

# Empowering Cross-Cultural Kids - Bridging The International Emotional Gap

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Crnički, Petra

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**UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB**  
**FACULTY OF TEACHER EDUCATION**  
**DEPARTMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION STUDIES**

**Petra Crnički**

**EMPOWERING CROSS-CULTURAL KIDS - BRIDGING THE INTERNATIONAL  
EMOTIONAL GAP**

**Master's Thesis**

**Zagreb, July 2023**

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**Mentor:**  
**izv. prof. dr. sc. Kristina Cergol**

**Zagreb, July 2023**

**Abstract:** This thesis explores the intersection of emotional intelligence (EI) and cross-cultural kids (CCKs) in the context of international schools. Cross-cultural kids, or children who have lived in or been exposed to more than one culture in their developmental years, face unique challenges and opportunities. Available research points to emotional intelligence, or to the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions and those of others, as a key factor in academic success and overall satisfaction and well-being. This thesis delves into the relationship between cross-cultural identity and emotional intelligence, as well as the impact of cultural factors on emotional intelligence development in cross-cultural kids. It examines how cultural norms, values, and beliefs can shape emotional expression and regulation, and how this can affect the emotional intelligence of cross-cultural kids. Drawing on existing literature and research, as well as case studies and interviews with people who grew up in culturally diverse environments, the thesis presents interventions and strategies for promoting emotional intelligence development in cross-cultural kids that can help them navigate the unique challenges they face. The findings suggest that the integration of programs that develop emotional intelligence in schools can be particularly beneficial for cross-cultural kids. Furthermore, the thesis discusses the role of teachers in promoting emotional intelligence development in cross-cultural kids, and how they can create a supportive and inclusive environment that fosters emotional growth. This thesis provides a comprehensive understanding of the intersection of emotional intelligence and cross-cultural kids by giving an overview of effective interventions and strategies that can empower cross-cultural kids to thrive in diverse and multicultural environments.

**Key words:** cross-cultural kids, culturally responsive teaching and learning, emotional intelligence, international schools

**Sažetak:** Ovaj diplomski rad istražuje povezanost emocionalne inteligencije i djece koja su izložena više kultura u kontekstu međunarodnih škola. Djeca koja su kroz djetinjstvo izložena najmanje dvije različite kulture, suočavaju se s jedinstvenim izazovima i prilikama u svom razvoju. Literatura upućuje na to da je emocionalna inteligencija, koja se odnosi na sposobnost prepoznavanja, razumijevanja i upravljanja vlastitim emocijama i emocijama drugih, ključni faktor u akademskom i osobnom uspjehu i zadovoljstvu u životu. Ovaj rad istražuje međusobnu povezanost kulturnog identiteta i emocionalne inteligencije te utjecaj kulturnih čimbenika na razvoj emocionalne inteligencije kod djece koja su izložena više kultura. Rad istražuje kako kulturne norme, vrijednosti i uvjerenja mogu oblikovati emocionalni izraz i regulaciju te kako to može utjecati na emocionalnu inteligenciju djece koja su izložena više kultura. Na temelju dosadašnje literature i istraživanja, kao i studije slučaja i intervjue s ljudima koji su odrasli u kulturno raznolikim okruženjima, rad predlaže strategije za promicanje razvoja emocionalne inteligencije kod djece koja su izložena više kultura kako bi im se pomoglo u suočavanju s jedinstvenim izazovima s kojima se suočavaju. Rezultati sugeriraju da integracija socijalnog i emocionalnog učenja može biti posebno korisna za razvoj emocionalne inteligencije kod djece koja su izložena više kultura. Nadalje, u radu se raspravlja o ulozi učitelja u promicanju razvoja emocionalne inteligencije kod djece koja su izložena više kultura i o tome kako oni mogu stvoriti poticajno i inkluzivno okruženje koje potiče emocionalni rast. Ovaj rad pruža sveobuhvatno razumijevanje emocionalne inteligencije i djece koja su izložena više kultura kroz pregled učinkovitih programa i strategija koje mogu osnažiti djecu u multikulturalnim okruženjima.

**Ključne riječi:** djeca koja su izložena više kultura, kulturno osviješteno učenje i poučavanje, emocionalna inteligencija, internacionalne škole

## **Izjava o izvornosti diplomskog rada**

Izjavljujem da je moj diplomski rad izvorni rezultat mojeg rada te da se u izradi istoga nisam koristio drugim izvorima osim onih koji su u njemu navedeni.

Petra Crnički

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## **1. Introduction**

### *1.1 Background*

Growing up, I had a unique experience that shaped who I am today. From kindergarten through high school, I attended an American international school, where I was exposed to a diverse group of students and teachers from all over the world. In addition to this, the household I grew up in was culturally mixed. This cross-cultural upbringing had an enormous impact on my identity formation, as it allowed me to see the world from multiple perspectives and appreciate different cultures. However, it also presented numerous challenges – some at the time, such as adjusting to new environments and making friends in a constantly changing setting, and some that surfaced later in life, such as a lack of true cultural balance.

Following in my mother's footsteps, I enrolled in university to study teaching and English. During my studies, a young teacher and friend of mine mentioned the concept of TCKs and I was instantly intrigued by what exactly this concept referred to. As I delved deeper into the literature, I discovered the umbrella term cross-cultural kid (CCK) and found that I identified with the experiences that characterize this group. Realizing that I identify as a CCK fuelled my already-ignited interest in the topic. I started to identify with the positive and negative aspects of such a childhood. The revelation that I am not alone in some of the challenges I face, such as constantly saying goodbye and feeling like I don't fully belong in any one culture; but rather that they are unique to CCKs, was comforting and empowering. I was motivated to continue my research in hopes of using this key of insight into such a meaningful field I had stumbled upon on my journey with hopes of eventually being able to apply that knowledge to help children with experiences like mine have a more positive one.

My interest in emotional intelligence (EI) began with personal experience, as I found it to be a valuable tool for my well-being and success in life. Throughout my teenage years, I exposed myself to various situations that pushed me to research EI, such as organizing a mental health conference, attending a mediation course, and leading a workshop on emotional intelligence with high schoolers. My personal experience with emotional intelligence has driven my interest in exploring its application in the context of CCKs. I realized that EI is especially important for CCKs, as their unique experiences present a plethora of specific challenges that non-CCKs may not face in their developmental years. By developing their emotional intelligence, I believe CCKs can better navigate these challenges and prevent the development of any long-term negative effects of growing up in a cross-cultural environment.



As a future teacher aspiring to work in an international school, I am aware of the importance of EI development for myself on both a personal and professional level, as well as for my students. Furthermore, as a future teacher in a cross-cultural environment with my students' best interests at heart, I strongly believe in the significance of understanding the unique experiences of CCKs. These are the reasons I decided to write about both CCKs and EI in my research, as two deeply interrelated fields. I believe this newly developing field that emerges organically from the overlap of the two fields requires more attention and further research, and that any and every contribution can make a difference in the lives of CCKs. My goal is to contribute to a conversation that will not only benefit CCKs during their time in international schools but will also have a lasting impact on their personal and academic lives in the long run.

## *1.2 Purpose*

The primary objective of this master's thesis is to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and cross-cultural kids (CCKs) attending international schools. The study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on emotional intelligence and cross-cultural kids, highlighting the interconnectedness of the two fields of interest. Through a comprehensive literature review, this research seeks to provide a new perspective on if and how emotional intelligence can be enhanced in CCKs attending international schools, with the goal of gradually reducing the challenges that this population may face. By shedding light on the significance of emotional intelligence in cross-cultural kids who attend international schools, this study hopes to identify the unique challenges that CCKs may encounter, ultimately contributing to a powerful conversation that seeks to lessen the negative aspects of a cross-cultural childhood. Through this research, the study aims to provide insights and recommendations that can contribute to making a cross-cultural childhood a more positive experience for CCKs. It is hoped that this study serves as a stepping stone for further research and action in this area.

## **2. Cross-Cultural Kids**

### *2.1 Definition of cross-cultural kids and their unique characteristics*

Based on John and Ruth Hill Useem's research on what they eventually conceptualized as 'third culture' (*Figure 1*), the term TCK or 'third culture kid' was coined. TCKs are children whose parents work in countries outside their home country in representative roles, such as 'military brats' or 'corporate brats' (Cottrell & Downie, 2012), meaning that their distinction lies

in the involvement of another country and reason for spending a significant part of their developmental years abroad (Tan, Wang & Cottrell, 2021). In the second half of the 20th century, David and Betty Pollock started organizing conferences and seminars for TCKs. Since the introduction of the term, there was a sudden surfacing of many individuals who related to experiences associated with such children but did not fall into the traditional category and definition. As a result of the increasing complexity of cultural globalization, an umbrella term was needed to encompass the diverse group of individuals who share such experiences in a plethora of contexts.

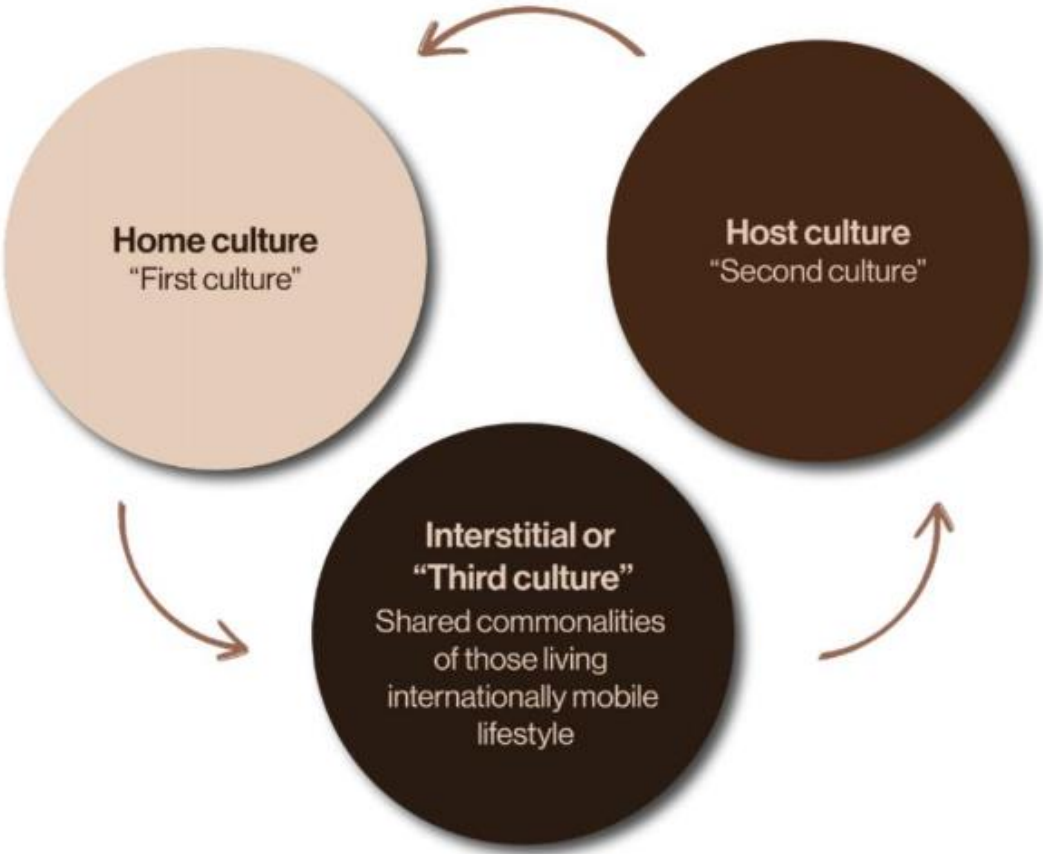


Figure 1. "Third culture" (Shades of Noir, 2021).

David C. Pollock and Ruth E. Van Reken's book "Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing Up Among Worlds" is a seminal work in the field of cross-cultural studies, introducing new ideas and perspectives on the experiences of individuals who grow up between cultures (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). In the third and updated version of the book, Van Reken

updated the old definition of TCKs and offered the term cross-cultural kid (CCK) as the solution to the problem posed by the numerous and complex intertwining of cultural worlds that make up an individual's upbringing. Once the concept of cross-cultural kids came to life, there was a language change that finally allowed for a new perspective and understanding of all children who grow up cross-culturally. However, the largest body of literature still revolves around the subgroup of TCKs (Waal et al., 2020).

Pollock and Van Reken (2009) define CCKs as individuals whose developmental years are characterized by significant exposure to at least two cultures. The definition of CCKs emphasizes the diverse cultural contexts that shape a child's experiences, rather than the specific physical locations of those experiences and the reason for being abroad, two factors that distinguish TCKs (Tan, Wang & Cottrell, 2021). Pollock et al. (2010) visually represent the current subgroups identified within the CCK group of CCKs (*Figure 2*).

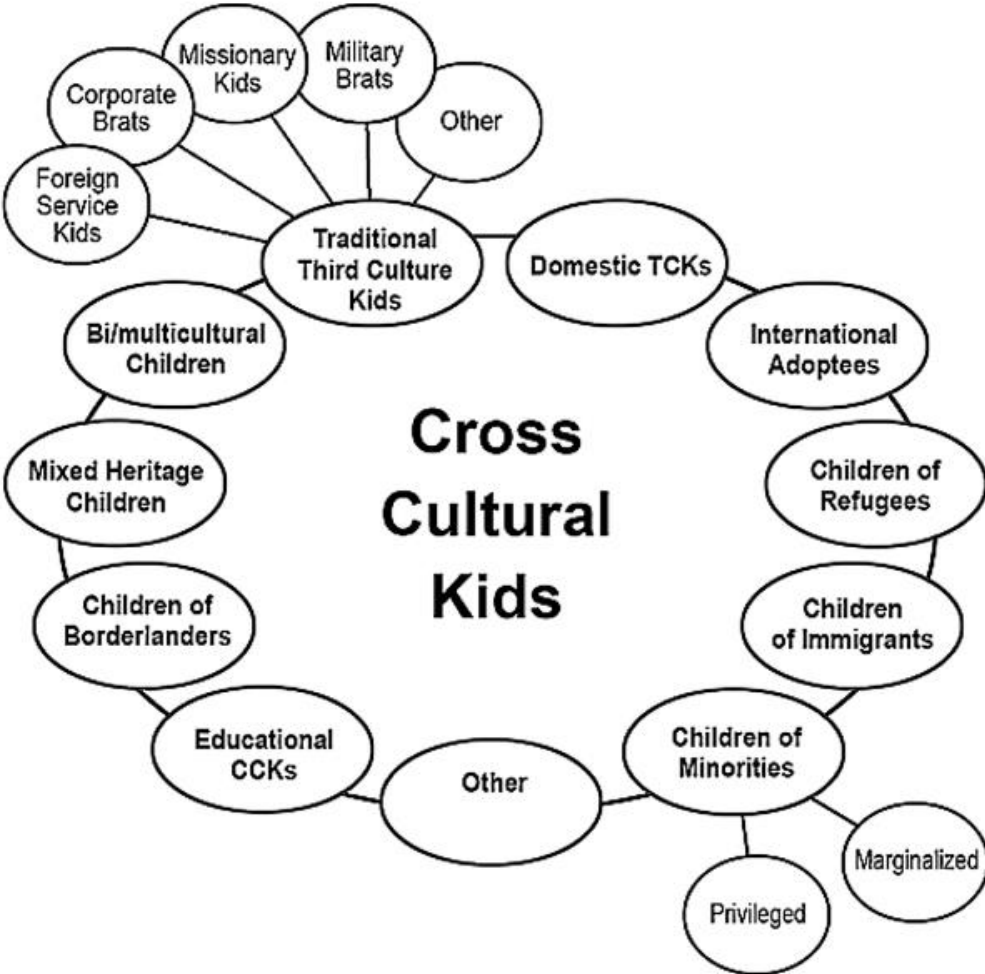


Figure 2. Cross Cultural Kids (Pollock et al., 2010).

Based on the analysis and classification of specific experiences, Ruth Van Reken presents the cross-cultural kid model, which defines the categories of CCKs that have been named thus far, including the following:

- 1 Traditional TCKs: Children who move out of their home culture because of a parent's career choice.
- 2 Children from bi/multicultural homes: Children whose parents are from two or more cultures.
- 3 Children from bi/multiracial homes: Children whose parents are from two or more races.
- 4 Children of immigrants: Children whose parents have moved permanently to a country other than their own passport country.
- 5 Educational CCKs: Children who live in their passport country but attend a school whose population is culturally different from the home culture.
- 6 Children of refugees: Children whose parents have been forced to flee their home country because of various circumstances like war, violence or natural disasters.
- 7 Children of borderlanders: Children who cross borders as they commute to school or whose parents have jobs that require them to travel between countries.
- 8 Children of minorities: Children whose parents belong to a minority racial or ethnic group in their country of residence.
- 9 International adoptees: Children who were adopted by parents of a different nationality than their birth country.
- 10 Domestic TCKs: Children whose parents have lived in diverse subcultures within their country of origin.

It is important to note that the authors of the book "Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing Up Among Worlds" further explore the topic mainly through the lens of traditional TCKs (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). They do so because of the existing length and depth to which there is insight available into their experiences, as opposed to that of CCKs. However, they point out that the findings of their research and conclusions drawn from the TCK experience, as a subgroup of CCKs, can be applied to the cross-cultural childhood of CCKs, which will be done in this research due to the limited literature in the field.

Despite the clear differences in the cross-cultural childhoods of these individuals, based on which they are classified as particular types of CCKs, these groups also share distinct commonalities. By taking an in-depth look at what is shared in the uniting experience of

growing up among cultures, Pollock and Van Reken (2009) bring to light the universal and unique characteristics of CCKs. Each of these characteristics may either bring benefits or challenges to the individual, manifesting as strengths or weaknesses (Shades of Noir, 2020). Some of the distinct characteristics of CCKs resulting from their cross-cultural experiences include cultural adaptability versus lack of true cultural balance, less versus more prejudice, decisiveness versus the delusion of choice, appreciation versus mistrust of authority, and real versus perceived arrogance (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Pollock and Van Reken (2009) continue to explain these characteristics in detail, basing their conclusions on a collection of stories written by adult TCKs (ATCKs) and adult CCKs (ACCKs).

Shades of Noir (2020) identify cultural adaptability and problem-solving through creativity and originality as one of CCKs prominent strengths. To survive the repeating changes of cultures, CCKs develop an ability to adapt to any situations, circumstances, and cultures they find themselves in, showing their cross-cultural competence or cultural intelligence. ACCKs sometimes describe themselves as chameleons, which vividly illustrates this ability to observe and consequently blend into their environment. In opposition to this, other CCKs may struggle to develop true cultural balance, seeming reserved and cautious or distraught and untrue of themselves (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). A lack of self-esteem and sense of identity (*Figure 3*) and belonging are detrimental for children while growing up, and since CCKs often experience such feelings, their levels of emotional stability and mental health are often negatively impacted (Shades of Noir, 2020).

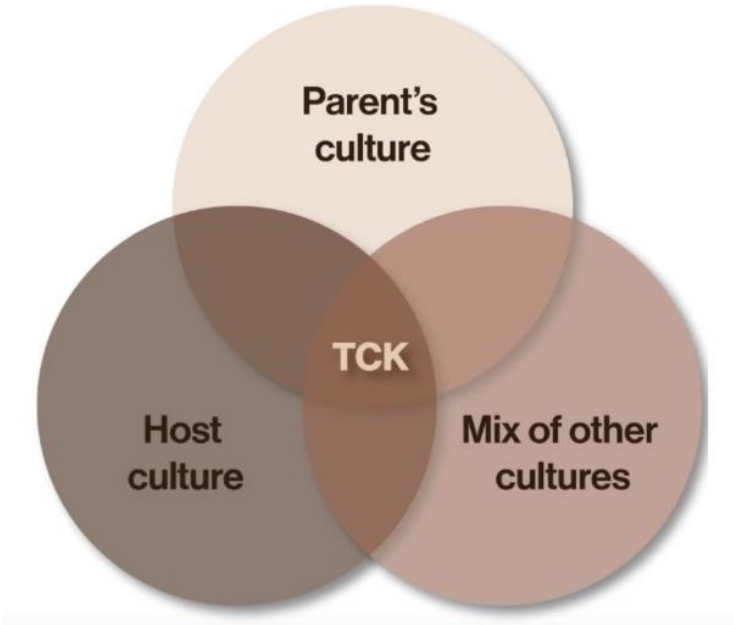


Figure 3. Third Culture Child and Identity Crisis (Shades of Noir, 2020).

A testament to the opportunity to be exposed to such rich diversity is the level of prejudice CCKs have toward people of all backgrounds. The CCKs whose experience has shaped them to perceive all people despite their backgrounds as equal, often single out the characteristic of increased tolerance and third-dimensionality as one of the most valuable gifts. Their cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity are an indication of their broader worldview (Shades of Noir, 2020). In comparison, other CCKs belong to the other end of the prejudice spectrum, coming out of the experience more prejudiced, feeling entitled and superior to the host culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Furthermore, CCKs often develop an ignorance of their home culture due to a lack of knowledge about the home culture's customs, norms, and values; and experience reverse culture shock upon reintegrating to their home cultures.

Decisiveness in CCKs can be detected in two ways, one of which is the motivation to get a lot done while not contemplating much. The underlying awareness of the passing of time and the importance of seizing the day that they experience also manifest in their education and career paths, as statistics show that the average likelihood of them acquiring an advanced degree is higher than that of the general population (Shades of Noir, 2020). The second way it can be detected is in the exact opposite – the lack of decisiveness and inability to commit to one of many options. This may occur due to past experiences in which CCKs felt choiceless because of external and ever-changing circumstances or because of the underlying belief that another better possibility may present itself (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

CCKs relation to authority is also specific. While some CCKs develop an appreciation of authority due to a strong feeling of security in a specially constructed organizational system that shuts out many "real world" states, other CCKs perceive this environment as living in a sort of bubble in which authority figures continued to make decisions throughout their childhood for them without consideration of their needs, leading to a mistrust of authority (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). The confusion they experience concerning politics and values is another factor that contributes to their identity crisis and cultural homelessness, subsequently making it difficult for them to adjust to adult life (Shades of Noir, 2020).

The last significant characteristic Pollock and Van Reken (2009) identified which is often tied to CCKs is arrogance. Their perception of themselves as "different" from others may lead either to real or perceived arrogance. Real arrogance manifests in their impatience or judgementalism with others, while perceived arrogance comes from the perception of non-CCKs who cannot relate to their experience and background. Consequently, they often find it

difficult to develop deeper communication and relationships with peers who did not experience a cross-cultural upbringing (Shades of Noir, 2020).

## *2.2 Transition cycle*

Before the publication of the first edition of the book "Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing Up Among Worlds", David Pollock took an in-depth look at the ways people process transitions, identifying the five common stages – the involvement stage, the leaving stage, the transition stage, the entering stage, the reinvolvement stage – and presenting them in his model of the normal transition cycle (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Pollock (2009) describes the response of the individual and of the community during each stage.

The first stage of the process is the involvement stage. This stage is characterized by a prevalent sense of belonging and comfort for both the individual and those surrounding them. Slowly but surely, an awareness of the approaching change creeps in, marking the beginning of the second stage – the leaving stage. To help themselves go through this stage as painlessly as possible, the individual tends to begin detaching from everything in their surroundings they have developed emotional ties with, including friends and responsibilities (Shades of Noir, 2020). This mechanism is one of the forms of self-protective denial. Others include the denial of feelings of sadness or grief, denial of feelings of rejection, and denial of expectations. While the individual takes certain actions to detach from the community, the community begins to do the same (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

Having gone through the first two stages, the individual enters the temporarily dysfunctional and chaotic transition stage. Amidst the effort to practically learn life over from its core, the individual often faces the loss of security and low levels of self-esteem (Shades of Noir, 2020) Their new community may be welcoming but does not yet see them as anything but a newcomer, making the individual feel statusless and disconnected from everything they were once certain made them who they were. This feeling may suck the individual into a downward spiral of withdrawal coupled with anger and loneliness (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

Soon after, the entering stage approaches, taking on the form of hope and light through the acceptance of the circumstances. It is characterized by the desire to become part of the new community, vulnerability, and ambivalence (Shades of Noir, 2020). The community also begins to accept the changes the new individual has brought to their world. They begin opening their eyes and hearts and putting in an intentional effort to make room for the new individual in their lives. The final stage is the reinvolvement stage. The individual and community may feel this

stage as a kind of breakthrough, the individual becoming confident in their new role as a permanent member of the community and the community recognizing the individual as part of the group (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

Certain subgroups of CCKs go through the transition cycle much more frequently than non-CCKs. The experience of CCKs who attend international schools makes them fall into the category of those who go through the transition cycle more frequently since they themselves move every so often and/or the people in their environment move often. In addition to the normal stress of a transition, those that move to other schools and cultures experience the added element of culture shock that only increases the intensity of such an experience. As a result, these CCKs often deal with unresolved grief, another one of their unique characteristics, due to several different types of invisible losses (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

### *2.3 Cultural identity and marginality*

A term very relevant to CCKs is cultural identity. According to Schwartz, cultural identity can be defined as "a sense of solidarity with the ideals of a given cultural group and to the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors manifested toward one's own (and other) cultural groups as a result of this solidarity" (Schwartz et al., 2006: 5). Ashforth and Mael (1989) offer another explanation of cultural identity as the foundation based on which an individual defines themselves and others (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Pollock and Van Reken (2009) emphasize the complex struggle CCKs face in developing their personal and cultural identity in culturally diverse environments. Cultural identity is a significant element contributing to intercultural interactions. Since such interactions characterize CCK's childhood, it is evident that strengthening cultural identity is a necessity. The stronger their cultural identity, the better the CCK processes cultural knowledge, develops motivation, and perceives their ability to interact with people from other cultures (Lee, 2010).

Another important term to define is cultural marginality. It is used to describe CCKs whose experience is influenced by more than one cultural tradition, leading to the construction of a unique sense of belonging that does not relate specifically to either of the cultures (Shades of Noir, 2020). Individuals recognize it in their feeling of being at home both nowhere and everywhere (Lee, 2010). Schaetti (1998) states that the term can be positive or negative, depending on the individual and how they decide to use it. Those individuals who use it to their advantage are referred to as constructive marginals, while those who let it trap them are referred to as encapsulated marginals (Bennett, 1993). On one hand, constructive marginals transition through cultures with ease and manage to maintain a strong sense of self as multicultural beings,



actively constructing their identity (Bennett, 1993). According to existing CCK experiences, these individuals often end up using their ability to fit in wisely wherever they find themselves by applying the unique skills and knowledge they acquired throughout their childhood. On the other hand, encapsulated marginals struggle with developing a sense of self and belonging, consequently facing and experiencing feelings of anger, helplessness, and isolation (Whyte, 2016).

#### *2.4 Benefits and challenges of being a cross-cultural kid*

Pollock and Van Reken (2009) describe the necessity of looking into the paradoxical benefits and challenges of the CCKs to fully understand their unique profile. They see it important to recognize the complexity of their profile as a direct product of the intertwining of the benefits and challenges; therefore, explaining them further in pairs, simultaneously complementary and in opposition to one another – expanded worldview versus confused loyalties, three-dimensional view of the world versus painful view of reality, and cross-cultural enrichment versus ignorance of the home culture. These benefits and challenges are just the tip of the CCK profile iceberg that Pollock and Van Reken (2009) have started to uncover.

The first benefit that Pollock and Van Reken (2009) point out is the CCKs' expanded worldview which is seen in their early awareness of the multitude of perspectives from which people can view life. The second benefit stemming from the cultural richness and high mobility of their childhoods is a three-dimensional view of the world (Shades of Noir, 2020). Having so many hands-on experiences and using their senses to experience the many cultures they were in contact with and places they were in helped them develop this 3-D view of the world. The third benefit Pollock and Van Reken (2009) identify is cross-cultural enrichment. CCKs often continue to enjoy and implement many aspects of culture from the host cultures they have lived in before long after moving away, considering them part of their heritage and wealth. Besides the surface layers of culture, CCKs also understand and appreciate the deeper levels such as behavioral differences, unlike non-CCKs who may be irritated by them (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

In opposition to an expanded worldview, Pollock and Van Reken (2009) mention the challenge of confused loyalties and values. This refers to their choice in supporting certain policies or deciding on their core personal beliefs that are either in harmony with their host or home countries. The challenge that potentially comes with the second benefit – the three-dimensional worldview – is the painful reality of the world due to their global lifestyle that may be a result of various circumstances like war, violence, or natural disasters (Pollock & Van

Reken, 2009). Pollock and Van Reken (2009) describe ignorance of home culture as a challenge in contrast to the third benefit – cross-cultural enrichment. However, Pollock and Van Reken (2009) conclude that this challenge seems to be lessening thanks to the Internet and various platforms allowing CCKs to stay informed about what is going on in their home countries daily and allowing communication and connection with family relatives, and friends.

### **3. Emotional Intelligence**

#### *3.1 Emotional Intelligence*

##### *3.1.1 Definitions and main models of emotional intelligence*

The notion of emotional intelligence stems from the beginning of the twentieth century as an element of Thorndike's (1920) interpretation of social intelligence and Howard Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences as a concept belonging to interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. Shortly after, Wayne Leon Payne (1985) and Keith Beasley (1987) changed the course of the discussion, explicitly using the terminology of emotional intelligence. Salovey and Mayer (1990) were the first to offer a formal model of emotional intelligence (EI), which marked the introduction of the term in scientific literature (Rathore & Chadha, 2015). They defined EI as "a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). Several years later, Goleman proposed his definition of EI: "Emotional intelligence is the ability to motivate ourselves and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate our mood and keep distress from swamping our ability to think, and to empathize and hope." (Goleman, 1996, p. 34). Goleman's successful book, "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ" (1995), caught the attention of the general public and set in motion a new wave of understanding emotional intelligence as a construct accessible and relevant to all people.

Since the initial introduction of the term, researchers have continued to further their understanding of EI by classifying EI skills into five major categories or dimensions. The categories, which have undergone minor changes since Goleman's (1995) description of the four major dimensions of emotionally intelligent people, are self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Goleman (1998) divided the five dimensions into two categories – personal and social skills – and twenty-five emotional competencies (*Table 1*).

THE EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK	
PERSONAL SKILLS (how we manage ourselves)	SOCIAL SKILLS (how we manage relationships)
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Self-awareness</b> (knowing one's internal states, preferences, resources and intuitions)</p> <p>Emotional awareness <i>Recognizing one's emotions and their effects</i></p> <p>Accurate self-assessment <i>Knowing one's strengths and limits</i></p> <p>Self-confidence <i>A strong sense of one's self-worth and capabilities</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Empathy</b> (awareness of others' feelings, needs, and concerns)</p> <p>Understanding others <i>Sensing others' feelings and perspectives, and taking active interest in their concerns</i></p> <p>Developing others <i>Sensing others' development needs and bolstering their abilities</i></p> <p>Service orientation <i>Anticipating, recognizing, and meeting customers' needs</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Self-regulation</b> (managing one's internal impulses and resources)</p> <p>Self-control <i>Keeping disruptive emotions and impulses in check</i></p> <p>Trustworthiness <i>Maintaining standards of honesty and integrity</i></p> <p>Conscientiousness <i>Taking responsibility for personal performance</i></p> <p>Adaptability <i>Flexibility in handling change</i></p> <p>Innovation <i>Being comfortable with novel ideas, approaches, and new information</i></p>	<p>Leveraging diversity <i>Cultivating opportunities through different kinds of people</i></p> <p>Political awareness <i>Reading a group's emotional currents and power relationships</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Motivation</b> (emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals)</p> <p>Achievement drive <i>Striving to improve or meet a standard of excellence</i></p> <p>Commitment <i>Aligning with the goals of the group or organization</i></p> <p>Initiative <i>Readiness to act on opportunities</i></p> <p>Optimism</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Social Skills</b> (adeptness and inducing desirable responses in others)</p> <p>Influence <i>Wielding effective tactics for persuasion</i></p> <p>Communication <i>Listening openly and sending convincing messages</i></p> <p>Conflict management <i>Negotiating and resolving disagreements</i></p> <p>Leadership <i>Inspiring and guiding individuals and groups</i></p> <p>Change catalyst <i>Initiating or managing change</i></p> <p>Building bonds <i>Nurturing instrumental relationships</i></p> <p>Collaboration and cooperation <i>Working with others toward shared goals</i></p>

<i>Persistence in pursuing goals despite obstacles and setbacks</i>	Team capabilities <i>Creating group synergy in pursuing collective goals</i>
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*Table 1. The Emotional Competence Framework (Goleman, 1998).*

As stated by The Encyclopedia of Applied Psychology (Spielberger, 2004) there are three major models of emotional intelligence: the ability model, trait model, and mixed model.

John Mayor and Peter Salovey (1993) proposed the four-branch ability model of emotional intelligence defining emotional intelligence as a set of cognitive abilities that include perceiving emotions, using emotions to facilitate thinking, understanding emotions, and managing emotions. They (1999) argue that emotional intelligence is distinct from other forms of intelligence, but meets traditional standards for intelligence, such as the ability to be measured using performance-based tests. According to the ability model, EI can be developed and improved with training and practice. The model suggests that EI is a reliable predictor of many outcomes like academic performance (Petrides, 2011).

The trait model, as presented by Petrides (2011), views EI as a reflection of an individual's emotional self-perceptions, dispositions, and abilities that enable them to cope effectively with demands and pressures in their environment. Since this model conceptualizes EI as a personality trait or set of traits, measurements rely mainly on self-report questionnaires. In opposition to the ability model, the trait model sees EI as a relatively stable aspect of personality with four main dimensions: self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, and social skills (Petrides, 2011).

Mixed models of emotional intelligence combine elements of both ability and trait models and propose that EI is a combination of cognitive and personality factors. Several studies have proposed a mixed model of emotional intelligence that incorporates both cognitive and personality factors, which is considered to be a more comprehensive approach (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004; Petrides, Pita, & Kokkinaki, 2007; Lopes, Salovey, & Straus, 2003).

### *3.1.2 Importance of emotional intelligence*

When talking about EI it is important to mention the term IQ, as well. The term IQ or Intelligence Quotient refers to a score on a set of tests that rate an individual's overall cognitive ability in relation to the general population. Before the discussion and research on EI, the term IQ was thought of as a great indicator of an individual's success in life. However, psychologists have reached the conclusion that IQ on its own not only does not allow for a true prediction of the level of success one will reach professionally, but also a correlation between a high IQ level

and a successful life and career cannot be scientifically proven or backed (Goleman, 1995). Quite the contrary, according to Goleman (1995, 33) "there are widespread exceptions to the rule that IQ predicts success – many (or more) exceptions than cases that fit the rule". Since emotional intelligence is a relatively new concept, there has not yet been a defined percentage determining exactly how much of an impact it has on a person's life. However, available data does suggest that it may be just as (if not more) influential as IQ and an overview of research that has been done to support this claim will be presented.

### *3.1.3 Can emotional intelligence be developed?*

In recent years, there has been growing evidence to suggest that emotional intelligence is not a fixed trait and can be developed through deliberate effort, training, and education. Catherine Moore (2019), argues that emotional intelligence can be improved (Goleman, 1995) through strategies such as seeking feedback, learning from role models, and developing self-awareness. Similarly, Caruso and Salovey (2004) provide practical strategies for improving emotional intelligence skills in the workplace, while Six Seconds Emotional Intelligence Network (Six Seconds, n.d.) offers various resources and tools to help individuals and organizations develop their emotional intelligence skills.

The American Psychological Association (APA, 2021) acknowledges that while there is a genetic component to emotional intelligence, environmental factors can also influence its development. Brackett and Rivers (2014) note that emotional intelligence can be taught and improved through training and education, particularly in the areas of emotion recognition and regulation, social skills, and empathy. Nelis et al. (2009) found that emotional intelligence training programs can significantly increase emotional intelligence scores among participants, while Miao, Humphrey, and Qian (2017) reviewed emotional intelligence training programs and found that a variety of training methods, including cognitive-behavioral interventions, mindfulness-based interventions, and social cognitive training, can develop emotional intelligence. Joseph and Newman's (2010) meta-analysis suggests that training and coaching programs can develop emotional intelligence, especially in emotional recognition and expression, emotion regulation, and empathy.

Overall, these sources provide ample evidence that emotional intelligence is not a fixed trait and can be developed through deliberate effort, training, and education.

### *3.1.4 Emotion and cognition*

From the previously mentioned definitions of emotional intelligence, it is evident that EI as a construct encompasses cognition and emotional abilities (Cherniss, 2001). In understanding emotions, Barrett (2017) clarifies that they are constructed by the brain based on past experiences, present circumstances, and learned concepts. As such, they are triggered by the brain's predictions of what is likely to happen and what is relevant for survival and well-being (Panksepp, 2011), helping people makes sense of the world and guide their actions (Barrett, 2017). Therefore, emotions are intertwined with cognition (Barrett, 2017).

According to Bechara (2005), emotions and cognitive processes are closely intertwined in decision-making and impulse control. Based on the work of Immordino-Yang (2011), emotions are an integral part of cognitive processes and should in turn be interwoven in learning and education. LeDoux (1992) takes an in-depth look at the relationship between emotions and cognition, concluding that emotions can influence several cognitive processes such as attention, memory, and decision-making. This is known based on the understanding of the amygdala, a brain region involved in emotional processing which interacts with other brain regions involved in cognition, such as the prefrontal cortex (LeDoux, 1992). Bechara (2005) discusses the crucial role of the prefrontal cortex in regulating emotional responses and making decisions, which supports the growing evidence in neuroscience for the interconnection between cognition and emotions (Caruso, 2008).

### *3.1.5 Emotional literacy and competence*

It is important to differentiate the terms emotional intelligence and emotional literacy. According to the book "Emotional Intelligence 2.0" by Bradberry and Greaves (2009), emotional intelligence (EI) is composed of four core skills: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Emotional literacy is not simply a key component of these skills, but more so a refinement of emotional intelligence (Ninivaggi, 2017). The term emotional literacy was coined by Steiner and first published in written form in his book "Healing Alcoholism" in 1979 (Steiner, 2003). Steiner (2003) offers his take on the difference between the two terms, defining emotional literacy as "heart-centered emotional intelligence" (p. 16). He further explains the term as the ability to use emotions to our benefit and the benefit of those in our surroundings. Emotional literacy can be developed with adequate training and consequently result in the re-establishment of contact "with our feelings and their power, especially the power of love" (Steiner, 2003, p. 22).

Cherniss (2010) claims it is beneficial to make a distinction between the two constructs that emotional intelligence refers to – emotional intelligence and emotional and social competence. In his clarification of the constructs, he states that emotional intelligence encompasses certain core abilities, while emotional and social competencies are what is derived from those abilities (Cherniss et al., 2006). Saarni defines emotional competence as "the demonstration of self-efficacy in emotion-eliciting social transactions" (Saarni, 2000, p. 68) and emphasizes the skills of emotional competence that allow the individual to attain the intended result. Saarni lists the following skills of emotional competence:

- 1 being aware of one's emotional state
- 2 distinguishing others' emotions
- 3 using the culturally available vocabulary of emotion appropriately
- 4 empathic and sympathetic participation in others' emotional experiences
- 5 understanding that there may be a difference between inner emotional states and outer expression
- 6 using intrinsic coping strategies to handle unpleasant or difficult emotions well
- 7 awareness that relationships are partly demarcated by both the authenticity of emotions displayed and by the level of mutual exchange within the relationship
- 8 'feeling overall the way one wants to feel' (p. 77).

### *3.1.6 Emotions and culture*

The study of emotions has brought to light an issue regarding the nature of emotions. Hence, the emergence of opposing views on this matter, those that emphasize biological factors and those that emphasize cultural factors (Mesquita & Frijda, 1992). In the seminal work by Charles Darwin (1872), "The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals", he researches the evolution and expression of emotions in humans and animals. In doing so, Darwin (1872) concludes that emotions have a biological basis, implying the existence of shared emotional expressions in all cultures, while also noting the influence of cultural factors in the expression and interpretation of emotions. His work reveals the complex interrelationship between biology and culture in shaping emotional experiences and expressions. Wierzbicka (1999) supports her findings on the influence of culture on emotions through her work, claiming that emotions are shaped by cultural factors, such as language, social norms, and cultural beliefs. Furthermore, Ford and Mauss (2015) argue that cultural factors play a crucial role in shaping how individuals regulate their emotions. Mesquita and Frijda (1992) review research on cultural variations in

emotions and argue that emotions are culturally constructed. They suggest that different cultures may have unique emotional schemas, which are shared beliefs and expectations about emotions. These schemas influence how emotions are experienced, expressed, and perceived within a culture. The authors highlight the need for cross-cultural research on emotions to help broaden our understanding of emotions and promote a more culturally sensitive approach to studying emotions.

Studying the complex relationship between culture and emotions is important for international schools because they are environments of great cultural diversity. To facilitate an inclusive approach to learning and an educational setting in which all students feel valued and understood, it is necessary to understand the role that culture plays in shaping emotional experiences and expressions.

### 3.2 Emotional intelligence in education

The idea of considering students' emotions and character in education can be traced back to Ancient Greek times when a focus on virtues and moral education was prevalent (Mayer & Cobb, 2000). However, it was not until the publication of Daniel Goleman's book "Emotional Intelligence" in 1995, that the concept of emotional intelligence gained wider attention and popularity among the general public. Since then, there has been a growing interest in integrating emotional intelligence into educational settings, and various efforts have been made to incorporate it into curricula and teaching practices. Educators and policy experts began to acknowledge EI as a predictor of a person's success in life, to acknowledge the ability of EI to be assessed and enhanced in students, and to acknowledge the role of EI in the learning process (Mayer & Cobb, 2000).

#### *3.2.1 Emotions, students and learning*

As this study focuses on cross-cultural children, it is worth examining studies that explore the correlation between emotional intelligence and academic achievement, as well as the correlation between emotional intelligence and English language proficiency, a crucial skill in international schools. It is only beyond the language barrier that students can reach their full potential and thrive in their educational journey, both academically and in the context of their personal growth and well-being.



A study was conducted by Lam and Kirby (2002) to determine whether there is a relationship between EI and individual performance on a cognitive task. The participants of the study completed written tests to measure their cognitive performance, a short version of the MEIS, the Shipley Institute of Living IQ Scale, and a questionnaire that assessed their demographic characteristics. Their study confirmed their first (of four) hypothesis which stated that there is a positive relationship between overall emotional intelligence and individual cognitive performance, meaning that EI does contribute to individual cognitive-based performance.

Another study, the subject of which were students at different universities in Iran all of whom were ESL learners themselves and doing their last semester majoring in English literature and Teaching English as a foreign language, was conducted on the topic of the effect of EI in English language learning by Zarezadeh (2013). After the correlations between EQ (found by taking the EQ questionnaire) and reading, listening, speaking, writing and GPA were computed, the results of the data revealed a positive correlation between EI and students' achievement. Further, Karaman (2012) conducted a study to answer research questions related to EI and performance on English language tests of Turkish undergraduate students. Data analysis proved a significant relationship between scores of EI and the reading component scores of the English language test. Fahim and Pishgadam (2007) investigated the role of emotional, psychometric, and verbal intelligence in academic success in English. By using EI Inventory and Wechsler's Adult Intelligence Scale and GPA, they found that there was a relationship between each of the subscales of EI and academic success. Rouhani (2008) carried out a study to investigate EI, foreign language anxiety, and empathy. It was shown that EI is closely related to reading comprehension skills. Sakrak (2009) conducted a study to explore the relationship between EI and foreign language anxiety at the end of which he found that the degree of anxiety of students decreases as the degree of EI increases. Goudarzi and Yazdanmehr's (2016) work shows that emotional intelligence has a positive impact on career development and success, while Cabello and Fernández-Berrocal (2015) highlight the importance of EI in academic success and personal growth. Furthermore, Langer (1997) supports the claim that EI is imperative, specifying that EI is an important factor for success in personal development, career advancement, social mobility, cognitive development, and personal fulfillment.

The conclusions drawn from the aforementioned studies provide strong evidence that emotional intelligence is instrumental in ensuring a successful learning process for students, which is consistent with Goleman's (1995) assertion that EI plays a pivotal role in achieving success and fulfilment. Therefore, it is clear that the development of students' social and

emotional skills enhances academic success and well-being, both in the short term and long term.

### *3.2.2 Emotions, teachers and teaching*

Kremenitzer et al. (2008) highlight the importance of emotional intelligence in the classroom and suggest that teachers should model emotional intelligence and create "teachable moments" to promote emotional intelligence skills. Mortiboys (2005) also emphasizes the importance of emotionally intelligent teachers, who can recognize and respond to their own and their students' feelings to facilitate effective teaching and learning. Kremenitzer et al. argue that an emotionally intelligent classroom environment is ideal, as it creates a "community of engaged learners" (Kremenitzer et al., 2008, p. 201). Rogers (1983) believes that a teacher's attitude is more important than the specific procedures and practices they use and that a climate of respect, trust, and empathy is necessary for effective learning. According to Kremenitzer et al. (2008), a traditional curriculum is complete only once it integrates emotional intelligence training. The lack of emotional intelligence in teaching may negatively impact the learning process (Mortiboys, 2005). Sutton and Wheatley (2003) analyzed interviews with students, concluding that it is not uncommon for them to recognize and be impacted by negative emotions teachers express in class. These findings indicate the importance of teachers' emotions in the classroom (Mađarić, 2020). Furthermore, a higher level of emotional intelligence in teachers can enhance the use of teaching strategies, practices, procedures, and methods (Kremenitzer et al., 2008). Hargreaves' (2000) work points to the same conclusion, proving the interplay between a teacher's emotions and their instructional practices, as teaching and learning are both built on emotional experiences (Hargreaves, 1998).

Overall, the literature suggests that emotional intelligence is essential to "actively orchestrate an emotional climate in the classroom" (Immordino-Yang, 2015, p. 112) and that teachers should model and cultivate emotional intelligence skills in themselves and their students (Makhwathana et al., 2017).

### *3.2.3 Emotional intelligence in the primary curriculum*

According to Reuven Bar-On (2010): "Social and emotional learning is an essential component of a comprehensive approach to developing emotional intelligence. SEL helps individuals develop the competencies and skills they need to manage their emotions, communicate effectively, build and maintain relationships, and make responsible decisions" (p.

68). Bar-On considers it necessary to integrate SEL, an important component of EI, into primary school curriculums (Bar-On, 2010, p. 68). Mahoney, Durlak and Weissberg (2018) give an overview of four meta-analyses that research the effectiveness of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs in schools.

The findings of the first meta-analysis give strong evidence in favor of the effectiveness of school-based universal interventions aimed at enhancing students' social and emotional learning (Durlak et al., 2011). They indicate that students who participated in SEL interventions showed significant improvements in "SEL skills, attitudes, and positive social behaviors" (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 413) compared to students who did not receive SEL instruction. The positive effects of SEL interventions were evident immediately after the intervention and were sustained over time (Durlak et al., 2011). The three meta-analyses that followed support the main takeaway of the first meta-analysis – students who took part in SEL programs significantly benefited from them in terms of their SEL competencies and academic performance (Mahoney, Durlak & Weissberg, 2018).

The findings of the two meta-analyses that focused on the longer-term effects of the SEL programs showed that the effects of SEL programs weakened over time (Sklad et al., 2012; Taylor et al., 2017). Consequently, educators and policymakers advise that SEL programming can have the greatest positive impact when systematically integrated in a planned and continuous manner throughout all levels of elementary school (Mahoney, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2018). According to Greenberg and Kusche (2006), well-constructed curricula are vital in the promotion of social and emotional development and should be implemented schoolwide in a developmentally sequenced way starting from preschool. This is because early development of social and emotional competencies is considered crucial as it forms the basis for healthy development and is correlated with positive outcomes in later stages of life (Heckman & Kautz, 2012).

#### *3.2.4 Emotional intelligence and international education*

Sherlock (2002) explores the relevance of emotional intelligence in international education. Based on the identification and comparison of the desired outcomes of international schools and various personal development programs, he concludes that the two are tightly interwoven. Since the core of international education is the amalgamation of cognitive and affective, a quality curriculum calls for a basis in an approach that combines both subject-based knowledge and emotional intelligence skills (Sherlock, 2002). Hayden and Thompson (1995)

offer their interpretation of international education as "a dynamic concept that involves a journey or movement of people, minds, or ideas across political and cultural frontiers" (Hayden & Thompson, 1995, p. 328). Sherlock (2002) argues that the bridge to aid in such 'crossing of frontiers' is emotional intelligence and the underlying competencies. His explanation of this claim is that the development of such competencies and skills is the foundation of the international values and international attitudes promoted in international education. Furthermore, he identifies "self-awareness, personal decision-making, managing feelings, handling stress, empathy, communications, personal responsibility, group dynamics, and conflict resolution" (Sherlock, 2002, p. 151) as the essential skills students are to be taught to eventually acquire and apply the core values of international education, including empathy, caring, self-esteem, peace, respect, and tolerance. Sherlock (2002) emphasizes the importance of EI in international schools because of their common mission of embodying and celebrating "tolerance, inclusiveness, and appreciation of diversity" (p. 156). Hayden and Thompson (1995) leave the reader with a promising idea and food for thought, claiming that any school can work towards fostering international values, cultivating 'world mindedness' and becoming truly 'international'.

### *3.2.5 Elements of emotional intelligence particularly relevant for cross-cultural children*

A CCK's experience of growing up across cultures during their developmental years calls for a specific approach to emotional intelligence development. Certain elements of EI are particularly relevant to CCKs. Subsequently, understanding, teaching, and learning about them can help CCKs navigate the unique challenges and opportunities of their cross-cultural experiences through the application of concrete tools and strategies that support their emotional well-being. The elements of EI that will be further discussed are self-awareness, self-regulation, cultural competence, open-mindedness, empathy, communication, resilience, and flexibility.

According to Sharon Willmer, one of the most prominent challenges cross-cultural kids may face is developing a clear sense of identity because of cultural or national confusion (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). A potential resolution to this issue is the development of self-awareness. The significance of acquiring self-knowledge is highlighted in the 'Delors report', *Learning the Treasure Within* (UNESCO, 1996) as one of the four pillars of education. Taking into consideration Goleman's personal and social competencies and a subject-based curriculum, Sherlock's (2002) model condenses the four pillars of the report into three domains – understanding self, understanding others, and technical (referring to subject knowledge).

Beginning with self-awareness and self-understanding, CCKs can ultimately develop self-control and motivation (Sherlock, 2002). Self-awareness and self-regulation or self-management are the two domains of EI that relate to personal competence. Self-management depends on self-awareness and allows for flexibility and adequate management of behavior (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). Since CCKs may experience a range of emotions, there is an evident need for them to learn to regulate their emotions in different cultural contexts. Developing self-awareness and self-regulation can help CCKs better understand and manage their own emotions and reactions, which can in turn facilitate their ability to adapt to new environments and contribute to a clearer sense of identity (Simens, 2011).

As an embodiment of the increasingly global and diverse world, cultural competence is a necessary skill in international schools (Moule, 2011). According to Bennett (1993), one notable change in individuals with developed cultural competence is the qualitative shift in their frame of reference from an ethnocentric perspective to an ethnorelative one. Instead of evaluating behaviors and practices of other cultures as good or bad based on their cultural norms and values, individuals view behaviors and practices that deviate from their own simply as different (Bennett, 1993). The outcomes of cultivating such a perspective are the transformation of how CCKs think and greater sensitivity and effectiveness in working with others in multicultural environments (Moule, 2011). Other results that come with nurturing cultural competence coincide with those tied to open-mindedness, including tolerance, global awareness, closeness to others, and curiosity, all of which can facilitate academic success and the ability to build relationships (Shao, Liu & Huang, 2021).

Ethnorelativism allows CCKs to develop a non-judgmental attitude towards others' actions, subsequently fostering another element of EI – empathy (Moule, 2011). Developing CCKs' empathy can significantly impact the quality of their interactions and ability to maintain friendships (Whyte, 2016). According to Whyte (2016), empathy is a vital skill in cross-cultural transitions during which CCKs may struggle with navigating the complexities of different cultural environments where emotions may manifest in different ways. Wang, Zhang and Zheng (2023) relate empathy to yet another element of EI – communication – stating that having intercultural empathy is crucial for effective communication across cultures, as it enables individuals to understand and contrast their own emotions with those of others. It also allows them to experience and appreciate the feelings of people from different cultures, leading to greater cross-cultural understanding and harmony: "Given that the realization and appreciation of different cultures lay the foundation for understanding and feeling those with different backgrounds, essential traits, such as trust, respect, love, and human communication can be

promoted" (Wang, Zhang and Zheng, 2023, p. 197). Tseng explains the importance of strong communication skills in culturally diverse surroundings: "since language, culture, and communication are intrinsically interconnected with one another" (Tseng, 2017, p. 33). Developing effective communication skills can help CCKs express their emotions and needs, as well as successfully manage and adapt to cultural differences.

Whyte (2016) strongly believes that increasing CCKs' resilience is crucial in helping them deal with the challenges they face because of high mobility, enabling them to tolerate adversity with greater ease. According to Taguchi (2014), resilience and flexibility are aspects of cross-cultural adaptability crucial in adjusting to and thriving in a new cultural environment. Claxton (2001) and Seligman (2011) state that the development of resilience through an optimistic outlook is crucial, as it helps individuals maintain a sense of control over events and bounce back from setbacks with a belief that defeat is temporary on their journey to a specific victory. Whyte (2016) claims that "enhancing key competencies of emotional intelligence, such as optimism, would increase the likelihood of employing active coping strategies in stressful situations" (p. 60).

#### **4. Empowering cross-cultural kids through emotional intelligence**

##### *4.1 Interventions and their impact*

Along with the growing awareness of the importance of emotional intelligence, there has been an exponential rise in the number of EI programs and interventions used in schools worldwide. Some of the most well-known and researched EI programs and interventions that have shown success in developing social-emotional skills in students include the RULER Approach, MindUP, PATHS, Second Step, Caring School Community, Roots of Empathy, and Friends for Life.

The RULER Approach is an evidence-based program for social and emotional learning (SEL) that was developed by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence for students from kindergarten to eighth grade (Rivers et al., 2013). The program aims at building and acquiring emotion-related knowledge and skills with specific tools and 'feeling words' to facilitate positive youth development (Rivers et al., 2012). The RULER skills – recognizing emotions, understanding emotions, labelling emotions, expressing emotions, and regulating emotions – are founded based on the achievement model of emotional literacy (Rivers and Brackett, 2010). Thus far, research has examined several outcomes of RULER implementation, proving positive

outcomes in terms of academic and social achievements and the emotional climate of classrooms (Bracket et al., 2010; Obrle & Schonert-Reichl, 2017).

Since the surfacing of mindfulness as a concept, there has been growing research on the effects of mindfulness training techniques (MBIs) in school settings (Hang Hai, 2021). McKeering and Hwang (2019) reviewed MBIs used in schools and suggested there may be great benefits of their implication on resilience, cognitive performance, mental health, and behaviors. The MindUP intervention, comprised of 15 lessons, is a school-based MBI that has shown promising results in elementary schools (Hang Hai, 2021). Maloney et al. (2016) state that the program is based on cognitive developmental neuroscience, contemplative science and mindfulness, SEL, and positive psychology. Hang Hai (2021) provides an overview of studies that examined the impact of MindUP on elementary school students, highlighting the following benefits of the program: an increase in mindful attention, a decrease in aggression, better language skills, improved attention, and significant development of elements of EI like optimism, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills.

Roots of Empathy (ROE) is a 9-month school-based program developed with several aims, including the prevention of behavioral and emotional problems, the development of student's social and emotional understanding, and teaching students about infant development (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2012). The lessons are designed to help individuals learn and practice different dimensions of EI such as recognizing, labelling, and expressing different emotions, understanding and appreciating perspectives of others, and being aware of and responsive to the emotions of others (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2012). According to Cohen (2002) and Noddings (1992), the desired outcome of the implementation of the ROE program is a positive classroom environment that fosters social and emotional competence by emphasizing the promotion of collaboration and teamwork, effective communication, conflict resolution, a sense of belonging, fostering caring relationships, kindness, compassion, and empathy. Schonert-Reichl et al. (2012) examined the effects of the Roots of Empathy program in a study with almost 600 students from fourth to seventh grade. Their systemic attempt to do so provides evidence for the positive impact of the program on students' prosocial behaviors and proactive and relational aggression in classrooms where the ROE program was implemented, in relation to the control classrooms (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2012).

The integrative PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) curriculum has been designed for students in grades K through grade 5 as a response to today's fast-paced cultural evolution to ease students' transition into adulthood and equip them for the needs of an increasingly global world (Kusche & Greenberg, 2006). The main goals of the program are

social and emotional competence promotion and prevention or reduction of behavior and emotional problems (ibid.) through three main units (the readiness and self-control unit, the feelings and relationship unit, and the interpersonal cognitive problem-solving unit) which encompass five conceptual domains: self-control, emotional understanding, positive self-esteem, relationships, and interpersonal problem-solving skills (Greenberg et al., 2004). One of the characteristics of the program that significantly increases the probability of its success is its comprehensive foundation, which is scientifically grounded on the following four conceptual models: the ABCD model, the eco-behavioral systems model, neurobiology and brain organization, and psychoanalytic theory (Greenberg et al., 2004). Findings of a study that investigated the effects of the PATHS curriculum in a sample of 200 second and third graders point to considerable development in terms of cognition and academic success, as well as social cognition and behavioral outcomes, emphasizing the potential of the program in the context of classroom behavior and long-term school success (Greenberg et al. 2004). Furthermore, PATHS exposure has been associated with improved academic performance and interpersonal, social, cognitive, and emotional skills (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 1999; Greenberg & Kusché, 1998; Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2010; Greenberg et al., 2006, 2010).

According to the Committee for Children (1991, 1992a, 1992b, 1997), *Second Step* is a social and emotional learning (SEL) program for students from pre-K through eighth grade that focuses on encouraging the growth of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills and limiting the development of social, emotional and behavioral issues. "Behavioral skill training, modeling, and a combination of cueing, coaching, and reinforcement characterize the teaching strategies used in *Second Step*" (Moy & Hazen, 2018). These strategies are implemented with the help of audio-visual media presentations, posters, visual aids, and discussions that are spread out across 48 weekly lessons (Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2017; Moy & Hazen, 2018). The meta-analysis conducted by Moy and Hazen (2018) presents the findings of studies on *Second Step's* impact on program content knowledge, prosocial outcomes, and antisocial outcomes, concluding that the greatest impact of the *Second Step* program was on knowledge outcomes, while there was a less significant impact on prosocial outcomes and a non-significant impact on antisocial outcomes. Other research on the implementation of the program shows a positive correlation with improved interpersonal skills, cooperation, and social competence (Frey et al., 2005; Holsen, Smith & Frey, 2008; Shick & Cierpka, 2005).

Caring School Community (CSC) is an intervention that targets children in kindergarten to sixth grade for developing SEL and is "designed to create caring classroom and school



communities such that students experience increased connection and bonding toward school" by focusing on the development of interpersonal skills and strengthening of relationships with other members of the school community (Rimm-Kaufman & Hulleman, 2014). This is done through four elements: class lessons based on discussion, a cross-age 'buddies' program, 'homeside' activities, and school-wide community activities (Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Rimm-Kaufman and Hulleman (2014) present findings from studies that have proven the benefits of CSC and the achievement of the program's main aims. In a study conducted by Chang & Munoz (2006), there has been substantial evidence in favor of CSC as an effective program concerning the way students perceive support and their sense of control and impact in the classroom. In addition, some students exposed to CSC enhanced their academic and behavioral performance (Battistich, Schaps & Wilson, 2003; Battistich et al., 1997).

The FRIENDS program, founded on a cognitive therapy model, is implemented in schools through ten hour-long sessions to develop students' practical skills in anxiety recognition and management, and in the use of relaxation methods through the application of behavioral, physiological, and cognitive strategies (Stallard et al., 2005). In addition to the immediate benefits of the program that had previously been measured, the outcomes of a more recent follow-up study conducted by Barrett et al. (2006) point to long-term effectiveness. The findings of a study conducted by Stallard et al. (2008) further support this claim, concluding that the program can be used both as an intervention and as a preventive measure based on results that showed a significant increase in emotional health in terms of anxiety and self-esteem, as well as a positive effect on high-risk students and preventive effect on low-risk students. Another study conducted by Stallard et al. (2005) provides the same evidence for a decrease in anxiety rates and an increase in levels of self-esteem. According to these results and several other studies, FRIENDS has been shown to successfully promote emotional resilience in primary school students and is generally well-received (Stallard et al., 2005).

#### *4.2 Culturally responsive teaching and learning*

The increasing changes in demographics in terms of students' cultural and linguistic diversity have brought to light students' unique learning needs that require special attention and adequate preparation (Au, 2009; Cummins, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Hence, culturally responsive teaching (CRT) emerged as an educational reform aimed at integrating the cultural and historical backgrounds of every student in the classroom and creating an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages all students to actively participate in the

learning process (Vavrus, 2008). According to Aceves and Orosco (2014) taking into account the impact of students' cultural and linguistic experiences on their identity formation and learning abilities is crucial in creating a culturally responsive approach. CRT stems from the acknowledgment and critical understanding of the significance of cultural connection in students' academic achievement (Vavrus, 2008). The concept of CRT develops its practices on the idea that through a learner-focused approach and multicultural frame of reference professionals can restructure classroom teaching practices and school policies (Vavrus, 2008). Based on their review of CRT literature, Aceves and Orosco (2014) list and explain several common CRT themes such as multicultural awareness, high expectations, critical thinking, and social justice. Banks (2004) highlights the importance of multicultural awareness of teachers in CRT as the starting point for the development of their EI skills and introspection in terms of their cultural values, beliefs, and perspectives. The result of high expectations for students exposed to CRT is the subsequent facilitation of greater growth because of the teacher's belief in students' ability to maximize their capabilities (Scheurich, 1998). Another central aspect of CRT is its focus on developing students' capacity for critical inquiry through analysis and problem-solving (Aceves and Orosco, 2014). Furthermore, CRT places significant emphasis on social justice which entails raising awareness of social and political issues that shape our world, and a commitment to addressing and responding to the impacts of systemic injustice (Cochran-Smith, 2004).

In addition, Aceves and Orosco (2014) identify and briefly discuss four evidence-based CRT practices, including instructional scaffolding, collaborative teaching, responsive feedback, and modeling. Culturally responsive instructional scaffolding refers to the optimization of learning through teacher support and guidance in difficult tasks which is built on students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, resulting in their gradual transition to becoming independent learners (Suryaman & Chaerul, 2019). Collaborative teaching encompasses various instructional methods such as peer teaching and cooperative learning that involve a shared effort between teachers and learners, where both parties contribute their knowledge, skills, and perspectives toward achieving common learning objectives by basing the acquisition of new knowledge on each other's experiences (Aceves & Orosco, 2014). Culturally responsive feedback is a teaching approach in which teachers consider students' cultural and individual differences and give them constructive and timely feedback, empowering them to take ownership of their learning and monitor their progress; build self-confidence; practice introspection and engage in critical thinking (Bergantz, 2021). Culturally responsive modeling requires teachers to build on students' experiences by demonstrating and embodying the key

principles and goals of CRT such as critical thinking, and valuing and embracing the diversity of students' cultural and linguistic identities: "As a culturally responsive practice, modeling involves explicit discussion of instructional expectations while providing examples based on students' cultural, linguistic, and lived experiences" (Aceves & Orosco, 2014, p. 15).

Existing CRT literature points to two recommended teaching approaches, including problem-solving and child-centered instruction (Aceves & Orosco, 2014). The evolving standards of various professions and emerging requirements of modern workplaces have initiated advancements in learning theories regarding teaching different ways students can approach and tackle challenges. Subsequently, there has been a shift in education and national standards towards problem-solving as a central skillset binding all segments of a curriculum (Wellesley & Kirkley, 1998). According to Aceves and Orosco (2014), in CRT teachers ought to give students culturally and linguistically relevant problems that require and encourage them to think creatively, critically, and independently while coming up with solutions, to foster a sense of community engagement. Moreover, Kea et al. (2006) highlight child-centered instruction as fundamental to CRT practices and in cultivating an inclusive and engaging classroom environment that is responsive to and respectful of the student's individuality (Horaiu, 2021).

#### *4.3 Practical strategies for promoting emotional intelligence development in cross-cultural kids*

Having mentioned some of the elements of EI particularly important for cross-cultural kids in international schools, like self-awareness, self-regulation, cultural competence, open-mindedness, empathy, communication, resilience, and flexibility; as well as several successful EI programs and interventions, it is of special interest to discuss the practical strategies and tools that make such programs successful in EI development.

RULER is an approach that involves a Feeling Words Curriculum and several 'anchor tools', including the Mood Meter, the Charter, the Meta-Moment, and the Blueprint (Nathanson et al., 2016). Russel and Barrett (1999) define the Mood Meter (*figure 4*) as a four-quadrant color-coded grid that helps encourage the classification and understanding of emotions based on their levels of pleasantness (represented by the X-axis) and energy (represented by the Y-axis). This tool is a starting point for enhancing self-awareness and social awareness, as well as a foundation for developing strategies for regulating emotion. Over time, it is expected that students will gravitate from identifying as being in a certain color quadrant based on how they

are feeling, to using a wider range of vocabulary to label specific emotions. The Charter refers to classroom and staff agreements that students and educators create based on the identification, understanding, and regulation of feelings to create a positive learning environment (Torrente et al., 2016). According to Gross (2015), the Meta-Moment encompasses all EI skills, proposing a method of response to emotional triggers that entails deep breathing, visualization of one's best self, and then acting accordingly. Through asking specific questions, like identifying one's own and others' emotions or discussing their causes and consequences, the Blueprint encourages individuals to reflect, take different perspectives and practice empathy (Nathanson et al., 2016).

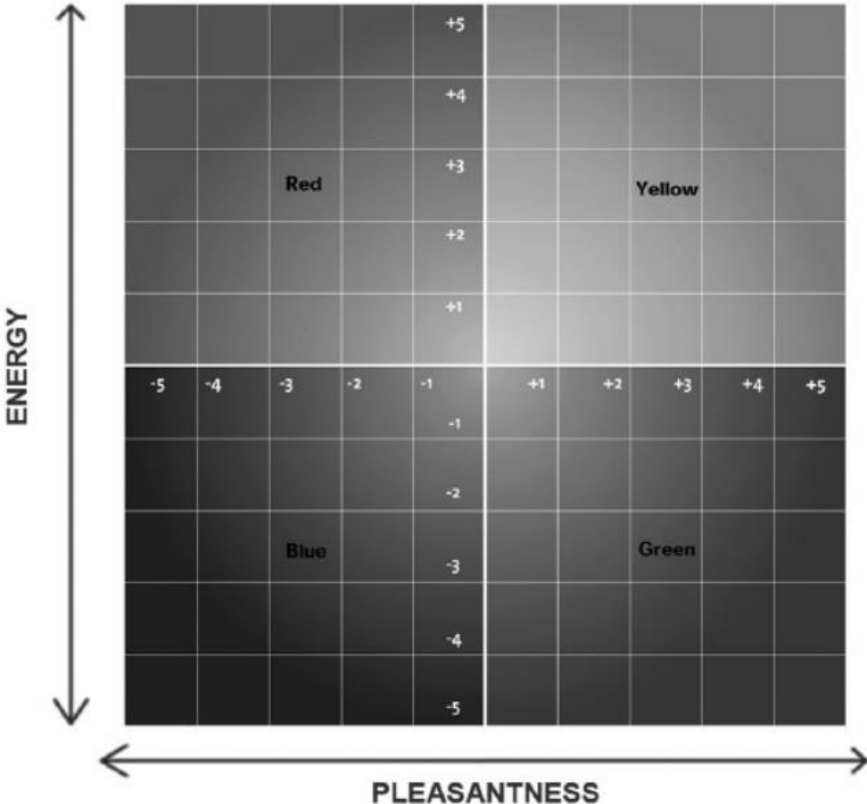


Figure 4. Mood Meter (Emotionally Intelligent Schools, LLC, 2008).

The MindUP curriculum (The Hawn Foundation, 2011) bases its teachings on 15 lessons and the Core Practice that is ideally implemented in the classroom daily. Unit 1 introduces students to brain research and teaches them deep belly breathing and mindful awareness through journaling and prompted discussions. Unit 2 focuses on sharpening students' senses through six lessons that encourage an awareness of the relationship between their senses, their bodies and movement, and their thoughts (Maloney et al., 2014). This is done by practicing

mindful listening, seeing, smelling, tasting, and movement. Unit 3 teaches students about the impact of mindset and attitude on learning and progress through activities like storytelling and perspective-taking, observing, and identifying optimism, and sharing happy memories. The fourth and final unit shifts the focus to the application of mindful behaviors to interactions with others through gratitude practices, performing acts of kindness, and taking mindful action in the world (The Hawn Foundation, 2011).

The PATHS Program (2023) has developed a curriculum for students in kindergarten through high school. Materials for implementation include a printed curriculum manual of 52 scripted lessons that include both preparation and potential follow-up activities and guidance such as communication with family members. Activities incorporated in the curriculums include storytelling by teachers and students with the use of puppets, developing emotional vocabulary using 'feeling faces' cards, verbal mediation, attribution training, and social and self-reinforcement (PATHS Program, 2023; PATHS to Success Research Team, 2015). Visual (posters such as '3 Steps For Calming Down' and 'Control Signals'), verbal (song suggestions), and physical (puppets) resources and cues are used weekly, ideally at least twice a week for 20-30 minutes.

Based on research, Caring School Community has designed a comprehensive curriculum that explicitly teaches responsibility, justice, empathy, and cooperation through four program components, including class meeting lessons, a cross-age 'buddies' program, 'homeside' activities, and school-wide community building (WWC Intervention Report, 2006). Class meeting lessons are scripted and aim at promoting positive dialogue between students (Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Cross-age 'buddies' programs involve mentorship of older students to younger students in the context of academics and learning skills. Along with cross-age 'buddies' programs, the schoolwide community aspect of the curriculum which includes activities like planting a school garden and interviewing nonteaching staff members, fosters the development of stronger relationships and trust among all members in the school community. An additional aspect that aids in building a sense of community by connecting students' homes and schools and in raising cultural awareness are the 'homeside' activities such as show and tell from home, sharing traditions, and telling folklore stories (WWC Intervention Report, 2006).

FRIENDS for Life is an integrative program that equips both students and parents with tools to cope with anxious feelings and redirect them toward more helpful thoughts (Stallard et al., 2008). The psycho-educational session provided for parents highlights the importance of a family skill component to be strengthened alongside their children's sessions. This is executed

in a group format and takes the form of discussion, role-plays, pair activities (i.e. Thought Terminator), and deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation. The program builds students' resilience through group discussions, individual work, exercises in their program workbooks, role plays, games, hands-on activities, and quizzes (Shortt & Barrett, 2002). At the end of each session which targets a particular skill, such as problem-solving, deep breathing, and identifying inner thoughts (Shortt & Barrett, 2002), the different strategies and activities listed are used to ensure students' immediate implementation and practice of that skill (Ahlen et al., 2012).

Ulutaş, Engin, and Bozkurt (2021) suggest several effective methods and techniques that enhance emotional intelligence in the classroom. Strategies for teaching emotion recognition include observation and discussion through cartoon and book character analysis or using a mirror; emotion diaries through recording situations by picture or video; emotion cards; greeting cards; and emotion membranes. Methods for understanding emotions include collecting affectionate words, interactive book reading with the use of emotional storybooks and using puppets hand interpreting visual materials such as magazines and newspapers. Methods for emotion management include exercise, cat awakening, positive and realistic self-talk, self-compassion, focus change, turtle technique, imaginary activities (i.e. 'stairs'), trust walk, pros and cons lists, drawing and portraying events, relaxation bags, problem-solving cards, and empathy cards.

## **5. Conclusion**

### *5.1 Summary of the main findings*

This master's thesis explored the unique characteristics, benefits, and challenges faced by cross-cultural children. The strengths that were identified include third-dimensionality, interpersonal sensitivity, cross-cultural competence or cultural intelligence, cultural adaptability, increased tolerance, problem-solving, and scholarship. The weaknesses that were identified include reduced levels of emotional stability, confused loyalties, identity crisis, ignorance of home culture, difficulties with adjusting to adult life, cultural homelessness, reverse culture shock, creating close friendships with peers, mental health, and unresolved grief. Despite the challenges they face, it was shown that cross-cultural kids possess valuable skills such as adaptability, empathy, and multicultural competence, making them valuable assets in a globalized world.

The paper reviewed the main models of emotional intelligence (EI) and emphasized the importance of developing emotional literacy and competence. EI was found to be an essential factor in promoting well-being, satisfaction, and overall success in life. Additionally, the paper highlighted the role of emotions in cognition and the impact of culture on emotional expression and regulation. The paper found that incorporating EI into education can promote better learning outcomes, teacher-student relationships, and student well-being, making it particularly relevant for cross-cultural children.

The paper took a comprehensive look at programs and practical strategies for promoting EI development in cross-cultural kids, such as culturally responsive teaching and learning, mindfulness practices, and social-emotional learning programs. Ultimately, the paper found that empowering cross-cultural children through EI can promote their well-being, academic success, and ability to navigate a globalized world, highlighting the need for further research and practical implementation of EI programs for cross-cultural children.

### *5.2 Recommendations for future research and practice*

The literature reviewed in this master's thesis has laid out the existence of a comprehensive foundation of knowledge and research on emotional intelligence, and limited knowledge and research on cross-cultural kids. Furthermore, the literature lacks studies that explicitly link these two fields. Therefore, educators must continue learning and contributing to this ongoing conversation. This study highlights practical strategies that can be employed to promote emotional intelligence development in cross-cultural kids. Hence, educators should incorporate effective practices into their classrooms, as well as explore other strategies that can be tailored to meet the specific needs of their students.

It is recommended that teachers in public schools and international schools are equally inspired to embrace emotional intelligence development in their classrooms, as it has been shown to have long-term benefits for students. By equipping students with emotional intelligence skills, educators can foster a culture of empathy, respect, and understanding that is essential in today's globalized world. Such skills are not only relevant to cross-cultural kids but rather to every student of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. By teaching EI, emotionally intelligent students who leave our classrooms and schools will be equipped with skills such as resilience, empathy, kindness, motivation, self-awareness, and open-mindedness, which will enable them to navigate the complex and ever-changing global world successfully.

By utilizing this research as a starting point and continuing to deepen their understanding of the connection between cross-cultural experiences and emotional intelligence, educators can create an emotionally intelligent environment. It would be interesting to approach teaching today as raising culturally and emotionally intelligent *students of the world*, because that is in fact what they are, global citizens. I hope the present paper enlightens educators and opens their eyes to the real needs of the students before them. Emotionally intelligent students will be able to contribute to the exponentially growing and globalized world we live in today. By teaching emotional intelligence in schools, we can create a future generation of global citizens who are equipped with the tools necessary to not simply navigate but rather thrive in today's complex and ever-changing world in their unique ways. Therefore, it is essential for educators, both in international schools and those in culturally less diverse environments, to incorporate emotional intelligence development into their teaching practices to foster an emotionally intelligent culture that will produce students who are not only prepared to succeed in the globalized world but also to positively contribute to it.

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