

Emotional Literacy and Self-Awareness in Adolescents: Exploring Brené Brown's *Atlas of the Heart* for Schools

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ABSTRACT

Adolescents must develop emotional literacy and self-awareness as they navigate the complexities of a world rife with environmental crises, political turmoil, and societal injustices. Emotional literacy involves the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's emotions and the emotions of others, which is particularly important in a world where adolescents are exposed to a range of emotional stimuli, from the traumatic effects of climate change to the disorienting impact of political polarization and systemic inequalities. Correspondingly, self-awareness involves reflecting on thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to understand how they impact oneself and others, cultivating a sense of agency and purpose that enables positive contributions in different settings. The present analysis explores the possible use of Brené Brown's *Atlas of the Heart* to develop emotional literacy and self-awareness in students. Emotional maps are defined, and their importance in navigating emotions is discussed. The *Atlas of the Heart* book is introduced, and the various emotions and feelings are explained. The analysis also offers guidance on implementing the *Atlas of the Heart* to students, including those with exceptionalities, and provides examples of activities that can be used to develop emotional literacy and self-awareness. The benefits of developing emotional literacy and self-awareness in students are also discussed. Finally, potential challenges for implementing the *Atlas of the Heart* in classrooms and suggestions for overcoming them are presented. The analysis provides a comprehensive overview of using the *Atlas of the Heart* to develop emotional literacy and self-awareness in adolescents.

Keywords: *Atlas of the Heart, emotional literacy, self-awareness, emotional maps, social-emotional learning*

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Alfabetización emocional y autoconciencia en adolescentes: explorando el Atlas del corazón para las escuelas de Brené Brown

RESUMEN

Los adolescentes deben desarrollar alfabetización emocional y autoconciencia mientras navegan por las complejidades de un mundo lleno de crisis ambientales, agitación política e injusticias sociales. La alfabetización emocional implica la capacidad de reconocer, comprender y manejar las emociones propias y las de los demás, lo cual es particularmente importante en un mundo donde los adolescentes están expuestos a una variedad de estímulos emocionales, desde los efectos traumáticos del cambio climático hasta el impacto desorientador de la polarización política y las desigualdades sistémicas. De manera correspondiente, la autoconciencia implica reflexionar sobre los pensamientos, sentimientos y comportamientos para comprender cómo afectan a uno mismo y a los demás, cultivando un sentido de agencia y propósito que permite contribuciones positivas en diferentes entornos. El presente análisis explora el posible uso del *Atlas of the Heart* o Atlas del Corazón de Brené Brown para desarrollar la alfabetización emocional y la autoconciencia en los estudiantes. Se definen los mapas emocionales y se discute su importancia en la navegación de las emociones. Se introduce el libro Atlas del Corazón y se explican las diversas emociones y sentimientos. El análisis también ofrece orientación sobre cómo implementar el Atlas del Corazón en los estudiantes, incluyendo aquellos con necesidades excepcionales, y proporciona ejemplos de actividades que se pueden utilizar para desarrollar la alfabetización emocional y la autoconciencia. Se discuten los beneficios de desarrollar la alfabetización emocional y la autoconciencia en los estudiantes. Finalmente, se presentan posibles desafíos para implementar el Atlas del Corazón en aulas de clase y se ofrecen sugerencias para superarlos. El análisis brinda una visión general completa del uso del Atlas del Corazón para desarrollar la alfabetización emocional y la autoconciencia en los adolescentes.

Palabras clave: *Atlas del Corazón, alfabetización emocional, autoconciencia, mapas emocionales, aprendizaje socioemocional*

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INTRODUCTION

Developing emotional literacy and self-awareness is vital for achieving personal and academic success. They empower individuals to manage their emotions and actions effectively, make thoughtful choices, and cultivate meaningful connections with others (Tagata, 2022). Research has shown that these skills are positively associated with academic achievement, improved social-emotional well-being, and increased resilience in the face of adversity. Other studies suggest that the importance of emotional literacy, self-awareness, and reflective practice starts with training and development for school leaders, counselors, and principals in promoting social-emotional learning (SEL), equity, and social justice in schools. For example, Asenjo et al. (2021) conducted a systematic literature review of empirical studies on the impact of service learning on student teachers' socio-educational commitment, suggesting that service learning positively affects student teachers' attitudes and beliefs toward teaching and learning, highlighting the potential of service learning initiatives as an effective strategy for developing student teachers' socio-educational commitment, which is particularly important for promoting equity and social justice in their future classrooms (Alemdar, 2018; London et al., 2023; McDonald, 2021; Parinussa et al., 2023).

Bellocchi's (2019) inquiry explores the early-career of science teachers' experiences of social bonds and emotion management, highlighting the importance of social bonds with colleagues and students for early-career teachers' emotional well-being and professional development, suggesting that teacher education programs should prioritize the development of emotional skills and the promotion of supportive social networks for early career teachers. Brinkmann et al. (2021) also suggest that crisis leadership and coaching can help build school leaders' self-efficacy through self-awareness and reflection. School leaders are often required to make important decisions and navigate complex circumstances in times of crisis, such as challenging situations or unexpected events. Therefore, the ability to effectively lead, manage, and teach these skills is enhanced exponentially when school leaders possess a strong sense of self-awareness and can engage in introspection.

Bettors-Bubon et al.'s (2022) study highlights the role of school counselors' critical reflection in antiracist education within a multi-tiered system of support framework. Özkan (2022) explores how school principals can become environmentally sustainable leaders, promoting their self-awareness in leading change. O'Donnell-Allen and Robbins (2022) make a similar correlation to the imperative of sustainable education initiatives, which aims to foster critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and ethical decision-making to empower individuals to contribute to a more sustainable and equitable society. Forman et al.'s (2022) study analyzed the experiences of fifteen school leaders who implemented SEL programs in their schools, seeing the potential of SEL as a powerful tool for promoting equity in education, challenging school leaders to develop initiatives to combat systemic racism and promote social justice in their schools. Geesa et al. (2022) suggest the need for collaboration among educators, students, and families to create a positive learning environment that supports students' social-emotional development.

Tagata (2022) discuss the importance of incorporating empathy and critical emotional literacy in lessons, presenting various activities that can be used to promote empathy, such as role-playing, storytelling, and group discussions. Additionally, Tagata argues for the need to develop critical emotional literacy, which involves analyzing the emotional impact of language and cultural practices, including developing global citizens who can communicate effectively in multicultural settings. More importantly, however, Tagata points to the imperative of empathizing with others and understanding their emotions, as well as being able to manage one's emotional responses in various situations. While Tagata (2022) does not explicitly mention self-awareness, the concept is often used in connection with empathy and emotional literacy in the broader discussion of emotional intelligence and social-emotional learning. Self-awareness is a foundational skill underpinning these concepts, allowing individuals to understand themselves and others better.

Research has also shown that emotional literacy and self-awareness are crucial skills for at-risk youth, as they often face challenges that can negatively impact their emotional well-being and ability to navigate social interactions effectively. Lomas et al. (2020) focused on mindfulness training that

emphasized emotional self-awareness to help at-risk adolescent boys explore and challenge traditional gender norms and engage in more positive behaviors and interactions with others. Pelin (2021) explores the impact of English language learning on the acquisition of soft skills such as emotional literacy and critical thinking skills, suggesting that English language learning can contribute to developing critical thinking and emotional literacy skills, which are important for students' academic and future success. Forber-Pratt et al. (2022) found that SEL and motivational interviews can be used to support middle school youth with disabilities or those at risk of disability identification by assessing the impact of these interventions on the group's social and emotional well-being. In integrating SEL strategies and motivational interviews, the study aims to improve the motivation and engagement of middle school students, leading to positive results and providing valuable insights into the potential benefits of SEL and motivational interviews for students with disabilities or those at risk, fostering their overall well-being and academic achievement.

In Alemdar and Anilan (2022), emotional literacy and emotional labor are important components of social capital in educational contexts, highlighting the potential of emotional literacy and emotional labor in building stronger relationships with students and contributing to a positive school culture. Coskun (2019) also evaluated the impact of SEL activities on self-regulation skills among primary school children, finding that SEL activities can positively influence students' self-regulation skills, which can have implications for their academic and social success. Self-regulation is modifying or controlling one's thoughts, emotions, actions, and words. Emotional regulation controls emotions and directs them toward more acceptable and appropriate behavior (Coskun, 2019). Even more so, during adolescence, individuals undergo significant cognitive, emotional, and social changes, making self-regulation a critical skill to develop (Fomina et al., 2020).

Similarly, in developing self-awareness in students, Thaintheerasombat and Chookhampaeng (2022) propose using social and emotional learning processes to develop self-awareness skills in high school students. Geesa et al. (2019) define self-awareness as the ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values, explaining that self-awareness is a key component of SEL and

is essential for individuals to develop a positive sense of self, making responsible decisions, and engaging in healthy relationships with others. Sevilla (2021) draws on the teachings of the Kyoto School to argue for the importance of education for self-awareness in promoting mindful education. Bıdık and Sisman (2021) systematically reviewed school-based mental health programs, suggesting that such programs can help improve psychosocial well-being in children and adolescents, potentially enhancing their self-awareness.

Additionally, Trentini et al. (2022) investigated the role of emotional self-awareness in gender differences in empathy during adolescence, finding that emotional self-awareness moderated the relationship between gender and empathy, with higher levels of emotional self-awareness predicting greater empathy in both boys and girls and suggesting that emotional literacy and self-awareness are important factors in fostering empathy during adolescence, and may help mitigate gender differences in this area. Similarly, Kara and Yüksel (2022) developed and evaluated a training program to improve adolescent emotional awareness, pointing to improvements associated with better mental health outcomes and further reinforcing the importance of emotional literacy and self-awareness in adolescent development, suggesting that targeted interventions may effectively promote these skills. Fogel (2022), Genovese (2021), and Huggins et al. (2021) suggest the importance of emotional literacy and self-awareness for adolescents on the autism spectrum, as deficits in these areas can impact adolescents on the spectrum's social and emotional functioning. Fogel's study highlights a discrepancy between actual performance and self-awareness among adolescents with executive function deficits, which is one of the core deficits associated with students on the spectrum. Similarly, Genovese's study emphasized the significance of self-awareness when treating adolescents on the spectrum. Huggins et al.'s study focused on emotional self-awareness in individuals with autism, reporting significant group differences in emotional self-awareness between individuals with and without autism. Huggins et al.'s study also highlighted developmental effects, indicating that younger individuals with autism have lower emotional self-awareness levels than their typically developing peers.

Despite the importance of emotional literacy and self-awareness, research has identified several challenges associated with teaching these skills in the classroom. For example, a study by Mahoney et al. (2018) concluded that compelling evidence supports the value of SEL programs for promoting positive outcomes in students' academic and personal lives but finding that implementing SEL programs in schools can be challenging due to factors such as lack of teacher training, limited resources, and competing priorities. Additionally, challenges identified by Mahoney highlight the need to address equity concerns, such as ensuring that all students have access to high-quality SEL programs and addressing cultural differences in how emotions are expressed and regulated. Mahoney also notes the need for continued research to understand better the long-term impacts of SEL programs on students' academic, social, and emotional outcomes (Mahoney, 2018).

The present analysis incorporates the review of relevant works related to emotional literacy and self-awareness in education. The literature review focuses primarily on research published in the last five years to ensure the most up-to-date and relevant information is included. The research is selected based on relevance to the research themes and the identified gap. Some references that were identified were outside of the scope of the five years but are appropriate and significant in support of the purpose of the analysis, such as founding theorists on emotional literacy (Steiner, 1997) and self-awareness in the classroom (Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Silvia & Duval, 2001). Accordingly, the review centers on themes of emotional literacy and self-awareness in education, focusing on the following:

1. The benefits of emotional literacy and self-awareness for academic performance and social-emotional well-being
2. The challenges of implementing emotional literacy and self-awareness programs in schools
3. The potential of using the *Atlas of the Heart* to develop emotional literacy and self-awareness in students.

RESEARCH AND METHODS

Emotional literacy in schools is viewed as vital preparation for future success, as it allows students to explore their emotions, identify strengths and limitations, and understand their learning styles

(Dusenbury & Weissberg, 2017). Van Damme and Ramaekers (2022) emphasize the role of emotions and well-being in education, suggesting that students, even young, can create a meaningful and ethical educational environment. Recognizing and valuing emotions are integral to children's development, and teaching students to identify and express emotions empowers them for meaningful learning (Van Damme & Ramaekers, 2022).

The present analysis explores the potential of using Brené Brown's (2021) *Atlas of the Heart* to develop emotional literacy and self-awareness in adolescent students. The analysis focuses on studies related to emotional literacy and self-awareness in education published in the last five years. The review includes relevant literature and identifies the research gap this study aims to fill. The research on emotional literacy and self-awareness in education has shown that interventions to develop these skills can positively affect students' academic performance and social-emotional well-being. For example, Mahoney et al. (2018) found that SEL, a significant component of emotional literacy and self-awareness, can improve students' academic performance, social skills, and emotional well-being. The present analysis aims to fill this research gap by investigating the potential of using Brown's *Atlas of the Heart* to develop emotional literacy and self-awareness in students.

Brown's (2021) *Atlas of the Heart* provides a comprehensive guide to understanding and managing human emotions, offering a framework for healthy emotional expression. Educators can incorporate emotional maps from the atlas in the classroom to foster emotional literacy, emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and a culture of emotional well-being. The atlas facilitates the identification and understanding of emotions, tracking emotional changes over time, and developing strategies for managing difficult emotions (Brown, 2021; Farrell, 2022; Kroeze Visser, 2022; Pagliarella, 2022; Rajakumar, 2022).

The research approach involves a comprehensive analysis and review of existing literature. Relevant studies are identified by systematically searching academic databases and other relevant sources. The studies are evaluated based on their relevance, quality, and potential to contribute to the research themes. Findings from the studies are synthesized using a narrative approach. The theoretical

framework for this study is based on the SEL theory, which emphasizes the importance of teaching social and emotional skills in schools while also drawing on cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) principles, a form of psychological intervention structured to help change negative thought patterns and behaviors (Coskun, 2019; Nakao et al., 2021).

The SEL theory is foundational in initiatives to develop students' social and emotional competencies alongside academic skills in schools, which suggests that social and emotional skills, such as emotional literacy, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, can be taught and developed in students through targeted interventions and explicit instruction (Brackett, 2019; Brackett et al., 2019). According to Green et al. (2021), students who receive SEL instruction demonstrate significant improvement in social-emotional competencies, academic achievement, and positive behaviors while also experiencing reduced problem behaviors and emotional distress. Furthermore, the Green et al. study demonstrated that the effects of the SEL programs were maintained over time, suggesting its potential for long-term benefits. Green et al. agree with Fomina et al. (2020) underscoring the importance of implementing SEL programs during early adolescence, as this developmental period is crucial for social and emotional growth.

In addition to the SEL theory, this analysis also draws on cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) principles, which is a type of psychological intervention that is effective in treating various mental health conditions, such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. CBT aims to change negative thought patterns and behaviors by helping individuals identify and challenge their automatic thoughts, develop coping strategies, and engage in behavior change. Incorporating CBT principles in the analysis, the intent is to develop an intervention that targets both the social-emotional skills and the negative thought patterns and behaviors of high school students, aiming to improve their well-being and academic success (Bıdık & Sisman, 2021; Klim-Conforti et al., 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Claude Steiner (1997), a psychotherapist and author, first used emotional literacy in his book, *Achieving Emotional Literacy*, describing emotional literacy as the ability to understand and express emotions in oneself and others. Since then, the term has been used in various fields, including education, psychology, and business, to refer to the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions effectively. Since Claude Steiner used the term “emotional literacy” in 1997, several scholars and educators have contributed to developing and understanding of the concept, such as Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer, Daniel Goleman, and Marc Brackett, among others (Brackett, 2019; Peseyie & Rao, 2020; Rollins-Koons & Rauh, 2022).

In 1990, Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer introduced the concept of emotional intelligence, which overlaps with emotional literacy in some respects. Daniel Goleman (1995) further popularized emotional intelligence through his bestselling book, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, stressing the significance of emotional intelligence, self-awareness, emotional literacy, and their integration into social-emotional learning and can have a profound impact on individuals' personal growth, relationships, and overall achievement in various areas of life. In the field of education, Marc Brackett, the founding director of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, has developed the concept of "RULER" to mean Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing, and Regulating emotions and as a framework for teaching emotional intelligence and emotional literacy in schools (Brackett, 2019; Rollins-Koons & Rauh, 2022).

The conceptualization of self-awareness is difficult to attribute to any one specific individual, as the idea has evolved through the works of many theorists. Self-awareness has been explored by various philosophers and psychologists throughout history, including Aristotle, René Descartes, Immanuel Kant, and Sigmund Freud (Birney, 2023). Self-awareness theory expanded with Duval and Wicklund's (1972) book, *A Theory of Objective Self-Awareness*, where the authors offer that when we focus our attention on ourselves, we evaluate and compare our current behavior to our internal standards and values, which elicits a state of objective self-awareness (Duval & Wicklund, 1972;

Silvia & Duval, 2001). On the surface, self-awareness correlates to self-consciousness as they both involve recognizing and understanding oneself, but they have distinct meanings (Majolo et al., 2023). Majolo et al. (2023) expand on the understanding of self-awareness and self-consciousness in the article, *Self-consciousness, and Self-awareness: Associations between Stable and Transitory Levels of Evidence*, offering that self-consciousness and self-awareness are related concepts that involve the recognition and understanding of oneself but caution that they should not be confused as self-consciousness focuses on appearance, behavior, or performance in social situations (Majolo et al., 2023). Self-awareness goes beyond the surface-level awareness of oneself that self-consciousness entails involving a more comprehensive understanding and insight into identity. In contrast, self-consciousness tends to focus more on perception in specific moments or contexts. The distinction between self-awareness and self-consciousness is important when studying the effects of interventions aimed at improving emotional intelligence and well-being, as self-awareness can be developed through self-exploration and social experiences, broadening one's social world toward becoming more familiar with the self (Majolo et al., 2023).

Understanding Emotional Maps

As Brown (2021) describes in her book *Atlas of the Heart*, emotional maps are powerful tools for individuals to understand their emotions better and cultivate self-awareness. Emotional maps serve as visual representations of an individual's emotional experiences and are created through various methods such as journaling, drawing, or using online tools. Identifying and labeling emotions helps individuals better understand their internal states and improve communication with others. Emotional maps also enable individuals to track and monitor their emotions over time, identify patterns, and develop coping strategies to manage emotional experiences such as anxiety or grief. The significance of emotional maps in the *Atlas of the Heart* lies in the visual representation of complex emotions and experiences, offering a unique way to understand and navigate the landscape of emotions. The emotional maps are intended to help readers better understand and describe their emotions, which can

lead to improved emotional literacy and self-awareness (Brown, 2021; Farrell, 2022; Pagliarella, 2022; Rajakumar, 2022).

Developing emotional literacy and self-awareness through emotional maps can improve emotional well-being, relationships, and academic or professional success. Emotional maps can benefit children and adolescents, providing a solid foundation for lifelong emotional intelligence and resilience. Consequently, Brown (2021) underscores the importance of cultivating emotional intelligence by creating emotional maps, which can lead to a more fulfilling and authentic life. The book explores the psychology behind human feelings and how they make up our lives and change our behaviors. The emotions are grouped into geographic regions, forming an Atlas of the Heart. Some examples of emotions mapped out in the book include *freudenfreude* (the German word for joy), bittersweetness, cognitive dissonance, gratitude, tranquility, dehumanization, reverence, heartbreak, and amusement. Brown aptly provides an overview of the necessary skills and an actionable framework for building emotional literacy and self-awareness, providing that to navigate emotions, individuals can cultivate profound connections and foster personal growth through enhanced self-awareness (Brown, 2021; Farrell, 2022; Pagliarella, 2022; Rajakumar, 2022).

Overview of the Atlas of the Heart

Brown's (2021) *Atlas of the Heart* represents the complex emotions and feelings that human beings experience. It is a collection of emotions categorized into different groups to help people better understand and navigate their emotions. The book is designed to help people develop emotional literacy, which is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions and the emotions of others. The *Atlas of the Heart* is divided into six major categories of emotions: love, joy, gratitude, anger, sadness, and fear. Each category is further divided into more specific emotions: compassion, contentment, frustration, disappointment, and anxiety. The book is an invaluable roadmap for promoting emotional literacy and self-awareness, aligning with the principles of SEL theory. The teachings call for tapping into our inner selves to embrace emotions, honor experiences, and use meaningful language to build deeper connections with others. Brown believes that connection

is why we are here and is what brings meaning into our lives (Brown, 2021; Farrell, 2022; Pagliarella, 2022; Rajakumar, 2022).

In the *Atlas of the Heart*, eighty-seven emotions and experiences that define what it means to be human are presented. While the book does not provide an order of importance for the emotions, Brown (2021) describes each emotion and its distinguishing features. The emotions presented range from anger, anxiety, and awe to vulnerability, wonder, and worry. Brown believes that precisely naming feelings is a crucial skill, especially in days of uncertainty and division. In the book, love, for example, represents connection and belonging, while heartbreak represents the pain of loss and disappointment. Compassion represents the ability to connect with and understand emotions (our own and the emotions of others), while gratitude represents the ability to appreciate and be thankful for positive experiences (Brown, 2021; Farrell, 2022; Pagliarella, 2022; Rajakumar, 2022).

The main themes and ideas of the *Atlas of the Heart* include recognizing and accepting one's emotions, developing self-compassion, and building emotional resilience (Brown, 2021; Kroeze Visser, 2022). The book emphasizes acknowledging and processing difficult emotions as part of growth and healing. The importance of growth and healing for individuals' futures cannot be overstated, contributing significantly to personal development, resilience, and overall well-being, aligning with sustainable education's goals and principles. Therefore, while the book does not explicitly discuss sustainable education, a correlate can be found in O'Donnell-Allen and Robbins (2022), who stress the importance of sustainable teaching practices and the urgent need to adopt them, reasoning that educators need to develop the skills to teach in a way that promotes sustainable development, including integrating concepts such as emotional literacy and self-awareness, which is central to Brown's (2021) *Atlas of the Heart*, as well as environmental and social justice issues into their curriculum. Sustainable teaching then goes beyond traditional teaching methods and curricula to integrate sustainability principles and practices into all aspects of the teaching process. Sustainable teaching demands that educators equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to create a more sustainable and equitable future.

Using *Atlas of the Heart* in the Classroom

Before introducing the *Atlas of the Heart* to students, it is essential to provide some background information on the importance of emotional literacy and self-awareness. Students should know the benefits of understanding and managing their emotions, including better academic performance, improved relationships, and increased mental well-being. Once students understand emotional literacy and self-awareness, educators can introduce the *Atlas of the Heart*. It may be helpful to show students images or videos and discuss how each represents a different emotion or feeling. For example, there are several video resources available that can accompany Brown's *Atlas of the Heart* book. Some resources are available on YouTube. Dr. Brené Brown takes viewers on a journey through the eighty-seven emotions and experiences that define the meaning of being human as conceptualized in the book. In another resource, the official HBO Max trailer, Brown provides an interactive journey to share the language, meaning, and power of emotions (HBO Max, 2022).

Additionally, there are various activities that educators can do with the *Atlas of the Heart* to help adolescents develop emotional literacy and self-awareness. For example:

1. Reading and discussion groups - Educators can assign students a section of the *Atlas of the Heart* to read and discuss as a group. Students can share their thoughts and emotions related to the images and discuss how they can use this knowledge to better understand and navigate their own emotions (Loyens et al., 2023).
2. Journaling - Students can use the *Atlas of the Heart* as inspiration for journaling exercises. They can reflect on which emotions they have experienced recently and explore why they felt that way, helping students become more self-aware and develop better emotional regulation skills (Brandt, 2020).
3. Mindfulness practices - Educators can guide students through mindfulness practices, such as breathing exercises while looking at the *Atlas of the Heart* images, becoming more present in the moment, and developing a better understanding of their emotions (Lomas et al., 2020; Sevilla, 2021).

Educators could successfully implement the *Atlas of the Heart* to support emotional growth and self-awareness in students. According to a Commonsense Media report, Brown's *Atlas of the Heart* is appropriate for ages thirteen and older due to the language used in the book (Herman, 2022). Fomina et al. (2020) and Green et al. (2021) agree that since early adolescence is a crucial period for social and emotional growth, it is an appropriate time to introduce emotional literacy and self-awareness educational initiatives. In the classroom, the *Atlas of the Heart* can be used to develop emotional literacy and self-awareness in students. At the school, district, and community levels, the *Atlas of the Heart* can promote empathy and understanding among individuals from diverse backgrounds. In acknowledging and accepting the emotions and experiences of others, individuals can develop stronger relationships and a greater sense of connection. Additionally, the *Atlas of the Heart* can be used as a tool for conflict resolution, helping individuals communicate their emotions in healthy ways and resolve conflicts in a positive manner (Bezzina & Camilleri, 2021; Brown, 2021; Farrell, 2022; Pagliarella, 2022; Rajakumar, 2022).

Benefits of Developing Emotional Literacy and Self-Awareness in Students

Developing emotional literacy and self-awareness in students can have numerous benefits beyond the classroom. For example, emotional literacy and self-awareness can improve families' mental health and emotional well-being. Becoming more aware of emotions and developing strategies for managing them can reduce students' stress and anxiety, improve their self-esteem, and help them develop stronger coping mechanisms. In addition to improving mental health, emotional literacy, and self-awareness can also have educational benefits. Emotionally literate students are better equipped to focus on their studies and achieve academic success. Furthermore, students can develop greater self-awareness and become more motivated to learn and take ownership of their academic progress (Bıdık & Sisman, 2021; Peseyie & Rao, 2020).

Emotional literacy and self-awareness can also have social benefits for students. Students can improve their communication skills and develop stronger relationships with their peers by developing greater empathy and understanding of their own and others' emotions. This can lead to a more positive

school environment and a greater sense of belonging. Some of the benefits of developing emotional literacy and self-awareness in students:

1. Improved academic performance - Students who have developed emotional literacy and self-awareness are better able to manage stress, anxiety, and other negative emotions that can hinder academic performance and are likely to be motivated and engaged in their learning (Peseyie & Rao, 2020; Tagata, 2022).
2. Better social relationships - Emotional literacy and self-awareness help students communicate effectively and form positive relationships, equipped to resolve conflicts and empathize with others (Bezzina & Camilleri, 2021; Tagata, 2022).
3. Increased emotional regulation - Students with strong emotional literacy and self-awareness skills can better regulate their emotions and manage stress and are less likely to engage in disruptive behaviors or respond negatively to challenges (Tagata, 2022).
4. Improved mental health - Emotional literacy and self-awareness have been linked to better mental health outcomes. Students who are emotionally literate and self-aware are less likely to experience anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues (Bıdık & Sisman, 2021).
5. Increased resilience - Developing emotional literacy and self-awareness can help students develop resilience, or the ability to bounce back from setbacks and challenges and better cope with stress and adversity (Brown, 2021; Kroeze Visser, 2022).

Possible Challenges for Implementing Atlas of the Heart in the Classroom

Implementing the *Atlas of the Heart* in the classroom can pose several challenges, including a lack of familiarity with emotional intelligence, resistance to discussing emotions, a lack of time and resources, and limited accessibility. However, incorporating the Atlas of the Heart into the curriculum can significantly benefit students' emotional growth and self-awareness despite these challenges. Educators can seek professional development opportunities to overcome these challenges, create safe and supportive learning environments, and collaborate with colleagues to integrate emotional intelligence concepts and tools (Forman et al., 2022; Kim & Hong, 2019; Soutter, 2019).

One challenge in implementing the *Atlas of the Heart* in the classroom is the lack of familiarity with emotional intelligence concepts among teachers, administrators, families, and students. Many educators may not be familiar with the benefits of emotional intelligence or may lack the skills necessary to teach emotional intelligence effectively. This lack of knowledge and skills can make it challenging to introduce the *Atlas of the Heart* and effectively support student learning. Correspondingly, families are critical in raising a self-aware, respectful child who can manage emotions, make responsible decisions, and build healthy relationships (Forman et al., 2022; Kim & Hong, 2019).

Another challenge is the resistance to discussing emotions that some students may have. Some students may feel uncomfortable discussing their emotions or may not understand why it is important to do so. Adolescence is a critical period of development who must navigate the complexities of a world rife with countless challenges. This resistance can make it difficult to engage students in activities with the *Atlas of the Heart* or to encourage them to develop emotional literacy and self-awareness (Soutter, 2019).

Lastly, a lack of time and resources is another challenge in implementing the *Atlas of the Heart* in the classroom. Teachers have many competing demands on their time, and integrating emotional intelligence concepts and tools may not be a priority. Additionally, some schools may not have the resources necessary to support implementing SEL programs, such as training, materials, and technology funding. Thus, limited accessibility to the *Atlas of the Heart* may also pose a challenge for implementation. Some schools may not have access to the tool, or it may be too expensive for individual teachers to purchase. Furthermore, students who do not have access to technology outside of the classroom may be unable to use the *Atlas of the Heart* at home, limiting their ability to practice emotional development skills (Forman et al., 2022; Kim & Hong, 2019; Soutter, 2019).

CONCLUSION

The present analysis aimed to explore the use of Brené Brown's *Atlas of the Heart* to develop emotional literacy and self-awareness in students. The methods used include defining emotional maps, introducing the *Atlas of the Heart*, providing guidance on how to introduce it to students, and offering examples of activities that can be used to develop emotional literacy and self-awareness. The results include a comprehensive overview of using the *Atlas of the Heart* to develop emotional literacy and self-awareness in students and the benefits of doing so. The limitation is the potential challenges for implementing the *Atlas of the Heart* in the classroom, which are presented along with suggestions for overcoming them. The contribution of the article is its guidance on using the *Atlas of the Heart* for emotional development, and its novelty lies in its focus on marginalized communities. The analysis provides a valuable resource for educators looking to help their students develop emotional literacy and self-awareness using the *Atlas of the Heart*.

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