emotions and would often not tell the truth for fear of getting in trouble was more able to make connections with friends, use visuals, ask for extra time, and was becoming more truthful. Another child who has a diagnosed learning disability was recognized for her persistence, focus, and hard work. Another teacher noticed a child integrating into the class socially. She attributed this to the kindness of the students and that the good role modelling.

I then asked the staff to think about a child they are worried about and to set an intention to connect with that child in a deliberate way. One teacher noted that she was
going to try the name it to tame it strategy with a student who experiences big anger over small things. Another teacher brought attention to a child who was experiencing anxious tendencies and was going to research how to support him better. One teacher planned to go out on behalf of the staff to gather strategies for students who have sensory issues. She visited schools, went to a workshop with an occupational therapist, and then presented back to staff. She supported other teachers in developing sensory kits for students who needed them.

5.3.5. Parents’ Reflections

We were reflecting on our use and experiences with the integrating strategies and these stories were told.

The other day my son came home upset. I immediately went to the logical solutions, he had to suck it up and I would follow up. I left the discussion and then started wishing that I handled the situation in the way the book told us to meet the child emotionally rather than going to the logical. So I went back and asked if we could start again. This time I met his need emotionally. I actually allowed him to express himself and that is what he needed. So we actually solved the problem in a long term way rather than fixing it temporarily by ending the discussion. I realize that I did not respond correctly initially and that I could go back and start over and still am effective.

(Parent Reflection, 2013)

Solving via emotions as compared to lecturing the kids gives a better (Super girl) feeling as opposed to feeling like a ‘bad’ parent, all day long.

(Parent Reflection, 2013)

5.3.6. Buddy Journals

“Studies have clearly shown that the very act of recalling and expressing an event through journaling can improve immune and heart function, as well as general well-being” (Siegel & Bryson, 2011a, p. 84). The leadership students and buddies had been journaling about their experiences working with younger students. I saw their sense of compassion grow as they worked at relating to the younger students. Some quotes from their work:
She got frustrated because she saw somebody else’s work that was really good. I talked to her about how her work was good too. I had to think like a kindergarten.  
(Grade 4 Student, 2013)

I think that when I helped these students it made them feel happy because they know that someone cares for them at school and at home.  
(Grade 5 Student, 2013)

I was affected in a strange way because the boy I helped did not say thank you and the made me feel bad. I did something that was good, so I feel good.  
(Grade 5 Student, 2013)

I did not really understand what the kindergarten wanted me to do. Then he started crying and it broke my heart.  
(Grade 5 Student, 2013)

In his heart the stuff that he loved was his family, his dog and his guinea pig.  
(Grade 4 Student, 2013)

After each lesson we would debrief. The students would ask challenging questions and make interesting observations. One boy said, “It is hard not to punish a small child when they are doing something wrong, that is all I could think of to do but I knew you would not let me, so I had to think of something different.” Another student said, “Sometimes those kindergartens are too cute for their own good. They get away with stuff that is not going to be good in the end.” One kindergarten started to cry during our session because he did not know how to draw a heart and the buddies he was working with did not understand him. He cried and I could see the tears in the big buddy’s eyes as well. Later in the reflection time they said it broke their heart. I had intervened at the time and demonstrated how to listen deeply to the child and then how to break a task down into smaller bits, make it successful, make it fun, and feel success without doing it for the child. We worked with breathing exercises like elevator breathing to connect to
yourself. We started recognizing when we needed to take a break so we made it okay to go and have a drink, take a walk in nature, or changing seating. They used these strategies with some of the younger students. Most importantly, it changed the way they engaged in their own self-talk when they were feeling anxious.

5.3.7. Hearts and Minds Art Show Summary

I took field notes during our class reflection of the art show and I have combined voices in the following summary.

When you are working with little kids it is important to give them feedback about the process so they are not afraid to make mistakes. The art show brought our hearts together with everyone. It was not just me it was everyone. All of us were teachers. We gained connection by working together and trusting each other. Sometimes you can lose your love. When the art show was over I was sad because I enjoyed it so much.

(Fusion of Grades 4/5 Reflections, 2013)

Heart Art from the show is included in Figure 5.3, followed by two student written reflections in Figures 5.4 and 5.5.

Figure 5.2. Heart Art
I felt happy when the Art Show was on, but when it ended I was sad because it was fun. I was helping with the one love song. It was fun working with all of the kids. After all that, we kinda comm...
Figure 5.4. Grade 4 Girl Art Show Reflection

April 5th 2013

The Art show

When I looked around at the art show, I was so amazed at how everybody worked together to build a beautiful piece of art. When I did it I connect with my class but also connected with my self. I was so proud of myself to work independently and to connect with my classmates. I helped me to learn more about them. I really enjoyed doing it. The pace created a painting which was on the wall and the money for that painting went to Jonathan. The rest of the money went to help us get more stuff. Now we also did activities but in every activity there was a message behind it. We also worked with the kindies and Mrs. Shepherd's class. I also helped us connect with those classes. Because we helped them build an heart and put things inside them. We learned things about them and formed trust. Those things are very important to have.

We gain trust, friendship, stronger relationships, happiness, we gain all that with just connecting with one another.
5.3.8. Fun Factor

The intermediate students, teachers, and parents went snowshoeing in the sunshine, played camouflage, and explored the trails. It was nice to be outside, active and enjoying each other without being rushed. It was nice to see students overcome some fears and apprehension to discover they are capable.

It was time for tubing. The enthusiastic teacher grabbed his tube and ran up the mountain, followed by another teacher. Their role modeling, along with several parents, showed that joy could be shared. The kids, parents, and teachers played. From the sidelines some of us loved watching and listening to the sounds of fun while we sipped tea and hot chocolate. With teamwork, teachers, parents, students, and mountain staff joined 78 tubes together for a big slide.

Siegel talks about the importance of the Fun Factor in children’s lives. The adults on our trip modeled the fun factor: the joy, the happiness, the play and the students joined in and mirrored what they saw. The day went a long way to creating the type of joyful and connected memories that move us from a sense of “me” to “we.”

(Newsletter Excerpt, 2013)

Parent Book Club Reflection

It is the negatives in the day that keep us awake at night. We feel the most positive when we are living in the moment. I love dancing to my favorite songs but it embarrasses my kids. We love singing at the top of our lungs in the car; this also embarrasses my kids. We enjoy family walks in the sunshine and going for coffee. We love to play tag.

We get bogged down by our families need for structure. Schedules are complicated. We are not a priority because so many other things put demands on our time. (Parent Book Club Reflection, 2013)

5.3.9. The Healthy Mind Platter

The teachers and I were looking at how we could build balance into the school day. We are challenged by Dr. David Rock (2011), in his blog “Your Brain at Work,” to map out an average day and see what percentage of our time is spent in each area.
Most of the staff reflected that they did not provide any down-time and little time-in (Figure 5.5). One teacher gave percentages which reflected the conversation that followed.

**Figure 5.5. Classroom Time Healthy Mind Platter Graph**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Time Healthy Mind Platter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus Time</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Play Time</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connecting Time</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Time</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time In</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Down Time</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teacher Reflection**

The teachers felt that connecting time was built into most things during the day. They allocated connecting time as part of the other times. In response to reflecting on how we spend our time in the classroom, teachers hoped that parents are providing some of the time in the aspects not emphasized as much at school. The teachers wondered about building in time for meditation. They felt it would be important to build in body breaks and quiet drawing time to reflect.

(Staff Response, Spring 2013)

**Book Club Reflection**

When we reviewed the Healthy Mind Platter during the Parent Book Club, the parents spoke about how hard it is to give undivided attention to each person in a family. The parents felt they could show how overwhelmed they are by fragmenting their attention. The parents spoke of the complexity of scheduling families today. The parents felt they were the role models of balance for their children and
they felt the need to find balance within themselves. The parents rely on the school to meet some aspects of the healthy mind platter, as the teachers had acknowledged the parents.

(Book Club Reflection, Spring 2013)

5.4. Reflection (Summary Links to Research)

In the intermediate stages of coding, I began to look for connections between the different data sources. I looked for emerging categories and sub categories.

In this section of the inquiry cycle, I am summarizing the categories that emerged from the selected documentation. These categories are then connected to theory or research to better understand and describe the phenomena.

In this cycle of the inquiry we were focusing on connecting to each other. As the facilitator of the process I selected strategies and activities that would help frame our vision for what we wanted to do and become as well as provide the relational skills necessary for coming together collaboratively for learning. In this phase we worked on building our relational capacity through events and reflection. Connection to each other involves empathy. In the second cycle of inquiry strategies and events were selected to support relationship building.

5.4.1. Understanding Connection

Engagement in relationships is the way we learn that there is a world outside ourselves. It’s the way we learn about emotions and social interaction. A sustained relationship with you allows trust, security, and intimacy to build. It is the fabric that keeps us all striving to fulfill and be fulfilled emotionally. (Greenspan & Greenspan, 2010, p. 34)

The students reflected on the topic of connection and they thought it was important to learn to connect to yourself, which is what Siegel (2011) refers to as, insight. They felt connection to themselves when they did breathing exercises, when they did nature walks or walked the spiral. They saw a connection with each other. They felt they built that connection by sharing their feelings and ideas, learning about each other and how everyone thinks. They also identified connection is built through
sharing experiences. In our classroom at the end of the day on Friday, we put on music as we cleaned up and prepared for home time, as everyone completed their tasks they came to the carpet where we were all dancing. According to the students, this ritual gave them self-confidence and courage, while being fun. They had come to know that their body language was important in creating connection. They talked about eye contact and gestures, acknowledging that they use all of their senses to take in information.

When the students would respond in such meaningful ways to our experiences, their thoughts seemed beyond their years in wisdom. I was very mindful to create lessons that emphasized thoughtful communication, yet I attribute so much of their learning to the direct experiences they shared with the younger students within a context where they were being coached on connection. They were not learning to work with the younger students in a vacuum; we were identifying challenges and working through real experiences.

The focus on connection became our strategy. We brainstormed and tried ways of inviting people into relation with us. We made sure to notice people and share of ourselves.

Interaction means that conversation, whether verbal or nonverbal, is a continuous flow, a circle of communication. Circles of communication—opening and closing, back and forth, flowing—teach children how to be purposeful or logical, how to make things happen in the world. (Greenspan & Greenspan, 2010, p. 38)

Closing the communication circles of communication at least five times before changing the subject or when initiating a conversation with somebody, became our rule of thumb for every day practice. During our buddy work the leaders would focus on the communication cycles as a way of engaging children they did not know very well. We learned about ourselves through reflection but also by noticing and observing others.

The staff began to openly discuss questions about their practice as well as set intentions that were relationship specific in working with their children. Conversations in the staff meetings began to make visible the places where teachers were meeting the convergence of their reflections, new learning, and pre-existing beliefs.
One teacher had a conversation with me privately. She said that she trusted me to be there to support her and her students. As much as that it is a nice thing to hear, it marks a shift. She attributed a conversation during a staff meeting for setting the stage for the strong feelings of trust. During the staff meeting a teacher asked, “When is it appropriate to send a child to the office? I have always wondered and have been afraid of being criticized for being a weak teacher if I send a child to the office.” My answer was, “When you are not self-regulated and you need my support. I am here for you and the children.” I believe most teachers know all of the strategies for working with children that I know; I can at times be more effective because I have not experienced the dis-regulating experience that brought them to my office. I am calm and able to support them constructively through it. The shift for the teacher was in acknowledging the need for teachers to practice self-care when working in relationships. It acknowledges the role of the adult as central for modeling the strategies, for identifying what is going on inside of me, has an impact on my relationships and you.

Being conscious and accountable for our own internal subjective state enables us to work in relation more effectively. As one person said so clearly:

In the past, there were many instances that I was upset or frustrated, which made helping a student to learn or do something way more challenging, as I was not in the right state of mind. Now, I know that once I am conscious of this fact, redirecting students and helping getting to a state that learning can happen is way easier.

(Thoughtstream Survey Response, 2013)

Another respondent highlights the concept of practice, which reconnects to our learning journey metaphor:

The leadership at our school has set a positive, caring, accepting atmosphere. I personally feel and can see that at this school we are able to set good examples and be openly praised for that, but we are equally free to seek help on days when perhaps we are not at our level best—and it is this in particular that actually helps students and adults be more self-aware, because you have so many opportunities to practice.

(Thoughtstream Survey Response, 2013)
The above responses make visible a shift in the way the two respondents approached their work with children. Their shift had impacted their way of being with their students, which represents new strategies as well as a sense of identity.

This shift was also represented in the parents’ stories. One parent shared:

The other day my son came home upset. I immediately went to the logical solutions, he had to suck it up and I would follow up. I left the discussion and then started wishing that I handled the situation in the way the book told us- to meet the child emotionally rather than going to the logical. So I went back and asked if we could start again. This time I met his need emotionally. I actually allowed him to express himself and that is what he needed. So we actually solved the problem in a long term way rather than fixing it temporarily by ending the discussion. I realize that I did not respond correctly initially and that I could go back and start over and still am effective.  
(Parent Story, February 2013)

This shift exemplifies what Siegel (2012a) describes as a “being” versus “doing” with your child. He explains that, “being with someone else’s intersubjective experience” is more important than solving their problems. He says that teachers and parents are so busy doing we are missing the opportunity of being with our children.

5.4.2. Engagement through Events

Dialogic OD approaches will not attempt to diagnose systems so much as attempt to create events and containers where organizational members can increase their awareness of the variety of experiences in the system and how social reality is being co-constructed in their system with the purpose of creating alignment and support for change.

(Bushe & Marshak, 2009, p. 364)

Engaging students in designing and implementing events in the school as a way of engaging in the new learning came from an intentional place on my part. In my experience schools tend to be tradition-driven institutions with pre-set calendars and established routines, traditions and celebrations. Many of the things we do within the school year are done because we have always done it and they are done in a specific way. In my view what we choose to celebrate and acknowledge tells a great deal about our culture. By empowering the children to dream and envision events and traditions we
were opening our culture up to change and the emergence of new possibilities. Bakhtin’s notion of the carnivalesque opened my thinking to include the children in dreaming and designing our experiences to share and engage with the community (as cited in Sheilds, 2007).

According to Bakhtin (1984a), by experiencing new ways of being, people see alternatives and new possibilities. Bakhtin states:

Carnival is the place for working out, in a concretely sensuous, half-real and half-play acted form, a new mode of interrelationship between individuals, counter posed to the all-powerful socio-hierarchical relationships of non-carnival life. (p. 123)

One person noted, “The displays were so powerful; to see their stories of respect, kindness, and helpfulness among the students and staff as well. It really gave me to appreciate their thoughts and how they were acting to help others.” (Thoughtstream Survey Response, 2012). The students found the events provided opportunities for leadership and learning beyond the event itself. I have summarized and combined many of their responses and reflections below:

The events brought us all together because a bunch of kids had to come together to create an idea, we had to make that idea happen, and we had to put on a big show. Everybody connected with other people and people made new friends. You do not need a lot to connect. If you are a really shy person you do not have to have a huge conversation with somebody, you can just connect by at least saying one simple word like, hi or just waving. We connect using body language. (Fusion of Student Dialogue Circle Responses, 2013)

One response in particular demonstrated the link between student-led events and the development of self-regulation skills:

We gained trust in each other and how not to always look at the teacher but to look at each other. We learned to be in charge of our self and how we can really help the world. (Student Reflection, 2013)

Another intentional shift in the types of events we designed involved participation and engagement. Traditionally our events and celebrations involved the school putting
on a show for the parents. The events we planned were participatory in nature. Instead of performing for our parents and community we were sharing and engaging our community.

In carnivalesque moments in a school, the student, teacher, and administrator come together to enjoy a temporary suspension of the rules and routine and to work together to build the best possible sand castle or ice sculpture or so forth... Because their academic histories, their family backgrounds, or their reputations are irrelevant in the suspended world of carnival, new relationships may be formed in what Bakhtin calls “the living present” (1984a, p. 108). (Shields, 2007, p. 105)

Implicit in this design are the notions of learning as a journey and the use of documentation to make our learning visible. Within:

Bakhtin’s concept implies the need to build on all of life’s experiences and realities and to permit them to become fodder for conversation and exploration in a classroom. (p. 108)

If we present and perform our finished product it celebrates the end of a learning journey; we were working towards documenting everyday moments along the narrative of a learning journey. Each participatory event, engaged our community to share in our learning, and marked our narrative with interesting places and concrete experiences upon which to reflect and inspire our next new idea. I do not believe this is what Bushe and Marshak (2009) envisioned when they wrote:

Instead of facilitating project groups doing data collection and diagnosis, dialogic interventions are more choreographed events that create a “container” or enabling conditions within which stakeholders can share their views of social reality and seek common agreements in real time. (p. 356)

But I see that our participatory events gave us a concrete experience from which to reflect, dream, and design our next possibility.

5.4.3. The Being of the Leader

“Containers are co-constructed through the being of the leader in relation to the group” (Bushe, 2012, p. 7). In the first cycle of inquiry I found myself relying on my
intuition and found the challenge was to remain purposeful while working in the realm of creating. I also experienced some disorienting vulnerability that I had to learn to embrace as I intentionally set myself up as a co-learner and not as an expert.

In this second cycle of inquiry vulnerability and authenticity challenged me even more. My own ability to be accountable for my own inner experiences was taxed as the emergent process became more complex. As the emergent process became more complex, I was struggling to stay oriented in the purpose of the research, it became harder to clarify in my own mind, why I was doing what I was doing. I kept challenging myself to connect the intuitive with the concrete. I realized just how much I rely on my intuition. Many rich experiences were happening and it became challenging to understand what made those experiences or stories significant or valuable to the learning journey. Writing memos helped me connect the experiential with the theoretical.

It was in this cycle of inquiry I was able to launch my blog. The act of making my thinking and ideas public was terrifying for me. The keystroke that made my blog public resulted in extremely intense feelings of vulnerability.

The facilitator’s ability to get curious and be open to new possibilities when she feels her own emotions and reactivity being hooked is central to this distinction between containment and control. It is that ability to notice at that moment, when she wants to argue with, or persuade, or ignore someone who is not making sense that she is trying to change the other person’s experience before she really understands it. She has to be able to notice that her curiosity has gone out the window, to park her reactivity, and to re-engage her curiosity, or else she is being controlling and the container becomes too rigid and impermeable.” (Bushe, 2013, p. 14)

I reflect on the intense feelings of vulnerability with making my thinking public and see it as a loss of control. I was comfortable with much of the emergent process because it was co-created, yet I owned my thinking in relation to this blog. I lost my curiosity for my own ideas. This perceived high-risk experience made me accountable for my own ideas and I felt exposed.

Two weeks before The Hearts and Minds Art Show, my father died suddenly. I got the call as I was preparing the canvas for the staff art piece that was going to be
auctioned for a child with cancer who had attended our school. My office was filled with bins of almost finished pieces, and the prepared materials for works still to be done. I spoke to my staff, closed the door, and walked away.

This marked a loss of control of my life, my family, and my research. Since I had been reading so much about emotional strategies and healthy attachment, I knew “staying present with what is” (Siegel, 2011) was the most important thing I could do for myself and all of the people I love. I had to experience my own big emotions and trust that they would pass. I became very aware of my own lack of a cohesive narrative in my family as I listened to many descriptions, variations, and exclusions of details of our lives.

While I was away from school, I was receiving emails from parents and teachers explaining how difficult a time they were having with my class. This group of caring, thoughtful leaders were turning against each other instead of toward each other. I felt that all of the work we had been doing in regards to self-awareness and relationship building was not internalized. It only happened when I was there to make it happen.

Amidst the funeral preparations, I decided to go visit my students and find out how they were doing and to try to make sense of their behaviours. When I walked into the room they became silent, a little afraid to look at me. I realized they may or may not know why I was away so I asked them, “Do you know why I have been away?” Some knew and some did not. One boy finally said, “I am sorry.” I spoke to them openly about my fathers’ death. I told them that I got to see him and that he looked peaceful and that made me feel better. One boy said, “he is in a better place. My grandmother had cancer bugs in her head and when she died the doctor said she was in a better place because she did not hurt anymore. That is where your dad is Mrs. McComb.” Another boy said, “I know where that place is, it is heaven. And yes it is better.” The moments I spent with them were so heartfelt and sincere, I experienced “feeling felt,” which is what Siegel (2012b) describes as “attunement.” I was able to say good-bye to them knowing they were just fine and trusting that whatever came next would be fine too.

When I returned to work just a day or two away from the Hearts and Minds Art Show, I had to ask my family to help set it up. I entered my office to find it filled with
hearts. Hearts made out beads, play dough, plastic, rocks, paper, and even a cucumber slice. The bins of incomplete projects were complete; parents, teachers, and students took it upon themselves to finish all that we had started.

I tell this story because it signals the moment when a disrupting experience changed the locus of control and empowered the community. Real or imagined, I was like a conductor and with this experience a different type of community ownership was experienced that shifted our relation to one another.
Chapter 6.

Phase 3 Inquiry: Connecting to the World and the Environment

As was described in the methodology, this co-operative inquiry spanned over three cycles of inquiry. Each cycle consisted of grounding in the propositional or practical knowledge from research, engaging in the new learning through events and strategies, going deeper into our learning through documentation and finally reflecting on our learning by linking it back to the research. Chapter 6 narrates the third inquiry cycle in which we focused on our connections to the world and nature.

The new research continued to be introduced to teachers during the research snippets during staff meetings, and to parents through the book club format. The students designed the dialogue circle in order to plan and prepare for their involvement in bringing their learning beyond our community. They shared their learning journey at the Simon Fraser University Conference; as well as they designed a dialogue reflection of their learning journey to be shared with experts in innovation, social emotional learning, early learning, and learning support. As well the students planned a symbolic gift to nature and a charity event in their desire to reach out to the world and nature.

Daniel Siegel’s notion of integration stood at the forefront of the organization of the cycles of inquiry. Integration is defined, by Siegel (2011) in his video clip called, The Human Mind and the Cultivation of Well-Being, as the harmony that is created by the “honoring of differences and the promotion of linkages within a system like a school or classroom, a family, a relationship or within an individual’s mind.” He maintains that “integration is made visible through kindness to self, others, our communities, and environments.” Thus the names of the three cycles of inquiry: connecting to self, connecting to each other and connecting to the world and our environment.
In his video, Siegel (2011) reviews the nine functions of the prefrontal cortex that represent the integrative physical aspect to the brain. The nine functions include: body regulation, attuned communication, emotional balance, response flexibility, fear modulation, insight, empathy, morality, and intuition. Within the new research and content, most of these nine functions will be explored either through strategies or, in the instance of intuition, it may be woven into the honouring aspects of the discursive nature of our coming together. Central to the three cycles of inquiry are insight, empathy, and morality. Connecting to self involves insight, asking questions about, “who I am now, how was I before, and who do I want to become?.” Connection to each other involves empathy, asking questions that support knowing who I am, helps me understand that you are also a person with an internal world and subjective experience. Connecting to the world and nature involves morality and the understanding that “you are part of a larger whole.”

The strategies that have been selected from Siegel and Bryson’s (2011a) book, *The Whole Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child’s Developing Mind*, supported our work in suggesting actions that can improve our ability to foster relationships, reflect, and develop resilience. In the first cycle of inquiry, strategies and events were selected to support integration within the brain and insight. In the second cycle of inquiry, strategies and events were selected to support the creation and maintenance of relationships and empathy. In the third cycle of inquiry, strategies and events were selected to reach out beyond our school to the world and nature and moral judgment.

### 6.1. Propositional/Practical Knowledge (Theory, Research)

During the third phase of inquiry, we planned events to share our connection with our community, our environment and beyond to charities. Siegel (2011) describes morality as “the map of we; knowing you are part of a larger whole.” This function of the prefrontal cortex involves social and moral reasoning and moral enactment.
6.1.1. Building Advanced Thinking

Earlier in Chapter 4 we discussed Siegel and Bryson’s metaphor for regulation as the River of Well-Being which was described as not being too rigid or too chaotic, being just right in your relationship to the world. Greenspan and Greenspan (2010) link this to advanced thinking, “If children—and adults too—respond to a feeling by becoming all-or-nothing thinkers, they can’t think through other reasons for the situation and can’t analyze the whole spectrum” (p. 60). All-or-nothing responses close the opportunity for adaption. If children become all-or-nothing thinkers they have limited ability to change the situation.

6.1.2. Multi-causal Thinking

Earlier in Chapter 4 we discussed the importance of children becoming familiar with the range of emotions they are feeling. We also discussed in Chapter 5 the importance of working in the Buddy Project and how it made visible the emotions of others. Greenspan and Greenspan (2010) relate this to multi-causal thinking, “if a child understands the variety of her own feelings, she begins to appreciate those of others and to put her own feelings in perspective” (p. 61). By understanding the degree and power of emotions and the variety of situations that can cause people to experience big emotions, the child is, “becoming a subtler thinker who sees nuances and complexities in relationships, ideas, and people. Understanding degrees of difference helps that earlier thinking level give way to reason, debate, negotiation, and compromise” (p. 65).

6.1.3. Reflective Thinking

Greenspan and Greenspan (2010) define reflective thinking as, “your ability to think about yourself and judge yourself and your own performance” (p. 69). This high level skill is challenging to master yet is a critical ability because it becomes your way of learning from experiences. The students and adults throughout this research were being asked to reflect on their learning and to judge themselves and their performance against a backdrop of their defined personal vision. Greenspan and Greenspan (2010), say reflective thinking, “is essential for all relationships as well as advanced academic activities” (p. 69).
6.1.4. The Me–We Connection

Integration can happen within a brain, where different parts of the brain are integrated by neural connections. Through attuned relationships and secure attachments we experience connection. These relationships and connections have an impact on our inner world. Siegel and Bryson (2011a) discuss the social brain as, “hardwired to take in signals from the social environment, which in turn influence a person’s inner world. In other words, what happens between brains has a great deal to do with what happens within each individual brain” (p. 122). Our brains are in a sense socially constructed by our interactions with others. Many research studies have shown increased well-being when a person feels like they belong. As well, “a key factor in well-being is devoting one’s attention and passions to the benefit of others instead of just focusing on the individual, separate concerns of a private self” (p. 122).

6.1.5. Positivity

To summarize Dr. Barbara Fredrickson’s (2009) video clip positive emotions like love, joy, gratitude, interest and hope are heartfelt emotions that change our mindsets and our biochemistry. She describes a positivity ratio as the tipping point to move from languishing in the negative to flourishing in the positive. Fredrickson promotes being open, curious, kind and real as a way of expanding our positive emotions. Openness can expand our awareness to the goodness that surrounds us. She explains that it is important to question some of our negative mental habits that keep us rigid and blind to the good things. Positivity helps us celebrate our common humanity and oneness so we start to think in terms of a “we” instead of a “me.” She suggests becoming mindful our emotions so we can discover what makes us come alive so we can do more of the things that bring us joy.

6.2. Engagement (Events and Strategies)

To share our learning beyond our school the students created a workshop presentation they took to Simon Fraser University. They also wanted to do some charity work to give back, so we participated in a Young Entrepreneur Fair. They also
organized and Earth Day celebration that honoured nature. To conclude our learning journey, they participated in Reflective Dialogue Circle that was witnessed by experts. The staff continued to engage in new learning during the staff meetings using research snippets, reflections and sharing. The parents continued with their book club and participated in school events. Documentation was used to make the learning journey from self, to relationships, to building a “we”-centered mindset toward wise action.

6.2.1. The Simon Fraser Conference

SFU put out a call for presenters for the 2013 Engaging Learners Conference. The theme of the conference was, “It takes a village to raise a child.” I saw this conference as a nice fit for my research. In my deliberations about what aspects of our learning journey were important to share, I reached out to my students for their reflections and ideas. As they sat at the carpet brainstorming ideas and visions, I asked if they wanted to do it with me. The class was thrilled and the brainstorming had a different sense of purpose. We took the theme, “It takes a village to raise a child,” and brainstormed, “what does that mean?” As the students were brainstorming and talking, I was listening and taking notes. At the end of our first session we had concluded that it is all about connection. So we called our presentation, “Connected.” We agreed that we would do a fishbowl strategy followed by an example of our buddy work and create an installation with meaning, and we would end with a reflection including the audience. From that I wrote the proposal, and we also agreed that the students had to authentically come up with ideas and we needed a process to come to a conclusion about our messages. We decided that the dialogue circle was our best way of shaping our ideas in a generative way. We also identified the need to create some guidelines for our participation in the circle as well as we needed practice participating in this way. We acknowledged the need to individually become good at dialogic action. If the students were going to be presenting, they understood that they needed to self-regulate versus have me orchestrate the dialogue. My job or task was to listen deeply while they were in process and bring the themes I heard in circle and the themes I read in their personal reflections together to be brought back as a catalyst for the next circle. This is the process we used to create their conceptual framework.
We clearly defined and created our dialogue circle process for creating our ideas for the conference. Everyone must be in the circle and able to be seen. I was outside of the circle and discussions were to be aimed at each other, not me. I was only the listener. When a person put an idea into the circle, others would engage with it at least five times so we could build on ideas, after five rounds the person who started the idea would make a summarizing statement. We decided when someone took us away from deepening our learning through humour, or disruptive behaviour, we would acknowledge them with body language (the joke may be funny). We wanted people to be acknowledged and we also wanted to keep our learning on track, so we would acknowledge and return to the idea. We also had to revisit our temperaments, and decided to stay aware of body language because it is not as natural for some people to speak up. Each dialogue circle was completed with a time to personally reflect, research ideas, and document the things that stood out for each person. I read their reflections, looked for themes, and brought the themes back at the start of the next dialogue circle.

After several dialogue circles and reflections, our brainstorming needed to be consolidated into an actual presentable idea, or a conceptual framework. Brainstorming came easily, but creating a framework for our understandings that could be shared proved to be a difficult task. The work had to belong to the students, so I could not just step in and organize it all because they had to have the ownership. We decided to do a reflection and then have time to clean desks, draw, read, and do puzzles or Lego. All of a sudden, one of the students jumped up and exclaimed that he had it. He started talking a mile-a-minute and we were having a hard time understanding what he was meaning. I asked him to sit down and draw it out like a map so that we could engage in his vision. He started on paper and then replaced it with the whiteboard because he could get it down faster. As he drew his framework and labeled it, the class was able to add in the details and understanding that he was bringing to the work. He started by saying, “I see a butterfly at the center.” I asked him at the end, why a butterfly? He said, he did not know, it was just there. We went and searched, ‘butterfly symbolism’ and what came up was truly synchronicity. The students say I yelled, and they came rushing up to read what I had found.
We put in our proposal and had it accepted. It took some organization to make room for a class of presenters, but it was accommodated by the conference organizers. The parents were in support of our adventure.

6.2.2. Building the Nature Spiral

As part of our brainstorming for the conference, we researched the symbolism of a spiral and the Fibonacci sequence as part of our search for motifs that symbolized connection. The Fibonacci, or spirals in nature, intrigued the children. I found a book called, *Swirl by Swirl: Spirals in Nature* by Joyce Sidman (2011). The spiral was used in both the conference framework as representing our continued growth and it was used in our Earth Day celebration as a gift to nature. The students used the book with every class. They read it and then went out into the woods to find spirals in nature. Each child then painted a rock and drew their nature spiral on the rock. On Earth Day, we had several students present their writing and some singing outside. While the choir was singing, butterflies flew between several of the students who had been part the conference organization. Their eyes grew with amazement. Every child, and every adult, and every person who came for the assembly, silently built a labyrinth-sized spiral on the field and then we all walked it in honour of the Earth. The boy who gifted us the idea of the butterfly spiral led us; he walked hand in hand with his mother.

We moved the spiral off to the corner of the field by the woods. Students walk it, some run it, some mend it, and some like to study the art on each stone. Our class walked it silently as part of our connection to ourselves, after we have walked silently through the woods.

6.2.3. Young Entrepreneurs for Charity

We were also trying to make a connection to the world, moving from a “me” to “we” thinking. These are students who engage in conversations at meal times and are aware of different charities and are well aware of child activists in the world making a difference. Some of these students aspire to that ideal. Many of the students wanted to raise money to give to a charity and there were several different causes suggested.
Instead of trying to select just one or two, we decided to do a young entrepreneurs’ fair. Essentially, the other intermediate teacher and I contacted a company that helped us with the educational materials for students creating their own small businesses. We got the support of the parents and began teaching the lessons on products, marketing, money, loans, and displays and eventually we had a Farmers’ Market to sell our products. The students had advertised, produced, priced and set up their displays. The community came out to support us and most students sold out of their products. The students then took a portion or all of their earnings and gave it to a charity of choice. This way every student was able to take an idea from beginning to end and give to a charity that they valued.

6.2.4. The Dialogue Circle for Reflection

To bring closure to the year and the research we decided to do a fishbowl dialogue circle. Originally, I had planned a world café, but felt the students needed to reflect on their personal learning journeys. As well, they had developed the relational skills necessary to participate in reflective thinking and a dialogue circle. We invited experts in social emotional learning, resiliency, innovation, and learning to observe the student dialogue circle as they reflected on their individual and collective learning journey. The experts then listened for themes, connections to their area of study or knowledge, and then described the aspects of our learning journey they found significant.

6.3. Going Deeper (Artifacts and Documentation)

Creswell (1994) describes qualitative analysis as collecting information from the field, sorting the information into categories, formatting the information into a story or picture, and actually writing the qualitative text (p. 153).

Throughout the research cycles, the act of documenting and linking ordinary moments to theory through what Piantanida and Garman (2009) refer to as thinking pieces, “a semiformal document that is more structured and public than an entry in a personal or professional journal, yet less polished than a formal paper” (p. 19). In
grounded theory, Birks and Mills (2011) referred to memoing as, “a series of snapshots that chronicle your study experience and the internal dialogue that is essential when conducting any research, particularly that with an interpretive component” (p. 41). Memoing became the most significant activity for me as a researcher because, “embryonic ideas can be explored and new insights gained through the contribution of all those involved in a study.” The process I refer to as pedagogical documentation in essence became memoing which was shared publicly in newsletters and on my blog. This method proceeded throughout the research.

In the initial stages of coding of data sources like: reflections, field notes and documentation, it was a reflexive activity of ongoing analysis and was represented in the memos. I used the same initial coding with the Thoughtstream Survey and Dialogue Circle. I read the transcripts line by line or sometimes chunk by chunk and noted what I thought were being represented. I then compiled these ideas into categories and wrote a reflection.

In the intermediate stages of coding, I began to look for connections between the different data sources. I looked for emerging categories and sub categories. I looked for relationships between categories and began working towards a conceptual framework. I also brought the Thoughtstream Survey coding back to the staff for feedback. With the dialogue circle, I compared my coding with the expert coding and student reflections.

Documentation is further described in the Early Learning Framework as:

Observing and interpreting what children do and why they do it probes the connection between thinking and questioning, and shows or makes visible the way children are making meaning of their learning or of their interaction with the world. As one interprets and analyzes an ordinary moment/observation, intriguing questions and insight can be gained without requiring absolute certainty about the particular situation or occurrence. Documenting can range from jotting a few notes, to taking pictures, to capturing a moment on videotape (BC Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 12)

Documentation was the main strategy used throughout the inquiry process to make meaning and generate thoughtful reflection. In my field notes, I recorded ordinary moments where I saw a link to theory, or a link to our learning about self-regulation and
integration. I shared those moments back to our community through pictures, narratives being thoughtful about making the direct links the research. This section includes the initial stages of coding data sources like: reflections, field notes, and documentation. This was a reflexive activity of ongoing analysis and was represented in the memos. I used the same initial coding with the Thoughtstream Survey.

6.3.1. Thoughtstream Survey Question 4: Learning

In response to the question, “What have you learned?” we found that self-regulation is complex, it can help us shape our environments, it is a topic with meaning for everyone, and we have only just begun on our learning journey. The complexity of the topic is applying it practically with individual children. Each child is unique and they respond to different strategies. As well, there are different states of arousal, some students need to be up-regulated, some down-regulated, to engage them in a calm, focused and alert state and ready for learning.

When we look at how learning about self-regulation and integration has helped shape our environment there are references to classroom based activities and school wide activities. One respondent said:

When there have been school wide projects that include a variety of learning opportunities that include expressive, share participation, creative, sensory and hands on access students and adults alike have an easier time being aware and in control of themselves.

(Thoughtstream Survey Response, 2013)

Another said:

I used photos and self-charting during work times. I also taught the children how to help one another when stuck during journal time. Many of the children are able to manage themselves and one another with this system. I now can concentrate on helping students who really need adult assistance.

(Thoughtstream Survey Response, 2013)
There are references to how learning the brain science has helped inform teachers in shaping their classroom environments as well as a focus on autonomy and empowerment.

When the staff responded to the themed responses on this question of learning, they had the desire to narrow in on some central themes to make the topic more manageable. This helped shaped our learning goals for our next year’s growth plan. There also is a desire to continue to educate parents, and other staff about what a brain responsive classroom can look like it. It may be a different picture than what we have traditionally held as a positive image of a classroom.

As the principal, when I look at the responses to this question of learning, I agree self-regulation is complex and we are at the beginning of our learning journey. I hesitate at narrowing our focus too closely as this does not necessarily keep people in a generative state of operationalizing the ideas in their own practice. I would like to see their learning empower them into autonomous and educated action and worry that if we focus too narrowly we will lose the inquiring spirit and try to create a formula. I have seen formula driven responses divide people as for or against. Whereas when you have come to know something through learning and you decide how you want to put that into practice with your group of students and knowledge of your own temperament, I believe you are accountable to yourself for your actions and therefore more apt to follow through on your own belief system.

6.3.2. **Thoughtstream Survey Question 5: Changes**

In response to the question, “What changes you have noticed in yourself or in the school community?” the thoughts included changes to ourselves, our children, our school community and to learning.

In talking about changes to ourselves, people were describing gentler more open ways of being. They talked of having less stress, being more open and appreciative, understanding they also need to be at a just-right level for engaging children in learning. This awareness of self is key to understanding the adult role in the learning relationship.
of self-regulation. It is within these relationships that students learn to self-regulate.

One respondent said they are approaching discipline in a different way:

I have noticed a change in the way I handle different situations with students when they are either upset or acting inappropriately. Instead of a ‘top-down’ approach to discipline, in which I am tough on students for acting inappropriately, I have tried to adopt a more conversational approach with students. I try to get both sides of a disagreement or argument and we try, as a team, to come to a beneficial solution for all parties involved. We try to identify our feelings, and why we feel that way, and decide on appropriate responses. This opens communication with students and it seems to build a more positive relationship between myself and any students involved.

(Thoughtstream Survey Response, 2013)

Another respondent said being aware of one’s own emotions helps in working with students:

In the past, there were many instances that I was upset or frustrated, which made helping a student to learn or do something way more challenging, as I was not in the right state of mind. Now, I know that once I am conscious of this fact, redirecting students and helping getting to a state that learning can happen is way easier.

(Thoughtstream Survey Response, 2013)

And another respondent talked about the more settled environment giving the gift of time:

Now that my students are much better about regulating themselves, I now have more time to be a thoughtful observer. I find this interesting and much less stressful than being the one directing all of the action on my own. I’ve never liked the nagging aspect of teaching and now I have to do much less.

(Thoughtstream Survey Response, 2013)

The students are described as more self-aware and more confident. We have seen older students and younger students relationships nurtured. This creates a more peaceful playground including the soccer field. We are seeing students start to understand their limits and their impact. The students are confident in their ability to solve problems and try new learning.
When the teachers responded to the Thoughtstream Survey responses, they noted that it is important to have the principal involved in supervision out on the playground:

The principal on the field, supervising in the morning, noon, and after school, has made a world of difference. She knows the kids in and out can coach with problem solving.

(Teacher Reflection of Thoughtstream Survey Responses, 2013)

I agree a key idea is the principal is on duty outside as much as possible. I rarely miss the opportunity because, I know the children. I want to know the children. I want us to solve problems together on the spot. I want to coach them through their difficulties and not leave them on their own. This co-regulation for some students coaches the in forging friendships, navigating a playground game, or managing worries and anxieties. It also creates consistency: a consistent set of expectations, a consistent approach to problem solving and place to go when things are not working for you.

At the heart of why supervision is important is the relationship. I greet almost every child by name every morning. I get to hear their worries, their joys, their hopes, their fears, and know whether or not they will need some extra attention that day or just a check in. More importantly, I model the relational language I hope to hear from others with a mindset that does expect perfection and makes the most of the everyday moments to coach children through their challenges.

One respondent made a reference to the importance of modeling and leadership in building a connected community:

The leadership at our school has set a positive, caring, accepting atmosphere. I personally feel and can see that at this school we are able to set good examples and be openly praised for that, but we are equally free to seek help on days when perhaps we are not at our level best—and it is this in particular that actually helps students and adults alike be more self-aware, because you have so many opportunities to practice.  

(Thoughtstream Survey Response, 2013)
6.3.3. **Student Concept Framework for Conference**

Our Connected conference framework is illustrated in Figure 6.1 along with the installation images (Figure 6.2).

**Figure 6.1. Connected: Conference Framework**

![Connected: Conference Framework](image)

**Figure 6.2. Connected: Installation**

![Connected: Installation](image)
It was a real blessing to be able to participate in this process. Not only was I amazed at Andrea’s presence with this group of kids in a very unfamiliar environment, I was profoundly impacted by the student leaders and how they led us adults through a series of brainstorming and sharing. It was also a wonderful rekindling of the joy of uninhibited learning. I was invited into this process by the students and was also amazed to see how easily they accessed their feelings and reactions within the dialogue circle.

(Conference Participant Blog Response, 2013)

We need more of this type of intergenerational work that engages creativity within our education system.

(Conference Participant Blog Response, 2013)

I had the opportunity to be part of this conference presentation. WOW, the obvious deep thought and understanding displayed by the students was inspiring. These are complex ideas and models that each student truly was connected to and able to articulate. Moving outside the classroom was an excellent idea as we all know that teaching to someone engages the teacher as well as learner in new understandings. Well done and thank you.

(Conference Participant Blog Response, 2013)

I write as an elder, invited to bear witness to a student-led presentation and dialogue on ‘Connection’ within the context of the notion that ‘It takes a village to raise a child.’ This event was part of the Learning together: Engaging the World Conference held in the architectural masterpiece of Simon Fraser University’s Surrey Campus. The children, 9- and 10-year-olds from a small elementary school in Coquitlam, quickly assumed the mantle of seriousness appropriate to this place of higher learning as they sat in a circle within a circle of educators, faculty members and parents.

The children had come to showcase their collective discoveries of the concept of connection. The adults attending this session, could not have known in advance, that the children would engage them in deep thought and involve them in a hands-on process of learning together that the meaning of connection, for the children took the form of a spiral structure of relationships; of “crazy” ideas and scientific theory, of divergent thoughts and the unity of ‘being-with’ one another and the world. All this having grown out of their quest for connection between their academic discoveries and an epiphany, “a sudden intuitive leap of understanding,” shared by the ‘dreamer’ in the class.

The freshness of wisdom articulated by the children astonished, thrilled and in some moments, even frightened some of the adults. Questions such as, “How can I learn to catch up and keep up with your learning?” “How do such young minds grasp these sophisticated concepts?” “Where might we grow from here?” While the children had been concerned with questions such as, “How are we to be with each
other if we are to make a better world?” As I listened, I found myself wondering, “What does it mean to raise a child?”

Ultimately, a realization of Martin Buber’s teaching, “I become through my relation with you,” (1984,19-20) settled in the back of my mind as a response and prompted the questions, “How are we to be the village that honours, nurtures and preserves this way of seeing the child, this way of ‘being-with’ whilst getting out of the way of the child’s thoughts they touch upon what is known, what is yet to be discovered and what is intuited by the dreamers.”

(Conference Participant Blog Response, 2013)

6.3.4. Earth Day Spiral

I took notes while the students reflected on their event. As well two samples of student Earth Day writing are included in Figure 6.3.

The spiral was our way of inviting in outsiders. The spiral includes everyone. It was quiet and peaceful as we walked through it. People are still walking through it and it will last a long time. All of our stones were original, like our genius, but in the spiral we are all connected and united. Everyone contributed. We each had a say and a way to express ourselves. Everything tied into each other. It was such a big event.

(Principal’s Field Notes, 2013)
6.3.5. Young Entrepreneurs

Figure 6.4 shows a few farmers’ market stands that were part of our Young Entrepreneurs project.
All of our Grades 4 and 5 students created a small business plan. They created, advertised, and sold their products. As we were setting up for our big day, one student felt exhausted by the hard work after setting up her booth. Once they began to sell their items and interact with younger students, teachers and community, they were filled with excitement and enthusiasm. Many of the younger children learned as well how to spend their money. The teachers were amazed and proud. The parents were very supportive of the whole program and welcomed the real-life lessons their children encountered as a result of this process.

6.3.6. The Learning Journey Dialogue Reflection

Instead of sharing a reflection at the end of the dialogue circle, I have chosen to include the students preliminary planning. The transcript of the dialogue circle is in Appendix F and the expert responses to the dialogue circle are shared in Appendix G. Below is the brainstorming on a whiteboard after students had a chance to think individually about their learning journey. We were trying to decide what was important to share with others. Part of the student process for planning is included in Figure 6.5.
While the discussion was taking place, I was taking field notes.

What are the ways we are genius? Students shared stories of giving, perseverance, and connection.

What have we learned about connection? One child said, “Connection is a galaxy, it’s like asteroids hitting each other making new planets.”

We connect and have fun in a more silent way. We know when someone is ready to talk and we wait for them. The dialogue circle is a good learning experience to talk to each other not just to the teacher. It can be hard to get your ideas in when there are so many good ideas. Some people are not as confident and that can depend on your passion or the topic. We connect through body language, greetings, smiles, laughter, activity, listening and showing your emotions.
We have learned to self-regulate especially when we are in trouble. We now use self-talk like, "What will this get me in return? What do I expect of myself? What am I going to be like in the future? It helps to create a picture at the end when your start something. When you feel mad at someone you love to find a way to talk but not in a mean way. Share your feelings. If I want the relationship, I work hard at talking. If I don’t want the relationship I just give time. With you good friends you can solve problems.

Have you made a difference or an effect? I am nice to people. It has made a difference to my learning. I helped younger children and charity. I can set boundaries with people.

*(Principal’s Field Notes, 2013)*

### 6.4. Reflection (Summary Links to Research)

In the intermediate stages of coding, I began to look for connections between the different data sources. I looked for emerging categories and sub categories. In this section of the inquiry cycle, I am summarizing the categories that emerged from the selected documentation. These categories are then connected to theory or research to better understand and describe the phenomena.

In this cycle of the inquiry we were focusing on connecting to the world and nature. As the facilitator of the process I selected strategies and activities that would support complex thinking through symbolism, dialogue and creating community events. In this phase we focused on the shared experience and inviting people into our work and our understandings. While connection to the world and nature involves morality, we asked questions about our connections, our responsibility to one another, and our effect.

#### 6.4.1. Building Complex Thinking

Greenspan (1999) studied children who demonstrated strong self-awareness and reflective thinking skills and found that they had a capacity for moral judgment, could reason analytically, and did well in school and with friendships (p. 18). He found that these intellectual and social gifts rest on emotional building blocks. Children with the most reflective responses to questions about abstract qualities like fairness started off by
sharing a “lived emotional experience” and could place them in an analytic framework or context (Greenspan, 1999, pp. 18-22).

The events created a common story and the lived emotional experiences that the students could draw upon in this reflective stage. As we were in the final stages of the research my head was turning to the idea of significance. We did all of this learning and we participated in all of these events, now what significance does that have?

To explore significance we engaged in the dialogue circles for designing presentations and conceptual frameworks of our learning journeys. The dialogue circle became the process for developing our reflective thinking conceptually. The students would dialogue about a topic, I would take careful notes to find emerging themes, then they would go back and reflect on the circle in their journals. This often led to research or exploration. The use of symbols and metaphors became central to developing the ideas into meaningful maps.

Throughout the dialogue circle process, the students were practicing the higher level thinking skills.

School can be just as important a spot for creativity and imagination as home. Innovative thinking is the foundation of science, technology, and the arts, and we don't want a focus on rote learning and memorization to undermine this. Your child's ability for abstract thinking and problem-solving, and success as an adult in general, will depend more on creativity than on any other skill.

(Greenspan & Greenspan, 2010, p. 47)

Because our reflections were grounded in shared emotional experiences we had a commonality that connected us. One student’s process and thinking was profoundly unique. I share the story as a gift of our learning together. His contributions to the dialogue circle were often very high level and complex. He could integrate information and ideas verbally. Once we had explored the notion, “It takes a village to raise a child” to saturation, we decided we needed a framework for organizing our ideas. This was proving to be a very challenging task for us. We took a break from our thinking to give ourselves down time. This student very quickly had his epiphany moment. He tried to convey his ideas to us verbally and was speaking so fast we could not understand him.
He then tried to draw what he saw in his mind. That became the conference conceptual framework. What we learned from him was that he sees in pictures and the words come at a different rate and quality for him. The students honoured his process and could use their strengths to build his idea. He said, “It all starts with a butterfly and I don’t why.” We researched butterfly motifs and symbolism. The connection to our learning was profound in that it was essentially a symbol of transformation and the ripple effect.

Lake (2012) highlights the experiences of Temple Grandin, who describes words as her second language:

When I was a child and a teenager, I thought everybody thought in pictures. I had no idea that my thought processes were different. In fact, I did not realize the full extent of the differences until very recently. At meetings and at work I started asking other people detailed questions about how they accessed information from their memories. From their answers I learned that my visualization skills far exceeded those of most other people. (p. 72)

We saw our own unique thinking styles. This profound experience brought us feelings of pride. For the child who could connect our ideas so powerfully: he was so proud because, as he puts it, “I knew I would blow your mind.” He actually did. His ideas connected, elaborated, and symbolized the very meanings we were struggling to convey. The other students saw his ability, and they saw also how they could connect to make his framework more detailed.

6.4.2. Morality

Siegel (2011) defines morality as, “the map of knowing you are part of a larger whole.” He describes the secret to happiness as generosity. The more devoted you are to caring for others the happier you feel inside yourself. We actually become a larger people by focusing on another person. He attributes this generosity as giving your life meaning, a feeling of connection and sense of purpose.

In this final phase of inquiry we reached out through presenting and sharing our learning journey as well as through charity work. During the expert dialogue circle the significance of our sharing our learning was explored. One respondent said:
I believe that every time I listen to another’s’ learning story or am able to share some of mine, we both change. It may not always be in the way we thought but that is just as important, or more so than what was expected. (Expert Response to Dialogue Circle, 2013)

Another said:

By sharing this learning journey you have given voice to good ideas, given the ideas legitimacy, given an opportunity for voices that would otherwise be silent or obscured to be heard, and you have forged relations and connections among and between people and ideas. (Expert Response to Dialogue Circle, 2013)

When the students, parents, and I presented at the SFU conference, there was a very clear feeling of generosity. From the initial organization to the final drop off, the parents were supportive and generous with their time and trust. The students and I did not know what to expect but engaged with the wholehearted idea that we had something to contribute. This may not seem to be an act of generosity but the felt experience was a true act of contribution.

The more expected form of generosity was our Young Entrepreneur Fair where the students raised money through their own small business ventures to give to charity. The community came and supported us with open hearts and wallets. The students experienced a profound feeling of ability.

6.4.3. The Being of the Leader

In this final cycle of inquiry I had shifted significantly in what I would describe as my position to the work. I began this inquiry because the topic of self-regulation and integration came to the surface through collaborative work. The topic captured the interest of the entire community. I explored my vulnerability in the first cycle of inquiry because I positioned myself as a learner not an expert. As the journey began to take shape it became more complex when I experienced a disruptive event that shifted me from feeling like the conductor to a position of gratitude and acknowledgement of the strengths of others. This lead to a very creative and emergent final cycle of inquiry
where the students and I developed our own strategies and events with our own scaffolding based on knowledge of ourselves and each other.

Inviting, and trusting the students to take the lead in the creation of a conceptual framework and conference presentation were a different act of vulnerability. It required profound trust. As one respondent said:

Sometimes we (as educators) need to move out of the way and support students as the students lead their own learning. It seems that this is a courageous endeavor for both students and teachers and involves a phenomenal amount of trust and respect.

(Expert Response to Dialogue Circle, 2013)
Chapter 7.

Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to document a school’s journey in learning about self-regulation and integration. Research in the area of self-regulation has flourished due to the advances in neuroscience and translating that theory and knowledge into practical applications for parents and teachers is at the crux of this study. The knowledge existed in theoretical literature to support the importance of self-regulation and integration, yet the knowledge had not translated widely into practice in schools. The nature of the problem in this co-operative inquiry was to make the new knowledge in neuroscience accessible to our community, and to find ways of operationalizing our learning into action. Our documented journey once shared suggests a continued direction for learning as a community, and is a story that can be shared with other schools, who have chosen similar inquiry goals.

Essentially four audiences participated in the study, the students, the parents, the teachers, and the school principal. The students identified the need for learning about self-regulation during a yearly review of the school code of conduct in the spring of 2012. In this student group there were two children from every class ranging from kindergarten to Grade 5. The students identified the need to behave even when teachers and parents were not around because it would create a sense of safety for them within themselves and the school. They identified the desire to be part of the learning journey in both identifying the virtues to be taught and the process of meaning making with the rest of the school.

The study was designed as a co-operative inquiry with three cycles: the first connecting to self through insight, the second connecting to others through empathy, and finally connecting to the world and nature through moral reasoning. Within the three inquiry cycles in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, documentation is included in the
engagement process of going deeper into the experience. The memos are included in
the reflective aspect of each cycle of inquiry. In the advanced stages of coding, I used
the main categories from the integration of data sources to create the storyline for the
most significant aspects of our learning journey. Chapter 7 describes the main themes
that have emerged from this advanced analysis and are described in a conceptual
framework.

7.1. Conceptual Framework for Enduring Understandings

Students and teachers are not uniform raw materials or assembly line
workers, but a diverse collection of living, breathing human beings with
complex evolutionary histories, cultural backgrounds, and life stories.
Teachers are people whose job it is to engage, attach, and teach other
people in the real world. When you remove homogeneous products and
clear outcomes, you need teachers who can bring their humanity to work,
form secure attachments, and make decisions on an individual and
moment-to-moment basis. (Cozolino, 2013, p. xvii)

Creating an integrated learning community entails explicit and intentional
relationship building. To engage in learning about the relational aspects of our roles
thoughtful attention was given to how we craft a container for participation. We began
with awareness and we found the discovery of self and others entails seeing learning as
a journey and being open to “what is.” Discovering interdependence entails developing
relational strategies that both build identity and connections. Events became the lived
emotional experiences from which we built our metacognitive thinking and reflection.
Participating in attuned relationships leads to the discovery of wise action grounded in
the “we.”

7.1.1. Explicit and Intentional Relationship Building

If our goal is to be an integrated learning community that honours differences and
builds linkages, we need to explicitly and intentionally build relationships. Understanding
the dynamic developmental approach to a developing child’s mind stresses the
importance of relationships. This journey was designed to understand the role of
relationships in the development of a child’s ability to self-regulate and integrate. The
dynamic developmental approach positions us differently in our beliefs about education. Education develops the heart and the mind. Many of us have worked within a mechanistic, compliance driven framework. Many people are entering into the understanding self-regulation because they want to redress compliance in a new set of strategies. This dynamic developmental approach is uncovering many of our biases that linger from the behavioristic models of compliance.

It is a huge challenge to bring some of our implicit understandings to the surface and decide if they still are working for us or our students. Challenging ourselves to surface our thinking has been an act of trust building for the adults. Not everyone joined in the journey but for those that did they are questioning themselves more and now sitting on shifting ground toward altering their beliefs about how to engage children in their learning. For those that did not join the journey, my hope is that they have absorbed some of the new learning that may take hold another day.

What I have come to know through this journey working toward self-regulation and integration is a way being, a way opening to, a way of staying curious to what is, while noticing the child, and staying with a strong emphasis on care. I have come to honour myself in the same way because my non-anxious presence can trigger the mirror neurons in those around me, either signaling connection or not.

7.1.2. Crafting a Container of Self-Awareness

Crafting a container for participating fully in a discovery of self and others entails, seeing learning as a journey and being open to creativity and imagination. Beginning with the learner profiles helped bring out the language of traits, temperament, and preferences. The language of the learner profiles is neutral and descriptive. The students felt they could express their strengths and differences in a neutral way without judgment. By doing the learner profiles in the class setting they were able to see that everyone has similarities and differences as well as they had language to describe it that was neutral. It gave us a strong sense of “what is”.

From there the cooperative learning strategies allowed us to delve into perspective taking and comparative thinking. The four corners approach gave us the gift
of exploring one another’s perspective while maintaining our own. We charted how at times our ideas can change when we are given new or more information. This created openness to diverse thinking and other points of view.

I also think the boundaries we set for our reflections and dialogue circles were imperative at first. The boundaries were made explicit at first but became internalized and second nature as we gained experience. Bushe (2013) spoke about energy pooling at the boundaries. I became conscious of the boundaries we chose and found myself coaching students about how to navigate the boundaries.

The buddy project also gave them the opportunity to see traits and characteristics in the children they were working with and could think about what they could do support those children. This gave them incredible insight into themselves. Seeing and supporting somebody else through frustration gave them ideas on how to see and support themselves through frustrating times. In learning to coach others they changed the inner talk to themselves.

The adult learners were motivated to learn by wanting strategies to work with the students. Many of them confronted themselves first. Ideally we would all be self-reflective and self-aware about our being with each other and as parents and teachers we have a responsibility.

7.1.3. Relational Strategies

Discovering interdependence entails developing relational strategies that both build identity and connections. When I review the Buddy Project reflections I see that the students learned and reflected upon several strategies to bring themselves into relation with others. The most important strategy we used was closing the circles of communication. When we engaged with another person we tried to close the communication circle at least five times. We practiced this during our reflection times and dialogue circles. We brainstormed ways to engage people bringing into their awareness a variety of strategies to add to their repertoire. They added to the obvious list of greetings and body language with ideas like word play, finding similarities or giving a reaction that is unexpected. The students came to understand that they had to assess
where a child’s starting point was in regards to the task in order to help them be successful. Their greatest challenge was to allow the little buddies work through their challenges and not do it for them. We also used strategies like naming emotions, asking open-ended questions and providing open-ended tasks.

7.1.4. Wise Action

Participating in attuned relationships leads to the discovery of wise action grounded in the “we.” What stood out for me the most throughout this journey was the ability of my students. As they gained self-awareness and were able to use relational strategies, I saw their confidence bloom. They exhibited compassion and empathy. A new definition of leadership was emerging for them. They had seen leadership as roles and tasks, and were now defining it as being and creating. During the dialogue circle these are the words they used to describe leadership:

The reason we do leadership is to build trust with younger students and help them learn... It takes a lot of trust and responsibility... It gives us confidence to help other people... It helps us think in different ways... It helps us learn more than we already know... It is our input into the school so we can make it better.

(Fusion of Dialogue Circle, Student Responses, 2013)

This resulted in creative actions that can be witnessed by their journey into the use of symbolism, dialogic participation, and their everyday actions. My field notes are filled with ideas we did not do when we were brainstorming for the conference that were innovative and meaningful. Most of all I noticed a sense of self agency in the students. They thought about their skills and capacities in relation to challenges they knew they would encounter.

7.1.5. Social and Emotional Learning

The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has identified five core competencies:

- **Self-awareness**: The ability to accurately recognize one’s emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. This includes accurately assessing
one’s strengths and limitations and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.

- **Self-management**: The ability to regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward achieving personal and academic goals.

- **Social awareness**: The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

- **Relationship skills**: The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed.

- **Responsible decision making**: The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others.

  (CASEL, n.d., para. 1)

When I review the student dialogue transcript I see evidence that they have met these challenging competencies. In our quest to learn about self-regulation and integration we have essentially landed within this framework of understandings. CASEL (n.d.) describes how to foster social and emotional learning in schools and their list is evident in our strategies. They promote restorative discipline practices over a punitive approach. Cooperative learning is promoted over competitive or individualistic models. An emphasis is placed on developing emotional literacy in students. We are encouraged to have social and moral discussions to develop reasoning and to coach students in conflict resolution and social problem solving. All of this is done through the promotion of positive relationships.

Before we embarked on this learning journey, I had read a great deal and worked within the social and emotional learning framework. Greenspan and Greenspan’s (2010) learning tree model brought a new developmental dimension to the work, an added layer to better understand the child. Thinking about the needs of children as based in the way they experience and process sensory information helped me broaden my understanding of the dynamic of development. It is within the noticing the developmental profile and
sensory needs of each learner and nudging and stretching them in ways that expand their experience. In the final phase of the research, the nudging and stretching extended to higher level thinking. Working with students on grey area thinking, comparative thinking, perspective taking was essentially the most rewarding experience for us all. When we reached a stage where we could take respect, listening, and awareness as a given, we were open to creativity, synergy, and curiosity that brought with it a responsibility and an honour. This experience moved us beyond trust.

Holding another’s brain in your hands for the first time is the closest to a spiritual experience I have ever had. It makes you feel humble and mortal at the same time. (Hood, 2012, p. 5)

I was taken with this quote because Hood, expresses an honouring of humanity. As teachers, principals and parents we have the opportunity to craft the containers for attuned relationships that will foster and nurture the growth of our children’s developing minds.

7.2. Dialogic Organizational Development and Inquiry

“The dialogic change process works not by trying to change what they do, but by changing how they think so they can make different personal choices about what they do” (Bushe, 2012, p. 5). In the design of this co-operative inquiry I deliberated over the dialogic and diagnostic stance. Would it have been easier to spread the messages of self-regulation by identifying the need, measuring our abilities, implementing a program with common tools and common language and then measure our growth? It certainly from my position would have been more defined and clear cut in both design and energy. There are a few programs designed to improve executive functioning, mindfulness, and self-awareness and emotional literacy.

Is it better to have a school adopt a program and track progress or build the philosophical groundwork for self-selection of strategies and implementation? I worry when I see programs grounded in philosophical frameworks misinterpreted as a method for compliance. For instance, when is a dialogue circle generative and how do you ensure it does not cross the line to peer coercion?
I also believe that transformation involves identity reorganization, if I truly want to transform my practice I may need to shift my thinking, my mindset, or challenge my assumptions. I need to make the implicit explicit. Yet, many teachers do not participate in reflective practice even when we do it as a staff. Would they implement a program that in turn could give them the concrete experience of change to become reflective upon?

7.2.1. Vulnerability: The Being of the Leader

Yes, we are totally exposed when we are vulnerable. Yes, we are in the torture chamber that we call uncertainty. And, yes, we’re taking a huge emotional risk when we allow ourselves to be vulnerable. But there’s no equation where taking risks, braving uncertainty, and opening ourselves up to emotional exposure equals weakness. (Brown, 2012, p. 1)

Throughout the cycles of inquiry I was very aware of my own feelings of vulnerability. Brown (2012) defines vulnerability as, "uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure" (p. 3). Feelings of vulnerability took me by surprise as the design of the inquiry was similar to other things I had done before. In the first cycle of inquiry I identified the feelings of vulnerability with my position of not being an expert but a co-learner. I think the added dimension that this was my thesis research added a pass or fail ending to the process. In other inquiries we simply shared our story and experiences without judgment.

In the second cycle of inquiry the emergence of new ideas was becoming more complex and I was trying to stay grounded with the purpose of my research. It was in this cycle of inquiry my blog went public and I felt exposed.

To put our art, our writing, our photography, our ideas out into the world with no assurance of acceptance or appreciation—that’s also vulnerability. To let ourselves sink into the joyful moments of our lives even though we know that they are fleeting, even though the world tells us not to be too happy lest we invite disaster—that’s an intense form of vulnerability. (Brown, 2012, p. 34)

I experienced an emotionally disruptive event in my life. Here we were learning about how important it was to manage our own emotional states when working with
children and I was experiencing a traumatic dysregulating event. I experienced feelings deeper than I had known, along with navigating a complex family environment. It felt out of control.

I did believe that I could opt out of feeling vulnerable, so when it happened—when the phone rang with unimaginable news; or when I was scared; or when I loved so fiercely that rather than feeling gratitude and joy I could only prepare for loss—I controlled things. I managed situations and micro-managed the people around me. I performed until there was no energy left to feel. I made what was uncertain certain, no matter what the cost. I stayed so busy that the truth of my hurting and my fear could never catch up. I looked brave on the outside and felt scared on the inside. (Brown, 2012, pp. 42-43)

I am not completely comfortable with the above quote to describe my experience but it resonates as a point of continued reflection. It goes back to Siegel’s clarification of “being” versus “doing.” My father’s death came at a time when I was so busy and this call could not be escaped. I also had to reach out for support and be fine with the way support presented itself. I had to open to being more human than I would care to be in front of my students, teachers, and parents, who embraced connection authentically in the moment.

If we want to reclaim the essential emotional part of our lives and reignite our passion and purpose, we have to learn how to own and engage with our vulnerability and how to feel the emotions that come with it. (Brown, 2012, p. 5)

In the final phase of inquiry, vulnerability started to signal a very different response in me. As my class and I embarked on the conference preparations, my self-talk changed. I knew it was a risky idea, taking a class of Grades 4 and 5 students to an academic conference and trusting them with the organization and presentation; but what was the worst that could happen? The results of our presentation were not the primary focus; we would share a lived experience together that we could learn and reflect upon.

Sometimes we (as educators) need to move out of the way and support students as the students lead their own learning. It seems that this is a courageous endeavor for both students and teachers and involves a phenomenal amount of trust and respect. (Expert Response to Dialogue Circle, 2013)
7.2.2. **Courage**

The power of our mentors is not necessarily in the models of good teaching they gave us, models that may turn out to have little to do with who we are as teachers. Their power is in their capacity to awaken a truth within us, a truth we can reclaim years later by recalling their impact on our lives. (Palmer, 1998, p. 21)

Overwhelmingly the students emerged as the strongest leaders in this journey. They were enabled by the courage of the adults to be reflective and set intentions to try on new ideas, new ways of thinking, and new ways of being. It takes courage to start a sentence with the words:

I am not the kind of teacher who would allow my kids to sit anywhere while I read a story, but when I gave them the option to sit where it was best for them. Some were lying on their tummies, some sat at their desks, others brought over their chairs, but everyone was attentive and listening. (Teacher Reflection, 2014)

As one teacher reflected in the Thoughtstream Survey, we need to redefine what a good classroom looks like. In our learning about the developmental needs of students we are given permission to work with some of long held routines and allow a new image of what it means to be a good teacher, parent, or leader to become.

Another teacher attended a workshop on neurodiversity this year. Brenda Whittam-Neary was showing us examples of cluttered classrooms. A few years ago that clutter was defined as stimulating in a positive regard. This master teacher has a rich and stimulating classroom, which was now being described as cluttered. I leaned over and asked her, “When are we starting to weed your room?” Her response was, “When I retire.” We shared an endearing laugh. Two months later, at the end of the day, I saw a huge bookshelf moving out of her room. I ran down the hall asking if she is retiring, and she smiled and said she felt like it was time to let go of some of the treasures she had been carrying with her for 20 years. She is a teacher who dances and celebrates with her students and when they entered the next morning they were delighted that she had made them a dance floor. Letting go was courageous.

This model of community reaches deeper, into ontology and epistemology—into assumptions about the nature of reality and how we
know it—on which all education is built. The hallmark of the community of truth is in its claim that reality is a web of communal relationships, and we can know reality only by being in community with it.

(Palmer, 1998, p. 95)

This speaks to the interconnectedness and the relationship created by the virtues of working together dialogically. It was the process of being exposed to new ideas, allowing those ideas to implant themselves as a point of contemplation and when the person has the chosen their action, it is their action, not a direction but a choice.

7.3. Questions and Recommendations for Further Research

This research study is grounded in the action research genre as a co-operative inquiry. It is not a typical action research design because it does not identify a problem and then measure growth. This shift in epistemology was awkward because defining the significance of our work became a narrated journey versus a quantifiable measure. Most of my past experience with action research projects has been firmly grounded in complexity theory. In search of a grounding framework, I found the dialogic organizational development theory much more fitting for our process. Further documentation of dialogic processes in education could bring strength to an emerging way of working together.

The documentation honoured the subjective experiences of each person who participated and may simply be a story without significance to the education field. I saw such a profound growth in the students’ abilities and confidence and it would be interesting to know if those perceived developments will have a lasting significance and if so what would that look like in terms of outcomes?

Since this research study does not outline a template or a recipe, it would be difficult to replicate. The journey has benefited my school community and I hope that once it is shared with others that it can have a guiding worth. I am struck by the notion that, this is our work, yet I struggle with measuring its significance. It is not a template or a recipe, but action aimed at changing mindsets, conversations, and thinking. In times
of such significant change I wonder if “the being of the leader” (Bushe, 2012, p.7) can be linked to wise action of teachers.

I would like to see further research connect certain practices with philosophical stances. Over the course of this research study, I have come to understand that many people want to learn about self-regulation so they can make students comply. Relationally speaking compliance is teacher regulation, while self-regulation may not always look like compliance. A self-assessment tool designed to support teachers in defining their philosophical stance as it relates to discipline tactics, rewards and punishments given, and the feelings of trust present in their classroom would be valuable in going deeper into uncovering the essential considerations for change.

Further research is needed to help people define the tension between being professional and being authentic. My hypothesis is that most people think to be professional we need to have a strong upper lip, be driven by order, show strength, and be in control. We need to explore the strength of authenticity, define it, and demonstrate that there are ways of being both professional and authentically human.

7.4. Recommendations for Practice

In reflecting on our learning journey as a community, it was both a simple and complex process. Self-regulation is a multi-faceted area of study and is influenced by so many research fields. Child development is not a linear, streamline process but a subjective and dynamic journey, which mirrored the developmental journey of our community. Since everyday experiences shape the developing mind, our everyday actions, routines, communication styles, and policies need to be thoughtfully practiced. My recommendations for educators embarking on the journey of learning about self-regulation and integration are:

1. Start with yourself. Your ability to self-regulate and integrate has an impact on children.

2. Neurodiversity is a given, so begin to understand yourself and your children considering the five domains of self-regulation: sensory, emotional, cognitive, social, and metacognitive. Be mindful to include both the strengths and the needs of children.
3. Start with small steps. Consider your class as a whole and try to identify one change you can try that will impact the most students. Consider one student and set an intention to try to understand them more fully.

4. Be reflective. When you try new strategies it can come into conflict with underlying beliefs or values you are holding. Bring them to the surface and consider them.

5. Remember transforming practice is a journey. At the end of the day supporting students with self-regulation and integration is way of being not a way doing. The relational aspects of everyday moments add the linkages for children to develop through the stages of development.

My recommendations for any leader who is embarking on a co-operative inquiry are:

1. Change happens in individuals and is made visible by our linkages and relationships. It is important to craft containers for dialogic action so we can gently discover our own questions, mindsets, values and thinking.

2. Be mindful of the philosophical underpinnings of your policies, practices, and established routines. Events can disrupt the automatic, ‘doing what we have always done’, to provide a point of reflection, so the implicit becomes explicit and then you have the opportunity to decide what you want to create.

3. Transformational change involves vulnerability. Vulnerability can be uncomfortable. Build the capacity to stay with the discomfort with curiosity and awareness.

4. As the leader, understanding the design process is essential. How you engage with the community relationally, how you structure meetings, and how you plan events, all contribute to creating openness to learning, risk taking, and reflection.

5. Transformational change is messy. We work in a human system, within relationships and there is not a checklist for that. Documentation can support the mapping of your community journey.
7.5. Summary

The Dialogic OD model assumes that change comes from the emergence and widespread embrace by the whole system of stake-holders of new ideas, models, metaphors, and theories that “challenge the guiding assumptions of the culture, ... raise fundamental questions , ... foster reconsideration of that which is ‘taken for granted’ and thereby furnish new alternatives for social actions (Gergen, 1978, p. 1346).

(Bushe & Marshak 2009, pp. 355-356)

This research study documented a complex and layered learning journey. Everyone in our school community had the opportunity to be involved. Embracing new learning and one another became the two design challenges. A thoughtful approach to crafting a container that created feelings of trust and safety so each person could participate in developing both self-awareness and the awareness of others was at the forefront. As well our new learning had to foster provocations to nudge and stretch our underlying beliefs and assumptions as we move in education from a mechanistic, behavior based frame of reference to a dynamic developmental frame of reference. Our narrative highlights both the heart and mind of education and provides powerful examples of relational strategies that can support our development.

7.6. Epilogue

“Transformational change, changes the very nature of the system to be better at what it aspires to be and do” (Bushe, 2012, p. 1). A student visited me four months into the school year. She had moved on to middle school and as she described it was a rough start for her. This was surprising because she would be described as social, academic, athletic, and confident. I asked her to tell me her story. She described her difficulty stemmed from the program she had chosen. She chose a project based learning stream of the middle school because it was deemed to be the way of 21st-Century Learning. What she experienced was isolation. Projects were largely done on the computer; some were even marked by the computer. Her learning was self-paced. She said this did not appeal to her because she could do projects already; the real learning happens when you work as part of a group and stretch your thinking. She also found teacher feedback and interaction lacking. She made the decision after discussing
it with her mother to leave this specialty stream and asked for a transfer to another pod. She went into the vice-principal's office on her own. The vice principal called her mother and discussed how impressed he was with her for her well thought out reasons for the request and her ability to advocate for herself. This young student had gone in on her own with her reasons firmly laid out. She felt an inquiry was about asking important questions and working as part of team to extend your learning not just completing tasks. She felt like strong teachers interacted with their students and their ideas. Her mother supported her request and she went into another pod that was not promoting itself on any agenda. She is much more fulfilled and feeling like this is truly education. She came with her mother to share her story. She thought I should know, and she also told me she wished she had had one more year with me because she could have strengthened her feelings of security in her abilities. She attributed her already blossoming strength to the events and experiences we shared throughout this research study.
References


Thompson, L. (2008). Hope is an open heart. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Scholastic Inc.
Appendix A. Strategies, Structures and Tactics

Cooperative Strategies

Four Corners

I would give the students an article or a story to read that had within it a controversial topic. After reading the story I would propose the topic and ask the students if they strongly agreed, agreed, somewhat disagreed, or disagreed with idea. The students selected the corner which resonated with their thinking. While in the corner with others who selected the same response, they discussed why they thought the way they did. As a group they would present their ideas to the other corners.

Dialogue Circle

The dialogue circle strategy was of our own making. At first we had normal classroom discussions where all of the students directed their conversations towards me, the teacher. When we were having our class reflections or when we were researching new ideas, the students would gather around me at the carpet and we would have a discussion. At a certain point I realized they had a great deal to say to one another. One day I moved all of the desks out of the way and we assembled our chairs in a circle, I did not include myself in the circle. I gave a prompt and let the dialogue begin. I listened and took notes trying to find themes. When we finished our dialogue circle the students would take a minute to reflect. I would read their reflections and add to the themes. The themes became the prompts of the next circle.

At first the students continued to look to me or direct their comments to me. Eventually we used the idea of closing the circles of communication at least five times with each other. Our new rule became, the person who prompted the discussion topic also closed the topic with a summary after hearing at least five other comments. This started the students listening so they could build on each other’s ideas instead of over anxiously changing the topic.

After a while we did not need to explicitly state the rule it became our practice. We also encountered the difficulty of people taking us away from our learning through humour. We did not want to dismiss people’s contributions so we decided to acknowledge humour with a smile and a nod, and then try to continue on with the topic. We valued the humour and also continued with our learning.

We also had to reflect continually on our temperaments to ensure we were not leaving people out.

Fishbowl

For the conference at Simon Fraser University and the expert dialogue circle, the students participated in the dialogue circle while the onlookers sat in an outside circle and observed. In the case of the conference, the students then went on to interact with the participants in a collaborative meaning-making activity. During the dialogue circle the experts sat around the outside of the circle and took notes. They were given an opportunity at the end to ask questions and give input.
Appendix B. Learning Team Structure

Learning Teams are small groups of educators that meet to engage in a professional growth experience focused on improving instructional practice and student learning. Learning Teams are facilitated by a variety of educators who have expertise in the topical/curricular area, and in facilitation. Two to 3-hour meetings occur six times in the year and take the following format:

- individual write
- sharing
- discussion
- work-time
- reporting back and
- a commitment for the next meeting

There are 4 main types of Learning Teams:

- School based Learning Teams: small groups of educators meet from one school
- Mentorship Learning Teams: small groups of educators in new positions
- Targeted Learning Teams: for individual educators or smaller groups who wish to join with colleagues from other sites who share an interest in a particular point of inquiry identified below.
- Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Learning Teams: small groups of educators meeting to develop technology applications within chosen curriculum

1 From School District 43’s secure member-only website; drawn from the staff development team’s processes guided by an external assessment consultant, Dr. Sharon Jeroski.
Appendix C.  Consent Forms

Student Participants

Application number: 2012s0881

Participant ID#
Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University
8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC.
Canada V5A 1S6

Informed Consent for Student Participation in a Research Study at Anmore Elementary
(November 2012-June 2013)

Title: Integration

Documenting a school’s journey in learning about self-regulation and integration.

Investigator Name: Andrea J. McComb
Investigator department: Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University

Purpose: This thesis is designed to document a process in my school community as we learn about integration.

Risks: There are no risks to the participants in our study. There is no perceived danger to the participants in this research and no deception will be practiced. All school-wide activities will occur as a normal practice in the school. The leadership students who organize and implement the plans will be involved in the research data collection and they participate voluntarily. Documentation included in the displays will have individual student and parental consent. Names will not be included in documentation so there is no risk of pictures being linked to names in the display. You can change your mind at any time and decide not to participate. Refusal to participate or withdraw from the study will have no adverse affects to grades or evaluation in the classroom.

Benefits: By documenting the process of collaboration for mutual learning each person within the group will be strengthened by our group learning. By documenting the process, we will create a school narrative available to others who may want to embark on a similar journey of mutual learning. If we find ways of supporting self-regulation in one another and in our students, we all benefit.

Statement of Confidentiality: If you choose to respond at the end of the process to the feedback open-ended questions your answers will be done electronically and thus kept completely confidential. As the researcher I gather all of the ideas with no names attached. The Thoughtstream program will be used to collect and sort data. It is stored on a Canadian server. Each person will be accessed through e-mail and responses back to me are anonymous.

Approval for this research has been obtained by the Coquitlam School District.

Research Ethics Board: This research is being conducted under permission of the Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board. The chief concern of the Board is for the health, safety and psychological well-being of research participants. If you have any questions about participation in this study please contact Professor Carolyn Mamchur at Carolyn or phone or Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director Office of Research Ethics by email at or phone 778-782-6593.

Signature: Your signature on this form will signify that you understand the procedures, possible risks, and benefits of this research study, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the documents describing the study, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

Page 1 of 2
Version: 2013 March 18
I understand that I may withdraw from the research at anytime. I may obtain the results of this study by emailing Andrea McComb at [redacted]

Name of Student Printed

Signature

Date: __________________________
Parental Consent for Student Participation

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS

Application number: 2012s0881

Participant ID: #
Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University
8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC.
Canada V5A 1S6

Informed Parental/Guardian Consent for Students to Participate in a Research Study at
Anmore Elementary (November 2012-June 2013)

Title: Integration

Documenting a school’s journey in learning about self-regulation and integration.

Investigator Name: Andrea J. McComb
Investigator department: Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University

Purpose: This thesis is designed to document a process in my school community as we learn about integration.

Risks: There are no risks to the participants in our study. There is no perceived danger to the participants in this research and no deception will be practiced. All school-wide activities will occur as a normal practice in the school. The leadership students who organize and implement the plans will be involved in the research data collection and they participate voluntarily. The information in the parent book club will be shared with staff via the school newsletter. Documentation included in the displays will have individual student and parental consent. Names will not be included in documentation so there is no risk of pictures being linked to names in the display. You can change your mind at any time and decide not to participate. Refusal to allow your child to participate or withdraw from the study will have no adverse affects to grades or evaluation in the classroom.

Benefits: By documenting the process of collaboration for mutual learning each person within the group will be strengthened by our group learning. By documenting the process, we will create a school narrative available to others who may want to embark on a similar journey of mutual learning. If we find ways of supporting self-regulation in one another and in our students, we all benefit.

Statement of Confidentiality: If you choose to respond at the end of the process to the feedback open-ended questions your answers will be done electronically and thus kept completely confidential. As the researcher I gather all of the ideas with no names attached. The Thoughtstream program will be used to collect and sort data. It is stored on a Canadian server. Each person will be accessed through e-mail and responses back to me are anonymous.

Approval for this research has been obtained by the Coquitlam School District.

Research Ethics Board: This research is being conducted under permission of the Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board. The chief concern of the Board is for the health, safety and psychological well-being of research participants. If you have any questions about participation in this study please contact Professor Carolyn Mamchur at [redacted] or phone [redacted] or Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director Office of Research Ethics by email at [redacted] or phone 778-782-6593.

Parental/Guardian Informed Consent for Student Participation Page 2 of 2
Signature: Your signature on this form will signify that you understand the procedures, possible risks, and benefits of this research study, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the documents describing the study, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the study.
I understand that I may withdraw from the research at anytime. I may obtain the results of this study by emailing Andrea McComb at [email protected]

__________________________
Student First and Last Name Printed

__________________________
Parent/Guardian Name Printed

__________________________
Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date: ______________________

Page 2 of 2
Version: 2013 March 18
Parent Participants

Application number: 2012s0881

Participant ID#
Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University
8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC.
Canada V5A 1S6

Informed Consent for Parent Participants in a Research Study at Anmore Elementary
(November 2012-June 2013)
Title: Integration
Documenting a school’s journey in learning about self-regulation and integration.
Investigator Name: Andrea J. McComb
Investigator department: Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University

Purpose: This thesis is designed to document a process in my school community as we learn about integration.

Risks: There are no risks to the participants in our study. There is no perceived danger to the participants in this research and no deception will be practiced. All school-wide activities will occur as a normal practice in the school. The leadership students who organize and implement the plans will be involved in the research data collection and they participate voluntarily. Staff will be involved in learning snippets as part of our staff meetings, as well as the school wide activities with the Leadership team. The information in the parent book club will be shared with staff via the school newsletter. Documentation included in the displays will have individual student and parental consent, if any items are selected from the parent artifacts your consent will be sought before they are included in the documentation. Names will not be included in documentation so there is no risk of pictures being linked to names in the display. You can change your mind at any time and decide not to participate.

Benefits: By documenting the process of collaboration for mutual learning each person within the group will be strengthened by our group learning. By documenting the process, we will create a school narrative available to others who may want to embark on a similar journey of mutual learning. If we find ways of supporting self-regulation in one another and in our students, we all benefit.

Statement of Confidentiality: If you choose to participate in this study your confidentiality will be respected. No names will be included in the documentation.

Approval for this research has been obtained by the Coquitlam School District.

Research Ethics Board: This research is being conducted under permission of the Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board. The chief concern of the Board is for the health, safety and psychological well-being of research participants. If you have any questions about participation in this study please contact Professor Carolyn Mamchur Parental Informed Consent Page 2 of 2
OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS

at [Name] or phone [Phone] or Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director Office of Research Ethics by email at [Email] or phone 778-782-6593.

Signature: Your signature on this form will signify that you understand the procedures, possible risks, and benefits of this research study, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the documents describing the study, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

I understand that I may withdraw from the research at anytime. I may obtain the results of this study by emailing Andrea McComb at [Email].

________________________
Name Printed

________________________
Signature

________________________
Date: _____________________
Staff Participants

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS

Application number: 2012s0881

Participant ID#__________________________
Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University
8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC.
Canada V5A 1S6

Staff Informed Consent Page 1 of 2

Informed Consent for Staff Participants in a Research Study at Anmore Elementary (November 2012-June 2013)

Title: Integration

Documenting a school’s journey in learning about self-regulation and integration.

Investigator Name: Andrea J. McComb
Investigator department: Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University

Purpose: This thesis is designed to document a process in my school community as we learn about integration.

Risks: There are no risks to the participants in our study. There is no perceived danger to the participants in this research and no deception will be practiced. All school-wide activities will occur as a normal practice in the school. The leadership students who organize and implement the plans will be involved in the research data collection and they participate voluntarily. Staff will be involved in learning snippets as part of our staff meetings, as well as the school wide activities with the Leadership team. The information in the parent book club will be shared with staff via the school newsletter. Documentation included in the displays will have individual student and parental consent, if any items are selected from the staff artifacts your consent will be sought before they are included in the documentation. Names will not be included in documentation so there is no risk of pictures being linked to names in the display. You can change your mind at any time and decide not to participate. Your decision to participate or not participate, will in no way impact your employment.

Benefits: By documenting the process of collaboration for mutual learning each person within the group will be strengthened by our group learning. By documenting the process, we will create a school narrative available to others who may want to embark on a similar journey of mutual learning. If we find ways of supporting self-regulation in one another and in our students, we all benefit.

Statement of Confidentiality: If you choose to respond at the end of the process to the feedback open-ended questions your answers will be done electronically and thus kept completely confidential. As the researcher I gather all of the ideas with no names attached. The Thoughtstream program will be used to collect and sort data. It is stored on a Canadian server. Each person will be accessed through e-mail and responses back to me are anonymous.

Approval for this research has been obtained by the Coquitlam School District.

Research Ethics Board: This research is being conducted under permission of the Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board. The chief concern of the Board is for the health, safety and psychological well-being of research participants. If you have any Staff Informed Consent Page 2 of 2
questions about participation in this study please contact Professor Carolyn Mamehur at [redacted] or phone [redacted] or Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director Office of Research Ethies by email at [redacted] or phone 778-782-6593.

Signature: Your signature on this form will signify that you understand the procedures, possible risks, and benefits of this research study, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the documents describing the study, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

I understand that I may withdraw from the research at anytime. I may obtain the results of this study by emailing Andrea McComb at [redacted]

Name Printed

Signature

Date: ________________
Expert Participants

Application number: 2012s0881

Participant ID#

Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University
8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC.
Canada V5A 1S6

Informed Consent for Expert Participants in a Research Study at Anmore Elementary
(November 2012-June 2013)

Title: Integration

Documenting a school’s journey in learning about self-regulation and integration.

Investigator Name: Andrea J. McComb

Investigator department: Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University

Purpose: This thesis is designed to document a process in my school community as we learn about integration.

Risks: There are no risks to the participants in our study. There is no perceived danger to the participants in this research and no deception will be practiced. All school-wide activities will occur as a normal practice in the school. The leadership students who organize and implement the plans will be involved in the research data collection and they participate voluntarily. Staff will be involved in learning snippets as part of our staff meetings, as well as the school wide activities with the Leadership team. The information in the parent book club will be shared with staff via the school newsletter. Documentation included in the displays will have individual student and parental consent, if any items are selected from the parent artifacts your consent will be sought before they are included in the documentation. Names will not be included in documentation so there is no risk of pictures being linked to names in the display. You can change your mind at any time and decide not to participate.

Benefits: By documenting the process of collaboration for mutual learning each person within the group will be strengthened by our group learning. By documenting the process, we will create a school narrative available to others who may want to embark on a similar journey of mutual learning. If we find ways of supporting self-regulation in one another and in our students, we all benefit.

Statement of Confidentiality: If you choose to participate in this study your confidentiality will be respected. No names will be included in the documentation.

Approval for this research has been obtained by the Coquitlam School District.

Research Ethics Board: This research is being conducted under permission of the Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board. The chief concern of the Board is for the health, safety and psychological well-being of research participants. If you have any questions about participation in this study please contact Professor Carolyn Mamchur Parental Informed Consent Page 2 of 2
OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS

at [redacted] or phone [redacted] or Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director Office of Research Ethics by email at [redacted] or phone 778-782-6593.

Signature: Your signature on this form will signify that you understand the procedures, possible risks, and benefits of this research study, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the documents describing the study, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

I understand that I may withdraw from the research at anytime. I may obtain the results of this study by emailing Andrea McComb at [redacted]

Name Printed

______________________________

Signature

Date: ________________________
#Appendix D. Curricula Overview for All Participant Groups

##How We Learned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>How we come together as a group</th>
<th>Processes used for collecting documentation</th>
<th>What was collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code of Conduct group (20 students)</td>
<td>• Some activities were whole school activities like assemblies, celebrations, co-operative challenges.</td>
<td>• We used photos of assemblies, topics that the students decide upon as key learning, and some work samples that showed the whole school participation.</td>
<td>• Photos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory Group (5 students)</td>
<td>• There were two Leading groups (Memory Making and Code of Conduct Teams) who are volunteers, and some names are suggested by their teachers.</td>
<td>• The Memory Group made slide shows of events, created a yearbook and a memory album.</td>
<td>• Slideshows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Grades 4/5 class</td>
<td>• Most of the students in my class, (I teach .4), are part of the Memory Group and the Code of Conduct group.</td>
<td>• The Code of Conduct group created skits, displays and participated in activities like, The Terry Fox Wishing Well, and the Kindness Project.</td>
<td>• Displays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School population 175 students.</td>
<td>• My class used the Sidwell Elementary Buddy Model.</td>
<td>• The Grades 4/5 class did Buddy Projects, where they worked with younger students, and reflected on their learning about leadership in a reflection journal and in a dialogue circle.</td>
<td>• Yearbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Big Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Reflection Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Dialogue Circle Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(teacher)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Cub will be open to all parents</td>
<td>• An invitation was put out to all parents in the school to participate in a book club. Parents participated in the group in person or privately through on-line newsletters and resources posted to my blog.</td>
<td>• Parents in the book club were encouraged to free write at the beginning of each session. The reflections were followed by a discussion time. Those discussions points were part of our recorded group learning.</td>
<td>• Shared thinking Papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>estimated group size (15)</td>
<td>• The topics also came to our School Planning Council and to our Parent Advisory Committee.</td>
<td>• As a group we decided what key learning we gained in our work together and decided together what representations we included along with a narrative, to make that learning visible to others. This documentation was posted in newsletters and on the blog.</td>
<td>• Photos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletters and blog posts will be available to all families.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Reflections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Stories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How we come together as a group</th>
<th>Processes used for collecting documentation</th>
<th>What was collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 teaching staff members.</td>
<td>- Teachers had set this as a goal in our school growth process called Action Plan for Learning. We embedded the topics, discussions and learning into our staff meetings.</td>
<td>- Shared Thinking Papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I was part of a district learning team on self-regulation and I brought that learning back to my staff to share.</td>
<td>- Photos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Teachers were part of the school-wide activities designed by our leadership students and had access to the learning prompts for our parent book club.</td>
<td>- Work samples from students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- As well, I shared a storybook and strategy to engage the teachers in the learning. They were invited to do the strategy with their class and build in their own ideas which were then shared with each other.</td>
<td>- Reflections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Stories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Principal

- I set out a reading list including Shanker, Greenspan, Hood, and Vygotsky.
- I connected to twitter and started following some strongly written blogs to increase my network.
- I joined a district learning team on Self-Regulation, and a team that works with Dalai Lama Center developing the Heart and Mind Index, as well as stayed connected to Social Emotional Learning Researcher Miriam Miller and the team from the Middle Years Development Instrument.
- I learned how to use Thoughtsteam.
- I used everyday moments as the catalyst for my thinking pieces which link the documentation to research.
- The act of creating newsletters, blog posts, and twitter feeds acted as the greatest moments of reflection.
- The learning team, various workshops, and collaboration with students, parents, and teachers gave opportunities to gather more ideas, or sharing my discoveries with others and getting responses.
- I have presented two workshops on my research one to a district team and another to a whole school.
- When I had a great deal in my mind, I would often go out with my camera and look for metaphors to better hone my thinking. Using the metaphor strategy for me helps me identify keys aspects. I used many of those photos in my blog.
- Personal Reflections
- Journal Entries
- Field Notes
- Photos
- Blog
- Newsletter
- Meeting Minutes
- Twitter Hashtags
- Pocket App: Has a collection of articles
What We Learned

---Parent Book Club

The Whole Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child’s Developing Mind by Daniel J. Siegel M.D. and Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D.

Invitation: Come and join us in a Parent Book Club. Meetings will be on the 3rd Tuesday of the Month at 9:00. We had six sessions and various whole school activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Connecting Activities</th>
<th>Processing Activities</th>
<th>Transforming Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting with the Brain in Mind (November)</td>
<td>Who are you, why did you come, what do you hope to get from this?</td>
<td>What is important and why? About the chapter. Work in groups of four.</td>
<td>Co-creating a narrative summary of our discussion and set an intention to try something new by next session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Brains are Better Than One Integrating Left and Right (December)</td>
<td>Left Brain/Right Brain Preference</td>
<td>In groups review how strategy #1: Connect and Redirect. Now, think of a time that you could re-do using that strategy, share if you are comfortable. In groups review strategy #2: Name It to Tame It. Now, think back to your own childhood of story that was left misunderstood by you, what did you need back then to give a more integrated story? Share if you are comfortable.</td>
<td>Co-creating a narrative summary of our discussion and set an intention to try something new by next session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building the Staircase of the Mind: Integrating the Upstairs and Downstairs Brain (January)</td>
<td>Everyone learn the hand model of the brain.</td>
<td>There are three strategies in this chapter: #3 Engage Don’t Enrage, #4 Use it or Lose it, and #5 Move it or Lose it. Think about scenarios in your household that depict these strategies. What possibilities for shifting the interactions toward integration do you see?</td>
<td>Co-creating a narrative summary of our discussion and set an intention to try something new by next session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killing the Butterflies: Integrating Memory for Growth and Healing (February)</td>
<td>Think of a time when you remembered something as a child to return as an adult and find out how out of perspective your memory was? How did you feel? Think about your favorite story that is told about you within your family. How does it make you feel? Write, share if comfortable.</td>
<td>Thinking about the strategy #6: Use the Remote of the Mind: Replaying Memories, and Strategy #7: Remember to remember: Making Recollection a Part of Your Family’s Daily Life, reflect back to your warm up examples and explain them through the eyes of these strategies.</td>
<td>Think of actions you will take in knowing this. Does anyone have anything to share about last month when we set goals to integrate ourselves while working with our children?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Chapter: Connecting Activities

**Integrating the Many Parts of the Self (March)**

- Everyone create a rim of a wheel of the things they are thinking, feeling...
- There are three strategies in this chapter, strategy #8: Let the Clouds of Emotions Roll By: Teaching that Feelings Come and Go, Strategy #9 SIFT: Paying Attention to What is Going on Inside, and Strategy #10: Exercising Mindsight: Getting Back to the Hub, each group can summarize the key points of the strategy and role play a scenario.
- Make a feelings chart for the fridge as well as some blank wheels for reflection.

---

**The Me–We Connection: Integrating Self with Other (April)**

- Positivity Score from Frederickson
- As a group identify the key points in the chapter. Brainstorm ways of doing the last two strategies, and make a list. Strategy #11: Increase the Family Fun Factory: Making a Point to Enjoy Each Other, and Strategy #12: Connection Through Conflict: Teach Kids to Argue with a "We " in Mind.
- The two wolves story. Discuss. Co-creating a narrative summary of our discussion and set an intention to try something new by next session

---

### Staff Engagement

- The staff participated in school-wide assemblies, school wide announcements and initiatives.
- The staff used our collection of social responsibility books and tagged them with strategies that link to our reading goal.
- We used a Learning Team Structure to investigate the main strategies for self-regulation. Each staff member was given a journal. At each staff meeting we started with a 5-minute write, from a prompt. People were invited to share if they felt comfortable. Then, I presented a short research snippet that included strategies and background research from the, *The Whole Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child’s Developing Mind*, by Siegel and Bryson (2011).
- Teachers were invited to share lesson ideas, smartboard files, and supporting activities on a shared drive on the school network.

### Student Engagement

The students envisioned, planned, and reflected on each event. They created the skits, the videos, the charts, the decorations, and taught many of the lead up activities that contributed to the shared experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| November | Our best selves.        | • “Each Kindness” story shared with every class, sharing kindness stories, the Ripple Effect Lessons.  
|          |                        | • Terry Fox wishing well.                                              |
|          |                        | • Reflection sheets for misbehavior (a shift derived from code of conduct meetings).  
|          |                        | • Building the video, writing the songs and skits for Kindness Project, sharing snippets on the announcements |

---

174
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| December | Our Code of Conduct: Who do we want to be together? | • Mini lesson from leadership group in class meetings.  
• Assembly on Kindness include: songs, stories, skits, written by students. |
| January  | Managing Big Emotions         | • “Hope is an Open Heart” story shared with every class through buddy structure, students created art around emotions.                       |
| February | Handling Disappointment       | • “One Love” story shared with every class, students created heart art and writing about love using the buddy structure  
• Students created a bulletin board filled with hearts as a response to my loss, all led by parents and students.  
• Hearts and Minds interactive art show. |
| March    | Conflict                       | • Teach students knee-to-knee, eye-to-eye strategies, where you really try to hear and see the other person.  
• Teach them the word attunement, feeling felt by the other, do some role-plays. Practice. |
| April    | Contribution                  | • Spirals in nature activity done through buddy structure, for Earthday  
• Young Entrepreneurs Projects where students created a business, sold products, and gave to a charity of choice. |
| May      | Memories                      | • Remembering to Remember book filled with student stories about the year.  
• Much of this work turned into a school yearbook and end of the year videos to celebrate. |
| June     | Reflection                    | • Volunteer Grades 4/5 students participated in community dialogue circle to give input to the official community plan.  
• Volunteer Grades 4/5 students presented at a conference at SFU.  
• Volunteer Grades 4/5 students participated in a dialogue circle where they reflected on their learning journey while be witnessed by experts. |
Appendix E. Thoughtstream Survey Analysis

Question 1. Why did you want to learn about self-regulation?

**Key Words Extracted from Descriptors**
Learning, self-regulation, children, understand, motions, strategies, issues, techniques, environments, instruction, control, assist, process, social.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>• How can children self-regulate without disrupting others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Opportunity to practice self-regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Does it mean dampening kids emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Why is it important—relevancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How will it benefit education system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Inclusion: need practice including others and helping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How does it work for each student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I want to follow the heart of students interacting with learning friendships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>• It’s a school goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Love hearing examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Prompted by the principal to do so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs Based</td>
<td>• My child needs help with it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Saw a need within students in the School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Saw a need within myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• It is an important life skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Future success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Personal/emotional problem solving strategies make for a happier, focused and balanced life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Important for functioning in society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learning to self-regulate for a life time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Important for maintaining healthy relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Learning</td>
<td>• There were five thoughts saying they did not take part in the learning so they do not know what is, one person stated an interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Descriptors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Learners</td>
<td>• How to teach all children to self-regulate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Help my children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Many students have impulse control issues and I want to give them strategies for dealing with these issues in socially appropriate ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• It is hard to work on your own regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Improve my child’s social skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To learn whether my expectations are acceptable and realistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Strategies for coping with emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learning to be a better parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Becoming aware of changes in educational system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To work in collaboration with teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Help me understand myself and those around me better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To learn to facilitate learning in the best possible way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowledge is power</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Quotes**

- There is often a disconnect between home and school life and it’s so important we are all on the same page and working together to foster social and emotional well-being in our children. Quite often parents feel disconnected from what is being taught at school and it’s difficult to create consistency in both environments. Learning about self-regulation as a family helps our children succeed at home and at school.

- Self-regulation is a tool that we can nurture in our students. As someone who often dismisses my own emotion and simply puts them on the “back burner” without truly understanding them, I thought that self-regulation would be a good skill to learning to teach to my own students. Having them be increasingly aware of their own thoughts, feelings and emotions helps to identify ways to understand these feelings and overcome them in positive and constructive ways.

- I learned that it is hard to work on your own regulation. It is hard to see your own faults, but it is easy to point out others. I am now trying to not say the first thing I think of when I am upset with others. I have also started with my own kids if they have made me really upset, I now tell them that I will talk to them later, after I have had a chance to calm down. Working with the kids, you can now tell some of the kids that they are getting too silly and they know that they need time by themselves. Other kids just tell you that they need time by themselves as they know they need that time to settle down.

**Staff Response to Thoughtstream Question 1**

- It is hard to see your own faults, but easy to point out in others.

- There is a disconnect between home and school, what can we do to strengthen the connection?
• Lots of people want to help their children with this strategy

**Principal’s Response**

• I think it is powerful that those who responded recognized that self-regulation is as much about the adults self-regulating as the students. The greatest conversations we have had in our desire to gently begin to explore this topic, has been around our own self-awareness. When we as adults made shifts, responsiveness from children or students or within peer groups, were gentler and more person centered.

**Question 2. What learning tools are you finding most valuable for your participation:** research snippets, newsletter posts, book club, student leadership activities, displays, assemblies, shared lessons, the Integration blog, twitter, or student’s stories?

No key words found in descriptors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Club</td>
<td>• Book club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Adult: newsletter posts, book club, blog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Loved the flow summary of events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• We are having mini book clubs that are quite helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displays</td>
<td>• Displays are powerful for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• School projects, classroom creativity and student leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Kids displays, assemblies, student stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Assemblies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The displays were so powerful to see their stories of respect and kindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Stories</td>
<td>• Student’s stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The learning stories were a great way for all participants to reflect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learning tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Shared lessons, students stories and the conversations they bring home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Together</td>
<td>• Shared ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• You always learns so much from the students' writings and drawings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Working with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter, Blog</td>
<td>• Love the blog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Newsletters are great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Emails about what is happening in the school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research
• I like viewing and discussing video segments during staff meetings
• Research sells parents as well as staff and student training
• Research snippets
• District organized seminars

Student Leadership
• Student leadership activities, the whole school activities like the hearts and minds, the spirals Earth Day were my favorites.
  • Learning about new books that relate to the topic for both students: one Kindness” and the spiral book plus books for me professionally
• Shared lessons

The Playground
• I found that sometimes, their kindness didn’t extend to the play yard
• I find that none of these are well promoted

Key Quotes
• I thought that participating in the book club was the best. It gave you a chance to hear how other people handled different situations. It also gave you perspective about some trying times with your kids. You also realized that everyone seems to have similar problems and you were not alone with the stresses of raising children.
• I think school projects, classroom creativity and student leadership. I have seen all of these things in action and the result and they all bring a sense of personal and social responsibility, self-awareness and the chance to shine. When you are given these opportunities, the tools to self-regulate are embedded within.
• The displays were so powerful to see their stories of respect, kindness, helpful and kindness among the students and staff as well. It really gave me to appreciation to their thoughts and how they were acting out to help others.
• The level of engagement in the school community has been ten out of ten.
• I find many of the learning tools we have discussed so far very valuable. Most beneficial to me are student leadership activities and shared lesson plans. Being able to share lesson plans, and then reflect upon them helps to deconstruct different lessons and strategies on how to improve upon them.
• I love to read and do this often, but I really found that working with my student teacher and discussing where we were going next to be the most helpful of all. We developed an effective set of class tools together…tinkering away a bit at a time. I never would have come so far without sharing thoughts and ideas with someone else.

Staff Response to Throughstream Question 2
• Emails are important in participating in the learning
• Parents who participated in the book club really enjoyed it; is there any way for teachers to be involved or participate in it.
• Parents who missed out because of full time work.
• Sounds like people are interested in blogging, how do I get to it, I would like to read it…
• Loved the sharing of rich literature that I could use in my class
• Would it be useful to have one of our school based prod dedicated to bringing someone in to help us with self-regulation
• Self-regulation lacking in the playground.

**Principal’s Response**

• I am thrilled that people valued the stories, the shared lessons, the school wide shared events and the displays. Those all came from the ideas of the children and I went on their lead to try to find meaningful stories to bring their messages to life. Even my mother was visiting book stores trying to find the best literature for our school. It was so neat for me to see what each teacher did to extend those shared lessons in their classrooms.
• Our shared displays then became extensions of shared thinking, learning and recognition of our work.
• I really enjoyed the book club because the parents and I had time to talk about kids in a very different way than we usually do during PAC meetings. We talked about their emotions, their development, their goals, their fears… We were so comfortable with one another, we were so honest with one another, and it felt warm.
• That warmth seemed to permeate other activities we were working on.
• I felt so supported and empowered by the parents that it enable me to do more, stretch more, be more creative, and they took risks in supporting our creative acts.
• The parents seemed to love to hear the learning stories that made me think about how students develop and learn. We all grew in those moments.
• I appreciate that the teachers and staff were so open to the creative and at times quite wild ideas the students implemented. The staff warmly opened their classrooms to travelling students with stories, art activities, sign language lessons, and school wide activities. Their openness to the shared experiences was a gift.
• I am disappointed that there are concerns about the playground. I see the biggest difference to the positive on the playground. We have older students always looking out for and supporting the younger students. It is not uncommon to see most of the school engaged in an invented game, students of all ages, all abilities, everyone included. Yes we have some disagreements that mostly are dealt with on the spot.
Question 3. If you are not engaged in the learning, how can we invite you to participate?

No key words found in descriptors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Book Club         | • Make book club times more easily accessible by parents who work full time  
                    • Do book club again, the Tuesday mornings just didn’t work for me this year          |
| Evening Meetings  | • A monthly meeting held in the gym for parents say two grades at a time  
                    • Unfortunately the only times I am able to get to most activities I in the evening  
                    • Information sharing is key and understanding the big picture, I would really like to understand how all the individual activities fit together and how I can be the best parent I can be |
| Inclusive         | • As a member of this school team I have always felt included  
                    • With all the initiatives and ways to connect, it’s impossible not be engaged, if a person is not engaged with the school this year, it’s because they don’t want to be  
                    • I am engaged in learning as a lifelong learner |
| Keep us in the loop | • Continue the community awareness  
                    • I work full time so it has to be remote participation  
                    • Emails: insightful emails work for most: that is the way we disseminate to ur parents  
                    • More newsletters  
                    • Send out more information via email  
                    • Receiving emails is a better tool for me to learn at my own pace and time, thank you  
                    • By flyers, by email and notes sent home  
                    • I work full-time so it is hard to participate. Online resources are great if available  
                    • Through short emails to see how the students are learning |
| Leadership        | • I think the principal's leadership and her way of doing the activities with the students get us on board.  
                    • I think the mark of good leadership is ensuring your team is engaged and able to benefit from the opportunities provided wherever you are working/learning on site may be. When you have a group of people that feel valued and included, you will obviously have a team that is vested in the shared vision. |
| Make Me Aware     | • I am only engaged in a limited way; would mind to know what is available, through emails  
                    • I would like to have helped more students and learn more of what they are learning |
| Sharing Assemblies| • Assemblies where people can share the progress on these issues with concrete examples to help our children and ourselves.  
                    • I think more active participation between kids, parents and teachers, school and home are often so disconnected, it’s great to get on the same page and work together towards a goal |

Staff Response to Throughstream Question 3

- A lot of people stating they work full time but want to be involved somehow.
- How many of our parents work full time?
• Seems to be a lot of people who want email information.
• If people aren’t involved it’s because they don’t want to be: different priorities, how can we make this one for them?
• Participation was low

Principal’s Response

• The sharing assemblies and school wide projects seemed to get the most involvement. Parents were unclear that many of our activities were designed around sharing an experience together versus performing for them. During our hearts and minds show, I insisted we would stop putting out seating for people so we could get across the idea of active participation. This is a change, a shift, it started to catch on. For our Earth Day Spiral, we painted extra stones for the visitors to participate, anticipating the desire to be included. One boy who initiated the idea, held his moms hand and they lead the way to create and walk the spiral. One grandmother who had brought a younger sibling was heard saying, “This was the best assembly I have ever been too, I can’t believe what we just did.”

• In regards to the newsletters, nobody reads the newsletters. People read the calendar but not the details. I started putting learning stories in the newsletters. Slowly the older students started to read them because they wanted to see if they were going to be highlighted. My class would be talkative about what I selected to write about the day after the newsletter was emailed out. I do not believe their parents always read them but the students certainly did. The stories I put in the newsletter used real life examples from our school of the Daniel Siegel strategies we were learning about in the book club.

• Every newsletter included links to the blog which covered all of the summaries of our book club so that people who worked full time could access it online. I know a few parents followed closely. I know a few parents opened all of the links I sent out that may interest and further their learning. One parent would respond by email.

• I love the idea a holding the book club at a time when teachers and parents can come. This was designed so the teachers were getting research based snippets of the same strategies parents were learning about in the book club. This is an idea I will take forward for next year. I will continue with the blog and add to it the teacher resources and group activities we shared. I would love to get other schools trying similar activities and sharing their learning with us.
### Question 4. What have you learned?

**Key Words Extracted from Descriptors**

children, need, self-regulation, different, lean, help, story, emotions, connected, identity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No New Learning</td>
<td>• 8 people reported no new learning, one because they are an expert, another who is unclear what there was to learn, and the rest have not participated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Self-Regulation is Complex| • Different strategies work for different children  
• There are many avenues to explore self-regulation  
• Around the age of six, self-regulation should be evident  
  • various levels of regulation  
  • Students learn best when they are at a certain level  
  • Difficult to identify the appropriate strategy for a child                                                                 |
| Self-Regulation is for Everyone | • Being assertive is also a useful tool  
• Making “I” statements helps me to be concise and clear  
• People need to be educated about what self-regulation can look like  
• I have learned to take a few breathes when I am upset and if I need to it is okay to take a time away from the situation and come back and deal with it when I am calm  
• Have a good strategy to deal with each emotion  
• Having strategies will help integrate people in their social surroundings  
• Learn to move through conflict, they are not as fearful and have more positive approach and when they acknowledge their kindness they create more  
• No matter how old one is, they have the same needs for self-regulation  
• Co-regulation: it works and frees me to work with needier students                                                                 |
| Shaping Our Environments  | • Emphasis on autonomy and empowerment  
• Patience is a useful tool for self-regulation  
• Children need to work things out on their own  
• The way people perceive a "good" classroom needs to change  
• Children need more freedom in their learning  
• Information about how the brain works  
• Patience is definitely a virtue  
• Many different strategies  
• Self-assessment: young children are able to do this effectively  
• Caring and inclusion: they help, but need work  
• How the students being more open to their hearts, appreciation among themselves  
• It is a big joy to see what I’ve seen among the students  
• It is important to recognize big feelings  
• Children need to feel safe to connect to learning  
• Self-regulation helps children be better learners                                                                 |
**Key Quotes**

- When there have been school wide projects that include a variety of learning opportunities that include expressive, share participation, creative, sensory and hands on access students and adults alike have an easier time being aware and in control of themselves.

- I learned that there are different levels of self-regulation and that students are all quite unique in their ability to handle different situations as they arise. When performing a little research, I stumbled upon a story of 2 classes. The first was a class that was very structured, students in their desks while the teacher was reading them a story. Every few moments, the teacher would look up from the book and ask a question. A few hands would shoot up to answer, and a small discussion would ensue. In the second classroom children were scattered in small groups, each working on a different skill, whether it was to do with reading, writing, or mathematics. The children were all actively engaged in their conversations and making valuable contributions. This was in contrast to the first class in which a variety of students had “checked out” of the conversation. This demonstrates a need for students to be able to ‘up-regulate” as well as “de-regulate.”

- I used photos and self-charting during work times. I also taught the children how to help one another when stuck during journal time. Many of the children are able to manage themselves and one another with this system. I now can concentrate on helping students who really need adult assistance.

- A simple end-of-the-day checklist! It gives the children a chance to look back on the day and reflect properly without being clouded with the emotions of the moment. They are proud of their achievements and thoughtful about their troubles. In particular, one particularly needy student is very clear and accurate with their self-assessments. As they never vocalize their thought about themselves, I would never have known what they are able to do.

- The children are now very quick to help one another when physically hurt. They can easily identify this need. Loneliness is another story. It is much more challenging for them to notice and care to help. We are still working here.

**Staff Responses to Thoughtstream Question 4**

- Many different aspects of self-regulation were explored. Possible to look at similar aspect? Bring in those kindergarten posters to share with everyone.

- The way people perceive a “good” classroom needs to change. Is a quiet class the best place where learning happens?

- How can we reach more parents?
- Children need to work things out on their own, yes but they need to be taught the skills to problem solve or be given little tools to apply.

**Principal’s Response**

- The themes and responses speak to the importance of emotional literacy for adults and children alike. The metacognitive strategies for reflective self-assessment and self-knowledge are lifelong practices.

**Question 5. List any changes you have noticed in yourself or in the school community**

No key words found in descriptors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not Engage</td>
<td>• Three people have not seen changes or do not understand the questionnaire.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Our Children | • Students and teachers are more aware  
• A lot less arguing on the soccer field  
• Kids are starting to learn their limits  
• More kindness and empathy from the older students  
• More patience with emotions  
• At our school we have made huge changes on learning from this approach  
• Children more thoughtful  
• Children more self-aware  
• Children more aware of others  
• A stronger sense of community/desire to create and sustain a community  
• Older student/Younger student relationships  
• Students are more engage with their school and community  
• I love the confidence and excitement I have seen in my kids  
• I do notice my daughter talking more “after the fact” in a fair and reasonable manner. She is a compassionate person and good at looking at things from the other’s perspective. This has likely strengthened that in her. |
| Our Community | • The art and kindness show was a great way to involve the community  
• We are a caring school community  
• I find the school community to be more insular than engaging  
• School is open to using different strategies for different children  
• Since the strike, the environment has become less hostile and tense |
Ourselves

- Using the phrase, “feel your feelings” a lot more
- I can turn a blind eye to little things that would have bothered me before
- To not let logic rule my decisions
- To find coping strategies that work for me
- My strategies don’t necessarily work for my kids
- I yell less
- Self-regulation must be taught with a cognitive component and emphasis on cognitive functions
- To be more communicative and open minded with our daughter
- Counting our good fortune that the school improves and focuses on education to gain trust and empowerment from parents
- Better appreciation of those around and understand for the needs of the kids
- Once I am ready to teach and at end right level, I can redirect students
- Less stress
- I’ve learned to be more open to follow among the students’ appreciation, kindness, respect, artwork which really amaze me.
- Their thoughts are so powerful to change among themselves
- I am spending more time talking to my kids about strategies for dealing with stressful situations.

The Learning

- I know specifically taught, it works
- Children cannot learn without first having basic skills for self-regulation

Key Quotes

- The leadership at our school has set a positive, caring, accepting atmosphere. I personally feel and can see that at this school we are able to set good examples and be openly praised for that, but we are equally free to seek help on days when perhaps we are not at our level best—and it is this in particular that actually helps students and adults alike be more self-aware, because you have so many opportunities to practice.

- I have noticed a change in the way I handle different situations with students when they are either upset or acting inappropriately. Instead of a “top-down” approach to discipline, in which I am tough on students for acting inappropriately, I have tried to adopt a more conversational approach with students. I try to get both sides of a disagreement or argument and we try, as a team, to come to a beneficial solution for all parties involved. We try to identify our feelings, and why we feel that way, and decide on appropriate responses. This opens communication with students and it seems to build a more positive relationship between myself and any students involved.

- In the past, there were many instances that I was upset or frustrated, which made helping a student to learn or do something way more challenging, as I was not in the right state of mind. Now, I know that once I am conscious of this fact, redirecting students and helping getting to a state that learning can happen is way easier.
• Now that my students are much better about regulating themselves, I now have more time to be a thoughtful observer. I find this interesting and much less stressful than being the one directing all of the action on my own. I've never liked the nagging aspect of teaching and now I have to do much less.

**Teachers Responses to Throughstream Question**

• I agree, there is a lot less arguing on the soccer field.

• Parents are way too involved in disagreements and is this a hindrance to self-regulation.

• The idea of the school being insular, the parent community does have a lot of cliques.

• The principal on the field, supervising in the morning, noon and after school, has made a world of difference. She knows the kids in and out and can coach with problem solving.

**Principal’s Response**

• One teacher had a conversation with me privately. She said that she trusted me to be there to support her and her students. She attributed a conversation during a staff meeting for setting the stage for the strong feelings of trust. One teacher asked me, “When is it appropriate to send a child to the office, I have always wondered and have been afraid of being criticized for being a weak teacher if I send a child to the office?” My answer was, “When you are not regulated and you need my support, I am here for you and the children.” Teachers know all of the strategies for working with children that I know; I can at times be more effective because I have not experienced the dis-regulating experience. I am calm and able to support them constructively through it.

• I would like to respond also to the comment about job action. Our school did remarkable well on a personal level through the job action. There was no tension between myself and the staff. We ensured that the students did not miss out on many things. At the end of the day, as a staff, we learned we could let go of a few things, we would like to carry on some of the practices we created to deal with the job action. We mined the experience for what it brought us in the way of learning.

• I agree a key idea is the principal is on duty outside as much as possible. I rarely miss and make it a priority because, I know the children. I want to know the children. I want us to problem solve together on the spot; I want to coach them through their difficulties, not leave them on their own. This is called co-regulation and some students need it desperately for forging friendships or navigating a playground game. It also creates consistency: a consistent set of expectations, a consistent approach to problem solving and place to go when things are not working for you.

• At the heart of why supervision is important is the relationship. I greet almost every child by name every morning. I get to hear their worries, their joys, the hopes, their fears, and know whether or not they will need some extra attention that day or just a check in.
Appendix F. Dialogue Circle Transcript

Facilitator: So these are Grades 4/5 students. Some of them have been involved in three dialogue circles and some of them it is their very first one. They have come to join us today because they are very interested in the process and they want to see if they have something to share and they are not sure. So we have people with varying experience in the room.

I have just told everybody, all of the experts in the room, a little bit of what we have been doing so that they have some idea about the work. They are going to be listening to you and taking notes, kind of like we talked about this morning and it is not something to feel nervous about. Are any of you nervous?

Just take a big breath and imagine they are all me. A lot of these are friends of mine that I worked with last year on different projects and they are all very happy to be here.

Now, this group of kids has worked with adults before and found it a little nerve racking but they found out the only thing different between working with kids and adults is that adults have more to say.

Right?

So the first thing we will throw into the circle is....

This is how we do it, I throw something into the circle and I take a back seat, they do not react to me they just talk to each other.

We are talking about leadership. We are all leaders in this school. So, think about why we teach you leadership skills? It is not in the curriculum really, it is part of everything we do but it is not there.

Why is leadership important?

Burgundy: The reason we teach leadership is to build trust with younger students and help them learn.

Green: It takes a lot of, they trust us and it is our responsibility to help them learn.

Orange: It gives us confidence to help other people.

Blue: It helps us think in different ways.

Purple: It will help us learn more than what we know. We are learning two different things. One is learning school and stuff and two is learning what other kids react to.
Green: People will look up to us. Like the younger kids will look up to us not just their teachers, they will look to us if they need someone or they need help.

Red: It is our input into the school so we can make it better for us.

Facilitator: So could you talk about a significant learning story for you about your own experience where you saw yourself as a leader.

Burgundy: I remember in Grade 4, I usually did not want anything to do with the kindergarteners. Like if I saw one crying I would see a couple of Grade 5’ers going to help them and I would just turn and walk away. Now, if I see a kindergartener that is upset I will go straight to them even if I see other people coming to help. I will be there to comfort them as well and help them to be better.

Orange: Well, was doing this, well when Violet, we were doing this heart thing and he needed to draw a heart and he did not know how to draw a heart, so I didn’t get what he was trying to tell me and he started crying. So Mrs. McComb helped him draw a heart and then I understood him.

Purple: We do this thing where Mrs. McComb says something and there are four corners, one is strongly agree, agree a little, no agree and not agree a little. I went to strongly agree for what sensitive kids I think, we should watch for them. I said that we should help them a little more because they may take more in than we think and so we should help them.

Red: Me and a couple of people taught sign language for the Christmas Concert and it was to a song. We taught the whole school sign language.

Green: For the Hearts and Minds Art Show, I was helping younger kids to their projects down there. So we had a big art show and everybody came and they sold for charity for someone who went to our school last year. We helped him because he had cancer. So we helped him by doing a bunch of raffles and stuff.

White: Last year I got in trouble and Mrs. McComb, she put me in the kindergarten room. I did not want to go to the kindergarten room because I hated the kindergartens. But after a while I really liked the kindergarteners and I stayed for the rest of the year.

Azure: Some of my friends they used to hang out in the girls washroom, the one downstairs and they were not allowed at like lunchtime and recess. And they were like Azure come on, and I just said no, and I had a sense that I should just say no and going outside because we are not allowed.
Facilitator: Azure that is a great segway into the next thing, when we talk about leadership we often think about leading others or helping others. Is leadership always about others?

Many Voices: No.

Facilitator: Explain.

Burgundy: Basically leadership is your choice to do it. It is your responsibility. And, just by doing it, it doesn’t necessarily mean you help others. It just makes you feel good because you know you are responsible and kids look up to you.

Red: Sometimes leadership helps you, you may not help others. It helps you.

Blue: It makes you feel like you have accomplished something.

Purple: It feels good to help someone other than yourself sometimes. And it feels good to help yourself. And it really helps.

Turquoise: It is taking responsibility for, it is not just helping others you help yourself.

White: Leadership is also if you do something bad and you blame somebody else you are not taking leadership for yourself. You are blaming on somebody else. But if you confess that you did it then you are taking leadership for yourself and taking the responsibility.

Brown: Making you feel good when you do leadership.

Facilitator: So those are pretty interesting ideas. Just so everyone knows White was not sent back to the kindergarten room to be a kindergartener. You were sent to help the kindergartens. He shared that last night in his speech at the Grade 5 leave-taking and he took down the whole gym. Everyone just loved that story White. It was great, a big smile for you.

One of the ways we started this year was to talk about who you are as a learner. That is how we started learning about some of these ideas about leadership, by knowing who you are. I just want you to talk about what you learned during that time, in that beginning part of the year, about who you are and how you are smart.

Orange: We are smart for knowing ourselves.

Red: You have to know your strengths and weaknesses.

Green: So you can see other people’s strengths and weaknesses too.

Burgundy: You have to know your learning style and your way of connection.
Purple: You need to know what you do best and what you like to do.

Blue: You have to know how you feel occasionally.

White: You have to know that you can always get stronger by stuff that does not kill. If you think you are going to die from jumping out of an airplane do not do it because then you might not get stronger you will get weaker.

Burgundy: Basically when you know yourself it might help you decide to do when you are older because you know your strengths and weaknesses and what you like to do. And also, if you have weaknesses you can build them up and make them strengths and then you can take on more weaknesses and make those strengths.

Green: And practice makes perfect. So the weaknesses you can always practice and make them perfect and better.

Orange: When you conquer your fear you feel much better.

Burgundy: Basically you are always learning about yourself, it is kind of like a spiral, how everything you do goes out into the world like a ripple effect.

Purple: Some people just say, I want to do this, but they are not actually trying to do it. They are just sitting there just sitting there saying I want to do this isn’t going to help you have to try for it and keep trying.

Red: You have to know what you like doing not just what you are good at. But if you are good at something and you do not like doing it; it is your choice if you want to do it or not.

Orange: Everybody is different.

Burgundy: You are always learning and growing and figuring out different things about yourself that you did not known yesterday.

Brown: Every time you build up a weakness you are learning more.

White: Everybody has strengths to help each other out so like if somebody is better at math then the other person can help the person who is not better at math.

Orange: To make your weaknesses better.

Facilitator: Can you talk about some of the events you have done in the school as leadership kids. You have organized some events in the school. And those events have worked toward creating connection within the school. Can you talk about some of those events for us?

Green: Sports day for sports day we usually have like we are all in teams. But we did it really different this year we were all connecting in each sport. We had two people from each grade and we were doing something and then so. We did
one activity where somebody hopped on your back and in my case it was a kindergarten and we had to go around the spiral and back out. So we were all connecting with ourselves and with each other.

Orange: The Hearts and Minds show. A couple of people ran some stands like the stand that I did wanted to see what people care about.

Purple: For earth day we came into our field and everybody painted a rock. The older you are the darker the rock you painted.

Green: By doing that we connected with earth and with nature.

Burgundy: And we also did the conference where we went to SFU and we did the exact same thing we did today. Only after our dialogue circle we would go up and we have to find an adult partner and we have to make different things on butterflies because, well it is a bit of a long story. And that is what we made over there.

Orange: At the conference it was really hard not roll around on the roly chairs.

Facilitator: Explain that a little bit to the adults in the room.

Orange: So there were these roly chairs that a lot of people at the beginning part were rolling around in. It was like hard not to do it because you had to it still and at the end we kind of felt like doing tag with the roly chairs.

White: And then Mrs. McComb got really, really mad at us. For no reason.

Facilitator: So we walk into the room and the chairs have wheels. We put the chairs in a circle that did not look like a circle for long. We played for a while and then we stopped.

Burgundy: I remember me and my friend playing bumper cars with the roly chairs. And then we got in trouble by my Mom. She said, you have to keep them in a circle. But we still kept playing and it was really fun.

Yellow: With earth day we kept the spiral on our back field but we moved it to the side so people can still play soccer.

Green: And it is still here today.

White: Another event that we did was Young Entrepreneurs which everybody in the dialogue circle here did it and all of the Grade 4’s and 5’s. What we did is we made a project and we made a farmers market and we sold it at the farmers market. We can give money to charity and some people were so generous that they gave all of their money to charity. Like I did my project with a friend and we ended up giving $24 to charity.
Burgundy: With the Kindness project, my friends they were in charge of filming a video and going around to different classes and pulling kids out and filming them saying what ways are you kind. In what ways are you kind? I got to be part of it. In one part I like seeing myself. In the assembly I love seeing myself up there saying the ways I am kind because that made me feel like a really good person.

Orange: With the kindness project, Mrs. McComb taped a couple of people saying like who they want to be and like who they want to be when they continue on in their life.

White: With the kindness project we also went to a kindness concert about bullying and there were a lot of songs about not to bully. There were a lot of people that actually did get bullied and they were actually at the concert presenting stuff and one of them even sang a song, more than one of them.

Red: For a while we had, everyone made hearts in their free time and stuff. The billboard outside we all pinned them and there was a huge billboard with pictures of hearts, drawings of hearts and cards and stuff.

White: With the memory project what we did was, well I had the idea last year to have a school newspaper and we turned that into something bigger. We have been doing a lot of stuff around memories and we did like a newspaper but it was a, Remembering to Remember Book that people could buy.

Burgundy and Red: A yearbook.

White: No that was for the Grade 5’s.

Facilitator: That kind of changed so when you presented it to the parents they had a traditional sense of a yearbook but you have all been adding to the memory book.

Burgundy: I remember since I was not part of one of the people with a stand at the Hearts and Minds Show. I went down there with my class and the first thing I did was, I went to the memory book and I opened it up and I flipped through it and I read some of the parts of it and the stuff that I thought interesting. There were lots of parts that were interesting but I did not get a chance to read it because I went on to see the art and there was a lot of very interesting art there.

White: At the Hearts and Minds Show we had a couple of people doing videos and we also had a theme song. I think you remember it.

Everyone sang: Anmore Elementary is a very safe school. We don’t allow bullying and that is very cool. Yeah.
Facilitator: Didn’t we have another song. White and Pink made up another song, they can’t remember.

How do you think you created connection in the school through those events?

Burgundy: I think it brings us all together. Because we had to get together, a bunch of kids had to come together to create an idea, we had to make that idea happen, and we had to put on a big show. So I thought that was connecting because we had to bring ourselves together to make an idea actually happen.

Red: In Young Entrepreneurs we are connecting with the world because we were donating some of our profits.

Purple: And for a lot of them we just stayed together and we just had to do it all. We did mostly everything we came up with and we came up with a lot.

White: Everybody I think connected with other people and people made new friends. Like with me, I made a new friend during Young Entrepreneurs with my partner.

Facilitator: So do you think it is time to talk a little bit more about the content of what we presented at the conference. Pink, do you want to give the background about it? Why don’t you introduce the idea.

Pink: So, Mrs. McComb was doing this exam thing and it was part of her exam thing to go to SFU and do a dialogue circle.

Facilitator: Part of my research.

Pink: Yes part of her research, so we sent a proposal and we got accepted.

White: The idea was, Mrs. McComb found this pretty book. It was like a spiral.

White: Swirl by Swirl.

White: And it was everything had a spiral and that is when we decided to do Earth Day with a spiral and the rocks. And then we thought of doing that right there (pointing to mural).

Pink: The mask represents ourselves and the four stages of life. See how it is cut into four.

White: The sacred four.

White: The sacred four can be...There are four kinds of unicorns, four kinds of beasts, four stages of life, four seasons, four times of day. And then it goes around with the butterflies. Then it comes to the building blocks, which means the systems and the attributes of the systems.
Burgundy: Like for a town, you need to have recreational centers, you need to have police, you need to have fire halls and houses.

White: And the attributes would be like kindness.

Green: You need schools and teachers.

Burgundy: For the attributes you need like, say you do different clubs, say like soccer, say you do soccer, maybe you want your soccer coach to be nice to you. Maybe you want your dance teacher to be like helpful and support you and teach you better ways you can do in dance.

White: And then the next one in the spiral is calling your genius.

Pink: It is about what you are really good at. So say you are really, really good at sports.

White: It is about how you are smart.

Green: And like everyone has their own genius. Like I am good at art and I am a follower, I mean leader not a follower. And we learned a whole bunch of stuff about how we are genius.

Brown: We wrote a genius poem.

Purple: We did who we are like if we think we are a leader, how we are ahead, how it includes the person we want to be.

Turquoise: We wrote at least ten things about how we are a genius.

Pink: Knowing your genius is, knowing if you are right or left brain. I am left brain so I am right handed, normally if you are right handed you are left brained for most people.

White: Getting back to “It takes a village to raise a child.” Anmore it has a school, a fire department and a store. That is why we are so close to Port Moody, because Port Moody has so much stuff, like they restaurants, IGA, stuff like that.

Blue: .....townhouses and stuff.

Burgundy: Anyway, we are still a growing community, there are still being houses built in Anmore. There are new people moving in and old people, well not old people but people who have lived here for a long time they are moving out and new people are moving in and it is still a growing community.

Orange: It is spiraling. It keeps growing.

White: Returning back to the conference.

Pink: The fourth one is connections. So like connecting with your families, and we learned that we connect with each other but we need to connect more with nature.

Red: We connect to each other by doing this (the dialogue circle) like at the beginning of the year we wouldn’t be able to do it without interrupting each other.
Green: ... some people would be talking way too quiet or way too loud. People would be ... and making funny jokes and stuff.

Red: We have to be able to connect to do this because you have to know if someone is about to talk or when it is your turn.

Burgundy: So many people had so many great ideas so that sometimes you couldn't get into the dialogue circle. So sometimes you need to be able to hold your idea and let people who do not get a chance to share, if they are trying to say something. Let them try to say what they are trying to say because maybe somebody who says a lot will take their idea and then they will go back to being someone who just listens and doesn't get a chance to talk because somebody takes their ideas. The dialogue circle is so big that it is hard for them to get a spot in, so sometimes people need to wait their turn to let people who do not get a big chance to go in can get a chance to go in so they can get a turn.

Purple: A lot of people used to always just bud, always talk loud and try to talk over people and when you tried to get in someone would say a joke and everyone would start laughing. We would never really start to get into our learning.

White: Before we went to the SFU conference, we did a dialogue circle. And I remember everybody was just talking as soon as one person finished. And there was one person who just couldn't get to say what it was, I can't remember who it was, but everyone just started laughing.

Pink: You do not need a lot to connect. If you are a really shy person you do not have to have a huge conversation with somebody, you can just connect by at least say one simple word like, hi or ... or just waving.

White: You don't have to connect with each other like we do. You can also connect with yourself with breathing, your brain, your activities.

Pink: You can connect with yourself and with others when you do activities.

Orange: Like you connect to the world.

Burgundy: Like say you are having a bad day or something and you see one of your friends and you don't really want to talk with them and they are really enthusiastic. And they are your friend so all you have to do is wave and say hi and keep going but at least they know that you have acknowledged them and you are their friend and you are there for them.

Red: There are different times to connect with other people and yourself. So, when you are trying to do your work, you are trying to connect with yourself. If you are playing a game
with one of your friends you are connecting with them. When we walk the spiral a lot of people are trying to connect with their friends by talking to them and we are just trying to calm ourselves down so we should really just be connected with ourselves.

Blue: We connect using body language.

White: There is a kid that will always cheer you up if you are sad. So, one time I popped somebody’s yoga ball and I was really sad. Then, the kindergartener walked into the room and she just cheered me up right away because she was asking me all of these questions and I didn’t know how to answer them. But she was asking them in such a cute way that it was cheering me up.

Facilitator: You have touched on something that I remember early on when we first started to work with our buddies. So, this group has buddied with every group in the school not just one class. Thinking about, remember when you first started working with the kindergartens. Your first buddy lessons, what do you remember learning from your first buddy lesson with the kindergarteners?

Pink: Well, I was not really shy but kind of, cause the kindergarteners you don’t know the kindergarteners that much and they don’t know you. In Grade 3 we didn’t really do buddy reading. We did it more with the older students and now we are intermediate and I don’t go with older kids I go with the kindergarteners or the Grade 1’ers.

Burgundy: For me it felt kind of awkward at first because I hadn’t, well the kindergarteners are new so I hadn’t really met them or gotten a chance to know them. Not like the Grade 1’ers or Grade 2’ers because you have had a couple of years to get to know them. The kindergarteners, this is their first year as well to get to know them, so for me it felt a little awkward because we didn’t know them as well so we weren’t really saying much and we were just doing our art and we weren’t really talking. And after a while, every now and then, we would start up a conversation. And now as soon as we go to buddy, instead of just saying, “Hey do you want to be my buddy?” , and then you come to their desk and don’t really say anything. I walk up to them and say, “Want to be my buddy?,” and then I will talk to them, we talk to each other, and they respond. It is really nice. There is this buddy in Grade 1 and she is so cute and she really likes me because I always talk to her and she talks back to me. So whenever I say, “Oh, hi how are you?,” she won’t just smile kind of shyly and just run off with her friends. She will come up to and say, “I am fine and you?” So she is really nice and really cute.
Jaune: At the start of the year, one of my friends. A kindergartener walked up to one of my friends and he (friend) said, “Call him cuckoo head,” which was me. So now some kindergarteners just call me cuckoo head and I am just fine with it.

Facilitator: Is it a friendly thing? Is it endearing?
Jaune: What does that mean?
Facilitator: That you like it, it is not a put down.
Jaune: Yep, I like it.

Facilitator: Blue do you remember your learning about the kindergarteners? Do you remember what you said?
Orange: I do. Right at the beginning of the year with the kindergartens, I was thinking what has Mrs. McComb got us into because the kindergarteners were kind of crazy. They don’t always cooperate with you. Like they don’t turn around and if you try to stop them they become more silly.

Facilitator: Blue do you remember what you said?
Blue: No

Facilitator: One day Blue said, “Sometimes they are too cute for their own good.” Do you remember that Blue.
Blue: Ya.

Facilitator: So, I have a question for you. How did you learn to work with the kindergarteners? What strategies did you use?
Purple: I tried not chasing after them, not encouraging them to hurt, talk bad things, or hurt people’s feelings, or punch or kick. Not chase them or make them go too crazy or you won’t get them what they need to do.

Blue: I would try to remember what my body would do when I was young and now I try to do what he would do.

White: It was a little hard to control our buddies at the beginning of the year because they were so new that they were not old enough to know what school is about because they had only been in daycare or preschool where all they do all day is play around. And it was hard to control them because they would get all wild up about getting into grade-school.

Brown: I just smiled, and saw my buddy and waved and then we had a conversation.

Yellow: Some of us take care of a lot of the kindergarteners and some of them have different learning skills. One of the girls is sometimes really upset or really happy. Our teacher Mr. Navy, he sometimes cheers her up by talking with her.

Black: One of the times with Teal, he did not want to put his jacket on and he ran outside of the door and down the hall way.
So what I did, is just stand outside of the door and what Gray did was go through our class and came out so Teal could not go past Gray or me. We finally got him to put on his jacket.

Magenta: Instead of chasing them, you can make them come to you.
White: You can listen to them and hear what they want to do so you can connect with them and that gets back to connection.

Noir: Once Me and Purple, it was almost time for the kindergarteners to go outside, three kindergarteners ran down to the parking lot. So Purple and I just stood there and weren’t playing with them so they eventually came back.

Yellow: One smile can cheer up more than one kindergartener, because sometimes they sometimes can be sad because their friends aren’t playing with them.

Orange: At the beginning of the year Teal did not have many friends, so he tried running away. The supervisor had to chase because he was running in the parking lot and he was running away.

Azure: Sienna wanted to play princesses with me and that is my idea of a good time, you know. I did and she had a lot of fun and that was good.

Red: One time, me and one of my friends we were playing a game with one of the kindergarteners and we were playing hide and go seek. We were counting and we did not realize that she wanted to be on the finding team and so we were counting. And just before we were about to go, someone was walking with her and she was crying because she thought that were trying to run away with her and not playing with her. But she didn’t know that we were just counting so she could run. We explained to her that we just misunderstood each other.

Black: One time, I think it was after the lunch bell rang. I think it was time to go back inside, Sienna was in the mud. Me and Purple, “It is time to go in now” and she said, “But my pants are all dirty.” And so we talked her and she said, “She is a mud monster” and eventually we got her to come in.

Purple: She was like, “But I like the mud” and we said, “Well you can come out again after lunch.” And she said, “but I don’t want to work either.” And I said, “You should see the work I am doing in class.” And she said, “okay, I guess I will come in.”

Jaune: One day me and my friend Black, we were playing with Teal and then the bell rang. We said, "Race you to the door Teal." And he raced us there.
Brown: With my buddy, I found that if I built a bigger connection with him, he listened more to me.

Facilitator: You can tell we have a thousand buddy stories. The little kindergartens in our school are quite the characters. Think about now the last part of your spiral, what did we mean by the butterfly effect and what was significant about the butterfly symbol?

Red: The butterfly effect means the same as the ripple effect. In the Hearts and Minds show we worked we did something with the ripple effect. We read a book and it is where you have a pond or some water and you get a rock or something. You drop it in the water and as the ripples go out you think about who you want to be. The rock is like you and the ripples are the effect you make on other people. We researched and found out that it also means the butterfly effect, which was really cool.

Green: There is somebody in our class. I do not know if he is here today? He is not here today, but he thought of this idea to do that (she pointed at the image on the poster we have created). He just came up with the image of a butterfly and I do not know why. He did not know why, he just liked butterflies. So, Mrs. McComb said, so let’s research it and it meant the butterfly effect, just like the ripple effect, who you want to be. And so we decided to use the spiral because it shows who you want to be and everything you do is a spiral that goes around and around and around.

Purple: The more things you do, say like you just went on a big trip or just did something very big. Every single day the spiral just keeps getting bigger. It never shrinks, it only goes up.

Facilitator: Thank you. At this time, I would like to invite anyone from the outside of the circle, if you had something you wanted to ask, you are more than welcome to do that.

M.M.: Boys and Girls what is the most thing you think that you have learned from sitting and sharing with each other and having the dialogue circles and sharing all of your ideas?

Red: Connection because we have learned how to connect with each other now that we have learned to do this.

Facilitator: Connection, does anyone else. Connection is a great idea Red.

White: How spiral is everything in the world and you can find spirals everywhere.

Purple: Connection too, because all we have been doing is talking to each other, and helping each other out and it really helps us to connect to each other.

M.M.: Thank you, thank you for answering that for me.
S.A.R.: Boys and girls, hello, I know you have learned a lot through this, this year and I am wondering since I know some of you are going on to middle school next year, how will you take what you have learned and use it next year?

Red: I think we will be a lot better to help, if you can see someone is upset, it is a lot easier to do that now.

Purple: It will be a lot easier to make friends because of connection.

White: We can use connection to make friends with the older kids so they can show us around.

Orange: It will be easier to do your work because we know more and we have more friends than you would expect.

G.M.: If I was to start this in a different school with different kids, what advice would you give me if I was to start this brand new?

Red: Set up some rules so like we have WITS (walk away, ignore, talk it out, seek help).

Green: Throw an idea into the circle and they can start by brainstorming.

Red: You also need to know that for normal day stuff to start simpler then get harder and harder and help out when it is harder.

White: Like start out with something you use at school and then move along before you go to something like this.

Purple: Make events like what we did on Earth Day and the Young Entrepreneur.

Red: You can brainstorm stuff like that to make it easier for your school too and then that will help when you want to do something more difficult like this.

Green: Give a lot of team work problem stuff like projects where you work with your friends and different people.

Red: Write responses after so you do not forget what you thought of.

Purple: take good notes so that when you run out of ideas you can check on them and you might get one.

Brown: Build off of people's ideas.

J.M.: I have a question. I am wondering if you noticed yourself using the skills you have learned here in other things that you do. Like have you noticed it at home, are you noticing that you are acting a little bit different at home and in what ways, or on your sport teams.

Facilitator: Does anyone feel comfortable sharing Yellow’s story?
Red: Yellow has a little sister who is four and she says that when her sister is having a temper tantrum, that is easier now for her to stay calm and then her sister is calmer. She says that it helps her.

Green: On our sports teams. We bring our school name to our events. We cheer for our school and if we know another school like Elementary School, we will cheer them on not just our school.

Red: It is easier to tell if someone is upset or if something is bothering someone or they don't like what they are doing because we have talked about it so much.

Orange: I think things are easier for me and it has given me more courage to play harder in my sports.

Purple: It has helped me make friends and with sports. Because I just started baseball this year and I think I have done better than what I expected when I started. I said to my Mo and Dad, I am not a real fan of having somebody throw a ball at me while I try to hit it with a stick. But I tried it out, and I have been in basketball for about five years so I just did baseball, and I think I like baseball more and I have made friends on my team.

Blue: I started skiing when I was two and when I started I thought, I can't do this. I was scared to go down something like this but know I can go off cliffs and do tricks and stuff. Now, people want me in their groups.

White: I started playing soccer when I was five or six and the first time I liked it because it was so small and stuff. We always had to play in the rain and one time I fell right at my Dad's feet and he fell right on top of me.

Facilitator: Azure, I want to throw a curve ball into the same type of questions J.M. just asked you, do you remember you conversation with Orange about boundaries. Do you remember that conversation Orange about being in the back of your car with your sisters?

Azure: Can I share the story? A lot of the kindergartens they really like to climb on me because I am really tall. It is kind of annoying and sometimes when they climb on me it hurts. So I say no and they are so sad. I still play with them but they are not allowed to use me as a jungle gym.

Orange: So in the summer we sometimes go on vacations with our car. If we go on vacations with our car it is so annoying because our back seat is so small. My twin sisters sit in car seats and I have to sit in the middle and it stabs into my hip. What is worse about it is that they sing. When they sing I get a really bad headache so I don't actually get in trouble for yelling at them and they actually get into trouble for continuing to do it when I have asked them to stop.
Facilitator: So one of the things that we are bringing to the surface in the classroom is that it feels like you are being mean when you are setting a boundary. How do you do that, set a boundary and not feel cruel or guilty.

Shall we end with our word? Sit for a second and think of your word. Whatever word you want. It could be your genius word or it could be the word that results from you participating in this circle.

A word was given from each student: Athletic, creative, awesome, responsible, smart, happy, intelligent, you have a lot of courage in you when you do something like this, courageous, trusting, kindness, brilliant, connected, confident, feel like you are part of something special, pride, loved, willing, daring, noticed, cool, genius.

Facilitator: Adults you are allowed to as well.

A word was given from each adult in the outside circle: Confident, powerful, community, amazed, abundant, hopeful, appreciation, inspiring, truth, reflective.

Facilitator: We are done. Are you proud of yourselves?

All students: Yes.
Appendix G. Dialogue Circle Responses

Expert Responses

K.B.

Themes

Leadership:
- Learning to help others, helps foster a sense of community
- Teaching empathy for others (younger kids)
- Fostered a sense of wanting to follow the rules not go with the crowd ie. the story of not staying in the bathroom
- Leadership helps students take responsibility

Smarts:
- Learn your strengths/weakness-learning style
- Helps you accept others strength and weaknesses
- Helps you learn to improve your weaknesses
- Learn to try at something you like but may not be good at
- Everybody is different
- Help others whose weaknesses are your strengths

Creating Connections through events:
- Sports day was about connection
- Hearts and Minds, Earth Day, Young Entrepreneurs
- Makes students feel like a good person

Creating Connection:
- Bring students together, work together to make an idea happen
- Young entrepreneurs connecting to the world by giving to charity profile
- Can make new friends by working together
- Connections by doing dialogue circles with Ms. McComb, taught them to take turns, hold your idea, wait for each other, be respectful of other ideas, taught how to be respectful to others even when having a bad day, easier to connect with kids, talking helps

Buddies:
- Help foster a sense of getting to know each other
- How to deal with problems (ex. Kindergarten who need help, how to play with others)
Acceptance:
  • the story of not wanting to play princesses with a kindergarten child but doing it anyways

Butterfly Effect/Ripple Effect:
  • What you do spirals around and around
  • Spiral keeps getting bigger doesn’t shrink, gets bigger

Next year:
  • Will help make friends, connect with other kids
  • Team work, work together

Skills used at home:
  • Leadership

**Significance**

Skills for Life:
  • Taught how to share ideas which is an important skill for life
  • Taught students how to get along with others
  • How to deal with others when you are mad or they are mad
  • Courage of how to deal with friends
  • Talking helps
  • I think this is important for the students because sometimes they aren’t talking to their parent whom work all the time
  • Teaches them to be responsible for example Jade’s story of not wanting to follow the crowd because she knew it was wrong
  • How to take turns (learned from dialogue circle)

Empathy for others:
  • Sometimes our students have everything they need want and aren’t able to comprehend not getting something
  • Learned to raise $ for a charity that doesn’t have $
  • Empathy for those that don’t have as much as them or who are in need (ex. $ for cancer)
  • Taught everybody has strengths and weaknesses so that they can help others who have weakness when it is their strength
  • Connecting to the world around them not just me but ‘us’
  • Acceptance

Sense of belonging:
  • Helped students how to make friends
• How to create connections with others
• How to deal with situations that arise (important in their community)
• One girl’s last word was LOVED, that is important because children need to feel loved so they can learn
• Helped foster friendships, important for life, middle school, etc.

Links to Learning/Thinking
• I feel it is important because in this community students get everything they need and sometimes we don’t feel they need our help but students in this area need a sense of belonging.
• Parents work a lot, kids are in a lot of extra-curricular but emphasis at home is not put on a sense of belonging and friendship.
• Also in a small school where kids have known each other for a long time sometimes it is hard to foster new friendships. This is important because sometimes students don’t connect with friends at the beginning of the year and feel like outcasts while at the school.
• Acceptance: students here get a lot and aren’t aware of what life can be like for others: helping to gain acceptance of others in school, in the community or world-wide is important so they start being thankful of everything they get.
• Most important word I heard in all of it was Loved. Students deserve to feel loved and doing this helped with that either through developing friendship, acceptance, self-regulation etc.

Words
• Powerful
• Community
• Loved
• Empathy
• Communication

J.M.

Themes
Metacognition:
• Learning will move into long term memory when we know why we are learning something

Self-Evaluation:
• Scale (agree, strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree) increases student motivation because they have a voice.
Leadership Opportunities:

- Opening doors in a school through leadership opportunities within a building. What settings are going to help a student versus one classroom model on its own.
- Ownership of one’s self and one’s goals
- Personal profile: knowing ones strengths and weaknesses so you can be accepting of others strengths and weaknesses.
- Bod Awareness: self-regulation, matching the feelings inside our bodies to the setting
- Student engagement in their learning and choice in the focus of school projects.
- Connected learning and the power of setting goals and working toward them
- Multiple Intelligences theory: everybody has their own genius.
- The realization that we need to connect more with nature.

Significance

- Action oriented individuals that will foster positive change in their community.
- Accepting of differences
- Students will continue to ask questions about their learning versus downloading content from teachers that has no meaning for them (engaged learners)
- Huge Ripple has been created; impact on their families
- Students feel safe to talk about emotions in a group
- Your school is rich with natural supports (peers)

Links to Learning/Thinking

- Need to connect with nature further, the OT and I are developing a workshop to address middle school learners and sleep, screen time and adrenaline seeking behaviors. Technology is a major roadblock when it comes to connecting with nature.
- Self-Regulation is what we do in response to a difficult situation. Our job as educators is to ensure we provide students with the tools and outlets: ties into district self-regulation cohort that piloted at another elementary school and that is moving to include five more schools next year.
- Self-Regulation is a belief system or a way of being. It is not a recipe. It begins from within and “ripples” out.

Words

- Accountability
- Empowerment
• Engagement
• Confidence
• Acceptance

**M.M.(1)**

**Themes**

Trust
Confidence
Leadership
Learning
Helping others
Participatory learning, choice, responsibility:
• Peer mentorship
• Student voices
• Community building
• Empathy
• Pro-social behavior: positive effects on self and others
• Courage
• Honesty
• Standing up what is right
• Self-understanding
• Self-awareness

Smart:
• Self-awareness
• Self-management
• Know yourself: strengths, weaknesses
• Know emotions, learning about yourself (spiral)
• Knowing the difference between thought and action (trying versus thinking about)

Social awareness: know your strengths so you can help others

Events:
• Connecting with selves and others
• Hard to “resist” rolling around on the rolling chairs.
**Significance**

Fosters a sense of community:
- Peer belonging/peer connectedness
- Making friends and keeping them

Cooperative learning:
- Working together for a common goal (positive)
- Farmers market sales for charity

Meta-awareness:
- Self-awareness
- Social awareness
- Cognitive awareness (of learning process)
- Community awareness
- Environmental awareness

Motivation and engagement in learning through:
- Autonomy (student choice)
- Belonging (peer and adult connections)
- Competency (the students have the support from teachers and other students)

Communication: exchange of ideas, stories, opinions

Understanding and developing positive norms for behavior

Learning how to set boundaries in healthy ways

The dialogue circle fosters self-regulation (students must use executive functions of inhibitory control, waiting turn to talk, working memory, hold an idea in mind, cognitive flexibility through perspective taking.

No longer a need for formal “rules” because the students have internalized the expected behaviors.

**Links to Learning/Thinking**

- Connects in so many ways
- SEL: the mechanism, process of the dialogue circle taps into each of CASELS competencies (self-awareness, learning about personal strengths and weaknesses, emotions, self-management: emotion and behavior regulation, social awareness: understand others, relationship signs, empathy and perspective taking, communication for conflict resolution, responsible decision making, reflecting on decisions.
- Content of discussions also connected to:
Positive behavior: pro-social behavior, altruism, empathy (which is something I am exploring, particularly wondering how can we foster these positive behaviors)

Climate: school and classroom climate (creating emotionally and physically safe spaces)

Mental Health: promotion of positive mental health (decreases in anxious and depressive symptoms when students are engaged in positive interactions)

Words

- Thoughtful
- Reflective
- Aware
- Pro-social
- Connected

Sometimes we (as educators) need to move out of the way and support students as the students lead their own learning. It seems that this is a courageous endeavor for both students and teachers and involves a phenomenal amount of trust and respect.

E.A.

Themes

- Trust
- Personal learning: confidence, reliance, personal responsibility, being a model.
- Personal awareness: strengths, weaknesses, build our weakness to strength, always learning and growing, layers to planning, responsibility, event itself, always a choice.
- Connecting our Community: activities: Conference, sports day, earth day, hearts and minds, market, kindness project, memory project.
- Regulation: difficulties, temptations, co-regulators (adults and teachers)
- Compromise: listening to each other changes flow of projects, many inputs, spiral symbol, idea connectivity.
- Conference
- Boundaries

Significance

- Seeing ideas as connected: creating metaphors to help understand ideas and how they connect.
- Deep understanding of self which allows confidence and ‘place’ in social group to develop
• Appreciation of others through deep listening
• Social cues and ways of being with others
• Finding balance in challenging self and being comfortable in being in tune with self and others
• Concepts: balance, healthy, whole, connected, respect
• Teacher facilitating the students ideas and lead, evolving.

Links to Learning/Thinking
• This group of students have some clear scaffolds for understanding themselves
• Also some group understandings for interacting together, planning and debriefing
• These two elements along with the opportunities for leadership action have fostered the development of empathy, caring, confidence, honesty, respect, and depth of understanding.
• It strikes me this combination lays the groundwork for resiliency.
• Trusting a meaningful process leads to richness and depth.

Words
• Metacognition
• Togetherness
• Appreciation
• Empathy
• Metaphor

M.M. (2)

Themes
• Leadership skills
• How their own learning journey is expanding this expansion leads to a more confident student. A branching of their knowledge is opening many learning doors.
• How this experience is building self-awareness. This self-growth in turn leads back to expanded life-long learning.
• Building an awareness of others and how to value another’s skills and what they have to offer.
• Variety in learning: again confidence guiding, self-pride, sharing knowledge, opportunity
• Community Education: being a good citizen knowledge and awareness of one’s place in the world, their neighborhood etc.
• Connection to others: the importance of caring and kindness.
• We are all connected: being inclusive of others, accepting differences, celebrating our goodness “Letting everybody’s shine sparkle” and benefitting from it. Together we are stronger.

**Significance**

• I think the most wonderful outcome of the shared learning experience is that it takes away the fear of expressing your ideas and replaces it with an atmosphere of sharing and acceptance of different learning styles.
• It breathes confidence right into a students’ heart.
• This makes their world such a connected one.
• It gives an early start to self-awareness.
• How one moves through their learning journey in life and how they can affect others.
• It is so amazing to see how far a child will reach out on a learning path when they have a framework behind them offering peer support and shared bank of unique ideas.
• They are connected.

**Links to Learning/Thinking**

• Yes, I am a big fan of sharing ideas to enhance and support learning.
• I believe that every time I listen to another’s learning story or am able to share some of mine we both change. It may not always be in the way we thought but that is just as important, or more so than what was expected.
• Being connected.
• It makes our universe expand.

**Words**

• Confident
• Connected
• Self Aware
• Brilliant
• Brave
• Inspiring

**G.C.**

**Themes**

• Leadership= responsibility, confidence, empathy, learning, respect, participation.
Helping others, understanding, teaching skills, assisting, growing, moving out of ‘hate’
Your choice to lead, feel good, helps you too, accomplishment, own up to actions, know yourself, how you feel, your strengths and weakness and build them, conquer your fears, make you feel good to help others.
Charity-generosity, kindness, bullying, presenting, speaking your ideas.
Connecting with younger students, adults, and the world.
Developing buddy relationships.
Using symbolism.
Setting boundaries, it is okay to set a limit for others with you

Significance
- Personal growth
- Reflection
- Participation
- Discovering themselves and opening up to really see others.
- How ideas, big idea, looking beyond themselves to their larger community, class, school, neighborhood and relationships.
- Seeing where they are in the world and how they fit in it helps they can change and improve it.
- Supporting each others’ ideas.
- Seeing that their ideas are valued.

Links to Learning/Thinking
- Yes, making meaning through children’s voices.
- We would love to host a similar dialogue circle with Grade 4’s and for 7’s to look at what MDI results mean and what to do about them.
- Today by the end I think almost everyone spoke, interesting to see how this circle works
- Love to hear that the group created their own process and rules: it makes it more meaningful to me.
- Love the building on each other’s ideas.
- Loved to see how the children really seemed to own the whole thing.

Words
- open-hearted
- hope
- connection
- learning by doing
- respect
**Name: Shirley-Ann Rubis**

**Themes**

Self-Efficacy, Self-Esteem:
- Trust
- Leadership
- Confidence
- Stewardship
- Empathy
- Setting boundaries

Core Concept:
- Identity
  - Who am I?
  - Who am I as a learner?

**Reflection on Self/Metacognition**

Knowledge of strengths, gifts, challenges

The Spiral: has significance in spiritual traditions

Knowledge of self (the ‘I’)

Hearts, Minds, Sports Day, SFU Conference

Memory Project, Kindness Project

The ending words - “Words are carriers of energy that can influence environments

Extending our influence out to community “the We”

Butterfly=Transformation

**Significance**

- Everything in life is about connections- the relationships between and among things- Between people, the environment, etc. The students will carry this profound learning onward with them.

- You have provided a deep and meaningful model for working and learning with children- this should be “mandated curriculum.”

- Each of them will take a part of this learning forward and create so many “spirals” out there—how beautiful.

**Links to Learning/Thinking**

- This totally links with my worldview and knowledge of the spiritual processes of life.
• Use of symbols (spiral, butterfly) and metaphor forces deeper meaning, engages students (and adults) in a more profound (left brain/right brain) – whole brain way.

• Love the idea that we must begin with the self, then extend out to others from a healthy, aware place within ourselves.

• I think all students should be guided through self-awareness/self-knowledge experiences.

• We must trust the wisdom of children and give them voice. This is one of my key understandings from my teaching career.

• Creativity:
  o Imagination is key, drawing on the non-linear right side of the brain fosters engagement, deeper connections and joy.
  o I have studied the First Nations “medicine cards” for spiritual wisdom over the years. These symbols are in there (butterfly, spiral) but in other traditions as well
  o It seems that your students are tapping into some very ancient wisdom.

I love what you did, Andrea.

Words

(No response)

G.M.

Themes

Leadership
Opportunities
Connections and Relationships: Empathy
Communication
  • Expression
  • Feeling
  • Sharing
  o Learning is (at least) 2 ways.

Significance

Sharing does many things:
  • It opens up what the possibilities are
  • It legitimizes what we already do
  • It answers questions we have
• It makes our learning stronger
• We have a common goal
• Common actions
• For students it gives them shared learning, it gives them opportunities for leadership
• It helps them find their role/place in the team and in the world.

Sharing success and progress celebrates the positive aspects of learning.
Sharing success makes the success feel bigger.
Sharing struggle reduces the burden; it makes risk taking easier.
In terms of innovation: chance favors a connected mind (Steven Johnson)
We learn a lot by seeing how our shared understanding plays out in different contexts.

Links to Learning/Thinking

With the website I oversee, the Bright Ideas Gallery, my vision was to highlight and share forward thinking practices.
In addition to this, what the site ended up doing was celebrating individuals and gave everyone permission to think in new non-traditional ways.
Your shared learning journey does many similar things:
• It gives voice to good ideas
• It gives safety and legitimacy to ideas
• It gives an opportunity/vehicle for voices that would otherwise be silent or obscured
• It forges relations and connections among and between people and among and between ideas.

Words
• community
• respect
• honouring
• sharing
• empathy

A.H.

Themes
Why leadership
• Trust, confidence, others perspective, giving back
• Learning story: others perspective, caring for others, helping others, giving back to community, contributing to, learning alongside others, discovery of self and own voice
• Leadership about others: self-awareness, discovery of how they feel, sense of responsibility
• How you are smart: strengths, weaknesses, appreciate others, perseverance, awareness of self helps to better understand others, keen awareness of others
• Articulation of found language/knowledge
• Sense of community: all individuals, valued, contributions valued,
• Discover of happiness: knowledge of self, to better prepare/"ready" to learn
• Working with others
• Making a plan
• Problem solving
• Perseverance
• Relationship building and planning ahead
• Patience, perseverance, sharing, working with k’s
• Empathy: recognition of others feelings, perspectives and commitment to help.
• Connections, symbolism of spirals
• Engagement, active listening, open hear, mind, respectful of process word, importance of ritual

Significance
• Powerful examples of knowing/discovery one’s self dual prong—better knowing self, better understanding others—power of all contributions to “greater community”
• Depth of caring for others, ownership of caring for contributing to community—gifts they bring, gifts others bring
• Building relationships
• I wonder how these experiences, will continue to influence—clear value around relationship building sense of community, belonging, contributing to
• Clear examples of developing self-regulation skills, is there the same “awareness” of this growth.

Links to Learning/Thinking
• Experiences shared provide authentic learning opportunities personalized, to develop, grow self-regulation skills, growth of self-awareness and growth of communicating learning/metacognitive piece.
• Depth of knowing one’s self, recognizing/connecting to those around, better able to identify with others, work with others
• Explicit, intentional relationship building, responding to others “connections”
• Clear sense of responsibility.
• Power of and acknowledgement of the process, the journey- trust in self, others, co-creation of knowledge.
• Would love to learn more about feeling/sharing back to school community and families
• Power of learning, immersed in their world, capable, strong, beautiful, powerful.

Words
• community
• truth
• self-awareness
• discovery
• perseverance

K.T.

Themes
Leadership builds trust with younger students
• Promotes different kinds of learning
• Looking after younger students, responsibility
• Empathy, recognizing younger students can be more sensitive
• Helping
• Many Grades 4’s and 5’s didn’t originally like or want to be with younger students- this changed their perceptions

Leadership makes you feel good
• Feels good that others look up to you
• Makes you feel good about yourself
• Taking responsibility for yourself

Being smart is knowing your strengths and weaknesses
• Knowing your feelings
• Learning, growing from surviving your fears, more courage
• Experiences help you grow
  o Practice makes perfect
  o What doesn’t hurt you makes you stronger
• Appreciation of diversity in others (everyone is different)
School Events

• Promotes connections with selves and each other
• Promotes connections with the earth and nature
• Hard to sit still—temptations of rolling chairs
• Charity, generosity
• Kindness—feeling like a good person, who you want to be.

Butterfly/Ripple Effect

• Your actions affect other people
• Spiral shows how everything you do contributes to who you are
• Self-discovery
• Future goals.

Significance

Events promoted connectedness

• Children had to collaborate on ideas
• Learned more about the world
• Connected with new people, made new friends
• Learned connections between people (ourselves) and places, systems, the environment, the world (their city)
• Exposed to art, science at out of school events (community)

Learning journey taught personal skills and social skills

• Required patience, letting other students speak, easier to make friends, feel more courageous in sports
• Taking turns
• Understanding other people’s feelings/ways of communicating
• Learning to connect with ourselves eg. calm oneself down, self-regulate

Buddy program enabled self-reflection. Perspective-taking,

• Learning you can’t “control” them, let them come to you
• Reflecting on how you were at their age
• Promoted a sense of social responsibility
• Learning to set personal boundaries

Links to Learning/Thinking

The importance of connectedness, belonging

• One of the students words was ‘noticed’
• This seemed like a wonderful exercise particularly for students who are shy or have trouble connecting to other students.

Pairing with younger students to learn empathy, perspective-taking has been supported in other research.

A few students mentioned how the learning journey made them think about who they are and who they want to become as adults. Thinking about one’s identity and wanting to ‘grow up’/ have more responsibility its theories of stage development (Erickson 1965).

**Words**

- connection
- responsibility
- pride
- expanded world-view
- empathy
- acknowledged

**Expert Response Summary**

**Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Descriptive Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>• Taking responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fostering a sense of wanting to follow the rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Building empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fostering a sense of community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Developing ownership of one’s self and goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Engaging and choosing the focus of school projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Participatory learning including choice and responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Making ideas happen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Being a role model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promoting different kinds of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Changing perceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Feeling good about one’s self and accomplishments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Developing trust, skills and problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Descriptive Statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Awareness | • Recognizing temperaments of self and others  
            • Metacognitively recognizing learning story or development  
            • Identifying difficulties, temptations, times to co-regulate  
            • Finding voice on controversial topics  
            • Matching feelings to self and environment  
            • Understanding multiple intelligences  
            • Acknowledging the differences between thought and action  
            • Developing emotional language  
            • Recognizing own identity and a keen awareness of others’ |
| Connection| • Seeing self as a “good” person  
            • Participating through events  
            • Engaging in dialogue  
            • Solving problems individually and in groups  
            • Acknowledging nature  
            • Building awareness of place  
            • Building new friendships through working together  
            • Helping younger children  
            • Contributing through charitable work |
| Acceptance| • Celebrating goodness  
            • Recognizing everyone’s genius  
            • Acknowledging similarities and differences  
            • Acknowledging strengths  
            • Accepting weaknesses  
            • Honouring and embracing diversity |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Descriptive Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Altruistic Behaviors** | • Fostering: courage, trust, kindness, confidence, empathy, and responsibility  
• Engaging  
• Sharing  
• Caring  
• Including  
• Trusting  
• Persevering  
• Speaking your ideas  
• Helping  
• Compromising  
• Holding your ideas to allow another their voice  
• Contributing  
• Relying  
• Giving  
• Opening |
| **Boundaries** | • Wanting to follow the rules versus going with the crowd  
• Knowing when you are giving and when it is okay to set limits with others  
• Standing up for what is right  
• Being a good citizen  
• Acknowledging one’s place in the community  
• Setting boundaries builds self-efficacy  
• Accepting the ups and downs of emotion |
| **Symbolism** | • Using metaphors: spiral, butterfly, ripple  
• Expressing learning as a journey  
• Acknowledging the importance of ritual  
• Transforming  
• Innovating  
• Representing |
| **Events**    | • Kindness Project  
• The Memory Project  
• Hearts and Minds Art Show  
• The SFU Conference: Connected  
• Young Entrepreneurs  
• Sports Day |
### Significance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Descriptive Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills for Life</td>
<td>• Knowing how to share ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowing how to get along with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Understanding how to manage emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Having the courage to engage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Turn taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Developing action oriented individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Engaging in learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowing yourself allows for better understanding of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Collaborating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learning how to calm oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learning to set personal boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy for Others</td>
<td>• Acknowledging strengths and weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Contributing to charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Connecting from a “me” to a “we perspective”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>• Knowing how to make friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowing how to connect with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowing how to problem solve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Developing strategies for dealing with conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Feeling safe to talk about emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Building relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Community</td>
<td>• Developing natural supports in the school culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Impacting not just school culture but families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fostering a sense of belonging and connectedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Seeing where they are in the world and how they fit in it helps them see they can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>change and improve it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Learning</td>
<td>• Working together toward a common goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Discovering big ideas by looking beyond themselves to their larger community, class,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>school, neighborhood and relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fostering self-regulation through the dialogue circle (students used executive functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of inhibitory control, waiting turn to talk, working memory, hold an idea in mind,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cognitive flexibility through perspective taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Descriptive Statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meta-awareness</td>
<td>• Discovering themselves and opening up to really see others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Developing self-regulation skills through self-awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reflecting on self at different stages of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Developing social awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Understanding their learning process through cognitive awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>• Opens up possibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Legitimizes what we are doing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Answers questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Strengthens learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Connects common learning and goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lessens burdens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>• Learning social cues and ways of being with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teaching as facilitating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Appreciating through deep listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Seeing the connections between ideas through metaphors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Making meaning through children’s voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Valuing ideas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Links to Learning/Thinking**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Descriptive Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connection</td>
<td>• Creating openness to new relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pairing with younger students to learn empathy and perspective-taking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The importance of connectedness and belonging, one child said they felt noticed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning as a Journey</td>
<td>• The power of acknowledging the process, the journey as it built trust in individuals and each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Co-creation of knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The power of learning, as it is immersed in their world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A few students mentioned how the learning journey made them think about who they are and who they want to become as adults. Thinking about one’s identity and wanting to ‘grow up’ and have more responsibilities fits with stage development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Descriptive Statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Relational Strategies       | • The dialogue circle is a mechanism for CASEL’s Competencies: self-awareness, learning about personal strengths and weaknesses, emotions, self-management (emotion and behavior regulation), social awareness (understanding others, relationship signs, empathy and perspective taking, communication for conflict resolution, responsible decision making, reflecting on decisions)  
  • Scaffolds  
  • Buddies  
  • This group of students has some understandings for interacting together, planning and debriefing.  
  • Explicit, intentional relationship building through responding to others and developing connections.                                                                                                                                 |
| Developing Identities       | • This group of students has some clear scaffolds for understanding themselves.  
  • Loved to see how the children really seemed to own the whole thing.                                                                                                                                                      |
| Content/ Creativity/ Imagination | • The content of the discussions in the dialogue circle: address pro-social behaviors like altruism and empathy, create emotionally and physically safe school climate, and promote positive mental health by decreasing anxious and depressive symptoms when students are engaged in positive interactions.  
  • Imagination is key; drawing on the non-linear right side of the brain fosters engagement, deeper connections and joy.  
  • The use of symbols (spiral, butterfly) and metaphor forces deeper meaning by engaging students (and adults) in a more profound left brain/right brain or whole brain way. |
| Wisdom in Action            | • Self-regulation is a belief system or a way of being, not a recipe, that begins from within and “ripples” out.                                                                                                            
  • Trusting a meaningful process leads to richness and depth.  
  • Sometimes we (as educators) need to move out of the way and support students as the students lead their own learning. It seems that this is a courageous endeavor for both students and teachers and involves a phenomenal amount of trust and respect. |
| Self-Regulation and Integration | • Self-regulation is what we do in response to a difficult situation and our job as educators is to ensure we provide students with the tools and outlets.  
  • Identifying the need to connect with nature is important as we work towards learners getting enough sleep time and decreasing screen time.                                                                                       |
| Sharing our Journey         | • I believe that every time I listen to another’s learning story or am able to share some of mine, we both change. It may not always be in the way we thought but that is just as important, or more so than what was expected.  
  • Making meaning through children’s voices.  
  • We must trust the wisdom of children and give them voice.  
  • By sharing this learning journey you have given voice to good ideas, given the ideas legitimacy, given an opportunity for voices that would otherwise be silent or obscured to be heard, and you have forged relations and connections among and between people and ideas.  
  • Experiences shared provide authentic learning opportunities.                                                                                                                                                    |
The themes were more descriptive in details and the words were more succinct.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling Words</th>
<th>Participants’ Personal Attributes</th>
<th>Scaffolds for Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Brave</td>
<td>• Abundant</td>
<td>• Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Confidence</td>
<td>• Acceptance</td>
<td>• Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Courageous</td>
<td>• Accountability</td>
<td>• Connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Empowerment</td>
<td>• Amazed</td>
<td>• Discovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Happy</td>
<td>• Appreciation</td>
<td>• Learning by doing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Honoured</td>
<td>• Awareness</td>
<td>• Metacognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hope</td>
<td>• Brilliance</td>
<td>• Metaphor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inspired</td>
<td>• Daring</td>
<td>• Noticed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Loved</td>
<td>• Empathy</td>
<td>• Open-hearted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pride</td>
<td>• Engaged</td>
<td>• Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Powerful</td>
<td>• Intelligent</td>
<td>• Self-awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trusting</td>
<td>• Kindness</td>
<td>• Sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Perseverance</td>
<td>• Togetherness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pro-social</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Respect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Responsible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Smart</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Thoughtful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>