



Integration of Cultures in Early Childhood Education: Finnish and Mexican Practices for Improving Self-Regulation Skills.

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**Integration of Cultures in Early Childhood Education: Finnish and Mexican
Practices for Improving Self-Regulation Skills.**

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My thesis managed to create culturally sensitive workshops that emphasized self-regulation skills in early childhood by combining Finnish educational approaches with Mexican cultural values. This project was carried out in partnership with the community center Renovación - Unión de Fuerzas, Unión de Esfuerzos in Mexico City, with a focus on the needs of low-income families and educators. I collaborated closely with the pedagogy director and other stakeholders to create four workshops covering emotional awareness, methods of relaxation, and creative expression. The workshops were based on theoretical frameworks like Shanker's (2016) self-regulation methods and Finland's early childhood education curriculum, to facilitate families and educators in integrating these practices into their everyday routines.

The project used qualitative research methods, which included interviews and observations, to explore how Finnish and Mexican educational paradigms may be blended. Continuous feedback from stakeholders, including the pedagogy director and members of the community, was essential in structuring the workshops and addressing issues like time restrictions and the need for flexibility. The workshops were well accepted and had a beneficial impact on the community, encouraging children, parents, and educators to develop emotional awareness and resilience.

This thesis provides essential contributions to the field of early childhood education by demonstrating how culturally responsive approaches can empower communities and improve child development. The project's success not only met the needs of the working-life representatives, but it also provided the groundwork for future projects at Renovación, fostering more collaborative, play-based teaching practices. The findings have the potential to be implemented in many different kinds of educational contexts, promoting the use of self-regulation tools in early childhood education.

Additionally, the thesis process contributed to the creation of a detailed self-regulation guidebook for educators, which collects the workshop methods, activities, and outcomes. This guide is practical for educators exploring self-regulation approaches in their classrooms, providing culturally sensitive alternatives to encouraging emotional awareness, relaxation techniques, and creative expression in young learners. The guidebook (Appendix 1: Guide for Self-Regulation) comes at the end of the thesis and offers easily available tools that educators may customize and utilize in diverse educational environments. It makes a significant impact in supporting long-term, play-based learning and self-regulation in early childhood development.

Keywords: self-regulation, emotional awareness, early childhood education, community collaboration, guide.

Contents

1	Introduction.....	6
2	Background.....	7
2.1	Development-Based Thesis.....	7
2.2	Working Life Partner	8
2.3	Ethical Considerations	9
3	Theoretical Framework.....	10
3.1	The Concept of Self-Regulation.....	10
3.2	Culture Consideration on Self-Regulation.....	12
3.2.1	Parenting Practices in Mexico	13
3.2.2	Parenting Practice in Finland.....	14
4	Policies Framework Early childhood education and care (ECEC)	15
4.1	Overview of ECEC policies and regulations in Mexico and Finland	15
4.2	Integration of Self-Regulation into National Curriculum Frameworks	16
4.2.1	Educators' Practices in Mexico.....	17
4.2.2	Educators' Practices in Finland	18
5	Implementation of the thesis	19
5.1	Planning.....	19
5.1.1	Objective and Initial Approach.....	20
5.1.2	Collaborations and Participants.....	21
5.1.3	Data Collection.....	23
6	Workshops.....	24
6.1	Workshop I:.....	26
6.2	Workshop II.....	28
6.3	Workshop III:	32
6.4	Workshop IV:	35
6.5	Workshops conclusion and evaluation	38
7	Discussion.....	40
	References.....	44
	Appendices.....	51
	Figures.....	62

1 Introduction

As someone who has lived a considerable portion of my life going through the educational environments of Finland and Mexico, this thesis is a very personal and professional experience. After living in Finland for almost two decades while maintaining deep connections to my Mexican heritage, I've become more conscious of the different advantages and challenges that come with these two culturally diverse systems of education. This thesis is the outcome from a collaborative project that seeks to bridge these educational approaches by focusing on the development of self-regulation skills in early childhood education (ECE).

The initial inspiration for this project was a shared awareness, in partnership with the community center "Renovación - Unión de Fuerzas, Unión de Esfuerzos" in Mexico City, of the important part that self-regulation plays in holistic child development. Drawing on over 40 years of experience in the ECEC field, my working life partner and I set out to develop a culturally sensitive, evidence-based framework incorporating Finnish and Mexican educational practices. Our goal was to facilitate children's cognitive, emotional, and social development, particularly in low-income homes, by improving the self-regulation skills of parents, educators, and assistants. To make this idea a reality, I organized four workshops to carry out the project, facilitating cooperation and practical interaction with the community.

According to research, self-regulation in early childhood is a significant indicator of beneficial developmental outcomes (Blair & Diamond 2008; Zimmerman 2000). Furthermore, self-regulation is a cognitive ability that is strongly influenced by cultural circumstances (Markus & Kitayama 1991; Triandis 1995). Understanding this, we set out to design workshops that not only taught self-regulation strategies, but also respected and integrated the Mexican community's traditional values and practices. This approach is consistent with the belief that effective education requires being culturally sensitive and contextually appropriate (Vygotsky 1978).

The organization and execution of these workshops were driven by a complete needs assessment, which was carried out in close collaboration with Renovación's Pedagogy Director. The assessment found that focusing on the professional development of educators, parents, and assistants would result in considerable improvements to children's self-regulation. This perspective is supported by Whitebread et al. (2017), who highlighted the importance of adults in promoting self-regulation in children. Therefore, the workshops were

designed to equip these key stakeholders with the skills and knowledge necessary to create supportive learning environments for young children.

This thesis details the development, implementation, and assessment of culturally sensitive workshops. It also considers the more general effects of combining Finnish and Mexican educational practices, adding to the current debate about the significance of culture in education. By integrating these two systems of learning, I intend to demonstrate the potential for intercultural collaboration to improve early childhood education worldwide.

The findings of this development project not only underscore the necessity of culturally tailored educational interventions but also demonstrate how these approaches might end in considerable improvements to children's emotional and social well-being. As we advance on a more connected world, comprehending and valuing cultural diversity in educational processes becomes increasingly important.

2 Background

2.1 Development-Based Thesis

A development-based thesis establishes a solid foundation for assessing educational practices and promoting transformation in early childhood education and care (ECEC). By adopting this approach, I expect to make a major improvement in the development of self-regulation competencies among parents, assistants, and educators drawing on insights from my working life partnership with Mexico City's community center "Renovación- Union de Fuerzas, Union de Esfuerzos," as well as Finnish evidence-based methods.

Adjusting educational methods using regular assessments, such as those undertaken by the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC), allows a thorough grasp of present practices and areas for improvement (FINEEC 2020). This detailed assessment acts as the framework for the creation of my thesis, enabling tailored interventions to improve self-regulation skills in ECEC contexts.

Furthermore, a development-based approach emphasizes ongoing improvement and development in the framework of education. This methodology promotes a culture of continuous learning and progress by identifying areas for improvement and providing practical suggestions (FINEEC 2020). In my thesis, I utilize this philosophy to provide practical methods for developing self-regulation competencies for parents, assistants, and educators, drawing on insights from many different cultural settings and collaborative partnerships.

I aim to improve the standards of early childhood education by implementing sets of workshops guided by evidence-based methods and cultural perspectives. By incorporating components that include play-based learning activities, regulating emotions methods, and collaborative approaches with educators, parents, and people in the community, it's my goal to build positive settings in which children may flourish. (Finnish National Agency for Education 2022; Shanker 2021; Yoshikawa et al. 2007).

In a nutshell a development-based thesis not only provides a strong framework for examining educational methods, but it also gives practical ideas for improving adults' educational experiences. By integrating research findings and collaborative relationships, I expect to contribute to the continuous improvement of early childhood education and care practices, which will benefit families, communities, and children.

2.2 Working Life Partner

In our continuous collaboration to improve early childhood education and care (ECEC) practices, my working life partner and I are starting on an exciting adventure that will connect knowledge and experiences from Mexico and Finland. Our collaboration with the community center "Renovación - Unión de Fuerzas, Unión de Esfuerzos" in Mexico City reflects our ongoing commitment to the development and well-being of young children, particularly those from low-income families.

Drawing on over 40 years of experience in the ECEC sector, my partner's deep insights into the challenges and opportunities within the community serve as the foundation for our joint efforts. We have recognized that it is essential to educate parents, assistants, and educators about self-regulation to create competencies that will improve children's cognitive, emotional, and social skills in ECEC settings. Blair and Diamond (2008), Zimmerman (2000), and Piaget (1962) state that self-regulation plays an important part in children's overall development. Furthermore, Markus and Kitayama (1991) and Triandis (1995) discuss how cultural norms influence self-regulation, underlining the significance of culturally sensitive educational methods.

Inspired by Mexico and Finland's rich cultural legacy, our collaboration aims to use evidence-based approaches from both countries to improve educational experiences at our services. By accepting variety and cultural differences, we hope to create a supportive environment that promotes children's overall holistic development.

Our partnership shows a commitment to worldwide solidarity and cooperation in achieving ECEC goals. We aim to develop creative ideas customized to our community's specific needs

through ongoing discussions, knowledge exchange, and active participation from all stakeholders. We plan to put together a series of workshops to help parents, assistants, and educators develop self-regulation skills, based on Mexico and Finland's combined expertise. This collaborative approach intends to provide these individuals with the abilities and knowledge they require to succeed in an ever-changing world.

2.3 Ethical Considerations

In my thesis, I was completely conscious of the ethical considerations that supported each step of my study and writing process. From development to implementation, I followed the ethical norms established by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK). This ensured that all components of my study, including interviews with educators and child observations, were carried out with transparency and followed ethical principles (Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity 2012).

Protecting participants' privacy and anonymity were high ethical considerations in this study (Wiles et al., 2008). To guarantee this, some security measures were implemented. Written permission was obtained from both parents and childcare management to ensure the children's confidentiality. Semi-structured interviews with parents and staff were done only after getting their full approval, and their anonymity was rigorously maintained throughout the study and thesis. Furthermore, photographs of parents and educators were only used after receiving clear written authorization. While these permission forms are not included in the thesis, all participants were fully informed about the use of their photographs, and their privacy was respected throughout the entire study.

A further significant component of ethical research was the use of reliable and multiple sources. I aimed to use primary sources whenever feasible since they provided firsthand evidence of the research issue (Creswell & Creswell 2018). Furthermore, I avoided plagiarism by carefully referencing all sources following Laurea's guidelines (Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity 2012).

Throughout my thesis, I adhered to the key values of research truthfulness: dependability, respect, openness, and responsibility (All European Academies 2023). This included providing accurate knowledge and ensuring that all results were my own, as well as protecting participant anonymity and securing relevant permission for the study (Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity 2012). Furthermore, I recognized the need to bring current and different perspectives into my study to reduce personal bias. By gathering a variety of perspectives, I aimed to provide a thorough and impartial study of the subject (Pannucci & Wilkins 2011).

Finally, when writing this thesis, I used ChatGPT, a big language model built by OpenAI (OpenAI 2024), as a tool to assist with translation and language refinement to improve fluency and clarity in English, my second language. In alignment with the ALLEA (All European Academies 2023) criteria for the responsible use of generative AI in research, I verified and recreated the information produced by the AI. I addressed this process honestly, openly acknowledging my usage of generative AI in my writing. Furthermore, I respected intellectual property rights and proper citation methods, ensuring that my research met moral requirements. Lastly, I accepted my responsibility for the overall research output, stating that the usage of ChatGPT functioned merely as a supplement to improve my writing, rather than replacing my original critical thinking or the development of the study's initial content (European Commission 2024).

In a nutshell, my thesis is informed by a dedication to ethical research procedures, including honesty, secrecy, trust, and various viewpoints.

3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 The Concept of Self-Regulation

Self-regulation is defined as the ability to manage how one acts, thinks and feels in pursuit of long-term goals (Baumeister & Vohs 2016), and it goes beyond willpower. It illustrates a dynamic interaction between brain functions, emotional regulation, and motivating drives. This concept has significant effects, especially in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) settings, where the foundations of self-regulation are started out developed.

Drawing on the dual-process theory, which argues that our behaviors are influenced by both instinctive and regulated mechanisms (Kahneman 2011), I see parallels between my own experiences with procrastination and unhealthy habits and the difficulties children face in developing self-regulation. Like how I must consciously control my natural tendencies to attain my goals, children in ECEC settings must learn to regulate their impulses and emotions to successfully navigate their early learning experiences. This approach emphasizes the value of structured guidance and support in facilitating children to learn the regulated processes needed for self-regulation.

However, more recent research has questioned the traditional view of self-regulation as a limited resource, like a muscle that can fatigue with excessive exercise (Baumeister et al. 1998). According to Inzlicht and Schmeichel (2012), self-regulation is not a decreasing skill,

but rather one that can be improved via training and persistence. This viewpoint is especially powerful in the context of ECEC since it implies that children's self-regulation abilities may be developed and reinforced over time, rather than being limited by boundaries. The difference in approach emphasizes the significance of early interventions and continuous encouragement in diverse situations.

In ECEC settings, parents, educators, and assistants play critical roles in promoting self-regulation. Parents, as the first and most influential adults in their children's lives, have a significant impact on their ability to self-regulate. The kind of parent-child interaction, defined by responsiveness, warmth, and proper boundary-setting, has a major impact on a child's self-regulation abilities (Bernier, Carlson, & Whipple 2010). As a result, it is critical to offer parents guidance and methods based on self-regulation theory. Educators and assistants who work with children daily in ECEC settings play an important part in this process. Their unique position allows them to carry out planned activities and participate in relationships that encourage self-regulation (Zurek et al. 2014).

The neuroscientific insights on self-regulation highlight the need for early intervention. The prefrontal cortex, which is involved in planning, decision-making, and managing activities, is essential for self-regulation (Heatherton & Wagner 2011). This brain region's relationship to the limbic system, which processes emotions, emphasizes the complex equilibrium between cognitive functions and emotional regulation. In ECEC settings, this principle emphasizes the need of giving children opportunity to practice self-regulation in an atmosphere of support where they have the opportunity to effectively manage their emotions and behaviors. What interests me the most is how environmental and social factors affect self-regulation. According to Bandura's social cognitive theory, our ability to self-regulate is heavily influenced by our surroundings, especially the actions we observe in others and the feedback we experience. In the context of ECEC, this idea emphasizes the need of having a consistent and encouraging experience at home and in the classroom. Research by Shanker (2016) highlights the importance of collaborative efforts among all caregivers in enhancing children's self-regulation. By encouraging communication and collaboration between parents, educators, and assistants, we may build a united support system that encourages children's self-regulation development in a variety of settings.

In defining the theoretical framework for my thesis on improving children's self-regulation in ECEC settings, I realized the significance of a comprehensive and cooperative approach. This approach requires actively engaging parents, educators, and assistants in the process of promoting children's self-regulation. By providing stakeholders with realistic, research-based tools and methods, we can guarantee that children obtain consistent and powerful communication through multiple environments. This constancy is critical for helping

youngsters integrate and implement self-regulation abilities effectively in a variety of contexts (McClelland, Geldhof, Cameron, & Wanless 2015).

As a conclusion, self-regulation is a diverse and dynamic process that is essential for accomplishing long-term objectives. In Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) settings, encouraging children's self-regulation needs the coordinated efforts of parents, educators, and assistants. This thesis proposes to build an effective approach for improving self-regulation between parents, assistants, and educators by incorporating the latest research and theoretical frameworks. This holistic approach is critical for providing children with the self-regulation skills needed to be effective both academically and in life.

3.2 Culture Consideration on Self-Regulation

As someone who grew up in Mexico and witnessed traditional practices in early childhood education personally, I've seen how our approach to encouraging self-regulation in young children reflects our fundamental values. While education in Mexico has changed and continues to grow, there is always space to improve our practices by incorporating ideas from countries like Finland, while being trustworthy to our cultural assets.

Finnish society, for example, mainly influences its early childhood education and care (ECEC) practices on the concepts of independence and individual development. Finnish ECEC places a high value on play-based learning, encouraging children to explore their surroundings freely and make their own decisions. This approach reflects Finland's cultural commitment to autonomy and a sense of independence. Finnish educators function more as facilitators, fostering conditions in which learners can demonstrate self-regulation by regulating their actions settling peer conflicts, and accepting responsibility for their education. What's also intriguing is that in Finland, there is little formal training during early childhood, allowing children to develop self-regulation skills in a low-pressure atmosphere. This promotes a sense of self-motivation, which is considered critical for overall well-being and future achievement (Olli 2018; Karila 2012).

Reflecting on my own experience in Mexico, the approach to ECEC is quite distinct. Our educational approaches are strongly anchored in Mexican culture's fundamental principles of collectivism and respect for hierarchy. During my early education, I recall that activities were frequently directed by the educator, with people closely monitoring the learning process. This reflects our cultural standards, in which respect for elders and loyalty to societal laws are vital. In this setting, self-regulation was frequently introduced through controlled activities and routines that emphasized following instructions and according to group norms.

There was a heavy emphasis on social harmony and interdependence, with children requested to moderate their behavior to maintain a sense of community (Rogoff 2003).

While the Finnish model encourages self-regulation through autonomy and learning by doing, the Mexican method focuses on self-regulation within the context of social harmony and respect for authority. Both approaches are effective within their cultural contexts, but they emphasize distinct perspectives on the individual's position in society.

Having experienced the traditional Mexican approach, I feel we may learn from the Finnish model, particularly when it comes to developing autonomy and intrinsic motivation in young children. At the same time, we must preserve our society's focus on social regulation and responsibility. Understanding and incorporating these cultural influences allows us to continue developing ECEC practices that enhance children's holistic development while remaining inclusive and sensitive to our unique cultural environment.

3.2.1 Parenting Practices in Mexico

Parenting methods differ greatly among countries, demonstrating the widespread effect of cultural values, beliefs, and societal expectations. In Mexico, the family unit is regarded as a pillar of society, with beliefs like familismo and machismo influencing the expectations of parents and actions. (Diaz 2013; Robert 2009). Familismo prioritizes the family's communal well-being by emphasizing interconnection and solidarity, whereas machismo defines traditional gender roles and influences parenting approaches to discipline (Robert 2009). Despite these cultural distinctions, Mexican parents' overall purpose stays constant: to encourage their children's holistic development.

In this cultural context, Diaz (2013) highlights that the home learning environment appears as an important influence on children's behavioral management and learning development. Mexican parents place a high value on building caring and stimulating environments at home, recognizing the significant effect that those surroundings have on the development of their kids. However, financial limitations may impede efforts to supply extra learning resources, underscoring the real-world challenges experienced by many Latino families. (Diaz 2013.).

Furthermore, according to Robert (2009), gender distinctions in approaches to parenting reflect the impact of social norms and expectations. Boys frequently face harsher discipline with less monitoring than girls, suggesting established gender roles in Mexican families. These dynamics influence not just the expectations of parents, but also children's self-regulation capacities, underlining the importance of culturally sensitive approaches in both academic and clinical settings (Robert 2009.).

In a nutshell, the complicated interaction connecting cultural environment, parenting methods, and self-regulation in Mexican families shows the need to recognize and honor cultural values and beliefs. Researchers and practitioners who use culturally sensitive approaches may efficiently encourage constructive parenting practices and facilitate the ideal development of children in the Mexican community.

3.2.2 Parenting Practice in Finland

Values, beliefs, and methods of parenting all have an important effect on children's capacity for self-regulation in today's Finland. Stevenson (2016) addresses the necessity of independence in children's daily lives as a prerequisite for investigating the connection between independence and learning. Finnish culture values kids being autonomous and views unsupervised time in the house as vital learning opportunities. This viewpoint is based on Finland's sociocultural substance, where the behavior of daily life provides a theoretical foundation for comprehending how independence impacts educational performance and self-regulated learning. (Stevenson 2016.).

Moreover, the Finnish culture highlights the importance of parental methods in promoting self-regulation. Mikkonen et al. (2023) discuss the many parenting styles often used by Finnish mothers and fathers, focusing on the impact of parenting with authority, which is characterized by kindness and behavioral management, on favorable outcomes for children. This parenting method is consistent with Finnish cultural norms, which promote independence and self-expression in children while rejecting forceful authoritative styles that discourage social engagement. Additionally, in Finland, the conventional categorization of parenting styles, as demonstrated in Mikkonen et al.'s research on Finnish parents' parenting styles and their links with parental burnout (2023), has been expanded to include psychological control in addition to behavioral regulation and kindness. This three-dimensional paradigm recognizes the different ways in which approaches to parenting affect children's development. While parenting with authority is linked to beneficial outcomes including psychological well-being and learning success, authoritative and negligent styles of parenting have a negative impact on children's self-regulation and overall development. (Mikkonen et al. 2023.).

Furthermore, the diversity of approaches to parenting in Finland reflects changing norms in society and family well-being. According to Mikkonen et al. (2023), parents who suffer from the effects of burnout are more inclined to adopt inappropriate parenting practices, which have detrimental consequences for their children. Parents who have significant psychological

well-being, on the other hand, are more likely to use adaptive strategies for parenting to help their children develop self-regulation and social-emotional abilities. (Mikkonen et al. 2023.).

The Finnish method of parenting promotes the interdependence of parental ideas, behaviors, and children's self-regulation abilities. Finnish parents foster the development of self-regulation in their children by emphasizing autonomy, tenderness, and positive supervision. These beliefs and behaviors reflect wider cultural principles such as equality, civic engagement, and independence as individuals, which influence children's self-regulation abilities from an early age.

In brief, values, beliefs, and parenting methods in Finland, all play important roles in molding children's self-regulation. Finnish parents build conditions in which their children develop adequate self-regulatory abilities by emphasizing autonomy, competent guidance, and familial well-being. Understanding the cultural environment and values that underpin parenting practices is important for determining the processes by which self-regulation is promoted and developed in Finnish society.

4 Policies Framework Early childhood education and care (ECEC)

4.1 Overview of ECEC policies and regulations in Mexico and Finland

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) is a key aspect of educational and social policies in both Mexico and Finland, with every nation adopting a distinct set of laws and regulations to promote high-quality early childhood education. While there are certain similar characteristics, like placing value on child well-being and growth, there are significant variances in how ECEC is structured and administered between countries.

Mexico's ECEC policies and regulations are overseen by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Development. Moreover, the General Law of Education (2023) offers an entitlement to early childhood education to every child from birth to six years old. Additionally, Mexico has also implemented the National Agreement for the Integral Care of Early Childhood (SEGOB 2019)., which seeks to integrate efforts throughout different departments of government to offer extensive education and care for infants and toddlers.

This agreement highlights the value of multidisciplinary cooperation and holistic approaches to the growth of young children. (Ley General de Educación 2023)

In Finland, the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish National Agency for Education supervise ECEC rules and regulations. The Act on Early Childhood Education and Care (Finlex 2018) is the primary legislation governing ECEC, establishing every child's right to high-quality early childhood education and care. Furthermore, Finland also has a National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care (2022) which establishes the aims, values, and material for ECEC practices across the nation. This curriculum promotes the value of play-based learning, personalized care plans for each child, and collaboration between early childhood educators and families. (National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care 2022).

4.2 Integration of Self-Regulation into National Curriculum Frameworks

The inclusion of self-regulation into national curricular frameworks is essential for promoting holistic development and well-being in early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings. Self-regulation, which includes controlling impulses, regulation of emotion, and concentration, is important for children's ability to navigate social interactions, regulate their emotions, and participate efficiently in learning experiences (Yoshikawa et al. 2007; FNAE 2022.).

In Mexico, the national curricular reform established a new preschool curriculum that recognizes the importance of self-management within the broader concepts of childhood growth and abilities (Yoshikawa et al. 2007). By highlighting the value of self-regulation competencies throughout the curriculum, educators are encouraged to build environments for learning that promote children's emotional and behavioral managing one's emotions meaning improving their general well-being and academic achievement.

Similarly, Finland's National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education emphasizes the inherent value of childhood and acknowledges children's right to well-being and care (FNAE 2022). This framework incorporates self-regulation as a basic principle, in line with the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care (Finlex 2018), and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations 1989). The curriculum points out providing welcoming settings in which children may nurture self-regulation abilities through play-based learning, peer interaction, and guided play (FNAE 2022).

Furthermore, assessments of ECEC practices in Finland emphasize the necessity of incorporating self-regulation into learning experiences and maintaining curricular consistency (Finnish Education Evaluation Center 2020). Guidelines stress the necessity of employee

education to improve their awareness of self-regulation and its contribution to child growth and development, in addition to leadership support and distribution of resources to ensure efficient implementation.

Finally, the incorporation of self-regulation into national curriculum frameworks in both Mexico and Finland demonstrates a commitment to supporting children's holistic development and well-being in early childhood education environments. Educators can assist children develop key abilities for achievement in academics and life by establishing self-regulation as a vital part of the curriculum.

4.2.1 Educators' Practices in Mexico

Self-regulation, or the ability to handle emotions, behaviors, and thoughts for the purpose achieve long-term goals, is an important talent that develops during childhood. Educators in Mexico, as in other countries, play a critical role in developing this ability among children. Educators' attitudes, beliefs, and childhood experiences have a substantial impact on their teaching approaches, which in turn shape students' self-regulation skills. This section explores how these characteristics materialize in the Mexican educational context, using research sources.

Educators' values and opinions are frequently deeply rooted in their cultural background and personal experiences. In Mexico, where community values and respect for hierarchy are valued, educators usually use a structured and authoritative approach to managing the classroom. Depending on how it is implemented, this strategy may facilitate or impede children's capacity to learn self-control. Educators who respect autonomy and responsibility, for example, can empower kids to take ownership of their learning and conduct, meaning promoting self-regulation. Those who prioritize execution and obedience, on the other hand, may unintentionally limit the development of these abilities. According to Rogoff (2003), the cultural characteristics of developmental processes play an important role in defining educational practices, showing that educators' attitudes and beliefs have a considerable impact on how children learn and develop self-regulation skills.

The childhood experiences of educators are also critical in shaping their teaching practices. Educators who grew up in supportive and loving circumstances are more likely to create similar environments in their classrooms that promote self-regulation development. Those who grew up in rigid and authoritarian environments, on the other hand, may have adopted these patterns, which decrease kids' ability to practice self-regulation. In Mexico, where

numerous educators come from strong discipline backgrounds, there is an inclination to adopt authoritarian methods of teaching. However, as Valenzuela (1999) notes in her research on US-Mexico children, there is an increasing awareness of the need for a more balanced approach that combines structure with possibilities for learners to make choices and learn from their failures. This transition toward a more reflective and supportive pedagogical technique is consistent with promoting self-regulation in children.

The intersection of educational attitudes, beliefs, and childhood experiences has important practical implications for promoting self-regulation skills in Mexican children. Educators who are aware of their own biases and actively work on developing an empowering and autonomous classroom atmosphere can significantly improve children's self-regulation abilities. This is especially important in the Mexican setting, where traditional educational procedures may not necessarily coincide to develop independent, self-regulated learners. Machost and Stains (2023) underline the significance of reflective practices in education, stressing that comprehending children's origins can help educators facilitate them in developing key self-regulation skills for personal and educational achievement.

To summarize, educators in Mexico's values, beliefs, and childhood experiences have a significant impact on their teaching techniques, which in turn shape children's growth of self-regulation. Acknowledging these effects and implementing more focus on learners' methods might help educators build the self-regulation abilities required for children's long-term success. The references supplied provide additional insights into these processes, emphasizing the need of inclusive approaches to learning.

4.2.2 Educators' Practices in Finland

The formation of self-regulation in children is an important feature of education, especially in Finland, where educational approaches are known for developing autonomy and responsibility in learners. Educators' values, beliefs, and childhood experiences all have a part in establishing these practices, which ultimately influence how children develop self-regulation.

Educators in Finland often exemplify ideals like trust, autonomy, and respect for the child as a competent person. These principles have a strong foundation in Finnish society, and the educational system in Finland is based on the theory that children are naturally curious and eager to learn when given the right assistance and opportunities. The educational confidence in the ability of learners to manage their learning processes reflects their belief in the value of self-regulation. This assumption is supported by the educators' childhood experiences, in which they were most likely given similar duties and autonomy. For example, the Finnish

practice of "free play" during childhood, when children have the freedom to explore and learn autonomously, teaches a sense of independence that educators bring into the classroom. (Sahlberg 2015).

These views and mindsets influence approaches to learning that encourage self-regulation. Finnish educators frequently use educational methods that help learners create personal goals, track their progress, and reflect on their learning. These methods aim not just to teach knowledge, but also to help learners obtain the ability to manage their emotions, behavior, and thoughts in ways that are consistent with long-term goals (Lonka 2018). Finland's emphasis on low homework, flexible timetables, and student-centered learning environments reflects educators' dedication to promoting self-regulation.

Furthermore, Finnish educators' childhood memories frequently contain a high level of trust and responsibility given by their parents and educators. This background is shared with their professional attitude, and they are more likely to use a similar approach in the classroom. The sense of trust and responsibility they felt as children inspired them to design learning environments that allow students to take ownership of their learning, which is critical for the development of self-regulation abilities (Tirri & Toom 2020).

Finally, Finnish educators' attitudes, beliefs, and childhood experiences all contribute to the development of methods of learning that encourage learner self-regulation. Educators in Finland facilitate children to develop the self-regulation skills vital to ongoing learning and personal growth by creating a culture of trust, independence, and responsibility.

5 Implementation of the thesis

5.1 Planning

The planning phase of my thesis project was marked by a close and collaborative relationship with important stakeholders, including a working life representative from Renovación - Unión de Fuerzas, Unión de Esfuerzos, a community center in Mexico City, and my thesis supervisor. From the start, we recognized the vital need to improve self-regulation abilities in early childhood education, particularly in communities with low incomes. The subject became a priority after a series of in-depth meetings in which we all recognized the enormous influence that better self-regulation of parents, educators, and assistants might have better help on children's cognitive, emotional, and social development.

Understanding the community's specific concerns and social factors was critical to our plan. I collaborated closely with Renovación's Pedagogy Director to carry out a comprehensive needs assessment, which helped shape the project's path. During our discussions, it became evident that any intervention we devised had to be both culturally sensitive and context relevant. To address this, we decided to combine the best elements of Finnish educational approaches with culturally relevant practices from Mexico. This dual-perspective approach aimed to create a holistic framework for improving self-regulation skills that would resonate with the community's values and educational goals.

The collaboration with the human resources director at Renovación was also pivotal in the logistical planning of the workshops. Considering the challenges of organizing schedules among educators, assistants, and parents, we collaborated to ensure that the courses were both practical and meaningful. The director's support in incorporating play-based and interactive experiences, inspired by the Finnish curriculum, was critical in customizing the workshops to the community's unique requirements. This enabled us to design a series of workshops that were relaxing, relevant, and effective at encouraging self-regulation.

In planning the workshops, I took the initiative to ensure that each session was well-structured, with defined objectives and activities. This organized approach enabled participants to gradually increase their knowledge and abilities, ensuring that the workshops were both effective and comprehensive. Regular discussions with the General Director of Renovation and educators offered vital feedback that helped us enhance the project's procedures and stay on track with our aims.

Throughout the planning process, I demonstrated significant independence and initiative, requesting help as needed but also making proactive efforts to overcome difficulties. My goal-oriented attitude and adaptability were critical in overcoming challenges and ensuring the project performed efficiently. This collaborative and continuous approach was critical in aligning the project's objectives with the needs of the community and the expertise of all involved parties, finally leading to the successful development of a culturally sensitive and educationally sound series of workshops aimed at enhancing self-regulation skills in parents, educators, and assistants to improve early childhood education.

5.1.1 Objective and Initial Approach

The starting point of our project was to improve self-regulation skills in early childhood education (ECE). The idea for this initiative was motivated by a shared perspective with our professional partner, Renovación in Mexico, on the critical role of self-regulation in holistic child development. Our goal was to develop a culturally relevant, evidence-based approach incorporating elements from Finnish and Mexican educational frameworks.

Our initial approach involved a comprehensive review of national curricula and literature pertaining to early childhood education and care (ECEC) in both Mexico and Finland. This review was instrumental in understanding how cultural factors influence learning and behavior. A subsequent needs assessment, including curriculum evaluations and classroom observations in Mexico, revealed significant insights. Interactions with educators and discussions with the pedagogy director at Renovación clarified that focusing on the professional development of educators, parents, and assistants would be more effective in fostering self-regulation skills in children than direct intervention with the children themselves.

This perspective is supported by recent research that highlight the need of incorporating adults in the learning process for the purpose of improving the results for children. As an illustration, Whitebread et al. (2017) indicated that continuing education for educators is critical for implementing successful self-regulation practices in the classroom. Furthermore, Vygotsky's (1978) work emphasizes the importance of adults in facilitating children's learning processes, implying that the most effective method to affect children's self-regulation is to improve the skills and practices of people with whom they interact daily.

As a result, we tailored our plan of action to focus on workshops and training sessions for educators, parents, and assistants. This approach adjustment was founded on the belief that providing those who matter most with the appropriate skills and information would result in a more supportive environment for the children and considerably improve the implementation of self-management practices.

5.1.2 Collaborations and Participants

Collaboration with our working life partner, Renovación - Unión de Fuerzas, Unión de Esfuerzos, has been a stimulating and fulfilling component of our project since the beginning. The shared goal of developing self-regulation abilities in early childhood education was a pillar of our collaboration, especially with the excellent direction of Renovación's Pedagogy Director. With over 30 years of experience in early childhood education, her extensive knowledge of the local community and cultural background in Mexico helped shape our approach. Our collaborative efforts were not just directed at tackling specific educational obstacles, but also toward providing a caring, culturally relevant learning environment for young children.

Regular communication with the Pedagogy Director was essential to our collaborative approach. This continual discussion enabled us to address limitations and change our strategy

as needed, maintaining alignment with the requirements of the community and the project's goals. Our continuous discusses allowed us to improve our methods in response to the workshops' shifting dynamics.

One of the most promising parts of our partnership was the dedication and commitment shown by all involved. We expected eight parents to attend the sessions, but eleven parents showed up, exceeding our expectations. This larger-than-expected response demonstrated the community's rising interest in and commitment to implementing new methods of learning focusing on emotional awareness and self-regulation. The strong participation underscored the relevance and timeliness of our initiative and demonstrated the community's eagerness to engage in meaningful dialogue and learning.

Educators and assistants played an important role in the project's performance. Their favorable attitude toward the workshops and active engagement with the material were critical to the project's achievement. Their willingness to try new approaches, particularly those inspired by Finnish educational practices, as well as their desire to participate in discussions and activities, demonstrated their commitment to improve their abilities and improving the educational experiences of the children in their care.

However, the project encountered difficulties, particularly in balancing traditional disciplinary measures with the more compassionate alternatives we proposed. Many attendees recalled their personal experiences growing up under authoritarian discipline, which frequently involved physical punishment, causing emotional discussions about the complexities of switching to more supportive techniques. To tackle these issues, we focused on offering practical tools and assistance throughout the workshops, as well as including interactive activities such as role-playing and storytelling to promote reflection and empathy. While this transformation would necessitate continual work, feedback indicated that participants were generally enthusiastic and eager to put the new strategies into practice.

The project's effectiveness was eventually acknowledged and appreciated by the Pedagogy Director and other important stakeholders at Renovación. The ideas and approaches created during this partnership are expected to have a long-term influence beyond the workshops, helping to sustain and enhance self-regulation abilities in early childhood education. The careful consideration of methodological decision-making, supported by a thorough understanding of the relevant literature and cultural context, ensured that Finnish educational practices were both respectful and effective when implemented in Mexico (FNAE 2022).

To summarize, my partnership with Renovación has been a truly enjoyable experience, resulting in tremendous progress toward our common aim of improving self-regulation abilities in early childhood education. The positive attitudes and active engagement of those engaged, together with careful consideration of cultural sensitivities and practical problems, have created the groundwork for long-term success in this field. The project's accomplishments are expected to have long-term benefits, acting as an example for similar efforts in other situations.

5.1.3 Data Collection

When I thought about my data collection strategy for building workshops to improve self-regulation skills in early childhood education, I explored combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies. However, upon additional reflection, I decided that a more focused qualitative method, particularly participant observation and semi-structured interviews, would provide more in-depth insights into the workshops' effectiveness. This method enables a more detailed assessment of the participant's experiences and the impact of the workshops.

Participant observation was critical in documenting real-time behaviors and interactions between stakeholders, including parents, educators, and assistants. By immersing myself in the workshop atmosphere, I initially understood how the methods were implemented and perceived. This approach allowed me to observe the training's practical effects, such as how it impacted interactions and behaviors in the educational setting. The complexity of the data gathered by observation provided a contextual perspective that quantitative metrics alone could not disclose. Creswell (2009) underlines the importance of observational research in understanding how people act and communicate directly, which is essential to properly analyzing educational interventions.

In addition to participant observation, I conducted semi-structured interviews with stakeholders to learn about their personal experiences and viewpoints. These interviews facilitated flexible discussions, allowing participants to express their opinions on the workshops, the problems encountered, and the expected advantages. Patton (2015) emphasizes the importance of this method in collecting delicate experiences and cultural variations that quantitative data may ignore. The qualitative data gathered from these interviews provided a better understanding of the workshops' impact, demonstrating how participants experienced and reflected on their self-regulation abilities.

To improve the analysis further, I consistently documented my observations and had thoughtful conversations with my life partner, "Renovation." During these discussions, I witnessed that participants were actively reflecting on their self-regulation skills, which is consistent with contemporary educational theories emphasizing the need for reflective thinking and continual professional development (Rintakorpi 2016). By combining these views, I was able to gain a better picture of how the workshops helped participants with self-regulation and contributed to their professional development.

In conclusion, the decision to use participant observation and semi-structured interviews was motivated by the need to gain a full knowledge of the workshops' impact from many viewpoints. This concentrated qualitative approach gave useful insights into both the practical implementation of workshop approaches and the stakeholders' personal experiences. The detailed feedback received through these methods leads to an increased understanding of how efficiently the workshops answer the community's requirements and provide practical recommendations for enhancing future educational procedures.

6 Workshops

The next section focuses on the workshops designed to improve self-regulation abilities in early childhood education, addressing the gap between Finnish and Mexican educational systems. By providing a full description of each workshop, we hope to shed light on the aims, methodology, and main focal areas that shaped our efforts. These workshops were intentionally created to provide an inviting atmosphere in which parents, educators, and assistants may actively interact with the idea of self-regulation while obtaining significant insights and practical skills.

The workshops were not just sessions; they were interactive experiences based on the principle that emotional awareness and cultural sensitivity are essential for optimal learning and development. Designed to fit within a 90-minute timeframe, which was agreed upon with my life partner "Renovacion" to accommodate the busy schedules of educators, parents, and assistants, the seminars offered participants strategies to help children self-regulate at home and in the classroom. These interactive lessons emphasized the necessity of self-regulation in early life and illustrated the power of culturally responsive education in shaping a child's future.

In the following sections, we will go over each workshop in detail, thoroughly examining how it was planned, the activities involved, and the outcomes obtained. This study will provide a more in-depth understanding of how culturally aware practices might improve self-regulation competence, providing children and adults together with the skills required for long-term success.

The following table captures the essential information related to the workshops for different groups, their focus areas, and the relevant dates.

Table 1: Workshop Schedule and Focus Areas for Parents, Educators, and Assistants (2024)

Group	Workshop Dates	Number of Participants	Focus Areas	Workshop
Parents	June 13, 27, July 11, 2024	11	Self-regulation, emotional awareness, practical applications, blending Finnish & Mexican practices	Workshop I, II, III
Educators	June 12, 25, July 2, 9, 2024	12	Self-regulation practices, Finnish curriculum, Shanker (2016) framework, classroom scenarios	Workshop I, II
General & Educator Assistants	July 17, 2024	10	Practical techniques for supporting children's self-regulation, guided by Guskey (2002) professional development model	Workshop IV

Initially, we planned to offer three workshops, each tailored to the unique needs of parents, educators, and assistants. However, as we went, it became clear from our observations and continuous discussions with both the pedagogy director and the parents that a third session would be quite beneficial. This closing session was designed to review the important takeaways from the previous workshops while also providing practical advice and contributions for parents. The goal was to reinforce the principles presented while additionally offering participants with concrete approaches they could immediately apply at home and in the classroom.

6.1 Workshop I:

Empowering Self-Regulation in Early Childhood via Cultural and Community Teamwork

This workshop aims to equip parents and educators with strategies to foster self-regulation in children, emphasizing the importance of community and culturally sensitive approaches. Participants will explore key concepts and engage in activities.

Table 2: Empowering Self-Regulation in Early Childhood via Cultural and Community Teamwork.

Section	Time	Content
I. Introduction	10 mins	Purpose and Objectives: Overview of self-regulation, its benefits, and culturally sensitive approaches.
		Importance of Self-Regulation: Overview of self-regulation and its impact on child development. Insights (Shanker, 2016).
		Cultural Diversity in Parenting: Examination of cultural approaches to parenting and their effects on self-regulation. Discussion on beneficial and detrimental practices.
		Practical Strategies: Presentation of activities and games designed to foster self-regulation. Discussion on role-playing and community engagement events.
		Reflection on Intercultural Differences: Discussion on intercultural differences in parenting and solutions for creating culturally inclusive environments.
		Practical Application: Encouragement of applying strategies in daily interactions and fostering collaboration between educators and parents.
II. Integration Activity	15 mins	Cultural Map Exercise: Participants introduce themselves, discuss their regional background, and share a cultural parenting practice.
III. Building Positive Relationships Through Storytelling	30 mins	Scenario 1: Navigating Parent-Child Dynamics: Role-play challenging self-regulation scenarios in small groups. Focus on active listening, empathy, and problem-solving.
IV. Group Discussion on Intercultural Differences in Parenting	30 mins	Introduction (5 mins): Introduction to the discussion on intercultural differences and their impact on educational collaboration.

Section	Time	Content
	15 mins	Breakout Groups: Small group discussions on the influence of cultural differences, personal experiences, and challenges.
	5 mins	Group Sharing: Groups share key insights or challenges. The facilitator highlights common themes and unique perspectives.
	5 mins	Discussion of Strategies: Summary of proposed strategies and their practical implementation. Emphasis on continuous learning and adaptation.
V. Final Comments	5 mins	Thank Participants: Express gratitude for their involvement.
		Promote Future Participation: Encourage attendance at future workshops.
		Request Feedback: Solicit feedback to improve future sessions.

In the initial phases of the workshop, parents seemed more reserved, but their attitude changed after participating in the cultural map activity, which created a sense of simplicity and relaxation, allowing both parents and educators to connect more deeply with one another. A shared experience came about between participants, rooted in the traditional education they had received. This childhood was frequently marked by harsh discipline, punishment, parental absence, drinking, and authoritarianism. However, there was a strong feeling of community, with wonderful memories of close ties with grandparents, aunts, and friends, as well as frequent weekend gatherings focused on meals and togetherness. This shared cultural background acted as a bridge between parents and educators, allowing for more open communication and understanding.

As the workshop progressed, educators and parents realized that they had already begun to adjust in their parenting at home and in classroom practices, like a significant change toward being more present and rejecting techniques such as physical harm. The workshop's play-based, interactive learning activities, inspired by the Finnish approach, helped to create a more relaxed and conducive environment for idea sharing. This collaborative setting led to the understanding that using a more playful and inclusive approach at home and in the classroom, as recommended by the Finnish curriculum, could improve self-regulation learning for both children and adults. Parents and educators committed to practicing this "relaxing approach," as they named it, seeing its potential to create better self-regulation and general well-being in their children.



Figure 1: Parents sharing a cultural parenting practice.



Figure 2: Educators discussion impact on educational collaboration.

6.2 Workshop II

Emotional Awareness and Regulation for Parents and Educators

This workshop equips parents and educators with skills for emotional awareness and self-regulation. It focuses on creating supportive environments for children's well-being, building on culturally relevant methods from Workshop I. Using Shanker's (2016) self-regulation principles and Finnish early childhood education concepts, participants gain evidence-based methods and resources.

Table 3: Workshop II Emotional Awareness and Regulation

Agenda Item	Time	Details
I. Timeout Dialogue: Rules and Workshop I Recap	5 mins	A brief review of Timeout Dialogue Rules and key concepts from Workshop I, focusing on self-regulation in children, cultural diversity in parenting, and practical strategies for promoting self-regulation.
II. Activity I: Self-Perception and Emotional Awareness	20 mins	Objective: Develop self-awareness and observation of emotional state through silence, breathing, and interaction. Hand Connection Exercise (5 mins): Participants hold hands in a circle, focusing on mindfulness and emotional state. Ball Game with Three Questions (15 mins): Participants discuss emotions and responses.
III. Activity II: Emotional Localization and Regulation	20 mins	Objective: Understand individualized emotional experiences and introduce regulation strategies. Where Do You Feel Emotions? (10 mins): Participants identify where emotions manifest in the body. Conscious Regulation Process (10 mins): Discuss strategies for managing emotions using a color-coded system.
IV. Activity III: Collaborative Creative Expression	20 mins	Objective: Emphasize the importance of individual contribution to collective well-being. Building a 3D House (10 mins): Group activity to build a 3D house. Collaborative Drawing (10 mins): Participants modify each other's drawings, fostering teamwork and emotional expression.
V. Activity IV: Reflection and Closure	10 mins	Objective: Reflect on personal and group insights. Observation and Reflection: Discuss questions about ownership of emotions and needs of others. Gratitude and Feedback: Thank participants, request feedback, and express appreciation.
VI. Activity V: Relaxation Circle	15 mins	Objective: Engage in relaxation and build connection within the group. Relaxation Exercise: Participants give and receive massages in a circle, focusing on relaxation and breath, while soothing music plays.
VII. Closing Remarks	5 mins	Summary: Reinforce the importance of emotional awareness and self-regulation in fostering healthy development in children. Encourage ongoing collaboration between parents and educators.

In this second workshop on emotional awareness and self-regulation for parents and educators, the participants were eager to explore and discuss their feelings. The initial workshop's effectiveness in creating a supportive and trusting environment contributed to this

greater openness to share. Mexican cultural values, which emphasize intimate family relationships and communal connections, are thought to have contributed significantly to this openness. Participants' comments exposed cultural complexities, specifically how conventional gender roles and respect for elders influence emotional expression and communication. For example, some participants emphasized the difference in emotional expression between men and women, which is frequently influenced by cultural norms and familial relationships. These cultural factors not only stimulated the discussions but also provided a better understanding of how emotional awareness is seen and practiced in their culture.

Furthermore, the workshop addressed the significance of culturally appropriate activities in encouraging active involvement and engagement. Exercises such as the Hand Connection and the Ball Game resonated powerfully with the participants, reflecting Mexican ideals of community and connection. The conversation also focused on the balance between traditional Mexican parenting traditions and current evidence-based approaches to emotional control. Participants expressed a desire for practical tools that could be easily integrated into their daily lives while considering the particular characteristics of their cultural setting, such as extended family dynamics and respect for authority. This reflects an increased cultural emphasis on practicality, as well as the requirement for successful and culturally suitable tactics. The workshop's interactive spirit was boosted by the participants' willingness to provide critical feedback and express gratitude, which is an element of Mexican culture. Their enthusiasm for ongoing cooperation indicates a desire to continue the journey toward increased emotional awareness and self-regulation. According to Triandis (1995), cultural factors such as solidarity have a significant impact on how people perceive and participate with emotional regulation measures, emphasizing the significance of culturally appropriate approaches in educational contexts.



Figure 3: Educators Building 3D House



Figure 4 Parents Relaxing Circle.

6.3 Workshop III:

Improving Emotional Awareness and Self-Regulation in Parenting

The third session was designed in response to parents' desire for practical, culturally relevant tools that may be integrated into their daily lives, particularly within extended family relations and respect for authority. Building on previous workshops, it addressed emotional awareness, self-regulation, and the impact of cultural variety on parenting. Reflective exercises, group discussions, and experiential activities taught parents how to improve empathy, handle conflict, and regulate emotions using the Emotional Traffic Light tool. The session stressed the necessity of working together as parents, educators, and support staff to develop culturally responsive parenting that increases children's emotional resilience.

Table 4: Improving Emotional Awareness and Self-Regulation in Parenting

Agenda Item	Time	Details
I. Introduction Objectives	10 mins	Workshop Series Overview: Summary of how this session builds on previous workshops focusing on emotional awareness, self-regulation, and cultural diversity in parenting. Timeout Dialogue Rules: Review the rules for maintaining respectful and open dialogue throughout the session.
II. Emotional Stories	20 mins	Objective: Improve empathy and emotional understanding. Activities: Participants reflect on a recent emotionally demanding situation, then share experiences with the group, focusing on the main character's emotions.
III. Managing Conflict Scenarios	20 mins	Objective: Improve emotional management in conflict scenarios. Activities: Small groups discuss and role-play a provided conflict scenario, then reflect on emotional management and alternative strategies.
IV. Emotional Traffic Light Game	20 mins	Objective: Teach participants to identify and manage emotions through visual learning. Activities: Groups use color cards to categorize emotions as red, yellow, or green, discuss management strategies, and share insights on emotional regulation.
V. Recap and Reflection	20 mins	Recap: Review key ideas, suggestions, tactics, and experiences from the workshop series. Gratitude and Input: Thank participants, encourage feedback, and promote future participation, emphasizing continuous learning.

As Workshop III began, I noticed a difference in the atmosphere compared to the prior sessions. The parents were more relaxed and open, and it felt like we were all entering a space for sincere reflection and improvement. I described the session's emphasis on increasing emotional awareness, self-regulation, and incorporating cultural variety into our parenting methods. The nods of agreement throughout the room were encouraging; it appeared that we were all on the same page, trying to get into the issues.

One of the first parts was titled Emotional Stories, in which we discussed recent highly emotional events. A parent told a powerful story about dealing with their child's tantrum at a family celebration. They discussed how they identified and named their displeasure, then used a deep breathing technique we learned in earlier seminars. It was motivating to hear how they effectively negotiated the problem, and their experiences created an engaging debate. As other parents recounted their comparable experiences, I felt a stronger feeling of community and support. It was evident that we were all learning and growing from one another's perspectives.

The Managing Conflict Scenarios activity was quite interesting. We role-played a variety of conflict scenarios, including a child's refusal to get ready for school. I was part of a group that talked about the "pause and observe" technique and the value of taking a moment to breathe. As we applied these strategies, it became clear that they were more than simply theoretical; they had practical applications that became second nature to us. The subsequent talks allowed us to reflect on the efficacy of these initiatives and explore new approaches, reinforcing our commitment to these approaches.

During the workshop, we conducted a recap and reflection session. This was an opportunity to express our gratitude for the supportive atmosphere and reflect on our personal development. One parent described how they began using the Emotional Traffic Light with their children, resulting in fewer confrontations at home. It was heartwarming to see the tangible results of our learning. I acknowledged the parents for their active engagement and encouraged them to continue using the skills we learned. We concluded the workshop with a request for comments, emphasizing the value of continuous learning and community support.

Reflecting on a difficult topic presented during the class was extremely eye-opening. A parent was dealing with their child's unwillingness to attend school, which was exacerbated by their own stress and emotional tiredness. Using the strategies we had taught; the parent was able to handle their frustration and collaborate with their child. They managed a balance between recognizing their child's anxieties and keeping a calm, supportive attitude. This case spoke to me deeply and demonstrated the practical value of our ideas in real-world circumstances. Overall, Workshop III provided a profound experience. Personal anecdotes, practical

exercises, and introspective discussions helped me get a better grasp of emotional awareness and self-regulation. I left the workshop with a strong sense of community and support.

Traffic lights



Figure 5: Emotional Traffic Lights Game.

6.4 Workshop IV:

Enhancing Emotional Awareness and Regulation Through Cultural Engagement for General & Assistance Educators

Agenda Item	Time	Details
I. Introduction and Workshop Overview	10 mins	Objectives: Recap the series' goals, emphasizing self-regulation, emotional awareness, and cultural diversity in parenting. Activities: - Overview of Workshop Objectives - Timeout Dialogue Rules for respectful interaction.
II. Cultural Map Exercise and Sharing	15 mins	Objective: Appreciate diverse cultural parenting styles and their effects on self-regulation. Activities: - Participants introduce themselves and share a cultural parenting practice. Facilitator: Encourage multicultural perspectives.
III. Self-Perception and Emotional Awareness	15 mins	Objective: Enhance self-awareness of thoughts and emotions. Activity: Ball Game with Three Questions: Participants reflect on their emotions by answering: 1. How are you feeling? 2. What does frustration mean to you? 3. How do you manage it?
IV. Emotional Localization and Regulation	20 mins	Objective: Focus on personal emotional experiences and introduce management tools. Activities: - Where Do You Experience Emotions? (10 mins): Identify where emotions are felt in the body. - Conscious Regulation Process (10 mins): Introduce emotional states and strategies for balance.
V. Creating Positive Relationships Through Storytelling	15 mins	Objective: Use role-playing to explore self-regulation challenges and develop empathy and problem-solving skills. Activity: - Scenario Role-Play (10 mins): Participants act out scenarios involving self-regulation struggles. - Discussion: Share observations and strategies (5 mins).
VI. Reflection and Group Discussion on Intercultural Differences	10 mins	Objective: Reflect on cultural differences in parenting and collaboration in educational settings. Activity: - Breakout Groups (5 mins): Discuss cultural variations in parenting.

Agenda Item	Time	Details
		- Group Sharing (5 mins): Share insights and challenges.
VII. Relaxation Circle	15 mins	Objective: Promote connection and well-being through a calming, introspective experience. Activity: - Relaxation Circle: Gentle massages, calming music, and Tibetan bowls to foster tranquility and presence.
VIII. Final Remarks and Feedback	5 mins	Objective: Reflect on the workshop, encourage continued learning, and gather feedback. Activities: - Reflective Questions: Discuss learnings and their impact on child interactions. - Gratitude and Feedback: Thank participants and promote future sessions.

Based on the workshops I've facilitated, it's evident that each one has considerably improved my comprehension of the participants' requirements, and the effectiveness of the activities developed to meet those needs. Workshops I, II, and III formed the groundwork for the last workshop, which was tailored specifically to support assistants more effectively. The idea of having the final workshop outside was influenced by the concepts of the Finnish Curriculum, which emphasizes the value of learning outside of the traditional classroom environment. My previous workshop experiences gave me more confidence in leading the final session, allowing me to better adapt and respond to the needs of the participants.

A truly moving event occurred during the Cultural Map activity. Two participants initially decided not to share their experiences, which we respected. However, one of these participants later approached me privately, indicating her trouble expressing her feelings openly as well as her difficulty avoiding tears while sharing her experiences. This moment emphasized the trust we had established and the significance of having a secure and supportive environment in which people can share their vulnerabilities. It was a powerful reminder of the level of emotion that may result from such exercises, as well as the importance of building trust and empathy in our sessions.

In the Self-Perception and Emotional Awareness activity, participants were noticed by how they indicated their physical reactions to emotions like anger. They observed that anger might appear in a variety of body areas, including the mouth, head, and chest. This discovery caused us to focus on the difficulties of describing and comprehending emotions. Participants struggled with the complexities of naming their emotions and determining where they were felt in their bodies. This reflection was critical because it emphasized the value of self-

awareness and the ability to detect and express emotions. As we wondered how to teach children to comprehend their own emotions, it became evident that we, adults needed to improve our own emotional recognition and expression skills (Denham et al. 2007).

The activity Creating Positive Relationships through Storytelling represented a significant change in focus, from previously highlighted topics to real-world workplace interactions. This approach proved to be quite beneficial, allowing participants to directly address concerns such as handling absent colleagues or dealing with demanding requests in hectic circumstances. Participants were able to communicate and brainstorm effective solutions after being exposed to these real-world situations. This technique not only helped issue solving, but it also highlighted the significance of self-regulation in maintaining strong workplace relationships. Furthermore, this practical approach to discussion underlined the crucial need to incorporate real-life situations into our workshops, as it improves the relevance and application of the information. According to research, when people participate in authentic professional scenarios, they improve their problem-solving skills and interpersonal interactions (Kolb 2015).

At the end of the workshop, we held a relaxation circle, which was well received. Participants acknowledged their appreciation for these relaxing moments and requested more opportunities for relaxation in future sessions. This comment emphasized the importance of including mindfulness and relaxation practices in our courses to improve participants' general well-being and foster a more balanced learning environment.



Figure 6: Reflection



Figure 7: Relaxing Circle

6.5 Workshops conclusion and evaluation

Reflecting on the series of workshops we conducted, I am impressed by their important effect on all participants—parents, educators, and assistants involved. Throughout these sessions, it became evident that our efforts to improve self-regulation abilities in early childhood education touched an emotional connection with everyone participating, particularly as we dived into the complex tapestry of cultural considerations that characterize parental and educational practices.

One of the most affecting aspects of the workshops was the incorporation of cultural viewpoints from both the Finnish and Mexican educational systems. This enriched our conversations by presenting a comprehensive approach to self-regulation. The strong participation of all groups—parents, educators, and assistants—was a significant asset. Their willingness to relate personal childhood memories helped us better grasp how cultural practices influence current parenting and education approaches.

Many participants shared memories of growing up in environments where authoritarian discipline, including physical punishment, was the norm. They described a childhood characterized by strict obedience without much room for emotional expression. Despite the strict discipline, there was also a sense of freedom in their childhoods—a freedom to explore, engage with nature, and interact with various animals. This contrast between strict discipline and unstructured playtime highlighted the complexity of their childhood, where fear of authority figures coexisted with fond memories of familial closeness.

The workshops showed a high willingness among participants to adopt more emotionally supportive and self-regulation-oriented approaches. Many expressed reliefs at the chance of moving away from punitive measures and toward methods that promote empathy, emotional awareness, and patience in children and adults. This development aligns with contemporary research, emphasizing the importance of nurturing environments that support the development of self-regulation and emotional intelligence (Shanker 2016).

A significant takeaway from the workshops was the importance of incorporating play-based learning and narrative guidance, as emphasized in the Finnish approach to early childhood education. We effectively illustrated these principles in an entertaining and practical approach using activities such as role-playing and the Emotional Traffic Light game. Participants indicated that these methods worked not only in the classroom but also at home.

However, certain areas showed potential for improvement. Participants reported difficulty integrating traditional disciplinary tactics with the more reflective and empathic alternatives we provided. The feedback highlighted a need for more targeted assistance in transitioning participants from traditional methods to newer, evidence-based approaches that prioritize emotional development.

Another area for improvement is the follow-up and support offered afterwards the workshops. While the sessions were significant, incorporating these ideas into daily practice remains an ongoing challenge. Participants expressed a desire for continuous assistance, possibly through additional workshops or monthly check-ins, to ensure that the principles we introduced are maintained over time. This is consistent with Guskey's (2002) model of professional development, which emphasizes the significance of continuous assistance in achieving meaningful change.

Furthermore, ongoing discussions and semi-structured interviews with my life partner; the Pedagogy Director, the Human Resources, and General Directors all provided valuable insights into their effect on me. These conversations focused on how the workshops integrated into the community's content, influencing not only children but also parents, educators, and directors.

The Human Resources Director acknowledged the workshops' success, stating, "The strategies you have introduced have given us a new way to address the emotional challenges of the children." This feedback demonstrated the effectiveness of culturally sensitive approaches for addressing emotional needs and aligning with community values.

The Pedagogy Director, with whom I collaborated closely, highlighted that the workshops provided opportunities for new initiatives focused on participation and play. She was excited about transforming these sessions into workshops that focus on active learning through play-based activities, saying, "These workshops showed us the potential for deeper collaboration between families and educators."

Despite these improvements, obstacles came up, mainly due to time restrictions. The directors noted that the fast-paced nature of everyday routines made it difficult to completely apply the methods. However, they felt that the practical value of these strategies in promoting self-regulation during emotionally intense situations beat the disadvantages.

The collaborative attitude of the project was a major highlight. The General Director commented on the mutual learning component, stating, "Your approach allowed us to not only teach but also learn together." This mutual sharing of ideas improved community bonds and encouraged collective growth.

Reflecting on these experiences, I find parallels to issues encountered in Finnish daycares, where limitations on time and daily routines also impede the integration of self-regulation measures (Rintakorpi 2019). Both scenarios highlight the significance of continual collaboration and adapting techniques to fit established habits.

This leads me to consider: How can we further assist the community in applying these suggestions while addressing time restrictions and everyday routines? The issue, which is based on my experiences at Renovación and insights from Finnish daycares, encourages a deeper investigation into developing practical, long-term solutions that are consistent with the community's unique structure and rhythm.

In conclusion, these workshops were an important step toward improving self-regulation and emotional awareness in early childhood education. The combination of Finnish and Mexican educational practices created a new perspective that was warmly accepted by participants. Moving ahead, it will be critical to give further assistance to parents and educators as they implement these practices into their daily routines. The insights gained from these conversations will have a long-term impact on our approach to early childhood education, creating conditions in which both children and adults can grow emotionally and socially.

7 Discussion

In this study, I investigated the impact of culturally sensitive workshops on self-regulation abilities among educators, parents, and assistants in the setting of early childhood education at the community center Renovación - Unión de Fuerzas, Unión de Esfuerzos in Mexico City. As someone who has lived in Finland for over two decades but values my Mexican heritage, this research was a personal and professional journey to bridge the educational methods of these two diverse cultures.

The workshops I organized were received with great enthusiasm, resulting in a significant increase in participants' awareness and understanding of self-regulation. It was inspiring to see how these workshops motivated a move toward more empathetic and reflective approaches to working with children. Many participants expressed a deep need to put the ideas they learned into action, considering the difficulties of merging these fresh methods with traditional discipline methods. Moreover, this excited attitude emphasizes the possibility of progressive improvements in the early childhood education environment, particularly in communities immersed in traditional cultural traditions. I am pleased to witness such a good reaction, which reflects participants' genuine desire to improve their grasp of self-regulation.

The insights obtained not only facilitate empathy-based approaches to interacting with children but also provide the framework for efficient daily routines. I think the guide I developed will be a useful tool for kindergarten educators, providing practical alternatives that respect different cultural practices. By integrating these flexible approaches, I hope to empower educators to create caring settings that facilitate substantial improvements, encourage healthier emotional development, and support the holistic growth of each child in their care. (See Appendix 1: Guide for Self-Regulation)

Planning this thesis involved a thorough study of the cultural dynamics of both the Finnish and Mexican education systems. Reflecting on Vygotsky's (1978) work, I realized the critical role that adults play in facilitating children's learning. The outcomes of this study reinforce this perspective, demonstrating that educating parents, educators, and assistants with the necessary abilities is critical for developing self-regulation in children.

As a Mexican living in Finland, I've frequently thought about the differences in how these two cultures handle education. Finnish education, with a focus on individuality and intrinsic motivation, comes in strong contrast to Mexican education, which focuses on unity in society and authority. However, the workshops demonstrated that these contradictory approaches may be combined. The high level of participation throughout the sessions, which may have been influenced by the Mexican concept of community and joint effort, demonstrates that culturally appropriate methods can successfully bridge the gap between diverse educational systems.

It was especially encouraging to see individuals in a traditionally hierarchical society like Mexico adopting elements of the Finnish model. This revealed to me that new educational methods, when offered respectfully and carefully, have the potential to cross cultural boundaries and result in significant change.

The results of these findings extend over the scope of this study and connect with my own experiences living between two cultures. The effectiveness of the culturally sensitive workshops demonstrates the relevance of customizing educational interventions to the cultural environment. It serves as a reminder that effective education involves incorporating and honoring the community's values and beliefs rather than imposing one set of practices over another.

This approach is useful not only to Mexico and Finland but also globally, particularly in regions with different cultural backgrounds. This study underlines the importance of continuing education for educators, parents, and assistants in ECE settings. By emphasizing self-

regulation abilities, we can create more supportive and loving environments for children, resulting in improved cognitive, emotional, and social outcomes.

The study suggests that policymakers and educators should prioritize culturally adapted professional development programs that address the unique needs of their communities. This is a critical step in creating inclusive and effective educational environments, which I have learned to respect greatly from my own cross-cultural experiences.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous studies on the relevance of adult interaction in promoting self-regulation in children (Whitebread et al. 2017). However, my research adds a new dimension by emphasizing the efficacy of culturally sensitive methods for a variety of educational environments. While much of the previous literature focuses on self-regulation within unique cultural frameworks (Zimmerman, 2000; Triandis 1995), this study shows how cross-cultural integration might improve outcomes in ECE contexts.

One of the most interesting and pleasant features of this study was noticing Mexican participants' eagerness to adopt Finnish model practices. This questioned the belief that deeply rooted cultural behaviors are difficult to change. It reaffirmed my conviction that when new methods are given in a culturally appropriate manner, communities are more likely to adopt them.

Despite the encouraging results, I must accept numerous limitations to this study. The sample size was very small, as participation was limited to a single community center in Mexico City. This fundamentally affects the findings' ability to be generalized to other regions or cultural settings. In addition, the study relied largely on qualitative data gathered through observations and interviews. While these methodologies delivered valuable insights, they may potentially be biased and lack to represent the workshops' long-term contribution.

Another area of concern was the workshop's short time frame and follow-up period, which may have been insufficient to observe long-term changes in self-regulation practices. Future research could benefit from a long-term strategy, which tracks participants over time to examine the long-lasting effects of these interventions.

Future studies should investigate the use of culturally responsive self-regulation workshops in various cultural contexts, notably in diverse populations or areas experiencing changes in education. Expanding the study to cover a bigger sample size and several locations might result in more reliable data and allow for comparative analysis across contexts. Incorporating quantitative indicators alongside qualitative methods may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the workshops' impact.

Longitudinal studies are especially critical for determining the long-term benefits of these interventions on both educators and learners. This would help evaluate whether the early positive changes observed during the workshops are long-lasting and lead to measurable gains in children's cognitive, emotional, and social development.

In conclusion, this thesis has been a deeply personal and professionally enriching experience. It effectively demonstrated the effectiveness of culturally sensitive workshops in improving self-regulation skills among educators, parents, and assistants in Mexico's early childhood education system. I feel that by incorporating elements from both Finnish and Mexican educational practices, this study has contributed to deepening our understanding of how cultural context affects educational outcomes.

The findings indicate that a balanced approach that combines autonomy and social responsibility can help youngsters develop self-regulation more effectively. The achievement of this effort demonstrates the significance of community involvement, professional growth, and cultural awareness in ECE practices. This study not only enriches information on the subject, but it also makes practical recommendations for educators and policymakers working to improve early childhood education in different cultural situations.

As someone who has spent most of my life navigating the differences between two cultures, I hope that the findings of this study can inspire additional efforts to establish more inclusive and effective educational environments for children around the world.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Guide for Self-Regulation Skills

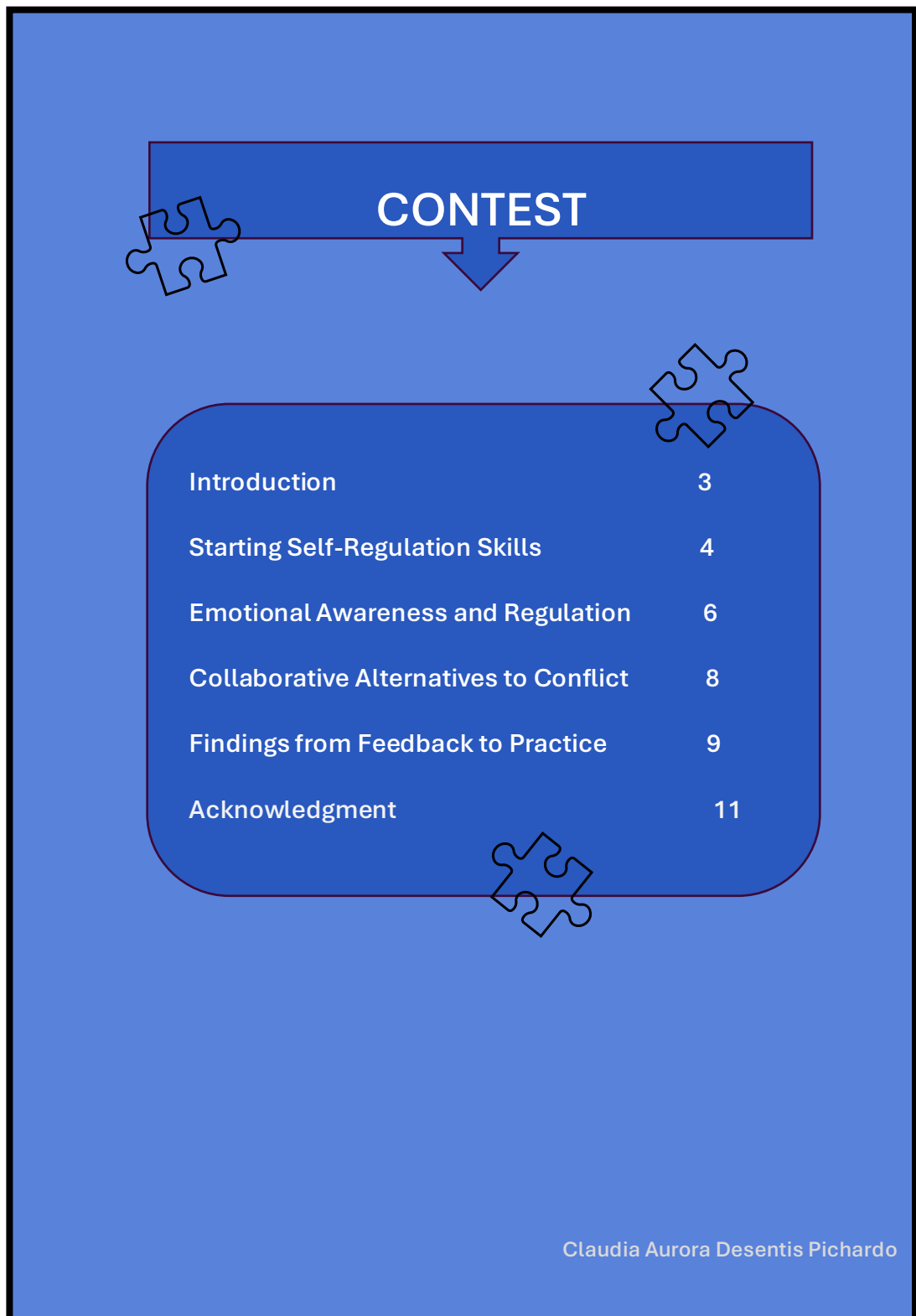
SELF-REGULATION SKILLS GUIDE



Finnish and Mexican Practices.



Claudia Aurora
Desentis Pichardo



SELF-REGULATION SKILLS



National Core Curriculum of Early Childhood Education and Care

The concept of Self-Regulation

Self-regulation, or the ability to regulate one's thoughts, feelings, and actions in pursuit of long-term goals, is key in early childhood education and can be developed with consistent guidance from parents and educators. Neuroscientific research underscores the significance of the prefrontal cortex in this process, underlining the importance of early intervention (Heatherton & Wagner 2011).



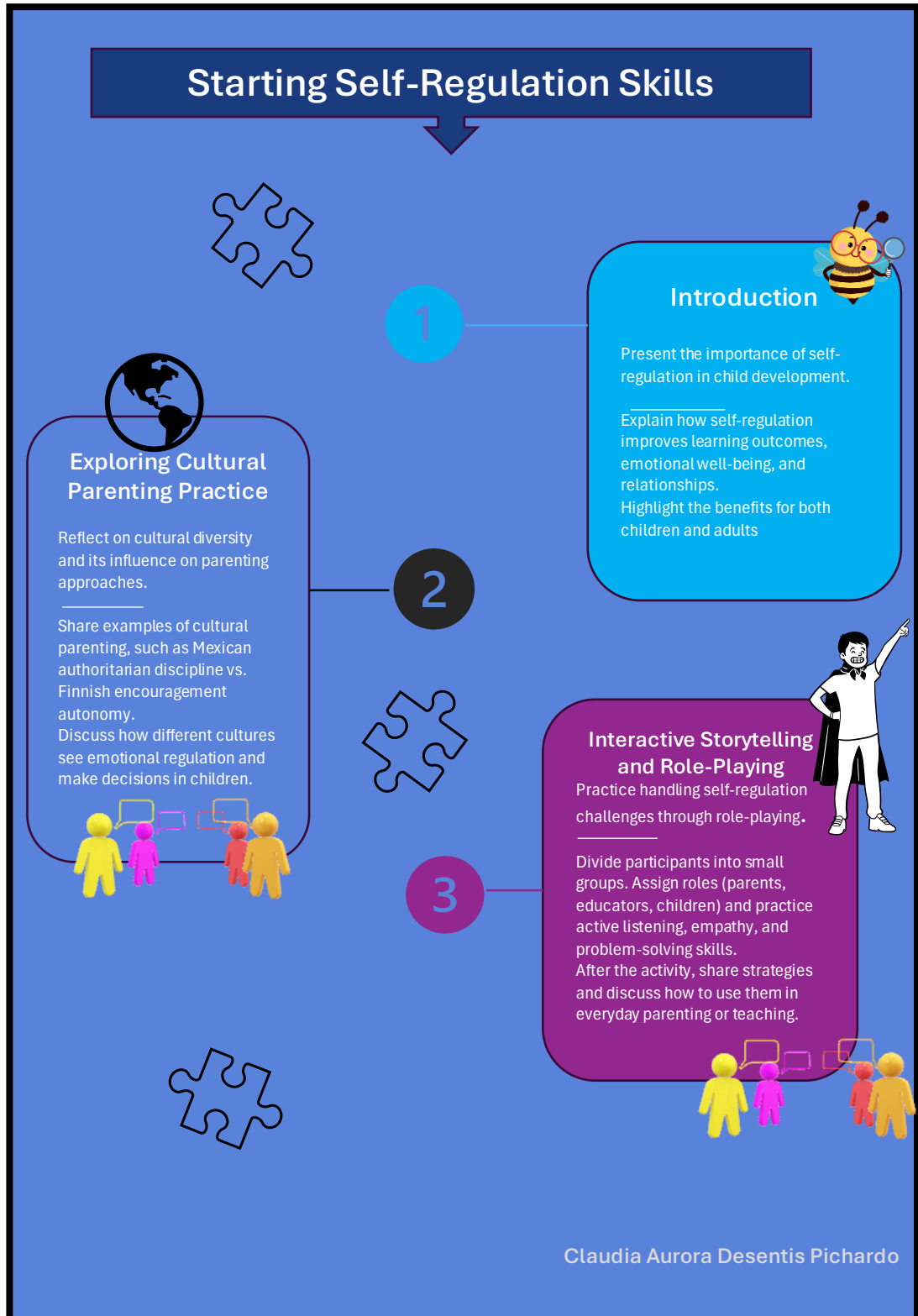
The purpose

Provide culturally sensitive practices for educators, parents, and assistants to promote self-regulation in early childhood education. Based on Finnish and Mexican educational approaches, the guidebook aims to incorporate play-based learning and emotional awareness strategies that respect and build on the community's values. Through this approach, I hope to transcend cultural gaps and give practical, empathetic strategies for promoting emotional development and self-regulation in children (Shanker 2016). This project represents my experience combining two educational systems while encouraging understanding between cultures.

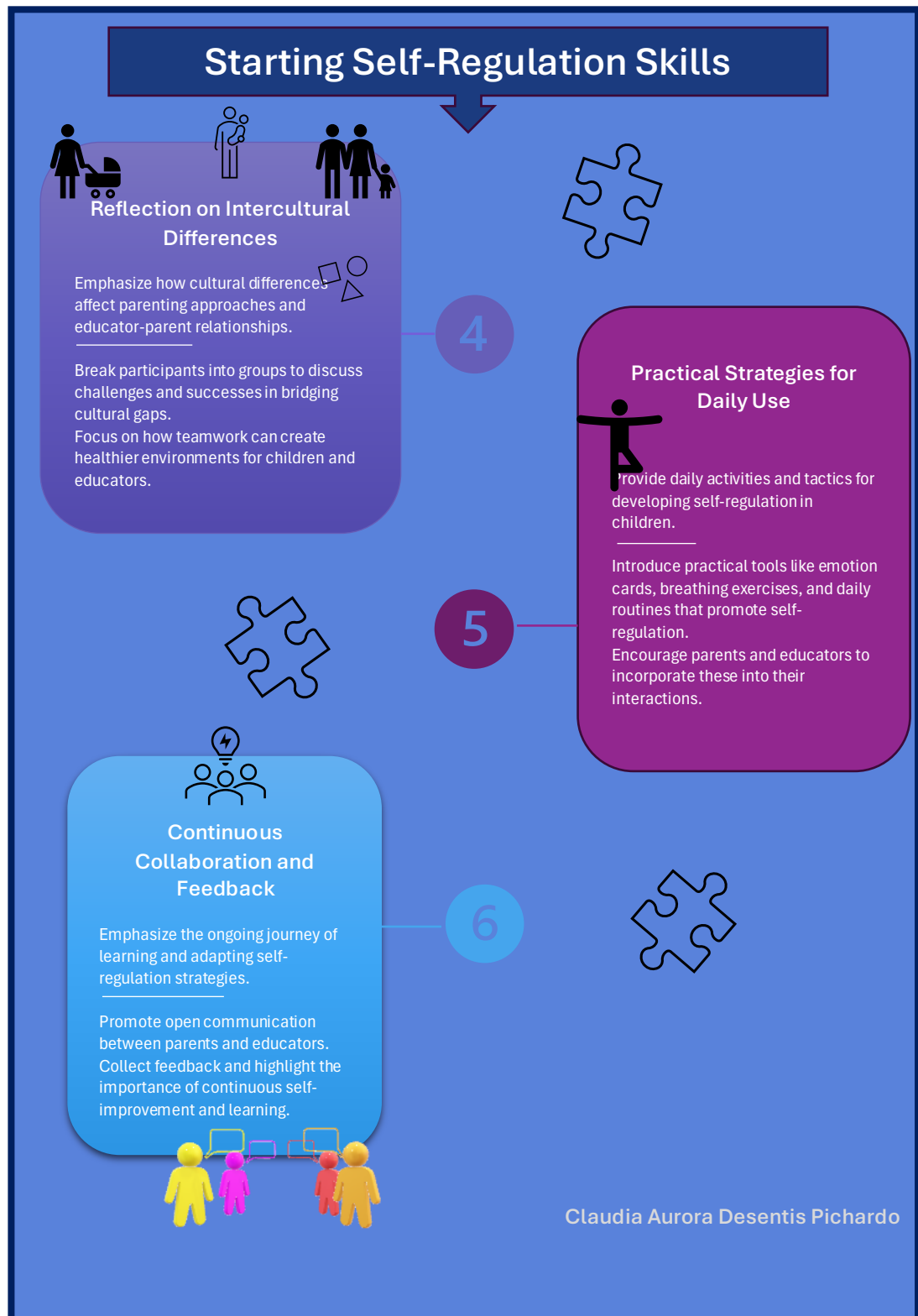
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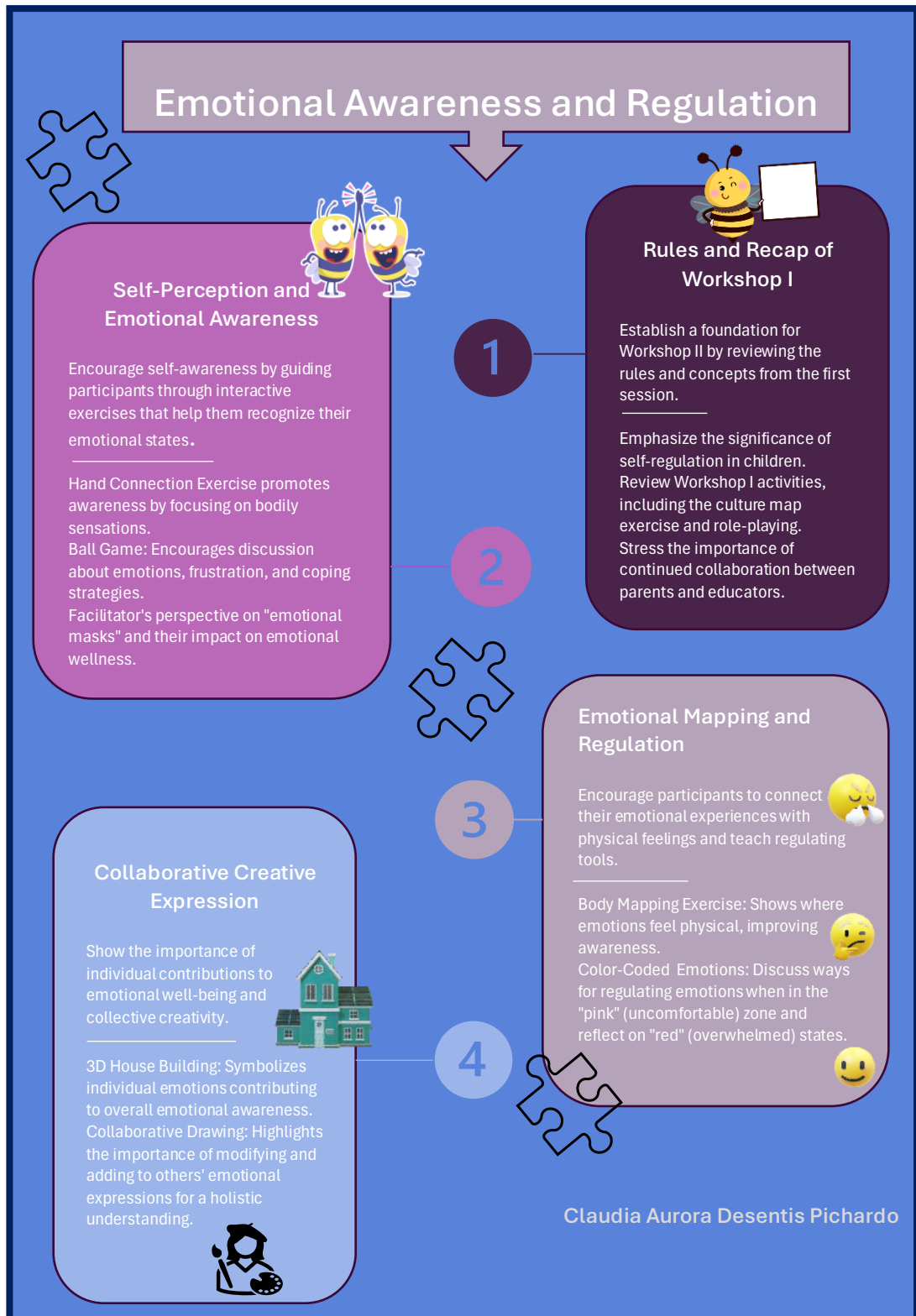
Claudia Aurora Desentis Pichardo

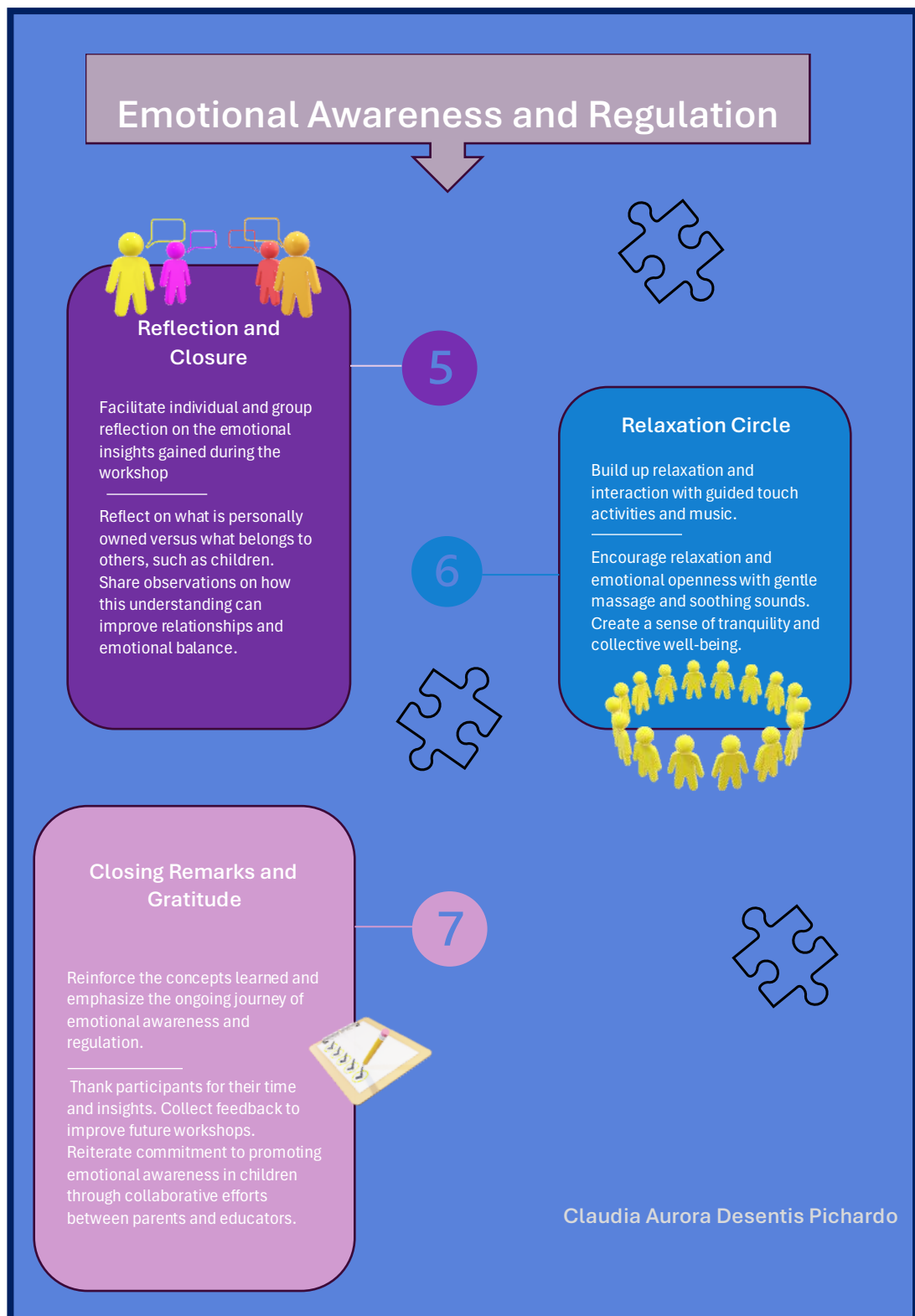
Starting Self-Regulation Skills



Claudia Aurora Desentis Pichardo







Collaborative Alternatives to Conflict



Emotional Self- Stories



Shared emotional experiences help to develop empathy and understanding.

Participants think to and write about recent emotionally challenging experiences. Each shares their story, focusing on thoughts and emotions. Group discussion to identify with shared emotions and develop empathy.

1

Overview



Introduce the workshop's goals, focusing on self-regulation, emotional awareness, and collaboration.

Summarize the objectives from the previous workshops. Highlight the importance of teamwork between parents, educators, and other support systems. Review basic rules for open dialogue and respectful communication throughout the session.

2



Emotional Traffic Light Game

Teach emotional management through the "traffic light" technique.



Explain the traffic light analogy: red = intense emotions, yellow = moderate, and green = regulated. Participants are given scenarios (e.g., stuck in traffic, a child throwing a tantrum) and discuss which light fits the situation. Groups brainstorm ideas for moving from red to yellow, then yellow to green, and share suggestions with the group.

3

Managing conflict scenarios

Practice emotional management in conflict situations.

Groups are given a conflict scenario to discuss and role-play how they handled emotions. Following each act, the group discusses the emotional responses and methods employed.

Explore alternating methods for solving conflicts and share them with the bigger group.

4



5



Recap and Reflection

Reflect on workshop experiences and learnings, and plan future action.

Recap the main ideas from all three workshops, focusing on emotional awareness and self-regulation.

Encourage participants to share their experiences with other parents, express gratitude for participation, gather feedback for improvement, and promote ongoing learning and collaboration in future sessions.



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Findings from Feedback to Practice



Introduction

Recap the series' goals and promote collaboration between parents, educators, and assistants.

Review previous workshops on emotional awareness and self-regulation.

Highlight the importance of collaboration among participants to foster better emotional support for children.

Establish "Timeout Dialogue Rules" for respectful conversations.

1



Cultural Map Exercise and Sharing

Recognize and appreciate cultural diversity in parenting and its impact on emotional development.

Participants share their cultural parenting practices. The facilitator highlights examples like Mexican authoritarian discipline vs. Finnish emotional balance. The facilitator highlights examples like Mexican authoritarian discipline vs. Finnish emotional balance.

2

Self-Perception and Emotional Awareness

Increase participants' awareness of their thoughts and emotions through a ball game.

Participants toss a ball and answer questions:

How are you feeling?

What does frustration mean to you?

How do you handle that emotion?

The facilitator guides and models responses.



3

Emotional Localization and Regulation

Understand how emotions manifest physically and present tools for emotional regulation.

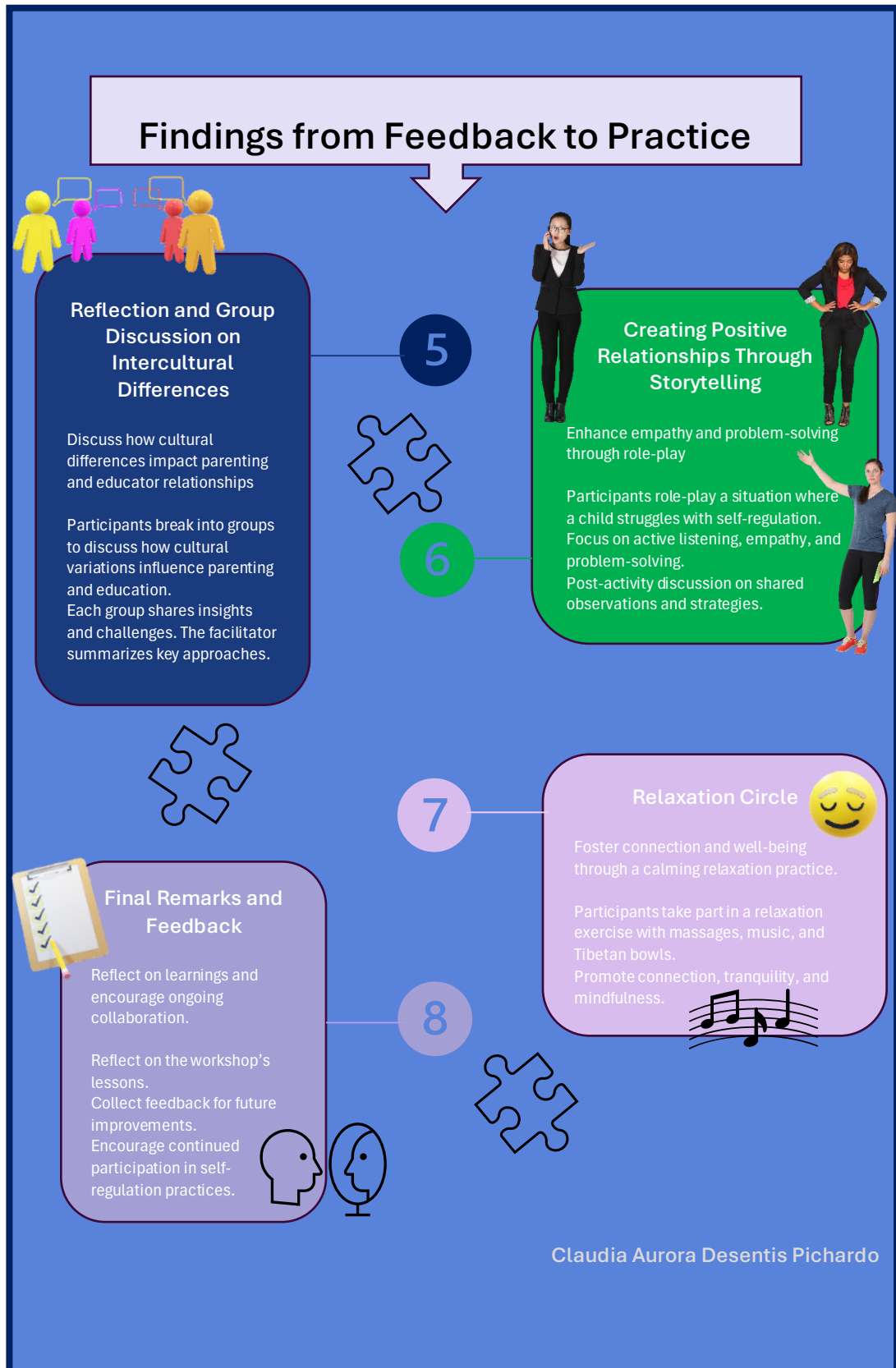
Participants point out where they feel emotions in their body using a body puzzle.

Introduce color-coded emotional states (red, yellow, pink, green) and strategies for emotional regulation. Reflect on experiences in the "Red" zone and learn techniques to return to equilibrium.

4



Claudia Aurora Desentis Pichardo





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Claudia Aurora Desentis Pichardo

Figures

Figure 1: Parents sharing a cultural parenting practice.....	28
Figure 2: Educators discussion impact on educational collaboration.	28
Figure 3: Educators Building 3D House.....	31
Figure 4 Parents Relaxing Circle.	31
Figure 5: Emotional Traffic Lights Game.	34
Figure 6: Reflection.....	37
Figure 7: Relaxing Circle.....	37

Table 1: Workshop Schedule and Focus Areas for Parents, Educators, and Assistants (2024) .	25
Table 2: Empowering Self-Regulation in Early Childhood via Cultural and Community Teamwork.....	26
Table 3: Workshop II Emotional Awareness and Regulation	29
Table 4: Improving Emotional Awareness and Self-Regulation in Parenting	32