



**GOES
GREEN**



***fun fact: All images on the website are my own!**

BRITTANY KROECKEL, '21

QUICK INTRODUCTION

A woman with dark curly hair and glasses is smiling. She has tattoos on her arms that read 'YOU ONCE' and 'OF BEING'. She has face paint that reads 'DREAMED' in a cloud shape above her forehead, 'WHERE' on her left cheek, and 'YOU' on her right cheek. She also has tattoos on her chest that read 'ARE' and 'NOW'.

Hello there! My name is Brittany Kroeckel. I am a junior Elementary Education and Psychology dual major with a minor in Environmental Sustainability Education.

THE PROJECT: PURPOSE

- ★ This project was completed to fulfill the independent study (ELE 391) requirement for the ESE minor.
- ★ My mentor for this independent study is Dr. Ammentorp in the School of Education in collaboration with Helen Corveleyn, the K-5 STEM Facilitator from Hopewell Elementary School.

THE PROJECT: THE PROCESS

- ★ For my project, I read and analyzed research on the connection between nature, nature-based therapy, and social and emotional learning. All the articles could be divided into three categories: emotions/mental health/mindfulness, social and emotional learning, and therapy.
- ★ Once the research was collected, I began searching through books and websites to create a comprehensive list of activities and how to execute them in a natural environment.
- ★ After conducting the research and discovering beneficial activities, I created the “SEL Goes Green” website through Webflow.

THE PROJECT: GOAL

- ★ The goal of “SEL Goes Green” website is to provide teachers nature-based therapeutic activities they can implement as “micro interventions” for their students to promote a healthier mental wellbeing.
- ★ The website provides an extensive annotated bibliography of relevant scholarly research with links to the articles.
- ★ One focus of my project was researching high-quality nature-based lessons that meet New Jersey Social and Emotional Learning standards.



NAVIGATION OF THE WEBSITE

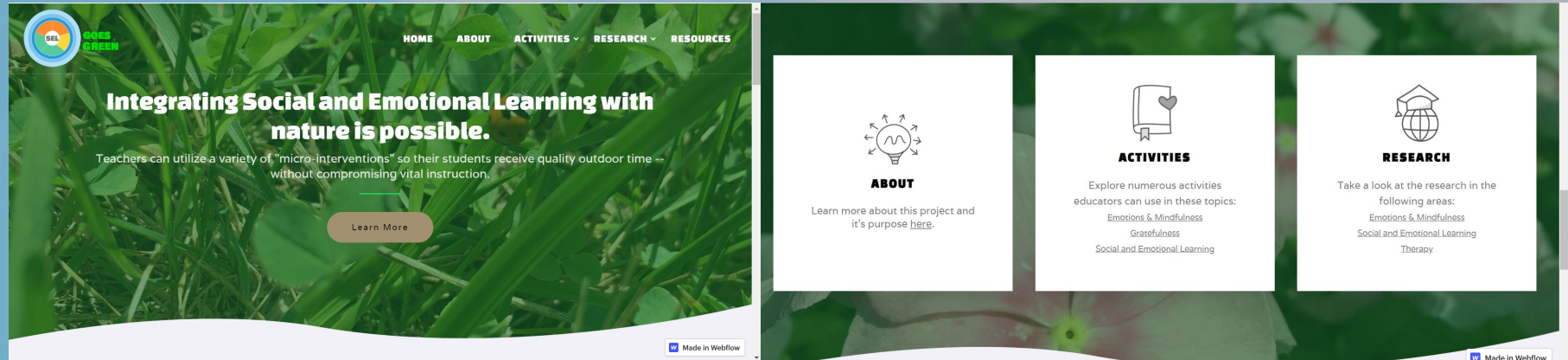
<https://selgoesgreen.webflow.io/>



HOME

The purpose of the homepage is to introduce the topic of the connection between children and nature. This is an area of discussion that is particularly popular today, given the rise in technology and advancements that result in kids being “glued to their screens” and not playing outside.

This page also provides as a hub for accessing other pages.



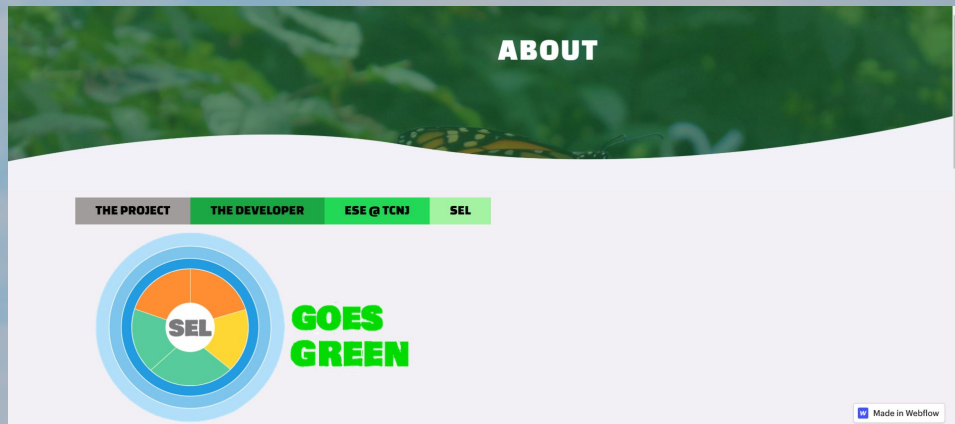
ABOUT

<https://selgoesgreen.webflow.io/about>



The “about” page is sectioned into four tabs:

- ★ The Project: another version of “the project” slide you just viewed.
- ★ The Developer: more information about me.
- ★ ESE @ TCNJ: about the minor -- for those who want to learn more.
- ★ SEL: information about the numerous components that comprise Social and Emotional Learning.



ACTIVITIES

<https://selgoesgreen.webflow.io/e-m-activities>

<https://selgoesgreen.webflow.io/gratefulness-activities>

<https://selgoesgreen.webflow.io/sel-activities>



- ★ The “activities” pages consist of the research I conducted of best practices for integrating nature-based therapy in schools.
- ★ These vetted activities are for preservice teachers, teachers and guidance counselors working with elementary-aged students, but can be adapted to any age group.
- ★ Categories include: gratefulness, emotions & mindfulness, and social and emotional learning.
- ★ Each category is placed on its own separate page and each activity has its own section/dropdown explaining each activity.

RESEARCH

<https://selgoesgreen.webflow.io/e-m-research>

<https://selgoesgreen.webflow.io/sel-research>

<https://selgoesgreen.webflow.io/therapy-research>



- ★ The “research” page on the website provides visitors with references and links to scholarly research.
- ★ The categories of research were comprised of emotions, mental health, mindfulness, social and emotional learning, and numerous forms of therapy (walking, music, play, etc.).
- ★ Each topic/area of research has its own page dedicated to it and each article has its own dropdown with a synopsis of that article.

Here are a few examples of scholarly research and activities provided on the website. I encourage you to explore the website for yourself to find more information about these titles and the rest available on “SEL Goes Green”:

RESEARCH

- ★ Emotions, Mental Health, & Mindfulness
 - *Mental health benefits of interactions with nature in children and teenagers: A systematic review.*
 - *Promoting children’s mental, emotional and social health through contact with nature: a model*
- ★ Social and Emotional Learning
 - *Promoting positive youth development through school-based social and emotional learning interventions: A meta-analysis of follow-up effects.*
- ★ Therapy
 - *The impacts of unstructured nature play on health in early childhood development: A systematic review*

ACTIVITIES

- ★ Gratefulness
 - Happy List
- ★ Mindfulness
 - Give Yourself A Break Cloud Floating
 - Hold and Release
 - Mind Drawing
- ★ Social and Emotional Learning
 - Heart-Happy Exercise

The Research is Clear:

There are positive and beneficial impacts to exposing children to nature. These impacts are seen on their emotional development, mental health, and learning experience.

Therefore, getting students outside is not only a great way for children to let out energy during recess, but it can also be used as a tool for teachers and guidance counselors to help their students grow emotionally and mentally.

CONNECTION TO THE ESE MINOR

“The children and nature movement is fueled by this fundamental idea: the child in nature is an endangered species, and the health of children and the health of the Earth are inseparable.” - **Richard Louv**

Since this is my capstone for the ESE minor, I feel it is appropriate to reflect on my experience and how I will use what I've learned in this coursework beyond the parameters of TCNJ:

- ★ As shown to me in ESE 100 and MST 203, there are so many ways to teach children about the environment, ways to take care of it, and what we can do to make a change. Environmental science in a classroom setting can spread across disciplines, and SEL is no exception.

CONNECTION TO THE ESE MINOR (CONT.)

“The children and nature movement is fueled by this fundamental idea: the child in nature is an endangered species, and the health of children and the health of the Earth are inseparable.” - **Richard Louv**

- ★ An important note and take away from my time in ESE 220 is that the time for change is now. Our students are now. Gandhi told us that we cannot wait for others -- when we change the nature within ourselves, the world will change too.
- ★ This can start in our schools. If we “reconnect” children with the beauty of the natural world around them, it will not only reap health benefits for these students but also the health of nature. We must empower and spark advocacy within our children to protect what is left of our planet.

THANK YOU!

ANY QUESTIONS?

FEEL FREE TO REACH OUT TO ME!

You can contact me at:
kroeckb1@tcnj.edu