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Students Developing a More Specific Emotional Vocabulary through Picture Books

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Abstract

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is a relatively new set of standards in Ohio's curriculum. This curriculum teaches students interpersonal and personal skills essential to living a fulfilling life. Because of its novelty, it is essential to find the best practices for teaching SEL to meet the needs of the students. Research has shown that the standard videos, activities, and take-home worksheets referenced in the curriculum are not engaging the students (Pysarenko, 2021, p. 639). Another avenue must be taken for students to truly learn from SEL, which prompted the idea of picture books. Teachers already use picture books throughout the school day to teach academic content, so why can't it be done to teach Social-Emotional Learning as well? This study seeks to further understand the connection between children's literature and emotional vocabulary, which is part of the Ohio Department of Education SEL standard, "Demonstrate an awareness of personal emotions" (ODE, p. 8, 2019). With 32 participants, the researcher interviewed students before and after an intervention with picture books to see if participants could apply the emotional vocabulary used during the read-alouds. After all the interviews, thematic coding was done with all the responses to see if children were able to apply more complex emotional vocabulary to hypothetical situations. The data shows growth in application which suggests that picture books can be used to teach emotional vocabulary. This is significant because helping students grow their emotional vocabulary will help them connect better to themselves, the people in their lives, and their experiences so they can live an overall better life.

Dedication

This research is dedicated to my mom as this research would not be possible without her support and encouragement. Thank you for supporting me in everything I do! You inspire me to be a difference maker and the best educator I can.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Dr. Arnold and Dr. McIntosh for pushing me to do this research. Finally, a huge thank you to Dr. Sableski for holding my hand throughout the whole process. You have not only made me a better researcher, but a better educator and for that I am forever grateful. Your unwavering support means the world.

University *of* Dayton

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Chapter 1

An Introduction to the Research Study

Background of the Problem

A few decades ago, students were expected to know how to do tasks such as recognizing their emotions or making friends without being *explicitly* taught the skills or knowledge to guide them. Over the past few decades, research has demonstrated that academics is not the only topic needed to be taught in schools. In the 1980's, James Comer with Yale University began the Comer School Developmental Program which targeted two of the lowest performing schools in New Haven, Connecticut and began looking at the whole child and their emotional and mental needs instead of purely academics. By the end of the program not only did these schools have academic scores higher than the national average, but there were also less behavior problems (Edutopia, 2011, paras. 7-9). This inspired a movement in 1994 when Social Emotional Learning (SEL) became an integral part of many educational systems across the world (CASEL, n.d., para. 9). SEL acknowledges that social and emotional learning require knowledge and learned skills, like understanding when you are embarrassed or proud.

Social-Emotional Learning already has proven benefits, such as an increase in personal and relationship skills, socially appropriate behavior, positive attitudes, and academic success (Durlak et al., 2022, p. 775). All of these benefits significantly influence the culture of American schools to make them more friendly and humane. Just creating the SEL curriculum itself is already a significant first step to making a positive impact on schools. However, there is still more to be understood about how to

consistently implement SEL in schools (Durlak et al., 2022, p. 776; Chen & Yu, 2022, pp. 4-5).

While there is already great success with Social-Emotional Learning, more research is needed into its application and impact on students. Student engagement in the material is an important consideration, for example (Pysarenko, 2020, p. 639). One of the first behavior management tactics teachers learn is to use topics that interest the students to keep them engaged. If the lesson does not connect to students, students will not be invested in learning the content. This begs the question: How do teachers plan lessons to engage as many students as possible with Social-Emotional Learning material? How do teachers implement SEL consistently so all students can receive the same benefits? In life, these skills usually end up even more essential than the academic skills. Social-Emotional Learning programs are critical structures to support students in entering an increasingly challenging world after they leave school.

This study proposes that to determine the most effective method of SEL implementation, instructional practice should be grounded in standards. In Ohio, standards guide how SEL curricula are delivered. One Ohio SEL Standard states, "Demonstrate an awareness of personal emotions" (ODE, 2019, p. 8). This standard is a focus of this study because recognizing and understanding emotions sets the foundation for many other standards. Personal emotions, as stated in the standard, are wide-ranging, from disappointed to disgusted to embarrassed to proud. These are examples of complex emotions. However, many children only understand the basic, simple emotions, such as happiness or sadness (Baron-Cohen et al., 2010, p. 2). This standard calls for an increase in awareness from these simple emotions to the more complex emotions. The research in

this study seeks to find if children's literature, specifically picture books, can help students make progress towards achieving the expectations of this standard.

Picture books have previously been suggested to help children during stressful times and connect with the students' lives (Roberts & Crawford, 2008, p. 12; Gunn et al., 2022, p. 363). Furthermore, emotional vocabulary increases with input frequency and specific exposure (Grosse et al., 2021, p. 152), which picture books provide. Therefore, this study suggests that reading picture books with SEL themes in the classroom will help students grow in the understanding and application of their complex vocabulary. The research question is, *Will dialogic read alouds of picture books increase students' application of more complex emotional vocabulary?*

Definition of the Terms

Children's Literature – A collection of texts or a book designed for the entertainment, education, or interest of children or even young adults is how children's literature is defined for this study. Therefore, the books themes, language, and content should be appropriate for an audience of children.

Curriculum – Curriculum is the set of standards for how, when, to whom, etc. something should be taught for a group, usually defined by a school district. In terms of this study, curriculum refers to how schools establish how to teach Social-Emotional Learning.

Emotion – According to the American Psychology Association, emotions can be defined as, "conscious mental reactions (such as anger or fear) subjectively experienced as strong feelings usually directed toward a specific object and typically accompanied by physiological and behavioral changes in the body".

Simple Emotion – For this study, a simple emotion can be referred to as an emotion that is easily comprehended by people at a young age. These are the first emotions children learn and encompass many complex emotions, as defined below. They are umbrella terms, such as “happy”, “sad”, “mad”, etc. Children need to understand these emotions before they can understand complex emotions.

Complex Emotion – Complex emotions are emotions that are harder for people to comprehend and apply and are understood later in childhood, sometimes not even until adulthood. They do not easily fit into categories and often can be misrepresented by simple emotions. For example, a child who has not developed a complex emotional vocabulary might express they are “sad”, when really they are “worried” or “anxious” about the first day of school. Some examples are “disappointed”, “jealous”, “embarrassed”, and “proud”.

Ohio Department of Education (ODE) – The ODE represents the organization in charge of educational decisions in the state of Ohio that all Ohio schools are bound to follow. One specific task they have is writing the standards for all areas of child development in the state of Ohio, for example, specific content like Math or Reading, Social-Emotional Learning, and Physical Education.

Self-Awareness – This is one of the five competencies of Social-Emotional Learning. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning defines it as, “the abilities to understand one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts” (2023). For this study, we are focusing on emotional awareness, which is a fundamental part of Self-Awareness as often our emotions

influence the rest of our behavior. When we are aware of our emotions, we become self-aware.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) – According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, Social-Emotional Learning can be defined as, "the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions" (2023). In simple terms, SEL is the set of standards schools follow to ensure students are growing interpersonal and personal skills that help in Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Responsible Decision-Making, Social Awareness, and Relationship Skills.

Picture Book – Picture books are a type of literature, usually children's literature, that contain illustrations. The illustrations usually correspond to the text on the page by representing some aspect to the book's message, but some picture books are purely illustrations. In this study, three picture books are used that contain both texts and pictures.

Limitations and Assumptions of the Study

There are two categories in which there are limitations to this study: participation diversity and quality of data. First and foremost, the participants come from similar backgrounds. This study was conducted at a singular Catholic school in Ohio. This school requires tuition, therefore the children come from similar financial backgrounds as guardians have to pay for attendance. Furthermore, the school is located in a small, suburban town with families coming from similar cultures. While there are some

participants of different races, most of them are White. Therefore, this study lacks an accurate representation of all students across the country.

There are also some limitations in the data. Opinionated responses from participants are collected, making the data subjective. Subjective, qualitative data is not always as accurate as quantitative, numerical data. Furthermore, answers are gathered in a group setting. This limits the validity of data as peers could be influenced by each other. For example, participants could just copy each other instead of expressing their own opinions. Finally, there are some time restraints that limit data. To cooperate with schools, the researcher tries to interfere as little as possible with the school day. This can complicate data collection and the research implementations. Furthermore, the second graders only read two books while the other grades read three.

Summary of Chapter

Schools are becoming increasingly more aware of the importance of teaching social and emotional skills in schools. Research has already identified that programs teaching these skills, called Social-Emotional Learning, have many benefits. However, the research does preclude that there lacks an essential consistency to these programs. This research study suggests that when focusing on specific standards, schools can identify SEL implementations that will fit all students. In regard to personal emotions, this study seeks to find if picture books help students grow in their vocabulary. Students tend to use simple emotional vocabulary, but picture books being read aloud to groups of students could help them use more complex terms. However, this study does lack a heterogenous population as well as data quality. The school used has a very uniform student population with similar backgrounds across students. Furthermore, due to time

restraints, the data could vary between classes in the study as well as group settings influencing answers. Nevertheless, this study hopes to bridge the gap of incongruity amongst Social-Emotional Learning techniques.

Final Research Question

The research guiding question is: *Will dialogic read alouds of picture books increase students' application of more complex emotional vocabulary?*

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Social-Emotional Learning

In 1994, the non-profit organization, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], was founded in hopes of providing children across the globe with a guideline to grow in all aspects of life, including emotions, social skills, self-regulation, etc. which has previously been put on the back burner. Later, in 1997, CASEL defined this as Social-Emotional Learning, or SEL. (CASEL, n.d., para. 1-3). In specific terms, SEL is:

> the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions (CASEL, 2023).

In essence, Social-Emotional Learning seeks to guide individuals towards starting, maintaining, and growing healthy personal and interpersonal skills. Research has concluded that these skills are important and benefit students for the rest of their lives (Durlak et al., 2022, p. 765, Chen & Yu, 2022, p. 4).

Published in 2022, the American Psychology Association [APA] conducted 12 meta-analyses of 11 independent research studies determining the impacts of SEL implementation for various grade levels (Durlak et al., 2022). 10 of these studies received quality scores over 24, which means they were high-quality studies, 4 of which received the maximum score of 30 (Durlak et al., 2022, p. 768). Therefore, these studies gave

applicable and valuable data. The meta-analysis concludes that the implementation of SEL programs increases students' personal and interpersonal skills, appropriate social behavior, attitude, and performance in school. Furthermore, these programs were found to decrease students' drug usage, inappropriate behavior, and emotional distress (Durlak et al., 2022, p. 775). While all of these programs are trying to achieve the same goal, some programs are more effective. However, research still lacks consistency on why this may be. Therefore, the researchers conclude that more research should be done on how, when, and to whom specific SEL programs should be implemented to foster the best outcomes for every student (Durlak et al., 2022, p. 776).

Social-Emotional Learning programs have also benefited children from across the world. Researchers conducted a meta-analysis of SEL program implementation research done in China. (Chen & Yu, 2022). In this meta-analysis, 86 studies that involved some sort of SEL intervention were chosen. This included 8,736 children (Chen & Yu, 2022, p. 6). Researchers identified that outcomes could be influenced by the schools' locations, textbooks that were used, the SEL frameworks implemented, student participation, how implementation occurred, and duration of the intervention. Therefore, researchers excluded studies that were significantly different from the norm (Chen & Yu, 2022, pp. 4-5). It is important to note, however, that these variables are some of the reasons why SEL implementation success could lack consistency across schools. The outcomes for this meta-analysis are extremely similar to those of the meta-analysis done by the APA. The research suggests that incorporating SEL programs into a school will render positive SEL skills, attitudes, and positive behaviors and decrease emotional distress, as demonstrated by Table 3 (Chen & Yu, 2022, pp. 6-8).

Source: Chen & Yu, 2022

TABLE 3 The mean effects and heterogeneity tests of SEL.

Variable	N	Mean ES	95% CI		Z Sig.	Q	I^2
			Lower	Upper			
Positive outcomes	54	0.361	0.211	0.512	4.70***	280.79***	84.74%
SEL skills	25	0.361	0.098	0.652	2.69***	156.86***	88.48%
Attitudes	13	0.334	0.038	0.629	2.21***	56.97***	83.22%
Positive social behavior	16	0.372	0.137	0.608	3.10***	66.77***	80.35%
Negative outcomes	32	−0.292	−0.499	−0.085	−2.77***	190.99***	95.61%
Conduct problems	12	−0.348	−0.730	0.033	−1.79*	68.31***	91.31%
Emotional distress	20	−0.265	−0.515	−0.014	−2.07**	122.63***	91.25%

***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL] has a framework that communities use across the country to implement SEL (CASEL, n.d., para. 11.). This framework includes five competencies of Social-Emotional Learning: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making (CASEL, 2023). Ohio's Department of Education [ODE] uses these five competencies as the foundation for their Social-Emotional Learning Standards (ODE, 2019, p. 4). However, as stated in the meta-analyses, SEL program success lacks consistency (Durlak et al., 2022, p. 776; Chen & Yu, 2022, pp. 4-5). So while the ODE has these standards, how should schools in Ohio, as well as schools all over the world, implement SEL for the best possible outcome for every student?

Emotional Development

The very first standard in Ohio for Self-Awareness is "Demonstrate an awareness of personal emotions" (ODE, 2019, p. 8). Therefore, this standard sets the foundation for the rest of the Self-Awareness standards as well as standards in other competencies as, "Being able to express and share emotions helps children to generate social understanding, empathy, and healthy relationships" (Grosse et al., 2021, p. 150). Having self-awareness stems from recognizing the emotions one feels in the moment. It is

understanding, my eyes are droopy because I am exhausted, for example. For children, or any person for that matter, to demonstrate emotional awareness, they need to understand various emotional vocabulary words to differentiate between their experiences. This then begs the question: How do people learn and then apply emotional vocabulary?

Just as with all words, learning emotional vocabulary is a never ending process that begins at birth (Be You, 2021, p. 1). Babies begin to recognize emotion words like happy, mad, sad, and scared. As children grow, they begin to understand more complex emotions like shyness, surprise, elation, embarrassment, shame, guilt, pride and empathy. (Be You, 2021, p. 1). For example, over 60% of 2 year-olds could use the terms “happy”, “scared” and “mad” (Baron-Cohen et al., 2010, p. 1). However, learning emotional vocabulary has its struggles as these words are abstract and do not fit as nicely into categories like tangible objects do such as food, sports, or animals might (Grosse et al., 2021, p. 151). It is harder for children to conceptualize these terms. Therefore, adults have to consider two factors when expressing emotions to children: input frequency and word specificity. The more a child hears emotional words being used, the more chances they have to try and understand them. Furthermore, if adults use the same word consistently to represent a specific situation rather than in general terms, the child is more likely to grasp the word’s true meaning (Grosse et al., 2021, p. 152).

A study done in Germany dove into the development of emotional vocabulary with 27 adults and 123 children participants (Grosse et al., 2021, p. 152). The Children’s Emotion-specific Vocabulary Vignettes Test [CEVVT] was used to test emotional vocabulary. It consists of 20 scenarios with children experiencing different emotions for the participants to label. It gives participants the opportunity to use basic or complex

emotions (Grosse et al., 2021, p. 153). Figure 1 shows an example of vignettes from CEVVT.

Source, Gross et al., 2021

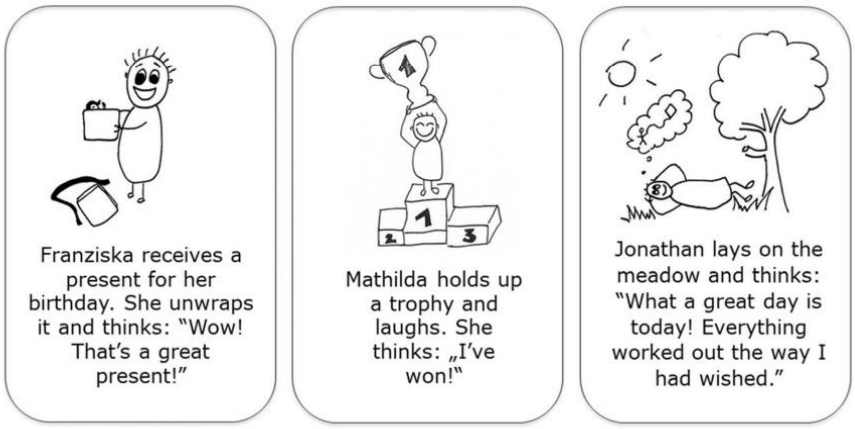


Fig. 1 Example vignettes representing joy, pride, and contentment used to assess emotion vocabulary

Based on the results, researchers coded the words into 38 various emotion words, ranging from your basics like angry and happy to more complex words like lonely, proud, satisfied, and disappointed (Grosse et al., 2021, p. 154). As expected, the adults have about 15 different emotion words throughout the 20 vignettes. The children's average was much smaller (Grosse et al., 2021, p. 154). The results also demonstrated that the most frequent vocabulary used from ages 4-11 were "happy" and "sad" (Grosse et al., 2021, p. 155). However, results show that with age, people do become more specific with their vocabulary usage. One emotion category from the list was "unspecific positive" which categorized words that were trying to express something positive but did not fit into anything specific. Children from the ages of 4-5 used an unspecific positive 18.88% of the time. This percentage decreases as for children 6-7 years old use an unspecific positive 8.14% of the time, children ages 8-9 use one 6.36% of the time, 10-11 year- olds use one 1.89% of the time, and adults use an unspecific positive only 0.39% of the time

(Grosse et al., 2021, p. 156). This shows that while children might still be using basic words, like “happy” and “sad”, they are still growing into becoming more specific with their emotional expression. Even five years can make a huge difference as unspecific positives decreased from 19% to 2% from ages 4 to 11! While it is significant that children are learning more specific words, how do we guide children to use those more complex words, something other than “happy” or “sad”. As children grow and experience new situations, it becomes imperative for their overall growth and self-awareness for them to have the capacity to express their feelings through these times with specific words.

A similar study also seeking a better understanding of the development of emotional vocabulary was done in the United Kingdom. 377 children were gathered from public and private schools in the Cambridgeshire area. Like in the previous study, children were grouped into age-specific categories for every two years starting at 4 years-old and ending at 16 (therefore, the groups were 4-5, 6-7, 8-9 years-old, etc.) (Baron-Cohen et al., 2010, p. 1). Whereas the previous study accounted for 38 emotion words, this study accounted for 336 emotion words. Participants were asked about their knowledge of these words in a survey, indicating either clearly understood, not understood, or possibly understood. Only when “clearly understood” was selected would the word be accounted for full comprehension for the participant. (Baron-Cohen et al., 2010, p. 2). The results indicated that ,“Of the list of 336 emotion words, 41 words were understood by at least 75% of 4–6 year olds, 88 by 7–8 year olds, 180 by 9–10 year olds, 299 by 11–12 year olds, 320 by 13–14 year olds, and 330 by 15–16 year olds (Baron-Cohen et al., 2010, p. 2). These findings can also be visualized by Figure 1.

Source, Baron-Cohen et al., 2010

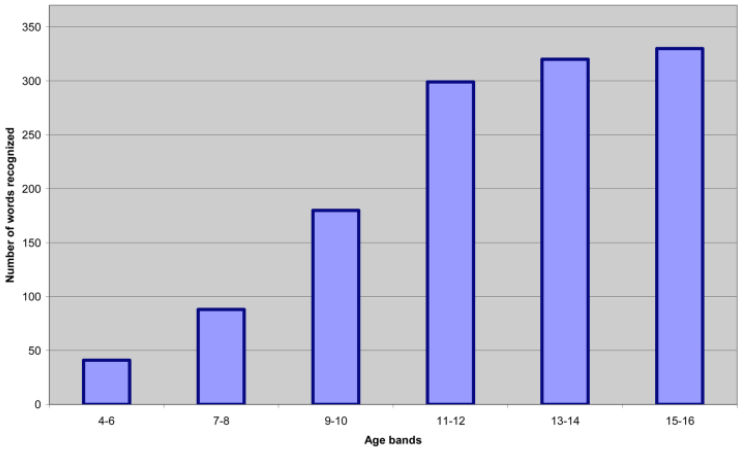


FIGURE 1 | The number of emotion and mental state words understood by at least 75% of participants in each age band.

These results demonstrate once again how rapidly emotional word knowledge grows with age. Furthermore, a snippet from Table 1 (below) shows the difference between the development of basic emotion words, like sad, and complex emotion words, like restless.

Source: Baron-Cohen et al., 2010

	Emotion word	Age (years)					
		4–6 (%)	7–8 (%)	9–10 (%)	11–12 (%)	13–14 (%)	15–16 (%)
277.	Restless	13.3	29.4	76.9	82.8	84.4	95.2
278.	Sad	100	100	100	98.4	100	100

There is a drastic almost 50% difference between the comprehension of the word "restless" from ages 7-8 to 9-10 whereas there is no change from the word "sad" because both ages comprehend this word 100%. When analyzing the results for the 336 emotion words, many of them, like "restless" have a significant increase usually between the ages 4-5 to 6-7 or 6-7 to 8-9. What accounts for these increases? As the German research concluded, input frequency and word specificity are significant factors that could

contribute (Grosse et al., 2021, p. 152). One way to help with both input frequency and word specificity is children's literature, specifically picture books.

Teaching SEL through Children's Literature

Picture books are used to teach Social-Emotional Learning for many reasons. Children's literature invokes interest, resonates with children, and gives structure for how to feel during certain citations. Just as with any content area, Social-Emotional Learning should be engaging. Students should want to learn the content. However, one teacher found that, "when we solely used the [SEL] curriculum, the students were uninterested" (Pysarenko, 2020, p. 639). Their curriculum consisted of pre-discussions, videos, activities, post-discussions, and take-home worksheets (Pysarenko, 2020, p. 639). However, the teacher goes on to state that, "Incorporating picture books into the SEL curriculum builds on those lessons to create a deeper, more meaningful, authentic discussion. These deeper discussions not only give an abundance of tools for students to use but also help students retain those tools for life" (Pysarenko, 2020, p. 639). Why do students engage more with picture books?

One group of researchers explored how multicultural books with undertones of Social-Emotional Learning themes are beneficial for students by analyzing dozens of children's books that covered both Culturally Responsive Teaching [CRT] and SEL. "SEL content and vocabulary integration within read alouds align with young children's developmental needs and provide powerful learning contexts for enhancing social problem solving, language development, and comprehension" (Gunn et al., 2022, p. 362). Furthermore, these researchers believe that the SEL message is even more impactful in multicultural books because more students can resonate with the characters in them and

their stories (Gunn et al., 2022, p. 363). This study analyzes children's literature based on the following criteria (Gunn et al., 2022, p. 364):

- High-quality diverse/multicultural literature;
- Picture book format, text complexity, and content appropriate for a 20-minute read-aloud lesson with K–3 children;
- Subtle integration of SEL themes within the story, without an overly didactic tone or moral message;
- Characters demonstrate agency with respect to social–emotional awareness and problem solving;
- Characters, plot, and problems relevant to CARC children's lives and reflective of their diverse identities;
- Engaging content, language style, humor, and visual appeal;
- Main characters' gender and literary genre balanced across the book collection.

The researchers feel as if this is what makes a quality piece of children's literature when exploring topics of CRT and SEL. Many of this criteria was also considered during the book selection process for the present study. Specific books selected for this study support teaching the five competencies of SEL to children in grades K-3. When picture books highlight emotion words with different colored font, text size, etc. children are drawn and their curiosity about those words is invoked. For example, "angry" written in big bold, fiery, red letters clues students into knowing what angry might mean (Gunn et al., 2022, p. 364). Furthermore, characters being depicted experiencing certain emotions helps children visualize feelings and how they should be expressed (Gunn et al., 2022, p. 364). Overall, students engage with these picture books because they relate to the

characters in the stories (Gunn et al., 2022, p. 362). Children are able to learn SEL content because they are hearing and seeing new emotion words through visual cues both through the fonts of the text and the illustrations. Picture books also help give students structure to new experiences, especially difficult ones.

Children's literature gives children various avenues to explore their stressors. Children face many daily challenges that often are hard to understand. Therefore, they need tangible supports to guide them through these new taxing experiences (Roberts & Crawford, 2008, p. 12). Literature does this by offering references for how children can cope with a hard situation, gives insight into human behaviors and emotions, and enhances a child's natural curiosity to provoke their problem-solving skills (Roberts & Crawford, 2008, p. 13). Essentially, it models behavior and informs of emotions that students can identify with to promote them to fix a problem. Reading literature about stressful situations untangles possible fears that children might have about those situations as well as prepare them for the situations before they could possibly occur (Roberts & Crawford, 2008, p. 14). This can be applied to emotional development as well. If children are taught what "stressed" or "anxious" means through characters in a story, they will be more equipped to deal with these feelings before they arise. Or if they have already felt those emotions, they will better understand why they felt that way.

All of these articles explore reasons why literature is important for teaching SEL. However, there is little research that has been done to prove these beliefs. Pysarenko expressed that her students were disengaged with the current Social-Emotional Learning curriculum and preferred to learn through books (2020, p. 639). Gunn and others suggest that books with themes of SEL and CRT could help students grow in all five SEL

competencies (2022, p. 363). Roberts and Crawford saw the connection between children's literature and helping students grow through novel stressful situations (2008, pp. 12-14). While all of this research suggests how impactful incorporating children's literature can be, there is little research done on proving these beliefs through data, specifically with emotional vocabulary. By proving the impacts picture books can have with a specific SEL standard, schools can begin to integrate a more consistent approach towards SEL that was previously lacking (Durlak et al., 2022, p. 776; Chen & Yu, 2022, pp. 4-5). How does the research suggest we implement these read alouds?

Two researchers dove into the implementation of Social-Emotional Learning through picture books by dialogic reading, or asking open-ended questions and discussing with students at strategic points in the story (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006, p. 560). They believed that emotional vocabulary could be grown this way (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006, p. 558). For example, this is how one teacher discussed the word, "grouchy" by using dialogic reading: "Matthew and Tilly do not talk to each other in a friendly way. Their voices and bodies show that they are in bad moods; they are grouchy. Grouchy means feeling a little angry with others. 'It was an old crayon,' Matthew said in his gr____ voice." (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006, p. 558). Then the teacher encourages students to think of times when they felt grouchy. Finally, students are encouraged to use these new emotion words when expressing their emotions throughout the day in the classroom. This helps them grow in their emotional development (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006, p. 559).

According to Venegas, literature circles are another tool used to teach SEL through picture books (2019, p. 149). Literature circles are small groups of students each with a specific role to help enhance conversations around the same text (Venegas, 2019,

p. 149). The roles are listed and described in Table 2 along with how they aid in Social-Emotional Learning.

Source: Venegas, 2019

Table 2
Literature Circle Roles and Plausible Implications for Socioemotional Learning

Meeting	Grace's role	Role description	Plausible implications
1	Connector	Make text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections.	*Intrapersonal:* Mixed self-management skills (e.g., positive self-confidence, lack of impulse control) *Interpersonal:* Low social awareness
2	Word Wizard	Infer and/or define meanings of unknown words.	*Intrapersonal:* Positive self-management skills
3	Discussion Director	Write questions to lead text-based conversations.	*Intrapersonal:* Mixed self-management skills (e.g., positive self-confidence, lack of impulse control) *Interpersonal:* Low social awareness
4	Literacy Luminary	Identify puzzling, powerful, and/or important selections in the text.	*Interpersonal:* Low social awareness
5	Discussion Director		*Intrapersonal:* Positive self-management skills (e.g., positive self-confidence) *Interpersonal:* Facilitated group's social metacognition
6	Summarizer	Summarize the assigned text selection.	*Intrapersonal:* Demonstrated empathy
7	Discussion Director		*Intrapersonal:* Positive self-management skills (e.g., positive impulse control) *Interpersonal:* Facilitated group's social metacognition; demonstrated social awareness
8	Students were not assigned a specific role for this meeting but instead completed a self-evaluation on their learning and participation during the literature circle cycle.		*Intrapersonal:* Demonstrated empathy *Interpersonal:* Facilitated group's social metacognition; demonstrated social awareness

In an effective literature circle, roles would rotate weekly, giving each student an opportunity to participate in each role at least once (Venegas, 2019, p. 153). Many groups of students have ample opportunities to participate that otherwise might not, such as English Language Learners or students with disabilities (Venegas, 2019, p. 149). Therefore, literature circles overall increase the benefits for all students due to higher order thinking and peer to peer conversations (Venegas, 2019, p. 149). This study observed Grace in a case study, a fifth grade, African American girl. Grace was a part of

a literature circle with three-five other students. To assess SEL growth, Venegas does a pre- and post-interview as well as take observational notes throughout the eight week literature circles (Venegas, 2019, p. 153). While this particular case study did not observe the SEL competency of Self-Awareness, "Grace honed her self-management (an intrapersonal skill) as she interacted with her peers in literature circles [and] Grace exhibited growth in terms of interpersonal skills such as social awareness, social metacognition, and empathy" (Venegas, 2019, p. 157). Literature circles provide conversation structure as students can explore the literal text as well as how peers relate to one another through the meaning of the text. If teachers give probing questions about emotions during literature circles, this could lead to students learning more emotional vocabulary from each other as well as from the text. For example, one student might suggest that a character felt a certain way during the text and explain why, defining the emotion in the process and aiding in their peers' emotional growth.

Dialogic reading and literature circles are two popular ways to implement Social-Emotional Learning during read alouds of picture books (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006, p. 558; Venegas, 2019, p. 149). Dialogic reading can be used to define an emotion word, place it in context to give an example, and give opportunities for students to practice using the word. Literature circles can be used to allow students to learn from their peers and grow as a small group in their emotional vocabulary. They provide situations for students to have more confidence in using this vocabulary because the groups are smaller. However, literature circles can be hard to control as students can veer down their own conversation paths. Furthermore, students might not pick out certain emotional vocabulary in a text without teacher guidance. Younger students might have a hard time

participating and staying on task. Therefore, dialogic reading was used to read picture books during this study.

Summary of Chapter

The literature review is broken down into three parts: defining Social-Emotional Learning and establishing its importance, factors of emotional vocabulary development, and how children's literature, specifically picture books, create a consistent method to the SEL curriculum. Many people around the world are still unsure of what Social-Emotional Learning is. This is because SEL is a relatively new concept and the research around it and how to implement it is not vast. In essence, Social-Emotional Learning is how schools help children grow as people. It is guiding students on how to develop emotionally and mentally as well as in their relationships and decision-making skills. Globally, these skills have become significant as many different countries are implementing them into their curriculum. In Ohio, one standard is, "Demonstrate an awareness of personal emotions" (ODE, 2019, p. 8) which is what this study is based on. Emotional vocabulary development is a never-ending process beginning at birth. Emotions range from simple to complex, with the first words being simple, such as "happy" or "sad". This is because emotions are hard to understand and even more so apply due to their pure abstractness. Research has discovered that children do become more specific with their emotions, even if they are still simple. Furthermore, emotion vocabulary complexity growth is rapid. Two specific factors that influence these rates are input frequency and word specificity.

Some research has found that many SEL curriculums are bland and students find it hard to engage with. Picture books are believed to increase engagement. Furthermore,

books with SEL themes are suggested to increase understanding in all five of CASEL's SEL competencies. Finally, picture books help children understand how they might feel in a difficult situation and how to handle that. However, not much research has been done with variables to determine how true this research is. Picture books can be implemented through dialogic reading, or asking open-ended questions building all the way up to applying vocabulary, or literature circles which give students small safe spaces to learn and grow with the text and with each other.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Review of the Research Question

Will dialogic read alouds of picture books increase students' application of more complex emotional vocabulary? The purpose of this study is to find any correlation between reading picture books to students and their understanding of complex emotional vocabulary, which are typically harder for young students to grasp. Understanding and applying these emotions are part of the Social-Emotional Learning standard, "Demonstrate an awareness of personal emotions" (ODE, 2019, p. 8) and these skills are essential for students to succeed in life (Durlak et al., 2022, p. 765, Chen & Yu, 2022, p. 4). Dialogic reading has been thought to be a great way to grow emotional vocabulary in students (Doyle & Bramwell, 2006, p. 558), but not much research has been done to prove this. Therefore, this study seeks to see if complex emotional vocabulary can be increased through read alouds of carefully selected picture books.

Setting

This study took place at a Catholic grade school in a suburban town in Ohio, about twenty-five minutes away from the researcher's institution. The National Center for Education Statistics [NCES] gives this town a code of 21, meaning that the large suburban town is "Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population of 250,000 or more" (2021). Furthermore, this school is relatively small with only one class per grade level and a population of about 155 students enrolled, according to the NCES (2020). However, the school lacks diversity as 145 of these students (about 94%) are White, while seven are Hispanic (about 5%) and three are Black (about 2%).

For this study, only grades Kindergarten through Third were chosen participants, with guardian permission, as these grades are the researcher's target population.

This study took place at the school over a three week period. Every Friday, the researcher would come in and conduct the next part of the study. The first day, the researcher conducted pre-interviews and collected permission slips. One grade at a time, the researcher took the participants to the schools' library to conduct the pre-interview. After about twenty minutes filled with recording each student's name and assigning them a number, turning on the recorder, asking the participants questions, and recording their responses on a computer one at a time, the researcher took the participants back to their classroom, thanked their teacher, and moved onto the next class. The second visit was a busy day for the school so the researcher conducted the research implementation, reading the picture books, in the quiet gymnasium, following the same transition procedure as before, once again getting about twenty minutes with each grade. Finally, on the last day, the researcher conducted post-interviews following the same procedure as the first day but taking the children all over the school to find a quiet place, whether that be in the cafeteria, outside the classroom, or in the library, getting an allotted time of about twenty minutes with each class. While the areas in the school differed slightly during each session, the researcher followed the same routine and created a similar environment, regardless of the exact location.

Research Design

This correlational study seeks to find a relationship between the dialogic reading of SEL picture books and the application of complex emotional vocabulary. This is calculated by comparing the pre-interview responses to the post-interview responses and

identifying if the students were able to apply emotional vocabulary they learned from the books. For example, the researcher transcribed interview data and identified if students were able to use the term "jealous" after being read *The Rabbit Listened* (Doerrfeld, 2018).

This data is qualitative by definition as, "Qualitative research at its core, ask open-ended questions whose answers are not easily put into numbers…[and] uses several techniques including interviews, focus groups, and observation. Interviews may be unstructured, with open-ended questions on a topic" (Tenny et al., 2022, para. 2, 14). Both spoken and written (words and/or drawings) data were collected from the interviews. This gives a more in-depth perspective to what is going through the participants' minds. The researcher uses content analysis, which, "is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within some given qualitative data (i.e. text)...researchers can quantify and analyze the presence, meanings, and relationships of such certain words, themes, or concepts" (Columbia University, n.d., para. 1). The researcher used coding analysis to count the qualitative data, such as how much complex emotional vocabulary was used in the pre- and post-interviews, how many students applied new vocabulary terms, and how many times each taught complex vocabulary word was used. After this analysis, the researcher can quantify the data to see if there is a correlation between a dialogic reading of SEL picture books and an increase in emotional vocabulary.

However, as with any study, there are limitations. First and foremost, this study is correlational which means it tests the relationship between variables rather than causation. At this time, doing an experimental study would be implausible as the

researcher would need more time and participants. To test total causation, the researcher would have to either do the pre-interview, variable implementation, and post-interview consecutively or hold the subjects to make sure no other variable could account for an increase in emotional vocabulary. This seems difficult as either subjects would lose interest and be disengaged if done consecutively and it is unethical to hold children for an extended period of time. Also, the researchers cannot control whether or not the participants were exposed to the books read before. Previous exposure could mean that some students have a better chance at recalling vocabulary than others. Nevertheless, showing this relationship between variables is a first step to changing SEL implementation.

Another limitation due to time restraints is that interviews occurred in a group setting. Because participants are with their peers, their responses could be influenced either negatively or positively. Therefore, their responses are not completely reliable. However, as the researcher got to know the subjects, the order of responses changed to try and reduce influence. For example, calling on someone who their peers often look up to last so the others have a chance to think of original responses. There are more limitations with the study population as discussed further in the next section.

Subject Selection

While this study consisted of a reasonable number of participants, these participants were not part of the drafted plan. Originally, the researcher was going to try and gain participation from a public school to add more diversity to the subject population. However, the researcher decided to obtain participation from a school to which she had access based on previous relationships and proximity. As stated

previously, the school has one class per grade so the researcher proposed using at least three of the classes between Kindergarten and Third grade. However, the principal gave permission to use all four classes.

After being granted guardian permission and being in attendance all three days of the study, there were a total of 32 subjects - 6 in Kindergarten, 12 in 1st grade, 9 in 2nd grade, and 5 in 3rd grade. Any student in these four classes could be participants if granted permission by their guardians. 18 participants were girls and 15 were boys. All 32 subjects were given a pre-interview, were read the chosen picture books, and were given a post-interview. Furthermore, each one was assigned a number to maintain confidentiality. For example, someone was assigned 3.3, which means that this student is a Third grader and they received the number 3. A First grader could be assigned 1.10 and so on and so forth. Only the research team consisting of the researcher and the research mentor has access to the number assignments.

Design of the Study

Based on the literature review, the researcher knew that there was a lack of consistency in SEL curriculum. Because Social-Emotional Learning is a relatively new term, schools have not yet found the best practices for implementing it. Therefore, the research that has been conducted is still new and hypothetical in nature rather than experimental. Some studies and professional opinions, however, do lean towards children's literature as a key part of SEL programs. Based on the researcher's interests and this understanding, the researcher decided to test this hypothesis. However, Social-Emotional Learning is a broad concept and in the state of Ohio has many different standards. It seemed implausible to test all of these standards so the researcher

determined to focus on one fundamental standard about emotional vocabulary. Thus, the research investigated whether or not picture books increased children's ability to learn emotional vocabulary.

There is an inconceivable amount of children's books published each year, so how did three picture books make the cut to be included in the study? This part of the study, while time consuming, is arguably one of the most important aspects. The researcher made sure to find books that were appropriate for children in the age category of the research, included emotions, and had good scores on national book organization reviews. First and foremost, the researcher had to find books with undertones or themes of mental health or Social-Emotional Learning. If the book did not include anything about emotions, it would not fit the criteria needed for this study. To begin, the researcher did general Google searches to find highly rated books that many other professionals or parents are using. Then, to check for credibility, the researcher found the book on either Horn Book or Kirkus, which are literature organizations that give reviews by professionals. If these organizations gave scores of 1 or 2, which mean they are exceptional, the book would be considered for the study. After a list of about 5-10 books was created, the research team consisting of the researcher and advisor decided on a final three based on how well they believed each child would be able to connect with each of the stories while trying to vary the type of storyline. These books are *The Rabbit Listened* by Cori Doerrfeld, *In The Blue* by Erin Hourigan, and *The Good Egg* by Jory John and illustrated by Pete Oswald.

Once all the background information had been gathered and books had been selected, it was time to design the actual study itself. The researcher felt at least three

classes would be optimal for data accuracy, and the school agreed to use four, as discussed in Subject Selection. The researcher and principal set up three dates to come into the school to perform the research. These three days were each exactly one week apart. The first day would be dedicated to assigning students' numbers and the pre-interview. As the researcher gathered the participants, permission slips were taken and the researcher was able to give each participant a number that would keep anonymity throughout the study. This first day was essential as it set the baseline for what the children already knew. The researcher took participants from one class at a time to a designated quiet area in the school. During this pre-interview, the researcher read off a script found in Appendix A to keep each class's interviews as similar as possible. Four questions were read during this recorded interview one at a time:

1. How would you feel if you were sitting alone at lunch?
2. How would you feel if something you worked really hard on got ruined?
3. How would you feel if someone else had something you wanted?
4. How do you feel when you try something new?

These are based on whether the research team felt the participants could use vocabulary used in the three books to answer them. The researcher circulated around the group, asking one participant at a time for their response. If participants seemed to copy each other's answers, the researcher probed them to think of an original response if they could. For questions 1 and 3, except for the participants from First grade who only did this for question 1, participants were given a little piece of paper with their assigned number already on it to give a written response that could be either words and/or drawings. The researcher made sure to collect these from each student. After each group finished, the

researcher would return the group to their class and thank the teacher for giving the time. This took about twenty minutes with each class.

For the second day, the researcher implemented the intervention, which was reading the selected picture books to the students. Once again, the researcher took participants from one class at a time to a quiet place at the school to read these books. Participants sat across from the researcher as the books were read one at a time with the book being held facing the participants at an angle so they could all see the pictures and hear the words. Throughout the readings, the researcher would pause at designated points in the story stated on the script, again found in Appendix A, to point out certain emotion words in the text and explain what they mean in the context of the story. After each book, the researcher would pause so participants could adjust to have optimal attention on the next book. All three books were read to every class except Second grade due to a schedule change; they did not hear *The Good Egg* because the researcher felt the other books covered more vocabulary. After each group of participants, the researcher returned the students to their class.

On the last day, the researcher conducted the post-interview to determine whether or not students could recall any of the vocabulary read in the texts and apply it to these hypothetical situations. This day followed the exact same procedure as the first day, except there was no need to collect permission slips. Again, the researcher followed a script, found in Appendix A, but would also prompt students with reminders of the stories. For example, for question 3, the researcher reminded one student of the snake in *The Rabbit Listened* which entailed them to remember the word “jealous”. While this is

just a broad scope of how data was collected, a more in-depth explanation on this process can be found in the next section, Data Collection.

Data Collection

The researcher collected data through interviews with groups of participants. In these interviews, the researcher set the tone and reminded participants that their answers had no effect on their grades or any other aspect of their lives. This expectation helped their responses be as true as possible. The researcher took data from four interview questions the research team created, stated above in Design of the Study. The researcher believed these questions would mediate responses that could show growth in emotional vocabulary, which is the goal of the study. Data collection took place through both verbal and written responses. Many precautions were taken to make sure the researcher collected accurate data. Every interview was audibly recorded just in case the researcher missed something in real time. Furthermore, the researcher noted down each individual's responses during the interview on a Google Sheet to look back on when analyzing data. Finally, taking the written responses for two of the questions added another layer of accuracy because it allows some students to be more honest with their answers if they felt peer pressured and it could not be misinterpreted through dialogue. All forms of data collection in this study was approved by the Institutional Review Board as discussed in Ethical Considerations.

Nevertheless, numerical data was needed to answer the research question. Qualitative data could not measure growth, which was the researcher's goal. Therefore, after data was collected, the researcher used a content analysis to convert the data into something more numerical. The researcher first went through the Google Sheet data and

made sure there was a response for every participant. If something was missing, the researcher went back and listened to the audio recordings. Then, the researcher was able to contextually analyze the data by counting the increase of complex vocabulary from simple vocabulary, as defined in Chapter 1, from the pre-interview to the post-interview. From this numerical data, the research could look at each of the variables such as each interview question, each response, etc. and determine any significant changes, as well as answer the research question. The written responses are not as powerful as the verbal responses and therefore were not used to analyze data. Data analysis and results can be seen in Chapters 4 and 5.

Ethical Considerations

Because this study has student participation, special clearance needed to be given by the Institutional Review Board [IRB] to protect all people involved. Permission was granted by the IRB under 45CFR46.104(d)(1), which states that the current research is "conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, that specifically involves normal educational practices that are not likely to adversely impact students' opportunity to learn required educational content or the assessment of educators who provide instruction". After permission from IRB was granted, the researcher makes sure to protect the students' rights by requiring permission slips to be signed by a parent or guardian and assigning participants to a number code to grant anonymity. Only the research team has access to these number code assignments. Through following this protocol directed by the IRB, this study has taken account of all ethical considerations and protects all people involved.

Summary of Chapter

This study seeks to find a connection between picture book read alouds to students and their knowledge of complex emotional vocabulary. This would enable students to ultimately grow in their Social-Emotional Learning skills which have benefits that last a lifetime. This research took place at a private school in a large suburban town less than thirty minutes away from the researcher's institution. Most of the participants come from similar backgrounds of upper-middle class suburbia and were in kindergarten to third-grade classes. Over the course of three weeks, the researcher conducted a pre-interview, did a dialogic read aloud, and conducted a post-interview. The picture books read include *The Rabbit Listened* by Cori Doerrfeld, *In The Blue* by Erin Hourigan, and *The Good Egg* by Jory John and illustrated by Pete Oswald, which all have SEL themes, are appropriate for the participants, and have received accreditation from national literacy organizations. This study is correlational, meaning that it seeks to find relationships between variables, these variables being picture book read alouds and emotional vocabulary. Through pre- and post-interviews, the researcher collects qualitative data through spoken and written responses. However, to determine any relationship between the stated variables, the data needed to be quantitative. Therefore, the researcher performs a coding analysis to find themes amongst the data and determine any relationship numerically. When collecting the data, the researcher writes spoken responses on the computer, collects the written responses, and records the dialogue in case anything was missed. However, all identities are anonymous as each participant is assigned a number code. Any way of identifying participants would be kept between the researcher and mentor. This study was approved by the IRB and the researcher collected permission forms from each of the participants that were signed by a legal guardian.

Chapter 4

Data Results and Analysis

Introduction

This study sought to find the relationship between the dialogic reading of picture books and Social-Emotional Learning. Teachers often reach for picture books to include as part of classroom instruction, but typical lessons do not account for deep understanding of complex vocabulary. Dialogic reading is a type of read-aloud that prompts students' to connect to the text and discuss further different ideas. Furthermore, SEL is the curriculum that teaches students how to develop essentially as a person - emotions, relationships, social skills, etc. Through interviews and dialogic reading of picture books, this study focused on grade school students and explored if picture books can increase SEL, specifically complex emotional vocabulary development. This chapter will describe the results of this research.

Research Question

The research question guiding this study is, *Will dialogic read alouds of picture books increase students' application of more complex emotional vocabulary?*

Findings

There are many different layers to answering the research question. First, there is the all-encompassing view of looking at overall complex emotional vocabulary usage. This is important because it shows if there was any overall growth in vocabulary. However, it lacks in representing if students were able to *apply* the specific vocabulary taught through the read alouds. Therefore, this angle, as well as showing which specific

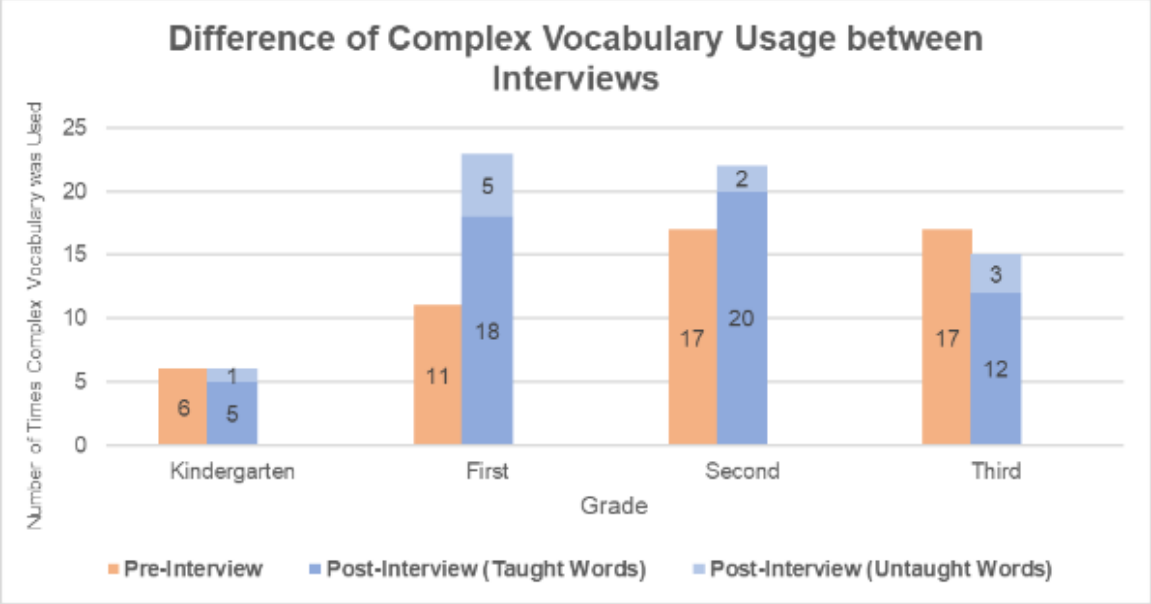
emotional vocabulary was applied is analyzed as well. Finally, the researcher felt it significant to find how many students applied the learned vocabulary.

Overall Usage of Complex Vocabulary

One set of data collected focused on the overall usage of complex emotional vocabulary between interviews. This is measured by taking the data the researcher recorded during the interviews and finding how many times complex emotional vocabulary was used in the pre-interview and comparing that to how many times it is used in the post-interview. This data is represented by Figure 1.

Figure 1

Difference of Complex Vocabulary Usage between Interviews



The orange represents the number of times complex emotional vocabulary was used in the pre-interview and the blue represents the number of times complex emotional vocabulary was used in the post-interview. However, this is divided even more as the light blue represents the number of times words that were discussed during the read alouds were applied and the dark blue is any other complex emotional vocabulary word

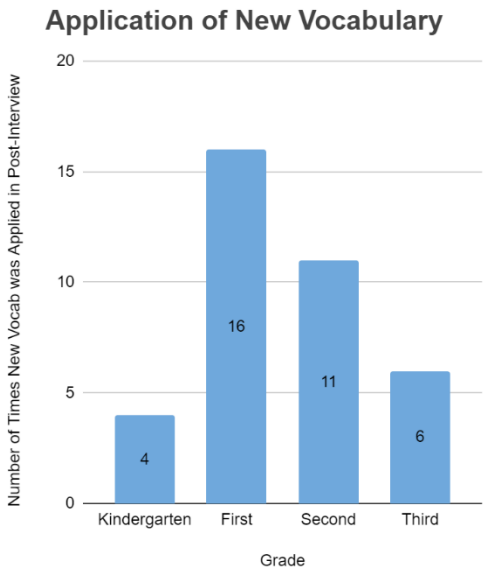
or a word that the student already knew in the pre-interview. Only in First and Second grade does the amount increase whereas in Kindergarten it stays the same and Third it actually decreases. However, examining the subsets of the data demonstrates the application of words read during the dialogic readings.

Application of New Vocabulary

Another set of data involves purely looking at how many times new vocabulary was used in the post-interview. This disregards complex vocabulary that was not taught as well as vocabulary that was already expressed in the pre-interview. It is measured by looking at how many times the vocabulary was used in the post-interview and subtracting any instances where the same word was used by the same participant in the pre-interview. This set of data is significant for showing an increase in knowledge from the pre to post interview. Results can be found in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Application of New Vocabulary



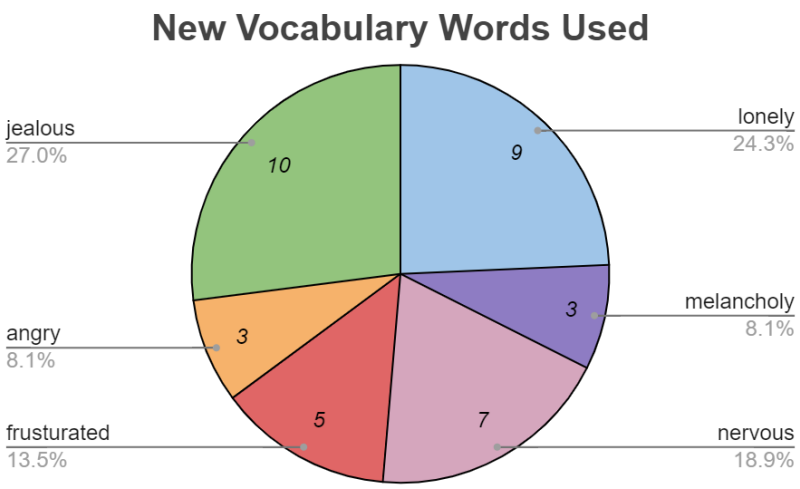
The blue bars in Figure 2 represent the number of times each grade applied a new complex emotional vocabulary word. This graph shows that each grade had some sort of application of new vocabulary. First grade had a significantly higher number of applications (16 compared to the 4 in Kindergarten), but they also had the highest number of participants. In total, there were 37 instances of new vocabulary usage during the post-interview, 4 in Kindergarten, 16 in First, 11 in Second, and 6 in Third. This is significant because each grade was able to apply new vocabulary, which supports previous research that children learn vocabulary at every age (Baron-Cohen et al., 2010, p. 2; Grosse et al., 2021, p. 156). Later, the number of applications will be split amongst how many participants applied new vocabulary.

Vocabulary Words Used

Another area of study focused on which vocabulary words were used the most in the post-interviews. This set of data is significant because it can tell us something about how children learn emotional vocabulary, which will be discussed further in Chapter 5. This data was measured by counting how many times each vocabulary word was used in the post-interview when the same participant did not use it in the pre-interview for the same question.

Figure 3

New Vocabulary Words Used



Each color represents a different vocabulary word. Jealousy is green, lonely is blue, melancholy is purple, angry is orange, frustrated is red, and nervous is pink. Inside each color is the number of times the vocabulary word was used. For example, the "10" in jealous means that a participant used the term "jealous" to answer one (or more) of the questions 10 times without it being used in the same question before. Underneath each word label contains the percentage of how many times the word was used compared to all overall new word usage. For example, jealous was used 27% of the time compared to angry which was 8.1%. Jealous was applied the most, then lonely, then nervous, then frustrated, then angry and melancholy. Possible reasons for this are discussed in Chapter 5.

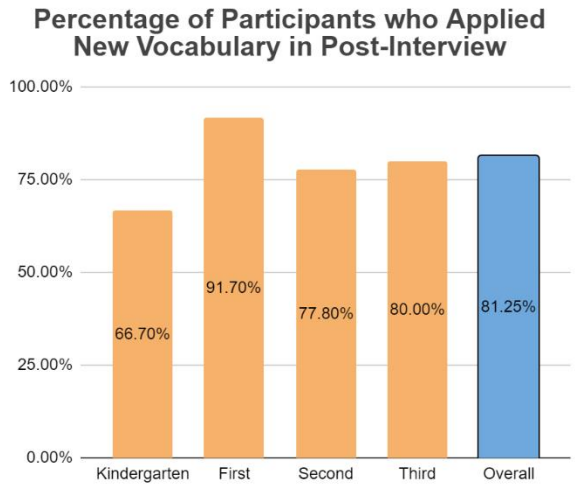
Growth in Vocabulary Amongst Participants

The final set of data displayed represents the amount of participants that applied the new emotional vocabulary during the post-interview. This data is essential to the study because it ultimately shows if the research method is impactful. Even if there was a high number of vocabulary applications, it could be the same few participants doing it multiple times. By measuring how many participants applied new vocabulary, the

research can determine if this method is effective and can be used in the classroom to benefit many different students. This data was measured by adding together the number of students who used a new vocabulary word and dividing it by the total number of students who participated in each grade which resulted in the percentage per grade. The overall percentage was measured by taking the number of participants who applied new vocabulary and dividing that by the total number of participants, which in this study is 32.

Figure 4

Percentage of Participants who Applied New Vocabulary in Post-Interview



Each grades' percentage is represented by the orange bars in the graph. The overall percentage of all participants in the study is represented by the blue bar. As shown, the lowest percentage was in Kindergarten with about 67%. This still means that 2 out of every 3 applied new vocabulary. First grade had the highest percentage with over 90%. Both Second and Third grades had about 80%. Overall, the total percentage of students who applied new vocabulary was about 81%, which is 26 out of 32 students.

Analysis of the Data

Ultimately, the question to be answered by the data is, *Will dialogic read alouds of picture books increase students' application of more complex emotional vocabulary?* However, while the answer to this question could be a simple yes or no, how children learn is complicated and there are many different layers to answering this question and, furthermore, analyzing the data collected. This data shows not only if there is a connection between variables, but also possible reasons why. . While the data displayed makes the simple answer to the research question evident as, "yes", the reasoning behind that can now be explored further.

Increase in Application

Figures 1 and 2 are significant to compare to determine if there is an increase in knowledge. In Figure 1, it illustrates that there is not always necessarily an increase in complex vocabulary between the pre- and post-interviews. For example, Kindergarten stays the same (6) and Third's pre-interview amount actually surpasses the post-interview amount (17 versus 15). The purpose of this study is to *teach* the participants new words and see if they can then *apply* them in hypothetical scenarios. Just because a number was higher in the pre-interview does not mean the participants did not learn anything, it just means that some might have felt the complex-emotion term they used in the pre-interview no longer applied. For example, participant K.7 used the term "angry" for question 2 in the pre-interview but then used "happy" in the post-interview. This does not mean they did not learn more complex vocabulary, but maybe they felt any positive complex emotion word taught, like "proud" did not apply to the situation. When looking at Figure 2, there is clearly application of new vocabulary amongst all the grade levels.

This is significant because it shows that there are many instances of participants using the new words that were taught to them, rather than just any complex emotional terms or unspecific positives or negatives, as defined in Grosse et al.'s study (2021, p. 156). Not only is there an increase in general application, but also an increase in the amount of emotions listed for answers. For example, Participant 2.1 answered question 3 in the pre-interview as "jealous" but as "jealous and angry" in the post-interview. The number of emotions listed per participant increased from the pre-interview to post-interview for every grade. This suggests that participants also began to grasp the overall complexity of emotions and how humans can feel multiple emotions at one time.

Differences Between Grades

While each grade shows application of new vocabulary, portrayed in Figure 4, there are still differences between each grade level. For instance, each grade had a tendency to apply separate terms. In Kindergarten, "jealous" was a new term applied the most. While six Second graders did use the word jealous in the post-interview, they also used it in the pre-interview meaning that they did not just learn this word. This data suggests that jealous was not in the everyday vocabulary of the participants in Kindergarten before the intervention and was for the participants in Second. Furthermore, as age increased, the complexity of the emotional vocabulary seemed to increase as well. The term "melancholy" was taught during the reading *In the Blue* by Erin Hourigan. While all participants heard it, only participants in Second and Third applied it during the post-interview. During the Third grade post-interview, participants even discuss the term as participant 3.5 remembered it being used in the read aloud but

forgot its meaning. This suggests that this might have been the participants first exposure to the term, yet two of the participants were still able to apply it correctly.

Why did the Kindergarteners and First graders not apply this word? The Melissa Institute compromised of professors and researchers all over North America states that, "Average vocabulary increases from an estimated 3500 root word meanings at the beginning of kindergarten, to 6000 root words at the end of the second grade, to approximately 20,000 root words by fifth grade…approximately 3500 words per year" (n.d., para. 8). While 3500 is a high quantity of words, think about all the new vocabulary Kindergarteners and First graders are hearing and seeing each day as they learn to read. Therefore, the more complex the words are, the less likely the student will be able to grasp it. "Melancholy" was too far out of these students' Zone of Proximal Development [ZPD], a term coined by psychologist Lev Vygotsky defined as, "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers," (Mcleoud, 2023, para. 6). Essentially, ZPD in this case is teaching emotional words that students have heard before and connect to vocabulary students already know and can then understand. For example, First Grade had an ample amount of new applied vocabulary (as shown in Figure 2 and Figure 4) with various terms such as "lonely", "jealous", and "nervous". This is because these are words that the participants have already heard before and easily connect to their previous knowledge of "sad" whereas "melancholy" is a word they have probably never heard before and therefore cannot make the connection as effortlessly. By the time Second and Third grades come around, most basic vocabulary is understood so students

have the capability to learn more infrequent words. However, it is still important to note that students of all ages between Kindergarten and Third grade are able to learn vocabulary through picture books, as demonstrated by the data.

Visual Representation of Vocabulary

As demonstrated by Figure 3, some vocabulary words were applied more than others in the post-interview. “Jealous” was the most applied term with 10 instances. A possible reason for this is because of the visual representation of the word in the story *The Rabbit Listened* by Cori Doerrfeld. The text reads, “And the Snake: “Shhhhh. Let’ssss go knock down someone else’ssss.” (Doerrfeld, 2018, p. 8) During the dialogic discussion, the researcher told participants that jealously is often represented by a snake because they want something they can’t have. Snakes are sneaky just like people who act in jealousy. Researchers from Carnagie Melon University claim that, “Children learn to follow stories in picture books before they are able to comprehend written text” (Oates & Reder, 2011, p. 2). This is because of the visual representation of the text. Therefore, because of the strong connection between the snake and the new vocabulary, participants were more likely to apply this vocabulary word. Furthermore, books provide the visual context, or how an emotion visibly looks on someone experiencing it. This is done with the word “melancholy”, as the illustrator shows how this might look in the book for the character in the story *In the Blue*. Two of the third graders were able to grasp this representation and apply the word in the post-interview.

Conversely, complex emotional vocabulary words can also help children define visualized experiences. We often use metaphors or descriptions to help us understand our feelings. For example, blue is often associated with sadness or red with anger. Participant

2.2 answered question two in the pre-interview with the description of "steamy hot". This participant knew they would be expressing some sort of madness, but did not have the right vocabulary to portray that feeling. Therefore, they did their best by applying a metaphor. After the read-alouds, this participant was able to coin "frustrated" for that "steamy hot" feeling during the post-interview. This suggests that we often use descriptions of feeling when we do not know the specific emotion we are experiencing as "In order to form emotional categories, an unconscious metaphoric process recognizes multimodal patterns of similarity and difference. This unconscious metaphoric process interprets or judges what is similar or different" (Modell, 2009, p. 8). Metaphors lay the foundation for children, or anyone for that matter, to explore similarities and differences between emotions. Through these dialogic read-alouds of picture books, students were able to learn new vocabulary through illustrations as well as find new vocabulary to define their visualizations.

Summary of Chapter

This chapter summarizes the data collected from this research and helps answer the research question, *Will dialogic read alouds of picture books increase students' application of more complex emotional vocabulary?* Four main groups of data were represented: the overall difference in complex emotional vocabulary between the pre-interview and post-interview, how many times new emotional vocabulary was applied, how many times each complex emotional vocabulary words was used, and then how many participants were able to apply the new vocabulary, per class as well as overall. All of this data is significant to representing the whole study and the different avenues that can be analyzed further. At a glance from the data presented, the answer seems like "yes"

to the research question. There was an increase in the application of this vocabulary as well as a significant number of participants who applied this vocabulary. The next chapter will dive further into this data discussion and truly show if this answer is correct and why it matters.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Summary, and Recommendations

Significance of the Study

What is the purpose of school? Is it solely academics? In the past, this might have been true, but the modern era of education is continuously emphasizing the importance of growing the whole child. Since 1994 with the creation of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) has become a new academic phenomenon. In 2019, the state of Ohio, for example, created a set of standards based on those by CASEL for SEL. These standards are overarched by the topics of Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social-Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision-Making. All of these skills lead to children growing a life-long aptitude for being productive students and people (Durlak et al., 2022, p. 775). Essentially, education is trying to shape children into what is viewed as being a good person.

While SEL has grown in importance the past few years, not much research has been done on what makes SEL implementation successful (Durlak et al., 2022, p. 776). What exactly makes these skills applicable and everlasting? According to one teacher, our current SEL curriculum in America consisting of videos and handouts is not the most engaging (Pysarenko, 2020, p. 639). It is then suggested that picture books might be the key to an engaging, applicable SEL curriculum (Pysarenko, 2020, p. 639). Picture books allow students to connect to a character, situation, experience, feeling, etc. (Gunn et al., 2022, p. 362) and prepare for stressful situations (Roberts & Crawford, 2008, p. 14). However, are students actually learning from these books?

This study is intended to take all of this previous research and find any correlation between picture books and the application of SEL, specifically emotional vocabulary. With all of this research already done, there still lacks consistency about what works best (Durlak et al., 2022, p. 776). This study is significant because it is taking a step towards creating consistency. Is there an increase in emotional vocabulary knowledge when picture books are read aloud with a dialogic reading? Can teachers read picture books and consistently see students growing in SEL, specifically their complex emotional vocabulary? There are a lot of different tasks that need to be accomplished throughout the day as a teacher. By finding one simple way of implementing SEL instruction, teachers can focus on growing students' Social-Emotional Learning.

Summary of the Study

On a broad scale, this study was based on creating a more consistent way of teaching Social-Emotional Learning, which could be through picture books. Specifically, however, this study aimed to answer the question, *Will dialogic read alouds of picture books increase students' application of more complex emotional vocabulary?* Teachers read many picture books throughout the school year, often reading a book aloud at least once a day. While these books are often selected to build content knowledge, they also hold potential for teaching SEL concepts. The literature review suggests that picture books are engaging and provide a stepping stone to feeling and understanding new or confusing emotions. This study supported these findings and suggested a method for using picture books in the classroom to teach SEL.

This study was conducted using pre- and post-interviews with the intervention occurring between. 32 students, ranging from kindergarten to third grade participated in

the study. During the pre-interview, the following four questions were asked one at a time:

1. How would you feel if you were sitting alone at lunch?
2. How would you feel if something you worked really hard on got ruined?
3. How would you feel if someone else had something you wanted?
4. How do you feel when you try something new?

Students were encouraged to give honest answers as the researcher recorded them. One week later, the intervention took place. This consisted of a dialogic reading of three carefully chosen picture books, *The Rabbit Listened* by Cori Doerrfeld, *In The Blue* by Erin Hourigan, and *The Good Egg* by Jory John and illustrated by Pete Oswald. During the read alouds, the researcher defined and/or highlighted certain emotional vocabulary, which is part of the dialogic reading process. Another week later, the same four questions were asked in the post-interview, with the objective being that the participants could apply the words they learned in the picture book. After the research was concluded, the data was analyzed.

Conclusions and Implications

After analyzing the results, the data shows that picture books have potential for teaching Social-Emotional Learning. The research question asked if there is an increase in the application of complex emotional vocabulary, and analysis of the results demonstrated just this. Every grade had at least one participant apply a new complex emotional vocabulary word. This shows consistency across elementary grade levels on top of the already high percentage of students overall who could apply new vocabulary. The standard connected to this study is, “Demonstrate an awareness of personal

emotions" (ODE, 2019, p. 8) and based on this data, students were able to do so. Furthermore, it is done with increasing complexity in the post-interview as students are able to use even more complex vocabulary to demonstrate their emotional understanding.

Much of the literature review discussed benefits of SEL programs. As discussed by Durlak et al. and Chen and Yu, the positive impacts of Social-Emotional Learning are evident. Their research found that students that participated in SEL had positive impacts such as more social skills, personal skills, school performance, and attitude and less emotional distress, outbursts, drug usage, and inappropriate behavior. The research in this study did not investigate this, but assumes that with greater fulfillment of the standard, the greater the likelihood of these outcomes as it relates to positive life skills. The caveat to their research, however, is that the *way* to teach Social-Emotional Learning is not evidently sound, meaning that there is no consistency in what SEL programs work (Durlak et al., 2022, p. 775-776; Chen & Yu, 2022, pp. 4-8).

Pysarenko claims that picture books have potential as an intervention to increase social-emotional learning. Her students found the standard curriculum boring, which consisted of videos and worksheets (Pysarenko, 2020, p. 639). However, not much data has been collected to prove this point, leading to the point of the current study: Can picture books make SEL more engaging and grow students' knowledge. As analyzed in Chapter 4 the data does lead to that conclusion. 81.25% of the participants, ages ranging from 5 to 9, were able to apply vocabulary learned through picture books. However, while there is only 4-5 years between the age gaps, the data suggests that there needs to be variations between these grades.

This supports the study by Grosse et al. which demonstrated a relationship between age and an increase in the use of specific emotional vocabulary (Grosse et al., 2021, p. 156). “Melancholy” is a very specific term whereas “lonely”, while complex, is not as specific. Also, this shows how rapid emotional vocabulary growth can be, also studied in the United Kingdom (Baron-Cohen et al., 2010, p. 2). Kindergarteners, aged about 5 or 6, and Third graders, aged 8 to 9 have vastly different emotional vocabulary capacities and they are only 2-4 years apart. This is also demonstrated in Baron-Cohen’s study. (Baron-Cohen et al., 2010, p. 2). Nevertheless, every child does have the capability to learn new vocabulary. Figure 4 demonstrates that about 81% of participants were able to apply new vocabulary with at least one person from each grade (ages ranging from 5/6 to 8/9). This continues to prove that emotional vocabulary knowledge never stops growing (Be You, 2021, p. 1).

When teaching emotional vocabulary to younger students, such as those in Kindergarten or First grade, it is important to use complex emotional terms that are more frequent in everyday life such as, “angry” or “embarrassed” rather than a term like “melancholy”. While the more uncommon complex emotion words are still important for students’ emotional development, teachers need to keep learning in students’ Zone of Proximal Development [ZPD]. Teachers need to understand where students are with their vocabulary development before they try to teach new words. This can be assessed by asking students if they have ever heard of the complex words teachers are introducing during a read aloud. Then the teacher can adjust the dialogic conversation surrounding the term based on what the students already know. For example, if the researcher asked the Kindergarteners if they have ever heard of the term “melancholy”, they probably

would have said no which means that the reader would use a less complex term to teach the emotion, like “lonely” or “disappointed” which better connects to their background knowledge.

Overall, every class in every grade at every school in every city all around the world is going to be distinct in their own ways. However, generalizations can be made for how to best support children of the same age in similar situations. This data suggests that for teachers to best teach complex emotional vocabulary with picture books to students, they need to consider the students’ Zone of Proximal Development. Teachers should ask themselves, “Have my students had any contact with this word before? Can students connect this complex emotional word to a simple one? Will students be able to apply this word to their everyday experiences?” A kindergartener does not need to be taught words like “anguish” or “loathing” as these are too complex for their vocabulary toolkit. Furthermore, a Third grader most likely already knows words like “embarrassed” or “guilt” so they do not need to be discussed as much during a read aloud. This also supports Grosse et al.’s study as the two factors they determined in their research for growing emotional vocabulary are input frequency and word specificity (Grosse et al., 2021, p. 152).

One of the most essential aspects of this study is analyzing the criteria for picture book selection. Before the study even began, an intensive search for picture books ensued. The researcher selected picture books suitable for the age group, relevant to the topic, and of quality. Now that the study has concluded, these criteria can be explored more in depth as well as new criteria added to the list.

As stated, there were many differences between the various grade levels. So while the books selected were identified as appropriate for grades K-3 prior to the study, analysis of the data could make it even more precise. For example, the Second and Third graders seemed more equipped to handle the vocabulary and story in the book *In the Blue* by Erin Hourigan than the participants in First grade or Kindergarten. During this read aloud, students were taught about the word "melancholy" and dived deeper into the different ways we can feel sad. Much of this information was too complex for the 5, 6, and 7 year-olds. Instead, the book *The Good Egg* by Jory John was more engaging to the Kindergarteners and First graders as the vocabulary and story line was easier to follow. Those in the older grades have already seen or heard the book before, which made it less engaging. These students also did not see as much vocabulary growth from this read-aloud because they already knew the complex terms already. It's essential to make sure the book read to children fits the Zone of Proximal Development for vocabulary growth for the students in the grade as well as still engaging for students to strive to learn.

Engagement is another factor for the selection of picture books. Pysarenko discusses how picture books are useful because they differ from the normal SEL curriculum (2020, p. 639). However, if these books are not engaging, students will have a hard time focusing and learning. Two ways to select books that are engaging are ensuring the characters represent something students can relate to (Gunn et al., 2022, p. 363) as well as including some of their interests. For example, the Kindergarteners giggled during parts of The *Good Egg* as this book was silly and they have previous experiences with eggs whereas they did not make as many connections with *In the Blue* because it was a heavy topic many students could not relate to. Third graders, however, are more mature

so they were engaged with *In the Blue* because they understood the content and characters more. Many of the students could also relate to the main character in *The Rabbit Listened* as the character goes through the different emotions one might feel if something they worked really hard on does not work out or gets ruined. It also modeled for the participants how to feel multiple emotions at once, which is a complex idea that students were more-so able to grasp as more answers in the post-interview involved more than one answer than in the pre-interview, as stated in Chapter 4.

Given that illustrations in the story were demonstrated to be important, it is also essential to choose picture books that have relevant visuals. In the books selected for the current study, the characters are seen depicting how feeling this emotion might look like. For example, the bear in *The Rabbit Listened* growls and shouts. This is essential to vocabulary knowledge as it bridges the gap between previous experiences and new knowledge (Gunn et al., 2022, p. 364). Furthermore, application becomes more feasible because students can think of how they might physically and mentally react to hypothetical situations and connect that to the visuals from emotional vocabulary in picture books. Essentially meaning that if one of the hypothetical questions makes students want to shout, they will realize they might be angry in that situation.

This data could benefit teachers and students as developmentally appropriate practice [DAP], also defined as to "implement learning environments to help all children achieve their full potential across all domains of development and across all content areas" (NAEYC, n.d., para. 1), could be adapted for Social Emotional Learning. Teachers can now see data that shows that dialogic reading of picture books does increase complex emotional vocabulary comprehension and application. In some places, such as Ohio, this

is actually part of the teachers' jobs as this outcome is a Standard. As a teacher, you should be choosing books that are part of your students' Zone of Proximal Development, engaging with visuals, and connecting to what students have experienced and will experience. Furthermore, students are growing as people, which ultimately should be the goal of an education. This is just the beginning of a society where picture books are not only tools for literature, but a gateway to a holistic and well-rounded education for all students, giving everyone the tools they need to be successful personally and interpersonally.

Recommendations for Future Research

Social-Emotional Learning was not officially defined until 1997 (CASEL, n.d., para. 3), which makes research on this topic relatively new and unprecedented. Previous research has focused on the impacts of SEL, but not on how to exactly teach it (Durlak et al., 2022, p. 775-776; Chen & Yu, 2022, pp. 4-8). Therefore, it is recommended that more research be done on methods of teaching SEL, specifically on the usage of picture books. This study is only preliminary so there is more work that needs to be done.

First and foremost, this study could benefit from more work being done with a diverse group of participants. This study focused on a Catholic school with participants coming from mostly the same white, upper-middle class background. Since the research is looking for consistency, there should also be work done to see if there is consistency amongst different socio-economic and racial backgrounds. Therefore, the recommendation is that a similar study be done but in different school districts with various backgrounds. This would lead to more consistency across the demographics of the country as a whole, rather than just a specific school in a specific area. Furthermore, it

is recommended to do this study more individually. Due to resources and time, this study was done in a group-setting where there were limitations of originality as participants could copy each other's responses. If participants could be interviewed individually, this could help keep the study more valid and accurate.

Another suggestion is using another method of teaching emotional vocabulary in children's literature. This study focused on dialogic reading of picture books because it gave participants a more explicit introduction to the material. However, there are other ways to explore and read picture books, as discussed in Chapter 2. Another method that could be studied is the use of literature circles in increasing emotional vocabulary. While dialogic reading is whole-group, literature circles allow for a more individualized and peer-to-peer engagement with the curriculum as each student has a role when analyzing and discussing a specific text in a small-group setting (Venegas, 2019, p. 149). This setting could potentially lead to even more consistency in complex vocabulary application.

There are five other competencies that make up Social-Emotional Learning besides Self-Awareness. Research could also dive into another one of the SEL standards, falling under any of the five categories. Ohio has 18 different SEL strands for which specific standards fall under and demonstrating an awareness of personal emotions is just one of them (ODE, 2019, p. 8). Through explicit instruction like dialogic reading, how consistent is growing in other competencies, such as maintaining successful relationships, a part of relationship skills (ODE, 2019, p. 20)? Would you have to read books using other methods to see consistencies in other SEL standards or does growth happen using

the same method? More research in this would give a more definitive answer into consistency amongst SEL programs as well.

What does Social-Emotional Learning look like in older grades? Can literature still be used to teach SEL? This study focuses on the elementary grades, specifically grades K-3. However, literature is something taught all the way throughout high school. While with age the pictures become less and less and the words become longer and more complex, literature is still taught and Social-Emotional Learning is still essential. Research can be done to see the validity in still teaching Social-Emotional Learning in literature, no matter the grade. Can students in primary grades or middle school learn about overcoming challenges when reading *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo, which fulfills the Self-Management Standard "B3: Persevere through challenges and setbacks in school and life" (ODE, 2019, p. 14)? Can high school students empathize with emotions for any of the characters in books written by Shakespeare? This would fulfill the Social Awareness Standard "C1: Recognize, identify and empathize with the feelings and perspective of others" (ODE, 2019, p. 15). Research could dissect this learning for grades other than in elementary school and discuss the importance of selecting books, even in upper grades.

Summary of Chapter

What deems someone as a successful participant of society? Is it the genius who lacks social skills? Is it the millionaire who struggles with their identity? There is more to a person than what they know academically. There are five aspects of ourselves that cannot be taught through your basic academic curriculum - Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social-Awareness, Responsible Decision Making, and Relationship Skills.

These are the five standards of Social-Emotional Learning and each are essential skills to becoming a successful human being. However, not much research has been done on how to teach them. This study is significant because it can guide teachers to a more consistent method to teaching Social-Emotional Learning which is beneficial for everyone involved, especially the students.

This study sought to answer the question: *Will dialogic read alouds of picture books increase students' application of more complex emotional vocabulary?* This was done by using a pre- and post-interview design with picture books being read in between. 32 students from a private school from grades K-3 were used as participants. During the interviews, four hypothetical situations were given to students and they were asked to identify any emotion(s) they would potentially feel during this situation. In between the interviews, students were read *The Sour Grape*, *In the Blue*, and *The Rabbit Listened* and were explicitly taught different complex emotions that were occurring throughout the story. The hypothesis was that students would then be able to apply these emotions during the post-interview.

The data concludes that picture books, with explicit instruction of vocabulary, can increase students' applications of complex emotional vocabulary. However, the data can be analyzed further to support teacher instruction. First and foremost, vocabulary knowledge grows rapidly during elementary grades. Therefore it is important to consider the students' Zone of Proximal Development when choosing picture books. There is a vast difference in the vocabulary capacity between grades. Other things to consider when choosing picture books include relatable characters, relevant illustrations, and engaging content that is of interest to students.

There are many different avenues where future research can be conducted. This study had limitations that with time and resources could be avoided, like individual interviewing to avoid any copying in a group setting. This study could also be differentiated by using another method to read the picture books, such as literature circles. Another avenue that could be taken for future research is measuring growth in another one of the five SEL strands, as this study specifically looks at Self-Awareness and personal emotions. Furthermore, research could discover if this thinking can be applied to upper grades, such as middle school and high school. Literature is a universal concept in academia, so it should be adapted to teach Social-Emotional Learning to any grade.

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Appendix A

Script

DAY 1

Hello everyone! My name is Mary Horvath and I am studying how to be a teacher at the University of Dayton. A long time ago, I sat in those exact seats. I graduated from [school] in 2016 and some of you might know my brother who is in seventh grade.

Do you guys ever have to do projects at school? (wait for response) Well this is just a project I am doing for my school. It has no effect on your grades here and might end up being a little fun! For the next three weeks, we will be answering questions and reading stories together.

Today, I will be asking you four questions. There is no right answer to these questions. Some of you might have the same answer, some of you might have different answers and that is all okay! I just want you to be honest with me. Two of these questions will also require a written response, whether that be by you writing a few words or drawing a picture. Something quick and easy. Any questions? (answer questions) You may stop me at any point if you have any questions.

The first question is: How would you feel if you were sitting alone at lunch?(let respond orally then give 1-3 minutes to draw/write)

The second question is: How would you feel if something you worked really hard on got ruined? (let respond orally)

The third question is: How would you feel if someone else had something you wanted? (let respond orally then give 1-3 minutes to draw/write)

The fourth question is: How do you feel when you try something new? (let respond orally)

Those are all the questions I have! I will collect all of your drawings and see you guys next week. Thank you!

DAY 2

*Italicized are the targeted complex vocabulary words.

Hello everyone! Today we are going to be reading three stories. Some of these you may have read these before and some of them you may have never heard of. Either way, my expectations are that you sit silently with your hands in your lap the entire time. If I ask a question, I expect you to raise your hand and I will call on you. While I am reading, I also want you to try to relate to the characters and feel the emotions they are feeling. Throughout the stories, I am going to pause and explain some of these emotions to you. Are there any questions? (wait for response)

The first book we are reading is *The Good Egg* by Jory John and Pete Oswald.

1. "I wandered from town to town. The hours became days, the days became weeks. I lost track of time. I was alone", and say, "The egg is *lonely*. Being lonely means when you feel like everyone is enjoying their time around you but you feel like you have no one to keep you company, like if you are playing alone at recess You feel left out".
2. Point out the word "lonely" where it says "Besides I'm kind of lonely out here".

The second book we are reading is called *In the Blue* by Erin Hourigan.

1. "They are a dep dark blue" ask, "What emotions can be represented by blue?" and let three students respond. Tell them, "Blue can represent many emotions that are

sort of like sad, such as *melancholy, nervous, or disappointed*. Melancholy means you are sad for a really long time. Nervous means you are scared to try something new. Disappointed means something didn't go the way you wanted it to. All of these are emotions are like being sad, just a little more specific. Let's see if the dad portrays any of these emotions through his blue in the story".

2. "I scream and rip. Throw, hit, and kick," tell students, "she is feeling *frustrated*. This means that she is feeling so mad that her body cannot control it so she takes it out on her surroundings".
3. "We all wait together in the blue" tell students, "They are all feeling different kinds of blue, or sad. The girl is feeling nervous because she does not know if her dad will be okay. She's also disappointed because what she did to cheer him up didn't work. The dad is melancholy because he has been sad for a really long time".
4. "I'm not afraid", tell students, "This means she is willing to confront the obstacles in front of her even though she is still scared. Scared is a small feeling whereas *afraid* is a big feeling. Scared is 'ahhh' and afraid is 'AHHH'."

   SHAKE IT OUT. HAVE STUDETS STAND UP AND STRETCH FOR A FEW SECONDS IF NEEDED.

The final book I am reading to you today is *The Rabbit Listened* by Cori Doerrfeld. Remember, try to feel or understand the emotions the characters in the book are feeling.

1. "Taylor was so *proud*", tell students this means, "Taylor feels happy because she did something new and accomplished it. So she's really happy for herself".

2. "I bet you feel so *angry*", tell students, "This is like when you're really mad, like frusturated in the last story".
3. "Let's go knock down someone else's", tell students, "The snake is *jealous*! This means it wishes it had what the other students had".

DAY 3

Hello everyone! This is my last day with you and I appreciate how great you have been so far. Today, I will be asking you four questions. They are the same four questions I asked the first day. If you weren't here that's okay just answer them the best you can. Don't forget, there is no right answer to these questions. Some of you might have the same answer, some of you might have different answers and that is all okay! I just want you to be honest with me. One/Two of these questions will also require a written response, whether that be by you writing a few words or drawing a picture. Something quick and easy. The one thing I want you to think about while you answer these questions are the books we read last week, *The Good Egg*, *In the Blue*, and *The Rabbit Listened*. I want you to close your eyes and try and remember these books for a second (pause). Any questions? (answer questions) You may stop me at any point if you have any questions.

The first question is: How would you feel if you were sitting alone at lunch? (let respond orally then give 1-3 minutes to draw/write)

The second question is: How would you feel if something you worked really hard on got ruined? (let respond orally)

The third question is: How would you feel if someone else had something you wanted? (let respond orally then give 1-3 minutes to draw/write for K and 3)

The fourth question is: How do you feel when you try something new? (let respond orally)

Those are all the questions I have! I will collect all of your drawings and see you guys soon. Thank you!