

The Impact of Circle Time Intervention on Student's Self-Regulation, Growth Mindset and  
Effort at School

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of circle time meetings on the self-regulation and growth mindset skills of fifth grade students. The participants in this study were 55 fifth grade students enrolled in a public elementary school in a suburban Maryland County. This study used a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design, and was conducted during a four consecutive-week period. During the intervention, each morning at the school, participants discussed various self-regulation and growth mindset questions related to the pre- and post-survey. Findings did not indicate that there were statistically significant increases in student self-regulation or growth mindset skills resulting from the intervention, however, students did appear to become more comfortable within a classroom community where they felt able to discuss strategies to promote self-regulation and growth mindset ideas. Students appeared to enjoy learning of their classmates' experiences and were observed referring back to strategies discussed during circle time meetings at times when they appeared frustrated by learning tasks.

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### Overview

There are many pressures within and beyond school that affect students' ability to self-regulate stress and reach their full academic potential. For example, teachers feel pressure to teach required content. Parents feel pressure to give their children the best education possible. Such pressures result in students experiencing both these teacher and parent pressures, as well as the emotional and physical pressure of peer relationships and trying to be successful academically.

The researcher's interest in this topic has resulted from many years of teaching and observing students become easily stressed and frustrated and think about themselves negatively due to the many demands they face in and out of school. In the researcher's school, many students play multiple sports or participate in extracurricular activities every night, have household chores to complete, must follow their parents' work schedules, and are expected to earn good grades and receive high test scores. The researcher noticed that the accumulation of these responsibilities led students to become frustrated when they were challenged and to become too overwhelmed to think clearly and problem-solve effectively. The experience of being overwhelmed and stressed appeared to result in reduced academic performance and/or poor emotional reactions by the students. Therefore, the researcher wanted to explore an intervention that would allow students to discuss these struggles openly within and as a classroom community and share ideas about how they might approach these situations constructively.

Research suggests circle time or classroom meetings can be used to relieve such pressures (Davis, 2018). Circle times or classroom meetings may afford teachers and students flexibility to discuss students' social, emotional and cognitive needs. Thus, this study was designed to explore the use of circle time within the classroom to improve students' self-regulation and growth mindset skills.

### **Statement of Problem**

The purpose of this study was to determine whether using circle time as an intervention would have a positive effect on students' self-regulation and growth mindset skills.

### **Hypothesis**

The null hypotheses for this study are that there would be no difference between gains in student self-regulation or growth mindset skills (as assessed by a survey) or effort in school of a group of students who participated in circle times to build motivational strategies and those of a similar group of students those who did not participate in circle times.

*ho1: gains in self-regulation (treatment group) = gains in self-regulation (control group)*

*ho2: gains in growth mindset (treatment group) = gains in growth mindset (control group)*

*ho3: gains in total survey scores (self-regulation and growth mindset) (treatment group) = gains in total survey scores (self-regulation and growth mindset) (control group)*

*ho4: gains in mean ratings of effort in school (treatment group) = gains in mean ratings of effort in school (control group)*

### **Operational Definitions**

The independent variable in this study was the Circle Time intervention.

**Circle Times** were class meetings that occurred daily for at least 15 minutes at the beginning of the school day. The meetings were led by the classroom teacher and included all students present

in the classroom. Everyone, including the classroom teacher, sat in a circle on the carpet at the front of the classroom to ensure that all participants felt as if they were a part of a community. The dependent variable in this study was improving students' self-regulation and growth mindset skills. These student skills were measured through a pre and post-test survey.

**Self-Regulation** is defined as monitoring ones own emotional state during challenging or overwhelming situations. (Good, 2008) It was measured by a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree using the teacher created survey in Appendix A.

**Growth Mindset** is defined as the belief that intelligence and academic ability are not fixed but are malleable and can be increased through effort and learning (Snipes & Tran, 2017). It was measured by a five-point Likert-type scales ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree using the teacher created survey in Appendix A.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

This literature review discusses the effects that circle time or class meetings have on student self-regulation and growth mindset skills among fifth grade students. It is becoming increasingly evident that children become overwhelmed or anxious by the pressures presented in elementary school. Performing well on state exams, meeting their parents' expectations and preparing himself or herself for a transition to middle school are some of the stressors a fifth-grade student may feel daily. These types of pressures can affect students' ability to self-regulate and beliefs regarding their capacity for success. In particular, such pressures may influence students' adoption of fixed or growth mindsets, which can impact behavior and achievement.

The first section of this literature review provides an overview of what self-regulation entails and its importance in student learning. The second section defines a growth mindset and how having a growth mindset can influence student learning. The third section focuses on how goal setting and self-assessments can relate to a connection between self-regulation and a growth mindset. Finally, the fourth section discusses how using circle time or class meetings can enhance both self-regulation and a growth mindset.

#### **Self-Regulation**

Self-regulation skills are skills that teachers and parents believe should be developed by students as they mature. However, the education system needs to support the development of these skills to ensure it is a positive attribute and used to promote success. "Self-regulated learning is the deliberate planning, monitoring, and regulating of cognitive, behavioral, and affective or motivational processes toward completion of an academic task" (Good, 2008, p. 1). Therefore, students can become intentional learners who choose targets or goals and make plans

for their learning. According to Good, these types of learners then can check their progress and intervene when things are not going as planned. Presumably, the development of these skills would increase success in many aspects of students' school experiences.

“Regular education classrooms include ever-increasing numbers of at-risk students. For example, special education students receive most, if not all, of their education in regular education classrooms. It is clear that teachers face enormous challenges meeting learners' academic and social-emotional needs” (Elksnin & Elksnin, 2003, p. 63). Therefore, it is important for educators to understand the benefits of implementing and guiding students to learn self-regulating skills in order to promote academic success. (Korinek & deFur, 2016). All students may not have the support at home for developing these skills. Students who are able to self-regulate their learning will have an academic advantage over students who struggle with self-regulation. Therefore, given the academic, behavioral, and subsequent social benefits of self-regulation, it should be a priority for elementary teachers to promote it among the students in their classrooms.

### **Growth Mindset**

“A growth mindset is the belief that academic ability or intelligence is not fixed but can be changed and enhanced over time through one's own effort” (Snipes & Tran, 2017, p. 1).

“Students with a growth mindset understand intelligence can be improved through their continued effort, learning from their failures, and showing persistence in spite of obstacles” (Garofalo, 2016, p. 4).

Garofalo (2016) noted that

“in an attempt to motivate today's students, teachers have embraced the benefits of such strategies as making real-world connections with the content, providing choice

for assignments, integrating technology into the classroom, creating project-based lessons, and forming positive relationships with each and every student. Even with all these approaches, though, many of the teachers that this researcher has spoken with are frustrated by students who do not try, do not attempt to learn and just do not seem to care” (p. 4).

Garofalo’s (2016) assertion above suggests that teaching students to have a growth mindset could benefit them by having a direct and positive influence on academic mindsets. “Students who have a growth mindset have more reason to believe that their performance can improve with effort. This in turn increases their incentive to make an effort to succeed academically and to engage in the academic behaviors that drive success in school. In contrast, students who hold a fixed-ability mindset are more likely to engage in performance avoidance” (Snipes & Tran, 2017, p. 2). Educators can influence development of this mindset in students within their own classrooms. Teachers can help students develop the ability to harness the power of the word “yet” (the time between now and the future) in order to counteract their initial reactions during immediate failure. By doing so, this can be considered the first step to developing personal sense of their potential growth and achievement. When focusing on a growth mindset, students can begin to make positive connections to failure when it addresses learning rather than the need for academic success (Pueschel, & Tucker, 2018).

Before introducing students to ways in which they can engage in growth mindset, students can be encouraged to reflect on growth challenges (Pueschel & Tucker, 2018). “Engaging in difficult dialogues is one of the essential practices for changing institutional practices and building institutional capacity in continuous improvement processes” (Hanson, Ruff, & Bangert, 2016, p. 2). Therefore, educators need to be willing to have ‘tough’

conversations with their students in order to develop a better understanding of how to change students' attitudes from a negative mindset to a growth mindset. For example, 'tough' conversations may consist of asking when students have overcome difficult challenges or what internal characteristics helped them to overcome obstacles or what internal characteristics have hindered success when they met with failure in trying to overcome a challenge. Pueschel and Tucker (2018) explain that these conversations can help students gain insights about their ability to personally enhance their success through continued effort and problem solving, which requires self-regulation.

### **Goal Setting**

Goal setting can be one of the most important components for educators to incorporate within classroom instruction to ensure students develop a growth mindset and develop confidence in their ability to learn. "Goals and criteria enable students to know what and why they will learn so that they can become active participants in what otherwise can be a passive learning process. When a new topic is introduced, it is crucial for students to share their goals, needs and criteria to get good results and notes" (Ozan, & Kınca, 2018, p. 87).

Goal setting can relate directly to skills such as self-regulation and a growth mindset. As students work through the process of understanding and learning these skills, they should be given the opportunity to share their goals and discuss how attaining self-regulation and growth mindset skills are going to affect them. For example, students can discuss how self-regulation skills can enable them to recognize when they begin feeling frustrated or losing focus and that a break to regroup might lead to continued productive learning. Through such conversations, students are able to develop an understanding as to why they are working on self-regulation and growth mindset skills. Therefore, "school norms and peer beliefs regarding the nature of

academic ability and the value of effort may shape academic mindsets and, through them, students' academic behaviors and outcomes" (Snipes & Tran, 2017, p. 3).

A classroom environment that makes self-assessment and goal-setting central to the process of learning can move students toward self-regulation and increased achievement. Research such as that reported by Horn (2007) suggests that examples of such an atmosphere include activities that help students feel as if they are part of a community of learners, diverse individuals working together like an ice breaker where students can realize that they already know a great deal about setting a goal and about the importance of team work, of effort, and of perseverance.

### **Circle Time and Class Meetings**

#### **Description**

Davis (2018) observes "As long as a student thinks negatively of themselves, or their school, it can be difficult for them to achieve successfully academically. Class meetings are a way in which to target and combat these perceptions within the student population" (p. 4-5). One type of classroom meeting is circle time. In circle time, students can experience both modeling and hands-on experience with finding solutions for what goes wrong. Additionally, circle time can give students an outlet to voice their concerns and share what is frustrating or hindering them. Cudmore (2018) reflects on the emotional attachment that classroom circles can provide for students, thus improving their learning and behavior. Class meetings or circle time can enhance the way students learn self-regulation and growth mindset skills. Davis (2018) notes that circles "provide both modeling and hands-on experience with finding solutions for what goes wrong" such as receiving a bad test grade or struggling to complete an assignment. Students can

be given the opportunity to share the goals they have set to achieve self-regulation and growth mindset skills within circle time or class meetings.

### **Relationship to Self-regulation and Mindset**

“Circle Time involves activities aimed at developing participants’ awareness of themselves and of others; raising self-esteem; and promoting mutual trust, listening skills and positive interpersonal behaviors” (Canney & Byrne, 2006, p. 2). By developing students’ awareness of themselves, they will be able to work towards their own self-regulation and growth mindset goals, as well as share the struggles they are facing through this process. “Research has shown that students respond more positively to being actively involved in their learning. The larger the role students are given in their learning, the more engaged and invested they often are” (Davis, 2018, p. 8). Therefore, the use of circle time to enhance self-regulation and growth mindsets can provide students with the active engagement necessary to implement these skills in their daily lives. Overall, multiple studies suggest that interventions targeting academic mindsets such as circle time can have substantial positive effects on academic outcomes (Snipes & Tran, 2017).

### **CONCLUSION**

Circle time and class meetings offer a strategy to enable students to become invested in themselves, while helping them learn self-regulation and growth mindset skills that can enhance their success within and outside of the school setting. The self-regulated learner is assured of his or her own ability, is independent, has self-esteem, and more inner interest (Khalaj & Savoji, 2018). Increased self-esteem and inner interest, promoted with circle time, may result in students developing their mindsets positively, thus becoming more likely to reach their potential when faced with academic, social, and emotional challenges.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODS**

#### **Design**

The purpose of this study was to determine whether using circle time as an intervention would have a positive effect on students' self-regulation and growth mindset skills. The study used a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design. A pre-intervention survey was given to two groups of students to assess their self-regulation and growth mindset in relation to prompted situations. Then, the treatment, which involved circle time discussions/class meetings related to self-regulation and growth mindset skills, was provided daily for four weeks, to one of the groups of students. The other group continued to follow their usual morning routine, which consisted of discussing the schedule of the day. Informal observational data also were collected during the four-week intervention period to document students' reactions when the researcher observed signs of frustration or students feeling overwhelmed. In addition to noting these incidents, students were asked if they could use any of the strategies discussed during circle time/class meetings to help them self-regulate and grow their mindset. Their responses were noted by the researcher to aid in the discussion of the study's results. After the intervention, the same survey was re-administered to both groups to assess whether their feelings or responses had changed over the treatment period and whether these differed across treatment conditions (circle time and no circle time). The independent variable for this study was circle time. The dependent variables for this study were the students' self-regulation and growth mindset skills assessed by the survey.

#### **Participants**

The participants included in this study were students in two fifth grade classes who ranged in age from 10-11 years old. All were enrolled in the same public elementary school in Harford County, Maryland. Each group consisted of 30 students who were heterogeneously grouped at random prior to the school year. One group received the circle time intervention aimed at increasing self-regulation and growth mindset and the other continued with their normal routine discussing the daily schedule but did not receive any specific circle time interventions to address growth mindset or self-regulation.

### **Instrument**

The instrument used in this study was a survey regarding student views of their self-regulation and growth mindset, which was administered to both the treatment and control groups before and after the intervention. The researcher created this survey to assess students' emotional needs which had been observed in the classroom and which the literature review suggested that circle time could address constructively. A copy of the survey is found in Appendix A. Students were asked to rate their agreement with each prompt by selecting from a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Scores were computed by summing the ratings and were then compared across time and groups.

### **Procedure**

This study consisted of using daily circle time discussions in order to improve students' self-regulation and growth mindset skills. To be able to accomplish this intervention, circle time discussions/class meetings were conducted daily at the beginning of the school day for the treatment group only. As students entered the classroom, a circle time question was displayed on the board to give students' sufficient time and opportunity to think of a response to share. Each student arrived in the classroom between 8:30 a.m. and 8:45 a.m.; circle time began after the



morning announcements at 9 a.m. In order to create a classroom community, students were told that they were expected to share a short response to answer the question displayed but they were not required to go into detail with their responses unless they chose to do so. Students also were expected to sit quietly on the carpet in a circle while others spoke, thereby demonstrating respect for one another. Students were selected to respond if they volunteered when asked to share. After everyone within the circle responded, the daily schedule was reviewed and directions for the next activity were given. Each circle time discussion focused on a question that changed every day or was based upon the discussion from the prior day. Each question used during the four-week period was derived from the teacher-created survey to guide the discussion so that students might express their suggestions about how to improve their own self-regulation and growth mindset skills.

Students in both the control and the treatment groups had been participating in ‘circle time’-like discussions from the start of the school year by sitting in a circle and hearing about the daily schedule related to the day and week. During this time, students were encouraged to ask questions about what they should be expecting, if they had any general questions about the schedule, a subject or activity, or if they had anything interesting about themselves that they wanted others to know. At the beginning of the study, the circle time routine was adjusted for the treatment group, but not the comparison group, to incorporate questions that were generated by the teacher to specifically address understanding and improving self-regulation and growth mindset. As stated above, each day the students were given a different question that related to items on the pre-and post-intervention survey, which is found in Appendix B.

At the conclusion of the study, all students in both groups were re-administered the same survey that each had completed at the beginning of the study. Differences in responses from the

pre- to post- intervention phase and across groups were compared to determine whether the intervention affected them significantly. Those results are discussed in Chapter Four.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS**

The purpose of this study was to determine whether using circle time as an intervention would have a positive effect on students' self-regulation and growth mindset skills. Surveys described in Chapter III were administered to the student participants to determine whether the intervention had a positive effect.

The researcher recorded data from the surveys. Four students, all of whom were in the treatment group, were excluded from the analyses as each failed to respond to one survey item (not all the same item), which would have affected their total Self-regulation or Growth Mindset and Total survey scores. This adjustment resulted in a sample size of 26 for the treatment group and 29 for the control group. Two other students in the treatment group failed to rate their effort at school on the post survey. Since they did respond to all of the other survey items, they were included in the analyses regarding self-regulation, growth mindset, and total scores, but not the analyses regarding effort at school as can be noted in the sample sizes noted in the output tables below.

#### **Pre-Intervention Comparison of Treatment and Control Group's Self-regulation, Growth Mindset, Total Survey Scores and Effort at School**

First, descriptive statistics were computed for the pre and post-intervention scores reflecting Self-regulation, Growth Mindset, Total Survey Scores, and Effort at School. These were computed separately for the treatment and control groups and follow in Table 1.

Table 1

*Descriptive statistics summarizing Self-Regulation, Growth Mindset and Total survey scores, and Ratings of Effort at School before and after treatment (disaggregated by group)*

Scale		n	Survey	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
<b>Self-Regulation</b> (survey items: 3, 4, 6, 7 10,11) (0-30 possible)	Treatment	26	Pre	21	5.43	11-30
			Post	21.77	5.10	13-28
	Control	29	Pre	20.45	4.21	12-28
			Post	21.10	4.30	12-30
<b>Growth Mindset</b> (survey items: 1, 2, 5, 8,9,10) (0-30 possible)	Treatment	26	Pre	24.62	3.62	17-30
			Post	24.11	3.34	17-30
	Control	29	Pre	24.59	2.83	20-29
			Post	24.51	2.72	19-29
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b> (0-60 possible)	Treatment	26	Pre	45.62	8.08	31-59
			Post	45.88	7.64	32-56
	Control	29	Pre	45.03	6.07	33-56
			Post	45.62	6.53	31-59
<b>Effort in school</b> (1-10)	Treatment	26	Pre	7.92	2.13	1-10
		24	Post	8.00	2.02	2-10
	Control	29	Pre	8.17	1.31	5-10
			Post	8.12	1.00	6-10

Next, the pre-intervention means for Self-regulation, Growth Mindset, Total Survey Scores, and Effort at School each were compared across the groups using four t-tests for independent samples to ensure the groups were similar in terms of these variables before the circle time intervention was provided to the treatment group. The results follow in Table 2 and indicated that none of the two groups' four pre-test scores differed in a statistically significant manner before the intervention.

Table 2

*Results of T-tests for Independent Samples comparing Treatment and Control Groups' Mean Pre-Intervention Self-regulation, Growth Mindset and Total Survey Scores and Effort at School Ratings*

Pre-Intervention Score	Mean Difference	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed) (p)	Std. Error of Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
<b>Self-regulation</b>	.552	.423	53	.674	1.30	-2.06	3.16
<b>Growth mindset</b>	.029	.035	53	.972	.84	-1.65	1.70
<b>Total</b>	.581	.303	53	.763	1.92	-3.26	4.42
<b>Rating of Effort in School</b>	-.249	-.528	53	.600	.47	-1.20	.70

Gain scores for Self-regulation, Growth Mindset, and Total Survey Scores and ratings of Effort at School then were calculated by subtracting each student's pre-intervention score on each of these variables from his or her post-intervention score on them. T-tests for independent samples were run to determine whether these gains differed statistically significantly across the treatment and control conditions. Descriptive statistics regarding these gain scores follow in Table 3 and the results of the t-tests for independent samples follow in Table 4. The results in Table 4 reveals that none of the mean differences between the groups' gains were large enough

to meet criteria for statistical significance at the .05 level. Therefore, null hypotheses 1-4, which stated that the gain scores would not differ significantly, were retained.

Table 3

*Descriptive statistics summarizing Gains in Self-Regulation, Growth Mindset, and Total survey scores and Ratings of Effort at School (disaggregated by group)*

<b>Gains</b>		<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>SEM</b>
<b>Self-Regulation</b>  (survey items: 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11)  (0-30 possible)	Treatment	26	.769	4.05	.79
	Control	29	.655	2.71	.50
<b>Growth Mindset</b>  (survey items: 1, 2, 5, 8, 9, 10)  (0-30 possible)	Treatment	26	-.500	3.74	.73
	Control	29	-.069	1.56	.29
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>  (0-60 possible)	Treatment	26	.269	6.65	1.30
	Control	29	.586	3.31	.62
<b>Effort in school</b>  (1-10)	Treatment	24	.083	1.75	.36
	Control	29	-.052	.87	.16

Table 4

*Results of T-tests for Independent Samples comparing Gains in the Treatment and Control Groups' Self-regulation, Growth Mindset, and Total Survey Scores and Ratings of Effort at School*

Gain Score	Mean Difference (between Treatment and Control Group Mean Gains)	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed) (p)	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
<b>Self-regulation</b>	.114	.124	53	.90	.922	-1.73	1.96
<b>Growth mindset</b>	.431	-.568	53	.57	.759	-1.95	1.09
<b>Total</b>	.316	-.227	53	.82	1.394	-3.11	2.48
<b>Rating of Effort in school</b>	.138	.364	51	.72	.371	-.61	.88

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this study was to determine if daily circle time meetings related to self-regulation and growth mindset skills would affect students' self-ratings of their overall self-regulation and growth mindset skills. After discussing self-regulation and growth mindset strategies in daily circle times, students appeared to be more comfortable sharing how they felt about themselves and discussing possible strategies they could implement in their own daily lives in the future.

#### **Implication of the Results**

The results of this study did not find mean differences between the groups' gains that were large enough to meet criteria for statistical significance within the students' self-regulation and growth mindset skills. Therefore, null hypotheses one through four, which stated that the gain scores would not differ significantly, were retained. This finding implies that the intervention did not improve the skills significantly; however, observations made by the researcher suggested there were some benefits of the circle times that might warrant further research. These are reviewed below.

#### **Theoretical Consequences**

Using circle time as a way to involve students in conversations about self-regulation and growth mindset skills appears to affect students in a positive manner and may improve their belief in their own ability to succeed and improve their effort, which then may increase their motivation to be successful in school (Snipes & Tran, 2017). Also, when students are able to engage in behaviors such as attending, participating, following directions, organizing and managing materials and time, and completing assignments, they are demonstrating their ability to



self-regulate which leads to increased academic and social performance across a variety of subjects and school levels (Korinek & deFur, 2016.). While the results of this study were not statistically significant, observations and data collected suggested that these meetings did have some positive impact on the self-regulation and growth mindset skills of the sample of fifth grade students. For example, students were ready each morning to sit in a circle on the front carpet and discuss the upcoming question with each other. While discussing the circle time topics and these skills, students were observed to make connections with and listen to one another. Throughout the day, if an activities or situations became challenging, a student was found to say, “Think about what we talked about during circle time,” to encourage their classmate to work through the problem. The researcher found that referring to student responses from circle time when discussing something that was frustrating with individual students positively affected how those students continued to approach such situations or how the students discussed their self-perception. Finally, students appeared more able to describe the strategies related to self-regulation and growth mindset, after participating in the circle time meetings in which they were reviewed.

### **Threats to the Validity**

There were multiple threats to validity in this study. The first was that the sample was a convenience sample from one school where the researcher worked. Another threat to validity was that the intervention was implemented for only four weeks. Within these four weeks, there were four snow days, one school closing because of a holiday, and one delayed opening that affected the schedule of the school day, causing the treatment group to miss a circle time discussion. An additional threat to validity was the size of the sample. The sample consisted of only 29 students in the control group and 26 in the treatment group. The survey given also posed

threats to validity because of its brevity and the fact that the ratings of effort at school, which were developed by the researcher, were not significantly different. This resulted in participants' responses being difficult to quantify or compare. Using a Likert-type rating scale with more clearly stated items may have yielded more informative responses, thus ensuring that the ratings were of greater value when interpreting the results of the study.

### **Connections to Previous Studies**

Multiple studies have suggested that interventions targeting academic mindsets such as circle time can have substantial positive effects on academic outcomes (Snipes & Tran, 2017). As noted in Chapter II, self-regulated learning involves intentional planning, monitoring, and regulating cognitive, behavioral and motivational processes toward assignment completion (Good, 2008). Students with a growth mindset understand that intelligence can be enhanced through the amount of continued effort put forth, learning from their own mistakes and demonstrating perseverance when something becomes difficult. (Garofalo, 2016) The researcher noted issues with these constructs, reflected upon how they were related to each other and to the students' school. She then applied these insights to determine if circle time might increase growth mindset or self-regulation, or both, among fifth grade students.

In addition, circle time activities were aimed at increasing participants' self-esteem, building trust, increasing listening skills, and supporting positive interpersonal behaviors. Canney and Byrne (2006) conducted research that suggested such activities could effectively address these constructs.

This study yielded results that were not statistically significant with respect to the benefits of using circle time to discuss self-regulation and growth mindset skills with students, which was not expected given the results of past research. Since there were some limitations to

the study, those should be considered before its findings are interpreted to mean the circle times do not affect the target skills in a positive manner.

### **Implications for Future Research**

It is recommended that future research pertaining to students' self-regulation and growth mindset skills by implementing circle time at school address some of the threats of validity that were present in this study. Additionally, a future researcher might review the questions used during circle time to ensure they match more specific outcomes and are parallel to items in any surveys given to students. Piloting a survey about self-regulation, growth mindset, and effort at school could help ensure the validity of the assessments, the ease of interpreting students' responses, and the attainment of useful ratings. Also, conducting similar studies about the effectiveness of circle time meetings for improving self-regulation and growth mindset skills with varied school populations and students of varied ages could offer insight on which of these constructs and practices may be most beneficial for diverse populations.

### **Conclusions/Summary**

The literature reviewed by the researcher suggested that incorporating a circle-time type of intervention could improve self-regulation, growth mindset skills, and effort among students. However, results from this study were able to suggest that circle time meetings related to student self-regulation and growth mindset skills may have been only slightly beneficial to students. By discussing self-regulation and growth mindset skills within a community-like environment, students did appear to feel more comfortable sharing their own perceptions of themselves. Given the students' positive reception to the circle time meetings and no apparent detriment to the treatment group, the researcher continues to implement daily circle time meetings within her

classrooms and the researcher will continue to make observations to determine what aspects of the meetings appear to be most beneficial for her students.

As situations related to self-regulation and growth mindset arise within the classroom, the teacher can guide students to reflect on relevant discussions held during circle time to help the students respond in a positive and effective manner. For example, when a student received a high score on a math assignment during the study, he shared that he believed he was a ‘decent learner and tries decently’. However, in that moment, the researcher used this concrete evidence of a good test result and suggested to the student that he was a hard worker and a positive learner. The researcher believes that by teaching and modeling concepts and terms related to growth mindset and self-regulation, students such as this may internalize the concepts and improve their self-regulation and growth mindset skills as well as their achievement and general success.

Given the results of research and potential benefits of students learning the work habits associated with growth mindset and strong self-regulation, future studies building on the current study appear to be warranted.

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## Appendix A

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions by circling the number that best describes your feelings about each statement.

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither Disagree nor Agree	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
1. People who are successful work to be successful.					
2. I am able to learn all that I can for my age and grade the way I am taught.					
3. When I have trouble understanding something I keep trying.					
4. I feel proud knowing I am in charge of what I am able to learn.					
5. I do have access to tools, resources or people to help me learn all I am able to learn.					
6. Challenging tasks make me feel excited.					
7. I know what tasks are difficult for me and I enjoy working through them.					
8. I try hard at school because I want to be successful.					
9. I set goals when I try hard at school.					
10. During an activity I think about how hard I am working and how rewarding it is to do well.					
11. I review and reflect on my hard work to change mistakes for the future.					
12. People who are smart hard.					



How hard do you try at school? Make this a rating from 1 to 10: \_\_\_\_\_  
Explain in 3-5 sentences why that is how hard you try?

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## Appendix B

### 4-Week Circle Time Discussion Questions

Week 1: (Related to questions 1-2 from the researcher created survey)

1. Monday: Who is a successful person you know?
2. Tuesday: What makes a person successful?
3. Wednesday: Can people become successful or are you born successful?
4. Thursday: Can you continue to keep learning or does it fill up like a glass?
5. Friday: Can you grow to be smarter than you are today?

Week 2: (Related to questions 3-4 from the researcher created survey)

1. Monday: NO SCHOOL
2. Tuesday: How do I feel when I have trouble understanding something?
3. Wednesday: How do I feel when I am successful at understanding something?
4. Thursday: Am I in charge of what I am able to learn?
5. Friday: How can I think about myself to know that I am able to learn?

Week 3: (Related to questions 5-6 from the researcher created survey)

1. Monday: How do challenging tasks make me feel?
2. Tuesday: What can I do when I begin to feel frustrated?
3. Wednesday: Whom can I talk to when I begin to feel frustrated or overwhelmed?
4. Thursday: Am I a failure when I do something incorrectly?
5. Friday: What can I do to change my outcome when I have done something incorrectly?

Week 4: (Related to questions 7-9 from the researcher created survey)

1. Monday: Why do I try hard?
2. Tuesday: When do I feel smart and successful?
3. Wednesday: Can I be smart and successful even if I fail?
4. Thursday: If I am smart, do I have to work hard?
5. Friday: Why do I work hard?