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Building Self-Compassion in Adolescents Through a Mindfulness Program

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Building Self-Compassion in Adolescents
Through a Mindfulness Program

by

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A THESIS

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Abstract

Adolescence is a critical time in human life with regards to identity development; adolescents may experience increased emotional turmoil, stress, and susceptibility to mental health problems (O’Connell, Boat, & Warner, 2009). Implementing a mindfulness program within school curriculum may positively influence this crucial time of growth.

This case study focused on teaching self-compassion to adolescents through the “Learning to BREATHE” program. Self-compassion involves being kind towards oneself, understanding that we are all part of common humanity, and mindfulness (Neff, 2003a). This multi-methods study was grounded in Integral Theory (Wilber, 2007), which integrates multiple perspectives of self-compassion. In keeping with Integral Methodological Pluralism, self-compassion was examined through multiple lenses with both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The findings indicated that a mindfulness program teaching self-compassion had many benefits to students, including increased mindful awareness and focused attention; emotional awareness and regulation; self-awareness, self-kindness, and self-acceptance; resiliency and growth mindset; compassion, acceptance, and forgiveness for others; and a belief it could reduce bullying in schools.

While school administrators believed that social and emotional learning can benefit students, classroom application and staff buy-in remains a challenge. Mindfulness programs in the school context will need to be introduced slowly over the next several years as students, parents, teachers, and administrators all have to understand the importance of these skills, before they can be implemented into the classroom.

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It is for the youth that I conducted this project, so I dedicate this thesis to my amazing children: Vhairi Leahy, Sheldon Leahy, Stephen Leahy, and Dia Anderson. Their love and support inspired me to see this project through.

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CHAPTER 1

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE TOPIC, QUESTIONS, AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Adolescence is a time of many simultaneous developmental processes that can create difficulties and susceptibility to mental health problems (O'Connell, Boat, & Warner, 2009). Education designed to help students successfully navigate this crucial period is important for healthy adolescent development. In order to build resilience, students require a firm basis in their individual biological, psychological, and sociological knowledge of themselves as individuals and within the social fabric of their families, communities, and society as a whole. One area of recent study is to increase self-compassion amongst adolescents as a way to build resiliency against future mental health difficulties and to increase wellbeing (Neff, 2003).

Self-compassion involves treating oneself with kindness, seeing oneself as part of common humanity with flaws and shortcomings, and mindfulness, which is seeing oneself at the present moment, nonjudgmentally (Neff, 2003). Teaching self-compassion, if built within the regular school curriculum, could become a critical method of instilling resilience and wellbeing in adolescents. Mindfulness can help adolescents to reduce emotional distress, promote emotional balance, improve attention, and contribute to motivated learning (Broderick, 2013). This case study combined multiple developmental perspectives to teach self-compassion through a mindfulness program to adolescents. This study could inform school districts to include mindfulness programs into the regular school curriculum.

Problem Statement

Social and emotional difficulties often manifest early in students' lives, and these difficulties can have a direct effect on their academic, emotional, and social wellbeing (O'Connell, Boat, & Warner, 2009). In fact, a half of the lifetime cases of psychiatric disorders are evident by the age of 14, and three-fourths by age 25 (Kessler, Berglund, Demler, Jin, Merikangas, & Walters, 2005). These problems can persist into adulthood and create psychological burdens for the individuals and economic burdens for society. In fact, it is estimated that more than one-quarter of the costs for mental health treatment among adolescents occurred in the education and juvenile justice systems (Costello, Copeland, Cowell, & Keeler, 2007).

Prevention of social and emotional difficulties can benefit both the individual and society; subsequently, educating for building resiliency may prevent or lower these emotional difficulties. Given the statistics noted above, it would seem logical that by building resilience during adolescence, the rates of mental health issues may be reduced. Recent research has found that people's awareness of how their brains function, how their brains can influence their emotions and behaviours, and how their brains can influence their relationships with others and society may prevent social and emotional difficulties later in life (Amen, 2008; Davidson & Begley, 2012; Goleman, 1995; Siegel, 2013). More specifically, recent studies have shown that self-compassion helps build resiliency and increases psychological wellbeing (Neff, Kirkpatrick, & Rude, 2007). In fact, a meta-analysis of fourteen studies on self-compassion has shown that an increase in self-compassion lowers levels of mental health symptoms (Macbeth & Gumley, 2012).

Adolescence is a critical time of development when young people push boundaries and create both challenges and catastrophes (Siegel, 2013). Adolescents can be taught to develop awareness so “the power of the adolescent mind can be utilized to benefit oneself and others” (p. 23). If schools offer programs to teach self-compassion, this could increase life satisfaction, wellbeing, and social connectedness and reduce anxiety, depression, and perceived stress, (Bluth, Gaylord, Camp, Mullarkey, & Hobbs, 2015). This research study examined if teaching a mindfulness program increased self-compassion amongst adolescents. This research project is a comprehensive view of self-compassion through Ken Wilber’s (2007) Integral Theory to investigate if a mindfulness program, implemented within the existing educational system, will give adolescents the tools to navigate their world competently, confidently, respectfully, and with compassion for themselves and others (Wienhold-Leahy, 2014).

My Personal Journey in Self-compassion

My world was rocked when a significant person in my life was hospitalized due to severe depression and suicidal ideations. She needed 24 hour around the clock supervision. This was followed by several years of hospitalizations for self-harm, psychiatrist and counsellor visits, school support meetings, and prescriptions for drug therapy, but nothing seemed to help. She hated herself, and I did not know how to help her.

During this time, I was attending my Master of Education program and working full time in special education. In my work, I became aware of how many other students, mostly girls, were suffering from mental health issues such as eating disorders, depression, and anxiety. It seemed to me to be an epidemic. As I did not see any adequate help for her, I was not confident that the medical field could help these students. I believe that these mental health problems need to be prevented, and this would come from the educational field.

I ventured into the field of mindfulness in education after my introductory course in the Doctorate of Education program with my amazing supervisor, Dr. Veronika Bohac-Clarke. I had no idea what a life-changing program this would be for me personally and professionally. As I entered into the world of mindfulness, I began a mindfulness practice; it transformed my way of seeing the world. I realized the influence I had in how I perceived the world; I became a much more optimistic and happier person. I reflected upon my world and became content and grateful for what I had.

Then disaster struck; I lost my husband to cancer mid-way through my doctoral program. I then dove head-first into the world of self-compassion, healing myself along the way. I attended a self-compassion week-long retreat in the mountains of New Mexico, a silent meditation retreat on Denman Island, one of the stunning Gulf Islands off the coast of Vancouver Island, and I attended the self-compassion teacher training at St. Benedict's Monastery in Winnipeg, the first teacher training session in Canada. These retreats and training sessions were uplifting, reassuring, and thought provoking. The world of self-compassion is a world where I can be genuine, accepted, and loved. It is an amazing feeling; I want to share this with others. I believe self-compassion can aid others to build resiliency and increase wellbeing; it has been a personal transformation for me.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this case study was to assess the impact of a mindfulness program on self-compassion with adolescents in one school in one city in British Columbia. Self-compassion involves three main elements: self-kindness (being kind to oneself rather than self-critical), common humanity (seeing oneself within a larger society), and mindfulness (being aware of one's thoughts and feelings in the present moment and not allowing them to overwhelm) (Neff,

2003a). Self-compassion also enhances compassion for others by recognizing connectedness with others and by promoting prosocial behaviours, and it is an important aspect of emotional intelligence by monitoring one's emotions to guide thinking and behaviour to help cope with stress.

Some studies have also shown self-compassion to be different for girls than for boys, as girls seem to develop less self-kindness because they are more self-critical, yet society deems them to be more caring and nurturing, which would suggest more compassion for others (Neff & Pommier, 2013; Yarnell & Neff, 2013). Helping students to understand and manage themselves and their emotions improves attention and memory, helps students control impulsivity and negative emotions, improves relationships, and makes them better learners (Lantieri, 2008).

Intervention methods steeped within the classroom curricula that promote elements of self-compassion could increase resilience and therefore wellbeing in students. In mindfulness practice, one learns to pay attention and focus the mind on the present moment non-judgementally and with acceptance (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). A core part of mindfulness programs is to be aware of and regulate thoughts and emotions and build an awareness and understanding of oneself with compassion for oneself and others. This awareness has resulted in students having more emotional self-control, displaying an increase in prosocial behaviours, and displaying a decrease in problem behaviours (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011).

The intervention method used for this research study is the "Learning to BREATHE" program (Broderick, 2013). This program is designed to develop mindfulness, which helps to enhance emotional regulation, strengthen attention, aid in academic performance, increase stress management skills, and empower adolescents as "they grapple with the psychological tasks of adolescence" (p. 13). The BC curriculum is currently undergoing a change, and the teaching of

social and emotional learning, which includes increasing emotional regulation, attention, and stress management skills, has been included in cross-curricular competencies and also within subject-specific curricula (BCEd, 2014a). It is hoped that by developing a mindfulness program to teach components of self-compassion within the BC curriculum, self-compassion and therefore emotional wellbeing among students will increase.

Integral Theory (Wilber, 2007) was used as a framework to view multiple perspectives of adolescent development to determine if the mindfulness program increased student self-compassion, emotional regulation, and self-awareness and acceptance, and if self-compassion impacts student behaviours, mindset, and compassion for others. Integral Theory or All Quadrants All Levels (AQAL) examines a phenomenon according to quadrants, levels, lines, states, and types. The four quadrants of Integral Theory are the individual-exterior (UR), which is the objective view of a phenomenon; the individual-interior (UL), which includes feelings and emotions; the collective-interior (LL), which includes relationships and culture; and the collective exterior (LR), which includes society and systems (Wilber, 2007). AQAL was used as a framework as it includes many different points of view with which to study self-compassion. Integral Theory is explained in more detail later in this dissertation.

Research Questions

How did the mindfulness program enable students to gain self-compassion? The research questions specifically targeted the four quadrants of Integral Theory as seen in Table 1.

1. Did students report a change in the self-report questionnaires?
 - a. Self-compassion Scale
 - b. Compassion Scale
 - c. Mindfulness Awareness Attention Scale

- c. Mindset Quiz
2. Did student resiliency increase?
 - a. In what ways did students perceive the three components of self-compassion: mindfulness, self-kindness, and common humanity?
 - b. In what ways did students report a change in emotional regulation?
 - c. Was there an increased sense of self-awareness?
 3. Was there a change in classroom or school culture?
 - a. In what ways did students perceive compassion towards others?
 - b. In what ways did student interpersonal relationships change?
 4. What were the benefits and challenges to teaching self-compassion within school curricula?
 - a. What were teacher/administrator perceptions regarding the implementation of mindfulness programs within BC curricula?
 - b. Does self-compassion and mindfulness fulfill the requirements on social and emotional learning mandated by the new BC curriculum?
 5. What were the gender differences in self-compassion?

Table 1 <i>Research questions in the four quadrants of Integral Theory (Wilber, 2007)</i>	
UL: Individual-interior Quadrant 2. Did student resiliency increase? a. In what ways did students perceive the three components of self-compassion: mindfulness, self-kindness, and common humanity? b. In what ways did students report a change in emotional regulation? c. Was there an increased sense of self-awareness?	UR: Individual-exterior Quadrant 1. Did students report a change in the self-report questionnaires? a. Mindfulness Awareness Attention Scale b. Self-compassion Scale c. Mindset Quiz d. Compassion Scale
LL: Collective-interior Quadrant 3. Was there a change in classroom or school culture? a. In what ways did students perceive compassion towards others? b. In what ways did student interpersonal relationships change?	LR: Collective-exterior Quadrant 4. What were the benefits and challenges to teaching self-compassion within school curricula? a. What were teacher/administrator perceptions regarding the implementation of mindfulness programs within BC curricula? b. Does self-compassion and mindfulness fulfill the requirements on social and emotional learning mandated by the new BC curriculum?
5. What are the gender differences in self-compassion?	

Methodology

This multi-methods research study focused on an intervention using the “Learning to BREATHE” program to increase self-compassion in adolescents. This action research was conducted in a city located in the southern interior of British Columbia, and it aimed to add to understanding teacher and administrator perceptions surrounding teaching mindfulness within the school curriculum. An involvement of practitioners was paramount in all its phases from planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting.

Research Design

This action research used multiple methodologies to gather data on the effects of a mindfulness program on self-compassion in adolescents. The “Learning to BREATHE” curriculum was taught during regular Religion classes for grades eight and nine students. During Religion classes, teachers are to focus on Health and Career education, which is where social and emotional learning and mindfulness can be easily incorporated. Multiple data collection methods were used to assess the effectiveness of the program.

Sample

This case study was conducted in a mid-size city located in the southern interior of British Columbia. The city has a population of approximately 85,000 people. This case study was conducted in one private school within the city.

The sample was chosen from all students in grades 8 and 9 during their regular, required, Religion classes. There were 83 students in total from both grades that made up the subject pool. One Religion teacher taught all grade 8 and 9 Religion classes during this semester. All classes received the “Learning to BREATHE” program in 18 twenty-minute sessions over an eight week period. Students in grades 8 and 9 were chosen for this program as this is an important developmental period where children develop their sense of selves, build life-long friendships, and when relationships with peers and parents go through changes (Costello, Copeland, & Angold, 2011; Selfout et al., 2009).

Interviews were conducted with students, the teacher, educational assistants, and administrators. In total, fourteen student interviews and six adult interviews were conducted. Two boys and two girls from each class were randomly chosen to be interviewed. The Religion teacher, two educational assistants, the principal of the school, the superintendent of Catholic

schools in the district, and one public school assistant superintendent were chosen to be interviewed. Both private and public administrators were chosen to get a cross-section of attitudes from both the public and private sectors. I hoped to gain valuable information about implementing mindfulness programs within public and private schools for the future.

Data Collection

Several methods, as shown in Table 2, were used to measure if self-compassion increased among the sample of students. Prior to start of the mindfulness program, all students filled in several questionnaires: the Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003b), Compassion Scale (Pommier, 2010), Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) (Brown & Ryan, 2003), and Mindset Questionnaire (Dweck, 2006). The Mindset Questionnaire was used as a method to show any changes in academic perseverance in students. A growth mindset has been well documented as a way of thinking that leads to academic success, whereas a fixed mindset leads to apathy (Dweck, 2006). An increase in a growth mindset would assume that academic success would also increase. The effectiveness of the program on student mindset and academic success could influence school district acceptance and implementation of such programs in the future. All of the participants completed the same questionnaires at the end of the program. In this way, the research showed if there was a statistically significant change in mindfulness, self-compassion, compassion for others, and mindset as a result of the intervention program.

Research participants also completed an on-going journal throughout the program. Journaling is a useful way to collect information on students' attitudes towards the program that may not be covered in the questionnaires (Leahy, 2000). Journaling topics included both directed and open-ended questions regarding student perceptions of mindfulness, self-compassion, and compassion for others. This information was used as a way to view how students felt towards

themselves and others, and how students felt towards the program. Journaling was also used to generate additional information that the researcher had not thought about. Data collected from journal entries could direct future research in this area.

Table 2: <i>Data collection methods divided into the four quadrants of integral theory</i>	
UL Student journaling Student interviews	UR Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale Self-Compassion Scale Compassion Scale Mindset Questionnaire
LL Student interviews Student focus groups Educational assistant interviews Teacher interviews	LR Administrator interview Superintendent interviews

Individual student, teacher, educational assistant, and administrator interviews were conducted at the end of the program. Student interviews assessed student perceptions regarding self-compassion and the program itself. Through the teacher interview, I tapped into the teacher's perception of the program and her thoughts about the policies and procedures surrounding teaching mindfulness to students. The administrator interviews added to the data surrounding private and public school policies regarding mindfulness programs in the classroom. These interviews generated data for the present research, but they also generated additional themes and ideas for future research.

In addition to individual interviews, student focus groups were conducted at the end of the program. The focus groups were used to gather data on the shared understanding of self-compassion amongst students.

The multi-methods study integrates multiple viewpoints of self-compassion amongst adolescents. The variety and triangulation of data enabled me to find the answers to the research questions and enlighten further understanding of the teaching of mindfulness in the high school context.

Rationale and Significance

Since this is the first known research study that measured self-compassion in adolescents in this particular school district following a mindfulness program, this research may influence if mindfulness should be taught within the school district. Also, this research increased the body of knowledge surrounding intervention programs that may influence student mindfulness, compassion for others, and mindset. This study might also answer some questions about gender differences and self-compassion. Most importantly, this study measured the effects of a mindfulness program on self-compassion and resiliency in adolescents, which will hopefully increase mental health and wellbeing amongst the research subjects.

Role of the Researcher

As researcher, I was responsible for initiating this case study within one private school. I worked closely with administration and the classroom teacher in the implementation, teaching throughout the eighteen session program, and through the final evaluation stage. I taught the “Learning to BREATHE” program to the students in four separate classes. My role was facilitator, teacher, observer, and researcher.

Researcher Assumptions

After the implementation of this eighteen session mindfulness program, I expected:

- Increase in students' mindfulness awareness as measured by the Mindful Awareness Attention Scale and student journals
- Increase in a growth mindset as measured by the Mindset Scale
- Increase in self-compassion as measured by the Self-Compassion Scale, student journals, and student interviews
- Increase in compassion for others as measured by the Compassion Scale, data from student journals, interviews, and focus group sessions
- Lower levels of self-compassion amongst female subjects than male subjects
- Higher levels of compassion for others in female subjects than male subjects
- Conflicting teacher perceptions about teaching mindfulness programs within the curriculum

Definitions of Key Terminology

Awareness or consciousness: to have the capacity to reflect on one's environment through the senses, and to be able to manage and direct these experiences (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). For the purpose of the present research, these two concepts are used interchangeably.

Compassion: is the recognition and kindness one feels towards people who are suffering and wanting to help (Neff, 2011).

Mindfulness: is the "awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment" (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 145).

Mindfulness practice: is the practice of sitting, observing thoughts, feelings moment by

moment, nonjudgmentally (Davidson & Begley, 2012).

Self-awareness: the ability to accurately evaluate one's emotions and thoughts as they affect one's behaviours (CASEL, 2013).

Social and emotional learning (SEL): programming which is based on five core competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2013).

Organization of the Dissertation

Since this research study focused on building elements of self-compassion, the first section of the literature review, chapter two, describes the elements of self-compassion in detail. The next section justifies my choice of Integral Theory as my contextual framework in relation to the elements of self-compassion. Then I situate the research questions into the four quadrants of Integral Theory highlighting existing literature in the area, showing gaps in existing research, and providing a rationale for my research questions. The final section of chapter two reviews current research in mindfulness and self-compassion.

Chapter three details the methodology used in this research study. First I describe Integral Methodological Pluralism (IMP) as described by Wilber (2007) and include the rationale for using IMP in my study. The next section describes the epistemologies and ontology used in this multi-methods research study to rationalize the use of both qualitative and quantitative methodology. Then I describe the action research, the setting, the population, and the data collection methods. Finally, I include ethical considerations, trustworthiness, and limitations and delimitations of the study.

Chapter four includes the findings of the research data accumulated in this study. I describe my data, both qualitative and quantitative, within the four quadrants of integral theory. I

show the results within the four quadrants of integral theory, highlighting statistically significant results and the main themes within the data.

Chapter five is the second level of analysis, and I discuss the integration of the results within integral theory. I analyze the results on two levels. First, I integrate the data between quadrants to see where the themes converge. Second, I analyze the data along the levels of development to see if the students gained levels of consciousness.

Finally, chapter six discusses results and answers the research questions, draws conclusions, discusses the implications of this research within the broader view of the teaching of mindfulness within an educational field. I also discuss recommendations for practice, quality of conclusions, and significance of the study. I conclude with a note from the researcher about my journey in mindfulness education.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Self-compassion has been shown to increase psychological wellbeing and happiness (Hope, Koestner, & Milyavskaya, 2014; Lindsay & Creswell, 2014). Through mindfulness, students may be able to raise their awareness of themselves as biological, emotional, and social beings to connect to themselves, their peers, families, and greater community. These connections develop integrity or “wholeness” so that they can become authentic beings (Palmer, 2004). “Whether it is a relationship to one’s own self, to others, or to the world, the experience of deep connection arises when there is a profound respect, a deep caring, and a quality of ‘being with’ that honours the truth of each participant in the relationship” (Kessler, 2000, p. 18).

The purpose of this literature review is to describe the elements of self-compassion (Neff, 2003a), to situate the elements of self-compassion within Integral Theory (Wilber, 2007), and to assess the implication of teaching self-compassion through a mindfulness program to adolescents. I propose that a mindfulness program can be implemented into the BC curriculum to increase students’ self-compassion, which will increase students’ resiliency and wellbeing, and reduce susceptibility to mental health disorders. This research will add to existing literature on mindfulness programs that teach elements of self-compassion in middle-school students.

Self-Compassion

Self-compassion is a concept brought into mainstream research by Kristin Neff (2003a) about a decade ago, and it involves a non-judgmental understanding of one’s own suffering and failure without being overly self-critical and with being kind to oneself. Self-compassion involves three main elements: self-kindness (being kind to oneself rather than self-critical), common humanity (seeing oneself within a larger society), and mindfulness (being aware of

one's thoughts and feelings in the present moment and not allowing them to overwhelm). Self-compassion is also an important aspect of emotional intelligence by monitoring one's emotions to guide thinking and behaviour to help cope with stress, and it enhances compassion for others by recognizing connectedness with others.

Compassion is not a new concept; it is a core practice in Buddhism. Buddhism, although fairly new to the West, has been rooted in the East for over twenty-five hundred years; its popularity might be attributed to its focus on uncovering universal truths and the nature of the mind (Cayton, 2012). According to the Dalai Lama, to understand self-compassion is to look at the Four Noble Truths (Varela, 1997). The Four Noble Truths are: "recognize the Noble Truth of suffering; abandon the Noble Truth of the source of suffering; accomplish the Noble Truth of cessation of suffering; and cultivate the Noble Truth of the Path" (p. 111). In essence, this means we need to recognize the cause our own suffering, not from the outside, but from within our minds; to relieve suffering is to change our responses to suffering. As the Dalai Lama stated, "The person who is experiencing suffering is oneself, and the one who needs to apply the means to dispel suffering is also oneself. And the cause for this is within oneself" (Varela, 1997 p. 111). Therefore, to remove suffering, one must look inwards at the self. According to Pema Chödrön, a Buddhist monk, compassion is as much working with ourselves as it is with others. This entails "allowing ourselves to feel what we feel and not pushing it away. It means accepting every aspect of ourselves, even the parts we don't like" (Chödrön, 1997, p. 79). To have compassion for others is to first have compassion for ourselves, with all our imperfections.

Self-compassion allows us to recognize our own suffering, and we strive to relieve it in caring and kind ways (Neff, 2011). Our individualistic and narcissistic society relishes in a competitive and materialistic culture; we tend to blame others for suffering in our lives, or if

suffering is turned inwards, we tend to blame and criticize ourselves in often destructive ways. Self-compassion, alternatively, helps individuals to be kinder and more compassionate towards the self. The next section of the paper will explain the three elements of self-compassion in more detail, as described by Kristin Neff (2003a; 2011) and Chögyam Trungpa (1984), a Buddhist meditation master.

Self-Kindness

Self-compassion involves mindful attention to oneself nonjudgmentally with loving kindness (Neff, 2003a). Being kind to oneself means being aware of oneself, one's strengths and weaknesses, with acceptance and understanding. Kindness towards oneself allows problems and human potential to be seen accurately with appreciation (Trungpa, 1984). To accept our mistakes means we are not self-critical and self-judging (Neff, 2011). By using sympathetic rather than judgmental language to express empathy towards ourselves, we can actively comfort ourselves as we would others. Unfortunately, self-kindness is not something actively taught or even accepted as a culturally valued response. Our society stresses individualism, and when we fail, we tend to blame ourselves with self-criticism and shame.

How we choose to think about ourselves is important in self-kindness. It is a choice to be authentic and let our true selves be seen (Brown, 2010). Building self-compassion may aid in developing a healthy self-identity. Developing and maintaining a healthy self-identity is important in adolescent development and wellbeing. In fact, Erikson (1968) deemed self-identity as critical to healthy adolescent development. Self-kindness allows people to see themselves accurately without judgment or criticism, which should aid in the development of an authentic, healthy self-identity. Another way to accept oneself is through an awareness that we are all just part of a common humanity.

Common Humanity

A common humanity suggests that we are all human, and we are all fallible (Neff, 2011). We need to look at ourselves and appreciate who we are and what we have. People are human beings, with feelings, passions, ignorance, and shortcomings that are the “natural elegance and equipment of human beings” (Trungpa, 1984, p. 19). A core element of humanity is that it is imperfect. This means that defeat and suffering are part of the human condition. In choosing an authentic self, we need courage to allow ourselves to be vulnerable – in feeling that we are not good enough and feel acceptance of our inadequacies without shame or guilt (Brown, 2010). Self-compassion means that we comfort ourselves when we make mistakes; wrong choices are part of human nature and are not to be criticized (Neff, 2011). As Palmer (2004) stated, wholeness “means embracing brokenness as an integral part of life” (p. 5). When we focus on negativity, our perspective becomes narrow, and we become self-absorbed in our insecurity. Through a growth in self-compassion, one is able to handle negative situations and feel more in control of one’s suffering. To look at one’s suffering nonjudgmentally and accept one’s own faults means to acknowledge that everyone suffers, and everyone is human.

Compassion means to “suffer with” which implies our connected relationships with others (Neff, 2011). Self-compassion suggests an interconnection with other human beings as part of common humanity. Connection, as defined by Brown, is “the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship” (2010, p. 19). Connectedness and belonging is a fundamental human need. Maslow (1943) deemed love (human connections) as a basic need that is required before esteem and self-actualization can be met; many psychopathologies are caused by a lack of love and affection. We have a need for

connectedness; humans are social beings. Belonging is the “innate human desire to be part of something larger than us...because true belonging only happens when we present our authentic, imperfect selves to the world, our sense of belonging can never be greater than our level of self-acceptance” (Brown, 2010, p. 26). We would not be who we are without our relationships with others. Self-compassion involves accepting oneself as fallible, which encourages acceptance of others with their flaws as part of common humanity.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the “awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment” (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 145). It is to experience the way things are and not to judge them. A conscious awareness exists in the unfolding of experiencing the here and now (Neff, 2011). It means becoming in-tune to oneself in “genuine reality, without any expectations or preconceptions” (Trungpa, 1984, p. 16).

Mindfulness is an awareness of awareness or meta-awareness, but it also entails an *acceptance* of the way things are (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). This does not mean we become apathetic towards the way things are and not try to improve our life’s circumstances. Rather, mindfulness allows us to see the way things are, to take steps to improve the situation, and to recognize and accept when changes are not possible (Neff, 2011). However, it is sometimes difficult to change what goes on inside our heads: our thoughts, feelings, and emotions. These are the automatic thoughts we cannot control, but they can control us (Goleman, 2006). When we are aware of our thoughts as only thoughts, they can lose their control of our mind. A conscious awareness becomes a calm foundation to experience life (Neff, 2003a). By reducing sensory input and sitting quietly, one can begin to pay attention to inner feelings, experience these feelings, and

bring them into conscious awareness (Neff, 2011). It means to awaken the heart within us to develop genuine kindness towards ourselves (Trungpa, 1984).

Self-Compassion is not Self-Esteem

Self-compassion is different than self-esteem. Self-esteem is dependent on how well we *think* we are doing in the world and causes us to compare ourselves to others. The self-esteem movement of the past has created a generation of young people who tend to have an over-inflated sense of their “self.” According to Twenge (2013), the “Generation Me” is more individualistic, and members of this generation have higher self-esteem than previous generations; young people in this generation have an over-inflated sense of their own abilities and expectations for their future. Narcissistic personality traits are also higher in this generation, and making money is more important than thinking about social issues. Self-esteem is associated with *thinking* you are a better person, not *being* a better person (Neff, 2003a).

Self-esteem is heavily reliant on the “*perceived* judgments of others”, which leads to competition, as we try to look better than others. These perceived judgments often come from strangers rather than those that are closest to us (Neff, 2003a, p. 139). In addition, adolescents rely very heavily upon the perceptions of their peers who may become more important than their parents (Neufeld, 2004). This reliance on the perceived opinions of others makes self-esteem very vulnerable and easily shattered. If we do not think we are better than others, we feel a negative self-worth, or we lower our expectations of ourselves (Neff, 2011). Social comparison also affects our relationships; we tend to distance ourselves from people we deem as being better than us (Neff, 2011). If we feel others are better than us, we feel threatened. This may cause people to pick on or lash out at others that are better than themselves and may be responsible for bullying behaviours (Neff, 2003a).

Maslow (1943) stated esteem is the fourth stage in his hierarchy of needs. He described esteem as a desire for a high evaluation based on achievement and respect from others. He stated esteem leads to confidence, independence, and prestige, but a lack of esteem can lead to discouragement and neurosis. Many young people in society do have a high self-esteem, but it is reliant on the sometimes arbitrary opinions of others, not on an authentic self-perception. And when their perceptions of these fickle opinions change, their self-esteem falls, sometimes to the point of mental distress and illness. Palmer (2004) stated when people live a divided life; they have an empty self; their identity is a void to be filled with competition, consumerism, or racism – trying to be better than others. Instead of self-esteem, we should be striving for self-compassion and self-acceptance for who we are to have a healthy self-identity. If our self-worth and belonging is “grounded in simply being human, we can’t be rejected or cast out by others. Our humanity can never be taken away from us, no matter how far we fall” (Neff, 2011, p. 69).

Summary

Self-compassion comes from ancient Buddhist philosophy and consists of three elements: self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness (Neff, 2003a). Self-kindness is to accept our authentic selves with loving kindness rather than self-criticism. Common humanity suggests that we are all humans; therefore, we are not perfect, and we need to accept our faults with kindness as part of being human. Mindfulness is a conscious awareness of the present moment with acceptance and understanding.

Self-compassion implies an open awareness of oneself with acceptance and kindness as part of the human condition, but in today’s world, adolescents often live a divided life, separated by competition and consumerism and have an empty self. I chose Integral Theory (Wilber, 2007) as the contextual framework for the present study as “integral” suggests a connection or

integration of the different aspects of the self into an integrated whole. The next section of this paper describes Integral Theory and my rationale for choosing this particular framework for my study.

Contextual Framework

Ken Wilber's (2007) Integral Theory incorporates five elements: quadrants, levels, lines, states, and types. It has been termed AQAL, "All Quadrants, All Levels," and is a way of mapping development within the quadrants, to strive for higher levels, along different lines, while being aware of states and types. Before I describe why I chose the integral framework to study self-compassion in adolescents, I will first define integrity and why adolescents need an "integrated brain" to form wholeness between their inner and outer selves (Siegel, 2013).

Integrity

Integrity, as Palmer (2004) described it, is the "state or quality of being entire, complete, and unbroken" (p. 8). But being whole involves being true to oneself and allows one's authentic selves to be vulnerable. In contrast, the divided life is an absence of wholeness, a personal pathology. He stressed mutual encouragement for "rejoining soul and role" (p. 10). Wholeness cannot be embraced alone; we need trustworthy relationships and community support. Between infancy and adolescence, the true self becomes threatened; the child becomes confused between "the public world of role and the hidden world of soul" (p 15). In our desire to succeed, we lose our souls and disappear into our roles. This incongruity between our inner and outer selves undermines our morale and relationships.

Csikszentmihalyi (1993) stated that when individual uniqueness becomes integrated, it leads to complexity or wholeness. This means that the self consists of knowledge, feelings, and actions, and when one becomes conscious of the processes that are happening within the self,

one is able to control it. The self includes all that passes into consciousness, and when we pay attention to it, over time, it shapes the self. When we integrate these processes and understand the processes within us, we become whole.

Forming a relationship between the inner and outer selves is important for the development of healthy adolescent self-identity (Kessler, 2000). Many adolescents (and adults) have little self-knowledge of their authentic selves. Building an authentic self begins within an awareness of how the brain works and how it influences thoughts and feelings, actions and behaviours.

The Integrated Brain

Siegel (2013) described integration as the ability to link different aspects of the self into an interconnected whole. It means to find out who we are by connecting our past, present, and future to find our authentic selves. It is about honouring differences and promoting connections with others. Integration helps us create health in our bodies, minds, and relationships. In adolescence, different parts of the brain link together resulting in an “integrated brain” (Siegel, 2013). The integrated brain generates an increase in cognitive control, perspective-taking, rational decision-making, and a decrease in impulsivity. With integration, adolescents are able to achieve more complex ways of thinking such as “self-awareness, empathy, emotional balance, and flexibility” (p. 100).

Between adolescence and adulthood, students can be taught to connect their inner and outer selves to create integration, or wholeness (Palmer, 2004). Adolescents can deepen their awareness of how their brain interacts with their environment to acknowledge the power they have to make necessary changes toward integration (Siegel, 2013). This journey to wholeness

may include support from the community. This community can be the classroom where adolescents can feel seen and heard, safe and respected for who they really are.

Integral Theory states that acting in an integral manner means that one is whole or complete; “integral means comprehensive, balanced, and inclusive” (Wilber, Patten, Leonard, & Morelli, 2008, p. 27). The integral method is a way to examine aspects of the self, such as one’s biology, thoughts, relationships, and society, within one contextual framework to analyze a mindfulness program’s effect on self-compassion, which may increase integrity and wholeness in adolescents.

Integral Theory

I chose Integral Theory as my framework, as I was able to integrate many different epistemological perspectives to build a comprehensive contextual framework to determine if a mindfulness program increased self-compassion and resiliency in adolescents. It is to look within a person and from without; it is to see multiple perspectives to integrate these perspectives into one integrated structure (Wilber, 2007). Through Wilber’s Integral Theory, I determined if self-compassion increased levels of consciousness along four lines of development: cognitive, emotional, self-identity, and interpersonal lines within the four quadrants. The framework of Integral Theory is a post-metaphysical approach, which emphasizes an *awareness* of how things are. This means that adolescents have to experience phenomenon for themselves rather than just be presented with information, and mindfulness is a way for adolescents to increase awareness. It is how our minds become conscious about phenomenon within our own bodies, minds, cultures, and systems to see it as a complete whole.

One epistemology or educational construct cannot fully explain how a person learns, makes sense of their world, gains a sense of self-identity, and develops self-compassion. Each of these

processes involves a myriad of epistemologies that cannot be combined into one ontological construct. Kegan (1994) stated a metapsychology is one method to organize the integration of ideas, and it depends on how different theories conceive of the phenomenon, whether it be biological, psychological, or philosophical. Integral Theory, then, can be the metapsychology within which to place multiple epistemologies. More specifically, Integral Theory can be used to study self-compassion using different epistemologies within the four quadrants of AQAL.

The four quadrants of Integral Theory are the individual-exterior (UR) or objective quadrant, which includes the physical body and bodily systems; the individual-interior (UL) or subjective quadrant, which includes feelings and emotions; the collective-interior (LL) or intersubjective quadrant, which includes relationships and culture; and the collective exterior (LR) or interobjective quadrant, which includes society and systems (Wilber, 2007). These quadrants all develop simultaneously and are interwoven into each other into a true integral framework (Esbjorn-Hargens, 2009). The integral model (AQAL) further organizes the quadrants into lines, levels, states, and types. This framework allowed me the flexibility to include many different epistemologies to study adolescents along several lines or streams of development while maintaining a structure within which to study one phenomenon: self-compassion. Self-compassion is viewed from the four quadrants to see the “big picture.” Not only do we see if self-compassion can increase students’ resiliency and wellbeing, but we can see if self-compassion help them to be less individualistic and narcissistic, more aware of social issues and their role in society, and more compassionate towards others. The Integral Theory is necessary to have an all-encompassing view of self-compassion from the individual to the societal level. Even though I believe this is the best methodology to be used in this research study, I had a few concerns with the integral method.

Several concerns arose for me as I was developing the integral framework for my research study. First of all is my concern to remain secular with elements of my study that have religious origins. Since I conducted my study within a private Catholic school, I had to be cognizant of remaining religiously neutral. Wilber's model has been criticized as combining philosophy with religion (McIntosh, 2012). Even though a lot of Wilber's philosophy has informed my research study, I am using Wilber's ideas more as a framework to situate my study; I am not necessarily following his philosophical content. But I am also using a program to raise adolescent self-compassion using mindfulness, a concept based in Eastern spiritual philosophy. Mindfulness practice may be based on Tibetan philosophy, but it does not adhere to one religious belief system. Mindful practice is more about teaching students to become aware of themselves in the moment as biological, emotional, and social beings with acceptance and understanding. Also, self-compassion has been brought into the mainstream scientific community by Kristin Neff (2003a), a renowned researcher, and it has been included in over 200 scientific journals. Self-compassion and mindfulness practice have repeatedly shown positive results, and may be a viable option towards building wellbeing in students. It is not a religion, but it is a way of being, and I see the benefits that this can provide to students. Even so, I expected some parents to be suspicious about concepts based on ancient Tibetan origin to be taught in a Catholic Religion class.

A second concern I have about the integral framework is about the difference between the levels and lines. While developing my research, I have been consistently questioning whether self-identity was a level or line. McIntosh (2012) pointed out that Wilber described self-identity as both a level and a line. For instance, he described the self as a proximate self (UR), a distant self (UL), and the ultimate Witness (LL), which would suggest that the self develops along levels

within the four quadrants. In essence, the “self” cannot be separated from the “I,” “me,” or “we” because it is a part of all three quadrants. Yet he also states that self-identity is a line of development, and that the “self” only develops along one line of development. In the current proposal, I have situated self-identity as a line of development, yet self-identity is a central component in adolescent development and self-compassion. Self-identity is the backbone of wholeness, integrity, and complexity.

A final concern I had with the Integral Theory is the complexity of it. Integral Methodological Pluralism (IMP), as you will read later, is a very complex methodology for any research project, especially one conducted by a doctoral student. IMP suggests that there are eight viewpoints which may involve eight different data collection methods in one research study. This can quickly become difficult, time consuming, and overwhelming for a student or even a seasoned researcher. I have endeavoured to include all of the points of view IMP includes, but this has become more of an overview of self-compassion in all four quadrants rather than a comprehensive view in any one area. Future research may answer additional questions in any one quadrant. IMP can be a difficult, yet all-inclusive framework to view a phenomenon.

Even though I have had some difficulties with the integral framework, it was an integrative and comprehensive framework to situate my research study. To study self-compassion from the different quadrants, levels, lines, states, and types was to formulate an over arching complexity of different elements and epistemologies into one true integrated format. This integral framework showed how a mindfulness program could be implemented into the BC curriculum to increase self-compassion in adolescents. I will now discuss each of the components of the Integral Theory separately into the levels, lines, states, types, and quadrants.

Levels of Development

Stages or levels of development are milestones of growth and development that represent a more complex way of being; each level is considered a stage or wave of development, “the unfolding from body to mind to spirit, where each of them is considered as a stage, wave, or level of unfolding care and consciousness” (Wilber, 2007, p. 7). In this study, I incorporated several lines of development, but only one level of development: the level of consciousness. As you will see, it is imperative that adolescents increase their awareness or level of consciousness (Kegan, 1994).

Levels of consciousness.

Consciousness is a way of knowing, and how we make sense of what we know (Kegan, 1994). Metacognition is reflecting and being aware of how the mind operates and how one processes information (Blatner, 2004). It is more about thinking about how one is thinking. Metacognition is an awareness of the mind-body connections; understanding how the brain develops and functions is a core element in awareness.

Levels or orders of consciousness develop in humans sequentially over the course of a lifetime. For instance, the transition from first to second order usually transpires around the ages of seven to ten, and the transformation from second to third order of consciousness usually develops around adolescence, between the ages of twelve and twenty (Kegan, 1994). Each transition from one level to the next is developmental and transformational. Higher orders of consciousness develop as humans reflect and process information resulting in more complex experiences (Zelazo, 2004). Levels or orders of consciousness reflect levels of awareness of a person’s environment (Kegan, 1994). It transforms their way of looking at the world.

Kegan (1994) stated that adolescents are in the unique position where adult expectations surpass the adolescents' order of consciousness. Between the ages of twelve and twenty, adolescents are transforming between second and third orders of consciousness; therefore, most adolescents are at a lower order of consciousness than adults' expectations of them. The third order of consciousness incorporates a cross-categorical knowing, which supposes that adolescents will surrender their own needs and desires for the better good of the family/school/community. A third order of consciousness expects adolescents to balance others' points of view with their own; they can understand and care about the opinions of others and suppress their own self-interest for the greater good. They become more responsible for their own role in society. This higher order of consciousness is not necessarily reflected in the minds of today's adolescents. The current "Generation Me" is highly individualistic with little concern for social issues, and youth of this generation are generally more narcissistic (Twenge, 2013). Therefore, the youth of today may be less able to suppress their needs for the greater good than those of previous generations. According to Kegan (1994), if adolescents do not acquire this third order of consciousness, they are *in over their heads* as teachers and parents have higher expectations of them. The higher levels of consciousness are based on the capability of self-reflective mental state of consciousness (Vanekerchkhove, 2009). Kegan (1994) emphasized that adolescents need to subordinate their own interests and learn to contribute as members of the greater community.

Siegel (2013) stated that the adolescent brain is being remodelled, and as adolescents mature, their conceptual thinking increases to allow for more creative explorations. This new way of looking at their world can expand their levels of consciousness; their brains will now permit this new conceptual thinking to emerge.

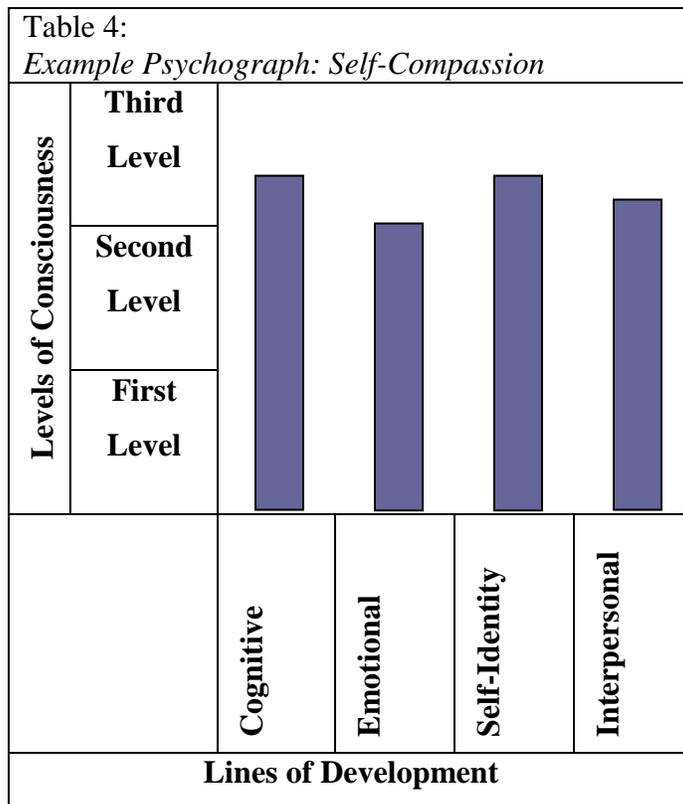
Environments that challenge adolescents to become aware of themselves within their expanding social world may foster this new conceptual thinking and become morally and socially responsible members. Adolescents today require experiences that will bridge their thinking from the second to the third order of consciousness (Kegan, 1994). A mindfulness program that teaches self-compassion may offer students the experiences that will expand their thinking to increase their levels of consciousness; this teaching of self-compassion may be the bridging that is critical to transform adolescents from the second to the third order of consciousness. Not only do the students need to develop along the levels or orders of consciousness, they will also need to develop along several lines of development.

Lines of Development

Wilber (2007) stated that people develop levels of development along different lines of development at different paces; there are at least a dozen lines of development including cognitive, moral, interpersonal, emotional, and self. The lines of development are not necessarily discrete lines, but are more like streams, and taken together form an integral map along different dimensions of biological, emotional, and interpersonal growth (Wilber, 2007). As one increases a level of consciousness along the lines of development, one grows in self, interpersonal, and global understanding and gains more capacity for love, compassion, and connection.

<p>Table 3: <i>The lines of development within the four quadrants of Integral Theory (Wilber, 2007).</i></p>	
<p>UL – individual interior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional Line • Self-Identity Line 	<p>UR – individual exterior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive Line
<p>LL – collective interior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal Line 	<p>LR – collective exterior</p>

Wilber stated that there are many lines of development, and I chose four lines of development, as shown in Table 3, for building self-compassion: cognitive, emotional, self-identity, and interpersonal. As Table 4 illustrates, each line develops independently, and levels of consciousness develop at different rates along these lines of development (Wilber et al., 2008). Through a mindfulness program, I expected students to increase levels of consciousness along the cognitive, emotional, self-identity, and interpersonal lines to increase self-compassion and therefore, they would be more able to reach the third order of consciousness that society expects of them. Now I will describe the lines of development in more detail.



Cognitive line.

According to Wilber (2007), the cognitive line is awareness and is necessary for all other lines of development, “Cognition delivers the phenomena with which the other lines operate” (Wilber, 2007, p. 65). One’s feelings and emotions must all follow the cognitive line because in order to have feelings and emotions, one must first be able to be aware of them. Metacognition is being aware of how the mind operates and how one processes information (Blatner, 2004). It is thinking about how one is thinking. Maslow (1943) stated that in order to acquire our needs, we need to know and understand our needs. It is a “desire to understand, to systematize, to organize, to analyze, to look for relations and meaning” (p. 385). To understand how we gain knowledge or cognition is to look at Piaget’s (1955) stages of cognitive development.

According to Piaget’s (1964) stages of cognitive development, adolescents are beginning to enter into the final, fourth stage of cognitive development called the formal operational stage. In this stage, adolescents are beginning to reason or hypothesize, but they need four factors to construct new knowledge: maturation (age), experience (effects of physical environment), social transmission (education), and equilibration (self-regulation). Piaget stated that to know something is to act on it, to *experience* a phenomenon. Social transmission is when students are given information in a way that can be understood and assimilated (Piaget, 1955). Gradually, as adolescents mature, cognition is gained as they construct information for themselves through experiences, social transmission, and equilibration.

Goleman (1995) stated that each stage of intellectual, social, and emotional development in a growing child marks a similar step in the maturation of brain areas; this anatomical process continues into the mid-twenties. Self-awareness is marked by an awareness of the sensations present in the body; people with greater activation in the insula of the brain have a high level of

self-awareness of emotions as well as physical sensations (Davidson & Begley, 2012). And when adolescents reflect on the inner workings of their minds, they create “neural integration” (Siegel, 2013). The result of this integration is to have more cognitive control and better ability to think rationally to assist in wise decision making. Through mindfulness practice, adolescents may become more aware of the mind-body connection, which may increase awareness of their emotions and how their emotions affect feelings, thought processes, and behaviours.

Increasing along the cognitive line of development is essential to self-compassion; adolescents need to first become aware of themselves in order to understand their strengths and weakness with acceptance and understanding. Through mindfulness practice, adolescents can become aware of their inner thoughts, pay attention to them, and assimilate them into their knowing. By consciously paying attention to the mind-body connections, one’s awareness of how physiological changes in the brain influence feelings, emotions, thoughts, and behaviours can assist adolescents to develop from the second to the third order of consciousness along the cognitive line of development.

Emotional line.

In the cognitive line, one learns to be aware of one’s thoughts and emotions, while in the emotional line, it is about the ability to regulate feelings and emotions so emotions do not disrupt oneself and one’s relationships; it is about how the mind can monitor and regulate physiological actions in the body. “The more accurately we can monitor our emotional upsets, the sooner we can recover from distress” (Goleman, 1995, p. 86). Emotional clarity helps us manage bad moods. The higher the level of consciousness along the emotional line of development, the better able we are of regulating our emotions.

There is a significant connection between the mind and the body when looking at the ability to regulate emotions. Goleman (1995) has suggested that we have two minds: the rational and the emotional minds. The prefrontal cortex (PFC) controls the thinking, rational mind, which is important for forethought and impulse control. The amygdala, a small spot in the PFC, triggers emotions like fear and panic; it is the “flight or fight” response, which is controlled by the emotional mind (Goleman, 1995). Strong emotions can stop the PFC from working properly, resulting in impulsivity and poor judgment (Amen, 2008). When one is emotionally charged, the amygdala reacts and the emotional part of the brain becomes over-active. This unconscious part of the brain takes over and can disrupt thinking, which can cause academic, emotional, and psychological distress as well as other health concerns. In adolescence, the amygdala is activated even quicker and the messages from the PFC telling it to slow down are not used as much (Siegel, 2013). This is why adolescents have an increased emotional tendency. If adolescents learn how their mind controls their emotions and body, they can learn to send messages to the amygdala instructing it to quiet down, enabling themselves to bounce back quicker from adversity (Davidson & Begley, 2012).

Teaching adolescents to think about their emotions and behaviours in a non-critical way is a core element in self-compassion. Through mindfulness practice, adolescents can become aware of their thoughts as just thoughts, and they can better manage their thoughts and emotions as they increase along the emotional line of development. By calming emotions, adolescents may be better able to see their inadequacies as a part of being human. If adolescents are better able to control their emotions, they can see themselves without judgment; therefore, they may be able to recognize and accept their authentic selves.

Self-identity line.

Building self-compassion involves building a healthy self-identity. Erikson (1968) proposed that identity formation was the key developmental task in adolescence; identity formation is characterized by inner conflicts of identity formation with two opposite poles: identity achievement and identity confusion. In fact, Berman, Weems and Petkus (2009) found that 14.3% of high school students met the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) IV criteria for identity problems and that 12% of university students met criteria for Identity Disorder. These statistics show that identity formation in adolescence may result in confusion and problems, while healthy self-identity is critical for wellbeing.

According to Loevinger's theory of ego-development (1976), adolescents develop from the conformist stage to the conscientious stage along a self-aware level. At the conformist stage, adolescents have strong group identifications with moral codes to follow, strong desires for social acceptance, and sensitivities to individual differences. They are prone to stereotyped sex roles, and they value niceness, helpfulness, and cooperation. Belonging is very important for security. The transformation to the conscientious stage is marked by an increase in self-awareness and an appreciation of multiple possibilities. At the conscientious stage, adolescents are able to see others' points of view, evaluate long-term goals, and have a sense of responsibility. Adolescents must become self-aware so they no longer conform to the standards of the group, but self-evaluate and form their own self-reflective standards (Loevinger, 1976). This transition from the conformist stage to conscientious stage is important to healthy adolescent self-identity. In order to reach this milestone, adolescents need to appreciate multiple possibilities in a situation, have a sense of responsibility, internalize rules, and self-evaluate their goals and ideals.

A strong self-identity is important to self-compassion. To be self-kind, adolescents need to first be aware of the authentic self, nonjudgmentally (Neff, 2003a). A core element of common humanity is that it is imperfect (Neff, 2003a). To move out of the conformist stage means that adolescents have “an awareness of oneself as not always living up to the idealized portrait set by social norms” (Loevinger, 1976, p. 19). In order to do that, adolescents need the courage to be vulnerable. Self-compassion may be the bridge between the conformist and the conscientious levels that may allow adolescents to become self-aware, make mistakes, and be kind to themselves as they reach a healthy self-identity. If adolescents are better able to see themselves authentically and recognize perspectives of others, their ability to connect with and formulate relationships with others may increase.

Interpersonal line.

As Goleman (1995) stated, interpersonal development is the ability to recognize emotions in others; it is the ability to empathize. The art of relationships is, in large part, a skill in managing emotions in others. People who are empathic are more attuned to subtle social signals; they interact well with others. Empathy kindles altruism and helps with relationships. In fact, adolescents who have achieved a healthy self-identity exhibit secure commitments that give meaning and direction to their lives; individuals who lack relevant secure commitments find themselves in a state of indecision (Crocetti et al., 2009, p. 847).

An increase in the levels of consciousness in the interpersonal line of development should increase positive emotions, empathy, and therefore, positive relationships. Our social world is moulded by our relationships, and we have to be aware of how we affect other people, their emotions and their biology (Goleman, 2006). Through mindfulness practice, students may become more aware of the workings of the mind, and how this might influence behaviours and

therefore relationships. Signals from the body go to the PFC and tell the mind what is happening inside the body, but the PFC also tells us what is happening inside other people's nervous systems (Siegel, 2013). Quieting the amygdala induces feelings of commitment and attachment, and high activation in the amygdala is responsible for a lack of social intuition (Arden, 2010). The brain contains natural opiates that are activated by positive feelings of closeness; the neurotransmitter dopamine is activated when attracted to another person, and cuddling activates the neurotransmitter oxytocin (Arden, 2010). Increases in oxytocin increase feelings of safety, generosity, calmness, connectedness, and self-compassion (Neff, 2011). Mindfulness practice enables a person to become connected to themselves, to become aware of how their mind influences their behaviours and relationships. "The more centered you are within yourself, the easier it will be for you to be centered in your relationships with others" (Kabat-Zinn, 2013 p. 273).

Increasing level of consciousness or awareness along the interpersonal line of development should help adolescents develop empathy and compassion for others. It entails multiple perspectives, between the inner and outer selves, and to see others nonjudgmentally as imperfect human beings with acceptance and compassion, which requires a higher level of consciousness, to be aware of their own needs and the needs of others. "The more conscious we are of the interconnectedness of our thoughts and emotions, our choices and our actions in the world, the more we can see with eyes of wholeness" (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 284).

States and Types

States are temporary ways of beings that we go through every day such as boredom, fear, and elation (Wilber et al., 2008). The major states of consciousness are waking, dreaming, and sleeping, but there are also meditative, altered, and peak states of consciousness (Wilber, 2007).

Mindfulness is the “paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment” (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 145). One of the elements of self-compassion is mindfulness; therefore, self-compassion requires the state of awareness of the present moment; it requires full attention to the here and now. Our state of awareness involves the awareness of ourselves as biological, emotional, and social beings.

While states of consciousness are temporary, types suggest a more permanent characteristic, such as one’s personality type, or being a more feminine or masculine type. Since gender differences have been found in relation to self-compassion, the current research study looked at gender differences amongst adolescents.

Gender Differences

Many studies found gender differences in self-compassion with sometimes contradicting results. In several studies, women have been shown to be less self-compassionate than men (Neff, 2003a; Yarnell & Neff, 2013). However, other studies show no gender differences (Neff et al., 2007; Neff, Rude, & Kirkpatrick, 2007). In studies that support lower self-compassion in women, it was suggested that the results could be because women tend to be more self-critical, and they ruminate more than men (Leadbeater, Kuperminc, Blatt, & Hetzog, 1999; Nolen-Hoeksems, Larson, & Grayson, 1999). Also, gender differences could exist because women are generally seen as being more nurturing and caring rather than being kind to themselves. For instance, women reported feeling less authentic and experienced greater emotional turmoil within interpersonal relationships than men (Yarnell & Neff, 2013).

New research in this area specifically with adolescents could shed light on gender differences and self-compassion. Bluth and Blanton (2014) found that there were no gender differences in self-compassion between younger adolescents, but older adolescent girls seemed

to have less self-compassion than did boys. These differences emerged between thirteen and fifteen years of age, and the greatest gap between boys and girls was between fifteen and eighteen years of age. This study indicates that self-compassion declines with age for the female subjects.

According to Erikson (1968), a woman's identity is often intimately linked to her relationships with others, while a man's identity is formed before they form relationships. Adolescent girls, in particular, form their sense of self around their relationships with others (Tolman, Impett, Tracy & Michael, 2006). Selfhout et al. (2009) found that girls in disengaged friendships had higher levels of depressive symptoms than adolescent girls in interdependent friendships. They further stipulated that girls might silence their own needs in a desire to maintain relationships. This has been described as a "loss of voice" by Gilligan (1993), and it may impede authentic relationships as the adolescent girl tries to remove the "self" from the relationship. In addition, Neff and Pommier (2013) found women reported lower levels of compassion for humanity and empathic concern, but displayed higher levels of perspective taking and forgiveness than men. Based on these findings, it was not unexpected that I also found gender differences in this study.

Summary

The Integral Theory (Wilber 2007) is a metapsychology, or a way to organize ideas to study self-compassion through multiple perspectives within one integrated format. The Integral framework is a comprehensive way to study self-compassion in adolescents from four different points of view, or quadrants, to see if students' level of consciousness increased along four different lines of development while being cognizant of different states and types. It is the viewing of self-compassion from the individual to the societal level.

During adolescence, many students live a divided life; they are confused between their internal feelings and external pressures and expectations (Palmer, 2004). Paying attention to, being conscious of, and understanding the processes within oneself allows a person to become integrated or “whole” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993). Adolescents may increase self-awareness through their knowledge of how the brain interacts with their environment. Self-awareness is having knowledge of the mind/body connection (Siegel, 2013). This increase in self-awareness is important for healthy adolescent self-identity and development (Kessler, 2000).

Adolescents are expected to see themselves as part of a larger community and make decisions to benefit the greater good (Kegan, 1994). Unfortunately, most adolescents’ level of consciousness is at a lower level than is expected. Increasing the level of consciousness along the cognitive, emotional, self-identity, and interpersonal lines of development may help adolescents to become more integrated and better equipped to navigate their social world. The cognitive line is an awareness of how things are, and it is necessary for all other lines of development. Adolescents need the cognitive line to increase their awareness of the mind/body connection to further understand their behaviours. This awareness will help them to increase levels of consciousness along the emotional line of development to enable them to manage their emotions better. Emotions often impede awareness; therefore, managing emotions is necessary for self-identity and relationships. A healthy self-identity happens when adolescents are aware of themselves authentically without judgment. The self-identity line of development is necessary for interpersonal relationships. As authentic beings, adolescents can see other perspectives and connect with others to form healthy interpersonal relationships. The interpersonal line of development is necessary to build compassion and empathy for others. This study examined how

mindfulness program could be the bridging necessary to increase adolescent development from the second to third level of consciousness (Kegan, 1994).

Forming Self-Compassion in Adolescence

Neff (2003a) identified the elements of self-compassion as self-kindness, a sense of common humanity, and mindfulness. I have proposed that adolescents need to develop from the second to the third order of consciousness to be able to balance their own needs with the needs of the greater society (Kegan, 1994). They need to increase levels of consciousness along the four lines of development in order to build self-compassion and therefore resiliency and wellbeing. Now I integrate the level of consciousness and lines of development within the four quadrants of Integral Theory to map out a framework within which to anchor a mindfulness program to increase self-compassion in adolescents. Within each quadrant, some processes of self-compassion, as in Table 5, will be discussed, and the existing research will be examined to find gaps in the research to rationalize my research questions.

Table 5: <i>Processes within the four quadrants (Adapted from Wilber, 2007)</i>		
	Interior	Exterior
Singular	UL: Individual-interior quadrant Subjective Emotional Regulation Self-Identity	UR: Individual-exterior quadrant Objective Mindfulness Self-Awareness
Plural	LL: Collective-interior quadrant Intersubjective Interpersonal Relationships Compassion for Others	LR: Collective-exterior quadrant Interobjective Prosocial Behaviours Academic Performance

Connecting Body and Mind: The Upper Right Quadrant

The upper right quadrant is the exterior-individual quadrant; it is to look at the individual from the outside, the concrete body (Wilber, 2007). Understanding how the brain functions and influences the body and mind is integral to increasing levels of consciousness; it is about developing self-awareness. Through mindfulness practice, a person becomes more aware of the body/mind connection, which allows the mind to become more aware of the body's influence on thought processes and behaviours.

Mindfulness.

Mindfulness is the “awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment” (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 145). The focus of mindfulness is to develop an awareness of inner experiences: thoughts, feelings, and sensations, and to observe them nonjudgmentally. It is to “cultivate a clearer awareness of direct moment to moment experience with acceptance and a kindly curiosity which is not obscured by judgments about the experience” (Meiklejohn et al., 2102, p. 292). Consciousness is the experience that comes out of the senses, feelings, perceptions, and attention to an object (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1992). Mindfulness also creates an inner calmness and compassion for ourselves, and has shown beneficial for academic learning (Broderick, 2013). It allows the mind to relax, to become more aware and attentive to the surroundings, and to integrate more information.

Mindfulness reduces emotional distress and promotes emotional balance, improves attention, and contributes to motivated learning (Broderick, 2013). The aim of mindfulness is to slow the functioning of the brain to allow for increased awareness, which activates the frontal lobe so that it is receptive to learning and remembering. Mindfulness allows the brain to focus

and become detached from the emotional reaction, which facilitates emotional regulation; it allows the PFC to gain control of the amygdala-driving emotional reaction (Davidson & Begley, 2012). It uses self-regulation to reduce anxiety to allow for critical thinking and moral reasoning (Bai, Scott & Donald, 2009; Zelazo & Lyons, 2012). Research has shown a negative effect between self-compassion and automatic thoughts (Akin, 2012). These results suggest the more self-compassion a person has, the fewer automatic thoughts they exhibit. In addition, Longe et al. (2010) found a link between activity in the lateral prefrontal cortex (PFC) and self-compassion. Self-reassured thoughts activated the same areas of the brain as compassion and empathy towards others, and self-criticism was associated with PFC activity that leads to more error processing and behavioural inhibition. Also, Ciarrochi, Kashdan, Leeson, Heaven and Jordan (2011) found mindful awareness and acceptance were positively correlated with wellbeing.

Mindfulness practice wires the brain's circuitry and promotes better relationships and better health; it opens the gate for change and acceptance (Arden, 2010). It helps create the skills of empathy and compassion for others, which builds strong relationships and a concern for others (Siegel, 2013). Neff and Pommier (2013) found mindfulness practitioners reported higher levels of "self-compassion, compassion for humanity, empathic concern, perspective taking, altruism, forgiveness, and less personal distress" than other adults or college students (p. 169). They suggest that mindfulness increases interconnectedness and the ability to be kind and understanding of self and others. Mindfulness opens up our minds to be more aware of spiritual growth and personal duty, including ethical and conscientious decision making; it is an openness for knowledge, to be fully human (Davidson & Begley, 2012). Through mindfulness practice, the persistent act of paying attention allows the conscious awareness to become more natural and

habitual. Wilber (2007) stated that the more one practices mindfulness, the faster one develops through levels of consciousness, and self-awareness increases.

Self-awareness.

A core process in self-compassion is self-awareness, a conscious awareness of the self in relation to the body and mind (Neff, 2011). Consciousness is a way of knowing and how we make sense of what we know (Kegan, 1994). The development of the prefrontal cortex plays a crucial role in the reflective aspect of consciousness and allows children to view their environment in relation to objects and themselves (Zelazo & Lyons, 2012). Through the senses, the mind interacts with the environment, and, mediated by the brain, elicits behaviours, and, reciprocally, behaviour and experience alter the brain functions and mental perceptions. This bidirectional communication between the mind and body means that the mind is “embodied” (Maturana, Thompson, & Varela, 1987). An embodied mind is to be aware of the body’s physical properties, how they affect the mind, and how the mind affects the body. Living as embodied beings means that our mind is integrally aware of our body and its effects on behaviours and perceptions of experience. Increasing one’s awareness of the mind-body connection increases one’s awareness of the self.

A core element in self-compassion is to see oneself clearly without judgment (Neff, 2003a). By increasing awareness along the cognitive line of development, adolescents become aware of how the emotional mind can take over the rational mind. Awareness of emotions can affect one’s thinking and influence one’s wellbeing. In fact, Walker and Colosimo (2011) found self-compassion leads to high levels of awareness, and acting with awareness was one of the strongest predictors of psychological wellbeing.

Summary.

The upper right quadrant is to study the individual's self, including body systems and behaviours. In order to influence their behaviours, adolescents must first be aware of how their mind influences their behaviours; therefore, increasing a sense of self-awareness is necessary. An awareness of how one's thoughts and emotions influence one's behaviours is important in developing self-compassion; it is how the emotional mind influences the rational mind. Mindfulness is a way of being in the present moment without judgment, and it increases emotional balance to allow for self-awareness. It is a way of increasing levels of consciousness in the cognitive line of development. As levels of consciousness increase, it is expected that adolescents become more aware of the relationship between their minds and their bodies. An embodied mind fosters awareness of how one's body is influenced by one's mind.

Mindfulness and self-awareness are correlated to psychological wellbeing, but the questions lies if mindfulness and self-awareness could be taught to adolescents, and if it increases self-compassion. More specifically, did self-compassion, compassion for others, mindful awareness and mindset change according to pre- and post-test intervention questionnaires? This present study added to the body of research as it measured whether self-compassion increased in adolescents as a result of a mindfulness program. Teaching mindfulness to students may aid them to slow down their thoughts and emotions, increase emotional regulation, lower stress and anxiety, increase life satisfaction, and help them formulate a healthy self-identity.

Connecting Mind and Self: The Upper Left Quadrant

The upper left quadrant is the interior-individual or the individual's thoughts, feelings, and sensations (Wilber, 2007). Being aware of emotions, feelings, and internal experiences is an

essential element of self-compassion; it is about managing feelings and emotions to be kind to oneself and others (Neff, 2003a). The emotional line of development is about the ability to regulate feelings and emotions so emotions do not disrupt ourselves and our relationships; it is about conscious monitoring of emotions, thereby regulating physiological responses in the body. In fact, Goleman (1995) found that emotional intelligence is far better than IQ for predicting successful lives.

Emotional regulation.

Emotional regulation is the ability to effectively process emotions, and it is critical to student success because it affects learning and wellbeing (Goleman, 1995). Self-compassion has been shown to help with emotional regulation to reduce stress and increase psychological wellbeing (Newsome Waldo, & Gruszka, 2012). Through mindfulness, one can reduce activity in the amygdala, and the brain can perceive thoughts and emotions less judgmentally (Davidson & Begley, 2012).

Research has shown that self-compassion may buffer against emotional difficulties. For instance, Hope et al. (2014) found self-compassion was associated with an increase in life satisfaction and a decrease in negative affect. Self-compassion has also been shown to reduce perceived stress in young adults, and they become more conscious and present (Newsome et al., 2012). In addition, Raes (2011) found self-compassion was a buffering effect on emotional problems such as depression. Walker and Colosimo (2011) also found subjects who scored high in mindfulness also scored high in self-compassion, wellbeing, agreeableness, extraversion, openness, and conscientiousness, and low in neuroticism. They concluded people high in self-compassion have more insight, clarity, acceptance, and are able to recognize and manage problems.

Less research has shown whether or not increased psychological wellbeing is attributed to emotional regulation, but the few that have been conducted have shown very promising results. For instance, Leary et al. (2007) found subjects high in self-compassion could handle negative experiences better because they had lowered negative emotions, were able to make themselves feel better after the negative events, and they saw these events as not being any worse than what others experience. They suggest self-compassion might enable subjects to process negative emotions, which might make it an effective emotional regulation strategy. In support of this research, Neely et al. (2009) found self-compassion helped students manage negative emotions following disappointment, which suggests self-compassion aids in emotional regulation and may be an effective way to manage emotions and increase psychological wellbeing. Emotional regulation may aid adolescents to slow down their thinking so their rational brain can control their emotional brain and therefore, they can view themselves more accurately.

Self-identity.

Identity can be viewed as an ongoing story that we construct about ourselves from our past and present experiences (Warin & Muldoon, 2009). The PFC decides what stories the brain will attend to and the emotional response to them. People with identity problems often tell themselves negative narratives, which can increase rumination (Alloy et al., 2012). Rumination is a negative core belief that a person thinks about over and over, which keeps away hopes or expectations of change. The more a person attends to negative narratives or ruminates, the stronger the neural circuits that represent those thoughts will wire together, and the negative thoughts become ingrained (Arden, 2010).

Self-compassion means being honest with ourselves about the stories we construct, allowing ourselves to make mistakes, and being kind to ourselves. A core element in common

humanity is to see ourselves as imperfect beings; it suggests we see our strengths and weaknesses authentically with self-acceptance (Neff, 2003a). Hall, Row, Wuensch and Godley (2013) found those low in self-compassion were more self-critical and undervalued themselves, whereas those high in self-compassion were able to perceive themselves more accurately, reported lowered perceived stress and depressive symptoms, were able to accept responsibility for their actions, and were less likely to ruminate about negative events. In addition, Raes (2010) found self-compassion had a buffering effect against depression because it reduced rumination.

Adolescents are more susceptible to “internal pressure for social conformity and sensitivity to social comparison” (Broderick, 2013, p. 15). Adolescents may also overemphasize their differences from one another. Breines and Chen (2012) tested self-compassion and social comparison. They found subjects with higher self-compassion engaged in more upward social comparison, which meant they preferred to be with others better off than themselves, which can provide inspiration for change. Contrarily, subjects low in self-compassion preferred a lateral or downward comparison; they chose to engage with others who were either the same or were worse off than themselves, which does not lead to self-improvement motivations. Another study by Crocker and Canavello (2008) looked at compassionate goals to subjects who had self-image goals. Those who had self-image goals would defend their images of the self as having desirable qualities, and they wanted to be recognized for having those qualities. The researchers found subjects who were high in self-image goals had low self-compassion, were self-conscious, had social anxiety, and had attachment insecurity. Our sense of identity relies on being recognized by others. “Clinging to an identity can have negative effects if this no longer draws positive responses from others” (Warin & Muldoon, 2009, p. 299).

As stated previously, a healthy self-identity is critical in adolescence. “Moments of deep connection to the self – when we really know ourselves, express our true self, feel connected to the essence of who we are – nourish the human spirit” (Kessler, 2000, p. 20). In light of this research, it is expected as self-compassion increases, adolescents will gain a more authentic self-image. With self-compassion, adolescents may be able to see themselves authentically and nonjudgmentally, and they can confront negative aspects of the self with kindness and motivation for change. “The more we encourage young people to strengthen their own boundaries and develop their own identity, the more capable they are of bonding to a group in a healthy, enduring way” (Kessler, 2000, p. 24).

Summary.

Self-compassion should aid adolescents to increase emotional regulation and formulate a healthy self-identity. Mindfulness aids in awareness of how emotions affect thoughts; therefore, it is expected that self-compassion will increase adolescents’ ability to manage their emotions and increase compassion towards themselves. If we learn how our mind controls our emotions and body, we can learn to affect this connection in a more positive way (Siegel, 2013). The more one practices self-compassion, one can learn how to regulate emotions, analyze internal thoughts, and form alternative responses to a negative narrative to be more empathic towards oneself. Self-compassion is based on our internal language, which means that our self-talk is not self-critical, but we accept our mistakes as a part of being human (Neff, 2003a). As adolescents increase levels of consciousness along the emotional and self-identity lines of development, they are more able to regulate emotions, analyze negative thoughts, and see themselves as non-perfect human beings who have the ability to grow and change to be authentic selves.

Most past research on self-compassion and emotional regulation and identity have been correlational studies, which means self-compassion has been associated with lowered negative emotions (Leary et al., 2007) and accurate self-perceptions (Hall et al., 2013), but it is not conclusive how they are associated. This research study added to the literature as it measured self-compassion after a mindfulness program to answer the following questions: How did students perceive the three components of self-compassion? In what ways did students report a change in emotional awareness? Was there an increased sense of self-awareness? This helps to answer the overarching question: Did student resiliency increase? It is expected a healthy self-identity allowed one to be more kind to oneself and others. As Palmer (2004) stated, forming a healthy sense of self-identity happens when the inner and outer selves are connected to “wholeness” which will help to formulate interpersonal relationships.

Connecting the Self to Others: The Lower Left Quadrant

The lower left quadrant is the interior-collective or the individual within a group or culture; it is the collective ‘we’ (Wilber, 2007). It is where a sense of social awareness is formed within the school, family, and community. A core component of self-compassion is to develop the ability to see oneself within a larger society (Neff, 2003a). According to Goleman (2006), we are wired to connect; our brains are designed to be sociable. In his words, “Our relationships have subtle, yet powerful, lifelong impacts on us” (p. 11). As children develop, they are able to reflect on their environment and experiences facilitating cognitive flexibility, emotional control, and concern for others (Zelazo & Lyons, 2012). Empathy was associated with increases in activity in the prefrontal region of the brain in children (Light, Coan, Zahn-Waxler, Frye, Goldsmith, & Davidson, 2010). Indeed, as Dolan (1999) found in his research of children whose orbitofrontal cortex was damaged, their ability for moral reasoning was defective and their perspective was

excessively egocentric. Human attachment means being seen, safe, soothed and secure; “being seen and accepted for who you are makes you feel good about yourself and helps give you a resilient mind” (Siegel, 2013 p 253). This next section will situate the research to show that self-compassion has been associated with increased interpersonal relationships and compassion with others.

Interpersonal relationships.

Through mindfulness, adolescents can become aware of themselves within a larger community, which can increase their relationship skills and compassion for others. By paying attention, we can sense someone else’s inner state; we empathize with others. When we draw into ourselves and focus on our own problems, our world contracts, but when we focus on others, our world expands. To increase levels of consciousness, it is important to see oneself in relation to others and to view oneself from their perspective. Adolescents need to learn to “reflect on the lives of others” (Noddings, 2006, p. 8).

Research has shown that self-compassion has been correlated to greater interpersonal relationships skills. For example, Yarnell and Neff (2013) found higher levels of self-compassion were associated with greater authenticity in interpersonal relationships, higher likelihood to compromise, higher levels of wellbeing in relationships, lower levels of emotional turmoil, and less likelihood to subordinate one’s needs. In another study, Akin (2010) found self-compassion was negatively correlated to interpersonal cognitive distortions, which are “highly exaggerated, inappropriately rigid, illogical, and absolutist thought patterns on the nature of relationships” (p. 2). They concluded self-compassion could diminish self-critical tendencies, and subjects recognized their interconnectedness with others. A study by Crocker and Canevello (2008) showed the more self-compassion a subject had, the more social supports they showed their

roommates. They concluded compassionate goals were correlated with a supportive environment, giving and receiving support, and increasing interpersonal trust. Neff and Beretvas (2012) showed self-compassion was associated with positive relationships traits with their romantic partners. More specifically, subjects high in self-compassion reported feeling worthy, happy, and being able to express opinions. In addition, those high in self-compassion were perceived as being more kind, caring, and more accepting of their partners. Neff and Pommier (2013) found age differences in compassion for others; older adults experienced more compassion for humanity, empathic concern, and altruism than undergraduates; they associate this with undergraduates not having yet fully formed a sense of self-identity, understanding of intimate relationships, and overestimating their differences from others. They concluded more research in the area of identity formation, self-compassion and compassion for others is necessary.

Compassion with others.

Compassion means to “suffer with”; it is about acceptance (Brown, 2010, p. 16). According to the Dalai Lama, compassion is not only to suffer with someone, but it also impels us to help others; there is a commitment to want to relieve other’s suffering. If we have an inborn desire to relieve suffering, so do others, “once we recognize this commonality, it’s easier to feel a connection and intimacy with others” (Barad, 2007, p. 14). Empathy and compassion assist with relationships. According to Rogers (1975), empathy is to perceive another’s thoughts accurately and with the same emotion and meaning as if you were that person; it means to live temporarily within his world, as an objective observer, without judging. To be present for others signifies we are attuned to their inner world; we feel what they feel (Siegel, 2013). People who are empathic are more attuned to subtle social signals; they interact well with others.

Among recent studies, self-compassion has been significantly linked to compassion for others, but gender differences exist. For instance, Neff and Pommier (2013) found self-compassion was associated with concern for others, but effects were higher in women. More specifically, they found women “reported significantly higher levels of compassion for humanity, empathetic concern, perspective taking and forgiveness than men did” (p. 170), yet it was not necessarily shown to be correlated with self-compassion. The researchers suggested women might tend to see themselves as more other-focused, but yet, they report as much self-compassion as men. Baker and McNulty (2011) tested to see whether self-compassion helps or hurts relationships. These researchers wanted to analyze if self-compassion removes the motivation to correct interpersonal mistakes among men and women. Their results found that men high in self-compassion and conscientiousness were motivated to correct interpersonal mistakes, participated in effective problem solving, and had more marital satisfaction. This effect was reversed in the men low in conscientiousness and high in self-compassion. Among women, self-compassion was positively correlated to the same variables independent of conscientiousness. This study suggests that men high in self-compassion are compassionate towards their partner only when they were high in conscientiousness, but women were more compassionate towards their partners regardless of conscientiousness.

Summary.

With self-compassion, one develops empathy, or a concern for others, which helps in interpersonal relationships. Research has shown self-compassion is positively related to interpersonal traits such as greater authenticity and wellbeing in relationships, and those who were more self-compassionate were deemed as more kind and caring (Baker & McNulty, 2011). Yet these studies only showed results of self-compassion correlated to relationships traits, but did

not directly measure compassion towards others. Since the Compassion Scale was only recently developed (Pommier, 2010), it has not been widely used as a measurement for compassion for others. This research study measured if there was a change in compassion for others after a mindfulness program. It helped answer the question: In what ways did students perceive compassion towards others? In what ways did student interpersonal relationships change? This is to answer the overarching question: Was there a change in classroom or school culture?

Connecting the Self to Society: Lower Right Quadrant

The lower right quadrant is the collective-exterior or interobjective, the systems in which people live (Wilber, 2007). Self-compassion may have societal implications by influencing the interconnectedness of students within the political, social, and educational systems. The school is the first and most significant place where students are socialized, and where children are taught how to function within their broader society. Curriculum to teach self-compassion is designed to teach students to regulate their emotions and to build awareness of how their minds control their bodies, emotions, and relationships. In turn, if students become more self-aware, form healthy identities, are able to regulate emotions, and connect well with others, we may find a change in student students' resiliency and connectedness with others.

Resiliency.

Resiliency is the ability to bounce back from defeat (Richardson & Begley, 2012). Resilient people seek out new challenges and push themselves to the limit; they do not see failures with shame (Reivich & Shatté, 2002). They are able to tackle problems efficiently without a threat to the "self." Young people struggle with lack of resilience which is illustrated by the high rates of mental distress when times are tough (Kessler et al., 2005). Teaching

students resilience in the face of defeat should alleviate some of these mental health issues and increase wellbeing in students.

The “Generation Me” has sometimes been described as narcissistic, as members of this generation have an over-inflated sense of themselves (Twenge, 2013). This has been associated with the self-esteem movement of the past, which may have caused an over-inflated ego and therefore, narcissism (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003). In addition, social media has fostered the growth of narcissism; it focuses on seeing oneself as the “centre of the universe” on sites like Facebook, My Space and YouTube (Hart & Frejd, 2013). This over-inflated ego is easily shattered if threatened. In fact, aggression has been determined to be a defence against a threatened, unstable self-esteem (Baumeister, Bushman, & Campbell, 2000). We tend to lash out at those we deem better than us. A core element of common humanity is that it is imperfect, and defeat and suffering are part of the human condition (Neff, 2003a). With self-compassion, instead of feeling threatened, we comfort ourselves when we make mistakes, we understand that wrong choices are part of being human, and we are not to self-criticize. Research shows that those high in self-compassion have an increased ability to cope with negative events, and they viewed their faults as more changeable, which aids in building resiliency (Hope et al. 2014; Neff, Hsieh, & Dejitterat, 2005).

Self-compassion has been shown to aid in mastery performance, help to develop a growth mindset, and aid in perseverance. A growth mindset is a belief that one’s qualities can change and grow through effort (Dweck, 2006). Hope et al. (2014) found self-compassion was associated with coping in the face of defeat or disappointment in goal progress, and it has been shown to be positively associated with goal pursuit and mastery performance; they concluded self-compassion is associated with an increase in learning because it frees students from harsh

self-criticism, and it enables students to cope in the face of failure. Neff et al. (2005) also found self-compassion was associated with mastery goals, as subjects had more perceived competence, and self-compassion was negatively associated with task-avoidance and fear of failure. In addition, Breines and Chen (2012) found after subjects were taught to use a self-compassionate approach to viewing a personal weakness, they viewed their personal weakness as more changeable. These studies showed that self-compassion aided students to persevere in the face of failure and to see their individual traits as more changeable, both core concepts in building resiliency.

The implications of increasing self-compassion and resiliency is that the youth will no longer be dependant on their unstable sense of self-esteem. While self-esteem is highly reliant on the perceptions of others, self-compassion is reliant on an authentic sense of self brought about by self-awareness and self-compassion. Students learn how to pick themselves up and persevere in the face of defeat.

Interconnectedness with others.

The “Generation Me” of today is overly concerned with the “self,” or individualism and narcissism (Twenge, 2013). These youth tend to focus on themselves, their social status and personal wealth and materialism. They are disconnected from their greater community and family; their peers mean more to them than their parents (Neufeld, 2003). Both parents being forced to work to afford a basic living coupled by increases in divorce rates have caused the deterioration of the nuclear family unit, the “foundation of society” (Jacobs, 2005, p. 29). But most importantly, a sense of community relationships among neighbours has been lost (Jacobs, 2005). Gone are neighbourhood stores to be replaced by big-box warehouses, and children no longer go to neighbourhood parks to play, but instead play on their digital devices. No longer do

we help our neighbours, but we go about our days in a more “isolationist” routine, only worrying about ourselves. Growing up in this world, the youth have not been raised with a sense of connectedness with others, and relationships are now often formed and maintained through digital devices (Hart & Frejd, 2013). We are wired to connect with others, and “our relationships have subtle, yet powerful, lifelong impacts on us” (Goleman, 2006, p. 11). This disconnection with others may have profound societal implications. Self-compassion has shown to build empathy and a willingness to help others, and it could help rebuild connections with others.

Common humanity is an interconnectedness with others, and research suggests that self-compassion can increase a willingness to help others (Breines & Chen, 2012; Lindsay & Creswell, 2014; Neff & Beretvas, 2012). For example, Welp and Brown (2013) studied if self-compassion predicts subjects’ empathy and willingness to help others. They found subjects high in self-compassion were more willing to help a victim, yet felt less empathy, as they saw the victim more responsible for his situation. But even those low in empathy and high in self-compassion were still willing to help a person, even if they found that person at fault; those low in self-compassion would only help victims who were not at fault for their predicament. This research showed that acknowledging that others make mistakes does not prevent that person from helping.

In another study, Lindsay and Creswell (2014) found, even after only a short ten-minute self-affirmation writing assignment, subjects experienced increased feelings of self-compassion, which increased pro-social behaviours in college students. This effect was strongest in subjects who were low in self-compassion at the beginning of the study. In addition, Weng et al. (2013) found subjects were more altruistic after a two-week compassion training, and were more willing to help a victim in distress than a control group. More significantly, Breines and Chen (2012)

found after teaching a self-compassionate approach to previous negative transgressions, subjects were motivated to make amends and not to repeat the transgression. This research is significant as it suggests that self-compassion training can lead to motivation to help others, which can help youth connect with others rather than being individualistic.

Summary.

The lower right quadrant is to study the system in which an individual lives. In order for a program to be implemented within a system, that program should prove a systemic benefit to the students. A mindfulness program that increases self-compassion could enable students to cope better in the face of failure; therefore, increase resiliency. The research showed that self-compassion increased subjects' ability to cope with defeat, and they believed that their circumstances were more changeable. Self-compassion was shown to increase connectedness with others, which resulted in more helpful and prosocial behaviours and less negative behaviours towards others. In schools where negative behaviours such as bullying are well known, bullying or negative behaviours could decrease after a mindfulness program. This research study added to knowledge about how self-compassion influenced compassion for others and resiliency after a mindfulness program. This data answered the questions: What were teacher/administrator perceptions regarding the implementation of mindfulness programs within BC curricula. It helps to answer the overarching question: Were there benefits to teaching self-compassion within school curricula?

Teaching Self-Compassion

From the previous literature, we can see that self-compassion promotes positive wellbeing by increasing awareness and self-awareness, by increasing awareness of and

regulating emotions, by increasing prosocial behaviours and compassion for others, and by persevering in the face of defeat and building resiliency, but can self-compassion be taught?

Research shows that self-compassion can be taught, and it increases wellbeing in research subjects. Odou and Brinker (2014) used self-compassionate writing as a way to find a relationship between self-compassion and rumination among undergraduate students. They found self-compassionate writing predicted improved mood, and they suggested interventions to increase self-compassion might be beneficial to wellbeing. In addition, Shahar et al. (2014) evaluated a loving-kindness mindfulness program with self-critical individuals. They found subjects reduced self-criticism and depressive symptoms and increased in self-compassion and positive emotions up to three months after the intervention. Birnie, Speca and Carlson (2010) studied the impact of a mindfulness-based intervention on empathy and self-compassion with university students. They found as self-compassion increased, so did mindfulness, and this increase in self-compassion and mindfulness was associated with a reduction in stress, mood disturbance, and personal distress, and an increase in perspective taking. They suggest a mindfulness-based program may increase psychological wellbeing in students. Shapira and Mongrain (2010) found subjects who practiced online self-compassion exercises were less depressed and happier as compared to a control group. Smeets, Neff, Alberts and Peters (2014) studied the effectiveness of a self-compassion intervention on resilience and wellbeing with female college students. They found the self-compassion intervention significantly increased self-compassion, mindfulness, optimism, and self-efficacy, and it significantly decreased rumination compared to a control group. These research studies suggest that self-compassion interventions can improve resilience and wellbeing.

Additional research showed that mindfulness-based interventions increased self-compassion. Jazaieri et al. (2012) implemented a mindfulness compassion training course for adults. They found subjects increased in self-compassion, compassion for others, and received compassion from others compared to a control group. They also found the more one practiced mindfulness, the more one had compassion for others. Neff and Germer (2013) found an eight-week mindful self-compassion program increased self-compassion, mindfulness, and wellbeing among women. In addition, these effects appear to have a lasting result one year after the program. Wallmark, Safarzadeh, Daukantaite, and Maddux (2013) studied the effects of a meditation intervention on empathy, perceived stress, mindfulness, self-compassion and altruistic orientation. They found the intervention group had increased self-compassion, mindfulness, and altruistic orientation and decreased in perceived stress than the control group. From the above research, it seems self-compassion can be taught in adults, but can the same effects be found in the adolescent population?

Teaching self-compassion to adolescents.

Many of the studies on self-compassion interventions have been conducted with young adults and university students, but a couple of recent studies have concluded that the same effects can be found in adolescents. In fact, Neff and Mcgehee (2010) found that overall levels of self-compassion were similar for both adolescents and college students. In addition, Bluth and Blanton (2012) found mindfulness and self-compassion promoted wellbeing in adolescents. They suggested a program on self-compassion may improve wellbeing among adolescents. As stated earlier, Neff and Pommier (2012) did find an age difference in their study, but this age difference was only found with compassion for others. It is not surprising that adolescents show more self-

compassion rather than compassion for others as their identity is still forming and perspective-taking skills are lacking.

New research in the area of self-compassion with youth has been conducted in the past few years. In one research study, adolescents were taught mindfulness and self-compassion in an after school setting. Results indicated that mindfulness, self-compassion, perceived stress, and life satisfaction improved. Self-compassion was negatively related to perceived stress (Bluth, Roberson, & Gaylord, 2015). Recently, a program specifically designed for teaching self-compassion to youth called *Making Friends with Yourself* was developed. Research on this program found that the adolescent intervention group had significantly greater self-compassion, life satisfaction, and lower depression than the control group. They also found self-compassion predicted decreases in anxiety and perceived stress (Bluth, et al., 2015). Research seems to support the effectiveness of teaching self-compassion to increase resilience and wellbeing in adolescents, yet research in this area is in its infancy.

Implementing an intervention strategy that incorporates elements of self-compassion could be a critical method of building wellbeing and buffer against mental health problems in adolescents. Schools can be powerful places to use curriculum to bridge the gap and raise students' self-compassion. "If self-compassion interventions do turn out to be successful, it may be that schools should start placing greater emphasis on the development of students' self-compassion to help them cope with the difficulties of growing up" (Neff & Mcgehee, 2010, p. 237). The recent study on *Making Friends with Yourself* is specifically designed to teach self-compassion to youth. Other intervention strategies implemented with adolescents are designed to teach mindfulness and social and emotional learning.

Social and emotional learning and mindfulness-based interventions.

Social and emotional learning (SEL) teaches students “a heightened self-awareness, better ability to manage distressing emotions, increased sensitivity to how others feel, and ability to manage relationships well” (Goleman, 2008, p. 2). Social and emotional learning programs are based on five core competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2013).

SEL helps increase self-awareness. In SEL, one learns to calm the body and focus the mind through muscle relaxation exercises (Lantieri, 2008). This allows the mind to relax so adolescents are more aware of how emotions can affect the mind, which can directly affect behaviours. If students gain knowledge of their physical body and how emotions affect their behaviours, they are more able to manage their behaviours by learning how to regulate their emotions.

SEL is designed to increase self-management by regulating emotions, managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself (CASEL, 2013). The goal is to assist students to recognize their emotions to act on them intentionally rather than reactively, to regulate emotions, to reduce stress, and to support academic performance (Broderick, 2013). This understanding increases students’ self-control, which has been shown to increase physical health (Moffitt et al., 2011). SEL programs teach students how to evaluate the accuracy of their automatic negative thoughts, challenge them to find ways to cope with problems, and teach assertiveness skills to think critically on their thoughts before they react (Seligman, Reivich, Jaycox & Gillham, 2007). The goal is to teach students critical thinking and problem solving. The students are taught to evaluate the accuracy of their pessimistic thoughts, to slow down, analyze problems effectively,

consider other perspectives, set a goal, choose the path to fulfill the goal, and analyze the outcome (Seligman et al., 2007).

SEL teaches social awareness and relationships skills. These skills are taught by taking other's perspectives, empathizing, communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, and resisting social pressures (CASEL, 2013). In SEL, the ability to recognize emotions in others and empathy may increase. If we are better able to control our emotions, bounce back from adversity, and recognize emotions in others, then our ability to form relationships and our decision-making ability will increase.

Teaching SEL and mindfulness in schools is important for students to gain self-compassion to enhance their social and emotional wellbeing. A SEL program focused on social and emotional competence and found that positive emotions affected mental health fifteen years following the intervention (Hawkins, Kosterman, Catalano, Hill, & Abbott, 2008). Schonert-Reichl and Lawlor (2010) reported a significant improvement in social and emotional competence in students after a mindfulness-based intervention program. Flook et al. (2010) tested students' executive functioning after a mindfulness awareness practice with second and third grade students, and they found a stronger effect on students who had executive function difficulties who improved in behavioural regulation and metacognition. From the above research, a mindfulness-based intervention strategy could be beneficial in increasing awareness, emotional regulation, and self-acceptance in students, which are all elements of self-compassion. In addition, a meta-analysis of 213 school-based SEL programs found students who received SEL programs had increased prosocial behaviours and decreased problem behaviours (Durlak et al., 2011).

From the above research, mindfulness and social and emotional learning have shown promising results for increasing awareness, emotional regulation, self-kindness, and compassion with others in a school setting. Most of the SEL and mindfulness programs used in the above research studies incorporate elements of both SEL and mindfulness practice, and the “Learning to BREATHE” program has shown promising results using elements of both mindfulness and SEL; therefore, I chose to use the “Learning to BREATHE” program in my study.

“Learning to Breathe” curriculum

The “Learning to BREATHE” (L2B) program has been adapted from Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program developed by Kabat-Zinn (2003) to a program easily incorporated into school curricula. The L2B program’s focus is to develop social-emotional learning (SEL) such as self-awareness and self-management (Broderick, 2013). L2B is intended to teach students to recognize emotions, values, strengths, and limitations, and how to manage emotions and behaviours to attain goals as well as fostering empathy, relationships building, and responsible decision making (Broderick, 2013).

Research on this program has shown a variety of results including increased calmness, self-acceptance, self-compassion, and emotional regulation amongst others. For instance, a control study found a reduction in negative affect and increasing calmness, self-acceptance, and emotional regulation in their research group as compared to controls (Broderick & Metz, 2009). In another study, participants reported feeling calm and relaxed, and experienced increased levels of self-acceptance (Broderick, 2013). The L2B program has also shown improved mindfulness, self-compassion, perceived stress, and life satisfaction in adolescents in an after school program (Bluth et al., 2014). A study conducted within a regular school classroom showed that participants showed greater gains in emotion regulation skills such as awareness of emotions and

regulation strategies (Metz et al., 2013). In a doctoral dissertation, the L2B showed a significant reduction in self-report rates of anxiety (Potek, 2012). These results suggest the “Learning to BREATHE” program is effective in teaching social and emotional skills.

The L2B is designed to communicate a message of self-compassion to adolescents, and self-compassion is formally taught in the theme of *Tenderness* (Broderick & Frank, 2014). I adapted the program slightly to incorporate more information on the core elements of self-compassion, such as common humanity, as the L2B program did not cover this topic. The program is divided into six themes, according to the acronym “BREATHE” (Broderick, 2013). Each theme is developed in three classes. I describe each theme, and how I adapted the program.

The B represents *Body*, and the focus in this theme was to teach students to be more aware of their mind-body connection. Understanding how the brain functions and influences the body and mind is integral to increasing levels of consciousness; it is about developing self-awareness.

The letter R represented *Reflections*, and students were asked to focus their thoughts on the present moment, how their breath enters their bodies, and try to let thoughts just be thoughts to not let them overwhelm. In doing this, the students were invited to become more mindful and attentive of their surroundings and themselves without getting caught up in their stories in their mind. Students were taught to evaluate their thoughts and just thoughts and not to get emotionally involved in them.

The E represents *Emotions*. In these lessons, students were taught about the amygdala and how they have a rational and emotional brain. Their emotional brain is their amygdala-triggered brain, while the rational brain tries to “tame” the amygdala so that emotions do not

influence their behaviours. The message is not to suppress emotions, but just to note them, where you can feel them in the body, and to be aware of how emotions can affect behaviours.

The letter A represents *Attention*, but I also adapted this unit to add more information about *Awareness* and *Acceptance*, which included concepts such as self-awareness and self-acceptance. It also included common humanity and to accept oneself and others nonjudgmentally. Focusing on the present moment with non-judgmental awareness is a core component of self-compassion.

The letter T represents *Tenderness*, and students were taught how to treat themselves with tenderness and self-kindness, a core element of self-compassion. Students were taught to be more aware of their how they talk to themselves, their thoughts, feelings, and how they treat themselves. They were taught to be kind to themselves, and treat themselves as they would treat a friend.

The H represents *Habits of Mind*. In these lessons, students were asked how they could use mindfulness in their everyday life. The letter “E” represents *Empowerment*. By the end of the program, the students were invited to become empowered to be more aware of themselves within their world, better able to handle emotions, more aware and accepting of themselves and others, more compassionate towards themselves and others, and more able to face life’s challenges and difficulties.

British Columbia curriculum.

British Columbia is currently in the process of changing the curriculum to fit more with today’s learners and the needs of society, and teaching self-compassion can be easily incorporated into the new BC Education Plan (BC Ministry of Education, 2012b). Creating a learning environment for self-compassion steeped in the new BC curriculum is an opportunity to

develop curricula that can be transformational for the education system and beneficial for the students. The new direction consists of cross-curricular competencies such as personal and social competencies, thinking competencies, personal and cultural identity competencies, and communication competencies that include both cognitive and social and emotional learning (BC Ministry of Education, 2013d). Also included in the new curriculum are “big ideas” about specific subject areas such as physical and health education and social studies curriculum (BC Ed, 2014a). These competencies and “big ideas” are shown in Table 6.

Of particular interest to incorporating self-compassion within the BC curriculum is to delve deeper into personal and social competency as defined by the BC Ministry of Education (2013d). Included in the definition is to build positive personal and cultural identity, to increase personal awareness and responsibility, and to create social awareness and responsibility. The goal is to teach students to take responsibility for their actions, be self-regulating, make ethical decisions, accept consequences, empathize with others, recognize and appreciate diversity, defend human rights, and contribute in social, cultural, and ecological causes.

Within the thinking competency, critical, creative, and reflective thinking represent abilities students need to develop a deep sense of personal and societal self-awareness (BC Ed, 2013d). The thinking competency includes metacognitive awareness to help students become reflective thinkers and become aware of their own learning processes. Reflective or critical thinking is to be able to use reason on matters that are of moral or social importance and to make personal decisions on matters that are influenced by one’s belief system (Noddings, 2006). Being a reflective thinker is integral to self-compassion.

<p>Table 6:</p> <p><i>BC Ministry of Education's core competencies within the Integral Model</i></p>	
<p>UL: Interior-Individual</p> <p>Awareness of emotions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be self-regulating • Understand emotions • Identify and manage stress 	<p>UR: Exterior-Individual</p> <p>Self awareness and mindfulness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase personal awareness • Understand mind-body connections • Build physical and psychological health
<p>LL: Interior-Collective</p> <p>Awareness of oneself within relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase social awareness and responsibility • Understand and appreciate one's own culture and those of others • Appreciate diversity • Develop empathy through relationships with others 	<p>LR: Exterior-Collective</p> <p>Awareness of oneself within society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase global competency • Increase ecological awareness and their role within it • Defend human rights

BC's new positive personal and cultural identity competency profiles (2014c) state students need to understand that they are shaped by their relationships and cultural experiences and to appreciate these experiences as a foundation for them to learn and grow. Some of the "big ideas" in the physical and health education curriculum (2014a) are to build caring behaviours, empathy, and good communication skills that will help students build strong relationships, resist unhealthy social pressures, and make healthy choices. In the BC positive personal and cultural identity competency profiles (2014c), an understanding of one's beliefs and perspective within a pluralistic society is one of the goals. Some of the "big ideas" in the social studies curriculum (2014b) are how awareness of how the outside world connects us with others, how values shape political, social, and cultural identities, and how technological advances impact the natural environment. Students learn to recognize and appreciate diversity, respond to human rights

issues, and contribute in social, cultural, and ecological causes through authentic service initiatives (BCEd, 2013a).

The “big ideas” in the new physical and health education curriculum (BC Ed, 2014a) are building an awareness of how the body works so that students are more knowledgeable about how to increase physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. Within BC’s new creative thinking competency profile (2013b), it states that students need to be given some “incubation time” and “quieting of the filters and censors” to allow students time to reflect and assimilate new information to their conscious minds (p. 2). This “incubation time” will allow students the time to process information to allow the rational mind to integrate the information into the emotional mind (Goleman, 2005). The physical and health education curriculum (2014a) states that identifying and managing stress, anxiety, and other issues increase mental wellbeing. Intervention strategies that connect the teaching of self-compassion to these cross-curricular competencies and “big ideas” in subject-specific curriculum can be powerful ways to increase wellbeing and resiliency in adolescents.

A critical question, though, was to find out teachers’ perceptions of this new BC Education Plan (2014a). As well as introducing SEL and competencies into the curriculum, teachers are being asked to implement project based learning and more technology into the classrooms. This new plan is a big adjustment from how teachers are currently providing programs for their students. I believe that many teachers will be resistant to the new plan, as they will experience a huge learning curve. Many teachers do not know what social and emotional learning is or how to teach it. The next few years will see many changes in BC classrooms, and teachers have a lot of work ahead of them. I hope that this research study may inform the school district on teacher and administrator perspectives of the teaching of SEL within school curricula.

Summary.

Intervention methods steeped within the classroom curricula that promote self-compassion should be taught in schools. In mindfulness, one learns to pay attention and focus the mind on the present moment non-judgementally and with acceptance (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). A core part of SEL and mindfulness is to be aware of and regulate thoughts and emotions, to increase social awareness and relationships skills, and to make responsible decisions in consideration of the wellbeing of self and others (CASEL, 2013). This awareness has resulted in students having more emotional self control, displaying an increase in prosocial behaviours, and displaying a decrease in problem behaviours (Durlak et al., 2011).

The new BC Education Plan (2014) is an opportune time to integrate SEL and mindfulness programs within the existing curriculum. The present research included assessing teachers' and administrators' perceptions of implementing SEL and mindfulness programs into BC's new curriculum, possibly the first such study. Now the big question is: How can these methods be incorporated into the existing curriculum? More specifically, what were teacher and administrators perceptions regarding the implementation of mindfulness programs within BC curriculum? And, does self-compassion and mindfulness fulfill the requirements on social and emotional learning mandated by the new BC curriculum? It will help answer the overarching question: What were the benefits and challenges to teaching self-compassion within school curricula?

Chapter Summary

This literature review began by introducing the elements of self-compassion, which are self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness. Self-compassion means to build a better understanding of one's role in the world, and one's acceptance of the way things are. It is to find

a way to see oneself in relation to others. These concepts, first developed in Buddhist philosophy, has been brought to contemporary research by Kristin Neff (2003a, 2011). I then introduced the contextual framework by introducing integrity (Palmer, 2004), the integrated brain (Siegel, 2013), and Integral Theory (Wilber, 2007) to rationalize my use of the integral framework for the present study.

The integral framework is a complex way of looking at a phenomenon, through quadrants, levels, lines, states and types (Wilber, 2007). It is how to build self-compassion and therefore emotional wellbeing and resilience in adolescents to develop levels of consciousness along four lines of development: cognitive, emotional, self-identity, and interpersonal lines of development. From the second to third level of consciousness, the adolescent is no longer a person self-interested, but he is able to calculate his own needs to those around him; he becomes more aware of the needs of others – developing a concern or compassion for others (Kegan, 1994).

In the next section of the literature review, I organized the current literature on the elements of self-compassion within the four quadrants of the integral framework to show gaps or questions within the literature to rationalize the research questions. Integrating elements of self-compassion such as self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness skills into the new BC Education curriculum is an opportunity for teachers to implement SEL and mindfulness programs to offer adolescents learning opportunities to help increase their wellbeing. The best intervention program is designed to fit in with existing curriculum (Lantieri, 2008). The current direction of the BC curriculum deems to do just that. Integrating these skills into the new curriculum is an opportunity for students to be taught self-compassion to help increase their wellbeing.

In the next chapter on methodology, I will show how I organized my research study within Integral Theory by using Integral Methodological Pluralism (IMP). IMP is a system to organize multiple epistemologies into one integral framework. I situated my research questions within the four quadrants, and developed data collection methods to answer the research questions. I was cognizant of ethical considerations at all levels of this research project. A detailed methodology section is described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this multi-methods research study was to assess the impact of a mindfulness program on self-compassion in one high school in British Columbia. This research study is a comprehensive view of self-compassion through Wilber's (2007) Integral Theory, which offers multiple views of a phenomenon – in this case, self-compassion, to determine if it should be taught in the regular school curriculum. Helping students to gain self-compassion may help them become more self-aware and manage their emotions, which may improve attention, help students control impulsivity and negative emotions, improve relationships, lower negative behaviours, and increase academics (Neff, 2003a).

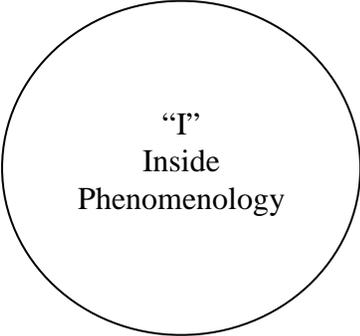
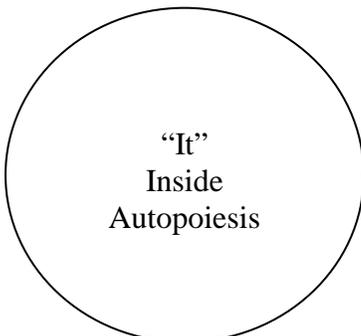
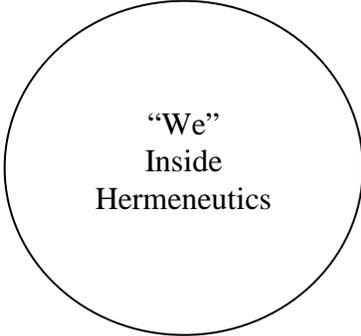
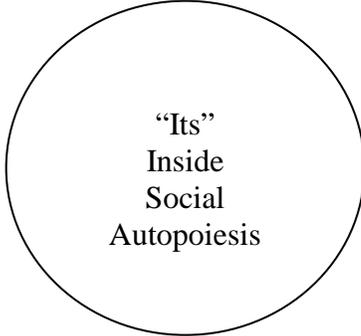
This methodology chapter describes how this research proposal was planned, initiated, and administered. First, I describe and rationalize the use of Integral Methodological Pluralism (IMP) and the subsequent epistemological approaches to address the research questions. Next, I describe and justify my use of multi-methods research methodology and subsequent data collection methods. Then I address my specific context including the research setting and population. Last, I present evidence of ethical considerations, trustworthiness, limitations, and delimitations to the present study.

Integral Methodological Pluralism

The integral method stresses viewing a phenomenon from a variety of perspectives and combining different epistemologies into one comprehensive and effective format (Wilber, 2007). The Integral Method integrates views of growth and development from the inside and outside of all four quadrants; therefore, viewing eight perspectives. These eight perspectives include inside and outside views of the “it” (the body or body systems), “its” (the system in which “it” lives),

“I” (the individual), and “we” (the culture or relationships with which the individual resides), which suggests both quantitative and qualitative methods respectively as shown in Table 7.

Integral Methodological Pluralism (IMP) includes all eight viewpoints and their distinct epistemological approaches and methodologies. To use IMP as a framework implies using all eight paradigms. To leave one out is not true IMP (Esbjorn-Hargens, 2006).

Table 7		
<i>Eight perspectives and Epistemologies (Adapted from Wilber, 2007)</i>		
	Interior	Exterior
Singular	 <p>“I” Inside Phenomenology</p> <p>Structuralism</p> <p>Outside</p>	 <p>“It” Inside Autopoiesis</p> <p>Empiricism</p> <p>Outside</p>
Plural	 <p>“We” Inside Hermeneutics</p> <p>Ethnomethodology</p> <p>Outside</p>	 <p>“Its” Inside Social Autopoiesis</p> <p>Systems theory</p> <p>Outside</p>

Integral Theory emphasizes methodology to linking epistemology and ontology (Esbjorn-Hargens, 2010). Ontologically, IMP is a way of knowing, of experiencing, and of being conscious of a phenomenon depending on the focus of the different views; therefore, the ontology associated with each view is the result of where it places its focus (Esbjorn-Hargens, 2010). For instance, the interior subjective view emphasizes the epistemology of phenomenology, which is to explore and make sense of a phenomenon, and the methodology used is to study the direct, lived experiences of the individual. Therefore, this view emphasizes the belief that humans can understand phenomenon in the immediate experience. In IMP, there are a variety of epistemologies; therefore, one ontology cannot be attributed to IMP, but rather, the different views must be integrated into what is called *ontological pluralism* (Esbjorn-Hargens, 2010). IMP integrates all eight views and epistemologies, and subsequently, many ontological positions. The next section describes the epistemologies and methodologies that I focused on in my study.

Multi-Methods Research

Integral Methodological Pluralism (IMP) suggests a multi-methods approach to research (Esbjorn-Hargens, 2006). IMP includes eight distinct perspectives and epistemologies to thoroughly answer the research questions using Integral Theory. According to Wilber (1994), in both the right and left quadrants, the question lies in *how* one knows what one knows, or epistemology. The right quadrants suggest knowledge of an object, while the left suggests knowledge of the self (Wilber, 2007). Therefore, the use of multi-methods research follows this paradigm of looking both objectively and subjectively at self-compassion and whether it should be taught to adolescents. Each of the eight perspectives in IMP are described as *zones* as shown

in Table 8. Each zone has its own epistemological approach in the either qualitative or quantitative discipline.

Table 8 <i>Research questions and epistemologies within the 8 zones of IMP</i> (Adapted from Wilber, 2007)	
UL – individual interior “I” Research Question: Did student resiliency increase? Zone #1: Inside epistemology: Phenomenology Zone #2: Outside epistemology: Structuralism	UR – individual exterior “It” Research Question: Did students report a change in the self-report questionnaires? Zone #5: Inside epistemology: Autopoiesis Zone #6: Outside epistemology: Empiricism
LL – collective interior “We” Research Question: Was there a change in classroom or school culture? Zone #3: Inside epistemology: Hermeneutics Zone #4: Outside epistemology: Ethnomethodology	LR – collective exterior Research Question: What are the benefits and challenges to teaching self-compassion within school curricula? Zone #7: Inside epistemology: Social autopoiesis Zone 8: Outside epistemology: Systems Theory

Since I examined self-compassion in adolescents, which is more of an internal phenomenon, I was therefore looking more closely to the left two quadrants, the “I” and “we.” I also used qualitative research for the lower right quadrant. I included quantitative methodology of the upper right hand quadrant to show more statistical evidence such as questionnaires. This multi-methods study was to examine how mindfulness affected self-compassion in adolescents. The epistemology and methodology of the study will now be examined through the eight

perspectives or zones of IMP, and each zone will be examined separately rationalizing the data collection measurements that were used.

Zones one and two are present in the upper-left quadrant, which views the “I” both from the inside and outside. The inside view of the “I” involves an interior/subjective epistemology of phenomenology. Phenomenology is the exploration of the consciousness of the subjects being studied (Stone, 1979). First used by Edmund Husserl, phenomenology recognizes human awareness, consciousness, and perceptions as part of one’s lived experience. It is a “totality of the perspectives for me” (Husserl, 2002, p. 132). One of the goals of this study was to explore the subjects’ perceptions of self-compassion, which was identified and interpreted through their journal writing. In this way, students were able to describe their perceptions of self-compassion through their writing.

Zone two is the outside/subjective epistemology of structuralism. In structuralism, the process for analysis is to view the individual as a “whole” within an ever-changing system (Greene, 1984). For Piaget, an individual aims towards equilibrium, which involves accommodating one’s own structure to the conditions of the outside environment (Turner & Chambers, 2006). “Every change in the actual structure of thought seems to show that this structure is plastic to the action of external things” (Piaget, 1930, p. 258). Therefore, thoughts evolve based on both the mind and the environment, and the mind adapts to the environment, and the world can also adapt to the mind (Piaget, 1930). From a structuralist perspective, this research included individual student interviews in order to understand how students have accommodated or assimilated aspects of self-compassion into their concepts of the self within their environment.

Zones three and four of the lower left quadrant represent the inside and outside of the collective “we,” or culture and relationships. Hermeneutics is the epistemology representing zone three, the inside view of the “we.” Hermeneutics, as understood by Gadamer (1976), is the belief that in order to understand an individual, one must also understand that person’s perceptions, which is influenced by one’s communications and experiences within society. According to hermeneutics, what we inherit from our family, culture, and our tradition is more important than self-examination and self-awareness. In this study, student journaling was used in order to interpret and understand the students’ perceptions of self-compassion in relation to their family, society, and school culture. I hoped to ask pertinent questions to assist in understanding diverse student perceptions of self-compassion.

Zone four, on the other hand, uses ethnomethodology as a way to draw out information of the outside view of the individual within their social milieu. Ethnomethodology, according to Garfinkel (1967), is the theory that one learns about the individual by viewing their activities within their social structure. One’s actions and expressions are contingent upon one’s social organizations within everyday life; therefore, an external method of gathering data on the students’ school organization was necessary. Twelve focus groups of several students were organized at the end of the intervention. Focus group discussions centred around aspects of self-compassion as discussed within group dynamics. I also interviewed two educational assistants and one teacher to gain an understanding of student dynamics within the classroom environment, and I interviewed administrators to understand school policies surrounding the teaching of mindfulness in schools. As ethnomethodology suggests, I could not interpret and understand students’ activities and perceptions without the context of their class and the school structure.

Zones five and six of the upper right quadrant represent a more objective view of the individual from the inside and outside. Zone five, the inside view of the individual, is represented by autopoiesis. Autopoiesis is the mechanism that views human beings as autonomous systems with bodies and biological phenomenon (Maturana et al., 1987). The biological phenomenon that was studied is mindfulness awareness. As stated in chapter two, a cognitive awareness of how the mind and body are linked is important for self-compassion. This mind - body awareness was measured by the Mindful Awareness Attention Scale (Brown, 2003). To test student self-compassion, the Self-compassion Scale (Neff, 2003a) and Compassion Scale (Pommier, 2011) were used. The Mindset Quiz (Dweck, 2006) was used to measure if students self reported a fixed or growth mindset. Autopoiesis is an objective view of the biological system, and data on mindful awareness and self-compassion were collected.

Zone six is the objective view using empiricism as a way of scientifically “proving” a hypothesis through statistical examinations. It is based on scientific “knowledge” as objective, accurate, and certain (Crotty, 2012). The empirical evidence shown through pre-and post-tests of the various scales used showed statistical evidence of changes in mindfulness awareness, self-compassion, compassion for others, and mindset in adolescents due to a mindfulness program. This empirical evidence is important to administrators and school boards who will quantitatively evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

Zones seven and eight include the objective exterior view of a mindfulness program to evaluate if it should be taught in schools. Zone seven’s epistemology is social autopoiesis. Social autopoiesis includes the social systems in which an organism lives, which entails reciprocal behaviours as members of a social unity, and as observers we can view their communications and describe their behaviours as members of a social system (Maturana et al., 1987, p. 193). The

social system arises in communication among organisms. It is the inside view of the social system: communication (Wilber, 2007). To view the inside of the social system, I conducted teacher and educational assistant interviews.

Zone eight's epistemology is systems theory or the outside view of the social system, as it views members of society as part of a system (Wilber, 2007). In this study, I was viewing the benefits of a mindfulness program on adolescents within society to see if a mindfulness program would be an acceptable method for students to learn social and emotional learning skills. The method of obtaining information was to conduct teacher, administrator, superintendent of Catholic diocese, and the superintendent of public schools interviews to discuss policies and procedures around teaching SEL and mindfulness in schools.

Integral Methodological Pluralism is to view a phenomenon from eight different perspectives, with eight different epistemologies and many views, or ontological pluralism. In order to truly conduct IMP, research must contain all eight perspectives. In this research study, I used multiple methods to view the teaching of self-compassion to adolescents from all eight perspectives. However, it was not feasible to delve deeply into all eight zones within a doctoral research project. The previous descriptions of the zones and subsequent epistemologies are a general overview of each zone, and it was not within the realm of this research study to analyze in depth each of the eight zones. By taking an overarching view and collecting data on all eight perspectives, I hoped to gain a broad overview of self-compassion within the high school context. IMP is to view the students as both individuals and as members of society to look at the learning and teaching of self-compassion and mindfulness from a variety of perspectives. I hoped that the current study may answers some questions, lead into unanticipated directions, and

provoke additional thoughts about self-compassion, social and emotional learning, and mindfulness in education.

In using all eight perspectives, IMP is a true multi-methods construct in which to focus on self-compassion as a way to gain information from multiple points of view. By teaching concepts of self-compassion through a mindfulness program, I focused more on the left two quadrants of AQAL as it was hoped that self-compassion and compassion for others would increase as a result of the mindfulness program. This study was to implement a mindfulness program within high school classrooms as a means to increase self-compassion. Integral Methodological Pluralism is my contextual framework that guided my data gathering, but I used action research as my methodology, as I worked closely with teachers and the administrator to implement this project.

Action Research

The term “action research” was first coined by Lewin (1947) as planned social action to solve a social issue. Lewin further stated that fact-finding methods are necessary so that the path to the problem is structured around a “realistic determination of the nature and position of the social goal” (p. 150). Action research is a methodology in which the researcher constructs to solve a problem currently experienced, in this case, in schools (Creswell, 2012). It is grounded in the researcher’s ideals of “good work” in education. Action research is a dynamic process in response to a problem and must be implemented with collaboration from the organization experiencing the problem (Elden & Chisholm, 1993). This type of research requires cooperative, trusting relationships between researcher, teachers, and administration. As Lewin (1947) explained, “One cannot overemphasize the importance of the spirit of cooperation and of social responsibility for research” (p. 153).

Action research's goal is to "enhance the lives of the children" (Mills, 2007, p. 10). In this research, I will endeavour to enhance the lives of the students by teaching mindfulness as a way to build self-compassion to increase wellbeing and resiliency in adolescents. According to Carr and Kemmis (1986), action research is to improve education in three areas: improvement of practice, understanding of the practice, and improvement of the situation by the practice. Through my research, I initiated a program in one private school to implement a mindfulness program to build self-compassion in students. The results of the program shed light on whether or not self-compassion should be taught to adolescents. In addition, the results of the study will enlighten the school board on the efficacy of such a program being taught throughout the diocese or district. An involvement of practitioners was paramount in all its phases from planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting.

Research Setting

Cooperation from all stakeholders is also paramount in action research: researcher, administrator, teachers, parents, and students. It is a dynamic and potentially very effective solution to an educational problem. I gained the trust and cooperation within one private school in a mid-sized city located in the southern interior of BC. The city has a population of approximately 85,000 people. The school district comprises of thirty three elementary schools, twelve secondary schools, one middle school, two private elementary schools, and one private high school.

I approached the Religion teacher from the school who taught both grades 8 and 9 Religion classes, and asked if I could teach a short mindfulness program to the students. Religion is a subject all students must take at this school; therefore, all students in grades 8 and 9 were in one of the four classes in which I taught. I taught the program for the first twenty minutes of

Religion class for eighteen classes over a seven week time period. I worked closely with the teacher to implement the intervention program as comprehensively as possible in her classroom. Building trust and cooperation with the teacher was an important aspect of this research.

Research Population

The sample was chosen from two grade eight classes and two grade nine classes. There were 35 grade eight students and 49 grade nine students; therefore, 84 students were in my research population. This private school is the only Catholic high school in the city with approximately 250 students. The students come from predominantly upper middle class families from a Catholic background. The school also includes students from other denominations as well as non-religious students, but approximately 50% of the student body is comprised of practicing Catholics. Because this case study includes students that are not a cross section of students in the greater population, the results of this study cannot be generalized to all adolescents in the district.

Of the 84 students approached to participate in the study, 67 of them consented to have their data analyzed for research purposes. Of those that were not included in the sample, 20% did not consent to participate, and 80% failed to return their consent forms. Approximately 33% of the high school population participated in the study. Of the participants, 32 were girls and 35 were boys. Their ages ranged from 13 to 15 by the end of the study. The data was analyzed separately for boys and girls.

Data Collection Methods and Analysis

Several methods of data collection were used in this action research. The four classes all received 18 sessions of the “Learning to BREATHE” curriculum. Questionnaires were distributed and collected by the classroom teacher. The journal entries and interviews were administered by the researcher. The focus group discussions were facilitated by the researcher

and research assistants. No names were used on any data, rather, numbers or pseudonyms were used to identify the individual students. The teacher nor researcher had access to the identity of the students who had signed the consent forms until after the teaching of the mindfulness program.

<p>Table 9. <i>Data collection methods divided into the four quadrants of integral theory</i></p>	
<p>UL – individual interior “I” Research Question: How do students perceive self-compassion?</p> <p>Zone #1: Phenomenology Measurements: Subjective information provided by student journals</p> <p>Zone #2: Structuralism Measurements: Student interviews on student perceptions of self-compassion.</p>	<p>UR – individual exterior “It” Research Question: Do students report a change in self-compassion?</p> <p>Zone #5: Autopoiesis Measurements: Mindful Attention Awareness Scale, Self-compassion Scale, and Compassion Scale</p> <p>Zone #6: Empiricism Measurements: Comparison between the pre and post intervention questionnaires</p>
<p>LL – collective interior “We” Research Question: Was there a perceived change in classroom or school culture?</p> <p>Zone #3: Hermeneutics Measurements: Student journals, student interviews focusing on school culture and relationships</p> <p>Zone #4: Ethnomethodology Measurements: Student focus group discussions, teacher interviews</p>	<p>LR – collective exterior “Its” Research Question: Are there benefits of teaching self-compassion within school curricula?</p> <p>Zone #7: Social autopoiesis Measurements: Teacher interviews</p> <p>Zone 8: Systems Theory Measurements: Interview with administrators and superintendents</p>

Journaling

To measure zones one and three, research participants completed an ongoing journal throughout the program (Wilber, 2007). Journaling was an effective means to follow the

participants' thoughts towards the program (Leahy, 2000). Journaling was useful in two ways: as a data collection method, but more importantly, as a method for students to reflect and integrate knowledge. Reflective journaling “provides a vehicle for inner dialogue that connects thoughts, feelings, and actions” (Hubbs & Brand, 2005, p. 62). Journal writing can be an effective means to integrate the two hemispheres of the brain - the creative right hemisphere of the brain is telling the linear, logical left brain to tell a story, and it assists in neural integration (Siegel, 2013). It can be used by students to make sense of their thoughts and emotions as they navigate through the mindfulness program. Journaling is a self-compassion practice in itself as it honours one's own experiences (Germer, 2009).

Journaling topics included directed questions regarding one aspect of self-compassion, open-ended questions regarding student thoughts and feelings towards any aspect of the intervention program, and directed questions about the intervention program itself (see Appendix A: Journal Prompts). This data was used as a way to “see” students' inner thoughts: how students felt towards themselves, others, and the program. The information also generated additional information that the researcher had not thought about. Data collected from journal entries may direct future research in this area. Also, it was made clear to students that it is effective to write down any thoughts that come to mind, even if they lack confidence with their writing ability or thought processes. Students were informed that their journals were completely confidential, and no names were used.

The data from student journals were analyzed using themes or reoccurring patterns (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014) using QSR® NVivo 10 program, a computer program developed to analyze qualitative data (NVivo, 2015). From these patterns, I was able to find pattern codes to develop a way to analyze the data to interpret meaning. For instance, one of my codes was

“emotion” or “compassion” to identify themes. All data that used the words emotion or compassion in them was moved to a node labelled “emotion” or “compassion.”

The data collected from the journals is a window into the thought processes and perceptions of the subjects in this study. The data helped answer the research questions: In what ways did students perceive the three components of self-compassion: mindfulness, self-kindness, and common humanity? In what ways did students report a change in emotional regulation? Was there an increased sense of self-awareness? Journaling helped to answer the overarching question: Did student resiliency increase?

Focus Groups

Focus groups are groups of subjects formed to collect a shared understanding of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). Focus group discussions can be an effective method to collect data on a phenomenon, evaluate new programming, elicit subjects’ opinions, and introduce new areas of study (Jarrell, 2000). Student focus groups were used to view zone four, the outside of the “we,” to collect data on the shared understanding of self-compassion amongst a group of students. Twelve focus groups were conducted at the end of the program. Focus groups consisted of four to five students, but one focus group had only three members. Focus groups were facilitated by either the researcher or research assistant and audio taped for later data collection methods (see Appendix B: Focus Group Questions). All names, if accidentally vocalized, were wiped from the audiotape recordings so that anonymity of subjects was maintained.

The data from the focus groups were analyzed similarly as the journal entries, by using pattern codes to develop themes. The audiotapes were transcribed into written data to develop patterns and codes using the NVivo program. I focused on themes that are components of self-

compassion, but I was also aware of additional themes that might be prevalent, but that have not been thought of prior to data analysis.

The student focus groups helped answer the research questions: 1. In what ways did students perceive compassion towards others? 2. In what ways did student interpersonal relationships change? It helped to answer the overarching question: Was there a change in classroom or school culture?

Interviews

Student interviews were conducted to collect data in zones two and three. Interviews were useful to provide in-depth information that may not have been included in the journaling. Student interviews were an effective means of acquiring information in zone two, the outside view of the “I”: student feelings and thoughts about self-compassion and the mindfulness program. Student interviews also helped collect data in zone three, the inside view of “we”: student perceptions around interpersonal relationships and compassion for others.

During the interviews, I asked subjects open-ended questions to obtain more information about their experiences and perceptions (see Appendix C: Student Interview Questions). A random sampling of two boys and two girls from each class were chosen to be interviewed for a total of sixteen students. Two students were not interviewed due to scheduling conflicts. The interviews were audiotaped; no names or identifying information were used in the interviews.

Student interviews helped answer the research questions: In what ways did students perceive the three components of self-compassion: mindfulness, self-kindness, and common humanity? In what ways did students report a change in emotional regulation? Was there an increased sense of self-awareness? They helped answer the overarching question: Did student resiliency increase? They also helped answer the questions in the lower-left quadrant: 1. In what

ways did students perceive compassion towards others? 2. In what ways did student interpersonal relationships change? It helps to answer the overarching question: Was there a change in classroom or school culture?

Teacher and certified educational assistant were interviewed to measure their perceptions of the program (see Appendix D: Teacher and Appendix E: CEA Interview Questions). Teacher interviews included open-ended questions designed to elicit thought provoking questions around effectiveness of the program on classroom culture, implementation of the program, and understanding school policies surrounding the teaching of social and emotional learning as prescribed by the new BCED initiative (2012a). These interviews helped me gain knowledge of zone four, the outside of the “we” (student dynamics), as it relates to their perceptions of student dynamics. The teacher interview helped me in zone seven, the inside of the “its” (educational system), to understand teacher perceptions of the new education plan (BCED, 2012a). The interviews were audio taped.

The data from the CEA and teacher interview helped answer the research questions: In what ways did student interpersonal relationships change? It helps to answer the overarching question: Was there a change in classroom or school culture? The interview also helped to answer the question: What were teacher perceptions regarding the implementation of mindfulness programs within BC curricula? It helps to answer the overarching question: What were the benefits to teaching self-compassion within school curricula?

The administrator of the private Catholic school, the superintendent of Catholic schools in the Diocese, and the assistant superintendant of public schools in the district were also interviewed. The interviews were conducted in their offices and included a variety of open and closed interview questions (see Appendices F and G). The administrators and superintendants

added information for zone eight, the outside of “its” or the educational system. These administrators have an overarching view of the educational system and the school environment specifically and a wealth of knowledge about policies and procedures and goals of the new Education Plan expected by the provincial educational ministry.

The administrators were able to help answer the research question: What are administrator perceptions regarding mindfulness programs in BC curricula? It will help answer the overarching question: Were there benefits to teaching self-compassion within school curricula?

The aim was to obtain information through individual interviews with students, CEAs, teacher, and the administrators to collect pertinent data regarding perceptions around mindfulness programs. As with the journal entries and focus groups, the interviews were also analyzed according to themes and pattern codes. All interviews were transcribed into written documents, analyzed for reoccurring code words, and further analyzed into themes for data analysis and interpretation. Again, I chose to use NVivo to assist in the data analysis of the large amount of data. This software enabled me to sift through the large amounts of data, but I needed to personally choose the codes and themes that were analysed.

Questionnaires

Prior to the teaching of the mindfulness program, all students filled in several questionnaires. Questionnaires were an effective means to collect quantitative data, which provided statistical data to analyze the teaching of a mindfulness program within school curriculum (Creswell, 2012). The questionnaires fulfilled the quantitative data required for zones five and six, the interior and exterior of the “it.” The questionnaires were distributed by the classroom teacher. Each participant complete the Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003b),

Compassion Scale (Pommier, 2010), Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (Brown, 2006) (Appendix J), and the Mindset Quiz (Dweck, 2006) (Appendix K). At the end of the program, the students were again asked to fill in the questionnaires. A pre-test/ post-test design assessed the impact of the program on the subject population.

The Self-Compassion Scale (SCS) has been developed by researcher, Kristen Neff (2003), to accurately assess levels of self-compassion and the subsequent psychological outcomes. One third of the questions focus on self-kindness, one-third on common humanity, and one-third on mindfulness. These also form three of the six subscales in the model. The other three are opposing constructs of self-judgment, isolation, and over-identification. The five-point Likert Scale questions range from 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always). An example question is “When I see aspects of myself that I don’t like, I get down on myself” (See *Appendix H* for the full scale). The SCS showed a significant positive correlation to social connectedness, life satisfaction, and emotional processing and coping (Neff et al., 2007). The SCS was significantly negatively correlated to self-criticism, perfectionism, depression, and anxiety (concurrent validity). The SCS scores were also significantly correlated with therapist ratings of self-compassion (convergent validity) (Neff et al., 2007). In addition, the SCS was not correlated with social desirability, narcissism, and self-aggrandizement (discriminant validity). The SCS also shows test-retest reliability (Neff, 2003b). The internal consistency reliability was $\alpha = .97$. (Neff & Germer, 2013). Overall, the SCS is a “psychometrically sound and theoretically valid measure of self-compassion” (Neff, 2003b, p. 244). As with all self-reporting scales, the SCS is limited in accuracy due to lack of subjects’ self-knowledge. Subjects may not be aware of their own emotional experiences to adequately answer the SCS; therefore, other means of assessing self-compassion were also used in this study. Neff and McGehee (2010) found the Self-

Compassion Scale to be reliable with adolescents; in fact, they found no differences in self-compassion between the adolescents and college students. The self-compassion score is recommended for ages fourteen and older; subjects should be able to read at the grade eight level. The SCS has been used successfully in many studies cited earlier in the literature review (Leary et al., 2007a; 2007b; Pauley et al., 2010; Neff & Vonk, 2009; Neff et al., 2007; Thompson, 2008; Raes, 2010; Ying, 2009). The SCS is an accepted and established method to measure self-compassion. The results answered the question: Did students report a change in the Self-Compassion Scale?

The Compassion Scale, developed by Pommier (2010), measures compassion as defined by Neff, “compassion involves being touched by the suffering of others, opening one’s awareness of others’ pain and not avoiding or disconnecting from it, so that feelings of kindness toward others and the desire to alleviate their suffering emerge” as shown in *Appendix I* (20013a, pp. 86-87). The Compassion Scale (CS) measures compassion for others with the six subscales similar, but not identical, to the SCS: kindness (rather than self-kindness), indifference (rather than self-judgment), common humanity for others, separation (rather than isolation), mindfulness in the case of others, and disengagement (rather than over-identification) (see Appendix 8). The construct validity of the CS was indicated by establishing content validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Also, the finding of the CS was positively correlated with similar measurements of “compassionate love, social connectedness, wisdom, empathy, and perspective taking,” giving the scale convergent validity (Pommier, 2010, p. 139). In addition, the negative correlation between personal distress and compassion indicates discriminant validity of the scale. Interestingly, the SC was not related to the SCS, indicating that self-compassion and compassion for others have concepts that are unrelated. This supports the earlier statement that subjects feel

compassion for others irrespective of their self-compassion. Gender differences were also found; not surprising, women tended to have higher levels of compassion than men. Overall, the Compassion Scale is a valid measurement of compassion and will be used to measure compassion for others in the present study. The results answered the question: Did the students report a change in the Compassion Scale?

The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) was used in this study to measure levels of mindfulness (Brown, 2003). The MAAS (Appendix 9) is a six point Likert Scale ranging from *almost always* to *almost never*. A sample question is, “I find it difficult to focus on what’s happening in the present” as shown in *Appendix J*. The MAAS has been shown to be a valid and reliable questionnaire to measure mindfulness, an internal consistency of $\alpha = .93$. The fourteen item short version has an almost perfect correlate to the long version. Also, the short version is recommended for contexts where a knowledge of Buddhist theology is not expected; therefore, I used the short version in this study. The FMI have been used in several studies, and some specifically to measure self-compassion (Neff & Germer, 2013). The MAAS is a valid and reliable questionnaire to use in the present research proposal. The results answered the research question: Did the students report a change in the Mindfulness Awareness Attention Scale?

Since the educational system’s principle objective is student achievement, then it would seem logical that if a program assists in the academic achievement of the student body, then the program would be more widely accepted as an effective intervention strategy regardless of the other benefits. Previous research on self-compassion has shown an increase in student achievement scores and growth mindset (Hope et al., 2014; Neff et al., 2005). Since improvement in academic achievement cannot be accurately tested with such a short intervention program used in the current study, I decided to test students with the Mindset Quiz (see

Appendix K) before and after the program. A growth mindset is associated with greater academic effort (Hope et al., 2014). A statistically significant change in growth mindset should indicate a change in academic attitude, as students will be more inclined to persevere in the face of defeat (Dweck, 2006). The growth mindset questionnaire was analyzed with statistical analysis software. A change in student academic achievement answered the research question: Did students report a change in the Mindset Quiz?

All of the groups completed the same questionnaires at the end of the program. The data were analyzed using the IBM SPSS Statistics 22 program. The study showed some statistically significant changes in self-compassion, mindful awareness, compassion for others, and mindset.

Ethical Considerations

My study was approved by the Conjoint Faculties Ethics Research Board University of Calgary in February, 2016, which gave me the permission to start my study. I was not required to obtain any additional approval from the Catholic Diocese. After receiving the ethics approval, I distributed the parent introduction letter (see Appendix L), Parent Consent Form (see Appendix M), and Student Assent Form (see Appendix N). In addition, I offered an informational session evening prior to the initiation of the program for any parents or guardians who might have questions about the research study.

After all consent forms had been signed and returned, the school counsellor kept them in a locked office. He opened the consent forms only to count the number of students who had consented. At that point, he informed me that only a few had not consented; therefore, I knew that the majority of the students had consented, which gave me the required number of subjects to go ahead with my study.

All students completed the questionnaires, journal entries, and focus groups, but only the data from those who offered consent were analyzed. All questionnaires were administered by the classroom teacher, and the researcher was not present, but the journals were administered by the researcher. The names of the students were removed from the journal entries and questionnaires, and a number or pseudonym were used to identify individuals on all the data. The researcher and teacher chose the students for focus groups, based on who had consented. The researcher and researcher assistants were observers only during focus group discussions. Interview participants were audiotaped, but were identified with their number or pseudonym. Focus group discussions were also audiotaped, but if names were inadvertently spoken, they were wiped from the audiotape to maintain participant anonymity. All audiotapes, questionnaires, and journals were locked in a fire box in the researcher's office. All data were read only by the researcher and kept strictly confidential.

As the researcher, I endeavoured to practice mindfulness as a daily practice, and I attended training in Self-Compassion (Neff, 2003a) and the "Learning to BREATHE" curriculum (Broderick, 2013). Many researchers contend the importance of personal mindfulness practice before practicing with students (Broderick, 2013; Germer, 2009; Neff, 2003a).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the quality of the research, and it depends on aligning what I want to know (research questions) with how I will go about uncovering the data (methodology) (Davis, 2008). Since this is a multi-methods research study, trustworthiness must be understood with both qualitative and quantitative lenses. As stated previously, qualitative methodology is represented by the left quadrants, while quantitative methodology is located in the two right quadrants. When looking at qualitative data, the trustworthiness of research acknowledges a need

for both credibility (what the subjects perceive is that which is measured) and dependability (that the researcher followed logical procedures for data collection and interpretation) (Blomberg & Volpe, 2012). Similarly, when looking at quantitative data, the quality of research will depend on the validity (accuracy of interpretation of test scores) and reliability (instruments used are stable and consistent) (Creswell, 2012).

The trustworthiness of qualitative data depends on accuracy of representation of subject responses in journal entries and interviews, inclusion of all voices during focus groups, and researcher bias; therefore, I would aim for truthfulness, fairness, and authenticity (Davis, 2008). First of all, the subjects may interpret journal entry questions differently, but they might also not answer truthfully. The journal entries and interviews depend on truthful responses, which were explained to the students during the introduction of the study. I hoped that students would take the research study seriously, but I expected some students would not contribute fully in some aspects of the study. Also, during focus groups, some students might be more outspoken than others, which might skew the dialogue in a certain direction, and all voices in the group might not be heard. To ensure all voices were heard, there was an opportunity, although not mandatory, for all members to share during focus groups. In addition, all subjects were given an opportunity to write in their journals any thoughts they were not confident in sharing during the focus group sessions. To diminish the effects of researcher bias, I was continually mindful of biases I brought into the research study by keeping true to the “Learning to Breathe” curriculum, core concepts of self-compassion as developed by Neff (2003a), and other research facts. I endeavoured to be open and honest in the reporting of results. The trustworthiness of the quantitative data depends on controls, valid and reliable measurements, and sound interpretations of results; therefore, it is

based on control, prediction, and explanation (Davis, 2008). The questionnaires I used in this study have high reliability and validity ratings.

As well as the above checks and balances between methodologies and data collection methods, the present research used a multi-methods approach to data collection, which entailed the use of triangulation, which included multiple data collection methods to clarify meaning (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Integral Methodological Pluralism and its subsequent eight zones supposes a multi-methodology approach, which supports triangulation and adds to the trustworthiness of the data. Through multiple perspectives, I collected a multitude of data that studied self-compassion to determine if it benefited middle-school students and whether or not it should be included in the regular school curriculum.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this research study as it was conducted in one Catholic school in one city in British Columbia. The results of this study cannot be generalized to the adolescent population outside of this context. First, the students who attend a private Catholic school may be demographically different than those students who attend other schools in BC. Second, this case study was conducted in relatively small city; therefore, the results cannot be generalized to the adolescent population throughout BC. In addition, an eighteen-session program may be too short to show many significant results.

Delimitations

As a doctoral student, I chose to conduct a case study as it was conceivable for a doctoral research study. Only four classes were chosen to limit the amount of data collected. The relatively short curriculum was feasible considering the time limit to teach and collect the data.

Even though this case study was limited to the chosen population and was conducted in a short amount of time, this is one of the first studies on self-compassion in the school setting.

Chapter Summary

In using Integral Methodological Pluralism (IMP), it was an opportunity to view self-compassion from a multitude of viewpoints or epistemologies using many views or ontologies. The eight zones of IMP suggest a multi-methods construct, within which I viewed self-compassion from eight viewpoints and multiple methods of data collection. The multi-methods approach allowed me to triangulate the data, which added to the trustworthiness of the data. I have been able to understand self-compassion from the students, teachers, and administrators' points of view and determined if self-compassion is a valuable construct for adolescents and if it should be taught within the regular school curriculum. The next chapter will describe my findings within the integral format.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

In this chapter, I explain the results of my findings within the integral format. I first describe how I collected and organized the data within the different zones of integral theory using both quantitative and qualitative methods and, subsequently, computer assisted technologies. I then describe the themes I discovered through this process and situate the results within each quadrant of integral theory.

Data Collection and Analysis: From Data to Findings

This multi-methods study accumulated a considerable amount of data including approximately 200 pre- and post-questionnaires, approximately 350 journal entries, fourteen student interviews (two students were cancelled due to scheduling difficulties), six adult interviews, and eleven student focus groups (one audio file was accidentally erased). In order to contextualize the findings from this large amount of data, the four quadrants of the integral theory were used to organize the results. Within each quadrant, the data were examined in the different zones with both an inside and an outside lens using either qualitative or quantitative methods. It is to view the teaching of self-compassion from eight different viewpoints using integral methodological pluralism (IMP).

Findings from Quantitative Data

Students filled out four questionnaires before they received the “Learning to BREATHE” program: Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003b), Compassion Scale (Pommier, 2010), Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (Brown, 2006), and the Mindset Quiz (Dweck, 2006). The pre-tests show the level the students were at in each of these questionnaires at the beginning of the program. I compared the differences between boys and girls using independent T-tests using the IBM® SPSS 22 software. The students all completed the questionnaires during the last teaching

class of the program to see whether or not the students changed after the completion of the mindfulness program. I analyzed the data using paired samples T-tests to measure if there were any significant changes in the levels of mindfulness, self-compassion, compassion for others, and mindset between the pre- and post-questionnaires. This quantitative data falls in the upper right quadrant as shown below in Table #11 below, and the findings of these results will be described later in this chapter.

Findings from Qualitative Data

To analyze the qualitative data, I went through each journal entry, interview, and focus groups transcript, separated by gender, and manually coded the information into nodes or codes using the QSR® NVivo 10 program. After my initial analysis, I was left with 70 nodes. I then looked to see how many references and sources were used for each node. I looked for commonalities in the nodes and where I could put them in the integral quadrants, keeping in mind my research questions. After looking at similar nodes, I then picked the themes that had the most references assigned to them and came up with a final six themes and twelve subthemes which were subsequently organized into the quadrants according to the research questions as shown in Table #10. The results will be described later in this chapter.

The purpose of using IMP is to examine the phenomenon of teaching self-compassion to adolescents from eight different lenses, or zones. In my use of research methods, I have endeavoured to be as thorough as possible in using IMP by collecting data from all 8 zones. The integration of all the perspectives provides an overview of this case, which is followed by an analysis of how the different zones influence each other which is discussed in chapter 5.

Table 10 <i>Themes divided into the four quadrants of integral theory (Wilber, 2007)</i>	
UL: Qualitative Methods Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused Attention • Effects on behaviours Self-awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-kindness • Self-acceptance 	UR: Quantitative Methods Statistical examinations of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-compassion • Compassion for Others • Mindful Attention Awareness • Mindset
LL: Qualitative Methods Common Humanity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compassion towards others • Classroom culture Conforming to group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peers • Technology 	LR: Qualitative Methods Social and emotional skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build resilience • Interpersonal relationships Systemic challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom application • Staff buy-in
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender differences in self-compassion 	

UR Findings: Connecting Mind and Body

The upper right quadrant is the exterior-individual quadrant; it is to look at the individual from the outside, the concrete body (Wilber, 2007). Zones 5 and 6 are to look at the objective view of the individual, from the inside using autopoiesis, and the outside, using empiricism. Autopoiesis is an objective view of the biological system, zone 5, and questionnaires to test students' mindful awareness, self-compassion, compassion for others, and mindset were distributed, collected, and analyzed. In zone #6, empiricism, I used pre-and post-test differences in the questionnaires to examine if mindful awareness, self-compassion, compassion for others, and mindset changed after the mindfulness program. Descriptive statistics and significant results are included in the Table #11.

The results of the Mindset Quiz are very similar for both boys and girls. An average score of 37 on the Mindset Quiz signifies that students overall have a growth mindset with some fixed ideas. A score of 45 would mean a strong growth mindset. As shown in Table #11, the Compassion Scale was significantly higher for girls than for boys, $t(58) = 2.99, p=.004$. For the

self-compassion scale, the boys were slightly higher, but the difference was not significant $t(59) = -1.33, p=.19$. For the Mindfulness Awareness Attention Scale, boys were slightly higher than girls, but again the results were not significant.

I compared the pre- and post questionnaires to measure if there were any significant changes in mindset, compassion for others, self-compassion, and mindfulness awareness after the

Table #11								
<i>Questionnaire Data: Statistical differences between genders.</i>								
Group Statistics	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mindset Quiz	Female	31	37.8387	6.77789	1.21734	.373	60	.710
	Male	31	37.2581	5.40350	.97050			
Compassion Scale	Female	30	3.7963	.53062	.09688	2.992	58	.004*
	Male	30	3.4167	.44900	.08198			
Self-Compassion Scale	Female	31	2.9519	.65095	.11691	-1.325	59	.190
	Male	30	3.1533	.52759	.09632			
Mindful Awareness Attention Scale	Female	31	3.9097	.64774	.11634	-.447	59	.657
	Male	30	3.9867	.69765	.12737			

mindfulness program than before. I conducted paired sample T-tests to find any significant results. Comparative statistics of the mean, standard deviation, and significant differences between the pre- and post tests are shown in Table #12. The significant differences between the two tests are in the Mindset Quiz and Compassion Scale. According to the results of the Mindset Quiz, students' mindset was higher after the program than before, $t(57) = 4.04, p=.00016$. According to the Compassion Scale, compassion for others had a significant difference between pre-and post-test, $t(54) = 2.35, p=.023$.

Table # 12
Paired sample T-tests between pre- and post- test questionnaires

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Post_MQ	41.3966	58	6.38512	.83841	4.044	57	.00016*
	Pre_MQ	37.9828	58	5.90121	.77487			
Pair 2	Post_CS	3.7600	55	.54077	.07292	2.347	54	.023*
	Pre_CS	3.6185	55	.51454	.06938			
Pair 3	Post_SCS	3.0961	49	.61691	.08813	.173	48	.863
	Pre_SCS	3.0824	49	.61194	.08742			
Pair 4	Post_MAAS	3.7038	47	.65061	.09490	-1.670	46	.102
	Pre_MAAS	3.8781	47	.63777	.09303			

Summary

The upper right quadrant includes the quantitative data for this study. There were some significant results in this data. Girls scored significantly higher on the Compassion Scale, $p=.004^*$ than did boys. The results also showed that there were significant increases in mindset, $p=.00016^*$ and compassion for others, $p=.023^*$ for both boys and girls between the pre- and post-test questionnaires. A summary of the results are shown in Table #13. The results of this data will be further analyzed in chapter 5. For the other three quadrants and 6 zones, I used qualitative data to answer the research questions.

Table #13					
<i>Summary of the Quantitative Results for the UR Quadrant</i>					
Group Statistics	Gender	N	Mean	Sig. (2-tailed) between boys and girls	Sig. (2-tailed) between pre-and post-test
Mindset Quiz	Female	31	37.8387	.711	.00016*
	Male	31	37.2581		
Compassion Scale	Female	30	3.7963	.004*	.023*
	Male	30	3.4167		
Self-Compassion Scale	Female	31	2.9519	.19	.863
	Male	30	3.1533		
Mindful Awareness Attention Scale	Female	31	3.9097	.657	.102
	Male	30	3.9867		

UL Findings: Connecting Mind and Self

The UL quadrant is the subjective-interior or your thoughts, feelings, and emotions. One of the goals of this study was to explore the subjects' perceptions of self-compassion, an upper-left phenomenon. In Zone 1, phenomenology, the focus is on the experience of the individual on their human awareness, consciousness, and perceptions. It is a "totality of the perspectives for me" (Husserl, 2002, p. 132). Through their journals, I was able to interpret their inside or phenomenological perceptions of self-compassion. Zone two is the outside/subjective epistemology of structuralism. In structuralism, the process for analysis is to view the individual as a "whole" within an ever-changing system (Greene, 1984). For zone 2, I interviewed 14 students. I had originally scheduled 16 interviews, two boys and two girls from each class, but I

was not able to interview two of the students, one boy and one girl, because of scheduling difficulties. The purpose of using integral methodological pluralism is to get an inside and outside view in each of the quadrants. I focused on information from the students when they stated fully that they believed this program made a difference for them.

For the themes of the UL quadrant, the data was narrowed to two main themes: awareness and self-awareness. These themes were further narrowed to four subthemes: emotional regulation, effects on behaviours, self-kindness, and self-acceptance.

Awareness

There first has to be an awareness, or cognition, of a phenomenon before there can be a change. One of the ways for students to become more aware is to have a mindfulness practice. Twenty-three of the students wrote in their journals and nine of the students interviewed stated that the mindfulness practice affected their awareness; some students just noticed their surroundings, thoughts, and feelings more. For instance, female student #59 wrote,

Yesterday when I was walking downtown I did it mindfully and I noticed a lot of things I haven't noticed before. I think some advantages would be that you get to see things with more detail and you get to appreciate them and enjoy it a bit more.

As Hermione stated,

Some advantages of being more mindful were that I noticed a lot more details, I was more focused on that activity, I actually enjoyed the activity that I did mindfully, and I pay more attention to the activity. All in all, I believe that being mindful makes you pay more attention to the activity that you are doing.

Male student #39 wrote,

Because you learn about your mind, thoughts and feelings. When you close your eyes you think on everything that is in your head or you can feel which feelings are inside of you right now. It's good because you start to think more of your life.

Focusing on the present moment experience seemed to have allowed the students to become more aware of their surroundings, thoughts, and feelings.

Some students reported that letting thoughts just be thoughts is difficult, as No Name stated in her interview, "I think it's difficult because we haven't always had influences to tell us that we need to fix how we are thinking." Pirlo reported during his interview,

I think it's hard because people really don't think about being nice to themselves and being positive all the time. It's like the negative things, they just want to get them away, but then negative things always come so just focusing on that. I find I'm thinking more positive now and not thinking about the negative things. I try to focus more on positive things.

This is how female student #29 reported during her interview that she deals with negative thoughts, "It's true, you can't shove away negative thoughts, but if you put things in perspective and smile, it makes it a lot easier to deal with every situation." A benefit of mindfulness is to build a focused awareness which allows students to focus on the present moment rather than getting caught up in the past, and ruminate, or worry about the future, and become anxious. Many students wrote that they became more aware of their thoughts which affected their emotional awareness and regulation.

Emotional regulation.

Students were taught to become aware of their emotions as they are happening in their bodies, the "embodied mind," and how this knowledge can help them to regulate their emotions.

Twenty-five of the students wrote in their journals and twelve of the students interviewed stated they felt the program made them more aware of and able to regulate their emotions. As female student #22 wrote, “To be aware of these sensations can be a good thing because it’s good to know what emotions you are experiencing and why.” Some students found this a new concept, as male student #45 reported, “I found it new because I never really stopped to think about how I really feel and thinking about my thoughts and stuff.” No Name stated in her interview, “Sometimes I’m aware of how I feel, but never really noticed it before.” Students were taught that people all have different perceptions and awareness of emotions, and they should recognize their emotions as they are happening in their body so that their emotions do not overwhelm them.

Emotional awareness allows students to be aware of their emotions which is important in emotional regulation. Many students showed their accurate understanding of the concept of emotional regulation. For example, male student #41 in an interview reported,

Mindfulness is like having a keen mind so to control your emotions and how your body reacts to your emotions. And don’t just let your emotions go through you. So if you’re angry, don’t let your body get angry, just brush it off and be more mindful of your emotions.

Female student #28 wrote, “Regulating one’s emotions means that when you are upset and have an unpleasant feeling, you try to get yourself back to normal. It also means that you will notice the feeling, but you don’t focus too much on them.” Female student #29 stated in her interview, “It’s much better to think about it because you really understand that maybe you really weren’t doing something correctly and that maybe you can just acknowledge that emotion but realize that you don’t need to react to it.” Another female student # 24 wrote,

For myself, learning about the ways we can control our emotions, learning what they all really mean, and how I can express my emotions without over doing it, really came to benefit me in the way I treat and look at myself and others. I learned that sometimes when I am sad or hurt it can reflect negatively on others.

And female student #48 wrote,

‘Surfing the wave of emotions and pleasant feeling’ was a good way to check in with yourself. It helped me notice what an impact emotions have. If I have a negative emotion, my behaviours become negative. If my emotions are positive, my behaviours are positive. So, being aware of my emotions will help me change them into positive behaviours. Because if I don’t notice my emotions, I won’t change my behaviours.

Finn (male) wrote, “Self-compassion does change the way I talk to myself by thinking before doing anything and cooling down.” These statements showed their understanding of emotional regulation, which had a positive effect on their thoughts.

The students reflected on how emotions impacted their thoughts, and how they were able to change their negative thoughts and emotions into positive experiences.

Female #29 wrote,

Regulating emotions is to control the reaction of the emotion, recognize the emotion, and then put your emotion into perspective. Awareness of emotion can affect your reaction; it can rationalize the emotion before having a negative outcome. I enjoyed learning about emotional awareness. It helps when dealing with stressful situations.

Male #41 stated in his interview,

It’s easier to get rid of them (emotions) because if you are aware of them, you know how to solve them. But if you’re not aware of them, it may affect others. If you’re angry and

you're not aware of it, you will continue to be angry and it will affect others around you, but if you know how to centre yourself back in then you won't get other people angry and hold grudges.

Female student #57 mentioned in her interview,

I think there have been a couple of incidents where I found myself thinking before I say something maybe irrational. When I stop myself and ask where is this going to lead? Like I don't want this to come out not how I actually mean it, so I find myself stopping.

Selena also wrote, "When I am upset, I try to take a few moments just to breathe, and this program has really helped me with that." Learning mindfulness seemed to have opened up the door to awareness about thoughts and emotions so that students were more able to regulate those emotions so they do not affect their behaviours. This ability to regulate emotions is important in managing behaviours. Students found challenges in regulating their emotions to be in more control of their behaviours. Some students reported that they found it difficult to remember to regulate their emotions in the heat of the moment, as female student #58 wrote, "It makes me think right now while I'm not upset that I should remember that stuff when I am upset, but by the time I get upset again, I forget all the stuff I wanted to remember." An emotional awareness enabled the students to be able to regulate their emotions so they were able to better control their behaviours.

Effects on behaviours.

There were many benefits of mindfulness when students actually were able to do it. Many students stated that mindfulness helped them with a focused attention which helped in academics, sports, and other activities. Twenty students stated that a more focused attention

helped them with their academics. Seventeen students stated that a focused attention helped them in their sports activities. Six students stated that mindfulness helped with chores.

Many students mentioned that mindfulness helped them focus more on their academics. For instance, female #48 wrote,

An activity I did mindfully this week was writing a math test. Usually when I get the test I start stressing out and wonder if I studied enough. This time when I did the test I just focused on the present and when I didn't understand a question I moved on.

Female #52 wrote, "Another advantage is that when you are mindful, you are more focused, and when it comes to something like a test all of your attention is put into it which can even result in a higher grade." Female #57 wrote,

I did my homework and studied for a French test this week. I did this mindfully. I focused on the task at hand and completed it.... Being mindful can help with many things. When you're in a mindful state, you seem to learn better, understand more, focus well and get the job done quickly and well.

Female #58 wrote,

Something I did mindfully was my Math homework because after missing the lesson I have to really focus to understand the question, but this benefits me because I'll do well on tests since I'm focusing on the homework.

Many students stated that a mindfulness awareness helped them focus on their tests, homework, and classroom lessons.

Students were able to use mindfulness in other areas other than academics such as sports. As Hunter wrote,

An activity that I did mindfully was going to hockey practice. I thought about my stride and if it was getting faster, I focused on every pass I made making sure it hit my teammates tape. I thought about picking corners on our goalie looking for open slots, how hard my shot was.

Male student #7 wrote,

My activity was playing a basketball game and had to use my mental game and my awareness of playing and thinking what I am doing. What I am doing on the court. On defence help out mentally ready to get my guy.

Timothy wrote,

Something that I did mindfully was volley ball. You always have to be thinking and moving where the ball is. When you're on the court you have responsibilities. If you don't care out the responsibilities you let the team down so you always have to be mindful of what you are doing and how you need to do it.

Prince Jafar stated, "When I'm practicing I am mindful of what I do because I want to build good habits so that when I play I can act and react without even thinking about it."

Students stated that a focused attention helped them to perform better during sporting activities.

Other students wrote how mindfulness changed their behaviours to be more focused on other activities, such as chores. Female student #55 wrote, "An activity I did mindfully this week was help clean the kitchen for my grandma. I was actually paying close attention to what I had to do. I did a better job than I do normally." Male student #3 wrote,

I think I did my chores mindfully last week as I was being more careful when I was putting things such as dishes and books away. I think the advantage of being more

mindful is that you won't make as many mistakes as you do things slower and more carefully.

Being mindful seemed to help the students be more aware and focused on their surroundings, more aware of their emotions; therefore, more able to regulate their emotions which affected their behaviours and their successes in their activity. In regulating emotions, students are taught how to be aware of their thoughts and emotions and not to let them control their behaviours. A mindful awareness also helps with self-awareness, self-kindness, and self-acceptance.

Self-awareness

A focus of mindfulness is to give students tools to focus their attention on themselves, their body and the sensations within their bodies, to be aware of how their minds and bodies are connected, or "embodied". Nine students stated in their journals and six students stated in their interviews that mindfulness helped them become more aware of their mind/body connection. For instance, Jose Juan wrote,

An activity that I did mindfully was thinking about where does my breathing go into my body, because it is something that I order to my brain. I think some of the advantages of being more mindful is that you have more control in your body, you're more a reflective person and you have more self-control.

Homer stated in his interview, "It means that you can connect with your body and your thoughts so that you are more aware of yourself and others around you.... I would do the breaths it calmed me and I could listen to my body." Michael Phelps wrote, "One of the advantages of being mindful is you can be aware of what your body is doing etc." Also, Dora wrote,

Something I did mindfully this week was close my eyes, listen to the bell, and really pay attention to my body. My toes, feet, legs, stomach, lungs, neck, shoulders, ears, scalp,

mouth, eyes, hair, head and my tongue, hands, fingers, arms, spine. I think some advantages of being mindful are that you get to actually sit down, and pay close attention to your body. Ignore everything else and just focus on your body.

As Homer wrote, “I sort of like it because then I know what’s going on in me.” Female student #28 wrote, “If we are more mindful then we can do better at things we do and we and know more about ourselves.” There first must be self-awareness before self-kindness and self-acceptance. Becoming more self-aware will allow students to be more cognizant of their thoughts and feelings, which makes them more aware of how they think about themselves, how they treat themselves, and how to accept themselves.

Self-kindness.

A major goal of self-compassion is to see yourself accurately and to treat yourself with kindness. Again, the point is to become more self-aware, so that you can see yourself as an authentic being, with flaws and inadequacies. Self-kindness is a core element of self-compassion, and many students stated that treating oneself with kindness was a new concept for them. Most students are taught how to be kind to others, not themselves. Twenty students wrote in their journals and all fourteen stated in their interviews that learning about self-compassion made them think more kindly towards themselves and saw ways they could improve their situation.

Many students wrote or stated that learning about self-kindness allowed them to think differently towards themselves and to treat themselves better. For instance, female student #26 wrote, “Learning self-compassion changes the way I talk to myself. It makes me more aware of myself and helps me don’t get mad to myself.” As female student #67 wrote, “Yes, learning self-compassion does change the way I talk to myself because it makes me and helps me forgive

myself for my mistakes and be able to move on and not beat myself about it.” Female student #25 stated in her interview,

Yes, I do feel like that because this program makes you love yourself and love others, and to take the time to do that, it really help some kids who are going through hard times like depression and stuff to kind of let some things go and just love yourself. And if you do it to yourself, you know that you have to do it to others.

Female student #25 during an interview reported,

I talk to myself really as my mindfulness practice. I’ve become more lenient towards myself, a bit more kinder. Like if I didn’t get a good mark on a test, usually I say, “What did you do? You’re so bad at that. Why didn’t you study more properly?” But now I go over it once again so you know what you’re learning and it’s okay. Nothing major happened. I’ll do way better next time.

Female student #29 wrote, “Learning self-compassion makes me think about what I can do to encourage myself when I am extremely upset or unhappy. It also gives me the ability to relax and be happier around others.” The point of self-compassion is for students to become more self-aware, so that they can see themselves as authentic beings, with flaws and inadequacies, to improve the situation where they can, and to accept themselves with kindness.

Self-acceptance.

A core element of self-compassion is common humanity, and students learned that common humanity is to view themselves authentically with faults and inadequacies. Self-acceptance is the ability to view ourselves accurately, make changes where we can, and to accept the things we cannot change. Fourteen students wrote in their journals and two stated in their interviews that self-compassion allowed them to see themselves accurately, to accept themselves

as part of common humanity, to be able to make changes where they thoughts changes could be made, and be grateful for what they have.

Students stated that learning about self-compassion allowed them to see themselves accurately, as part of common humanity, with faults and inadequacies. As Homer stated, “It means not to be that hard on myself and to realize that everyone makes mistakes and it’s just part of being human. (The point) is to recognize and realize more than you do about yourself.”

Female student #57 wrote, “The idea that others experience the same emotions as me helps me to see that it’ll be fine and I’m not alone. By feeling the same emotions as others makes me want to open my heart to them, for I know how they feel.” But as female student #58 aptly put, “It just seems much bigger when it’s your own problem.” During an interview, female student # 25 stated,

I feel like for me it’s hard to practice self-compassion because I usually judge myself a lot in a lot of things and I feel like wherever I go people are judging me. I always don’t feel accepted in some places, so it really still takes me some time to really accept myself for who I am, but it is hard, I have to say.

Female students #29 stated,

You need to be happy with yourself. You can say, “Michael is to do this,” but it needs to be for you, not to make others accept you, you need to be happy with yourself. A lot of comparing is to be better than someone else, but not really for you.

The following journal entry from Selena really made me smile inside, “This program has really helped me to calm down, especially before a test. It also helped me to accept myself just the way I am. Thank you!” Common humanity allowed students to see their problems as something that many people experience and to accept themselves, even though this is sometimes difficult.

Some students also stated how learning about self-kindness and common humanity allowed them to make changes where they could. Many of the students stated that learning about self-compassion helped them talk to themselves kinder. Female student #22 wrote, “Learning self-compassion can change the way you talk to yourself because if you have self-compassion, then you accept yourself.” Female student #55 wrote, “I’m much harder on myself. Yes, it helps me tell myself that I tried and that’s all I can do.” Female student #67 wrote,

But if I’m upset about something I did, I would probably be way harsher on myself. I would blame myself all day for whatever I did. Yes, learning self-compassion does change the way I talk to myself because it makes me and helps me forgive myself for my mistakes and be able to move on and not beat myself about it.

As female student #29 stated in her interview,

At the end of the day, you are only you. You can change you, but changing yourself in a positive way, not a negative way. If you put yourself down, you are not going to be moving forward, but if you’re making smaller steps towards being a better you, then I think it’s accepting yourself, but understanding that if you want to improve something on your self, then make sure you’re doing it in a positive way not a negative way.

Most students did not view self-acceptance with apathy and a lack of concern, but as a way to view themselves accurately as a way to make changes to improve the situation.

Accepting things the way they are also seemed to help students experience gratitude for what they have. For instance, female student #24 wrote,

Every night I take a shower and it is a daily thing that I always just seem to take for granted. I realize that not everyone has running water. I always seem to do it on autopilot.

Never thinking how lucky I am to have a home, clean running water, healthy food, a family that loves me. I take it all for granted. I think I will start appreciating what I have.

Belen wrote,

It was really relaxing and eye-opener because we usually don't focus in the good things happening in our life, we usually focus on the bad, and taking the time to think of the great things I have makes me feel really grateful for having such a great life. It also makes me feel guilty because I'm not usually grateful of the things in my life when I actually should, because I realize that not many people have what I have, and I should be really grateful for it to my parents that have given me everything I could ever need.

Female student #64 wrote,

From this lesson about the body and mind I learned that I should appreciate for what I have in life like a sense of smell, sight, breathe properly and to think of others that need help with. They can't do in life because of a disability or something.

Another student wrote, "Many people go through life on auto pilot, not noticing how blessed they are. And how beautiful and precious life is." Learning about self-compassion seemed to give students space to become more aware of how they treat themselves. Often, students are taught to be kind to others, not themselves. These students seemed to have become more self-aware; therefore, more kind, accepting, and grateful of themselves.

Gender Differences

When asked the question, how do you talk to yourself when you are upset? How do you talk to a friend when your friend is upset? Do you talk to yourself the same way as you talk to yourself? Nine of the twenty-eight boys stated that they would talk to a friend the same way as they talk to themselves, whereas none of the girls stated they would talk to a friend the same way.

As male student #15 wrote, “You talk to them as you talk to yourself and tell them that it’s alright to be upset, but not to be angry. You try to help them calm down.” More girls stated that they would speak kinder to a friend than themselves, whereas boys predominantly stated that they would say the same thing to a friend as themselves.

Another gender difference was the content of their thoughts. In one exercise, I asked the students to think about what kinds of thoughts are in their heads, and whether they were pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral, and how that thought affected them. It was interesting, but not surprising, to see that girls reported more unpleasant thoughts than did boys. Of the 25 journal entries, 14 of the girls reported having unpleasant thoughts, 9 had neutral thoughts, and 2 had pleasant thoughts. Of the 27 journal entries from boys, 8 of the boys stated that they had unpleasant thoughts, 15 were neutral thoughts, and 4 had pleasant thoughts. Girls and boys seemed to be just as hard on themselves, but girls were less hard on others, while boys were just as hard on others than themselves. The girls also had more unpleasant thoughts than did boys.

Summary

Through their journal entries and interview transcripts, I organized the results in the Nvivo program to analyzed the most important themes and subthemes to extract the students’ perceptions of self-compassion. The themes, subthemes, and frequency are shown in Table #14. Using frequency in qualitative data is a known method of data analysis (Fakis, Hilliam, Stoneley, & Townend, 2014).

Students deemed awareness as influenced by the mindfulness program. As Wilber (2006) stated, their first must be awareness of a phenomenon before there can be a change. Students stated they were more aware their surroundings, feelings, thoughts, with a focus on present moment experiences. Students stated that an awareness of emotions also assisted with emotional

regulation. They learned how to monitor their emotions so their emotions would not affect their behaviours. The students reported that a mindful awareness also helped them to focus their attention on activities such as academics, sports, and other activities such as chores.

Table #14			
<i>Summary of Qualitative Data separated by themes in the Upper-Left Quadrant</i>			
Themes	Sub-themes	Frequency of entries	
Awareness		32	
	Emotional Regulation	37	
	Effects on behaviours	Academics – 20 Sports – 17 Chores - 6	
Self-awareness		15	
	Self-kindness	34	
	Self-acceptance	16	
Gender Differences	Talk to themselves as they would a friend	Girls - 0	Boys – 28
	Pleasant thoughts	Girls – 2	Boys- 4
	Neutral thoughts	Girls – 9	Boys – 15
	Unpleasant thoughts	Girls - 13	Boys - 8

A main component of self-compassion is to be self-aware, practice self-kindness, and to be accepting without judgment as members of common humanity. Students reported that they became more aware of their mind/body connection; they became more self-aware of their how their breath enters their body to have more self-control. Being more self-aware enabled the students to think accurately about their thoughts and feelings so they could be more kind and accepting towards themselves. It allowed them to see themselves with accuracy so they can make changes to improve themselves or accept themselves if changes were not possible. Self-acceptance also seemed to aid the students to feel gratitude for what they had; it seemed to make them more aware of their gifts as well as their flaws.

Both boys and girls seemed to be just as hard on themselves, but boys seemed to be just as hard on others; whereas, girls were much more kind to others than themselves. Also, girls

seemed to have more unpleasant thoughts, whereas boys seemed to have more neutral thoughts. The results of this data will be analyzed in chapter 5. Now I show the results of the lower left quadrant.

LL Findings – Connecting the Self to Others

The lower left quadrant is the interior-collective or the individual within a group or culture; it is the collective ‘we’ (Wilber, 2007). It is where a sense of social awareness is formed within the school, family, and community. A core component of self-compassion is to develop the ability to see oneself within a larger society (Neff, 2003a). In zones 3 and 4, the epistemologies, hermeneutics and phenomenology, were used to understand students’ perception of self-compassion. Student interviews were used for zone #3, hermeneutics, to understand students’ concept of self-compassion in relation to their experiences within society and others. For zone #4, ethnomethodology, the idea is to draw out information of the individual as seen within their social milieu, or in this case, with their peers in the classroom; therefore, I conducted 12 focus groups, three from each class. Unfortunately, one audio file of one of the focus groups went missing, so I was left with eleven focus groups. I also interviewed one teacher and two CEA in this zone. The two main themes that came out of the data were common humanity and conforming to the group. The subthemes were compassion for others, classroom culture, peers, and technology. Now I will discuss each theme separately.

Common Humanity

One of the main elements of self-compassion is common humanity, the belief that we are all human, with flaws and imperfections. Coupled with the theme of common humanity is accepting others, with their flaws and inadequacies. Twenty two students during focus groups and twelve students in their interviews discussed common humanity as an important component

of self-compassion. Many students stated that learning about common humanity enabled them to have more compassion for others, and they felt it would benefit classroom culture.

Compassion for others.

Having a sense of common humanity allows one to see one's own flaws and imperfections nonjudgmentally; therefore, it also teaches a person to see other's flaws and imperfections nonjudgmentally which may enable them to have more compassion for others. There were twenty five students stated during focus groups and twelve students during their interviews who stated that self-compassion and common humanity could increase compassion for others. As male student #1 stated during his interview, "If you are kind to yourself, you will be happy and feel good about yourself, you can be good to others and take care of them." Female student #58 also stated,

It's like treating each other equally and have compassion for each other. If someone's upset over something, not just be like toughen up because if you were upset you would want people to listen to you talk about it or at least hug you or comfort you or something. Students stated that a sense of common humanity would increase compassion for others as they would treat others the way they wanted to be treated, with kindness and respect.

Some students stated that compassion for others would increase as they would be less judgmental and more forgiving of others' mistakes. One focus group member stated, "I've been less judgmental and I've been thinking of other people as equals that they are just the same as me." Female student in an interview stated, "If I don't really like a person, she's like mean, maybe I should give her another opportunity." Female student #59 explained,

And I also like remind myself that other people are in the same situation because that makes it easier for me to overcome it knowing that other people had managed and are

still managing it. It also makes it easier for me to understand and sometimes forgive them for actions that were triggered by stress. I think knowing this increases my compassion towards them.

Selena aptly stated, “If everyone remembered that we all have struggles in life and all make mistakes, I think people would get along better.” Students learned that as members of common humanity, all people make mistakes, and understanding, acceptance, and forgiving are important concepts for students to practice to get along with others.

Classroom culture.

Students stated that they thought the “Learning to BREATHE” program may have improved classroom culture. As one focus group member stated, “I feel like this program is really good and we should do it because it brings the whole class together more.” Students stated that learning about self-compassion teaches students how to treat each other better and how to listen more; they stated it could reduce bullying in schools as it increases an awareness of bullying. Of the 49 students who answered the question, “Do you think a mindfulness program should be taught in schools?” Forty-two stated “yes”, and seven said “no”. Bullying was the number one reason students said for the reason a mindfulness program should be offered.

Some students mentioned behaviours they noticed in themselves and their classmates that changed was being more caring and listening more. For instance, one focus group member stated,

I’ve noticed in myself that I’m more caring towards others now. I take the time to listen to others instead of always interrupting, saying how my day is going and barely listening to them, hearing what they’re doing and just taking the time to be there for them just like they are there for me.

Another student during focus group stated,

Now since we started this program, I'm actually listening more and I've noticed with my peers too. Some of my friends, when I have something to talk about, they listen more and before they would do the same thing I would.

Other areas that student noticed a difference in class culture was stated during focus group, "I think definitely in the hallways there is less negativity or generally rude comments about other people in the hallway and I think less gossip. I noticed more respect for each other and we are all equal." Students stated that learning about self-compassion changed school culture by caring about and listening to each others.

Many students stated that learning about common humanity could reduce bullying in schools because there is more of an awareness that we are all human, we all make mistakes, and we need to be less judgmental of others. One student talked about awareness and bullying during a focus group,

I think it will reduce bullying in schools because it calms people down and lets out stress. It makes us more aware of how we are feeling. As we find out what we are feeling, we might think about how others feel. So we are more aware of how we feel, we can think about how others feel.

Another student said during a focus group,

I think it does (reduce bullying) because we learned in class that we have to realize that everyone is going through the same struggles that you are. And when you judge someone just think about it from the other side. If you judge someone, you both have the same problems.

This awareness of how our actions affect others was described by one girl during her interview of her experience during her focus group,

Our (focus) group was really on board with this topic. It really has helped. One of the people in my group I've seen him change a lot as well. He used to not be the nicest person, but now he's actually telling me to help him. Like, 'If I'm doing something wrong, tell me that I'm doing it wrong so I can make it better.' And I see that in a lot of my classmates and I try to do that as well. It is really an important thing. What he told us that day is that when he sees his friends doing it (bully), so he feels okay that he does it. And then he realizes what his friends are doing really isn't right, and he's kind of prone to that now, and he's trying to change.

Another student state during another focus group,

I think if people can recognize bullying then they would be willing to stop the bullying because they recognize it. I think people will realize and understand that it's something that shouldn't be going on. They shouldn't be making fun of someone else because they look different or act different or have different religions or colours. We are all the same. We are all human, we all make mistakes. We want to fit in and speaking up about it will help reduce bullying.

Students reported that they believed some classroom culture improved during the teaching of the mindfulness program. The main effects were caring for others, listening more, and more awareness of bullying behaviours.

Conforming to the Group

Adolescents tend to react to peer pressure and conform to the needs of the group, even if it is not in their best interests. Sixteen focus group statements and four students in their

interviews stated that conforming to the group reduced their mindfulness practice. Many students discussed how they felt a need to conform to the group, especially during the mindfulness practice, and they were distracted from the practice. They reported that they felt very aware and self-conscious about participating in the mindfulness practice, and it influenced their participation. Others reported how technology and social media either distracted them from practicing mindfulness, or the messages from media counteracted the self-compassion practices. It is about how students felt about outside pressures such as peers and technology.

Peers.

Peer pressure to conform was a big stumbling block for many students, and it stopped them from participating in the mindfulness practices in class. Seventeen students stated that peer pressure was a stumbling block to practicing the mindfulness practices in class. As one female student reported during a focus group, “I don’t think they (teenagers) practice (mindfulness) because nowadays everyone just wants to fit in and they don’t really think about how they feel, they just want to fit in and look cool.” Another student commented in another focus group, “I would say no because teenagers don’t really think about themselves rather they want to please others and be part of the group. They don’t really practice self-compassion.” The teacher also noticed some of the students conscious of what others thought of them,

Sometimes when I observed them, I could really see that they were getting distracted and really uncomfortable. I think they are conscious about what other people are thinking. I think one to one they might be more comfortable, but I think that having everyone in there even if you are wanting to try it, your friends are there and you are worried about someone saying, “Hey you were really into that mindfulness”.

Even if students feel a mindfulness practice might benefit them, they seemed to succumb to peer pressure. As one student stated during focus group,

Even in today's age everyone is more focused on trying to fit in and I was hanging out with my friend a long time ago and I told him that we're doing this self-compassion and mindfulness thing and he kind of looked at my funny and it's actually kind of good, I mean before we started the program I noticed I was kind of stressed out and when I do the things like the exercises I feel a lot less stressed out. And kids are trying to fit in more and saying you are doing self-compassion things doesn't seem like it would fit in.

Another student added, "And it's more about peer pressure, so that is self-compassion isn't cool, then the majority of people won't do that." Another student during focus group stated, "Maybe people not accepting practicing mindfulness because it's not cool. It's huge because if your friends aren't doing it, it doesn't make you want to do it." Another student commented during focus group, "I think people get embarrassed or like even the people that needed it maybe realize they do need it but it's not cool if I close my eyes in class and show people that I'm actually trying to do this." Peer pressure seemed to be a stumbling block for students to practice mindfulness, and some stated that introducing mindfulness and self-compassion at a younger age would normalize the practice.

There were comments from many of the students and CEA #2 that starting a mindfulness practice in schools earlier than high school would be better, as then this practice would be a normal routine, and students would not be as self-conscious about practicing. As CEA #2 stated, "It's about getting it normalized; something that you do all the time, it would become more of a routine." Another student commented during focus group,

I think the “Learning to BREATHE” should be taught at a younger age because peer pressure is a big thing and when you are younger no one is really as judgmental as when you get older. I think if they taught it younger then now it would just be the norm and everyone would use it. It’s a good thing to grow up with because once you are older you are already set in your ways, but when you are younger you are still learning things.

Another student commented during focus group, “If we did it longer, it would become more a part of our lives and people would start to act on it and it would be so regular that people would just do it automatically.” Another student during focus group session stated,

Right now at our age in high school it’s a little bit late because you’ve already developed your personality a little bit more and you’re just trying to fit in, you’re not really trying to be nicer to everyone. But if you’re taught from a younger age then it would be more beneficial. Right off the bat everyone would learn it’s not okay to treat anyone like this and you need to treat yourself just like you want to treat others.

As well as starting younger, many students thought a mindfulness program should last longer than just a few weeks as a student during focus group stated, “If we did it longer, it would become more a part of our lives and people would start to act on it and it would be so regular that people would just do it automatically.” Students believed that starting at a younger age and having a longer mindfulness program would be more beneficial.

Many students stated that a mindfulness program at this age was difficult, as there were too many distractions and students were too self-conscious to pay attention and participate in the mindfulness practice. The overall consensus was that a more regular practice and starting at a younger age would normalize the mindfulness practice so students would not be so self-

conscious about participating. Students also stated the technology distracted them from a mindfulness practice.

Technology.

Seventeen students reported that technology such as video games, texting, social media, and other technological activities were deterrents or distracted students from a mindfulness practice. As No Name stated,

Something I did mindlessly this week is check Instagram at 6:00. At six o'clock every evening I go on my phone (send) a like a bunch of pictures, talk to my friends, and post a new picture. I don't really think that I am completely focused when I go on Instagram; it is just a natural reaction. I think if I paid more attention to what I was looking at, I would have more fun and it would be something I enjoy instead of just doing it mindlessly.

Another student reported during focus group,

I think the biggest stumbling block is that people want to do it, but they just don't find the time to do it. Well, they have time to do it, but they think they have to constantly check their twitter feed and constantly check their x-box but they don't think about what's really important. I think people just don't really care enough about taking the time to practice self-compassion.

Social media distracted students from practicing mindfulness, but also social media messages contradict the self-compassion teachings. For instance, one student mentioned in a focus group,

I think teenagers don't practice this enough because we are all so worried about what other people think of us the media and stuff so that kind of makes us hurt ourselves. We see other people in the media look so good it makes us feel like we aren't like them which makes us hurt ourselves. We are just so hard on ourselves nowadays.

In another focus group, students discussed messages they hear on media,

I think there is a lot of influence from social media and all the medias really because we see a lot of depressing stuff people put out there and that influences you to be more depressing or you might get thoughts like ‘Oh that’s true.’ Like you have to have the next best thing to be the best. And dieting, you have to be skinny. I’ve heard that by the time you watch TV you would have heard the word ‘diet’ 30 times.

One student simply stated, “Media is so messed up and then they messed us up. And now we are broken.” Another stated, “People probably have the hardest time with self-kindness because social media kind of sucks sometimes especially when you have idealized figures. It’s pretty hard to do that.” Another student during focus group stated,

Media teaches you that you should be perfect like those models they want they make you have high standards that sometimes you can’t achieve no matter how hard you try. Social media photos think you have to be perfect because if it’s not perfect, people will judge you.

Students reported that technology distracted them from practicing mindfulness, and social media was a deterrent to practicing self-compassion because the negative messages they receive from social media contradicts the messages they receive from self-compassion practices.

Summary

Many students said that learning about common humanity enabled them to feel more compassion for others. A summary of the numbers of entries students discussed in the different themes are shown in Table #15. The students also felt that if there was more compassion for others, that bullying behaviours would decrease. The students also felt a lot of pressure to

conform to the needs of the group which affected their mindfulness practice. This pressure was felt from other peers and from technology such as social media.

Table #15 <i>Summary of the Qualitative Data separated by themes in the LL Quadrant</i>		
Themes	Sub-themes	Frequency of entries
Common Humanity		34
	Compassion for Others	37
	Classroom Culture	42 –could reduce bullying
Conforming to the Group		20
	Peers	17
	Technology	17

LR Connecting Self-Compassion to Society

The lower right quadrant is the objective exterior view of the “Its,” the system within which “It” lives. It is to view the teaching of self-compassion from a systemic point of view – to look at society and the educational system of BC to see if self-compassion could influence the narcissistic and individualistic nature of the “Generation Me” and if it should be taught in schools. Zone #7, the inside view, is to use social autopoiesis to view the students as members of a social system, or society. In zone #7, I used CEA and the teacher interviews. Zone #8, systems theory, is to view the students, teachers, and policy holders as part of the social system in which the students learn. To learn about “the system’s” perceptions of a mindfulness program, I interviewed one classroom teacher, one school administrator, one superintendent of the Catholic schools, and one assistant superintendent of the public schools to have their viewpoint on if and how a mindfulness program could be incorporated into the regular school program, and how it fits with the new BC Education Curriculum mandated by the BC Ministry of Education. The data was organized into two themes, social and emotional skills and systemic challenges. The data was further divided into subthemes of build resilience, interpersonal relationships, classroom application, and staff buy-in.

Social and Emotional Skills

Before each of the adult interviews, I gave each interviewee a copy of the draft curriculum of the competencies in Health and Career mandated by the BC Ministry of Education. I asked interviewees if they felt these competencies were important, and which ones they felt were the most important. The public school administrator simply stated that all of the competencies are important,

They (the competencies) are all too interconnected to say one is more important than the other.... It's something that you're going to be doing all year every year for 13 years just because we need to. They build on each other and they are all interrelated, so I wouldn't say there was one that is more important than another. Some may take more repetition than others, but they are all interrelated.

The school administrator and Catholic superintendent both chose the following three competencies as most important: "Personal choices have a long-term effect on our well-being," "Achieving our goals depend on perseverance, strategy and tactics," and "Healthy relationship skills help us to manage conflict." The interviewees all felt that the competencies would benefit the students, but application to the classroom would be a challenge.

Build resilience.

The teacher, administrator, Catholic superintendent, and public superintendent all stated that there is a need for social and emotional learning to be included in the curriculum to build resiliency to enable students to cope better with life's difficulties. Two of the competencies the administrators felt were most important were: "Personal choices have a long-term effect on our well-being" and "Achieving our goals depend on perseverance, strategy and tactics." They stated

that healthy decision making and persevering to achieve goals are necessary to cope in school, but also throughout their lives. These competencies help build resiliency.

The school administrator and Catholic superintendent both discussed how students need to reflect on the choices they have made to have assist them in healthy decision making. As the superintendent stated, “Just always having that bigger picture out there in front of the kids thinking where our choices today can lead in terms of to the choices down the road.” The school administrator added,

The idea to reflect on their choices is to go back and say, okay, in this situation, this is the choice I made, now would it have been better if I made another choice. I think reflecting on their choices gives so much to our students if they’re purposeful about their reflections.

The Catholic superintendent stated,

The other thing that you see happen often is we’ve had these parents that have really taken away the consequences of choices to a place where they (students) don’t have a very secure sense of who they are and how they function in the world. And then they get out into the work place after graduation or go off to university and they crash and they burn because they haven’t learned that about themselves or how they are in the world around them.

Reflecting on their choices to enable students to make good decisions was one of the competencies that was deemed most important by both the school administrator and Catholic superintendent.

Persevering to achieve goals was one of the competencies deemed most important by the interviewees. Teaching skills to persevere and cope will increase resiliency which is important as many students seem to experience mental health issues. As the teacher stated,

If you get more into the stress and anxiety and depression, I think that's huge because I think that is becoming a greater increase in the students. Having more times to talk about where they are experiencing these things and how to cope with it I think is really important to be included in our curriculum.

The school administrator stated,

I think this area of research that you are pursuing is salvation kind of stuff when we talk about the world we live in and the changes that are happening now, versus in the 50s.

There used to be so much stability, but now, change is the norm. I suspect the volume of change is playing a role in the level of anxiety we are seeing in kids. I've experienced this in my role as principal. We used to see heightened anxiety prevalent in high school and mostly with female students, but now we are seeing heightened anxiety in elementary grades and we have kids in grade 3 that require a plan to get them comfortably into school.

The Catholic superintendent, "I don't know if we directly address the resiliency piece with kids in terms of helping them to handle things that don't go easily or are that challenge them or upset them or depress them. I think we kind of leave that to the counselling department or to specialist." As the public superintendent also stated about the competencies,

I absolutely love, love, love this part of the curriculum. What it does, when done well, it sets the stage for kids to learn everything else. Because if they're regulated, make good decisions, and self-aware, all that stuff, then they are going to be ready to learn in all the other areas. It's kind of like underpins everything else. So, yes, I think they (competencies) are great.

The Catholic superintendent commented as a whole about the competencies,

I think resiliency, the ability to bounce back when things don't initially work is an important life skill. Not just while in school, but in life in general. I think that's an important goal because even as adults, I think that's something we struggle with.

The administrators stated that students could benefit from social and emotional learning skills to build resiliency, as they are important life skills to make good decisions and persevere in the face of difficulties.

Interpersonal relationships.

Another competency the school administrator and Catholic superintendent felt was important was "Healthy relationship skills help us to manage conflict." Skills that increase interpersonal relationships will help students to get along with others which is crucial both in their personal and professional lives. As the Catholic superintendent stated,

That's going to be critical for children as they move into adulthood and prepare to go into the workforce. They can't be people that others can't get along with or deal with issues.

We see it in schools all the time.

The school administrator added,

Conflict strategies: I think that it's so different than when I went to school. How students manage conflicts... It's a building full of human beings and there's going to be conflicts, so how do we handle them? But I think reinforcing conflict resolution through each of the grade levels is a valuable exercise.... social media conflicts have made it far more complex, and somewhat dynamic.

Managing interpersonal conflicts was an important life skill the school administrator and Catholic superintendent both felt was an important life skills for students to learn. These competencies have been mandated to be included in the new BC education curriculum which has

been introduced this year. All the administrators seemed to think the competencies are important, but what are the challenges to incorporating these competencies into the regular school classroom?

Systemic Challenges

The administrators all felt the competencies in the new curriculum are important and benefit the students, but there are many challenges in incorporating the social and emotional learning skills into the curriculum. The two main themes that emerged when the interviewees were asked about systemic challenges were classroom application and staff buy-in. The interviewees felt that many of the social and emotional skills are already being taught by some teachers, and these skills can be taught throughout the curriculum, but that staff buy-in would be the greatest challenge.

Classroom application.

The interviewees felt that some of the skills mandated in the new physical and health education curriculum are already being taught by some teachers in the context of the every day classroom. They see the implementation of the new curriculum to be either incorporated into the Physical Education, Personal Planning, or Religion (for Catholic schools) classes or ideas to be shared by master teachers already teaching these skills in the classroom.

The teacher and administrators all felt some social and emotional learning skills were already being taught by some teachers. The Religion teacher, who is a Catholic school alumni, is a new teacher, and she stated,

I remember when I was doing my program in education we learned a lot about social and emotional learning and the whole time we kept talking about it I would think, this is Religion class. We learn a lot about these things, but in a different context with the

Christian mindset, but I think it was something that we did address, and trying to build that self-compassion and finding your dignity and value as a human person. And trying to encourage and teach empathy towards other people.

The school administrator stated that,

When it comes to social and emotional learning skills, I find it is mostly addressed in Religion class, and it's more the physical health, diet, and things like that that are getting touched on in PE, but the skills I believe to be most important ones are primarily addressed in Religion class.

The public superintendant mentioned that some aspects of social and emotional learning have been in place in public schools,

So I think they are covered in the current curriculum in Phys Ed and personal planning. We've had these around for a long time in the BC performance standards since 2000. I was just looking at it, and I was surprised at the date that it was 2000 on that document. So we've been looking at social responsibility and personal awareness for a long, long time.

The interviewees all believed that some social and emotional learning skills are already being addressed in some classes by some teachers, but the new curriculum demands a more systemic change to teaching these competencies to students.

The new BC Education Plan (2014b) has a list of competencies and Big Ideas on personal awareness and goal setting that were not included in the BC Performance Standards of 2000, but the question lies if the current teachers are prepared to implement the new BC Education curriculum. When asked about the future implementation of the new curriculum in Physical and Health Education, the school administrator and public superintendant stated that these skills need

to be spread throughout the classes and ideas about teaching the skills will be shared amongst teachers. As the administrator stated,

I think there is a natural fit with some of the revised curriculum competencies that will be covered in PE, and we have plans for that. We know that's going to be mandated.... The revised curriculum that is presently implemented is for K-9, so we are working with the PE teachers and Religion teachers in grades K to grade 9, but I do think there's a natural fit for some of these competencies in these courses.... As far as implementation, we are fortunate in a Catholic school to offer Religion. If we didn't offer Religion class, then we would incorporate these learning skills into other subject areas.... And some staff have received training in social and emotional learning programs and they develop better awareness. And that is shared with other staff members. I think there is a lot more awareness in the elementary division and value for this type of programming. Those learning skills are in the elementary teachers' yearly plans, and I certainly see evidence of them in their classroom.

The superintendent of public schools stated,

I think for a master teacher that sure, if you are looking at the big picture, it just fits in beautifully.... So there's lots of stuff like that going on in various classrooms and teachers, when they start doing it, and realizing that this settles everybody, and it makes them way more ready for learning.... I think once it is incorporated in the day to day teachings in a classroom, it makes everything in the classroom more easier.

The school administrator and public superintendent stated that they felt many social and emotional skills are currently being taught. They believe the new curriculum can be incorporated

throughout the classes by sharing information with other teachers and seeing first hand how these skills can help students settle down to help them learn.

Staff buy-in.

All the administrators were unanimous in deeming that convincing the teaching staff of the importance of implementing social and emotional learning in the classroom as being the main challenge. Teachers need to be convinced of the benefits of teaching students social and emotional learning; they need to feel comfortable practicing social and emotional skills themselves, and they need professional development in this area to be able to teach them to students.

The interviewees stated that teachers need to be convinced of the benefits of teaching social and emotional skills to their students. Teachers may not be aware of the importance of these skills in the area of student mental health; some may think this is the role of the parents, and some may teach a more traditional method of teaching. As the Catholic superintendent stated,

We've got such a mixed group of people, and I think it would have to start with just a buy in. That that's an important skill set. Regardless of where you are, do you not think that mindfulness and social and emotional learning is important? Let's start there. And then, try to work with what we've got. And there are people where that will be an area of struggle for them because that's not been a requirement, really in what we did in the past... and it's about getting people comfortable with the language. How can you get children to talk about what they are feeling if you can't? That's the biggest challenge is figuring out and meeting people where they are at and helping them to where they want to go.

The school administrator stated that many teachers feel it is the role of parents to teach their children social and emotional skills,

To me, it's not the issue of not fitting it in, but it's really convincing the teachers the value of teaching these skills.... I think we are finding out more and more and providing more and more opportunities for staff to understand the ideas around mental health issues. Some expectations I think some staff subscribe to is that it is not their responsibility to teach these competencies to their students. The student's parents or our society should have taught their children these skills. I do not agree. Once a child reaches school age, who spends a lot of time with students? Teachers! Especially with two parents working. Yes, we have to take on that role, and I still have staff that believe students should come to school with these skills fully developed.

The public superintendent also stated that working with the staff would need to be slow and mindful, especially if they believe in a more traditional method of teaching,

I think there is a learning curve for those that are more interested in a traditional model. We see this particularly in larger districts who actually have traditional schools and parents who want their children to have a more traditional education, and there's probably less of the social and emotional learning happening in those classrooms. So we need to respect and reflect the desires of our community while still moving forward. Walking the fine line because if you go too far too fast, then you don't gather up people up around you along the way. We've had complaints at various times over the years from parents like even if you use the word yoga as opposed to breathing and stretching. We need to reflect our community, which is a challenge in moving forward sometimes. I think when people see the results, when you see kids more regulated and content and

happy, it's kind of hard to ignore.... The problem is getting over that hump. But then again, we have professional autonomy, and we have a range of teachers, that, lack a better word, use a traditional approach to teaching, desks and rows, to teach.

Teaching social and emotional skills may be a significant challenge for many teachers, especially for those who are unaware of their benefits, who do not believe this is the role of the teacher, and for those who have a traditional method of teaching.

The teachers not only need to be skilled and knowledgeable about social and emotional learning, but teachers would need to become more self-aware in this area. As the teacher stated, "If the teacher is going to teach it (mindfulness) then I think they need to practice it. Because it is easy to talk about things, but if you haven't experienced it yourself." But as the Catholic superintendent stated, it is very uncomfortable for a lot of staff,

It's hard to teach what you don't know. When I look at some of these competencies, I think giving staff experience of developing resiliency and actually developing some of the big ideas within themselves as people would be huge if you had that opportunity during pro-d.... But when you are dealing with those people who are really struggling in those areas, it's painful. They just back away and physically will move away from you because we should be able to say to somebody, okay, when that happened, how did it make you feel? There are people that right at that point completely disengage from the conversation.... And they have to identify that for themselves and part of that piece is to know thyself to begin with.... There's not that many that have a good sense of, okay, here is an area I'm really strong in, and here's an area I need to do a little bit of growing because I'm really struggling, and I'm not comfortable there. That's a big piece and I

think trying to plan for that is going to be hard and be a challenge. Not impossible, just hard.

The administrators all seemed quite unanimous on the staff challenges to incorporate social and emotional learning into their own lives before they can adequately teach it in the classroom.

Teachers need to be educated about social and emotional learning and be comfortable with it before they can bring it to their classrooms to teach it to their students. This has to come from professional development opportunities, but according to the interviewees, professional development in this area will happen slowly over the next couple of years as teachers are coping with the new curriculum as a whole. As the teacher stated,

Even having any kind of speaker come in and do a topic on this because if they (teachers) never really heard of it before, then I think a lot of older teachers wouldn't really know what it means. Having someone coming in to specifically talk about what is that. The professional development that we have been having is surrounding the new curriculum as a whole. It's just everything, so it's not specifically focused on social and emotional learning. I think there will be more coming, but I think there's just been so much emphasis put on the new curriculum, like project based learning, just to prepare teachers, because that's what we feel we need.

The Catholic superintendent agreed that current professional development is looking at the curriculum as a whole,

We haven't yet offered anything specific in this area for professional development. The teachers and administrators have been reviewing the curriculum as a whole and have begun to implement the new curriculum in classrooms. The core competencies of the new curriculum will be reported on annually as per the Ministry's directive. More

professional development will be needed in the area of mindfulness if teachers are going to help students both understand and develop these core competencies

The school administrator also admitted that the new curriculum is a significant challenge for teachers, and professional development is currently in areas where administrators and teachers feels it is most needed,

That professional development is going to happen, but I think it will be a year or two down the road, and the reason I say that is just because of the big changes that are happening to the curriculum. We have been working on this for about three years, and we have primarily focused on the “why.” Why are we making these changes? It’s all research based, but (it is) to change attitudes.

The public superintendent stated that some professional development is happening, but it is a slow process,

There have been a lot of different programs that are offered, and our student services staff have been doing a lot of work with that. We have our behavioural resource teachers who work with individual teachers. We have consultants ... they’ve put on lots of workshops and are continuing to do so.... You’re not going to get everybody out, so it’s a process.

Even though all administrators feel social and emotional learning is very important for students to learn, and it should be taught in the classroom, the challenge is convincing the teachers of its importance, and this needs to be done slowly and methodically so that teachers “buy-in” to the concept and, in the process, may learn some social and emotional skills themselves.

Summary

The administrators all agreed that social and emotional skills are important for students to learn, but staff buy-in and application to the classroom are challenges. A summary of the themes

is displayed below in Table 16. The competencies they deemed most important were healthy decision making, persevering in goal pursuits, and building healthy relationships. These competencies are important for students to learn, but challenges to incorporating social and emotional learning into the curriculum exist. Application to the classroom is challenging as not every teacher is skilled in the areas of social and emotional learning, and teachers do not know in what areas to apply it. The biggest challenge according to the administrators is staff buy-in. The teaching staff is already overwhelmed with other aspects of the new curriculum, and staff must be first proficient in those area before professional development will happen in the area of social and emotional learning.

Table #16				
<i>Summary of Qualitative Data separated by themes in the Lower-Right Quadrant</i>				
Themes	Sub-themes			
Social and Emotional Skills	Build Resilience	Healthy decision making		Perseverance
	Managing interpersonal relationships	Managing conflicts		Interpersonal relationships
Systemic Challenges	Classroom application	Incorporated throughout the curriculum		Ideas shared between teachers
	Staff buy-in	Benefits to student mental health	Personal self-awareness	Challenges implementing new curriculum

Chapter Summary

Integral Methodological Pluralism was the methodology with which to view the teaching of self-compassion from eight different points of view, or zones. IMP is a comprehensive methodology to understand a phenomenon from students', CEAs', teacher's, and administrators' points of view. The first level of data analysis was presented in this chapter by looking at the

statistical results of the quantitative data, and pulling out the themes using qualitative data analysis, as presented in the summary Table #11. The quantitative data showed a difference boys and girls on the Compassion Scale; girls showed statistically significant more compassion for others than did boys. Also, there was a statistically significant increase on the Mindset Quiz and Compassion Scale between the pre-and post-tests. In the qualitative data, students reported a greater awareness of their surroundings which increased their awareness of their emotions to increase their emotional regulation skills to have an effect on their behaviours. Awareness also increased their self-awareness, and they were more kind and accepting of themselves. Results also showed that classroom culture changed and students had more compassion for others even though peer pressure and technology were deterrents to practicing mindfulness. Gender differences showed that girls spoke kinder to others than themselves, whereas boys spoke just as unkind to others as themselves. Also, girls had more negative thoughts, and boys had more neutral thoughts. The teacher and administrators all believed that social and emotional learning skills are important for students to build resilience and improve interpersonal relationships, but staff buy-in is a challenge to incorporating it throughout BC classrooms. The next chapter, the second level of analysis, explores the results further to integrate the data within and the quadrants and how they influence each other to shed light on the effectiveness of a mindfulness program in BC schools.

CHAPTER 5 SECOND LEVEL OF ANALYSIS

In this chapter I delve deeper into the analysis of teaching a mindfulness program with adolescents in schools. The purpose of this program was to teach components of self-compassion to build resilience and emotional wellbeing in students. This section evaluates if students increased in self-compassion, and if they reported any changes in awareness, behaviours, and compassion for self and others. I also looked at the efficacy of teaching social and emotional learning in BC schools. I divide the results into two approaches. First, I describe the themes in results to integrate the data from all four quadrants to analyze if a mindfulness program is effective in teaching self-compassion and SEL skills. Secondly, I situate the results into the lines of development to determine if the students developed along the lines of development and if this development also affected their level of consciousness.

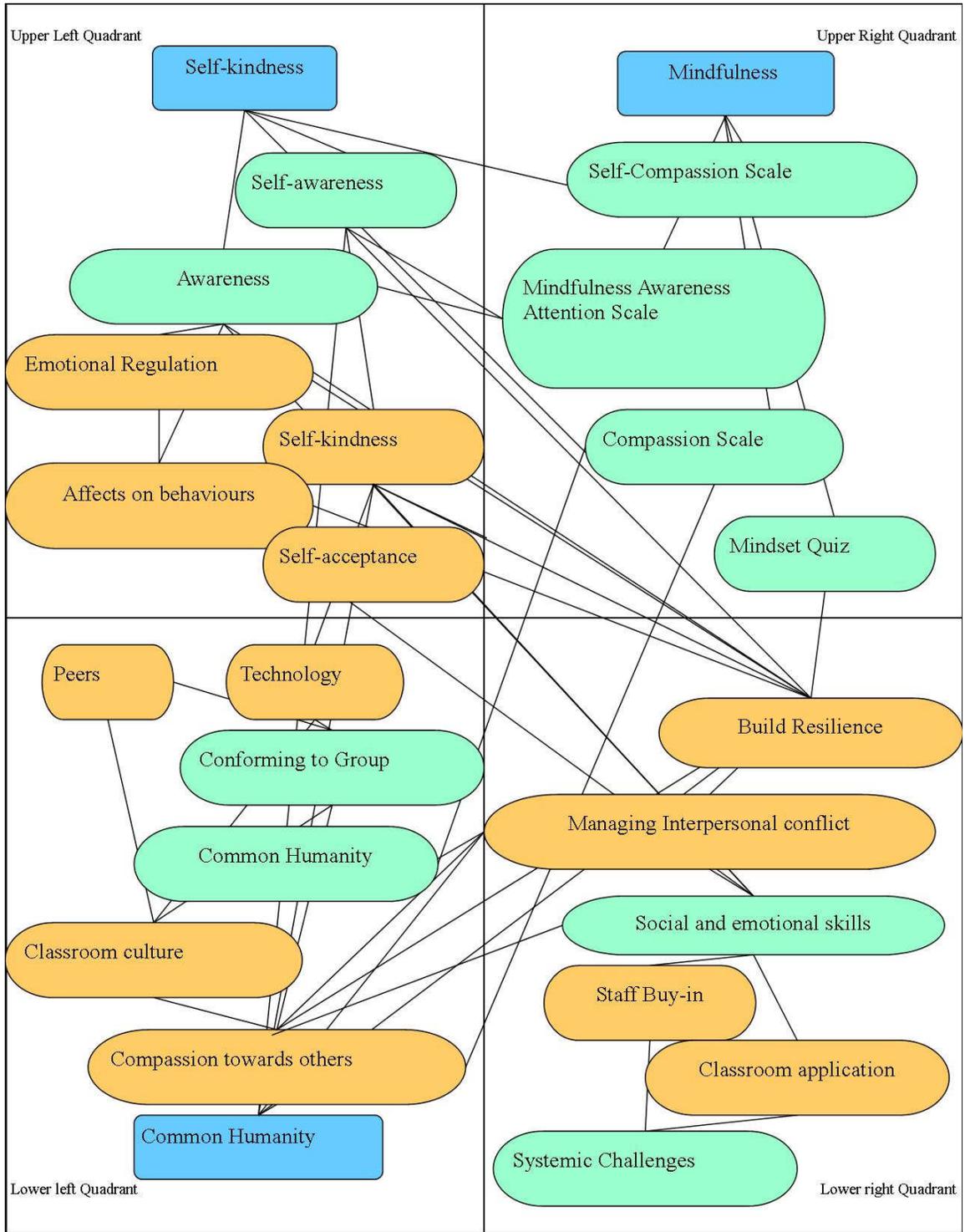
Integration of Data within Quadrants

Integral Methodological Pluralism (IMP) was used as a methodology to bring all the eight zones, or viewpoints, together into one comprehensive format. This section is where IMP becomes messy, yet dynamic. I analyzed the results and formulated a discussion by integrating the eight different zones of IMP. It is to see the larger picture, how all the zones, quadrants, levels, lines, states, and types affect one another; it is a true integrated view of the teaching of self-compassion in one high school context.

One method of viewing IMP is to create a map to view all the perspectives, “There is power in being able to see a larger picture, transcend our typical ways of approaching an inquiry, and consider where and how we can strategically use these elements” (Martin, 2008, p. 160). In Table #17, I have linked the themes and sub-themes in the different quadrants according to how they are interrelated. In blue are the elements of self-compassion, green represents the themes,

Table #17

Integral Map of Themes and Connections between Quadrants



and yellow are the sub-themes. It is how they are all inter-related and affect each other. By looking at Table #17, the lines seem to converge in three main areas: awareness, compassion towards others, and building resiliency. I conclude this section with student suggestions on ways to increase mindfulness practice in schools.

Awareness

Through mindfulness practice, a person becomes more aware of the body/mind connection, which allows the mind to become more aware of its influence on thought processes and behaviours, or metacognition. The quantitative data did not show an increase in mindful awareness, but the qualitative results did. From their journal entries, interviews, and focus groups, the students reported that they became more aware of their bodies in relation to their mind or embodied mind. They became more aware of their thoughts, and how their thoughts affect their emotions, and how that influences their actions and behaviours. Students reported that they were more self-aware and able to accept themselves for who they are.

Students mentioned that they were more aware of their surroundings; they became more aware of their breath and their body's sensations, and how breathing allowed them to calm themselves. They stated that this made them more aware about how their minds affected their bodies. As Chris Barros wrote,

And I feel like during these self compassion and taking care of your body classes were the only classes of this week that I was actually not on auto pilot. And it actually feels pretty good to be myself and relax, not just running on auto pilot all the time.

Through a mindfulness practice, students were more aware of their mind/body connection which helped them become aware of their thoughts, emotions, and themselves to be able to treat themselves with kindness.

The purpose of being aware of thoughts as just thoughts is to focus on the present moment, which students said is difficult as they have so many stressors and pressures in their lives. Many students stated that they were not even aware of their thoughts and emotions before the mindfulness practices. One student during a focus group reported,

Mindfulness is like being thoughtful and aware of everything. It's about how you think and what you think about. It's about caring about other people. It's about being aware of your actions. Self-kindness is not beating yourself up. It's about not letting your thoughts ruin your day. Just to be kind to yourself.

Some stated that they have so many thoughts, not all positive, that just take over; they found it difficult to let their thoughts go. As one student during a focus group reported,

We all lack confidence because we don't think we are good enough. We always think about what-ifs. We always think about what will happen when we raise our hand to answer a question. It's hard to be in the now when you have so many things going around in your brain. It's really hard to just settle down and think about what's going on right now because especially when there is something going on that's really big, it's just like a big event just happened, it's all you can think about. So to just sit and try not to think it's just really hard to do.

Awareness of thoughts helped students let go of their negative thoughts and to be kind to themselves. Freeing the mind of negative thoughts allows students to focus more attention to their activity.

Many students stated that the mindfulness practice helped them have a greater focus of attention, which helped them with academics, sports, and other activities such as chores. As male student #16 wrote,

Advantages of being more mindful are that you can go more in depth and in focus with life and its meanings. You get a different, slower, abler take on life... People should have it because it is cool, different, new and pretty important.

The students reported that they were focused, alert, and paid better attention; they enjoyed the activity better.

Self-acceptance is a component of self-compassion; it is to view oneself with nonjudgmental awareness. Students reported that self-acceptance is difficult. For instance, one student stated during a focus group, “I didn’t exactly accepted myself before this program, but I feel it is hard for teenagers these days because it’s hard to believe in what you are.” Another girl stated during a focus group,

A way we can cultivate more self-compassion is by learning to accept ourselves and for every flaw we can think of something positive. And if you’re someone that’s your biggest critic, you can think of positive ways you can solve the problem and don’t always think negatively. You only have one life.

Students identified self-acceptance as a new concept, something that is difficult to do, as adolescents compare and self-evaluate themselves against their peers and images on social media.

As reported by the teacher, only about half of the students participated in the mindfulness practices during class. This lack of participation was partly due to students conforming to peer pressure. They were very aware of their peers in class and how they looked in front of others. Unfortunately, the students who need mindfulness the most are the ones who did not participate. As one student during focus group stated,

It is hard because I think the people that needed it the most were the ones that didn't pay attention, which is too bad. It depends on the attention you are giving to the program....

The people who need that program aren't paying attention.

As CEA #1 stated, even though they were not practicing, they probably were getting some affects. In addition, one student commented during a focus group,

Even the people that don't like it or don't pay attention, they do hear what they're saying so they do learn something from it even though they don't like it at all. And sometimes people do change without even realizing it.

If students were not practicing, then the benefits of mindfulness would probably not be realized, which is probably why the results of the Mindfulness Awareness Attention Scale (MAAS) did not show any positive pre- and post test results.

Even though the quantitative data did not show a significant difference in students' mindfulness awareness, the qualitative data did show that students reported a greater awareness of their bodies, thoughts, and themselves which allowed them to focus more attention on their activities. Some students reported that they did not feel comfortable participating in the mindfulness activity as they were aware of how it looked to their peers.

Compassion for Others

In today's "Generation Me," young people have become more individualistic and narcissistic (Twenge, 2013). In addition, due to an increase in social media, the youth of today have less personal relationships (Hart & Frejd, 2013). The implications of these factors is having a generation of people who only look after themselves with little consideration of others.

Compassion for others is a skill that is important in school, work, and family life; it is about getting along well with others. The administrators all felt fostering more compassion for others is

important for today's youth. Building interpersonal skills was a "Big Idea" that the administrators deemed important for students to learn, and "healthy relationship skills help us to manage conflict" was a core competency. Both qualitative and quantitative results showed that compassion for others increased as a result of the program. There was a significant increase in compassion for others in both girls and boys, but girls also had more compassion for others than did the boys. Students reported that they were more accepting of others' faults and that class culture had changed, and gender differences seemed to exist.

The students acknowledged others as members of common humanity, with faults and inadequacies, and they were more able to accept others' mistakes with nonjudgment, acceptance, and forgiveness. As female student #29 said in an interview,

I don't know if people in my class could understand why it's important to be good to others because in the future, your success determines how well you work with others.

Because a lot of that is your personality and how you portray yourself in front of others.

That's a big part of getting into schools. So I think it's really important because the way you act around others and the situation is really (important).

Female student #25 stated, "We all know that we are all going through the same thing. Just like we are trying to accept ourselves, other people are trying to accept themselves, and the best thing to do is just help them with it and accept them for who they are." Female student #59 wrote,

I also like remind myself that other people are in the same situation because that makes it easier for me to overcome it (stress) knowing that other people had managed and are still managing it. It also makes it easier for me to understand and sometimes forgive them for actions that were triggered by stress.

Students learned to have more compassion for others who might be experiencing stressful times in their lives. If they can accept their own faults and inadequacies, they can be more accepting and compassionate of others' faults.

Students stated that they thought the mindfulness program may have influenced class culture; they reported that they believed students were kinder to each other and listened more. As Chris Barros wrote, "I think I can use mindfulness in my everyday life by thinking before you speak and think on how it will affect the person you are saying it to." As Eliza Doolittle wrote, "Awareness of emotions can often help people to know how to act in certain situations, and it can help them to be kinder to others, because they know when they aren't being (kind)." In addition, many students reported in their journals, interviews and focus groups that learning self-compassion could reduce bullying in schools. Some students became more aware of bullying behaviours, including the bully himself, and others reported that they might be more willing to stop bullying behaviours if they noticed them.

Even though both boys and girls stated that they treat themselves with unkindness, the boys stated they would speak just as unkindly to others as they do to themselves. The girls stated that they would not speak unkindly to others as they do themselves; they would treat a friend better than themselves. This difference may be because girls have more compassion for others than do boys, which was shown in the quantitative data.

Interpersonal skills and compassion for others is important for students to navigate their world. They will need to work well with others in many aspects of their lives. Interpersonal skills was one of the competencies deemed most important for students to learn by the administrators; the results seemed to show that students' compassion for others increased.

Building Resilience

Resiliency is how slowly or quickly you recover from adversity (Richardson & Begley, 2012). Today's "Generation Me" is proliferated with young people who have an over-inflated sense of self which has been partly caused by the past self-esteem movement in schools (Baumeister et al., 2003). The danger of self-esteem is that it hinges on how we think others think about us, which is easily shattered (Neff, 2003a). On the other hand, with self-compassion, students see themselves with faults and inadequacies, but those faults do not define them. They can learn from their mistakes and move forward, which are components of resiliency. Persevering with goals was a core competency the administrators deemed important for students to learn. It is to persevere in the face of defeat, and results indicated that students increased in resiliency as shown by an increase in growth mindset and their ability to regulate their emotions. In addition, students reported that they felt self-compassion could make people more resilient against mental health issues.

The results showed a significant increase in growth mindset, which has been shown to effect resiliency. A growth mindset had been shown to be positively associated with goal pursuit and mastery performance (Dweck, 2006). Students learned to talk to themselves with more kindness and acceptance. They also forgave themselves for mistakes and self-evaluated to know that they could make different choices and do better next time. As female student #29 wrote, "Learning self-compassion makes me think about what I can do to encourage myself when I am extremely upset or unhappy." Here is Yoda's explanation on how self-compassion made her feel more resilient,

Stressors in my opinion make you stronger in every way because no matter what life goes on and stressors are just obstacles in life and when the next obstacle comes you can say

I've been stressed before and I'm still here. I haven't lost anything. I'm still standing and that can make you more stronger emotionally and physically. It feels weird to think that other people have been through stressors because its hard to picture someone's reactions and actions. This makes me think that there are people who are stronger, and better than me and have been through worse, and in a way that makes me stronger by thinking there are people stronger and this makes me accept myself better.

Another student during focus group stated, "Personally for myself, I've seen changes that I've noticed. Like when I do bad at a test I kind of just say to myself, 'Okay I didn't do so well this time, but it's okay, there's always next time, so it's kind of nice.'" Another boy reported during a focus group how it helped him deal with stress,

I can see ways it is helpful and like for me it is helping me cope with stress more and it makes me stop and think what I'm stressing about. In ways it helped me a lot and in other ways it helped people differently. It helped me think of what I'm going to do with my stress.

Many students stated that learning about self-compassion and mindfulness aided them to become more resilient. This was shown in the way they did not give up and faced with challenges.

Emotional regulation is a major skill in social and emotional learning, and a core competency in resiliency. Students stated that they learned how emotional regulation enabled them to be in control of their emotions so they did not get overwhelmed and give up. This ability to regulate emotions is important to create an "integrated brain" (Siegel, 2013). An integrated brain generates increased cognitive control, perspective-taking, rational decision-making, and decreases impulsivity, which are competencies the administrators all deemed important for students to learn. As a student stated during focus group, "If we did this, it relaxes people and

have more control. So people wouldn't let that happen, like get their anger out. It can help people not get overwhelmed and give up." Another student during focus group stated, "I think the program will make us think that we all have feelings and we all get down on ourselves and this kind of reminds us that we just have to keep going and just relax and get through it." Results of the data showed that students learned how to become more aware of and able to regulate their emotions, so they are more able to control their reactions which aids in rational decision-making, perseverance in the face of difficulties, and emotional resiliency.

Many students stated that they believed that learning self-compassion could help buffer people against mental health issues. For instance, Dora wrote, "I think it should be taught in schools because there might be people in school suffering from depression and need help." One student during a focus group stated, "I think that people have the hardest time with self-kindness because a lot of the time when people are unhappy and have issues that they are having a hard time with, they might do self-harm, so we don't have a lot of self-kindness." In a different focus group, another student stated something similar, "I say self-kindness because a lot of people have depression and they start harming themselves because they blame themselves even when it's not their fault." In another focus group, a student stated, "Ya I think it should be a program taught in schools because it would help a lot of kids who are like struggling with depression and it would really help people like that." Male student #39 wrote,

I think the mindfulness program should be taught in school because most of the students have problems with hard situations and they don't know how to react, should be important talk with them, we can save a life, and someone can feel better.

Michael Phelps wrote, "I can practice self-compassion in my everyday life by not getting down on myself all the time about how I look to others." To summarize, female student #20 wrote,

“Yes, with the mindfulness program we could stop a lot of self harm, negative thoughts and suicide that happens, and little bullying things that happen in schools all across the world.” From the students’ view, it seemed this program could benefit students by building resiliency so students do not experience mental health issues.

Through the mindfulness program, it seemed that many students increased in awareness, compassion for others, and resiliency to be better skilled at navigating their world confidently and competently with compassion for themselves and others.

Increasing practice

Students were also asked how they could make mindfulness a daily practice. Many students stated that if the importance of teaching mindfulness would be emphasized by outside influences and taught at an earlier age and throughout the year, it would normalize the practice, and students would be more willing to participate. As Eliza Doolittle wrote in her journal,

I think a mindfulness practice could be taught in school, but not in high school, because most people at this age don’t pay attention in class, and don’t make an effort. If it was taught at a primary level like kindergarten, then I think kids would remember it the most.

Another student stated during focus group,

I think maybe it should be once a week for the whole year and you can get a lot of classes and you could focus a whole class on it and go more into depth. I think it should be taught younger to get it in their heads already. When you’re younger you absorb more. I feel like the majority of bullying happens at this age not really university age.

Students felt that if a mindfulness program was taught earlier and more often throughout the year, it would become part of their everyday life, so it would be normalized and peer pressure would have less of an effect.

Students mentioned that participation also depended on the attention it was given from the school, parents, and others in their lives. For instance, one student stated during a focus group that participation also depended on the attention the school gives the program, “It also depends on the attention the school gives. For instance, we are told that the ABCs are pretty important, so it depends on the school to give more attention to it.” Female student #29 stated during her interview that parental influence is also important,

I think that parents and the kids around me didn’t take it seriously because if it’s not serious or applied every day, then it’s not going to be taken seriously. I know that when I was little if my parents didn’t think something was important, I didn’t think it was important. If my friends didn’t think it was cool, I probably wouldn’t think it was cool unless my parents said so. No, I think you need an influence, and I think it should be started at a younger age.

Another student stated during focus group,

When a kid thinks something is important, he will try and understand it, but if the parents or if the people around them think its not fun or stupid then you don’t really feel like trying it. So even if they kept it for a longer period of time, you would have to make sure people were serious about it.

Even outside influences such as celebrities who practice mindfulness may have an affect on the students, as one student during focus group stated,

It’s not like you hear the superstars doing it (mindfulness) or anyone else, so people are not aware that they are being so harsh on themselves. If they are, they don’t stop it because they don’t know how to. A way they can cultivate more self-compassion is by learning to accept ourselves and for every flaw we can think of something positive.

Some of the boys stated that the mindfulness practice they were doing in school was similar to the mindfulness practices their coaches used before practices and games. These boys participated more in the mindfulness practice because they found this connection to the real world.

Conforming to the group and lack of support from outside influences was a deterrent for many of the students to participate in the mindfulness practices. Other students stated that positive outside influences had an influence on their participation in the practices.

Summary

Integrating both the qualitative and quantitative data within the quadrants showed three main areas where the data converged: awareness, compassion for others, and building resiliency. Students were more aware of their surroundings, but awareness also included self-awareness and self-acceptance. Mindful awareness seemed to be negatively affected by the presence of their peers; students felt self-conscious about practicing mindfulness in class. Compassion for others increased in both qualitative and quantitative results with girls showing more compassion for others than boys. Resiliency also seemed to have increased; students reported a growth mindset in both qualitative and quantitative data. They also felt that self-compassion could buffer people against mental health issues. Students offered some recommendations to increase mindfulness practice at schools such as starting the practice at a younger age and having it more emphasized by outside influences. Now I will analyze the results along the levels and lines of development.

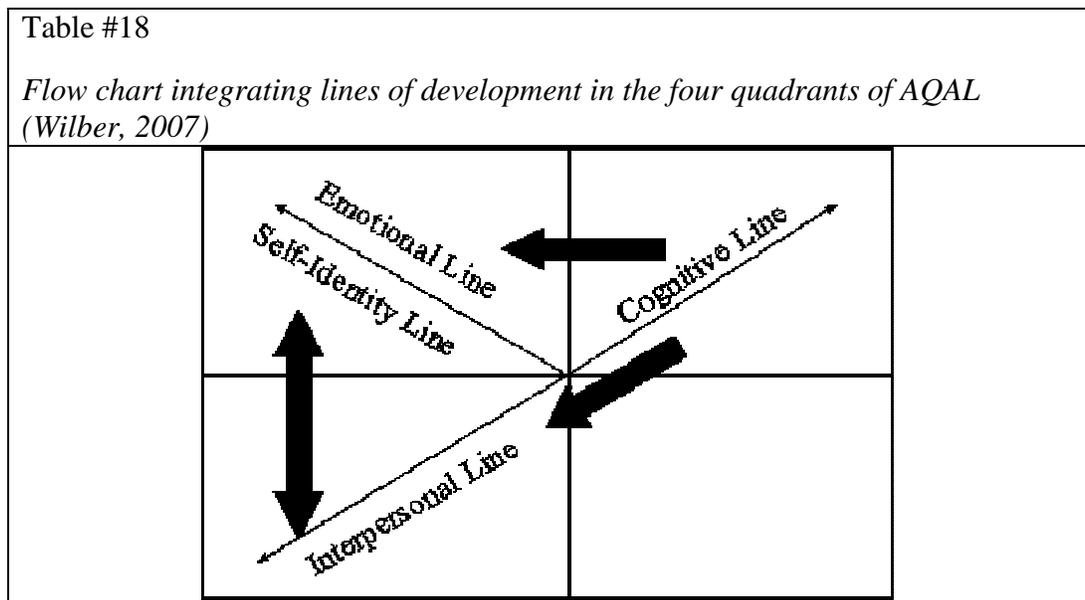
Levels and Lines of Development

Through the teaching of self-compassion, I hoped to help raise the students' level of consciousness from the 2nd to the 3rd order according to Kegan's levels of consciousness (Kegan, 1994). According to Kegan (1994) the third level of consciousness incorporates a cross-categorical knowing. At this level, adolescents need to surrender their own needs for the better

good of the community. They can balance others' points of view with their own and suppress their own self-interest for the greater good. My challenge was to determine if this 3rd order of consciousness could be realized in students through a mindfulness program. In order for students to reach the 3rd order of consciousness, they should develop along several lines of development.

Lines of Development

The four lines of development I chose for building self-compassion were cognitive, emotional, self-identity, and interpersonal. Students can develop their level of consciousness along these lines of development at different paces. My analysis follows the flow chart in the Table #18 below. I start with the cognitive line because, as Wilber (2007) stated, the cognitive line is awareness and is necessary for all other lines of development. Then I discuss the emotional, self-identity, and interpersonal lines of development and how students' perception and practice of self-compassion affected their development along these lines. Intertwined in this analysis will be the administrators' perceptions of how social and emotional learning skills can be integrated into the curriculum, followed by a deeper analysis of how to apply social and emotional learning into the curriculum.



Cognitive line.

The cognitive line is necessary for all other lines of development. In order to increase along the emotional, self-identity, and interpersonal lines of development, students' awareness must first increase along the cognitive line of development. Through the teaching of a mindfulness program, the students increased their cognition or awareness; students became aware of their mind-body connection, their inner thoughts, and how their minds influenced their emotions and their behaviours. "Neural integration" means to have more cognitive control and a better ability to think rationally, which is achieved by having a high level of self-awareness and emotional awareness (Siegel, 2013). From the data, it seemed that students were beginning to form this neural integration. They stated that they have a more focused attention and a better ability to think before they react. They became more aware and self-aware of the mind/body connection, how their thoughts effect their emotions, and how their emotions can affect their behaviours. It is all about a cognitive awareness of the self or the embodied mind.

Emotional line.

Students need to be first aware of their emotions before they begin to regulate their emotions. It is about being cognizant of how emotions can affect the body, and how to slow down the emotional reaction to better regulate behaviours; it is how the rational mind can monitor the emotional mind (Goleman, 1995). Being able to monitor one's emotional reaction enables adolescents to bounce back quicker from adversity (Davidson & Begley, 2012). Being more aware of emotions and how they affect one's choices and behaviours is a central goal of mindfulness practices.

Many of the students stated that the mindfulness practices helped them be more aware of their emotions so that they were better able to regulate them. This is the rational mind "taming"

the amygdala (Goleman, 1995). Students seemed to become more aware of and regulate their emotions so that they would not negatively affect their behaviours. It is about having a cognitive awareness of their emotional reaction and an ability to monitor their emotional reaction to a given situation.

Self-identity line.

Adolescents develop from the conformist stage to the conscientious stage of ego-development along a self-aware level (Loevinger, 1976). To develop to the conscientious stage, students need to increase their self-awareness so they no longer need to conform to the standards of the group. Adolescents need to see others' points of view, have a sense of responsibility, and self-evaluate their goals and ideals (Loevinger, 1976). Through the teaching of self-compassion, students were taught self-kindness and to be aware of how they talk to themselves. They were also taught common humanity, to acknowledge their faults and inadequacies with acceptance and understanding.

According to the results of this study, the students are still in the conformist stage, but a sense of self-awareness is clearly emerging in their responses. Students could see themselves accurately with faults and inadequacies, but they were able to see those faults as changeable. Students were able to talk to themselves with reassurance rather than criticism so they can bounce back from difficulties.

To move into the conscientious stage, students must have “an awareness of oneself as not always living up to the idealized portrait set by social norms” (Loevinger, 1976, p. 19). This point is very important, as adolescents are very hard on themselves if they do not live up to the norms their peers or social media deem important. This point was illustrated when the students stated that seeing “perfect” people in the media makes them hurt themselves. By teaching

students common humanity, that we are not perfect beings, students receive the message to accept themselves just the way they are. It seems that practicing self-compassion may be a step towards self-awareness, self-acceptance, and a healthy self-identity.

Interpersonal line.

Increasing levels of consciousness along the interpersonal line of development should help students develop empathy and compassion with others; it is to be aware of our own needs and those of others, to see multiple perspectives, and to empathize with others (Kegan, 1994). A major component of self-compassion is being nonjudgmental and accepting mistakes as part of common humanity. Students were taught not to judge themselves, but also not to judge others, which taught compassion for others.

Learning about common humanity seemed to increase students' compassion for others. There was a significant increase in compassion for others after the program than before according the pre- and post- Compassion Scale questionnaires. Students also stated that learning about our own faults and mistakes allows one to accept others' faults and mistakes as part of common humanity. This was acknowledged in many of the journals entries, interviews, and focus groups. Many students stated that they were less judgmental of others, they felt more compassion for others as they could relate to them more as part of common humanity, and they were more forgiving to others when mistakes were made. Students were more compassionate towards others by being less judgmental, accepting mistakes as part of common humanity, and forgiving others for mistakes.

Levels of Consciousness

Kegan (1994) proposed that adolescents need to develop from the second to third order of consciousness. He stated that adolescents are expected to "be able to identify inner motivations,

hold onto emotional conflict internally, be psychologically self-reflective, and have a capacity for insight all implicate the cross-categorical capacity” (p. 27). But, as Kegan explains, when adolescents do not rise to these demands, they are *in over their heads* because these expectations surpass adolescent capabilities. Kegan further asserts that there needs to be a bridging for adolescents to gain the third order of consciousness, and this bridging requires both support and challenge. As the administrators stated, we cannot expect this bridging to come from parents, as often parents are also *in over their heads* when it comes to life struggles, lack of parenting skills, or lack of time, all demands of modern life. The schools system is the vessel from which this bridging must come.

These social and emotional learning skills are important for students to learn as they build resiliency and better ability to work with others. I believe that the results of this study showed that students learned skills to build resiliency, such as awareness, self-awareness, emotional regulation, attention, and self-acceptance. These are skills important in the third order of consciousness: “identify inner motivations” (self-awareness), “hold onto emotional conflict internally” (emotional regulation), “be psychologically self-reflective” (self-acceptance), and have a “capacity for insight” (awareness) (Kegan, 1994, p. 27). A mindfulness program may be a way for students to develop from the second to the third order of consciousness.

Gender Differences

The girls seemed to have found the link between common humanity and compassion for others more than boys, but there seemed to be no difference in self-compassion between boys and girls. This follows previous research in this area that women reported higher levels of compassion for others, empathy, and forgiveness than men, yet this was not correlated with self-compassion (Neff & Pommier, 2013). Of the 27 girls’ journal entries, 17 stated that they would

have more compassion for others or want to help others. Of the 25 boys' journal entries, only 3 of them stated that learning about common humanity made them feel more compassion for others. In fact, five of the boys specifically said that learning common humanity does not make them feel more compassion for others, yet none of the girls stated that. As Jack wrote, "Knowing others feel the same way doesn't help at all. C-mon I am not thinking about that when I'm stressed! I'm thinking about myself!" In addition, some of the boys questioned why common humanity would help compassion for others at all; they thought that if others have the same experiences as themselves, they felt bad for them. Hunter aptly stated, "It sucks that others may feel the same way." John Cena felt so alone that he seemed to question the idea of common humanity,

It makes me amazed I'm not alone. Stress makes me get angry or sad at others.

Sometimes I feel alone due to my family, school, and friends. Stress, it's like my stresses are different and harder and people are smiling while I'm sad. Hope I'm not alone.

It seems that the boys had a more difficult time looking through their own stressors, and they could not see that others might be feeling the same way, or they felt their stressors were so strong that they felt sorry for others feeling the same way. Whereas the girls felt that a sense of common humanity made them want to help the other person, even if they felt their own stressors were difficult, as Hermione wrote,

Different stressors make me feel sad, anxious and stressed. It makes me emotionally tired.

It makes me feel compassion towards others because I know how it feels to be stressed out and its not fun.

Female student #26 stated in her interview, "Yes, when you are kind to yourself, you will know how people feel sometimes you can be more kind to others." Another female student #58 added,

It's like treating each other equally and have compassion for each other. If someone's upset over something, not just be like toughen up because if you were upset you would want people to listen to you talk about it or at least hug you or comfort you or something. Boys stated that common humanity did not change their compassion for others, while girls stated that knowing that others have flaws and inadequacies, just like them, gave them more compassion for others.

Chapter Summary

Analyzing the data through the IMP framework was messy but informative. It is to integrate all the zones or points of view, to see the big picture, and to analyze how self-compassion affected the students in this research study. In IMP, I was able to link all the themes together to see the "big picture" of teaching self-compassion. The results indicated that students' awareness, compassion for others, and resiliency increased. The students offered suggestions to increase a mindfulness practice in schools. The results did seem to show increased levels of development along the cognitive, emotional, self-identity, and interpersonal lines to increase students' level of consciousness from the second to the third order. Girls showed more compassion for others than did boys. The next and final chapter is a discussion of the results to draw some conclusions and make implications for future research in this area.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

In this final chapter, the research questions are answered, some conclusions are drawn, the quality of the conclusions are stated, the significance of the study is presented, implications and recommendations for implementing mindfulness in schools is discussed, and final thoughts are shared. Throughout this chapter I refer to the research questions as shown below. The research questions are divided into the four quadrants of integral theory as shown in Table #19.

1. Did students report a change in the self-report questionnaires?
 - a. Mindfulness Awareness Attention Scale
 - b. Self-compassion Scale
 - c. Mindset Quiz
 - d. Compassion Scale
2. Did student resiliency increase?
 - a. In what ways did students perceive the three components of self-compassion: mindfulness, self-kindness, and common humanity?
 - b. In what ways did students report a change in emotional regulation?
 - c. Was there an increased sense of self-awareness?
3. Was there a change in classroom or school culture?
 - a. In what ways did students perceive compassion towards others?
 - b. In what ways did student interpersonal relationships change?
4. What were the benefits and challenges of teaching self-compassion within school curricula?

- a. What were teacher and administrator perceptions regarding the implementation of mindfulness programs within BC curricula?
 - b. Does self-compassion and mindfulness fulfill the requirements on social and emotional learning mandated by the new BC curriculum?
5. What were the gender differences in self-compassion?

Table 19 <i>Research questions divided into the four quadrants of Integral Theory (Wilber, 2007)</i>	
<p>UL</p> <p>2. Did student resiliency increase?</p> <p>a. In what ways did students perceive the three components of self-compassion: mindfulness, self-kindness, and common humanity?</p> <p>b. In what ways did students report a change in emotional regulation?</p> <p>c. Was there an increased sense of self-awareness?</p>	<p>UR</p> <p>1. Did students report a change in self-report questionnaires?</p> <p>a. Mindfulness Awareness Attention Scale</p> <p>b. Self-compassion Scale</p> <p>c. Mindset Quiz</p> <p>d. Compassion Scale</p>
<p>LL</p> <p>3. Was there a change in classroom or school culture?</p> <p>a. In what ways did students perceive compassion towards others?</p> <p>b. In what ways did student interpersonal relationships change?</p>	<p>LR</p> <p>4. What were the benefits and challenges to teaching self-compassion within school curricula?</p> <p>a. What were teacher/administrator perceptions regarding the implementation of SEL and mindfulness programs within BC curricula?</p> <p>b. Does self-compassion and mindfulness fulfill the requirements on social and emotional learning skills mandated by the new BC curriculum?</p>
<p>5. What were the gender differences in self-compassion?</p>	

Discussion

The purpose of teaching a mindfulness program to students was to increase resiliency to buffer students against mental health problems. Many of the past research studies on self-compassion were correlation studies or introduced short self-compassion interventions. This is one of the first known research studies to implement the teaching of self-compassion in a regular school format. I wanted to find out how the teaching of self-compassion fits into a regular school classroom to determine if it had an affect on students' self-compassion, mindfulness awareness, emotional regulation, self-awareness, compassion for others, and resiliency. In addition, could self-compassion be incorporated into the regular school classroom? I will now discuss both the qualitative and quantitative results and answer the research questions.

Resiliency

A central goal of this research study was to examine if a mindfulness program teaching self-compassion could increase student resiliency to buffer adolescents against mental health issues. I chose to teach self-compassion, as I felt the three components: mindfulness, self-kindness, and common humanity, were all crucial concepts for students to learn, and research has determined that these skills help build resiliency in subjects (Hope et al., 2014; Neff et al., 2005).

In this study, I looked at the three components with both a qualitative and quantitative lens which produced mixed results. Quantitatively, to answer research question 1b, there was no significant result in the Self-compassion scale. One possible reason why self-compassion did not increase can be age of subjects as explained by recent research by Bluth and Blanton (2014). They found that younger adolescent females (11-13 year olds) had more self-compassion than did older adolescent females (14-17 year olds). They found no differences in boys' level of self-compassion between these ages. The students in the present study were in the younger category;

therefore, it could be that there was no difference in the Self-compassion scale as the students were not as low in self-compassion to begin with. More research needs to be done in regards to age and self-compassion. Even though there were no statistically significant results, the students stated in their journals, interviews, and focus groups that they had increased mindfulness awareness, self-kindness, and common humanity. I will discuss these concepts separately, along with emotional awareness and regulation, self-awareness, and mindset to determine if resiliency did increase in research subjects.

Mindful awareness.

To answer whether or not mindfulness awareness increased is to look at both the qualitative and quantitative data, the upper right and upper left quadrants. In the quantitative data, the upper right, to answer question 1a, students did not show any statistically significant result between the pre-and post-test on the Mindfulness Awareness Attention Scale. This could be partly attributed to a lack of participation by the subjects, as they seemed to be very self-conscious of participating in the mindfulness practices. This lack of participation could be attributed to a reliance on self-esteem: how one believes others perceive them (Neff, 2003a). In addition, many students at this age are still in the conformist stage of identity development; they have a tendency to conform to the group (Loevinger, 1976). This over reliance on others' perceptions and group conformity may have negatively influenced the students' participation in the mindfulness activities, as only approximately 50% of the students participated in the mindfulness activities. The students were very self-conscious about how they looked to others. Students suggested that starting a mindfulness practice at an earlier age and having the practice valued by others in their lives such as parents, teachers, coaches, and even celebrities may normalize the practice, so they would be more likely to participate in the practice. More research

needs to be done in the area of participation and peer pressure in regards to mindfulness practices in schools.

Even though there was no statistical significance shown in the quantitative data, the students did state that they increased in mindfulness awareness through the journals, interviews, and focus groups. Students reported that mindfulness made them more aware of their surroundings, their emotions, and themselves which partly answered research question 2a. They seemed to have increased along the cognitive line of awareness. Having more awareness of their surroundings enabled the students to have a more focused attention which allowed them to concentrate more on their daily activities, and some reported they enjoyed those activities better. An increased level of cognitive awareness also seemed to increase student emotional awareness and self-awareness.

Self-kindness.

Students reported that they practiced more kindness towards themselves. They discussed how they talked to themselves with more kindness, and were able to accept themselves nonjudgmentally. To partly answer research question 2a, students saw self-kindness as being more aware of how they talk to themselves, and if they are hard on themselves, to forgive themselves for making mistakes as part of common humanity. They discussed how practicing self-kindness was difficult, as it was a new concept for them, and self-kindness is not a socially accepted concept. People are more likely to self-criticize rather than see their mistakes as part of common humanity (Neff, 2003a). Students stated that practicing self-kindness allowed them to see their mistakes and shortcoming as temporary, to accept their shortcomings with kindness and acceptance, and to move forward and try again, all components of building resiliency and having a growth mindset.

Common humanity.

To partly answer research question 2a, students reported that they thought differently about themselves as members of common humanity. They were able to see their faults accurately, and accept mistakes because everyone makes mistakes. Students reported that they were not as hard on themselves when they made mistakes, and this helped them to encourage themselves to try again. Common humanity affected how one saw oneself, but it also affected how students perceived others, as also making mistakes. They reported that this influenced how they thought of others, with more compassion, acceptance, and forgiveness.

Emotional awareness and regulation.

Emotional awareness and regulation are important for students to learn to be able to manage their emotions so they do not affect their behaviours (Goleman, 1995). An awareness of emotions enabled the students to regulate their emotions; they were more able to evaluate their emotions before they reacted. Many students discussed how awareness of and regulating emotions affected their behaviours; it helped them think before they reacted on their emotions. This awareness allowed them to reflect on themselves to have more self-control. To answer research question 2b, students stated they were more aware of how their emotions affect their behaviours, and they are better able to self-calm so their emotions do not overwhelm them. They seemed to have increased along the emotional line of development. The results of this study follows previous research in this area (Bluth et al., 2015; Leary et al. 2007; Neely et al., 2009). Mindfulness and self-compassion may be an effective means of being aware of and regulating emotions. Managing emotions may aid in psychological wellbeing, interpersonal relationships, and authentic self-awareness.

Self-awareness.

Having more self-awareness enabled students to be more aware of their mind/body connection, evaluate themselves authentically, be more kind to themselves, and accept themselves as members of common humanity. The students were taught to think of their thoughts as just thoughts and not to let them get carried away into negative stories about themselves. They were taught to be kind to themselves when they make mistakes, as members of common humanity. To answer research questions 2c, the students reported that they were able to see themselves with accuracy, self-kindness, and self-acceptance, even though they stated that this was sometimes difficult to do. They stated that they previously had not been taught to be self-accepting, but to view oneself with criticism rather than kindness. Being more self-aware may increase development along the self-identity line.

Self-compassion may counteract the negative effects of having an over-inflated self-esteem or narcissism. With self-esteem, it is about how you *think* others perceive you, but self-compassion is to see yourself with accuracy. According to Warin and Muldoon (2009), a sense of identity relies on the recognition by others, and if this is no longer positively recognized by others, it can have a negative effect on one's self-identity. In another study, those low in self-compassion tried to defend their identity as desirable, and they were self-conscious, had social anxiety and attachment insecurity more than those high in self-compassion (Crocker & Canavello, 2008). With self-compassion, the students were more able to see themselves accurately, and if they made a mistake, they were more able to forgive themselves and accept themselves with self-kindness.

Mindset.

Self-compassion allows one to see oneself with accuracy, make mistakes as part of the human condition, and accept these mistakes with kindness and understanding. A growth mindset allows one to see obstacles as just that: obstacles, and not to let them get in the way of progress (Dweck, 2006). Students showed a statistically significant change ($p=.00016$) in the Mindset Quiz between pre-and post-tests, which answers research question 1c. The results of this study showed that students did not see their intelligence or talent as stagnant, but as something they can develop with motivation and determination, a core component of resiliency.

The current research will add to the research in this area. Past research on self-compassion has been shown to aid in mastery performance, helps develop a growth mindset, and aids in perseverance (Breines & Chen, 2012; Hope et al., 2004; Neff et al, 2005;). This ability to try again in the face of defeat is a large component of mindset and resiliency, and was a core component the administrators deemed important for students to learn: perseverance in goal completion.

Summary.

Resiliency is the ability to bounce back from adversity (Richardson & Begley, 2012). Resilient people have learned that when confronted with a struggle, they can tackle the problem, and they do not find defeat in failure, but it is a way to learn (Reivich & Shatté, 2003). In this study, students reported that they became more aware of their surroundings, their emotions, and themselves. This awareness allowed them to view their thoughts and emotions without getting involved in the stories and feelings. They were more able to see themselves authentically, to see their faults as part of the human condition, but with the ability to change; their faults did not define them. To answer research question #2, I believe that student resiliency increased as a

result of the teaching of self-compassion through mindfulness program. Self-compassion also helped improve classroom and school culture.

Classroom and School Culture

The concept of common humanity may counteract individualism and narcissism that has become prevalent in the youth of the “Generation Me” (Twenge, 2013). In narcissism, one does not see oneself with accuracy, but rather, one sees oneself with an over-inflated sense of self and may downplay faults while over-emphasizing perceived positive traits. In addition, narcissists tend to associate with those they feel they are better than, and they may show aggression to those they think are better than themselves (Baumeister et al., 2000). In this generation, young people have lost a sense of community, and their peers have become more important to them than their parents (Neufeld, 2003). These students are growing up in a world where youth often communicate through social media rather than in authentic face-to-face engagements (Hart & Frejd, 2013). In common humanity, one sees oneself accurately, with faults and inadequacies as part of the human condition; therefore, one sees others also with faults and inadequacies, but these faults do not define a person (Neff, 2003a). A sense of common humanity aided students to increase along the interpersonal line of development, as they were more able to be aware of their own needs and the needs of others, and they were more able to see multiple perspectives and empathize with others, competencies required for the third order of consciousness (Kegan, 1993). This may have been the biggest rationale for the increase in compassion for others and an improvement in interpersonal relationships.

Compassion for others.

Compassion for others increased in both the quantitative and qualitative data. To answer research question 1d, there was a significant increase between the pre- and post-test on the

Compassion Scale ($p=.004$). Also, qualitatively, students self-reported that their compassion for others increased. To answer research question 3a, compassion for others increased their ability to take the perspective of others; they were able to see others' point of view as members of common humanity. As students saw themselves make mistakes as part of common humanity, they became more compassionate, more accepting, and more forgiving of others' mistakes as part of the human condition. This follows previous research in the area which showed subjects high in self-compassion were more willing to help others (Breines & Chen, 2012; Lindsay & Creswell, 2014; Neff & Beretvas, 2012). Compassion for others is also important for interpersonal relationships, a competency the administrators deemed important for students to learn.

Interpersonal relationships.

A sense of common humanity seemed to have helped students have better interpersonal relationships. To answer research question 3b, the students reported that the main effects were caring for others, listening more, and more awareness of bullying behaviours. In narcissism, people tend to interact with people they feel they are better than, but when they feel others are better than themselves, they retaliate, which may lead to bullying behaviours (Baumeister et al, 2000). Students stated that they believed a mindfulness program that teaches compassion for others may reduce bullying in schools. A benefit of increased interpersonal relationships is to be better able to manage interpersonal conflict, which was core competency that the administrators deemed was important for students to learn.

Summary

The youth in today's "Generation Me" tend to focus on themselves, often with an over-inflated view of themselves and their abilities (Twenge, 2013). Self-compassion teaches people

to think about themselves authentically as members of common humanity, but they are also taught to be kind to others, and have compassion for others, as members of common humanity (Neff, 2003a). According to the data, the students increased in compassion for others, and their interpersonal relationships improved. They stated that they cared for others, listened more to others, and seemed more kind to others. They believed that learning self-compassion could reduce bullying in schools. The data has shown many benefits of self-compassion in the subjects, and now we turn to the benefits and challenges of implementing a mindfulness program in the classroom.

Benefits and Challenges of Teaching Self-Compassion

The BC curriculum is currently going through a change, which is an opportune time to implement mindfulness and social and emotional learning into the curriculum (BC Ministry of Education, 2012b). Some of the “Big Ideas” in the new curriculum are increasing awareness of how the body works, to increase physical, mental and emotional wellbeing (2014a), build caring behaviours, empathy and strong relationships, resist unhealthy social pressures, and make sound choices (2014a) among others. Mindfulness and SEL skills align with these new initiatives, and the teacher and administrators believed that the SEL skills embedded in the L2B curriculum were important to learn, but staff buy-in and classroom application would be a challenge.

Mindfulness and social and emotional learning.

Mindfulness used as a method to build resiliency and increase compassion for others may counteract the narcissistic and individualistic tendencies of the youth of today. The inundation of social media and online communication has replaced face to face communication and relationships (Hart & Frejd, 2013), and peers are becoming more important to youth than their parents (Neufeld, 2005). Programs that build social and emotional learning skills such as

awareness, emotional regulation, goal perseverance, and compassion for others are beneficial for students to learn, and these skills should be embedded into the curriculum. I discuss the competencies the administrators felt were most important for students to learn, but also some of the dangers of using mindfulness as a tool to suppress emotions and foster competition in schools.

The competencies the administrators deemed the most important for students to learn were to strengthen decision making skills to make sound personal choices, to build resiliency to persevere in achieving goals, and to increase relationships skills to help manage conflict. To answer research questions 4b, mindfulness and self-compassion increased self-awareness, emotional regulation skills, and growth mindset, all social and emotional learning skills required to build resiliency in students. In addition, this program helped to increase compassion for others which helps in interpersonal relationships to better manage conflict. In light of these results, it should be apparent that social and emotional learning should be implemented throughout the curriculum, yet challenges to implementing a mindfulness program are considerable, and are discussed later. First, I discuss the dangers of using mindfulness as an educational tool rather than as a method to transform and raise levels of consciousness.

There is a danger that mindfulness can be used in the schools as a tool to regulate behaviours, increase performance, and reinforce competition rather than used as a method to increase compassion for self and others. As Bai, Beatch, Chang, and Cohen (2016) have stated, there is a danger that mindfulness in the schools may be used as a cognitive-behavioural approach to manage behaviours, such as a technique to “self-regulate” for students who are a disruption in the classroom. In addition, “self-regulation” of emotions may be seen as to “suppress” or “control” emotions. In essence, mindfulness is about being “aware” of and

recognizing one's emotions as pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral, to be able to work with that emotion in the present moment so it does not overwhelm.

In addition, the fear is that mindfulness can be used as a skill enhancing behaviour technique. Research has found that mindfulness increases academics (Durlak et al., 2011), and it has also been used in sports to increase performance (Bernier, Thienot, Codron, & Fournier, 2009). This data can be used as a justification for using mindfulness as a skills-enhancing tool. The danger is that mindfulness may be used to actually increase competition and comparison among students, which is actually the opposite of what mindfulness in schools is trying to foster: "kindness, compassion, empathic joy, and inner freedom and peace" (Bai et al., 2016 p.14). These are the skills that are necessary to instil in today's students to reduce individualism and narcissism and increase levels of consciousness from the second to the third level so that students are "able to identify inner motivations, hold onto emotional conflict internally, be psychologically self-reflective, and have a capacity for insight" (Kegan, 1994 p. 27). The social and emotional skills are important for students to learn, and are necessary to increase levels of consciousness, but these skills will be difficult to incorporate in the classrooms, as most teachers are unfamiliar with these skills themselves.

Classroom application and staff buy-in.

All the administrators agreed that the social and emotional competencies are important for students to learn, and they need to be incorporated into the classroom and taught throughout the curriculum. To partly answer question 4a, classroom application and staff buy-in are the greatest challenge to implementing social and emotional learning into the curriculum.

Professional development in this area will need to be implemented to offer the teachers social

and emotional learning to skills to apply to their own lives to then be able to teach these skills within their classrooms.

In order for mindfulness to be applied successfully in the classroom, the teachers and administrators have to be educated about the benefits of mindfulness for the students and the benefits in their own lives. Professional development in the area of teacher education in mindfulness is now being offered in BC higher education institutions. SMART Education for educators is being offered out of University of British Columbia (UBC, 2016a), and a 12-month teacher education program specifically teaching SEL skills is also being offered out of UBC (UBC, 2016b), and Simon Fraser University is offering the a Masters of Education in Contemplative Inquiry (SFU, 2016). Professional development for existing teachers have also been available in the MindUp program (Hawn Foundation, 2011) in various schools in British Columbia. These programs in teacher education and professional development in the area of mindfulness, social and emotional learning, and contemplative practices are necessary for mindfulness in education to spread. More professional development in this area is needed for teachers to increase their own social and emotional skills and resiliency, and to introduce them into their classrooms.

Summary.

Social and emotional learning skills are important for students to strengthen decision making skills, to build resiliency, and to increase relationships skills. The teaching of mindfulness and self-compassion can meet these needs plus many more skills that will build resiliency and increase wellbeing. The teaching of mindfulness and social and emotional learning should be implemented early in elementary school, throughout the curriculum, so that mindfulness practices are normalized and become a daily routine. The implementing of these

skills need to come from experienced, mindful teachers who understand the essence of teaching mindfulness to students, otherwise mindfulness may be used as a skill building tool. Teacher education and professional development in the mindfulness, social and emotional learning, and contemplative practices are increasing and, in time, mindfulness practices will be seen in many BC classrooms.

Gender Differences

The results of this study showed that girls and boys were similar in self-compassion, but that differences existed with compassion for others, which answers research question #5. I expected girls to be lower in self-compassion than boys, as girls tend to be more self-critical than boys. Previous research showed conflicting results between women showing less self-compassion (Neff, 2003a; Yarnell & Neff, 2013) and no gender differences (Neff et al., 2007; Neff, Rude, & Kirkpatrick, 2007). Following research by Bluth and Blanton (2014), older adolescent girls (aged 15-18) had lower self-compassion than the boys and the younger girls. This study indicated that self-esteem decreases, as age increases in girls. Since my study was conducted with 13-15 year old, this same data would not have been uncovered. Future research could look further into age and its correlate to self-compassion in girls.

Girls showed greater compassion for others than did boys as shown by both quantitative and qualitative data. Compassion for others was significantly greater ($p=.004$) in girls than in boys, as shown by the results of the Compassion Scale. This follows previous research that showed women as being higher in compassion for others than men (Neff & Pommier, 2013). Both boys and girls spoke unkindly to themselves, yet girls seemed to be more kind to others; boys stated that they would also speak unkindly to a friend, whereas none of the girls said they would speak the same way to a friend. It seemed learning about common humanity did not

increase boys' compassion for others. They either could not see through their own stressors to look at others' stressors, or if others had the same experiences, they felt sorry for them. Further research in gender differences and self-compassion may shed light on why male have less compassion for others than females.

Conclusions

From the results of this study, there are grounds for teaching self-compassion and mindfulness in schools. First of all, social and emotional learning and mindfulness benefit the students. In the "Learning to BREATHE" program, students were taught how to be more aware of their surroundings, evaluate their thoughts, regulate their emotions, treat themselves with kindness, accept themselves, and persevere in the face of adversity. Students reported many positive results from the mindfulness program as shown in Table #20: increased awareness and focused attention; increased emotional awareness and regulation; increased self-awareness, self-kindness, and self-acceptance; increased growth mindset and ability to persevere; increased compassion, acceptance, and forgiveness of others, and a belief that it could reduce bullying.

Secondly, the teaching of social and emotional learning has been mandated by the BC government, and it will need to be incorporated into the regular school curriculum in the near future. Social and emotional learning skills are currently taught in both public and private sectors by many master teachers, but it will need to be more formally taught in the future. This will only benefit students, but it will be a challenge to administrators and teachers. Staff buy-in and classroom application were the biggest challenges that face teachers in embracing social and emotional learning in the classroom. Teacher education and professional development teaching SEL and mindfulness to the teachers first, so that they can learn the nuances of mindfulness

before they bring them into the classroom is important. This is not just a skill-building exercise, but it is a way to transform a way of perceiving the world and acting upon it.

Table 20 <i>Summary of answers to the research questions</i>	
<p>UL</p> <p>2. Did student resiliency increase? Increase in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindful awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - focused attention • Emotional awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - emotional regulation (self-calm) • Self-awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - self-kindness - self-acceptance • Common humanity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ability to persevere 	<p>UR</p> <p>1. Did students report a change in the self-report questionnaires? Increase in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistically Significant change in Mindset Quiz (p= .00016) • Statistically Significant change in Compassion Scale (p= .004)
<p>LL</p> <p>3. Was there a change in classroom or school culture? Increase in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compassion for others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - perspective-taking - acceptance and forgiveness • Interpersonal relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more caring, listening, and kind <p>- belief it could reduce bullying</p>	<p>LR</p> <p>4. What are the benefits and challenges to teaching self-compassion within school curricula? Increase in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student resiliency • Interpersonal relationships <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom application • Staff buy-in
<p>5. What are the gender differences in self-compassion?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compassion for others was higher in girls than in boys 	

Today's "Generation Me" is fraught with youth who are too self-involved, materialistic, individualistic, and narcissistic. By transforming their way of "knowing" to be able to see the world through a different lens may offer the youth an alternative way of "being" in the world. Self-compassion is a new way of thinking; being kind to ourselves instead of self-critical, to be able to pick ourselves up when we fall, to be compassionate to those around us, as our world is

changing. As our world becomes more individualistic and relationships are formed on social media, we are losing our connections with others. Bringing self-compassion and mindfulness into schools to teach our children and youth to care for ourselves and others is not just a “good idea”, but it is necessary and very timely, as our classrooms are changing and become more diverse.

Quality of Conclusions

With qualitative research, objectivity, reliability, and generalizability often come under question (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The concern I have with the objectivity of the data is that I may have influenced the students to report a certain way. It could be possible that the student journals and interview responses were biased as the students may have been trying to please me, the researcher. They were fully aware that this was a research project, and that I was interested in their thoughts regarding the program. They did not know my research questions, but they were aware that I was collecting data on their perceptions of the “Learning to BREATHE” program. They may have conjured up responses to make themselves look better or to give me what they thought I was looking for.

Another concern I have is the reliability of the questionnaires. Many students seemed to be confused over some of the questionnaire questions. The questionnaires may have been written at a too high of a level for twelve to fourteen year olds. Also, the students may have been very tired when they completed the post-test questionnaires. On the last day of the program, they had the final lesson with a mindfulness practice, participated in the focus group, wrote the final journal entry, and the questionnaires. It could be that the students were very tired by the end of the class and did not take the time to fully read and answer the questions to the best of their ability.

As this research was conducted with one specific population of adolescents, results cannot be generalized to all adolescents. This case study was conducted in a private Catholic school, and students who attend this school come from predominantly upper-middle class families. In addition, the program was taught during Religion class, and students may have believed this program to be religiously based. The results of this research cannot be generalized to a larger population of adolescents.

Even though the results of the study might not have been completely objective, reliable or generalizable, the results have shed light on teaching mindfulness in general, and self-compassion specifically, in a classroom setting which will add to the research in this area.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant on many different levels. First, this one of the first known research studies on teaching self-compassion within the regular school curriculum. Second, it is to increase self-compassion and resiliency in students so they are better able to cope with life's challenges in this fast-paced and changing world. It is hoped that youth mental health problems decrease if social and emotional learning skills are taught throughout the k-12 curriculum. Finally, integral methodological pluralism was used as the research methodology incorporating all eight zones or point of view. Integral research offers "an unprecedented, structured ability to ensure that all major, relevant perspectives are used when examining a research question," (Martin, 2008, p. 156). This research study incorporated eight different points of view to evaluate if teaching of self-compassion should be taught in the regular school curriculum to build resiliency and wellbeing in students.

Implications and Recommendations

The BC Ministry of Education mandated that social and emotional skills be incorporated into the classroom. The new BC education curriculum incorporated “Big Ideas” in the area of social and emotional competencies to be taught to students from kindergarten to grade nine, and the new curriculum for grades ten through twelve is forthcoming (2014b). The administrators deemed these competencies are important for students to learn; these skills can help increase student resiliency and therefore wellbeing. One method of teaching these skills is through mindfulness. The implication is that both students and teachers need to buy into the importance of teaching social and emotional skills in the classroom. Both students and teachers require a balance between challenge and support so they do not become *in over their heads*, and mindfulness in education just becomes another “good idea” that was never implemented properly.

One of the recommendations is to have students supported by other influences outside of the classroom so they are more aware of the importance of a mindfulness practice and be shown how they can use mindfulness in their everyday lives. Having outside influences such as their parents, peers, coaches, school administrators, or celebrities to tell students that a mindfulness practice is to their benefit, might influence students to practice more. Perhaps if the school offered mindfulness in earlier grades and throughout the school year, and if parents and coaches also supported a mindfulness practice, then students may take mindfulness practices more seriously and make a greater effort to participate. By discussing important people in the world who are practicing mindfulness, perhaps sports personalities or popular movie stars, students can become aware of where mindfulness can be used in their daily life. Making mindfulness

applicable not only in school, but in the real world would be very important to have the students “buy-in” to a mindfulness practice.

Another recommendation is offer professional development opportunities for teachers to become aware of the benefits of social and emotional learning and mindfulness, to embrace these skills themselves, and to implement them into the curriculum. At the moment, teachers are overwhelmed with the new curriculum such as project-based learning and more technology into the classroom. Adding social and emotional skills to their already full plate would be too challenging at the moment. Also, many teachers may be uncomfortable with social and emotional topics. Teachers require a balance between support and challenge; we need to start where the staff are at right now, and convince them of the necessity of teaching these skills to fully embrace the “new ideas” in education. Professional development in this area has begun, but it will start slowly as teachers become more familiar and accepting of teaching social and emotional learning skills in their classrooms. The challenge is to meet the teachers where they are at, encourage them to grow in social and emotional skills themselves, and support them to effectively teach these skills to their students.

Final Thoughts

This research project was a complex undertaking, but I had the passion and conviction to see it through. Initially, I started this project as, both personally and professionally, I saw too many students suffer from anxiety, depression, and other mental health difficulties at a much too young age. This project was to find out if a mindfulness program in schools might have a positive effect on students’ resilience and therefore, wellbeing.

The integral theory offered me a theoretical map to explore this issue. When I was in my first degree in Psychology in the late 1980s, the discussion always revolved around the

nature/nurture debate. Was it genetics or environment that influenced a person the most? But integral theory not only incorporates this dichotomy, but also incorporates many other influences; it integrates eight points of view which offered me a complex and dynamic way of viewing the teaching of self-compassion in a high school context.

My future endeavour is to bring self-compassion to my community, teaching self-compassion as an eight-week course. I also want to bring it to the youth in my community; therefore, I will be attending the first self-compassion teacher training in North America for youth called “Being Friends with Yourself.” I also hope to present professional development on social and emotional learning, mindfulness, and self-compassion to the teachers in the school district within the next couple of years. I am excited and optimistic that I can bring self-compassion into schools. It transformed my life; I hope I can make a difference in others’ lives.

Practicing self compassion is like throwing a pebble into the water. It starts a ripple effect in the home, in the workplace, at school. Your example will encourage others to be more accepting of themselves as well. The ripple goes on indefinitely

(AEIOU Foundation, 2015).

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Appendix A

Student Journal Entry Prompts

Students will write 6 journal entries for approximately 10-15 minutes after each theme in the “Learning to BREATHE” curriculum.

Body

1. Write about an activity that you did on automatic pilot (mindlessly) in the past week. Write about an activity that you did mindfully in the past week. What do you think are some of the advantages of being more mindful?

Reflections

2. Become aware of what your mind is doing: THINKING. It’s generating thoughts. It’s just what the mind does. Examine your thoughts with curiosity. Choose one thought. How loud or soft is it in your mind? Does it yell to be heard, or is it quiet, like a whisper? How strong is it? Is it pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral? How long does it last? Don’t try to push the thought out of your mind. Become friends with your thoughts.

Emotions

3. What was the experience of “Surfing the wave of emotions” like for you? What did you notice in your body, thoughts, and feelings? What was the experience of “Pleasant Feeling (Gratitude)” like for you? What did you notice in your body, thoughts, and feelings? Practice being kind to yourself when uncomfortable feelings arise. Don’t try to push them away. Just notice them and where they show up as sensations in your body.

Attention

4. Paying attention to how the body feels, what we think, and what emotions we experience prevents the buildup of problems that can harm the mind and body. Everyone experiences stress; it’s part of being human. How do different stressors affect your body, thoughts and emotions? How does it feel to be aware of these sensations? How does it feel to know that others may feel the same way?

Tenderness

5. When you are upset about something you have done, how do you talk to yourself? How would you talk to a friend who is upset? Do you say the same thing to a friend as you talk to yourself? Do you think other people talk kindly to themselves? How does this affect your compassion for others?

Habits of Mind

6. Our habits of mind can be changed, and we can choose to be mindful and to be more aware. How do you think you can use mindfulness in your everyday life? How do you think you can practice self-compassion in your everyday life? How do you think you can be more compassionate towards others?

Appendix B

Focus Group Questions

In your groups, you are going to discuss topics you learned in the “Learning to BREATHE” program. The goal is to encourage everyone to think and talk about what you have learned. Please allow an opportunity for everyone in your group to participate. Participants may pass whenever they wish. When someone is speaking, allow him or her the time to speak uninterrupted. Please comment without judgment. You will be audio taped during the interview, so please do not use names. If names are inadvertently used during discussions, they will be deleted from the audio file. Do you have any questions?

1. Discuss the three components of self-compassion: mindfulness, self-kindness, and common humanity. Which do people have the hardest time with?
2. Do you think teenagers today practice self-compassion? Why or why not?
3. What do you think is the biggest stumbling block to practicing self-compassion? What can we do to cultivate more self-compassion?
4. How do thoughts or emotions stop us from behaving with self-compassion? Is there anything that can trigger those thoughts or emotions?
5. Discuss how practicing self-compassion may help people practice compassion for others. Please discuss any change in behaviours in yourself or your peers since starting the “Learning to BREATHE” program? Do you think this program can reduce bullying in schools?
6. Do you think a mindfulness program such as the “Learning to BREATHE” program should be taught in schools?

Appendix C

Student Interview Questions

Introduction to students:

I am going to be asking questions about your ideas about the various topics we discussed in the “Learning to BREATHE” program during your Religion class. Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers. I am most interested in your thought and ideas; therefore, I may at times ask you to explain or restate something in more detail to better understand it. You will be audio taped during the interview, but no one will be able to identify you on the audio tape. Do you have any questions?

Mindfulness:

1. Tell me what mindfulness means to you. Do you use mindfulness in your everyday life? If so, how? How does it feel when you are aware of your thoughts and emotions? Do you think being aware of thoughts and emotions can affect someone’s behaviours? If so, how?

Self-kindness

2. What does self-compassion mean to you? What is the point of practicing self-compassion? How easy or hard is it to practice self-compassion? How do you think it would help other teenagers to practice self-compassion? Do you think being more kind to oneself allows one to be more kind to others? Why or why not?

Common Humanity/Compassion for others

3. How does understanding that other people may experience the same thing as you make you feel? Please tell me if this is helpful to you. Do you think understanding that people may have the same experiences make one feel more compassion for others? Why or why not?
4. Do you have any other ideas or experiences that you would like to share with me today?

Appendix D

Teacher Interview Questions

I am going to be asking questions about your perspective of the new BC Education Plan and how the “Learning to BREATHE” program may meet the needs of the new curriculum and the students. I am most interested in your thought and ideas; therefore, I may at times ask you to explain or restate something in more detail to better understand it. You will be audio taped during the interview, but no one will be able to identify you on the audio tape. Do you have any questions?

1. I have presented you with a copy of the draft curriculum in Physical and Health Education that forms part of the new BC Education Plan, and I highlighted the areas in which I believe the “Learning to BREATHE” curriculum meets the challenges of the new curriculum. Do you think that these competencies outlined in the new BC Education curriculum are important for students to learn? If so, which ones do you deem to be most important?
2. In what ways do you think the “Learning to BREATHE” program fulfills the requirements highlighted in the competencies? Do you believe these competencies are included in the current Religion curriculum?
3. What do you think will be the biggest challenges to incorporating these competencies into the day to day teachings in the classroom?
4. Do you think you could implement part or all of the “Learning to BREATHE” curriculum in your classroom? Why or why not? Do you think that a teacher who teaches a mindfulness program should practice mindfulness on a regular basis?
5. From your perspective, did you observe the students as being attentive during the teaching of the lessons? Did you observe the students as practicing the mindfulness activities?
6. What, if any, behaviour changes did you notice among the students in your Religion classes? Do you think that these behaviour changes, if any, were the result of this program? Please elaborate on any changes you may have noticed.
7. Tell me if you noticed any changes in classroom culture since the start of the program. Do you think these changes were a result of the program? Why or why not?
8. What kinds of professional development do you think will be necessary to fulfil the requirement mandated by the BC Education Plan? What kinds of professional development in the area of social and emotional learning has already been offered in your diocese?
9. How do you think that this type of programming can or should be evaluated?

Appendix E

CEA Interview Questions

I am going to be asking questions about your perspective of the “Learning to BREATHE” program that was taught to the students during your Religion block. Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers. I am most interested in your thought and ideas; therefore, I may at times ask you to explain or restate something in more detail to better understand it. You will be audio taped during the interview, but no one will be able to identify you on the audio tape. Do you have any questions?

1. From your perspective, did you observe the students as being attentive during the teaching of the lessons? Did you observe the students as practicing the mindfulness activities?
2. What, if any, behaviour changes did you notice among the students in your Religion classes? Do you think that these behaviour changes, if any, were the result of this program? Please elaborate on any changes you may have noticed.
3. Tell me if you noticed any changes in classroom culture since the start of the program. Do you think these changes were a result of the program? Why or why not?
4. Do you believe that a mindfulness program should be taught in school?
5. Do you have any suggestions to making the program more appealing to the students given the 15-20 minute time restraint?

Appendix F

Administrator Interview Questions

I am going to be asking questions about your perspective of the new BC Education Plan and how you see your school and teachers meeting the needs of the new curriculum and the students. Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers. I am most interested in your thought and ideas; therefore, I may at times ask you to explain or restate something in more detail to better understand it. You will be audio taped during the interview, but the audio tape will remain confidential with no identifying markers. Do you have any questions?

1. I have presented you with a copy of the draft curriculum in Physical and Health Education that forms part of the new BC Education Plan, and I highlighted the areas in which I believe the “Learning to BREATHE” curriculum meets the challenges of the new curriculum. Do you think that these competencies outlined in the new BC Education curriculum are important for students to learn? If so, which ones do you deem to be most important?
2. Do you believe these competencies are currently covered in the Physical Education, Health and Career, or the Religion curriculum? If not, which ones do you believe are not being currently covered? Do you believe these competencies will be a challenge to incorporate into the day to day teachings within a classroom? Why or why not?
3. What kinds of professional development do you think will be necessary to fulfil the requirement mandated by the BC Education Plan? What kinds of professional development in the area of social and emotional learning has already been offered in your area?
4. What do you deem the biggest challenges to offering programs in the area of social and emotional learning to the staff at your school?
5. How do you think that this type of programming can or should be evaluated?

Appendix G

Superintendent Interview Questions

I am going to be asking questions about your perspective of the new BC Education Plan and how you see your schools and teachers meeting the needs of the new curriculum and the students. Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers. I am most interested in your thought and ideas; therefore, I may at times ask you to explain or restate something in more detail to better understand it. You will be audio taped during the interview, but no one will be able to identify you on the audio tape. Do you have any questions?

1. I have presented you with a copy of the draft curriculum in Physical and Health Education that forms part of the new BC Education Plan, and I highlighted the areas in which I believe the Social and Emotional learning and mindfulness programs meets the challenges of the new curriculum. Do you think that these competencies outlined in the new BC Education curriculum are important for students to learn? If so, which ones do you deem to be most important?
2. Do you believe these competencies are currently covered in the Physical Education, Health and Career, or in Religion classes? If not, which ones do you believe are not being currently covered? Do you believe these competencies will be a challenge to incorporate into the day to day teachings within a classroom? Why or why not?
3. What kinds of professional development do you think will be necessary to fulfil the requirement mandated by the BC Education Plan? What kinds of professional development in the area of social and emotional learning and mindfulness has already been offered in your diocese?
4. What do you deem the biggest challenges to offering programs in the area of mindfulness or social and emotional learning to the staff in the area?
5. How do you think that these type of programs can or should be evaluated?

Appendix H

Self-Compassion Scale – Short Form

HOW I TYPICALLY ACT TOWARDS MYSELF IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Please read each statement carefully before answering. To the left of each item, indicate how often you behave in the stated manner, using the following scale:

- | Almost
never | | | | | Almost
always |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| _____ | | | | | |
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To Whom it May Concern:

Please feel free to use the Self-Compassion Scale – Short Form in your research (12 items instead of 26 items). The short scale has a near perfect correlation with the long scale when examining total scores. We do not recommend using the short form if you are interested in subscale scores, since they're less reliable with the short form. You can e-mail me with any questions you may have. The appropriate reference is listed below.

Best wishes,
Kristin Neff, Ph. D.

Appendix J
Mindfulness Awareness Attention Scale
Day-to-Day Experiences

Instructions: Below is a collection of statements about your everyday experience. Using the 1-6 scale below, please indicate how frequently or infrequently you currently have each experience. Please answer according to what really reflects your experience rather than what you think your experience should be. Please treat each item separately from every other item.

1 Almost Always	2 Very Frequently	3 Somewhat Frequently	4 Somewhat Infrequently	5 Very Infrequently	6 Almost Never				
I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until some time later.				1	2	3	4	5	6
I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention, or thinking of something else.				1	2	3	4	5	6
I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.				1	2	3	4	5	6
I tend to walk quickly to get where I'm going without paying attention to what I experience along the way.				1	2	3	4	5	6
I tend not to notice feelings of physical tension or discomfort until they really grab my attention.				1	2	3	4	5	6
I forget a person's name almost as soon as I've been told it for the first time.				1	2	3	4	5	6
It seems I am "running on automatic," without much awareness of what I'm doing.				1	2	3	4	5	6
I rush through activities without being really attentive to them.				1	2	3	4	5	6
I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I'm doing right now to get there.				1	2	3	4	5	6
I do jobs or tasks automatically, without being aware of what I'm doing.				1	2	3	4	5	6
I find myself listening to someone with one ear, doing something else at the same time.				1	2	3	4	5	6
I go places on 'automatic pilot' and then wonder why I went there.				1	2	3	4	5	6
I find myself preoccupied with the future or the past.				1	2	3	4	5	6
I find myself doing things without paying attention.				1	2	3	4	5	6
I snack without being aware that I'm eating.				1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix K Mindset Quiz

Place a check in the column that identifies the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Your intelligence is something very basic about you that you can't change very much.				
2. No matter how much intelligence you have, you can always change it quite a bit.				
3. You can always substantially change how intelligent you are.				
4. You are a certain kind of person, and there is not much that can be done to really change that.				
5. You can always change basic things about the kind of person you are.				
6. Music talent can be learned by anyone.				
7. Only a few people will be truly good at sports – you have to be “born with it.”				
8. Math is much easier to learn if you are male or maybe come from a culture who values math.				
9. The harder you work at something, the better you will be at it.				
10. No matter what kind of person you are, you can always change substantially.				
11. Trying new things is stressful for me and I avoid it.				
12. Some people are good and kind, and some are not – it's not often that people change.				
13. I appreciate when parents, coaches, teachers give me feedback about my performance.				
14. I often get angry when I get feedback about my performance.				
15. All human beings without a brain injury or birth defect are capable of the same amount of learning.				
16. You can learn new things, but you can't really change how intelligent you are.				
17. You can do things differently, but the important parts of who you are can't really be changed.				
18. Human beings are basically good, but sometimes make terrible decisions.				
19. An important reason why I do my school work is that I like to learn new things.				
20. Truly smart people do not need to try hard.				

Adapted from:

<http://www.classroom20.com/forum/topics/motivating-students-with>

Appendix L

Parent Introductory Letter



February 1, 2016

Dear Parents or Guardians:

My name is Bernita Leahy; I am a graduate student at University of Calgary and a staff member at xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. You are receiving this letter because your child attends xxxxxxxxx and is currently enrolled in either grade 8 or 9 Religion classes. My final project is a research study on increasing self-compassion among middle-school students. Self-compassion has three elements: self-kindness (being kind to oneself rather than self-critical), common humanity (seeing oneself within a larger society), and mindfulness (being aware of one's thoughts and feelings in the present moment).

I will be teaching a brain-based, rigorously researched program called "Learning to BREATHE," which has been approved by administration, Head of the Religion department, and the Religion teachers. The program will run for eighteen 20 minute sessions and is designed to enhance emotional regulation, strengthen attention, increase academic performance, and increase prosocial behaviours. Students will learn to self-regulate behavior and engage in focused concentration, which is required for academic success. The lessons align with the prescribed learning outcomes for Health and Career Education for grades 8 and 9 and supports improved academic performance while enhancing perspective taking, empathy, and kindness as well as compassion for oneself and others.

All grade 8 and 9 Religion students whether or not they agree to be included in the study will participate in the 18 session curriculum, and all students will fill out questionnaires and journal entries. I am inviting students to consent to have their questionnaires and journals used for my research. Their names will not be on the questionnaires and journals, but I would like to use the information to see if self-compassion changed in the students as a result of the program.

I would also like to have the opportunity to interview two boys and two girls from each class for approximately 20 minutes at the end of the program. If they participate, the interviews will be audio recorded. There will also be one small group discussion session at the end of the program for all participating students which will also be audio recorded. All their data will be kept strictly confidential, and codes or pseudonyms will be used to replace their names. Any names, if accidentally spoken during interviews or discussion groups will be wiped from the audio tapes.

Included in this envelope is a full consent form which describes all aspects of the research project and what the students will be expected to do. Also included in the package is a separate assent form for your child to agree to be included in the study. If you and your child agree to participate in the study, both forms will need to be signed.

Please return this envelope and forms to the Religion teacher or school office by February 11, even if you do not allow your child's data to be used in data collection. This is to ensure that neither the researcher nor the classroom teacher can identify the students who have not consented to participate in the study. All envelopes will remain in the Counsellor's office until the end of the program, and the researcher nor teacher will know who has consented to participate in the study.

I will be holding an information session on my research study on Thursday, February 11th at 7:00 pm in the high school computer lab to answer any of your questions. The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study, REB Certification - REB15-2952.

Thank you and I look forward to teaching your children aspects of self-compassion, as I believe it will be a benefit to the students.

Best regards,

Bernita Leahy, BA, TESL, MEd, Doctoral Candidate, University of Calgary

Appendix M

Parent Consent Form



Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone & Email:

Bernita Leahy, Doctoral Candidate, Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary

Tel: (xxx) xxx-xxxx Email: xxxxxxxxxxxx@ucalgary.ca

Supervisor:

Dr. Veronika Bohac Clarke, Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary

Title of Project:

Building Self-Compassion in Adolescents using a Mindfulness Program

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information. A separate assent form, which is included in this package, will need to be approved and signed by your child in order to participate in the study. Please review this document prior to having your child read and sign it.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study, REB Certification - REB15-2952.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of the “Learning to BREATHE” program on self-compassion with middle-school students. Self-compassion involves three main elements: self-kindness (being kind to oneself rather than self-critical), common humanity (seeing oneself within a larger society), and mindfulness (being aware of one’s thoughts and feelings in the present moment and not allowing them to overwhelm). Students will learn how paying attention to the present moment may allow students to be more aware of how their emotions affect their thoughts and behaviours and how to be more kind to themselves and others. This program, which has been approved by administration, the Head of the Religion department, and the Religion teachers, will run for eighteen sessions and is designed to enhance emotional regulation, strengthen attention, increase academic performance, and improve emotional wellbeing. It is hoped that this program will promote aspects of self-compassion and compassion for others.

What Will Your Child Be Asked To Do?

Students will be taught the “Learning to BREATHE” program in their regular Religion classes. BREATHE is an acronym for Body, Reflection, Emotion, Awareness, Tenderness, Habits of Mind, and Empowerment. Students are taught to slow down and pay more attention to the present moment experience, and how these experiences effect their emotions and behaviours. This will help with emotional regulation, which are ways for students to modify their emotional responses appropriately in a given situation. They will learn to be more kind to themselves and others, which encourages compassion and positive behaviours.

Students are asked to fill in four questionnaires, write six times in a journal, participate in a group discussion, and have the potential to be asked for an interview. There are no marks assigned for any of the work during the program. All students whether or not they have signed consent forms will participate in the “Learning to BREATHE” program, and all students will complete the questionnaires, journal writing, and group discussion. The teachers, researcher and other students do not know who is participating in the study, but the information collected will only be used if students sign the assent forms and their guardians have signed the consent forms.

The students will be asked to fill in four questionnaires at the beginning and end of the program. Answers are based on a 4 or 5 point scale varying from Very Rarely to Almost Always. The Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale consists of 15 questions to measure how aware a person is in the present moment. An example question is: I tend to walk quickly to get where I’m going without paying attention to what I experience along the way. The Self-Compassion Quiz asks 12 questions to measure how self-compassionate a person is. An example question is: When times are really difficult, I tend to be tough on myself. The Compassion Quiz poses 24 questions to measure how compassionate a person is towards others. An example question is: When others feel sadness, I try to comfort them. The Mindset Quiz contains 20 questions and measures how one’s effort influences what one can accomplish. An example question is: The harder you work at something, the better you will be at it.

Students will ask to write in a journal six times during the program. Journaling is to find out how students think about the program and concepts taught in class. An example question is: When you are upset, how do you talk to yourself? How would you talk to a friend who is upset? If students can not write in a journal, an alternative activity can be provided such as drawing.

At the end of the program, students will be asked to discuss topics in small groups. This is to find shared information within groups. An example question is: Do you think teenagers today are kind to themselves? Why or why not? These group sessions will be audio taped so that the researcher can listen to it later. If at any time someone’s name is accidentally mentioned, it will be deleted from the audio tape. Only the audio tape for those that have consented to the research will be kept for research purposes. All other audio files will be deleted.

Four participants, two boys and two girls, from each class will be randomly chosen for an interview. The interview will take approximately twenty minutes, and it will be conducted out of school time so that students do not miss instructional time. This could be at lunch time or after school. The interviews are designed to gather information about how students feel about the program that they may not have discussed in their journals. An example question is: What does self-compassion mean to you? What is the point of practicing self-compassion? How easy or hard is it to practice self-compassion? The interviews will be audio taped so that the researcher will be able to listen to it later. If at any time the participants do not want to answer a question, they may refuse, or if they say anything they do not want on the audio tape, it will be removed immediately.

All students will participate in the “Learning to BREATHE” program, but the collection of the data for the study is completely voluntary. Any participants, even after they have signed the consent form, can withdraw from all or parts of the study prior to April 15, 2016, the expected concluding date of the program.

What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?

Should you agree to allow your child to participate, he or she will be asked his or her first and last name, gender, age at beginning of the program, and telephone number and email address. Names will not be used on any data, but a code will be assigned, or the students may choose a pseudonym for themselves. The telephone numbers and email addresses will be used only if they have been chosen for an interview. Gender is needed as two girls and two boys from each class will be randomly chosen for an interview. Only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to any of the data collected. This data is for research purposes only and will not be made public at any time.

There are several options for you to consider for your child’s participation in this research. You can choose all, some, or none of them. Please review each of these options and choose Yes or No:

I grant permission for the researcher to read my child’s questionnaires: Yes: ___ No: ___

I grant permission for the researcher to read my child’s journal entries: Yes: ___ No: ___

I grant permission for my child to be audio taped: Yes: ___ No: ___

I grant permission for my child to be interviewed: Yes: ___ No: ___

Are there Risks or Benefits if my Child Participates?

Emotions such as happiness, worry, and peacefulness will be discussed in the program, as emotional regulation is a goal for this program. For some students, this might bring up some unpleasant memories associated with those emotions. The school counselor is aware of the program and will be available, and students may remove themselves from the class at any time. A benefit to learning about emotions is to become more aware of and able to monitor emotional responses so that the emotions don’t take over. It is to become more emotionally balanced.

The “Learning to BREATHE” program has been widely used and researched. The program strengthens attention and emotional regulation in subjects, and it helps cultivate wholesome emotions such as gratitude and compassion. Self-compassion has been reported to increase calmness, self-acceptance, insight, clarity, emotional regulation and the ability to recognize and manage problems. It has also been shown to reduce perceived stress in young adults, and they become more conscious and present. Self-compassion has been shown to increase student academic performance as it frees students from harsh self-criticism, and it enables students to cope in the face of failure, and it was negatively associated with task-avoidance and fear of failure. Self-compassion has been shown to aid students to develop empathy, or a concern for others, and to increase prosocial behaviours and decrease problem behaviours. Here is a website for additional information on this program: <http://learning2breathe.org/>

If a student reveals information that is required by law to be reported to a law enforcement or other agency, the teacher or researcher will be required to do so, as in all daily operations of the school.

What Happens to the Information I Provide?

Participation is completely voluntary, anonymous and confidential. Your child is free to discontinue participation at any time during the study up until April 15, 2016, the expected date the program will conclude. No one except the researcher and her supervisor will be allowed to see or hear any of the questionnaires, journal entries, or audio tapes. This information will not be shared by other participants at any time. Pseudonyms or a code name will be used on all the data. Only group information will be summarized for any presentation or publication of results. The data will be kept in a locked cabinet only accessible by the researcher and her supervisor. All digital data will be password protected and encrypted to remain confidential. The anonymous data will be stored for one year on a computer disk, at which time, it will be permanently erased.

Once all the data has been collected, analyzed, and submitted as my final Doctoral Dissertation, I will have the results of the study available to anyone interested in reading it.

Signatures

Your signature on this form indicates that 1) you understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your child’s participation in this research project, and 2) you agree to allow your child to participate in part or fully in the research project.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw your child from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your child’s participation.

Participant’s (Your Child) Name: (please print) _____

Guardian’s Name: (please print) _____

Guardian’s Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher’s Name: (please print) _____

Researcher’s Signature: _____ Date: _____

Questions/Concerns

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please

contact: Mrs. Bernita Leahy

Doctoral Candidate, Werklund School of Education

University of Calgary

Tel: (xxx) xxx-xxxx

xxxxxxxxxx@ucalgary.ca

Dr. Veronika Bohac Clarke

Coordinator, EdD cohort Curriculum-Integral Theory

Werklund School of Education

University of Calgary

Tel: (xxx) xxx-xxxx

xxxxxxx@ucalgary.ca

If you have any concerns about the way you’ve been treated as a participant, please contact the Research Ethics Analyst, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 210-9863; email cfreb@ucalgary.ca.

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

Appendix N Student Assent Form



Letter of Assent - Minors

Project Title: Building Self-Compassion in Adolescents Using a Mindfulness Program
Principal Investigator: Mrs. B. Leahy

What is a research study?

A research study is a way to find out new information about something. Children do not need to participate in a research study if they don't want to participate.

Why are you being asked to be part of this research study?

You are being asked to take part in this research study because we are trying to learn more about self-compassion, which is all about being more kind to yourself. You will be taught about self-compassion for twenty minutes during regular Religion classes for approximately two months.

All grade 8 and 9 students at St. Ann's Academy will be taught the "Learning to BREATHE" program in your Religion classes. The school and your teachers have agreed to let me teach this program to you. You will all fill in four questionnaires at the beginning and end of the program. These are scales where you fill in a box from 1 being almost never to 5 being almost always.

You will write in a journal six times. An example question is: When you are upset, how do you talk to yourself? How would you talk to a friend who is upset?

At the end of the program, you will be asked to discuss topics in small groups. An example question is: Do you think teenagers today are kind to themselves? Why or why not? These group sessions will be audio taped so that the researcher can listen to it later.

If you join the study what will happen to you?

- Your questionnaires will be used as information to tell the researcher whether there was a change in students' self-compassion between the beginning and the end of the program. Neither the teacher nor the researcher will know how you answered the questions.

- Your journal writing will be used as information to see what you thought about self-compassion and the program itself. Again your name will not be on the journals.
- You may be asked for a twenty minute interview at the end of the course. Mrs. Leahy will ask you questions about what you thought about the program. The interview will be audio recorded.
- You and your classmates will be recorded during a small group discussion on self-compassion and the program.

Will any part of the study be bad for me?

There is nothing that will be bad for you. We will be discussing feelings and emotions such as happiness and worry, but you can ask to leave if you ever feel uncomfortable. You may be asked questions, but you don't have to answer if you don't want to. Also, you do not have to say anything during the small group discussion if you don't want to.

Will the study help you?

This program has been known to help young people to pay more attention to what is happening around them. People have said they feel more calm and able to handle their problems better. It can also help to pay attention to school work and help bring up your grades. Also people learn about happiness, gratitude, and caring for others.

Will the study help others?

This study might help the school to decide if this program should be taught to more students. It might even be taught in the public schools.

Do your parents know about this study?

Your parents need to read this assent form as well as sign their own consent form to allow you to participate. You can talk this over with them before you decide.

Who will see the information collected about you?

The questionnaires will be kept safely locked up in the office until the end of the program. Mrs. Leahy and your Religion teacher will read the journals. Only Mrs. Leahy will listen to the audio recording of the group discussions and interview. All the information collected will be kept safely locked up. The study information about you will not be given to your parents or teacher. You will not be given marks for the questionnaires, journal entries, interviews, or discussion groups. The researchers will not tell your friends or anyone else

Do you have to be in the study?

No one will be upset if you don't want your questionnaires or journals to be a part of this study. If you don't want to be in this study, you just have to tell us. It's up to you.

What if you have any questions?

You can ask any questions to Mrs. Leahy or your Religion teacher. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, either you can call or have your parents call the school at xxx-xxx-xxxx. You can also take more time to think about being in the study.

What choices do you have if you say no to this study?

There are several options for you to consider if you decide to take part in this research. You can choose all, some, or none of them. Please review each of these options and choose Yes or No:

I grant permission for the researcher to read my journal entries: Yes: ___ No: ___

I grant permission for the researcher to read my questionnaires: Yes: ___ No: ___

I grant permission to be interviewed: Yes: ___ No: ___

I grant permission to be audio taped in group discussions: Yes: ___ No: ___

I wish to be referred to by a pseudonym or code name:

The pseudonym I choose for myself is: _____

Other information about the study.

If you decide to be in the study, please write your name below. You can change your mind and stop being part of it at any time. All you have to do is tell the person in charge. It's okay. The researchers and your parents won't be upset.

You will be given a copy of this paper to keep

Would you like to take part in this study?

_____ Yes, I will be in this research study. _____ No, I don't want to do this.

Child's name

Signature of the child

Date

Person who received assent

Signature

Date



Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board
Research Services Office
3rd Floor MacKimmie Library Tower (MLT 300)
2500 University Drive, NW
Calgary AB T2N 1N4
Telephone: (403) 220-4283
cfreb@ucalgary.ca

CERTIFICATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS REVIEW

This is to certify that the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board at the University of Calgary has examined the following research proposal and found the proposed research involving human participants to be in accordance with University of Calgary Guidelines and the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* 2010 (TCPS 2). This form and accompanying letter constitute the Certification of Institutional Ethics Review.

Ethics ID: REB15-2952
Principal Investigator: Veronika Elizabeth Bohac-Clarke
Co-Investigator(s): There are no items to display
Student Co-Investigator(s): Bernita Leahy
Study Title: Building Self-Compassion in Middle School Students Through the Learning to BREATHE program
Sponsor (if applicable):

Effective: January 29, 2016

Expires: January 29, 2017

Restrictions:

This Certification is subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval is granted only for the project and purposes described in the application.
2. Any modification to the authorized study must be submitted to the Chair, Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board for approval.
3. An annual report must be submitted within 30 days prior to the expiry date of this Certification, and should provide the expected completion date for the study.
4. A final report must be sent to the Board when the project is complete or terminated.

Approved By:

[Christopher R. Sears, PhD, Chair](#) , CFREB

Date:

January 29, 2016