ABSTRACT

Daniel Barnes, ENHANCING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY, AND PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS THROUGH MORNING MEETING IN AN ONLINE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (Under the direction of Dr. Marjorie Ringler). Department of Educational Leadership, December 2021.

This study examined the experiences of educators in a small, rural elementary school who provided live instruction in an online setting during the COVID-19 pandemic. The scholarly practitioner collaborated with inquiry partners to enhance student engagement, teacher self-efficacy, and principal leadership skills by implementing Morning Meeting, a social and emotional learning program from Responsive Classroom®, when students participated in remote online learning. The scholarly practitioner used over four decades of research about efficacy and identified leadership strategies and approaches that assisted in building individual and collective teacher efficacy so that teachers could effectively engage students.

Behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement were identified in research and used by teachers to determine the quality of participation in Morning Meeting. Teachers took daily and weekly attendance to measure engagement, and the scholarly practitioner facilitated team meetings with groups of teachers to compile comments and statements regarding student engagement. These statements were coded using pre-selected codes based on research about types of student engagement.

The scholarly practitioner facilitated the administration of a pre-study and post-study Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale so that individual, grade-span, and full-school efficacy data could be compiled. In addition, the scholarly practitioner held team meetings with the teachers to compile comments and categorize those statements into four areas: job accomplishment, skill development, social interaction, and coping with job stress. These four areas were also coded using the four categories described on the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale.

The scholarly practitioner also maintained a journal using a self-reflection tool about the lived experiences before, during, and after the study. The emphasis on this journal was about the development and growth of leadership skills, and the categories were pre-coded using Bernard Bass's categories of transformational leadership: individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation.

Student engagement increased throughout the study, and 77 percent of students were fully engaged during the study. Teachers expressed an increase in collective efficacy at the conclusion of the study, and six of the eight teachers reported individual increases in efficacy. The scholarly practitioner's use of differentiation within the context of transformational leadership was observed most frequently in the study.

ENHANCING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY, AND PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS THROUGH MORNING MEETING IN AN ONLINE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership

East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

by

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December, 2021

ENHANCING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY, AND PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS THROUGH MORNING MEETING IN AN ONLINE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the numerous people in my life who made it possible for me to achieve this milestone. My wife, Brooke, has been a constant source of love, encouragement, and sacrifice for this entire marathon. Thank you for keeping our family and house in order while I spent many hours away at work, in class, and while writing. Aiden, my son, has provided my essential "why" and unconditional love. Thank you for understanding that "Daddy had to write," and I am excited to have more time to play with you! I am blessed to have you both in my life. This work is also dedicated to my parents, Michael and Glenda Barnes, for their love, their modeling of service and hard work, and their support and encouragement. Thank you for being flexible and understanding when I had to meet deadlines and thank you for supporting Brooke and Aiden while I spent time completing this work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the numerous staff members at ECU who have supported, reviewed, taught, and helped me throughout this journey. My dissertation chair, Dr. Marjorie Ringler, has been incredibly flexible, supportive, and helpful in guiding me throughout the twists and turns in this adventure. Professors Dr. Dan Novey and Dr. Travis Lewis have been instrumental in providing support and a substantial amount of knowledge both as committee members and as professors. Beyond my committee, I also want to express my gratitude to former professors Dr. Tom Williams and Dr. Kermit Buckner for their decade-long support in many roles.

I owe a significant debt and have the deepest appreciation for my superintendent and fourth committee member, Dr. Lane Mills, who has provided thorough feedback and pushed me to grow out of my comfort zone but also made sure that I was provided the opportunities and confidence to succeed. In addition, I would like to thank my associate superintendent, Dr. Cheryl Wilson, who has sharpened my saw and has invested a significant amount of time in me, especially with our "on-the-road" phone calls where we would solve my problems. I also would like to thank the members of the Wilson County Schools administration and Board of Education, my fellow principals, ECU cohort members, and staff members at the schools I have served; they all have provided opportunities for me to learn with and from them, and I am appreciative.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family for their unequivocal support. To the love of my life, my wife, Brooke: thank you for the many nights on kid-duty, for being my sounding board, for your love and support, and for accommodating my career changes and near-constant enrollment in school. To my son, Aiden: you made me a father and changed my perspective as an educator for the better. To my parents, Michael and Glenda Barnes: thank you for providing unconditional love and support in all of my endeavors. To my family: thank you, and I love you.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

During the fall of 2020, many public schools in North Carolina and across the United States began the year in remote online learning, described by the North Carolina State Board of Education as "learning that takes place outside of the traditional school setting" with a variety of digital tools and platforms (Public Schools of North Carolina, State Board of Education, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2020, p.1). This situation prevented elementary children in Wilson County from being in school buildings from March through October 2020 (Burns, 2020; Granados, 2020). The pandemic, combined with various work and public health concerns along with school closures, amplified stress for students, educators, and families (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020, p. 511). Social and emotional learning (SEL) was necessary to support student development, as the COVID-19 pandemic created a decline in "school-based relationships, routines, and learning" and contributed to or exacerbated problems in physical and mental health, isolation, and potential economic and other linked dilemmas (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2020a, p. 3).

Because of this unique and complex situation, this study centered on social emotional learning. Morning Meeting, an SEL program from Responsive Classroom® and the Center for Responsive Schools, is "a daily meeting to create a sense of classroom community with time for sharing, games, and playful intellectual activity" (McTigue & Rimm-Kaufman, 2010, p. 7). Morning Meeting uses explicitly modeled and practiced protocols to "motivate students by addressing the human need to feel a sense of significance and belonging" (Kriete & Davis, 2016, p. 11). The focus of practice (FoP) for this study was to enhance student engagement and teacher efficacy through the use of Morning Meeting (Kriete & Davis, 2016) in an elementary school in

the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. This study needed to be conducted because of the significant, timely, and ongoing dilemmas within education caused by COVID-19.

There were numerous potential implications of this study. At the time of the study, the school and school system of the scholarly practitioner was in remote online learning (Wilson, 2020). In addition, North Carolina, where this study occurred, codified remote learning days as a requirement of public-school calendars and required remote learning plans from all school districts (Session Law 2020-03, pp. 10-13). This meant that online remote learning continued to be a component of educational plans for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year. With students out of the classroom for seven months at the time of this study, the social and emotional learning of students was critical while children were in 'stay-at-home' mode before the return to face-to-face school (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020, p. 512). Furthermore, teachers at Lee Woodard Elementary School (LWES), the school in this study, noted that engagement was less than 30% in the spring of 2020, which was during the initial switch to remote learning; therefore, the educators expressed minimal confidence in the quality of online learning and their preparedness to deliver online teaching. This was similar to teachers in a limited study in Indonesia where over 73% of the teachers stated that online learning was ineffective (Fauzi & Khusuma, 2020, p. 62).

For this study, the goals were to enhance engagement, which was identified as a focus and deficit by teachers, and to improve teacher efficacy with the implementation of Morning Meeting (Kriete & Davis, 2016) because of the need to build educator confidence and competence. During Morning Meeting, "children gather to participate in this daily routine that provides opportunities to learn socialization skills, communication skills, and academics while establishing a sense of classroom community" (Bruce et al., 2006, p. 3). Therefore, the implementation of Morning Meeting had the potential to address the isolation and lack of school-

based relationships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, Bondy and Ketts (2001) attribute improved academic performance in a third-grade class to the implementation of Morning Meeting, so this aligned with the study's goal at increasing teacher self-efficacy. Also, it was the theory of the scholarly practitioner that the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent immediate transition into emergency remote learning without preparation that created the lack of teacher self-efficacy regarding online teaching. The application of Morning Meeting had the potential to build educator confidence and student relationships and engagement.

Within this chapter, a background of the FoP, context of the study, and the statement of the FoP will be conveyed. Next will be the FoP guiding questions and an overview of the inquiry and inquiry partners, followed by the transformational leadership framework overview and a section on the definition of key terms. Lastly, this chapter will conclude with a description of the assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance of the inquiry, review of how the study advances equity and social justice, description of advances in practice, and a summary leading to the literature review in Chapter 2.

Background of FoP

Alec MacGillis (2020), in *The New Yorker*, chronicled the story of a middle school student in Baltimore, along with multiple teachers, who struggled at engaging and participating in online learning. MacGillis (2020) described a student who was rarely engaged with online learning along with teachers who doubted themselves and expressed concerns about the academic and mental wellbeing of students. In an article from the American Psychological Association, Chavez Phelps and Linda Sperry note that the absence of face-to-face instruction creates a situation where "one has to wonder how children with trauma-related issues are coping with our current state of affairs without adequate supports" (Phelps & Sperry, 2020, p. S73).

At Lee Woodard Elementary School, the North Carolina school at the center of this Focus of Practice study, teachers expressed similar concerns. As the 2020-21 academic year started online, and teachers struggled to build connections, this collaborative action research study needed to be conducted to examine and identify effective practices at engaging students. The principal and teachers in the study decided to apply Morning Meeting to allow for consistent procedures and expectations for building classroom community, rapport, and connection. Furthermore, limited research was available about elementary teachers facilitating online learning.

This study was needed to determine the extent that Morning Meeting implementation enhanced student engagement as children remained outside of school; this was also relevant because Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases, noted in September 2020 that the combination of less social distancing, the presence of COVID-19, and the flu season probably necessitated further school closings (Syal, 2020, para. 3). During and after the study, classes returned to online learning, and North Carolina law required district plans for remote learning (Session Law 2020-03, pp. 10-13). In addition, this study was needed to build educator efficacy and capacity at engaging students online. At the school used in this study, all of the teachers conveyed significant concern at the lack of student engagement that occurred in spring 2020. Within this study, in addition to growing student engagement, the scholarly practitioner worked to determine the extent that teacher efficacy was enhanced by using Morning Meeting (Kriete & Davis, 2016). Furthermore, teacher efficacy in teaching elementary students online was minimal because it has not been done before. This study provided an avenue for the teachers and principal to implement online learning for elementary-aged students.

Context of Study

The school in this study, Lee Woodard Elementary School (LWES), was a high-poverty, rural Title 1 elementary school located in Black Creek, North Carolina. The enrollment fluctuated from the 140s to 190s over the past five years. The free and reduced lunch rate was almost 67%, one of the higher rates in Wilson County Schools (Wilson County Schools Board of Education, 2019, p. 28). Based on Wilson County's designation as a Tier 1 economically distressed county, LWES was one of the most impoverished schools within one of the poorest counties in North Carolina (North Carolina Department of Commerce, 2019). As of the 2020-21 school year, LWES had 46% White students, 36% Black students, and 18% LatinX students.

At the time of the study, students were out of the classroom from March 13, 2020 through October 21, 2020 (Wilson, 2020). Educators and families expressed concern with the lack of active engagement since the children were not with teachers. LWES staff and families reported active engagement of 30%, and that was on an individual student-level; rarely were many students online and actively engaging with each other and the teacher simultaneously, but rather participating in 1-on-1 sessions. At the start of the 2020-21 academic year, educators and families expressed more concern about a lack of engagement along with an additional concern that students and teachers would not even know each other since this was the start of a new year and grade. The school improvement team and scholarly practitioner reviewed multiple SEL programming options: Conscious Discipline, Capturing Kids Hearts, Second Steps, and Morning Meeting. The team decided to keep Second Steps as a face-to-face intervention from the school counselor. The scholarly practitioner had experience in using Conscious Discipline in a previous principalship, but the team felt that the full-school training cost, when divided by the small number of school staff, was above a budgetary amount that was commensurate to the needs of

the school, at $120 per staff member. Capturing Kids Hearts was even more expensive, at more than $500 per school, and the staff felt that Capturing Kids Hearts and Conscious Discipline were more appropriate for schools with significant classroom management problems. Morning Meeting was described as being used for building connections, community, and engagement, which were the areas that teachers and families reported as "missing" during the spring 2020 emergency remote learning. Therefore, the staff at LWES decided to implement Morning Meeting in order to "motivate students by addressing the human need to feel a sense of significance and belonging" (Kriete & Davis, 2016, p. 11). Staff noted that Morning Meeting was already being used in at least two other elementary schools in the district and could be conducted in the virtual and face-to-face settings. In addition, the staff noted that Conscious Discipline's upfront cost would be more than 15% of the yearly instructional budget, Capturing Kids Hearts was even more expensive, and the lack of severe and external behaviors did not warrant that expense.

The changes desired in this study were an increase in the quantity and quality of student engagement in online learning, particularly within the Morning Meeting, and an increase in teacher efficacy at providing meaningful connection and engagement online through Morning Meeting (Kriete & Davis, 2016). These improvements were essential, particularly at a high poverty school, since students in poverty are more likely to receive social supports at school, including but not limited to instruction, counseling, mental health therapies, and supplemental nutritional supplies (Golberstein et al., 2020). In addition, the rural location of the school equated to fewer resources that were in close proximity, which exacerbated the problem of supports. The school's decision to implement Morning Meeting online and the use of collaborative action research (CAR) addressed the need to build connections with students while being cognizant of

how the prolonged absence adversely affected children (Kriete & Davis, 2016). Furthermore, the collaborative action research approach encouraged teachers "to improve the teaching-learning process while also contributing to the development of their own profession" (Sagor, 1992, p. 6).

Statement of FoP

The focus of practice for this study was to enhance student engagement and teacher efficacy through the use of Morning Meeting (Kriete & Davis, 2016) in elementary school in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the start of the study, very little data or scholarly research existed regarding online learning among elementary school students, but since this study was conducted during the pandemic, more studies were written. From a site-level perspective, the feedback from families and educators informed the necessity of the study; students missed the connections with each other and their teachers, and educators were less confident about their capability to build and sustain relationships and learning in a remote, online context.

The gap in the literature was significant. Online learning studies typically centered on the higher-education realm or in secondary schools, not elementary schools (Means et al., 2010, p. xviii). Furthermore, while literature existed regarding social emotional learning (SEL) for elementary students, few studies as of the time of this study existed regarding the enhancement of SEL and engagement in an online context. In addition, North Carolina's laws regarding remote learning meant teachers continued needing to build their efficacy at engaging students online (Session Law 2020-03, pp. 10-13).

This study aimed to enhance teacher self-efficacy by utilizing the collaborative action research method. The principal as the scholarly practitioner teamed with teachers, the school counselor, and instructional coach in two teams organized by grade span: Kindergarten through

second grade, and third through fifth grade. These teams aimed to enhance teacher self-efficacy by engaging students in Morning Meeting, and weekly team meetings were conducted to reflect upon and make adjustments to the Morning Meeting process (Kriete & Davis, 2016). The goals aligned with Sagor's (2000) purposes for action research: "building the reflective practitioner; making progress on schoolwide priorities; and building professional cultures" (p. 7).

FoP Guiding Questions

The questions guiding this FoP inquiry were:

1. To what extent does the implementation of Morning Meeting enhance engagement and learning in online settings for elementary school students?
2. To what extent does the use of Morning Meeting improve (a) teacher self-efficacy and (b) collective teacher efficacy?
3. To what extent does collaborative action research affect the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills?

Overview of Inquiry

To answer these FoP guiding questions, the scholarly practitioner used a collaborative action research (CAR) design. Sagor (2000) defines action research as "a disciplined process of inquiry *by* and *for* those taking the action" (p. 3). The primary reason for engaging in action research is to assist the 'actor' in improving and/or refining his or her actions. Sagor (1992) then defines "collaborative" in this context as "teams of practitioners who have common interests and work together to investigate issues related to those interests" (p. 10). Combined, collaborative action research involves teams of practitioners working and investigating together to improve and/or refine their actions (Sagor, 1992; Sagor, 2000).

This study utilized Sagor's (2000) seven steps of CAR: selecting a focus, clarifying theories, identifying research questions, collecting data, analyzing data, reporting results, and taking informed action (pp. 3-4). A more detailed description of the CAR process is articulated in Chapter 3, but this section includes a brief overview of each step. In step 1, educators identified a topic "worthy of a busy teacher's time" and identified components of educating students that they chose to study (Sagor, 2000, p. 4). Team meeting minutes were used to inform and provide feedback regarding the research questions. In step 2, the teams decided to implement Morning Meeting (Kriete & Davis, 2016) based on the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) standards for social emotional learning (SEL) (Sagor, 2000, p. 15). In step 3, the teams created the research questions based on the need for student engagement and teacher confidence and efficacy, while the scholarly practitioner added the third question regarding leadership skills since the scholarly practitioner is serving in the first year of the principalship at LWES (Sagor, 2000, pp. 17-18).

The following steps, 4 and 5, were repeated weekly as the teams met. For Internal Review Board (IRB) purposes, the scholarly practitioner studied the notes taken during the team meetings that were part of the scholarly practitioner's role as principal of LWES. For step 4, teams collected data prior to the study's implementation about the concerns of online learning for elementary students from staff members and families (Sagor, 2000, p. 19). During the study, the team defined engagement as "the quality of a student's connection or involvement with the endeavor of schooling and hence with the people, activities, goals, values, and place that compose it" (Skinner et al., 2009, p. 494). This was necessary because weekly data were collected regarding the quantity and quality of engagement per class. Furthermore, at the beginning and end of the study, teachers were administered a pre- and post-study instrument, the

Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale, to assess their efficacy (Schwarzer et al., 1999). Lastly, the weekly minutes from each team and the journaling from the scholarly practitioner were collected for further analysis.

Within step 5, the teams analyzed their efficacy on the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale along with the weekly results of student engagement and participation (Sagor, 2000, p. 20; Schwarzer et al., 1999). This data were compiled on a weekly basis and acted upon to reflect and adjust throughout the process and at the completion of the study. The names of students were maintained internally as a function of the scholarly practitioner's work, but they were also used to aggregate and disaggregate trends and to identify areas to address, such as students with exceptionalities or those who were new to the school or distinguishing between grade spans to identify areas of further focus.

In step 6, the results were reported out to the teams and to the entire staff (Sagor, 2000, p. 20). Family and staff concerns from the beginning of the study were shared during the virtual Title 1/Open House meeting with families as the impetus to implement Morning Meeting (Kriete & Davis, 2016). In addition, this data were shared with the team on a shared Google Drive spreadsheet in the shared Google Drive team folder. This was done using the team's strengths and weaknesses protocol and discussed during the following week's meetings.

Within step 7, the teams took informed action during and after the time of this study (Sagor, 2000, p. 20). On a weekly basis, as the teams identified narrow, specific problems, the student's teacher addressed the issue; for example, teachers used a digital communication tool to engage the family or the child to improve the situation. As the meetings continued, the teams identified and made quick adjustments, such as using two monitors or posting permanent links in

the Google Classroom, Seesaw, or parent's email. However, on a longer-term basis, the teams identified trends, patterns, and problems on which to focus.

Inquiry Partners

Multiple inquiry partners were involved in this study: teachers, a school counselor, an instructional coach, and parents. The school was divided into 2 grade-span teams which met weekly to advise and provide feedback regarding Morning Meeting. These teams described the strengths and weaknesses of the week, identified students who are engaged or disengaged, shared ideas for improvement, and reflected on what extent that the implementation of Morning Meeting affected them individually and as a grade span (Kriete & Davis, 2016). Each team included the scholarly practitioner, school counselor, and school improvement coach.

The participants in the study were the Kindergarten through fifth-grade teachers at LWES, the scholarly practitioner, school counselor, and school improvement coach, who were in two grade-clustered teams. Furthermore, the school engaged two parents who served on the Parent Teacher Organization and School Improvement Team. The scholarly practitioner was the only participant new to LWES for the 2020-21 school year. Further description of the inquiry partners and demographics will be described in Chapter 3.

Transformational Leadership Framework

The transformational leadership framework was used as the lens for this FoP study. James Burns (1978) describes transformational leadership as "a process in which leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation" (p. 20). Bernard Bass (1985) then added to Burns by adding the "4 Is," "individualized consideration," "intellectual stimulation," "inspirational motivation," and "idealized influence" as elements of transformational leadership that applied to the members of the team. These show how leaders

can be transformative rather than just transforming organizations. Kenneth Leithwood and Doris Jantzi study school improvement and describe in a few studies how the principal's transformational leadership's application relates to overall school improvement. Bruce Avolio, in numerous studies with multiple co-authors, examines how transformational leadership compares to other styles of leadership in educational and other contexts.

Since the inquiry approach was collaborative action research (CAR), the transformational leadership framework aligned well. CAR utilized teams working together to ask and answer the question, "how can my work be modified to produce better results?" (Sagor, 2009, p. 10). This matched Burns's (1978) description of transformational leadership as "leaders and followers helping each other" (p. 20). This framework, with the concept of leaders and followers helping each other, matched with the guiding questions about enhancing student engagement and teacher efficacy because the study was designed to help students and teachers, symbiotically; in addition, the third guiding question concerned the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills, and the transformational leadership approach also included followers and leaders helping each other. Numerous studies and research in transformational leadership will be discussed further in Chapter 2.

Definition of Key Terms

Online learning, in the context of this study, is based on the North Carolina State Board of Education description: "learning that takes place outside of the traditional school setting using various media and formats, such as but not limited to: video conference, telephone conference, […] online material, or learning management systems" (Public Schools of North Carolina, State Board of Education, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2020, p. 1).

Self-efficacy is an individual's belief "that a particular course of action will produce certain outcomes," such as specific performance attainments (Bandura, 1977, p. 193). In the context of this study, this refers to the confidence that teachers have in doing something; in this case, that is the teacher capacity to provide student engagement in Morning Meeting in the online learning setting.

Social emotional learning (SEL) in this study is defined as "the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2020b, para. 1).

Student engagement, within this study, has three facets to its definition: "behavioral," which refers to participation in the learning environment; "emotional," which describes the "positive and negative reactions to teachers, classmates, academics, and school," and "cognitive," which "incorporates thoughtfulness and willingness to exert the effort necessary to comprehend complex ideas and master difficult skills" (Fredricks et al., 2004, p. 60). In addition, the educators in this study added the quantity of participation as a measurement, which is described in more detail in Chapter 3.

Assumptions

This study included multiple assumptions. First, the scholarly practitioner assumed that all teachers valued social emotional learning (SEL) within the structure of Morning Meeting. Also, there was an assumption of social desirability that the staff was in favor of SEL because of the degree and amount of discussion about the topic since the scholarly practitioner became principal at LWES. Next, this study included the assumption that teachers were comfortable with the live instruction and technology. Another assumption was that the educators in the study took

care of their social and emotional needs and personal issues and had the capacity to attend adequately to student SEL. Further description of assumptions, and how the scholarly practitioner has dealt with these, is described in Chapter 3.

Scope

This inquiry engaged educators as they provided Morning Meeting in the online setting. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent online learning requirements, students and teachers were forced to use the internet for daily instruction. Therefore, access to the internet was an important aspect to the study and for the instruction provided by teachers. The school provided Google Chromebooks for students to access online learning, and every parent either received a device or affirmed that the student had a computer or tablet available at home.

Another component of the scope of this study involved the teachers at LWES. The teachers expressed their collective uncertainty about their ability to provide online instruction. None of the teachers and educators on the team were beginning teachers, and they each indicated how none of their coursework or previous experiences prepared them for providing online instruction. Furthermore, the limitation of internet access and speed impacted the teachers as well, since the students had limited bandwidth capacity and the teachers reported slow internet speeds when they worked at the school.

Limitations

One category of limitations was with technology. First, as described by Fauzi and Khusuma (2020), was the ability of families to have adequate devices and internet access. Furthermore, since LWES was a rural school located in an area of limited internet opportunities, this limitation was even more pronounced, although the school district offered cellular hot spots. This limitation was exacerbated by the ability of families to access the cellular hot spots, which

were located at a school in the city of Wilson, a distance that required automobile transportation since public transportation was not readily available in Black Creek. Another limitation of live online instruction was the home situation of students; multi-family and large family units presented problems for children to be able to find a quiet area for engagement. Additionally, educators and families expressed a concern about the lengthy amount of screen time being developmentally inappropriate; this thought-process in and of itself was a potential limitation.

Another category of limitations was with the adults in the study. Since the scholarly practitioner served as principal of LWES, a reactive effect and bias could have existed since the other teachers were supervised by the scholarly practitioner. The sample size of this study was limited because this took place at one school, and the school itself was small, with fewer than 200 students. The Morning Meeting training being facilitated by school staff and not external trainers also presented a potential limitation in the expertise and effectiveness of the training. The teachers were impacted themselves by the stresses of COVID-19 or other related or unrelated situations, which potentially limited enhancement of teacher self-efficacy at times. Lastly, since the scholarly practitioner entered LWES as principal in July 2020, the other educators may have been stressed at adapting to a new leader who replaced the previous principal of eight years. Further discussion of limitations is described in Chapter 3.

Significance of Inquiry

The significance of this inquiry related to closing the gap between the current and desired state (Mintrop, 2016). At the start of the study, educators and families noted that engagement was low in online learning, and teachers expressed low confidence at their capacity to facilitate learning and engagement in the online setting. The gap that this study aimed to close was between where the school was and a desired state where, when students needed to participate in

online learning, the students would have been able to engage meaningfully on a consistent basis. In addition, this scholarly practitioner desired for teachers to have developed efficacy at their capacity to facilitate Morning Meeting and monitor this engagement (Kriete & Davis, 2016).

This study addresses my transformational leadership skills by leading and learning with staff through collaborative action research (CAR). One of Sagor's purposes for action research, "building the reflective practitioner," aligns with the Burns description of transformational leadership as "a process in which leaders and followers help each other" (Burns, 1978, p. 20; Sagor, 2000, p. 7). This process involved the staff identifying the area of focus and entrusting the leader to provide options to address the study. Then, the teachers reviewed the options and identified a method that they believed would enhance both their efficacy at online instruction and student engagement. The teachers and leader then agreed on a process to implement, discuss, and modify the program on a weekly basis and at the conclusion of the study. This process allowed me to facilitate transformation by action and through the collaboration process.

Advancing Equity and Social Justice

In this context, the study aimed to advance equity and social justice by providing a consistent, evidence-based, CASEL-vetted structure for delivering social emotional learning within Morning Meeting in order to build student engagement. As MacGillis (2020) noted in The New Yorker, students disengaged from learning since they were disconnected from school. Therefore, since not all families had the same privileges and opportunities, a goal of this study was to build connections for all students, and then focus on those in more need as identified in the weekly team meetings. From an equity perspective, students still needed to receive engaging instruction despite the online setting. This data collected from the weekly meetings were disaggregated by grade level, teacher, ethnicity, special program status (English Language

Learner or Exceptional Children, for example) and by student name so that the teams were able to differentiate their outreach and help students engage in online learning. The demographic data were used by teams to identify trends and target students in need of additional support.

Advances in Practice

This CAR inquiry had the potential to make a difference in several areas. Since the 2020-21 school year started in an online setting, schools needed to build connections because the children and teachers had not yet met in person, and some of the children may not have known each other (Wilson, 2020). Since the 2020-21 school year alternated between full remote, face-to-face, and partially online learning, this study aimed to help teachers and students at building the necessary connections in order for learning to occur regardless of the setting. These connections were developed through Morning Meeting in an online context, but these continued after the study in the online and face-to-face context. Pfefferbaum and North (2020) observed the increase in mental health crises as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the shutdowns; these situations impacted families and students, either directly or indirectly, and this study attempted to provide insight into how teachers can assess and then respond to the needs of students.

In addition, elementary teachers had minimal experience in providing online learning in this setting. At the time of this study, little research had been conducted regarding teaching in this manner. This inquiry's second focus, on enhancing teacher efficacy at facilitating Morning Meeting online, provided a limited opportunity to assess strategies that helped teachers build individual and collective efficacy (Kriete & Davis, 2016). This context was only applicable from the SEL and Morning Meeting perspective; however, the strategies used by the team to evaluate, assess, and improve student engagement—as a way to build their teacher capacity—provided insight in future studies for practices at building teacher efficacy in other online contexts.

Summary

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the fall semester of the 2020-21 academic year started in an online setting at Lee Woodard Elementary School (LWES), a rural, high-poverty, Title 1 school in Wilson County, North Carolina (Wilson, 2020). Because of this situation, students were out of school for over seven months. The scholarly practitioner met with staff members at LWES, and collectively the staff identified social emotional learning (SEL) and engagement as a primary need. Teachers also felt that they needed to build their individual and collective efficacy at delivering online instruction and facilitating online SEL. Therefore, this study was a collaborative action research (CAR) inquiry with a transformational leadership lens in which leaders and followers helped each other to reach their aspirations to address the study questions.

Multiple inquiry partners including educators and parents contributed to this study, and their input was used to identify and act upon the CAR work. The study included limitations regarding device and internet access and assumptions about the staff's buy-in to the implementation of Morning Meeting. This study aimed to advance the studies of online learning in elementary school students and educators, since minimal research existed in this area. At the site level, this study had a practical benefit because students were online, and educators articulated the need for connection and engagement both during and after the study.

In Chapter 2, a literature review will be provided on transformational leadership, collaborative action research, social emotional learning, teacher efficacy, the principal's role in leadership and efficacy, Morning Meeting, and online learning. Then, in Chapter 3, the scholarly practitioner will describe in greater detail the collaborative action research inquiry method, inquiry partners and their roles, and the specific steps within collaborative action research.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In March 2020, schools in North Carolina and across the United States closed due to the COVID-19, and schools remained closed in North Carolina for the remainder of the 2019-20 academic year (Burns, 2020). For the beginning of the 2020-21 academic year, schools in North Carolina were provided the option to allow partial and modified face-to-face instruction or remote virtual learning (Granados, 2020). Wilson County Schools, along with many other districts in North Carolina, opted to start the year with remote online learning (Wilson, 2020). This plan is in place until at least October 21, 2020; as a result, students will be out of the face-to-face learning setting for at least seven months, from March to October. During this time, students will be engaged in remote online learning. Although families and educators have expressed academic concerns due to the duration of being out of school, there are also concerns on children's mental health and social emotional learning (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020). The purpose of this study is to describe the extent to which the implementation of Morning Meeting enhances student engagement, teacher efficacy, and the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills.

In order to better understand the study, it is important to review research related to the study. The following headings describe the topics researched for the study: Transformational Leadership and Teacher Empowerment; Historical Background for Transformational Leadership; Teacher Efficacy; Impact of Principals on Teacher Self-Efficacy; Teacher Self-Efficacy through Principal Transformational Leadership; Morning Meeting; Using Transformational Leadership to Introduce Morning Meeting; Social Emotional Learning Engagement; Online Learning in Elementary-Age Students; and Using Collaborative Action Research to Transform.

Literature Search Strategy

For this study, the following databases were used: (1) Google Scholar, (2) Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), (3) Research Gate, (4) Journal Storage (JSTOR), (5) Elton B. Stevens Company (EBSCO), and (6) ProQuest. Of these databases, ERIC, JSTOR, EBSCO, Google Scholar and ProQuest were accessed from the East Carolina University's Joyner Library, and Research Gate was accessed via Google. The terms used for the literature search were: transformational leadership; teacher efficacy; self-efficacy; Morning Meeting; social emotional learning; COVID-19; remote learning; virtual learning; online learning; leadership styles; and student engagement. In addition, the scholarly practitioner reviewed the 2020 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey.

The majority of the literature in the study was written after 2013, although some relevant studies and texts date back to the 1970s. Seminal literature includes Peter Northouse's (2019) eighth edition of his original 1997 text *Leadership*: *Theory and Practice*, and Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal's 1984 and (1991) text *Leadership and Management Effectiveness: A Multi-Frame, Multi-Sector Analysis*. These seminal texts provided theoretical guidance and lenses to examine leadership strategies, particularly transformational leadership as related to teacher efficacy.

This chapter first introduces the background of the study and the terms and strategies used for research. Next is the major category of Transformational Leadership and Teacher Empowerment, starting with historical background, studies, and the theoretical propositions of the model, along with how this framework enhances the design of the study and the rationale for choosing transformational leadership. After those is a review of research in teacher efficacy, followed by sections on social emotional learning, Morning Meeting, collaborative action

research, and remote learning. The chapter concludes with a summary of the research in the chapter and a preview of the upcoming chapter.

Transformational Leadership and Teacher Empowerment

James Burns (1978), a World War II veteran who wrote about political and military leaders, articulates two distinct leadership styles, transactional and transformational, as cited by Peter Northouse (2019), in the leadership text *Leadership: Theory and Practice*. Transactional leadership is one-way and traditional, similar to conditional statements; each action is rewarded or punished with a consequence (Northouse, 2019, p. 5). For example, a leader utilizing the transactional style would offer additional pay or time off for completing a task. However, transformational leadership is significantly more complex; leaders work to "raise the consciousness in individuals […] to transcend their own self-interests" for the good of the team or organization (Northouse, 2019).

Toprak et al. (2015) explore the relationship between the effects of the principal's leadership style on a school; the researchers determined that transactional variables have solely negative impacts on organizational health measures. Transformational leaders who emphasize collaboration for a collective vision "motivate their employees to work towards higher goals and lead them to exert more efforts for their organizations" (Toprak et al., 2015, p. 24). The study from Toprak et al. is only one example; an article from Lew Hardy and Calum Alexander Arthur (2014) uses a quasi-experimental action research model to measure the impact of transformational leadership interventions in a military setting; they identified that recruits given the transformational "treatment" significantly outgrew the group not receiving the treatment. Over time, the control group and experimental group both increased pass rates, but the recruits receiving interventions in transformational leadership, vision, motivation, and coaching

improved at a higher rate (Hardy & Alexander Arthur, 2014, p. 49). The researchers caution that variance could be caused by a "negative Hawthorne effect," signified by the control group feeling that the experimental group was receiving special treatment (Hardy & Alexander Arthur, 2014, p. 51). However, even if this were the case, the receipt of training based on the needs of the recruits is an example of transformational leadership as described by Bass's "individualized consideration" (Bass, 1985). This particular pair of studies provides promise for the impact of transformational leadership to affect organizational health in low-performing schools, as one study affected a traditional school, and another measured performance amongst students needing remediation.

Similar to the Toprak et al. (2015) study, Mehmet Korkmaz (2007) identified that transformational leaders have a high positive impact on teacher satisfaction. However, Korkmaz (2007) notes that the organizational health of a school is "significantly related" to the transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and job satisfaction of teachers. In summation, he notes that the transformational style has a large impact on job satisfaction, but transactional actions have an impact that are direct and negatively correlated with job satisfaction. This nuance provides context in that principals may not be purely transformational, but that leadership's *perceived* actions or decisions that contribute to clarifying and supporting a cohesive vision, that are motivational, and that consider individuals are characteristics of positive transformational leadership. These then enhance job satisfaction, whereas transactional approaches that utilize extrinsic rewards and/or manage by focusing on preventing failure or remediating non-compliance are correlated with lower scores on organizational health indices (Korkmaz, 2007).

Transformational leadership, particularly in a democratic context (as compared to laissez-faire or autocratic), facilitates a higher degree of staff's trust of the principal and towards students and external stakeholders (Kars & Inandi, 2018). The researchers conducted a correlation analysis and found stark results; the democratic principal traits correlate strongly and positively with an enhanced perception of the principal and organization as well as significantly greater trust of students, parents, and other colleagues. Kars and Inandi (2018) found that both laissez-faire and autocratic styles were correlated heavily with lower levels of trust across the spectrum of stakeholders, which shows that principals must actively engage their staff and stakeholders, cannot decide in a silo, and cannot simply delegate all decisions. The researchers conclude with a recommendation that epitomizes transformational leadership: "School principals must be more open to communication, deal with teachers' problems more often, and be more transparent and consistent in their actions in order to increase teachers' perceptions about principal trust" (Kars & Inandi, 2018, p. 157).

While trust of the organization and its members is important, another area of significance is the workplace environment of schools. Cemaloğlu (2011) examined the impact of transformational and transactional leadership in the context of workplace bullying at school. He discovered a negative correlation between transformational leadership and three domains of workplace bullying—towards students, towards staff, and towards the leaders; however, he also noted that transactional leadership had no impact or effect on workplace bullying (Cemaloğlu, 2011). While narrow in scope, bullying's impact on teacher job satisfaction is obvious, so the transformational leader's facilitating a decline on bullying would, presumably, improve teacher working conditions, whereas the transactional leader may not create more bullying, but doesn't

decrease it, either. That sustaining of an unsatisfactory status quo would also likely lead to a lower rating of job satisfaction.

In 2016, Lior Hameiri and Adam Nir studied the impact of transformational leadership on organizational health of schools in settings of perceived uncertainty. Their context, in Israel, is described as relatively uncertain politically and with little stability with their education heads; the researchers state that ministers of education average two years per post out of a four-year appointment (Hameiri & Nir, 2016). Their study indicates that transformational leadership qualities correspond directly with measures of organizational health; furthermore, "when schools experience the negative influences following environmental uncertainty, transformational school leaders may moderate, to some extent, adverse effects on these academically oriented variables" (Hameiri & Nir, 2016, p. 782). This contrasts directly with passive or *laissez-faire* leadership traits that would not attempt to be proactive nor even sometimes reactive, and active transactional leadership styles that would simply promote compliance and discourage risk-taking, particularly in a perceived, or real, school facing uncertainty. In short, the transformational leader mediated the negativity of uncertainty, and although Israel's context of uncertainty may be political, instability can be manifested in different settings by socioeconomic status, state and local politics relating to schools, and changes and trends within individual schools or districts.

Principals who exhibit transformational leadership traits directly affect teacher satisfaction because teachers know that these leaders will create and work towards a cohesive vision that is dedicated towards a greater good (Northouse, 2019; Toprak et al., 2015). Teachers also feel supported and valued as individuals with specific needs that cannot be met in a one-size-fits-all model, and they are also participants of a democratic team that supports the vision of

the organization (Kars & Inandi, 2018; Korkmaz, 2007). A charismatic, transformational leader serves as a thermostat rather than a thermometer; essentially, the transformational leader assesses the organizational temperature and works to improve conditions and address issues equitably, whereas the autocratic leader changes the temperature irrespective of individual circumstances, and the laissez-faire leader simply lets the temperature ebb and flow without impetus to change (Cemaloğlu, 2011; Hameiri & Nir, 2016). Lastly, the transformational leader, in limited research, has a positive impact on instructional leadership as relates to improved performance of remedial students (Hardy & Alexander Arthur, 2014).

For this study, transformational leadership is the approach used by the scholarly practitioner/principal to work with staff. Because this study requires collaboration between individual teachers and teams of educators, "the more teachers perceived the leadership style of their team leaders to be transformational, the more teachers reported engaging individually in information acquisition and engaging as a team in information processing" (Bouwmans et al., 2017, p. 76). Further studies explore how the principal works through teachers to facilitate change for students through a transformational approach. In addition, transformational leadership in conjunction with innovation aligns with an enhanced "collaborative culture," which is part of the collaborative action research component of the study (Geijsel et al., 1999, p. 316).

Historical Background for Transformational Leadership

James Burns introduced the concept of transformational leadership in his 1978 book, *Leadership*. Transformational leadership is "a process in which leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation" (Burns, 1978, p. 20). Burns (1978, p. 4) differentiates transformational leadership, which he states changes individuals and organizations, from transactional leadership, which is when "leaders approach followers with an

eye to exchanging one thing for another." For Burns, transformational and transactional leadership are exclusive of each other because the transactional leader operates within a given system of "if/then" transactions, whereas the transformational leader is an "idealized" individual who works to move followers and the culture of an organization to an improved, better state of being (Burns, 1978).

In continuing and expanding upon Burns's work, Bernard Bass describes measurements of transformational leadership, specifically based on the influence impressed upon followers by the leader's trust, admiration, loyalty, charisma, and work ethic (Bass, 1985). Bass (1985) articulates four elements of transformational leadership: "individualized consideration," "intellectual stimulation," "inspirational motivation," and "idealized influence." Within Bass's concept of transformational leadership, "individualized consideration" refers to how the leader addresses and helps the needs of each follower (Bass, 1985). "Intellectual stimulation" occurs when leaders facilitate outside of the box thinking by followers by challenging assumptions, taking risks, and incorporating the beliefs and ideas of the followers; "inspirational motivation" refers to the way in which a leader crafts a vision and message that has high standards and is ambitious yet clear (Bass, 1985). "Idealized influence" describes the leader's ethics and ability to install pride and garner respect (Bass, 1985). These components expand upon and add dimensions beyond Burns's theory by providing components that show how a leader can be transformative (Bass's concept) instead of just transforming organizations (Burns's theory).

Transformational leadership as articulated by Burns and Bass overlaps servant-leadership in some ways. Servant-leadership theory was articulated first in 1970 by Greenleaf, and transformational leadership theory was described in 1978 by Bass, but the "idealized" leader described by Burns and the "idealized influence" described by Bass both align with the

Greenleaf (1970) description of a servant-leader who assists individuals and then the larger "spheres of influence." Within Bass's description of individualized consideration, the transformational leader helps each member of the organization based on his or her needs, and the servant-leader attends to the needs of the individual; these descriptions are similar, but whereas the servant-leader is helping the individual based on his or her needs in that moment, the transformational leader provides the individualized assistance so that the person needing help can contribute to the organization.

Kenneth Leithwood and Doris Jantzi (1990) examined twelve schools in Canada in which school improvement and collaboration had been ongoing, and whose principals had applied strategies of transformational leadership. In these schools, principals helped their teachers identify long-term goals, short-term sub-goals that supported the long-term targets, and encouraged and facilitated collaboration to generate novel ideas to solve complex, meaningful problems (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990). Six transformational strategies emerged as common patterns in the schools in the study: (1) strengthened school culture, defined as a focus on sharing and technical teaching improvement, (2) use of bureaucratic mechanisms, described as using time, money and scheduling in order to facilitate collaboration, (3) staff development, identified as improving teachers' capacity to provide instruction, (4) constant communication about shared values and norms, (5) delegated powers and responsibilities to enhance staff ownership and buy-in, and (6) the use of symbols, rituals, and actions to communicate values (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990). The researchers generalize their results by describing how principals can restructure schools using these transformative approaches, which center on enhancing collaboration to address important problems that staff members are invested in solving (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990).

Kirby et al. (1992) conducted a two-part study in which over 100 people across six school districts used the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and a satisfaction rating of their immediate supervisor (i.e., teachers with principals, principals with directors, etc.); in addition, the second part of the study involved other educators choosing an idealized leader that they had, and to describe a situation that best represented their leadership. In the first part of the study, the impact of charisma has high significance, with the use of intellectual stimulation being the only other component of transformational leadership having a significant effect on satisfaction (Kirby et al., 1992). The researchers noted that the impact of charisma appeared to affect the followers more than their candid evaluation of the leaders themselves. In their second study, the researchers analyzed phrases and language patterns to identify traits that were identified as positive; those leaders who modeled their expectations, similar to Greenleaf's description of servant-leaders, and those who challenged their followers with ambitious goals, and those who helped individuals reach their personal goals were common amongst the respondents (Kirby et al., 1992). These aspects relate closely to Bass's four components of transformational leadership: "individualized consideration," "intellectual stimulation," "inspirational motivation," and "idealized influence" (Bass, 1985).

Hallinger (1992) tracked the historical role of the principalship, noting how the job has changed from a manager, to the instructional leader, into the transformational leader. Through the 1970s, principals were seen as building managers, instilling discipline, controlling budgets, and ensuring smooth day-to-day operations as well as implementing expectations from the district and state level (Hallinger, 1992). However, in the 1980s, principals became expected to be instructional leaders—lead teachers—who had to complete management tasks as a function of the job, not the primary objective (Hallinger, 1992). In the 1990s, Hallinger (1992) notes that

principals must be adaptive to change and able to distribute leadership opportunities to others who are in closer contact with students, aspects aligned with transformational leadership.

Howell and Avolio (1993) studied financial institutions based on their use of transactional, transformational, and passive (laissez-faire) leadership. The transactional approach was correlated with negative performance; however, the researchers caution that this result could also be attributed to rewards that were promised not being fulfilled (Howell & Avolio, 1993). The laissez-faire style did not result in positive changes either; however, transformational leadership aligned with better performance and a higher degree of employee satisfaction (Howell & Avolio, 1993). In this study, the researchers noted that the transformational effect was significantly stronger in groups that considered themselves innovative, implying that those individuals were more likely to accept non-contingent reward leadership styles because they were already thinking and performing "outside the box" (Howell & Avolio, 1993).

Lynn Liontos (1993) studied a principal in Oregon, Bob Anderson, who exemplified many attributes of transformational leadership. Liontos spent a few days with Anderson and surveyed the staff of North Eugene High School, a diverse and economically-distressed high school; Anderson and the staff prioritized a focus on collaboration and teacher empowerment and efficacy as the most significant components of the improvement of their school (Liontos, 1993). Anderson also provided additional context into his style of transformational leadership in that it transforms everyone—those who are following the leader, those who are served by the staff, and the leader—because the collaboration and empowerment allowed for the leader to be influenced by the empowered teacher-leaders in the school (Liontos, 1993). The goals of the school are wrapped strategically in the context of transformational leadership; improving instruction through collaboration amongst staff, and improving collaboration by reducing

departmentalization and isolation (Liontos, 1993). A distinction in Anderson's practice of transformational leadership is that his is particularly un-charismatic, and he describes this when he notes, "the important thing to me is that when I leave this school, it shouldn't make any difference whether I'm here anymore. The school should just continue to move in an upward trend. We need organizations that don't depend on one person to make them go" (Liontos, 1993, p. 54).

Koh et al. (1995) examined the impact of transformational leadership, as an add-on to transactional behaviors, on teacher perceptions and student achievement in 89 schools, with over 800 teachers in Singapore. These schools maintained components of transactional leadership, such as contingent rewards, but incorporated components of transformational leadership, particularly charisma (to inspire followers), individualized consideration (to enhance individual follower needs and growth), and intellectual stimulation (problem-solving) (Koh et al., 1995). Academic improvement was only indirectly impacted by transformational leaders; the researchers identified a "halo effect," in that teachers tended to mark their principals with higher marks if the school was already higher performing (Koh et al., 1995). However, the data showed that schools with improved collaboration and organizational commitment, which are effects of transformational leadership, had improved academic achievement (Koh et al., 1995). In addition, the researchers showed that applications of transformational strategies, such as facilitating collaboration, correlated significantly with increased teacher affiliation with the leader and enhanced teacher commitment to the school (Koh et al., 1995).

Jantzi and Leithwood (1996) studied how teachers develop perceptions of principals' transformational leadership attributes. The researchers use cognitive science, particularly regarding information-processing, to examine executive function, short-term memory, and long-

term memory (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996). Events requiring short-term memory are often viewed in the lens of recalled long-term memories, and prototypes of leaders are influenced by factors such as age, experience, and gender (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996). At the time of this study, the researchers noted that experienced teachers were inclined to favor styles that were authoritative, non-transformational, and masculine, as there were fewer female leaders and prototypes of female leaders in the 1990s (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996). However, Jantzi and Leithwood (1996) observed that younger and less-experienced teachers favored transformational prototypes and were more apt to include feminine styles and approaches. In addition, Jantzi and Leithwood (1996) described that teachers favored a transformational prototype in schools that are smaller and with more tenured teachers, which partially contradicts the conclusion regarding experienced teachers favoring non-transformational, authoritative styles. After analyzing the responses, Jantzi and Leithwood (1996) identified that teachers recognize principals as transformational if the leaders are seen doing work throughout the school to make a positive impact and if the leaders have improved the teacher and learner working conditions; in addition, this study identified younger, female, and elementary principals as more aligned with transformational leadership.

Bass et al. (1996) also examined how transformational and transactional leadership was evaluated, using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), to compare male and female leaders. Through three study trials, women were rated as more likely than men to be transformational, and women were rated as less likely than men to use passive, laissez-faire leadership (Bass et al., 1996). Women evaluators were also more likely to provide favorable scores to leaders, regardless of gender (Bass et al., 1996). The researchers made multiple relevant hypotheses regarding these results; due to historical gender discrimination, females that made it to a point of leadership are already of a higher quality, and some men may have been in some

positions of leadership due to privilege (Bass et al., 1996). However, the researchers also point out that since leadership had primarily a masculine role, the expectations of men may be higher, and hence, the ratings lower (Bass et al., 1996).

Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) replicated an earlier study they had conducted on the impact of transformational leadership on student engagement and a variety of school conditions, including purposes and goals (targets for school improvement), school planning (strategies creating and improving upon a shared vision), and organizational culture (facilitation of collaboration and cohesiveness around a common goal). Within 94 schools, 1,818 teachers, and 6,490 students, the researchers replicated a study that had completed earlier in 1999; they observed that transformational leadership had significant effects on the school conditions in both studies, but student participation in class was not impacted in the replicated study, although it had weak correlation in their earlier study (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999). Leithwood and Jantzi (1999), in their comparison of their replicated and original studies, cite Hallinger and Heck (1996) by noting that schools are more than simplistic variables, and that a variety of effects of transformational leadership (e.g., teacher collaboration, problem-solving teams, etc.) can have a meaningful impact more than a single variable. Hallinger and Heck (1996) conclude that "achieving results through others is the essence of leadership," (p. 39) so the inability to isolate the principal variable as the antecedent to improved student engagement in Leithwood and Jantzi's (1999) studies does not inherently dismiss the role of a transformational principal.

Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) utilized surveys in Canada that assessed transformational leadership of principals and evidence of student engagement and organizational culture. This study was conducted in elementary and middle schools, with over 2,000 educator-participants and over 8,000 student-participants (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). Similar to earlier studies, the

researchers discovered a statistically significant direct effects on organizational culture as assessed by staff and parents (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). However, also like in earlier studies, the effect of transformational leadership on student engagement was weak and indirect (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). Multiple other factors appeared to have a more direct impact on student engagement, including family involvement and socio-economic status; Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) hypothesized that schools with higher academic performance and more student engagement could be perceived by teachers to be less in need of transformational leadership, hence the effect of transformational leadership seemed less necessary.

Barnett et al. (2001) studied schools in Wales to determine the impact of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles on school learning culture and multiple aspects of organizational culture: teacher satisfaction, effectiveness, and willingness to exert extra effort. The researchers used the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) to assess the leadership styles of principals and the patterns of adaptive learning survey (PALS) to evaluate school-learning culture (Barnett et al., 2001). Like prior studies, a significant correlation existed between improvement in all areas of organizational culture and the use of transformational leadership (Barnett et al., 2001). However, the researchers identified a negative impact in the area of school learning culture; based on teacher feedback, this could be explained by the focus on the initiatives of the transformational leader, as well as a focus on culture over student learning (Barnett et al., 2001).

After Burns's 1978 description of "transforming leadership," which would later evolve into transformational leadership, multiple studies have been conducted to measure and enhance this theory. Bass et al. (2003) studied the impact of transactional and transformational leadership on the performance of United States military units. The researchers found that contingent reward

transactional leaders garnered more initial trust from subordinates, largely due to how transactional leadership is predictable; however, sergeants and platoon leaders who exhibited transformational leadership attributes had higher sustained levels of performance (Bass et al., 2003). This study also referenced another study in the banking industry in which transformational and transactional leadership styles are compared to performance. Geyery and Steyrer (1998) determined that bank leaders that used transactional approaches had greater short-term gains, but the transformational leadership style created long-term, sustained improvement.

Griffith (2004) examined the impact of transformational leadership in principals with the rate teacher turnover, improvement of academic performance, and teacher satisfaction. Survey questions were administered to teachers about their perceptions of their principal regarding three components of transformational leadership: charisma, idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation (Griffith, 2004). The structural equation model (SEM) was used by Griffith (2004) to measure the effect of transformational leadership on staff turnover, and on school performance, and then the indirect effects of job satisfaction on the relationship between transformational leadership and school performance. Over 117 schools and 1,791 teachers, the impact of transformational leadership was not statistically significant as creating a direct effect; however, indirectly, this style of leadership affected job satisfaction in a way that facilitated higher teacher turnover and higher academic improvement (Griffith, 2004).

Joseph Chin (2007) studied the effects of transformational leadership, specifically regarding teacher satisfaction, teacher perception of school effectiveness, and academic achievement, in schools in the United States and Taiwan. The results were classified into type of school (elementary or secondary), size of school, and country, and Chin (2007) used the MLQ to evaluate transformational leadership. Within the elementary school context, the correlation of

transformational leadership with enhanced teacher satisfaction and teacher perception of school effectiveness is high and significant, and is less correlated with academic achievement (Chin, 2007). However, secondary schools featured a much higher alignment of transformational leadership and improved academic performance (Chin, 2007). Additionally, the impact in the United States was higher across the board than in Taiwan, although the trends in elementary and secondary remained the same across nations, and significance of the strength of the correlations still existed in both countries (Chin, 2007).

A 2008 study by Kamille Demir investigated the actions and behaviors of transformational leadership in principals and their effects on collective teacher efficacy. Over 200 teachers from 66 schools were used for this study, and the researcher used a 5-point Likert scale to assess the degree of transformational leadership in principals and in questions regarding individual teacher efficacy regarding problem-solving in an instructional context (Demir, 2008). Within this study, Demir (2008) identified a significant amount of variance in the assessment of transformational leadership and individual self-efficacy in relation to collective efficacy. Essentially, if the degree of transformational leadership is weak, that negatively impacts individual and then subsequently collective efficacies (Demir, 2008). However, collective efficacy is also negatively impacted even if transformational leadership is strong but an individual's self-efficacy is low (Demir, 2008). The study also identified a high significance of collaborative culture, which is impacted by principal transformational leadership, on collective teacher efficacy (Demir, 2008).

Dussault et al. (2008) assessed the relationship between three styles of leadership: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire, with the collective efficacy of teachers in 40 high schools in Canada. To measure transformational leadership, the researchers used a survey

based on Bass's framework, Échelle de Leadership Transformatif du directeur d'école, and the collective efficacy was assessed with the Goddard Collective Efficacy Scale (Dussault et al., 2008). The laissez-faire style was directly correlated with poorer efficacy, as this style is passive and is seen as an absence of leadership (Dussault et al., 2008). However, in contrast to other studies, the researchers found a positive relationship in transformational and transactional leadership styles on collective efficacy (Dussault et al., 2008). Specifically, the presence of stronger transformational leadership attributes correlated with a higher effectiveness of transactional techniques (Dussault et al., 2008).

Hauserman et al. (2013) studied principals at 135 schools in Canada using the MLQ to identify degrees of transformational leadership quality and then used open-ended questions to assess the four areas of transformational leadership identified by Bass (1985): idealized influence, individual consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation. The researchers determined that the MLQ was a valid tool for evaluating the transformational qualities of principals, and they also used the instrument to differentiate principals into four quartiles (Hauserman et al., 2013). From this information, Hauserman et al. (2013) only used the "high transformational" and "low transformational" quartiles; in the study, the high transformational principals were credited for incorporating staff into decisions, prioritizing group and individual professional development, were visible in classrooms, and were fair when dealing with families. Conversely, low transformational principals were critiqued for narrowing decision-making to a small circle of administrators and lead-teachers, failing to encourage and adapt to change, and supporting parents more than teachers (Hauserman et al., 2013). Contextually, this study did not distinguish any measures of teacher experience or quality, which could impact principal capacity to delegate decision-making power and influence.

Lew Hardy and Calem Alexander Arthur (2014) examined academic performance and growth on assessments among military recruits who were performing at a low-performing, remedial level. The study's quasi-experimental model exposed the recruits to largely similar surroundings, except one group was exposed to workshops not based in content but in transformational leadership (Hardy & Alexander Arthur, 2014). The other group was the control group and went through training as was always done. That adjustment resulted in improved academic performance for the students in the workshops (Hardy & Alexander Arthur, 2014). Over the course of the study, the trainees who experienced leaders that used the transformative style improved their performance significantly more than those not receiving the experimental treatment (Hardy & Alexander Arthur, 2014). The transformational approach enhanced performance more that intense content in isolation.

Izhak Berkovich (2018) reviewed studies on transformational leadership from 1990 through 2016 that had the following items in common: usage of the MLQ, usage of teacher reporting on principals, usage of Likert scales in the study, and the use of means and standard deviations in the data analysis. The researcher tested "common perceptions" and evaluated them using over two decades of studies; Berkovich (2018) indicated that the hypothesis that transformational leadership approaches were more effective than transactional styles was not supported by the studies as a whole, primarily because the role of principal required inseparable components of transformational and transactional leadership. This finding did not indicate that transactional leadership was more effective, either (Berkovich, 2018). The study also indicated that, instead of being solely "transformational" or "transactional," principals fit on a continuum of the degree of transformational leadership used, which counters another "common perception" Berkovich (2018) identified as the premise of the study.

Teacher Efficacy

Psychologist Albert Bandura describes self-efficacy as "the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce the outcomes" (Bandura, 1977, p. 193). Bandura (1977) differentiates "efficacy" and "expectation" outcomes by noting that individuals can have an "expectation outcome," which is a belief regarding whether or not an action would produce a specific outcome, and an "efficacy outcome" about whether or not an individual has the capacity to perform the behavior (p. 193). This distinction applies to the school context; a teacher may know or believe that a particular practice is instructionally effective, which is an expectation outcome, but that same teacher may lack the confidence or self-efficacy to attempt to perform that practice even though the teacher knows that implementation with fidelity would be effective.

Bandura (1977) expands into this area further in describing how individuals "who persist in subjectively threatening activities that are in fact relatively safe will gain corrective experiences that reinforce their sense of efficacy, thereby eventually eliminating their defensive behavior. Those who cease their coping efforts prematurely will retain their self-debilitating expectations" (Bandura, 1977, p. 194). Within the realm of education, this could be described as a teacher attempting a new strategy or approach, and as long as the "corrective experiences" are safe, the teacher would continue to try the activity; however, if the opportunity is not safe, or if the teacher is unwilling or unable to cope with needing improvement, the teacher will resist even further. Multiple situations in a classroom provide that opportunity, from a particular instructional strategy to a classroom management protocol. When individual teachers achieve small "wins," those teachers begin gaining confidence and a stronger sense of self-efficacy to try more ambitious items. However, if individual teachers face persistent failure and have declining

self-efficacy, they "visualize failure scenarios and dwell on the many things that can go wrong" (Bandura, 1993, p. 118).

Bandura (1995) identifies two major sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences, in which individuals experience actual success through authentic attempts, and vicarious experiences, in which individuals observe others similar to them achieve success. Within the education domain, multiple scenarios fit within these two major sources. If a teacher is teaching a new skill to a student, the student may be reluctant to try, but by providing support and guidance, the student who succeeds has started to master the skill and is building self-efficacy for success. Similarly, with the rest of the class observing the student succeeding, the other students could be gaining confidence via vicarious experiences. Bandura notes that with vicarious experiences, "The impact of modeling on beliefs of personal efficacy is strongly influenced by perceived similarity to the models. The greater the assumed similarity the more persuasive are the models' successes and failures" (Bandura, 1995, p. 3). These statements affect those who are trying to build efficacy in a group significantly; providing models can be helpful, but the models need to be seen as similar to the individual doing the observing, and the models success or failure will impact the observer's belief in his or her self-efficacy.

A person's self-efficacy is not the only factor in being able to perform a task: Bandura notes, "Expectation alone will not produce desired performance if the component capabilities are lacking" (Bandura, 1977, p. 194). This caveat also functions in the school context; a highly self-confident teacher, or a novice one, may believe that he or she has the capacity to perform a certain task, but if that teacher does not have the requisite knowledge or present ability to do the behavior, then that teacher is set up for failure. That failure may then create apprehension for future changes which could negatively impact self-efficacy at performing other behaviors at a

later date. Bandura explains that self-efficacy can be slow to build and quick to dissolve; "Unrealistic boosts in efficacy are quickly disconfirmed by disappointing results of one's efforts" (Bandura, 1995, p. 4). Multiple successes can be extinguished by failure.

For example, if a teacher has been extremely successful at teaching Algebra, and the principal praised the teacher effusively and then decided to have the teacher teach Calculus without the time to review the material or receive training, then the teacher could take on the opportunity with a high degree of self-efficacy, but without the component capabilities. In the example of the mathematics teacher, it is certainly possible that the teacher whose self-efficacy has been built by success in teaching Algebra could lose that personal efficacy if teaching Calculus results in failure, especially if that teacher tries hard at the new task. However, Bandura (1993) also indicates that the strength of an individual's self-efficacy influences how high that person sets his or her goals; therefore, the teacher moving from Algebra to Calculus could experience great success if his or her self-efficacy is strong and has the component capabilities to overcome obstacles in that transition.

Part of a healthy school climate is the degree to which teachers have a sense of efficacy, which in an educational context is "the belief that they can have a positive effect on student learning" (Woolfolk et al., 1990, p. 137). Carolyn Anderson (1982) wrote about school climate both as an "albatross" and a "unicorn," meaning that the concept can be seen as both cumbersome and undefinable but could be described yet difficult to change. However, Anderson's work, regardless of the various definitions posited then, articulates a relationship between perceptions of working environment and school outcomes (Anderson, 1982). Mehta et al. (2013) identify staff efficacy as an integral component of organizational health; furthermore,

they link increased staff efficacy with improved school culture and higher-performing teachers and enhanced student performance.

Multiple studies have explored the impact of the principal on teacher efficacy. Hoy and Woolfolk (1993) explain that the principal's ability to acquire resources and shield teachers from external pressures increased staff efficacy per the Organizational Health Inventory (OHI). Furthermore, the aspects of collegiality from the principal to the teacher had little significance to individual teacher efficacy as long as the teacher possessed some decision-making ability and felt empowered to teach (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993). Teachers' perception of their ability to teach effectively and impact students is one of the measures assessed in the OHI; a simple response to two questions referenced by Hoy and Woolfork (1993) demonstrates basic efficacy: (a) "When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment"; and (b) "If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students" (pp. 356-357).

In addition to those fundamental questions, Hoy and Woolfork (1993) used the OHI to assess teachers throughout their study, and they concluded:

> A healthy school climate—one with a strong academic emphasis and a principal who has influence with superiors and is willing to use it on behalf of teachers—was conducive to the development of teachers' beliefs that they can influence student learning (personal teaching efficacy). Thus, teachers' confidence that they can reach students was supported by organizational factors that help teachers manage and teach students. Only institutional integrity (the ability of the school to protect faculty from unreasonable outside demands) and teacher morale predicted general teaching efficacy (p. 355).

In contrast to Hoy and Woolfolk's 1993 article, John Lambersky (2016) studied teachers in Canada and found a statistically significant relationship between staff efficacy and the ability of principals to encourage, acknowledge, protect from exterior forces, solicit teacher input, and establish a coherent, meaningful vision. Lambersky (2016) notes that teacher satisfaction and perception of efficacy is higher when principals provide support and create a positive, collegial environment. Notably, what teachers deem as acknowledgement and supportive is not expensive—simple "thank you cards," or a brief conversation, were identified as meaningful, and the gestures were much more effective than extravagant recognitions (Lambersky, 2016). Numerous reports describe the negative impact of exterior influence on a school and teacher stress (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998; Lambersky, 2016; Mehta et al., 2013). When principals are able to facilitate teacher capacity for decision-making, teacher satisfaction rises, which correlates with efficacy.

In addition to teachers' efficacy about their abilities (both personal aptitudes and the degree of influence in performing their tasks), teachers also are impacted by organizational health in their capacity of being leaders and change agents. Korkmaz (2006) describes this:

> The positive relationship between organizational health and a robust school vision is basically influenced by the harmony between the school's technical and institutional levels. When [they are] in harmony, teachers will probably feel that they have been strengthened by the school vision. […] When the technical and institutional levels are not in harmony, the common vision of the school will not develop and all efforts will be doomed to failure. Then, school staff moves according to their individual vision and takes fewer risks, leading to a less healthy future (p. 31).

Korkmaz (2006) notes that the staff efficacy in that their perception of a school's organizational clarity and consistency being aligned with managerial and technical actualities is significantly correspondent with the teachers' contributing to the collective vision and not just their individual, isolated approaches. Licata and Harper (2001) conclude that teachers will be less empowered to take risks when they are uncertain of administrative support (or, if they are certain that administrative support is lacking); instead, any efforts designed to show improvement will appear to be cosmetic and without substance. In essence, having a vision written does not constitute robustness, but having the vision acted upon, supported, and used to encourage, support, and shield teachers will make the vision robust in a school with positive organizational health.

Staff efficacy, as noted earlier, involves teachers' perception at their ability to make a significant impact, also known as self-efficacy. Many of the efforts revolving around school improvement, particularly in low-performing and majority-minority schools include more structured instructional design and an emphasis on equity. These make one study in the Journal of School Psychology quite troubling: "We also found negative associations between staff-reported burnout and students' experience of equity, such that the racial gap was smaller in schools with high ratings of burnout" (Bottiani et al., 2014, p. 567). In essence, schools that worked diligently to narrow the racial gap at student perceptions of organizational health factors such as equality in academic opportunities, discipline, etc., had a drastically higher rating of staff burnout, whereas schools where the racial gap was higher had much lower staff burnout. These findings are problematic but perhaps not "surprising" as the authors reference; the work of equity is hard, and not simplistic and not primarily revolving around basic teacher and learning in isolation. This finding alone provides a definitive imperative to improve staff efficacy and

working conditions, especially at schools that have significant needs in equity, because the very work that educators must do at those schools can lead to burnout much more rapidly.

Impact of Principals on Teacher Self-Efficacy

Parry and Proctor-Thomson (2002) describe the authentic integrity of principals as having a positive impact on teacher self-efficacy, particularly in the area of job satisfaction. First, the researchers distinguish between "transformation of the behaviors [sic] of leaders, rather than the intentions" (Parry & Proctor-Thomson, 2002, p. 16). This shows that although the language and vision of the leader is important, the actions that correspond with the vision and verbalized beliefs show integrity and authenticity. Furthermore, Parry and Proctor-Thomson (2002) that leaders must demonstrate integrity beyond the right/wrong or ethical/unethical paradigm; in fact, followers perceive leadership integrity as "doing something positive, active and proactive; not necessarily only doing 'ethical' things" (Parry & Proctor-Thomson, 2002, p. 16). This finding is similar to other researchers who identified laissez-faire leadership as negatively impacting culture and efficacy (Barnett et al., 2001) and as being a lack of leadership and acceptance of status quo (Dussault et al., 2008).

Rhodes et al. (2009) studied an implementation of the "Teacher Empowerment Project" within three schools in the Midwestern United States and used two similar schools in terms of demographics and performance as comparison groups. Within their study, the researchers questioned teachers on a yearly basis over five years regarding teacher perceptions and attitudes and organizational culture (Rhodes et al., 2009). For the implementation process, the researchers engaged school leadership teams to identify areas of weakness and concern so that that teachers could collaborate with the principal in providing solutions, rather than from the top (Rhodes et al., 2009). At the end of the study, the researchers identified direct and indirect positive results;

when principals and teachers engaged collaboratively in a cycle of identifying problems, implementing interventions, assessing effectiveness, and adjusting interventions, the teachers scored a higher rating on organizational health metrics (Rhodes et al., 2009).

Damanik and Aldridge (2017) examined the impact of principal leadership behavior on teacher self-efficacy. Individualized support significantly and directly impacted teacher self-efficacy as measured by Schwarzer and Jerusalem's (1995) General Self-efficacy Scale (GSES). Teachers whose principals spent time attending to individual teacher feelings and needs recorded higher scores on the GSES. This aligns with the Bass (1985) concept of individualized consideration, in that transformational principals identify the unique needs of all teachers to perform their best and then customize support based on the individual teacher needs. The individual attention further provides the principal perspective on determining strategies for assisting teachers, which enhances the professional capacity of the teacher's self-efficacy (Damanik & Aldridge, 2017). Furthermore, this emphasis on individualization enhances "collegiality and goal consensus," indirect factors that impact teacher self-efficacy (Damanik & Aldridge, 2017, p. 289).

Teacher Self-Efficacy through Principal Transformational Leadership

Leithwood and Jantzi (1990) describe the essential purpose of transformational leadership as the "enhancement of individual and collective problem-solving capacities of organizational members; such capacities are exercised in the identification of goals to be achieved and practices to be used in their achievement" (p. 7). Within this purpose, the principal guides staff into identifying and clarifying the objectives and assists in creating the conditions to improve individual and team problem-solving. Bass (1985) identified "the 4 Is," the four components of transformational leadership: "individualized consideration," "intellectual stimulation,"

"inspirational motivation," and "idealized influence." Effective principals using transformational leadership employ these components by helping individual staff members grow professionally, by working to challenge teachers to innovate and develop themselves and students, by motivating staff and students, and by being able to persuade and change teachers to adopt practices that align with the school's vision.

For a principal to be transformational, "the 4 Is" must be present. Barling and Kelloway (2000) examined multiple studies in the 1980s and 1990s and shared their belief that transformational leaders could be trained and developed, and they used Bass's "4 Is" for context. In addition, at least for the beginning of a new principal's tenure, the authors suggest two additional "Is": incremental and infrequent changes, so that the changes can be digested in reasonable chunks, and so that relative consistency is established (Barling & Kelloway, 2000). The successful transformational principal will expand "idealized influence" by doing what is ethically right over what is expedient, and will use consistent criteria for fairness and equity, and will provide increased transparency in decision-making (Barling & Kelloway, 2000). Principals can exhibit growth in this area in numerous ways, such as in the scheduling process. If the principal establishes criteria that are consistent, student-centered, and involves feedback from teachers, then the end-result can be analyzed in a way that is focused on what helps students rather than, for example, which teachers have a particular planning period. A principal who uses transparent, criteria-based processes and procedures can possess idealized influence, a key component of transformational leadership, to facilitate changes based on equity and the best interest of students.

The transformational leader also must employ inspirational motivation by conveying a sense of optimism and enthusiasm in order to build upon teacher self-efficacy (Barling &

Kelloway, 2000). In its simplest form, this approach describes the way a principal encourages and tells others that they can perform a desired task. However, Barling and Kelloway (2000) reference the concept of role breadth self-efficacy, described as "the extent to which people feel confident that they are able to carry out a broader and more proactive role, beyond traditional prescribed technical requirements" (Parker, 1998, p. 835). Parker expands upon these tasks and describes how employees are involved in "solving long-term problems, designing improved procedures, setting goals and targets, resolving conflicts, presenting information to colleagues, and meeting with customers and suppliers" (Parker, 1998, p. 836). Although Parker (1998) is not writing about school, those complex tasks are similar to ones that are present in schools. Therefore, the transformational principal must be optimistic and have a "can do" attitude, but this principal must be able to provide incremental, achievable opportunities within these sophisticated requirements so that the teachers can enhance their self-efficacy by believing and knowing that they can accomplish a variety of simple and complex goals.

The third "I," intellectual stimulation, is described by Barling and Kelloway (2000, p. 359) as "the leader's ability to get employees to think about work-related problems in new ways." These opportunities are nearly limitless in a school, especially in academic areas. Student learning, scheduling, teaching practices, and student behavior are just a few of the daily problems that principals and teachers have within the context of school. A principal demonstrates the skill of facilitating intellectual stimulation by asking probing questions, such as "what do you think we should do?" or "what would you advise if you were me?" (Barling & Kelloway, 2000). The transformational principal does not operate in isolation; he or she builds the problem-solving capacity of teachers and staff by involving them in the processes to solve issues within the school.

Lastly, a principal demonstrating transformational leadership exhibits the fourth "I," individualized consideration (Barling & Kelloway, 2000). Transformative principals provide their teachers with support and assistance based on what they need as individuals rather than blanket, uniform support. Barling and Kelloway (2000) in their study identify the most transformative leaders as those who employ a frequent amount of "management by walking around" to learn and address what individuals need. Furthermore, Avolio et al. (1999) describe that individualized consideration is the component that can make transactional leadership effective. In essence, Avolio et al. (1999) shared that that the contingent-reward nature of transactional leadership is often not as effective as transformational leadership, but when individualized support is adjoined with transactional leadership, employees have enhanced motivation and performance. Therefore, the ability of the transformational leader to provide individuals the amount of type of support needed based on the uniqueness of each person is a key attribute of a transformational leader.

Similar to servant-leadership, the concept of transformational leadership is based on a proposition of ethical intent; Price (2003) cautions of a fatal flaw: "Transformational leadership is inauthentic when leaders lack a commitment to altruistic values or behave in ways that are out of line with these values" (p. 71). Transformational leadership, when practiced for the leader's self-serving purposes rather than for good, can have similar flaws to charismatic leadership, which revolves around the personality of the leader (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). Leaders can be charismatic and have differing moralities; Carey (1992) and Bass and Steidlmeir (1999) reference dictators such as Pol Pot and Hitler as well as inspirational leaders like Nelson Mandela and Bill Gates; both articles provide comparisons between starkly different leaders who equally can use vision-setting and charisma for good or evil. Aspects of transformational

leadership can be manipulated with "bad faith" into pseudo-transformational leadership when "the gifts of charisma, inspiration, consideration, and intellectual strength are abused for the self-interest of the leader, the effect on followers ceases to be liberating and moral, and becomes instead oppressive and ideological" (Carey, 1992).

When practiced in "good faith," transformational leadership provides a framework so "that people can be lifted into their better selves" (Burns, 1978, p. 462). This concept, according to Price (2003), facilitates followers to "transforms people from the selves that they are into the selves that they should be" (p. 68). Authentic transformational leadership, as compared to charismatic leadership that is values-neutral, is "connected to friends, family, and community whose welfare may be more important to oneself than one's own" (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999, p. 186). Price (2003) references Aristotelian ethics in describing authentic transformational leadership as being inspired by altruistic values and congruent behaviors; both must be in place for transformational leadership to be authentic.

Transformational leaders "stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group. Transformational leaders achieve these results in one or more ways: They may be charismatic to their followers and thus inspire them; they may meet the emotional needs of each employee; and/or they may intellectually stimulate employees" (Bass, 1990, p. 21). When comparing transformational leadership to transactional leadership, a model that is based on "contingent rewards," the school setting adds dimensions of collaboration and complexity that cannot be improved based on incentives alone (Avolio et al., 1999). According to Avolio et al. (1999), "the level of integration and interdependencies that are needed for the new work environment will require leadership that goes beyond the more basic transactional style to styles that are more intellectually stimulating, inspirational and charismatic" (p. 460). The

transformational leadership approach blends urgency and the need to facilitate change with a large group of followers, which is necessary in creating systemic change in the complex setting of a school, but especially a high-poverty, persistently low-performing one. In addition, as a component of transformational leadership, having principals and teachers collaborate enhances teacher self-efficacy as described by Burns (1978) regarding leaders and followers building each other up. Higher teacher self-efficacy is likely to lead to confidence at building positive student engagement.

Social Emotional Learning and Engagement

According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), "Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2020b, para.1). Multiple programs and systems have emerged in which to implement and assist in SEL; in fact, a meta-analysis published in 2011 examines the findings from 213 programs that impacted over 270,000 students in elementary through high school (Durlak et al., 2011). These programs all had varying degrees of impact, but a consensus showed "significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behavior, and academic performance that reflected an 11-percentile-point gain in achievement" (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 405).

A 2004 study of early elementary students examined the problem of behavioral problems in a growing number of young children. The researchers note that these "red flags" exist in between 10 and 25% of lower grades children (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2004, p. 96). The researchers assert, "Preventing, reducing, and halting aggressive behavior at school entry, when

children's behavior is most malleable, is a beneficial and cost-effective means of interrupting the progression from early conduct problems to later delinquency and academic failure" (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2004, p. 97). In this study, the school used a program designed for supporting students with Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD) and applied it to the entire group of children (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2004, p. 99). The researchers noted that the program implementation benefitted the students with ODD and those with other behaviors, such as hyperactivity and attention difficulties, and that the improvements sustained in the years after initial implementation (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2004, p. 99). The program used in this study focused on helping children understand group rules, practicing the expected behaviors, making friends, identifying and understanding self and others' feelings, problem-solving, and anger management (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2004, pp. 100-104). These align with CASEL's five competencies: self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and social awareness (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2020b). As students participated in the program longer, they became more confident, participatory, and assertive; students became more engaged, and the program "simultaneously works to eliminate disruptive child behaviors and to foster prosocial behaviors" (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2004, p. 111).

In 2011, a meta-analysis was conducted on over 200 SEL programs and over 270,000 students from elementary through high school (Durlak et al., 2011). This study excluded a review of studies that targeted students with pre-existing problems and excluded SEL programs that emphasized improved academic performance as the primary feature of the program (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 409). The researchers identified that SEL programs that are sequenced, active, focused, and explicit (SAFE) were more efficient; these practices are recommended by the

researchers and CASEL (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 408). The researchers determined that SEL programs that used the SAFE procedures and were administered in class by school personnel were more effective than those conducted by non-school staff; additionally, academic performance improved when SEL programs were administered by school personnel and not when they were conducted by external providers (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 414). In addition, these gains were maintained after the SEL programming ended.

Of concern, the 2011 meta-analysis revealed problems with the quality of program and fidelity of implementation. The researchers identified that some of the over 200 programs studied did not implement each of the SAFE procedures and others maintained a focus on external supports rather than building students' internalized beliefs and values (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 407). Additionally, other schools used "multi-component programs" that started by using parent lessons and/or school-wide changes rather than emphasizing in-class lessons by school staff (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 410). The researchers hypothesized that multi-component programs would be more effective, but that was not the case; a review of those programs noted that multi-component programs did not use SAFE procedures as often as classroom-based, school-personnel-provided SEL programs (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 419). Another problem the researchers identified is that many of the programs, in their use as SEL interventions, are not implemented to fidelity or are not continued after an initial pilot phase, regardless of whether the program is showing initial signs of success or not (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 421).

In 2012, a study reviewed multiple SEL programs; one type of program focused on individual skills, such as drug avoidance or other specific avoidance of problem behaviors, whereas other programs focused on classroom and social behaviors (Sklad et al., 2012, pp. 892-893). Similar to the 2011 Durlak et al. study, this review also identified a key factor into whether

a program was efficient was if the SEL program was sequenced, included training, was monitored, and had well defined goals (Sklad et al., 2012, p. 894). This study specifically focused on programs that focused on at least one SEL skill, was school-based during school hours, and addressed all students instead of just a specific group (Sklad et al., 2012, p. 895). However, this study differed from the 2011 Durlak et al. study in that contexts outside of the United States were used; however, the effectiveness was not significantly higher or lower based on the geography of the program's implementation (Sklad et al., 2012, p. 906). This study found that program delivery by teachers did not have a significant decrease in effectiveness of the SEL program, whereas other studies explicitly noted that school staff implementation was much more effective than those delivered by outside entities (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 414; Sklad et al., 2012, p. 906).

A 2014 study reexamined multiple SEL studies within the context of culturally and ethnically diverse children and populations (Garner et al., 2014). On a summary level, when SEL programming is implemented at schools that face difficulty with behavior on a large scale, implementation often are unsuccessful "and may even exacerbate the social emotional problems that some children already have" (Garner et al., 2014, p. 166). In multiple studies, Black children receiving SEL programming showed more compassion towards peers of any ethnicity that shared stories of violence or abuse; however, the same students displayed fewer prosocial behaviors initially, while those gaps typically lessened as children aged (Garner et al., 2014, p. 169). LatinX children exhibited higher risk for internalizing problems for fewer prosocial behaviors than either White or Black children; the researchers noted that language barriers play a role in some cases (Garner et al., 2014, p. 170). In addition, with Latino American children, the

acquisition of English as a second language has sometimes resulted in more prosocial and antisocial behaviors (Garner et al., 2014, p. 170).

Overall, this study shows "success has been demonstrated not only with Caucasian American and affluent children but also with children from varied socio-cultural, economic, linguistic, and developmental backgrounds" (Garner et al., 2014, p. 173). The researchers note, also, that when teachers are assessing SEL skills, particularly with minority children, that some behaviors coded as negative "are viewed by teachers and other school staff as less appealing and acceptable" (Garner et al., 2014, p. 170). That presents a complex situation in which SEL benefits students across diverse populations, but the practitioners of SEL programs may require additional support in culturally responsive practices and expectations.

A 2015 study examined the benefit of social and emotional learning from an economic and cost analysis perspective (Belfield et al., 2015). The researchers reference how SEL programs assist students in the school setting but also "do not just raise academic achievement and educational attainment. They also foster personal satisfaction and growth, help individuals become better citizens, and reduce risky behaviors like violence and drug use" (Belfield et al., 2015, p. 509). This study identified SEL outcomes and an estimated net value of that outcome, evaluated how a program impacted those outcomes, and calculated cost-benefit by subtracting the implementation cost from the estimated value. The programs used in this study were all staff-facilitated and low-cost, but some programs only impacted in-school results, whereas others impacted students beyond the span of implementation (Belfield et al., 2015). In addition, these benefits were calculated on an individual basis and then extrapolated to a "per 100 student" ratio, but the researchers note "SEL benefits are dispersed through a school or community and so economic value should be measured at that level" (Belfield et al., 2015, p. 539). Even when not

considering uncalculated full-school benefits, these initial studies "show SEL interventions can easily pass a benefit-cost test and this conclusion is robust to sensitivity testing" (Belfield et al., 2015, p. 540).

A 2020 study in Turkey examined multiple aspects of gifted student perceptions of online learning during the pandemic, including affective development, which is very similar to social and emotional learning. Only one student reported a positive impact, and that was due to an adjustment of the sleep schedule and a parent-reported better disposition (Karabulut & Türksoy, 2021, p. 181). Otherwise, distance learning has been reported as having a negative impact due to loneliness, lack of social interactions, and the increase in student anxiety (Karabulut & Türksoy, 2021, pp. 181-182). Notably, the instruction being used in this study was delivered by a variety of teachers through a central online portal and television, meaning there was no reciprocal interaction. In addition, there is no formal or explicit social and emotional programming included for the students in Karabulut and Türksoy's study.

The next section will describe the Morning Meeting practices that are part of this study.

Morning Meeting

Kriete and Davis (2016) describe Morning Meeting as a structured time, up to 30 minutes per day, in which teachers "intentionally provide opportunities for students to practice the skills of greeting, listening and responding, group problem-solving, and noticing and anticipating" (p. 3). These opportunities are facilitated through explicitly modeled and practiced structures: "greeting," "sharing," "group activity," and "morning message" (Kriete & Davis, 2016, p. 3). Kriete (2003) describes "the sense of belonging, caring, and trust developed during morning meetings is a foundation for handling every lesson, every transition time, every lining-up, every upset and conflict, all day and all year" (p. 70).

Sharon Ketts (Bondy & Ketts, 2001) reviewed her students' progress on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and identified one significant change she had made: implementing Morning Meeting. Elizabeth Bondy, a professor at the University of Florida, studied Ketts and her third-grade students and their use of Morning Meeting (Bondy & Ketts, 2001). Bondy studied the students' beliefs about Morning Meeting and discovered three takeaways: "Morning Meeting helped them feel good," "students felt important, included, and ready to help one another," and "Morning Meeting was a kind of warm-up for the academic challenges that lay ahead" (Bondy & Ketts, 2001, p. 147). Bondy also examined the teacher's perspectives of Morning Meeting and noted that Ketts believed that students were able to get into a better frame of mind than they were at the beginning, when "students entered the classroom upset, frazzled, and rushed" (Bondy & Ketts, 2001, p. 148). Another positive impact, according to Ketts, was "increased student assertiveness and responsibility," which was described by how students would advocate for reticent children to have the opportunity to share when that would not have happened previously (Bondy & Ketts, 2001, p. 148).

A study in 2002 focused on the impact of the *Responsive Classroom*, specifically Morning Meeting, on an individual child, Jon, with autism. Winterman and Sapona (2002) describe a three-year focus on Jon from Kindergarten through second grade; he is in the general education setting but receives services from Exceptional Children's teachers also. During the Morning Meeting context, Jon started as non-verbal and eventually progressed to peer-prompted participation and eventually self-initiated participation (Winterman & Sapona, 2002, p. 4). Throughout the study, whenever Jon was in a situation with less structure, he was not as collaborative as the other children, but as the years progressed, Jon's peers initiated involvement with Jon, and the special education team also assisted Jon when he needed more support

(Winterman & Sapona, 2002, pp. 4-5). The researchers note that this model "was not specifically designed for children with special needs" but was helpful in ensuring that students with autism "are valued as an integral part of the learning community—and whose development teachers and peers support" (Winterman & Sapona, 2002, p. 7).

Rimm-Kaufman and Sawyer (2004) conducted a quasi-experimental study for three years comparing three schools using Morning Meeting to three schools not using Morning Meeting or any other social and emotional learning programming; the focus of the study was to measure the impact of Morning Meeting on teacher self-efficacy in educators working in elementary schools. The researchers reported that teachers who used Responsive Classroom techniques more frequently and to fidelity, particularly Morning Meeting, had higher self-efficacy scores in social and organizational domains and felt more optimistic about teaching as a profession than teachers (Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004, p. 333). Teachers implementing Morning Meeting and other Responsive Classroom techniques self-reported higher efficacy scores than similar teachers at the control schools (Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004, p. 336). The researchers also noted that principals conducting implementation made hiring decisions partially based on whether those teacher candidates expressed a willingness to use a social and emotional learning program (Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer, 2004, p. 336).

A 2006 study examined the meaningful impacts of Morning Meeting while working with students with disabilities. Teachers used the four structures of greeting, sharing, group activity, and morning message as a way to provide socialization skills, practice skills as part of student Individualized Education Plans (IEP), and preview the upcoming day (Bruce et al., 2006, p. 3). Activities such as greeting and sharing are individualized based on student goals, where some children speak and others may "use voice output devices or sign language" and communication

cues (Bruce et al., 2006, p. 4). By using Morning Meeting, teachers support students with disabilities "by ensuring that each child has a functional form of expression" so that "each child's contribution is valued while a sense of classroom community and culture is established" (Bruce et al., 2006, p. 15).

Zhang and Quinn (2018) studied how the use of the Morning Meeting structure could be a component of early writing instruction (Zhang & Quinn, 2018). Within the sharing component of Morning Meeting, students in the lower grades (e.g., Kindergarten) can practice writing skills by writing their names for attendance and drawing images as responses to question prompts (Zhang & Quinn, 2018, p. 553). This brief activity not only assists in teachers being able to assess student writing abilities, but this also allows students to share in ways other than verbally and could prompt peer-to-peer and whole group sharing (Zhang & Quinn, 2018, p. 553). Various writing activities can be used intermittently and in brief spells because it is important that Morning Meeting is "still maintaining its community-focus and children's interactive role within the activities that make up the meeting" (Zhang & Quinn, 2018, p. 554).

This study is examining Morning Meeting in elementary schools in a virtual context. A thorough review found no studies with the online component and activities, although one study in Indonesia addressed the teacher difficulties in online learning, specifically focused on internet infrastructure (Fauzi & Khusuma, 2020). An article in The New Yorker cited the difficulties that students had from a lack of engagement, although the context was more about the author's perspective that students needed to return to school (MacGillis, 2020). Otherwise, the literature is sparse at the time of the study regarding online elementary school and about online social emotional learning programming.

Using Transformational Leadership to Introduce Morning Meeting

Transformational leadership enhances the design of this study because the implementation of Morning Meeting (Kriete & Davis, 2016) is new to the school and has been chosen intentionally, collaboratively, and collectively to assist students and educators so that teachers have the self and collective efficacy to support social emotional learning during and after remote learning. Since this school has had a below-average rating on the student engagement component of the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey and because of the extensive amount of face-to-face time lost, transformational leadership is beneficial to enhancing the culture of the school to improve student social and emotional learning, enhance collective teacher efficacy, and develop the researcher's leadership skills due to transformational leadership requiring "distributed leadership" and the creation of a vision that "includes helping everyone understand the relationship between social-emotional well-being and success in school and life" (Weissberg, 2006, p. 13).

Leithwood (1994) articulates that transformational leadership is necessary for providing a restructuring of school. Three "psychological dispositions" are described: the teacher perception of school characteristics, teacher commitment to change, and collective organizational learning (Leithwood, 1994). The transformational leader must frame the school context in a way to show opportunity for growth and potential; from there, the leader must establish a culture where teachers commit to change for the betterment of student learning outcomes, and then build the capacity for the entire school to learn and grow collectively based on the needs of the unit (Leithwood, 1994). To accomplish these goals, Leithwood (1994) states that leaders must identify and clearly articulate a vision, establish high expectations, challenge preconceived notions and assumptions, and provide individualized support, similar to Bass's 4 "Is":

"individualized consideration," "intellectual stimulation," "inspirational motivation," and "idealized influence" (Bass, 1985). Leithwood (1994) also adds a component, "expert-thinking," described as having a high degree of "problem solving expertise;" these transformational leaders have the background knowledge to challenge conventions, lay out a vision and plan for change, and provide support and the ability to overcome barriers. Transformational leadership as described by Leithwood (1994) uses Bass's theories and adds a transactional component—helping teachers in having their needs met—so that the greater goals of organizational growth and learning can be met.

Carolyn Shields describes transformative leadership within the context of poverty; transformational educational leaders clearly articulate "the need for deep and equitable change" and "help those in the organization […] reconstruct frameworks that promote inclusion and equity" (Shields, 2014, p. 128). Shields (2014) conveys the need for urgency in noting that transformative leaders avoid "tinkering around the edges of change" and instead "deconstruct knowledge frameworks that perpetuate an inequitable status quo" (p. 128). In her study, Shields notes that one in eight people worldwide do not have enough food to eat, and that in the United States, more than 23 million children live in poverty. For the school in this study, over 66% of students are directly eligible for free and/or reduced lunch, an indicator of poverty (Wilson County Schools Board of Education, 2019, p. 28). Shields identifies approaches that are unsuccessful, such as pity, positive intentions, low expectations, deficit-thinking, blaming the victim (students and families), and persistent remediation; instead, educators must build relationships, value all students, and create and maintain high expectations along with the support needed to achieve those goals (Shields, 2014).

In her article, Shields (2014) provides three stories of individual students who faced the adversity of poverty; one student dropped out of school but then earned a high school equivalency degree, teaching degree, and became a teacher; another student had an advocate in high school who intervened when he wanted to drop out and is now a network engineer, and a third student became a high school dropout. Shields (2014) describes these three students as examples of how the system, as currently constituted, disproportionately works against students living in poverty whose parents may not have the time, capacity, or ability to advocate within the system. Shields's individual examples serve her greater point; transformative leaders must create equitable, welcoming schools that hold all students to high expectations with supports and not excuses so that students can succeed regardless of social or economic status (Shields, 2014).

To create equitable schools, transformational leaders must model attitudes, actions, and behaviors to disrupt systemic inequity so that the whole school's culture can be conducive to serving all students and especially those who are in poverty. The implementation of Morning Meeting at the school in this study is an example of the work to disrupt systemic inequity. Based on site-level data, students in the Exceptional Children's program are disproportionately the ones who are disciplined and disengaged. To a lesser extent, this systemic inequity applies to English Language Learners as well in the virtual context, but that has not been the case in historical face-to-face context. Educators must be shown how to model appropriate behaviors, expectations, and acknowledgement and display of emotions, which is necessary to lower the rate of exclusionary discipline, which disproportionately affects students of color and students with disabilities (Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 1997).

The need for urgent, transformational leadership is further exemplified by David Hutchens (2007) in *Outlearning the Wolves: Surviving and Thriving in a Learning Organization.*

In the parable, Hutchens tells the story of a flock of sheep who live in fear of wolves eating one of them on a regular basis. The sheep have accepted this because "This was the way it had always been" (Hutchens, 2007, p. 13). Furthermore, the sheep share their belief that "we are to be commended […] for we have prospered beneath the shadow of the wolf" (Hutchens, 2007, p. 17). However, one sheep, Otto, challenges the flock to become a "learning flock," and the sheep resist change initially and then only make slight changes. By the end of the parable, although Otto had died, the sheep figure out how to divert water to pool up an area so that the wolves cannot crawl under during droughts (Hutchens, 2007, pp. 44-47).

This short parable embodies Bass's "4 Is" of transformational leadership: "individualized consideration," "intellectual stimulation," "inspirational motivation," and "idealized influence" (Bass, 1985). Otto's dream, "I dream of a day when not another sheep will ever die to become breakfast for a wolf" inspired the sheep; his conception of a "learning flock" provided intellectual stimulation (Hutchens, 2007, p. 17). Otto's rousing words provided influence, and his successor, the little lamb Marietta, continued reminding the flock of Otto's vision and added that they need to "learn differently" (Hutchens, 2007, p. 32). Lastly, both Otto and Marietta used various sheep strengths, such as one who learned how to remove thorns from hooves, and another who moved rocks with his nose, which are individualized goals and contributions. By the end of the parable, the sheep had solved the problem of the wolves eating them, but the author shows the wolves attempting new ways to break in; this shows that the transformation of the flock is an ongoing process, not a one-time thing.

In addition to tying in with Bass's "4 Is," Hutchens's parable also resonates with Shields's (2014) statement to avoid "tinkering around the edges of change." In the parable, the sheep begin by making a minor adjustment—sleeping in close quarters so that the wolves would

have a more difficult time snagging a sheep—but that still led to the demise of Otto. It was only when the sheep learned about the wolves and embraced new ways of thinking that they developed a strategy that kept the wolves out (Hutchens, 2007, p. 49). Similarly, transformational leaders cannot simply make a few minor changes and accept that it would be enough to make impactful change. The low-performing school in this study features metaphorical wolves: high poverty, low historical academic performance, and a background of frequent and severe behavior problems. Transformational leadership is the approach for resisting the wolves so that the sheep can become a "learning flock" (Hutchens, 2007, p. 17).

Online Learning in Elementary-Age Students

Very little peer-reviewed research exists regarding online learning in elementary-age students. The existing literature typically revolves around parental feedback to online learning or about the perceived effects of online learning on student mental health. Much of the existing literature on online learning for elementary students consists of analyses of supplemental online tools; however, in late 2020 and early 2021, more studies and literature have emerged.

One study examined elementary online learning from the perspective of teachers in Indonesia (Fauzi & Khusuma, 2020). More than 75% of the teachers in the study were in their first 5 years of teaching. Nearly 60% of teachers in that study identified computer and internet capacity as the biggest obstacle to online learning, followed by nearly 20% identifying issues with planning and delivering instruction, and about 8% noting issues with either student or parent cooperation (Fauzi & Khusuma, 2020, pp. 62-63). Over 80% of the teachers reported being dissatisfied with online learning, and those who did report success noted that parental support and knowledge of technology was a significant factor (Fauzi & Khusuma, 2020, p. 66).

Of note, the teachers focused on technology, assessment, and parents as the metrics of online learning efficacy and not SEL (Fauzi & Khusuma, 2020, p. 66).

Lucas and Moita (2020) reviewed the instructional approaches that teachers in Brazil used during online learning through the COVID-19 pandemic. The researchers specifically focused on the "Emergency Remote Education (ERE)" used in March-May 2020 (Lucas & Moita, 2020, p. 4). Internet quality and the lack of training are identified as problems by 40% of teachers (Lucas & Moita, 2020, p. 7). However, the researchers note that "due to the emergency situation with which remote education was implemented, it was not possible to plan and systematize the ERE in a reasonable way" as compared to explicitly pre-planned distance education (Lucas & Moita, 2020, p. 7). Similarly, in the United States, the spring 2020 semester consisted more of "emergency remote teaching" rather than remote online teaching, which affects the availability of studies relevant to this study (Milman, 2020). Other concerns include a lack of synchronous participation, lack of student aptitude to navigate Google Classroom; therefore, the schools used local radio and social media to engage importance and paper and pencil materials to provide options for families without reliable Internet access (Lucas & Moita, 2020, p. 7). Since nearly one-fourth of teachers reported never using digital technology tools for instruction prior to the pandemic, teachers were having to learn the tools while students were learning the tools and the content, which has created frustration for educators, students, and families (Lucas & Moita, 2020, p. 9). However, the educators in Brazil frequently reflected that although the online learning has been extremely stressful, they are learning tools that can be continued to use when face-to-face instruction resumes (Lucas & Moita, 2020, p. 9).

Karabulut and Türksoy (2021) studied the impact of online learning on gifted students in Turkey. Students viewed a variety of teachers in online and television platforms provided

centrally by the Turkish government, but the instruction was one-way: teachers to students (Karabulut & Türksoy, 2021, p. 177). The study addresses the "effect of distance education on the development of a gifted child" and the perception of online and face-to-face education by the parents of gifted children (Karabulut & Türksoy, 2021, p. 177). Twenty-nine students and their families participated, and the researchers divided "development" into cognitive (content), affective (social and emotional), and physical. This divide is similar to the Fredricks et al. (2004) study that classified engagement into three categories: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive. Half of the respondents reported that online learning had a negative impact on cognitive development, one-fourth did not respond, and one-fourth indicated "positive" (Karabulut & Türksoy, 2021, p. 180). Notably, the online instruction delivered came from a centralized system where numerous teachers provided lessons in an online platform and on television, so students were exposed to a variety of teachers but from a central source (Karabulut & Türksoy, 2021, p. 177). The participants in the study commented primarily that the online learning was not as rigorous as what is done in face-to-face and is not sufficient for gifted learners. Some positive gains are noted because "taking classes from different teachers helps students to acquire different perspectives" (Karabulut & Türksoy, 2021, p. 181). Most students found the instruction lacking in rigor, and parents reported both a lack of cognitive gain and a decline in affective, or social and emotional, learning due to the lack of face-to-face instruction and the lack of interaction (Karabulut & Türksoy, 2021, pp. 182-183).

Innis and Murphy wrote about the COVID-19 pandemic's effect on school in North Carolina for the *News and Observer* newspaper. They studied the frustration that LatinX families commonly felt, specifically in Durham, North Carolina, and the parents noted that language barriers were exacerbated by English-only platforms, lack of adult technology aptitude, and

communication barriers (Innis & Murphy, 2021). One family discussed copying and pasting text into Google Translate in order to decipher directions to support students (Innis & Murphy, 2021). Additionally, families reported that teachers are requesting the students to have quiet places in solitude, and these families noted to Innis and Murphy that those cultural expectations were sometimes incompatible. Those additional barriers, in addition to physical separation from the classroom and the language difference, have negatively impacted engagement by LatinX students according to the numerous families in the article (Innis & Murphy, 2021).

A February 2021 Wall Street Journal article uses PowerSchool attendance data to determine that attendance from September 2019 to December 2020 was 2.3% lower than during September 2019 to December 2019 (Koh, 2021, para. 3). Koh notes that "students of color, special needs and elementary school students" were more likely to be attending school remotely and that they were also less likely to be attending and engaging in online learning (Koh, 2021, para. 1). The article further noted that taking attendance during remote learning also presented significant challenges, because each state, and sometimes different districts within each state, defined attendance in a variety of ways; for example, one state marked students present if they "engage with their school at least once every two weeks," and another required "some kind of daily participation," while yet another used evidence that students "spend enough time in class or doing homework that amounts to at least half the school day" (Koh, 2021, para. 20).

Although focused on collegiate students at the University of British Columbia, Walker's and Koralesky's February 2021 study in Canada examined student engagement during online learning through the COVID-19 pandemic. This study identified instructor strategies for facilitating learning and used three constructs of engagement, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive, that were defined previously by Fredricks et al. in 2004 (Walker & Koralesky, 2021,

pp. 1-2). Among instructors, 40% felt that student engagement was the same as in-person, whereas 60% described student engagement as "a little less engaged" (Walker & Koralesky, 2021, p. 4). Students were more likely to describe themselves as less engaged, as 57% were "a little less engaged" and 13% were "not engaged" (Walker & Koralesky, 2021, p. 4). A handful of activities were described as engaging; within synchronous teaching, the use of polls and chats and live demonstrations were considered engaging by between 64 and 73% of students per activity (Walker & Koralesky, 2021, p. 5). Within asynchronous teaching, the only activities deemed engaging by students were "attending office hours," which was considered engaging by 60.6% of students, and "having the instructor respond to students posts on a discussion board," which was considered engaging by 62.4% of students (Walker & Koralesky, 2021, p. 5). Although this study was not focused on elementary students, the strategies used by the instructors and the evaluation of student engagement could be applicable in the elementary school context.

There exists a need for more research in elementary school students and online learning, as well as online social emotional learning programming and instruction. This study, though, should add to the literature for other schools and educational leaders.

Using Collaborative Action Research to Transform

Sagor (2000, p. 3) describes action research as "a disciplined process of inquiry conducted *by* and *for* those taking the action." The primary reason for engaging in action research is to assist the "actor" in improving and/or refining his or her action." The "collaborative" component includes the participants in the study providing input to the action research as collaborators, which creates the concept of collaborative action research (CAR). Sagor notes three purposes for CAR are "building the reflective practitioner, making progress on

schoolwide priorities, and building professional cultures" (Sagor, 2000, p. 7). To do this, Sagor proposes seven steps in conducting CAR: "Selecting a focus," "Clarifying theories," "Identifying research questions," "Collecting data," "Analyzing data," "Reporting results," and "Taking informed action" (Sagor, 2000, pp. 3-4). Sagor proposes the collaborative aspect of CAR by juxtaposing two hypothetical speeches: a superintendent who dictates that scores need to improve, and a corporate executive who challenges engineers to create a project to get to Mars and encourages the scientists to be creative in solving the opportunity (Sagor, 2000, pp. 25-26). Sagor (2000) theorizes that the educators felt "We are expected to already know all that we need to know in order to improve" whereas the engineers likely felt that "our success will depend upon our collective problem-solving skills and creativity" (pp. 26-27).

Dickens and Watkins (1999) provide a review and analysis of action research by, initially, sharing critiques: specifically, action research can lack the rigor of "true scientific research" and "lacking in internal and external control" (p. 131). However, the authors note that action research addresses problems "in complex, real time settings" and that "the problems change under their feet, often before the more in-depth iterative search for solutions suggested by action research has achieved meaningful results" (Dickens & Watkins, 1999, p. 131). In addition, Dickens and Watkins note that the criticisms of action research are grounded in "more academic than practical concerns of most action researchers" (Dickens & Watkins, 1999, p. 131).

Dickens and Watkins (1999) reviewed two action research studies to provide analysis. The researchers identified a few commonalities for best practices; first, "it can go forward, backward, and all directions at once", which is not typical of traditional research (Dickens & Watkins, 1999, p. 135). In addition, action research needs to have a specific goal, although teams may need to modify steps to get to the goal or even details about the goal (Dickens & Watkins,

1999, p. 138). Also, action research necessitates participants to learn in the midst of the process so that participants can act upon and make adjustments based on the evidence gathered (Dickens & Watkins, 1999, p. 138). Dickens and Watkins (1999), in their examination of action research, describe the need for "transformation through individual and collective reframing of the problem," which requires individual participants to understand and work but also requires the team as a whole to collaboratively understand the focus or problem (p. 139). They also note that defining the problem and including democratic participation in the action research process can "ensure that everyone 'owns' the goal" (Dickens & Watkins, 1999, p. 138). Furthermore, the "democratization" of a group in conducting action research provides different perspectives that can enhance the effectiveness of actions (Dickens & Watkins, 1999, p. 137).

Sagor (2009) describes action research and school improvement as mutually necessary in the school context; action research is a catalyst to enhance school improvement, and school improvement is an essential aspiration for action research to matter. Sagor advocates for the collaborative approach of action research in contrast to a top-down professional development model in which "teachers are mandated to attend training on the implementation of an adopted 'proven practice'" (Sagor, 2009, p. 9). Since the collaborative action research method involves teacher feedback and input into identifying the focus and approach for making improvements, teachers have a greater sense of buy-in, as compared to implementing scripted programs "with fidelity," which could force ethical educators to "abandon their professionalism and do what is mandated, or they can choose to be insubordinate and work around the 'fidelity' expectation" (Sagor, 2009, p. 10). These actions undertaken within action research, assessing, analyzing, intervening, monitoring, and reflecting, are essential to action research and to the job of a teacher (Sagor, 2009, p. 10). Sagor's conception of action research is that the process leads to

professional learning based on the specific and fluid needs of a team, grade level, or school, as compared to training that may be focused on a specific program's fidelity of implementation.

Cher Hendricks (2009) describes how action research can improve education and instructional practices as a professional development activity. At the beginning of the article, Hendricks reviews Sagor's defense of action research as authentic to educator development as compared to top-down, fidelity-focused training (Hendricks, 2009, p. 4). Hendricks acknowledges that critiques of action research are centered on determining "what counts as research" and that clear differences in the definition of rigor exist between K-12 practitioners and university educators and governmental policies that prefer scientific or evidence-based research (Hendricks, 2009, p. 4). In addition, Hendricks (2009) advocates that educators at the K-12 and university level collaborate to build rigor in studies but also acknowledge that "context" cannot be controlled for in a scientific way but acknowledged as a component of the research (p. 4).

West (2011) writes about action research as a professional development activity. He references Sagor and asserts that teachers prefer action research to traditional research because "what is valuable about teacher research is one's personal experience with the topic, a notion supported by constructivist learning theories" (West, 2011, p. 90). In describing CAR, West uses a continuum to describe the degree of collaboration; the least collaboration occurs when teams work separately on a broad topic, followed by working separately on a specific topic, with the most collaboration occurring when "a team works together on a single study" (West, 2011, p. 92). West recognizes three critiques of action research as a whole: "the knowledge critique," or the lack of an in-depth literature review, "the methods critique," which questions whether participants can "understand events when one is a participant in them," and "the ends critique," which questions the power of action research "if it is used to perpetrate the status quo" and not

enhance structures (West, 2011, p. 92). However, West notes that CAR is an avenue for educators to pursue areas of improvement to improve their efficacy rather than a conventional model where "principals, district-level administrators, legislators, and other powerful stakeholders decide which educational and developmental topics teachers will pursue, without regard to the needs that the teachers themselves perceive" (West, 2011, p. 93).

Schenkels and Jacobs (2018) refer to CAR conceptually as "designing the plane while you fly it" (p. 697). The researchers note that CAR projects have "complex dynamics, since they exist of multidisciplinary teams or a group of collaborating stakeholders, each with their own interests, vocabulary and agenda," even within team members at a school level (Schenkels & Jacobs, 2018, p. 698). Therefore, the researchers summarized the "ladder of pretty" a "participation ladder" to evaluate the collaborative component of CAR (Pretty et al., 1995). A level one is a top-down model where the participants are told what to do; levels two through five range from participants being informed about the 'why' up to level five where team members "are involved in decision-making and the development and execution of programmes or activities" (Schenkels & Jacobs, 2018, p. 702).

Levels six and seven involve significantly more democratic processes; level six includes participants being equal partners in defining and strategizing actions for change with the leader facilitating and supporting, where level seven involves individual team members creating their own agenda and acting, with leaders providing facilitation and support "only if asked" (Schenkels & Jacobs, 2018, p. 702). The researchers then contrast that with an hourglass model, with "high self-mobilization" at the top, "interactive participation" at the point where the sand passes to the bottom, and "passive participation" at the bottom; in this model, participants balance their own thoughts into an interactive stage where they, the sand particles, "'scrape'

against each other, and real co-creation and learning occurs" before the participants resume the tasks required of the study (Schenkels & Jacobs, 2018, p. 711). Similar to West (2011), Schenkels and Jacobs (2018) identify CAR as "the meaning-making, identity development and co-learning that takes place when people share an endeavor that matters" (p. 713).

Summary and Conclusions

The impact of leadership in the improvement of schools is significant; a comprehensive 2004 Wallace Foundation study shows that exerted leadership is second only to the classroom teacher in terms of measurable impact on academic performance (Leithwood et al., 2004, p. 5). Therefore, leadership must be highly effective in order to leverage collective teacher efficacy so that teachers can have classroom management and the instructional expertise necessarily to improve student achievement. At high-poverty schools, poor culture has a negative impact on students, often minority children (Esposito, 1999). Therefore, the concept of transformational leadership describes the 'why' and 'how,' with Conscious Discipline serving as the tool.

For this study, the scholarly practitioner is implementing Morning Meeting in order to help teachers build individual and collective efficacy in working with students, initially in a remote setting who have been unable to participate in face-to-face instruction for at least seven months. This study will address the extent of how Morning Meeting impacts self and collective teacher efficacy and the extent of impact on the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills. Howell and Avolio (1993) acknowledge that the reception to transformational leadership is related to the workers' belief in innovation, so the paradigm shift at a school that has been extremely stable in personnel but has moved from face-to-face to remote learning will be challenging. In this study, the scholarly practitioner will assess educator perception, and in the collaborative action research model, that input will be used to evaluate and adjust based on staff and student needs.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS OF INQUIRY

The focus of practice for this study was to enhance student engagement and teacher efficacy through the use of Morning Meeting (Kriete & Davis, 2016) in an elementary school in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Kriete and Davis (2016) describe Morning Meeting as a structured time, up to 30 minutes per day, in which teachers "intentionally provide opportunities for students to practice the skills of greeting, listening and responding, group problem-solving, and noticing and anticipating" (p. 3). These opportunities are facilitated through explicitly modeled and practiced structures: "greeting," "sharing," "group activity," and "morning message" (Kriete & Davis, 2016, p. 3). At the time of this study, this school and district were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which prevented face-to-face classes. Therefore, the context was virtual, where students participated via Google Meet off campus; however, the goal was to transition back to face-to-face in either a hybrid or full-time scenario.

FoP Guiding Questions

Since the fall 2020 semester started in a virtual setting, teachers and students were unable to meet in a face-to-face context to begin the school year, meaning that initial relationships among students and staff were not conventional. Instead, students engaged in remote online learning, using both synchronous, or live, lessons, and asynchronous, or pre-recorded, activities. A study conducted during the summer of 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic forced schools to teach students remotely and online, indicated that educators were worried about the availability of devices, internet access, the instructional process, and engagement with families (Fauzi & Khusuma, 2020). Staff members expressed concern about their ability to have students engaged as well as their own capacity to provide connection and instruction. Therefore, this study was guided by the following questions:

1. To what extent does the implementation of Morning Meeting enhance engagement and learning in online settings for elementary school students?
2. To what extent has the use of Morning Meeting improved (a) teacher self-efficacy and (b) collective teacher efficacy in online settings?
3. To what extent does collaborative action research affect the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills?

Inquiry Design and Rationale

The focus of this study was examining the extent of impact on student engagement and teachers' self-efficacy by the implementation of Morning Meeting, with additional focus on the effect of collaborative action research on the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills. The inquiry method used for study was collaborative action research, described as "a discipline process of inquiry conducted *by* and *for* those taking the action […] to assist the "actor" in improving and/or refining his or her actions" (Sagor, 2000, p. 3). In this study, action research guided the implementation and assessment of daily Morning Meeting in each Kindergarten through fifth-grade classroom. The scholarly practitioner received permission from the Superintendent of Wilson County Schools to use previously collected data from staff and families. This data included educator and family surveys about the prior year's emergency remote learning experience, concerns about online teaching and learning, and feedback about devices, accessibility, and the platforms and types of instruction and assessment. In addition, the scholarly practitioner's school implemented Morning Meeting (Kriete & Davis, 2016) in the fall of 2020, initially in the virtual context.

The scholarly practitioner, as principal of the school, co-facilitated initial implementation of Morning Meeting with the school improvement coach and school counselor so that staff

received professional development and access to the Morning Meeting material. The principal, counselor, and coach provided half-day face-to-face training at implementing and practicing the components of Morning Meeting and shared a menu of options to use per grade level and a calendar and sequence at introducing, modeling, and practicing each component. In addition, each Kindergarten through fifth-grade teacher was provided a copy of the 2016 edition of the Morning Meeting book. These staff members were supported via coaching and feedback by a member of the administrative team weekly. Each week, the teachers met with the administrative team to discuss and review the impact of Morning Meetings on students and teachers, and the team collaborated to provide adjustments for subsequent weeks. Teachers provided feedback about engagement and the administrative team supported and assisted teachers; the scholarly practitioner facilitated reflective questioning for the teachers to analyze the extent of the impact of implementing Morning Meetings on their self and collective efficacy.

The rationale for using collaborative action research aligned with each study question. Sagor notes that "the power of action research […] is a means to renew the efficacy that most teachers possessed when they left college, believing they could accomplish miracles" (Sagor, 2000, p. 35). Using collaborative action research allowed for teachers to have input and to use their feedback and authentic data in order to affect the change they sought. This helped the teachers build their individual and collective efficacy. The emphasis of the research regarding student engagement was a direct focus of the teachers, so that the educators developed efficacy by helping students with authentic, meaningful engagement in the Morning Meeting. Lastly, the use of the collaborative action research process forced educators and leaders to make "continuous progress in developing their strengths as reflective practitioners," and provided the scholarly practitioner the opportunity to improve leadership skills (Sagor, 2000, p. 7).

Context of the Study

Lee Woodard Elementary School (LWES) was a rural Title 1 elementary school located in Black Creek, North Carolina. The enrollment has ranged from 140-190 in the past ten years, with a current enrollment of 183. The free and reduced lunch rate was 67%, one of the higher rates in Wilson County Schools. According to the North Carolina Department of Commerce, Wilson County was a Tier 1 economically distressed county; it was ranked 22nd out of 100 counties, and the 40 poorest counties were considered Tier 1 (North Carolina Department of Commerce, 2019). Therefore, the school was one of the most impoverished schools within one of the poorest counties in North Carolina. Demographically, LWES had 46% White students, 36% Black students, and 18% LatinX students.

At the time of the study, students had not attended class in the face-to-face setting for over six months, dating back to March 13th, 2020. At the beginning of the 2020-21 academic school year, through October 21st, 2020, students were in the virtual setting (Wilson, 2020). In surveying staff and families with regards to the crisis remote learning that occurred in March, April, and May of 2020, a consistent concern was the lack of active engagement in teacher-to-student interaction. At LWES, staff and families reported active engagement of 30%, and even that was inconsistent and often individual support for academic activities. By the start of the 2020-21 academic year in August, students had been out of school for over six months, and the collaborative decision to implement Morning Meeting came from the collective desire to establish "a climate of trust," "build and enhance connections," and "motivate students by addressing the human need to feel a sense of significance and belonging" (Kriete & Davis, 2016, p. 11).

With prolonged absence from school, students were prone to additional mental health and issues with isolation (Golberstein et al., 2020). Furthermore, since many students who needed mental health services typically received those services at school, and since students in poverty were more likely to receive their sole services from the school, the closure of school disproportionately impacts students in poverty (Golberstein et al., 2020). The collective choice to implement Morning Meeting and the scholarly practitioner's decision in using collaborative action research addressed the need to build connections with students while being cognizant of how the prolonged absence adversely affected children (Kriete & Davis, 2016).

Inquiry Partners

Numerous inquiry partners were involved in this study. The school was divided into two grade-cluster teams which met weekly to advise and provide feedback regarding Morning Meeting. These teams described the positive and negatives of the week, identified students who were absent, disengaged, and engaged, shared ideas for improvement, and reflected to what extent that the implementation of Morning Meeting affected them individually and as a grade span (Kriete & Davis, 2016). Each team included the scholarly practitioner, school counselor, and school improvement coach. The scholarly practitioner was a White male in the first year of the principalship at LWES and had been an elementary principal for the past five years, with twelve years of combined education experience. The school counselor was in her second year at counselor at LWES, is a White female, and served as a school counselor for the past eighteen years. The school improvement coach was a White male and had been the coach at LWES for the past two years, and he had eighteen years of elementary education experience as a teacher and instructional coach. See Table 1 for the demographics of the inquiry partners.

Table 1

Inquiry Partners for Study

Role	Ethnicity	Gender	Years of Experience	Team	Students
Principal	White	Male	12	1 and 2	N/A
Coach	White	Male	18	1 and 2	N/A
Counselor	White	Female	18	1 and 2	N/A
Teacher 1	White	Female	30.5	1	20
Teacher 2	White	Female	23	1	19
Teacher 3	White	Female	7	1	18
Teacher 4	White	Female	9	1	19
Teacher 5	White	Female	20	2	21
Teacher 6	White	Female	4.5	2	25
Teacher 7	White	Female	6	2	30
Teacher 8	White	Female	17	2	26
Parent 1	Jamaican American	Female	N/A	N/A	N/A
Parent 2	White	Female	N/A	N/A	N/A

Team 1 consisted of a Kindergarten teacher, a Kindergarten/1st grade combination teacher, a 1st grade/2nd grade combination teacher, and a second-grade teacher, along with the principal/scholarly practitioner, school counselor, and school improvement coach. The Kindergarten and Kindergarten/1st grade combination teachers were White and female; they had twenty-three and thirty and one-half years of experience, respectively. The 1st grade/2nd grade combination teacher and the 2nd grade teacher each were White females and they had seven and nine years of experience.

Team 2 consisted of a third-grade teacher, a 3rd grade/4th grade combination teacher, a 4th grade/5th grade combination teacher, and a 5th grade teacher, along with the principal/scholarly practitioner, school counselor, and school improvement coach. The 3rd grade teacher had twenty years of experience and was a White female. The 3rd grade/4th grade combination teacher had four and one-half years of experience and was a White female, with each year of teaching at LWES. The 4th grade/5th grade combination teacher also had six years of experience and taught at LWES for the past five years. The 5th grade teacher is a White female and had seventeen years of experience, all at LWES.

The participants in the study were the Kindergarten through fifth-grade teachers at LWES, the scholarly practitioner, school counselor, and school improvement coach, who are in two grade-clustered teams. Furthermore, the school engaged two parents who serve on the Parent Teacher Organization and School Improvement Team; one parent was a Jamaican American female whose child was in upper grades and committed to her child being a year-long participant in the fully online Virtual Academy. The second parent was a White female with children in upper and lower grades who intended for her students to return to face-to-face as soon as it was allowed. The demographics of the inquiry partners were two White males, nine White females,

and one Jamaican American female. The scholarly practitioner was the only participant new to LWES for the 2020-21 school year.

Ethical Considerations

In order to assure that processes, methods, and practices utilized by the scholarly practitioner in this study were ethical, the scholarly practitioner applied for Internal Review Board (IRB) approval from East Carolina University. Prior to seeking IRB approval, the scholarly practitioner completed Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) modules as required by the graduate school at East Carolina University. Both of these processes were completed before any research was done on individuals or groups regarding this study. In addition, the scholarly practitioner worked to ensure privacy and confidentiality of the participants in the study, and the scholarly practitioner solicited approval of questions from the dissertation chair prior to use.

In addition to completing the institutional requisite safeguards, the scholarly practitioner informed participants in advance of the purpose of the research, the types of data being collected, and assured the participants that the likelihood and magnitude of harm for participating in the study was minimal. Because the data collected was an integral part of the work being done by the school, the scholarly practitioner notified participants that this work was also being used for research purposes. As applicable, in situations where direct quotes from participants were used, pseudonyms were provided to protect identities. Because of social distancing and room requirements, meetings were conducted in a hybrid manner, with some individuals in the same room and the others on Google Meet. Because Wilson County Schools expects Google Meet meetings to be recorded, the scholarly practitioner obtained permission to view and analyze the recordings using the research questions of this study. These were encrypted, password-protected

files to preserve confidentiality, and at the conclusion of the study and completion of degree, they will be destroyed. Transcripts of questions were preserved and locked away within the scholarly practitioner's office, and these will also be destroyed upon both the completion of the study and degree.

In this study, the participants were chosen essentially by default—employees of the school under the purview of the scholarly practitioner in the capacity of principal and scholarly practitioner. Participants were informed of their ability to refuse participation in this study for any reason, without fear of reprisal or negative performance evaluation. Participants signed informed consent forms. At the end of the study, any participants wishing to review the results of the study were availed a copy.

Inquiry Procedures

For this study, the scholarly practitioner used the collaborative action research process. Sagor (2000) describes action research as always consisting of seven steps:

1. Selecting a focus.
2. Clarifying theories.
3. Identifying research questions.
4. Collecting data.
5. Analyzing data.
6. Reporting results.
7. Taking informed action.

Therefore, within this study, the collaborative action research process took place with the school-based inquiry partners.

Step 1: Selecting a Focus

Sagor (2000) describes the first step of action research as "serious reflection directed toward identifying a topic or topics worthy of a busy teacher's time" (p. 4). When the scholarly practitioner questioned staff members about the needs of the 2020-21 school year, the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the reality of starting the academic year remotely were considered. The scholarly practitioner asked teachers, "what element(s) of our practice or what aspect of student learning do we wish to investigate?" (Sagor, 2000, p. 4). Because students were remote, the teachers and scholarly practitioner concurred that a significant emphasis on content would not be applicable since students would be unlikely to participate in live online instruction for multiple hours each day. In analyzing the qualitative data from Team 1's meeting minutes, Team 1 expressed concern with developmentally-appropriate connections and establishing expectations without the benefit of traditional face-to-face interaction. Three of the four teachers in team 1 had either Kindergarten students who had not been in school or had first graders who did not complete a full year of Kindergarten last year, so they expressed a significant concern about rituals, habits, patterns, processes, and procedures. At that point, the team agreed that a focus should be on social and emotional learning and on establishing some sense of normalcy. Team 2's meeting minutes indicated a similar concern about connection, although they expressed more worry that students would have more emotional struggles at not having the benefit of being with each other, and they also shared more concern about connection in the context.

From there, both teams reviewed multiple ideas and concurred that the establishment of Morning Meeting, a 30-minute or less daily process, would be valuable to implement and study (Kriete & Davis, 2016). The teams also identified their own perceived deficiencies at handling

situations with students with behavioral problems, so they believed that an intense focus and study in this process would be beneficial in their own development.

Step 2: Clarifying Theories

Within step 2 of the action research process, both teams clarified their expectations for Morning Meeting and belief systems (Kriete & Davis, 2016). Specifically, the teams agreed that student presence, action (within activities), and interaction with the teacher and each other were all necessary components of successful Morning Meetings. This aligned with the five "competency clusters" of social emotional learning (SEL): "self-awareness," "self-management," "social awareness," "relationship skills," and "responsible decision making" (CASEL Guide: Preschool and elementary education, 2013, p. 9). In addition, CASEL (2013, pp. 11-13) recommends using SEL programming that is evidence-based, stakeholder-engaged, adult-modeled, and applicable at the individual, classroom, and school-wide level on a systemic level. CASEL also recommends finding SEL programming that will "foster active student voice in decision making, problem solving, and engagement" (CASEL Guide: Preschool and elementary education, 2013, p. 13). Because the context of this study was initially in the remote setting, and not face-to-face, the teams believed that a school-wide program focused on connection, sharing, and making good decisions was essential, so the focus of Morning Meeting was in educating students how to connect to the teacher and each other through the processes of greeting, sharing, participating in activities, and engaging in the morning message (Kriete & Davis, 2016). Furthermore, this choice aligned with the CASEL Guide's assessment that shows that this program features "opportunities to practice social and emotional skills," and includes classroom, school-level, and family-level contexts with which to promote and reinforce SEL (CASEL Guide: Preschool and elementary education, 2013, p. 27).

Step 3: Identifying Research Questions

For step 3, the team identified action research questions that would be used at each meeting and discussion about the Morning Meetings (Kriete & Davis, 2016). The teachers were highly interested in student engagement, since connection and engagement are key to learning, so the first question was: "To what extent does the implementation of Morning Meeting enhance engagement and learning in online settings for elementary school students?" Because teachers wished to reflect and identified an area of improvement, they also wanted to know how this process would help them individually and as a team; the scholarly practitioner worked with the team to identify the question as: "To what extent has the use of Morning Meeting improved (a) teacher self-efficacy and (b) collective teacher efficacy in online settings?" Lastly, the scholarly practitioner worked with the remainder of the team in answering the third question, "To what extent does collaborative action research affect the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills?"

Step 4: Collecting Data

In step 4, collecting data, the team gathered information prior to the first Morning Meeting. The staff polled families about their concerns regarding the previous spring's remote learning as well as the upcoming semester's opening, and the parents were nearly universally concerned about children missing teachers, each other, and about being alone, or isolated, for such a long time. Teachers on the team responded similarly; they were worried about children getting out of the routine of school and about them not being able to socialize. The team next looked at the 2020 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (NCTWC) and identified that only 69% of teachers at LWES felt that students understood and complied with teacher expectations, well below the state and district averages in the 80s. Furthermore, less than a third of teachers felt that the community had meaningful connection with the school.

Both teams identified student engagement as a key metric to measure success of Morning Meeting (Kriete & Davis, 2016). For the purpose of this study, engagement is defined as "the quality of a student's connection or involvement with the endeavor of schooling and hence with the people, activities, goals, values, and place that compose it" (Skinner et al., 2009, p. 494). Weekly, each team met to review the previous week's Morning Meetings in terms of participation and engagement (Kriete & Davis, 2016). The staff collaborated together to clarify engagement in the context of LWES Morning Meetings. Teachers said to assess engagement, students needed to be live during the synchronous Morning Meeting for at least 75% of the week and participate in the components of the day's Morning Meeting at least 75% of the time as the metrics for the context-specific definition of engagement. In addition, each teacher on the team identified the number of students who are present and engaged, and then the names and number of students who were disengaged and/or absent. That data were shared with the team for the scholarly practitioner and school counselor to review. Next, each team shared the strengths and weaknesses of each week in the context of Morning Meeting (Kriete & Davis, 2016). Then, the team shared helpful ideas to highlight and critical ideas to improve, enhance, or revise for the upcoming week; lastly, the team provided feedback on the extent of how Morning Meeting impacted the educators (Kriete & Davis, 2016). These data points were collected in the weekly team meeting minutes. See Table 2 for a description of how multiple data points align with study question 1: "To what extent does the implementation of Morning Meeting enhance engagement and learning in online settings for elementary school students?"

The second study question centered on teachers' individual and collective efficacy. At the beginning and end of the study, the scholarly practitioner used a brief self-efficacy survey as a component of the job to identify the confidence, efficacy, and concerns of teachers, specifically

Table 2

Data Points Aligned with Study Question 1 Regarding Student Engagement

	Criteria			
Data Points	Fully Engaged	Partially Engaged	Mostly Disengaged	Not Participating
Percent of Days per Week Live	75% or Higher	50-74%	20-49%	<20%
Number of Weeks Engaged	7-8 weeks at Fully Engaged	7-8 weeks at Partially Engaged, OR 4-6 weeks at Fully Engaged	7-8 weeks at Mostly Disengaged, OR 4-6 weeks at Mostly Disengaged	7-8 weeks at Non Participating
Quality of Engagement: Participatory	Shares, responds, comments, or completes exit ticket at least 75% of days live	Shares, responds, comments, or completes exit ticket 50-74% of days live	Shares, responds, comments, or completes exit ticket 20-49% of days live	Shares, responds, comments, or completes exit ticket <20% of days live

during the online teaching stage. This 10-question Teacher Self-Efficacy survey was adopted from Bandura's efficacy work and specifically addressed teachers (Schwarzer et al., 1999). Figure 1 is the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer et al., 1999).

During the weekly team meetings, the scholarly practitioner asked the educators about their perception of the progress, strengths, and weaknesses of Morning Meeting. The language was reviewed and analyzed in terms of teacher efficacy. In Table 3, the language expressed by each educator was aligned with study question 2: "To what extent has the use of Morning Meeting improved (a) teacher self-efficacy and (b) collective teacher efficacy in online settings?"

In addition, during the study, the scholarly practitioner wrote daily in a reflective journal to capture the thoughts that occurred at beginning, middle, and end of the study. The scholarly practitioner used a self-reflective tool from Cynthia Roberts, Associate Professor of Organizational Leadership and Supervision at Purdue, to assess study question 3: "To what extent does collaborative action research affect the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills?" (Roberts, 2008). Table 4 shows the self-reflection tool used to assist in assessing this question.

Step 5: Analyzing Data

For step 5, each team analyzed this initial data regarding the concerns of parents and educators from Spring 2020, specifically regarding the lack of connection and engagement, and asked: "What is the story told by these data?" and "Why did the story play itself out this way?" (Sagor, 2000, p. 6). The scholarly practitioner used Sagor's (2000) "Implementation Strategy #12—Coding Data for Analysis" within step 5 of collaborative action research (p. 127). For the qualitative information about concerns, the scholarly practitioner sorted the various concerns into codes and identified the frequency by person and cumulatively. Multiple categories emerged: connection with teachers, connection with peers, students being at home without supervision,

Response format:

(1) not at all true, (2) barely true, (3) moderately true, (4) exactly true

1. I am convinced that I am able to teach successfully all relevant subject content to even the most difficult students.
2. I know that I can maintain a positive relationship with parents, even when tensions arise.
3. When I try really hard, I am able to reach even the most difficult students.
4. I am convinced that, as time goes by, I will continue to become more and more capable of helping to address my students' needs.
5. Even if I am disrupted while teaching, I am confident that I can maintain my composure and continue to teach well.
6. I am confident in my ability to be responsive to my students' needs, even if I am having a bad day.
7. If I try hard enough, I know that I can exert a positive influence on both the personal and academic development of my students.
8. I am convinced that I can develop creative ways to cope with system constraints (such as budget cuts and other administrative problems) and continue to teach well.
9. I know that I can motivate my students to participate in innovative projects.
10. I know that I can carry out innovative projects, even when I am opposed by skeptical colleagues.

(Schwarzer et al., 1999)

Figure 1. Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale.

Table 3

Data Points Aligned with Study Question 2 Regarding Teacher Efficacy

	Criteria			
Data Points	High Efficacy	Moderate Efficacy	Minimal Efficacy	Little or No Efficacy
First Assessment of Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey	Average of 3.5 or higher on Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey	Average between 2.5 and 3.49 on Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey	Average between 1.5 and 2.49 on Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey	Average below 1.5 on Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey
First Week of Team Meeting Review	Language of full confidence	Language of some confidence	Language of minimal confidence	Language of no confidence
Fourth Week of Team Meeting Review	Language of full confidence	Language of some confidence	Language of minimal confidence	Language of no confidence
Eighth Week of Team Meeting Review	Language of full confidence	Language of some confidence	Language of minimal confidence	Language of no confidence
Final Assessment of Self-Efficacy Survey	Average of 3.5 or higher on Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey	Average between 2.5 and 3.49 on Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey	Average between 1.5 and 2.49 on Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey	Average below 1.5 on Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey

Table 4

Data Points Aligned with Study Question 3 Regarding Leadership Skills

	Time Period		
Topic	Beginning Questions	Middle Questions	End Questions
Learning	What do I intend to learn?	What happened? How did it affect me?	Did I learn what I had intended to learn? Why or why not?
Skills	What skills related to transformational leadership do I want to develop?	What was exciting, puzzling, inspiring, frustrating, impressive, upsetting, challenging?	How will I think, act, or behave differently in the future because of this?
Knowledge	What do I already know?	How can I use this material in my work?	In what ways have my sense of self, values and self-confidence been changed because of this experience?
Experiences	What will make this a good experience for me?	How has this experience changed my thoughts, values, or opinions so far?	
Looking Forward	How will I make sure it is?	What will I do differently next time based on what I've learned?	Do I practice any behaviors that reflect a transformational leadership style? Please elaborate.

mental health, behavior, computer time, and academics. Across the inquiry teams and in family survey results, the connection and mental health categories emerged across all groups and demographics. The academic concerns were significant, but to a lesser degree, by Team 2, the upper-grades teachers, which is the grade-levels of End of Grade testing, and by the families of lower-grades students, especially Kindergarten and 1st grade. The teacher working conditions perception data, which were collected prior to COVID-19, indicated staff concerns with behavior, with lower-than-average amounts of agreement that students knew, understood, and complied with behavioral expectations.

For the weekly Morning Meeting data collected by the two teams, the scholarly practitioner collected the responses for each question: the names and numbers of students engaged and disengaged, the strengths and weaknesses of the week, positive findings to highlight and areas of consideration for improvement, and the extent of assistance that Morning Meeting provided for each educator (Kriete & Davis, 2016). These notes were compiled in a multi-week tabbed spreadsheet per question and per team, and the coding was done on a weekly basis and aggregately per team and across both teams per question.

To analyze the data from study question 1, "To what extent does the implementation of Morning Meeting enhance engagement and learning in online settings for elementary school students?" the scholarly practitioner compiled the data referenced in Table 2 from the teams regarding the percent of days per week live and the quality of participation. This information was aggregated throughout the eight weeks to identify the number of weeks that students were engaged. At the school-level, the scholarly practitioner accessed student names and demographics, such as gender, ethnicity, special program status, etc. that was evaluated to determine formative needs throughout the study and next steps after the completion of the study.

To analyze the data from study question 2, "To what extent has the use of Morning Meeting improved (a) teacher self-efficacy and (b) collective teacher efficacy in online settings?" the scholarly practitioner reviewed the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale in Figure 1 to identify the pre-study and post-study scores of the teachers on an individual, team, and staff level. In addition, the scholarly practitioner reviewed the textual feedback in the weekly team meetings after the first, fourth, and eighth week to identify trends and changes. Lastly, to analyze the data from study question 3, "To what extent does collaborative action research affect the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills?" the scholarly practitioner coded the self-reflection journal using the tool in Table 4 to identify the changes over time.

Step 6: Reporting Results

The initial historical data were reported in various venues. The North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey [NCTWC] (2020) was shared with staff via teacher meetings, school improvement team, and on the school and scholarly practitioner's website. In addition, the family and staff concerns were shared with families during the virtual Title 1/Open House meeting. The weekly Morning Meeting data were shared amongst the team in the shared Google Drive team folder, and the previous week's minutes were reviewed and agreed upon during the subsequent week's meeting (Kriete & Davis, 2016). Updates were provided during staff meetings, which occurred bi-weekly via a hybrid Google Meet/face-to-face model, and results were shared at these meetings.

Each week, the scholarly practitioner asked the educators in each team about what went well and what needed improvement. This is done using the school's "strengths and weaknesses" protocol. For eight weeks, the scholarly practitioner collected this data and shared it with the teams at each subsequent week's meeting.

Step 7: Taking Informed Action

Throughout the process and at the conclusion of the study, the scholarly practitioner asked the educators in each team what went well and what could be improved by using the "strengths and weaknesses" protocol from each team meeting. Then in the subsequent meeting, the scholarly practitioner reviewed what had been identified as a strength or weakness, the response to it, and whether that modification was a strength, weakness, or neither. Table 5 describes a chronology of the strengths, weaknesses, and actionable responses.

The scholarly practitioner and teams took informed action prior, during, and after the timespan of this study. The historical data were reviewed and analyzed, which facilitated the informed action of providing training and support in the implementation of Morning Meeting, initially within the virtual context (Kriete & Davis, 2016). On a weekly basis, the teams provided valuable information for action; when providing strengths, weaknesses, and highlights, the teachers shared best practices information that was disseminated via the scholarly practitioner's weekly school newsletter, email, website, Google Classroom, virtual meetings, and socially distanced face-to-face meetings that other teachers utilized as appropriate. A simple example of this occurred in the first week, when a teacher learned how to use extended display monitors so that she could see her activities on one screen and the students on another. Within the next day, the entire staff had redesigned their computer station area to implement this effective practice.

In addition, each team shared concerns that were acted upon in the upcoming week; for example, in the virtual context, the K-2 team (Team 1) identified a need to show students how to "mute" and "un-mute" themselves within the sharing component of Morning Meeting (Kriete & Davis, 2016). On the 3-5 team (Team 2), a "down" occurred when a student shared a facsimile of a firearm on the screen; the team did not even contemplate that as a possibility, so that

Table 5

Strengths, Weaknesses, and Responses per Week

	Types of Feedback		
Week	Ups	Downs	Responses
pre-study			
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
post-study			

occurrence was discussed during a weekly meeting and then the team decided to provide explicit expectations for all families, immediately, on appropriate and acceptable topics and items to share. This is only one example, and further examples, notes, and details will be described in Chapter 4.

Within each team's weekly meeting, names of disengaged and non-participatory students were shared; the counselor and scholarly practitioner maintained this list on a master spreadsheet database that features demographic information such as ethnicity, grade, gender, and special population status (i.e., Exceptional Children, English Language Learner, 504 plan, etc.). This provided the team the immediate venue for making informed action to reach out to families to improve engagement or provide support. However, keeping this data aligned with demographic information provided the chance for patterns at the end of the study, and informed action was taken for more systemic actions for improvement. A potential example that was discussed was if the teams identified that students identified as English Language Learners were less engaged, the team would then develop a plan to focus on how to leverage resources to assist those students. Figure 2 is an example of what teachers bring to the team meetings.

In addition, this information was shared with the community, particularly parents, in multiple methods. The scholarly practitioner led Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings online where student performance and engagement were discussed, particularly in the online setting. Furthermore, the family and educator data on the initial thoughts of online learning and social emotional learning was shared at the Title 1 Open House meeting online.

In Figure 3, an image is provided to share the weekly process of Sagor's seven steps of collaborative action research. This figure was designed as an oval racetrack. Prior to entering the track, the first three steps, selecting focus, clarify theories, and identify research questions, were

Teacher:____

Last Name	First Name	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
		Att	Eng	Att	Eng	Att	Eng	Att	Eng	Att	Eng

Notes. Att stands for ‘Attendance,’ and Eng stands for ‘Engaged.’

Figure 2. Morning Meeting information sheet for team meetings.

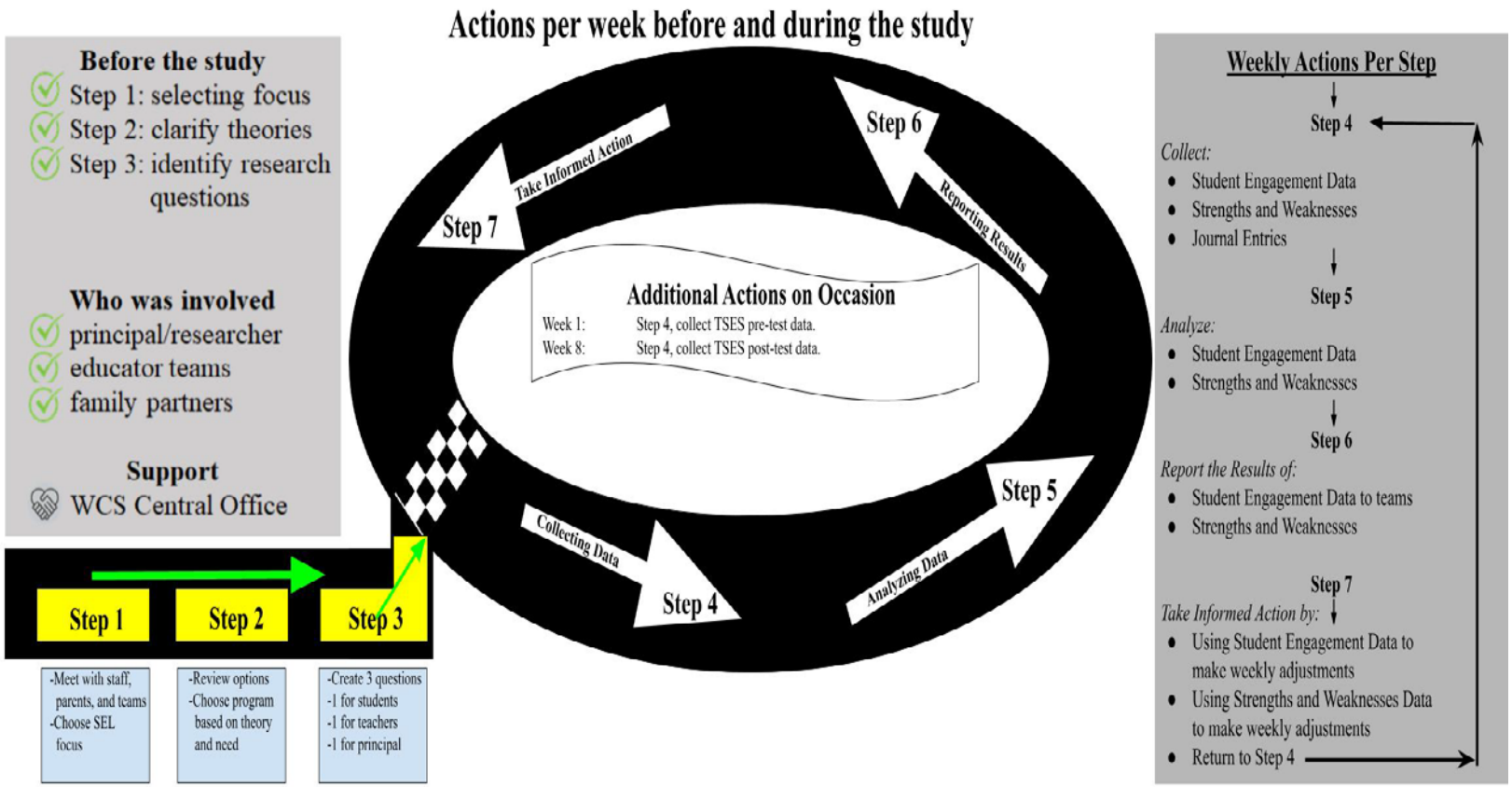


Figure 3. Actions per week before and during the study.

completed. Then, there were arrows in a counterclockwise pattern, each signifying a step, with specific actions completed per week at each step. After step 7, another lap, or cycle, began, which led to a return to step 4. The length of the study was eight weeks, which was represented by eight laps or cycles. Similar to an automobile race where the driver had to make occasional deviations from the normal path for gasoline or tire changes, there were two situations in weeks 1 and 8 that required an additional step. Figure 3 is a graphic representation of this information.

Inquiry Design Rigor

Sagor (2009) describes collaborative action research, in the educational context, as the process when individuals work together on a common focus to ask, "how can my work be modified to produce better results?" by using their individual and collective team knowledge to address the focus (p. 10). Sagor (2009) shows an example of collaborative action research in the context of "non-routine problems," and within collaborative action research, the team uses educator practices of "assessing performance, analyzing problems encountered, prescribing an intervention, monitoring performance, and learning from the experience" to address the focus of the study, similar to "the daily routine of the reflective practitioner" (p. 10).

Schenkels and Jacobs (2018) analyze collaborative action research and compliment the process in terms of "theory development" and "triangulation" because multiple individuals provide more depth and thorough understanding of a problem, or focus, at the professional level. Having multiple grade levels and individuals with different roles was helpful in blending different perspectives and expertise areas, although Schenkels and Jacobs warn that multiple individuals create the potential for one or more people to prioritize their own context and not that of the entirety of the study. However, Sagor (2009) asserts that educators making professionally informed adjustments rather than "proven practice […] with fidelity" is a feature and not a bug

of the collaborative action research process (p. 9). Jacobs (2010) is referenced in Schenkels and Jacobs's 2018 article regarding the participation ladder of collaborative action research; the educator team members at LWES were working at a level six (out of seven), which meant that they worked as "equal partners in defining the problems or needs and the strategies for change" and that "Professionals facilitate and support the process (p. 369)."

Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that that the value and worth of a research study corresponds directly with the trustworthiness of the study. They also identify four sections: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, which are the aspects they indicate as components of trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In order to create credibility, Lincoln and Guba (1985) identify multiple techniques to establish that the findings are true. The first two, "prolonged engagement" and "persistent observation," required the scholarly practitioner to devote time to know, understand, and participate in the context, and they required the scholarly practitioner to focus in great detail on those problems or issues being addressed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The scholarly practitioner, in the role as principal, was engaged throughout the duration of the study, and the focus of the scholarly practitioner's academic and professional work centered on the work of the study. Triangulation required multiple data sources, and this study used both quantitative perception data, quantitative data on numbers of engaged and disengaged students, and qualitative data from the inquiry partner teams.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) use a concept, "thick description," which is making a description with enough details so that others can conclude how the results can apply to other situations, and settings. The background information provided in this study limited the study's context to a rural, small, high-poverty elementary school, but the description of the school's

challenges and concerns was reasonably applicable to other contexts in which student engagement and individual and collective teacher efficacy were issues.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe the "external audit" process where an external person provides feedback as to whether the findings are supported by data. Partially, this process was supported by the parent inquiry partners whose children were participants. These external individuals did not have access to data regarding other children or their engagement or lack thereof, but they provided feedback with regards to their perception of Morning Meeting with their children (Kriete & Davis, 2016).

The scholarly practitioner compiled multiple pieces of data to create a detailed, descriptive understanding (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The process of conducting research, described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as an "audit trail," was detailed thoroughly so that others can identify the steps the scholarly practitioner took. In addition, the scholarly practitioner journaled daily to provide ongoing, formative, and reflective feedback regarding the daily, weekly, and ongoing implementation. The scholarly practitioner's committee assisted in providing an external audit to ensure that findings and assertions are challenged and able to be defended. Lastly, the scholarly practitioner identified biases and beliefs in the study, which was a component of "reflexivity" that impacts the framing and decisions made in implementing and interpreting the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions

The delimitations in this study were numerous. Within the literature, social and emotional learning studies referenced discipline, but due to the virtual learning context of this study, disciplinary incidents were not applicable. In addition, some components of Morning Meeting (Kriete & Davis, 2016) and connections between students and staff were not applicable in the

virtual context that would have been in a face-to-face setting. The focus of practice for this study was bounded by the context of the virtual opening of the fall 2020 semester, at a high poverty, rural elementary school, and it was intended to address a local concern of student connectedness and engagement, as well as individual and collective teacher efficacy, at an individual school. This study was not designed to be statistically generalizable to schools collectively, although it may be relevant to schools in similar contexts and situations.

Due to the inconsistent access of all families to internet access, one category of limitations was technology related. One limitation was based on the connection of families to broadband access. This was partially due to a lack of access within the rural context of LWES in this study, although the school district provided devices and cellular hot spots to those who expressed a need. Another limitation was based on family living situations and student reliability in terms of logging into the live sessions. Since each family had different work situations, some students had varying degrees of supervision for remote virtual learning, which created a data point for action but also possibly skewed the results that may would not otherwise. The educators and families shared another concern that could be a limitation with regards to the attention span of young children with regards to screen time; although LWES created a policy for limited screen time throughout the span of a day, having a sustained 15–30-minute live time for Morning Meeting (Kriete & Davis, 2016) was limiting in student engagement and attention span. Lastly, the student and family competence with technology limited the effectiveness of technology use in online learning; however, LWES scheduled numerous one-to-one and small group support sessions, and Wilson County Schools hosted a multitude of parent engagement sessions on specific topics, such as instructional platforms, and recorded and shared trainings in these so that families were supported. Furthermore, Wilson County Schools deployed technicians and Digital

Teaching and Learning Specialists to have a hotline during and beyond typical instructional hours to help troubleshoot problems.

Another category of limitations centered on the educators involved in the study. Since the scholarly practitioner is the principal, teachers may have responded in a way that they believed was favorable to what they believed the principal believed. The scholarly practitioner attempted to minimize this issue by encouraging open and repercussion-free discussion with the desire to gather authentic data to help in the teaching and learning process. LWES was a small school of fewer than 200 students, which created a small sample size of teachers and students, and the study having taken place at one school limited the sample size. Since Morning Meeting training was facilitated by the scholarly practitioner, counselor, and coach, instead of by outside trainers, another limitation was on the potential effectiveness of the training. However, the scholarly practitioner assigned numerous support staff to view and support the teachers in Morning Meeting to gather information and feedback for continuous improvement. The educators in this study may have also been limited by stressors; COVID-19 and online teaching possibly impacted their performance and/or self-efficacy, and other unrelated or unknown situations could have limited teacher efficiency. Additionally, since the scholarly practitioner was the new principal of the school as of July 2020, the educators could have been further stressed by adapting to a new leader who was replacing the previous principal of eight years. The scholarly practitioner facilitated one-to-one meetings and focused on becoming acquainted with staff members at LWES in order to minimize this limitation.

This study included a number of assumptions. First, the scholarly practitioner assumed that all teachers maintained the value of social emotional learning within the structure of Morning Meeting (Kriete & Davis, 2016). Since the scholarly practitioner discussed this within

the team and individual level, there was an assumption of social desirability to be in favor of social emotional learning rather than intense content due to the volume of discussion about the topic at the district level prior to and during the time that the scholarly practitioner became principal at LWES. This assumption was dealt with through check-ins with the teachers to discuss their thoughts outside the group team structure, and the school improvement coach also conducted these to attempt to receive feedback that may not be socially desirable. Next, this study included the assumption that teachers were comfortable with the live instruction and technology usage. The scholarly practitioner dealt with this assumption by assigning 1-2 staff members to participate within each Morning Meeting so that if there were problems, issues, or concerns, other staff members provided support and can report to the teams so that further assistance was given when necessary.

Role of the Scholarly Practitioner

The scholarly practitioner in this study was the principal at Lee Woodard Elementary School (LWES), an elementary school in Wilson County Schools, who was in his first year as principal at LWES, sixth year of serving as an elementary principal, ninth year in school administration, and thirteenth year in education. The scholarly practitioner directly supervised all of the participants in the study, who were educators at LWES.

For this study, the scholarly practitioner completed all necessary modules from the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) required by East Carolina University. These modules provided knowledge regarding privacy, ethical considerations, and confidentiality. Furthermore, the scholarly practitioner received approval from East Carolina University's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Prior to the beginning of the study, the scholarly practitioner met with participants to notify them of the purpose of the study as well as their rights. The scholarly practitioner described the procedures and collection of data and informed participants that their participation in the collection of qualitative data was voluntary. Since the scholarly practitioner had a supervisory relationship with the teachers as participants, the scholarly practitioner reiterated that participation was voluntary and that there was no impact positively or negatively on observations/evaluations or for any other employment matters.

The scholarly practitioner strived to remain unbiased in the study, as the scholarly practitioner framed questions in the capacity of identifying and examining approaches for overall school improvement; therefore, feedback that was receptive of the inputs or critical of the approaches was valued equally.

Summary

This collaborative action research study examined the extent of impact of the implementation of Morning Meeting on the engagement of students, development of teachers' self and collective efficacy, and leadership of the scholarly practitioner. This was done within the conceptual framework of transformational leadership in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The scholarly practitioner used existing data to identify areas of focus, with teacher and family input as significant, driving factors. Then, the scholarly practitioner and teams implemented Morning Meeting, which aligned with components of transformational leadership: intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, idealized influence, and inspirational motivation (Bass & Avolio, 2000).

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to describe the extent to which the implementation of Morning Meeting enhanced student engagement, teacher efficacy, and the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills. Specifically, this study focused on these aspects of the implementation of Morning Meeting in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The questions guiding this FoP inquiry were:

1. To what extent does the implementation of Morning Meeting enhance engagement and learning in online settings for elementary school students?
2. To what extent does the use of Morning Meeting improve (a) teacher self-efficacy and (b) collective teacher efficacy?
3. To what extent does collaborative action research affect the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills?

Methodology

The scholarly practitioner used collaborative action research (CAR) to answer the question, "what element(s) of our practice or what aspect of student learning do we wish to investigate?" (Sagor, 2000, p. 4). The team employed Sagor's (2000) seven steps:

1. Selecting a focus.
2. Clarifying theories.
3. Identifying research questions.
4. Collecting data.
5. Analyzing data.
6. Reporting results.
7. Taking informed action.

The teachers identified the need for student engagement as a primary need for students, and they recognized that they needed to build confidence in their ability to implement Morning Meeting through the online teaching method. After a review of social and emotional learning data and programming, the teams collaborated with the scholarly practitioner to develop and identify the two research questions about students and teachers, and they provided insight into the third question regarding the leadership of the scholarly practitioner. When the study started, the teams regularly collected, analyzed, reported on, and acted upon the data that was collected on a weekly basis. Figure 3 shows a graphic representation of the methodology in practice.

Participants and Demographics

The participants whose results were measured in the study were the kindergarten through fifth-grade teachers at LWES. These teachers were divided into two grade-clustered teams; team 1 had teachers in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade, and team 2 had teachers in third, fourth, and fifth grade. In addition, the scholarly practitioner, school counselor, and school improvement coach participated in and facilitated both grade-clustered teams. Each teacher and the school counselor were white females, and the scholarly practitioner and instructional coach were white males. The scholarly practitioner was the only participant new to LWES for the 2020-21 school year.

All homeroom teachers participated in the study, and each team featured four teachers. Teachers B, C, D, and M were on team 1, and teachers E, G, H, and N were on team 2. The remaining letters (A, I, F, J, K, and L) were not part of this study but were used in the scholarly practitioner's role as principal. Table 6 showed the teacher composition per team for the analysis of student engagement, and Table 7 showed the teacher composition per team for the Teacher Self-efficacy Survey (TSES).

Table 6

Teacher Membership for Assessing Student Engagement

Teacher	Grade(s) Taught	Team
Teacher 1	Kindergarten	1
Teacher 2	Kindergarten/1st Grade	1
Teacher 3	1st Grade/2nd Grade	1
Teacher 4	2nd Grade	1
Teacher 5	3rd Grade	2
Teacher 6	3rd Grade/4th Grade	2
Teacher 7	4th Grade/5th Grade	2
Teacher 8	5th Grade	2

Table 7

Teacher Membership by Team for the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale

Teacher	Team
B	1
C	1
D	1
M	1
E	2
G	2
H	2
N	2
A	Special Areas
I	Special Areas
F	Non-Instructional: both teams
J	Non-Instructional: both teams
K	Non-Instructional: both teams
L	Non-Instructional: both teams

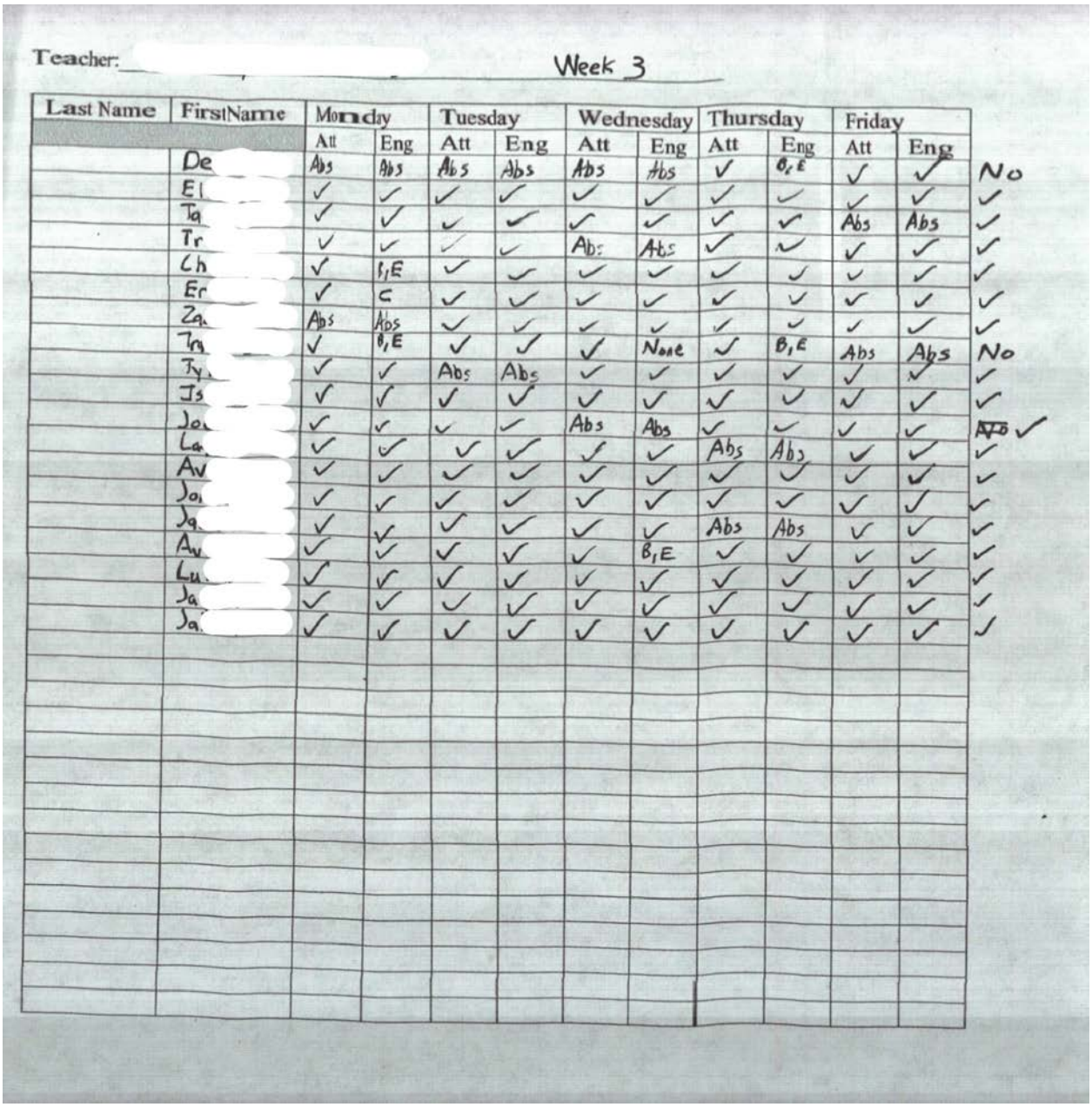
Collaborative Action Research

Just as the collaborative action research process was employed in the development of the topics, clarification of theories that informed the topics, and identification of research questions, Sagor's (2000) CAR process was used for the duration of the study as it took place. The teams of educators collected all of the engagement data prior to the team meetings that were organized by the scholarly practitioner. Before and during the weekly team meetings, the educators applied the standard of engagement to determine the quantity and quality of engagement, and the teams also contributed their perceived strengths and weaknesses to share at the weekly meetings. During the team meetings, the scholarly practitioner compiled the results that the teachers reported and shared these results during and after the meetings, specifically about student engagement and strengths and weaknesses. Then, the educator teams considered the data to make informed actions and adjustments for the following week. This process repeated itself on a weekly basis for the duration of the study.

Data Collection

The study took place for eight weeks, from Thursday, August 20th, 2020 through Friday, October 16th, 2021. Figure 3 shows a chronological timeline of what occurred before the study, during the study, and after the study.

During this time, classroom teachers took attendance and measured engagement daily using their gradebooks. The descriptors in Table 2 were used by teachers to complete weekly engagement reports, as shown by the example in Figure 4. Both the K-2 team and 3-5 team met online weekly via Google Meet and shared their attendance and engagement data and provided oral feedback for the notes to be coded regarding both teacher efficacy and student engagement.



Teacher: _____ Week 3

Last Name	FirstName	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		
		Att	Eng	Att	Eng	Att	Eng	Att	Eng	Att	Eng	
	De	Abs	Abs	Abs	Abs	Abs	Abs	✓	B, E	✓	✓	No
	El	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Ta	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Abs	Abs	✓
	Tr	✓	✓	✓	✓	Abs	Abs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Ch	✓	B, E	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Er	✓	C	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Za	Abs	Abs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Tra	✓	B, E	✓	✓	✓	None	✓	B, E	Abs	Abs	No
	Ty	✓	✓	Abs	Abs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Js	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Jo	✓	✓	✓	✓	Abs	Abs	✓	✓	✓	✓	~~Abs~~ ✓
	La	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Abs	Abs	✓	✓	✓
	Av	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Jo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Ja	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Abs	Abs	✓	✓	✓
	Aw	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	B, E	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Lu	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Ja	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Ja	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Figure 4. Sample of teacher gradebook marking assessment.

Each teacher completed these gradebooks and brought them to the weekly team meetings. The summary of this data was accumulated in Table 8.

Eight teachers completed the pre-study Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES) on August 20th, and the same eight teachers completed the post-study TSES on October 26th. These surveys were completed independently and anonymously through paper forms and submitted to the instructional coach, who then submitted the paper TSES forms to the scholarly practitioner on August 24th. The scholarly practitioner inserted the data into SPSS during the week of August 31st. At the end of the study, teachers practiced the same procedure for the post-test TSES on October 26th. The scholarly practitioner was provided the data on November 2nd and inserted the data into SPSS on November 2nd. Before, during, and after the study, the scholarly practitioner maintained a daily self-reflective journal using prompts in Table 9 from Cynthia Roberts, Associate Professor of Organizational Leadership and Supervision at Purdue (Roberts, 2008). The number of journal entries completed before, during, and after the study, as well as the prompting questions answered per time period, were included in Table 10.

In addition to staff-collected data regarding educators, additional data were gathered about the students. Teachers took attendance to determine baseline level engagement, specifically about whether students had logged in for the Morning Meeting lesson. Then, on a daily and weekly basis, student engagement data were calculated based on whether students were behaviorally, emotionally, and/or cognitively engaged. Students were marked as fully engaged if they were literally present for attendance and fully engaged; conversely, students were listed as partially engaged as long as they were present and engaged either behaviorally, emotionally, or cognitively. Typically, if a student was marked as partially engaged, it was because the student did not participate in the academic component of Morning Meeting. On a few occasions, a

Table 8

Weekly Engagement per Teacher

				Number of Fully Engaged Students per Week							
Team	Teacher	Grade	Students	Wk1	Wk2	Wk3	Wk4	Wk5	Wk6	Wk7	Wk8
1	1	K	20	6	19	16	19	19	17	18	19
1	2	K/1	19	10	17	17	17	18	17	17	18
1	3	½	18	9	16	16	16	18	16	17	18
1	4	2	19	10	17	17	18	19	18	18	18
Team 1 Total	Team 1	K/1/2	76	35	69	66	70	74	68	70	73
2	5	3	21	18	20	21	20	19	21	20	20
2	6	¾	25	20	20	23	23	21	24	22	22
2	7	4/5	30	25	26	27	27	25	28	27	27
2	8	5	26	20	22	22	21	21	18	21	21
Team 2 Total	Team 2	3/4/5	102	83	88	93	91	86	91	90	90
Combined Total	All	K-5	178	118	157	159	161	160	159	160	163

Table 9

Self-Reflection Journal Prompts Organized by the Time of the Study and Topics Addressed

	Time Period		
Topic	Beginning Questions	Middle Questions	End Questions
Learning	What do I intend to learn?	What happened? How did it affect me?	Did I learn what I had intended to learn? Why or why not?
Skills	What skills related to transformational leadership do I want to develop?	What was exciting, puzzling, inspiring, frustrating, impressive, upsetting, challenging?	How will I think, act, or behave differently in the future because of this?
Knowledge	What do I already know?	How can I use this material in my work?	In what ways have my sense of self, values and self-confidence been changed because of this experience?
Experiences	What will make this a good experience for me?	How has this experience changed my thoughts, values, or opinions so far?	
Looking Forward	How will I make sure it is?	What will I do differently next time based on what I've learned?	Do I practice any behaviors that reflect a transformational leadership style? Please elaborate.

Table 10

Self-Reflection Journal Entries Organized by the Time of the Study and Prompts Addressed

	Time Period		
Dates	Pre-Study July 17-August 19	During the Study August 20-October 16	Post-Study October 17-November 3
Number of Entries	10	38	10
Learning	What do I intend to learn?	What happened? How did it affect me?	Did I learn what I had intended to learn? Why or why not?
Skills	What skills related to transformational leadership do I want to develop?	What was exciting, puzzling, inspiring, frustrating, impressive, upsetting, challenging?	How will I think, act, or behave differently in the future because of this?
Knowledge	What do I already know?	How can I use this material in my work?	In what ways have my sense of self, values and self-confidence been changed because of this experience?
Experiences	What will make this a good experience for me?	How has this experience changed my thoughts, values, or -opinions so far?	
Looking Forward	How will I make sure it is?	What will I do differently next time based on what I've learned?	Do I practice any behaviors that reflect a transformational leadership style? Please elaborate.

student would be marked as partially engaged because the student would complete the activity but was non-participatory in the greeting or social component of Morning Meeting. After each week's data were compiled, each student was determined to be fully engaged if the student was present and fully engaged at least 75% of the time. This data helped in answering the first study question about student engagement because a numerical answer was generated per student, per class, per grade span, and per numerous demographic areas.

The first week attendance data included skewed attendance and engagement data. During the first week of the study, from August 20 to August 26, 2020, the attendance and engagement data were impacted because 22% of students attended a local childcare facility with inadequate internet capacity, which resulted in very few of those students being able to access instruction. The childcare facility could only maintain half of the students online simultaneously. The scholarly practitioner acquired a cellular hotspot to assist and provided information to the childcare director so that students in the same class could sit closer together and watch on one device. On the weekend of August 22, the childcare facility purchased additional bandwidth and installed additional devices to provide more thorough internet service.

All eight educators completed both iterations of the TSES within the study timeframe; specifically, the TSES was completed on August 20 and October 26, 2020. These dates were within the study timeframe between August 20 and the post-study date of November 3, 2020. Teachers were all present for each of the ten team meetings for providing attendance and engagement data and feedback; sometimes, the meetings fluctuated from Tuesday to Friday from week to week to accommodate logistic needs. The K-2 team met on August 19, August 27, September 3, September 8, September 18, September 23, October 1, October 6, October 15, and October 22. The 3-5 team met on August 21, August 28, September 1, September 10,

September 17, September 24, October 2, October 7, October 13, and October 20. No other deviations or irregularities occurred during the data collection component of the study.

Note: Action research steps 1, 2, and 3 took place prior to the dissertation proposal and were explained in greater detail in Chapter 3. The next three sections on action steps 1, 2, and 3 summarized the first three action steps for the reader's ease as a reminder of how these steps led to the data collection and analysis.

Action Research Step 1: Selecting a Focus

Educator input was the primary data source collected and analyzed in the first phase of the collaborative action research study. The scholarly practitioner met with teachers and asked, "what element(s) of our practice or what aspect of student learning do we wish to investigate?" (Sagor, 2000, p. 4). Teachers in their K-2 and 3-5 teams shared their answers verbally. All staff members also met with the scholarly practitioner in the summer of 2020 and shared their private, individual thoughts of what went well and the challenges of the previous year. Their answers were shared with the full staff in the late summer of 2020. From this anecdotal information, the staff all commented about the need for students to return to active participation since the spring of 2020 ended with no live instruction. Therefore, the early data were analyzed and the focuses of student engagement and building teacher efficacy were selected.

Action Research Step 2: Clarifying Theories

For the second phase, the full staff was shared information about social and emotional learning (SEL) from the website for the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). Multiple SEL programs were reviewed, and costs were provided to the LWES educators from the SEL program vendors by the scholarly practitioner. Table 11 was created with the LWES staff, which was used in the decision-making process.

Table 11

Social and Emotional Learning Program Costs

	Expenditure Categories		
Program	Materials Cost	Professional Development Cost	Total Cost
Morning Meeting	$450	$0	$450
Conscious Discipline	$435	$4,000	$4,435
Capturing Kids Hearts	$500	$4,200	$4,700
Second Step	$0	$0	$0
Positive Action	$2,500	$3,000	$5,500

The staff examined the various programs and in the analysis of the SEL programs, they chose Responsive Classroom's Morning Meeting as the program that most aligned with the staff's goals while simultaneously fitting into the school's limited budget. Although "Second Step" would be at no cost, limited training availability was identified as disqualifying.

Action Research Step 3: Identifying Research Questions

The data from the first and second action research steps were used to identify the research questions. The staff-identified needs influenced the focus on student engagement through the implementation of Morning Meeting. However, the teachers further recognized that they needed confidence to administer online instruction based on their own concerns about facilitating student engagement and their limited experiences at teaching online. That information about teacher confidence along with the data collected about engagement concerns data components led to the first question regarding student engagement and second study question about enhancing teacher efficacy. Because the scholarly practitioner was in the first year of the principalship at LWES and due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic response, the scholarly practitioner added the third study question about enhancing leadership skills through using the collaborative action research process to address the first two study questions.

Action Research Step 4: Collecting Data

Numerous data points were collected prior to the study which were described in action research steps 1, 2, and 3. However, during the course of the study and in the three weeks after the eighth week of the study, data were collected by the educators and scholarly practitioner on a daily and weekly basis.

Study Question 1 Data Collection

For study question 1 regarding student engagement, individual teachers collected student attendance and assessed engagement per day, and then per week. Figure 4 was an example of a daily and weekly tabulation of student engagement, and Table 8 was created from the combined sets of individual teacher reports.

During the ten team meetings per team, teacher comments were collected regarding the type of engagement observed by the teachers. Figure 5 was a sample of teacher comments during a K-2 team meeting. The yellow comments indicated behavioral engagement, and the blue comments reflected emotional engagement.

The scholarly practitioner compiled cumulative comments by adding the number of statements or comments per engagement type; in other words, teachers affirming or nodding was not added as an individual comment. The highlighting was done by the scholarly practitioner in order to sort statements and comments. Because meetings included dialogue and physical body language, the scholarly practitioner reviewed notes and google meet videos and transcripts in order to notate individual, unique statements.

Study Question 2 Data Collection

In addition to student engagement information, data for study question 2 regarding teacher efficacy were collected. Numerical data from the Teacher Self-efficacy Survey (TSES) was gathered in a pre-test before the study and a post-test after the study. All eight teachers completed the pre-test TSES and post-test TSES in August and October, respectively. The raw results were collected and shared in Table 12.

In addition to the TSES data, the scholarly practitioner reviewed team meeting notes and identified how they corresponded with four categories of efficacy, “job accomplishment,” “skill

Teacher	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
Team Span	K-2	K-2	K-2	K-2
Strengths	Ss getting in routine	Ss following directions	Ss able to get on and understand the routine	Ss getting on at a high rate
	Adding the share component helped in structuring the oversharing that the K Ss were doing	The Ss liked sharing, almost like show and tell	Ss liked to share	Structure of sharing was logical next step

Figure 5. Sample of teacher comments with highlighting per category.

Table 12

Teacher Pre and Post Study Changes on the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale

Teacher Pre and Post Study Results Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale

			Questions										
Team	Teacher	Test	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Sum
1	B												
		Pre	2	4	3	4	2	3	3	3	2	3	29
		Post	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	38
1	C												
		Pre	2	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	3	34
		Post	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	40
1	D												
		Pre	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	32
		Post	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	39
1	M												
		Pre	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	2	2	2	30
		Post	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	35
2	E												
		Pre	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	37
		Post	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	38
2	G												
		Pre	2	3	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	33
		Post	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	35
2	H												
		Pre	2	3	2	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	29
		Post	3	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	34

Table 12 (continued)

Teacher Pre and Post Study Results Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale

			Questions										
Team	Teacher	Test	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Sum
2	N												
		Pre	3	4	3	3	4	3	4	2	2	2	30
		Post	2	4	3	3	3	2	4	2	3	2	28

Teacher	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
Team Span	3-5	3-5	3-5	3-5
Strengths	started experimenting with group activity after sharing and the Ss participated well	getting support this week from coach has been very helpful	bouncing ideas from the other adults in the MM	the kids know the routine and I've been able to integrate the full-day expectations during the MM so there would be no excuse for 'not knowing'
Weaknesses	a few Ss like to turn their cameras off	frustration at getting Ss to do work after starting off well in MM	Ss getting a little bored, but self-reflecting about how to make it more interesting	some Ss are babysitting younger Ss during time they should be on live too
Helpful Ideas	Using headphones to block out noise	If using a doc-cam, don't use dual monitors--can't handle too many tools	Using color-coded/number signs to vote on screen or express opinion among options (also...makes camera-on more likely)	don't plug too many things in or it goes slow (doc cam + 2 monitors + projector + printer, etc)
Impact on Self as Educator	still focusing on SEL but trying to be more effective	identifying what works and being willing to cut what doesn't	finding ways to get results other than just mandates, which are hard to do in a remote setting anyway	trying to become efficient when dealing with new tools and strategies

Figure 6. Sample of teacher comments for teacher efficacy.

development," "social interaction," and "coping with job stress" as identified by Schwarzer et al. (1999). Figure 6 was created in a 3-5 team meeting; blue highlights signified "job accomplishment," yellow highlights indicated "skill development," gray highlights showed "social interaction," and green highlights aligned with "coping with job stress."

Study Question 3 Data Collection

For study question 3, the scholarly practitioner maintained a daily journal by answering question prompts by answering prompts from a self-reflection tool by Cynthia Roberts, Associate Professor of Organizational Leadership and Supervision at Purdue. The journal entries were handwritten, coded by hand, and scanned for backup onto the scholarly practitioner's private computer and memory card. The journal entries were completed on a daily basis, Monday through Friday, except on holidays or for sickness. Table 9 was used to organize the prompts by the time period of the study. At the end of the study, the scholarly practitioner collected further data by identifying categories of comments based on Bass's "4 Is" of "individualized consideration," "inspirational motivation," "idealized influence," and "intellectual stimulation." This information was compiled in Table 13.

Action Research Step 5: Analyzing Data

During the study's eight weeks, some of the data were analyzed on a weekly basis in order to adjust; however, the aggregated data were analyzed at the end of the study. Each study question was evaluated qualitatively using the Protocol Coding method, described by Johnny Saldaña as the "coding of qualitative data according to a pre-established, recommended, standardized, or prescribed system" in which the "list of codes and categories provided to the researcher is applied after his or her own data collection" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 175). After the study ended, and after codes were applied to the data, the scholarly practitioner applied a secondary

Table 13

Leadership Comments Sorted by Category

Category	Frequency
Individualized Consideration	48
Inspirational Motivation	41
Idealized Influence	28
Intellectual Stimulation	48

analysis and analyzed for themes "to discern and label its content and meaning according to the needs of the inquiry" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 15). These themes were developed based on the unique responses and content of the study questions.

In addition, study questions 1 and 2 included numerical data that were analyzed. For study question 1, teacher gradebooks included student rosters with attendance and teacher-determined levels of engagement. That information was then analyzed to identify student participation and further disaggregation based on grade levels, demographics, and other factors. In study question 2, teachers completed a pre-test and post-test Teacher Self-efficacy Survey (TSES), and that numerical data were calculated, disaggregated by teacher team, and averaged to identify results on a per-question and overall basis.

Study Question 1 Data Analysis

The first study question, "To what extent does the implementation of Morning Meeting enhance engagement and learning in online settings for elementary school students?" required the gathering of numerical student attendance and numerical student participation as well as qualitative data about what the teachers experienced with student engagement. Each teacher, individually and in team meetings, analyzed their daily and weekly attendance and engagement data as collected in their gradebooks. The scholarly practitioner entered that data into a Google spreadsheet and corroborated that data with the PowerSchool data management system. Eight total teachers, with four on both teams, was the sample used. Team 1 teachers had 20, 19, 18, and 19 students on their rosters. Team 2 teachers had 21, 25, 30, and 26 students on their rosters. This analysis during the study resulted in identifying individual students who had technical difficulties, behavioral concerns, social issues, or academic problems at the class and student level. These comments were coded as "behavioral engagement," "emotional engagement," and

"cognitive engagement," as described by Fredricks et al. (2004, p. 60). These codes were applied to the data collected in team meetings and individual teacher gradebooks regarding student engagement in Morning Meeting.

During the study, results for study question 1 regarding student engagement were shared on a weekly basis in the ten team meetings. The scholarly practitioner asked teachers to share their attendance and engagement data, which were then tabulated and shared for all to see. Table 8 was compiled after the eight weeks of the study, but it was being added to throughout the study. Weekly engagement was determined by considering active, full engagement for 75% of the days per week. This information was compiled per week, per teacher, and per team in Table 8. The results in Table 8 were a summary of the reporting of the attendance and engagement.

Week 1 included the discrepancy noted earlier regarding the internet bandwidth at the local childcare facility. Therefore, this data were analyzed in order to separate the students having the childcare facility's internet problems from those who were not impacted by the facility. The week 1 information included numerous situations where students alternated participation due to internet bandwidth, and teachers accommodated by recording the lessons for families to view asynchronously in the evening or weekend. In week 2, the childcare facility's internet issues were resolved, and all eight teachers reported an increase in student engagement. However, based on the number of students in the childcare facility who were able to be fully engaged in week 1, the increase in engagement in week 2 was larger than what could be attributable to the resolution of the childcare facility's internet. From week 1 to week 2, 39 more students became "fully engaged," but only 28 of those students attended the childcare facility, which meant another 11 students became fully engaged between week 1 and week 2.

During and after the first two weeks, the teams worked to recognize trends in analyzing this attendance and engagement data; specific students were identified and reported to the scholarly practitioner and student services team whenever issues arose. The teams also looked at daily attendance rates to see if certain days of the week were an influence, and no pattern in any class was identified. Week 1 data were skewed because of internet capacity at a childcare facility that held more than 20% of our students, but that situation was remedied within the first week and was no longer a factor after that week. Teacher comments were analyzed when situations arose regarding individual students and/or families, which resulted in school-based actions and supports.

Figure 7 was maintained on a weekly basis to show a change in full engagement per teacher, per team, and overall. Week 1 was noted as a gray "=" sign, increase was noted as a green "+" sign, and decline was noted as a pink "-" symbol. An additional color, blue, was used if a class or team had full engagement, regardless of whether the class or team maintained or increased.

During week 3, the Kindergarten teacher (teacher 1) observed a decrease in engagement with students, although those parents remained in communication and indicated that the students were having difficulties at attending to live online teaching. Teachers 2, 3, 4, and 8 maintained their attendance from weeks 2 to 3, and teachers 1, 5, 6, and 7 showed increases. As a result, team 1 showed a decline from weeks 2 to 3, team 2 showed an increase from weeks 2 to 3, and the entire school increased by two students from weeks 2 to 3.

In week 4, the Kindergarten engagement increase by three students, and all but one student was actively engaged. One additional student in teacher 4's second-grade class who had been absent for the first few weeks began engaging during the fourth week. The other two

Team	Teacher	Grade	Students	Change in Engagement from Prior Week							
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1											
	1	K	20	=	+	-	+	=	-	+	+
	2	K/1	19	=	+	=	=	+	-	=	+
	3	1/2	18	=	+	=	=	+	-	+	+
	4	2	19	=	+	=	+	+	-	=	=
	Team 1	K/1/2	76	=	+	-	+	+	-	+	+
2											
	5	3	21	=	+	+	-	-	+	-	=
	6	3/4	25	=	=	+	=	-	+	-	=
	7	4/5	30	=	+	+	=	-	+	-	=
	8	5	26	=	+	=	-	=	-	+	=
	Team 2	3/4/5	102	=	+	+	-	-	+	-	=
1 & 2											
	All	K-5	178	=	+	+	+	-	-	+	+

Figure 7. Changes in engagement over time.

teachers in team 1 maintained the same engagement, resulting in a net positive increase of four students in team 1 from weeks 3 to 4. On team 2, teachers 5 and 8 each had one less student engaged, whereas teachers 6 and 7 maintained the same engagement. Therefore, team 2 had a net decline in two students from weeks 3 to 4, and the entire school had an increase of two students between weeks 3 and 4.

During week 5, teachers 2, 3, and 4 had increases; in fact, teachers 3 and 4 had all their students engaged. Teacher 1 only had one student disengaged, which was the same as in week 4. Team 1 increased by four students again from weeks 4 to 5. However, team 2 was marked by declines from teachers 5, 6, and 7, while teacher 8 maintained the same amount of engagement. No observed relationships existed among the students who were newly disengaged in week 5 from team 2. The overall engagement declined by one student.

In week 6, each teacher in team 1 had declines. From team 2, teacher 8 had a three-student decline, but teachers 5, 6, and 7 had increases. The overall engagement dropped by one student. During the Wednesday of this week, the school board voted to return to face-to-face instruction in a month. For the following two days, teachers noted that attendance declined in each class. At the end of the week 6 meeting, the scholarly practitioner sent a phone message, text message, and correspondences in Seesaw (for team 1) and Google Classroom (for team 2) reminding families that online instruction remained until face-to-face instruction started.

During week 7, overall attendance increased by one student. Team 1 increased by two students and team 2 dropped by one student. Teachers noted that this week's attendees were almost primarily the students who had been engaged throughout the study, with the disengaged students being the ones who had been either disengaged the whole time or the ones who had been inconsistent.

In week 8, team 1's attendance increased by three students to 73 and team 2's engagement was maintained at 90. Three of the teachers in team 1 added one student apiece from week 7 to 8, and the remaining teachers had the same number of students in weeks 7 and 8. The attendance on the final week of the study was the highest of all eight weeks, whereas weeks 1 and 2 had the least number of engaged students.

In addition to weekly analysis, the scholarly practitioner worked with the eight teachers to analyze student engagement on a class-by-class level. This information was compiled during weekly team meetings and in individual conferences.

Teacher 1, the kindergarten teacher in team 1, reported one student with disabilities who rarely checked in to Morning Meeting. The teacher instead worked to accommodate the student with individual sessions. In addition, this teacher reported that two students who are twins only logged in half of the time due to multiple relocations and intermittent internet access during the duration of the study, which is why they were identified as "mostly disengaged." Teacher 1 reported that one student attended regularly but inconsistently participated, which is why the student was noted as "partially engaged."

Teacher 2 indicated that one student's family schedule was incompatible with the daily instructional schedule, as the child was at a grandparent's house with limited internet capacity until the parent took the child home in the morning, which prevented that student from being able to participate in Morning Meeting. Teacher 2 also had two students whose attendance and engagement fit in either the "mostly disengaged" or "partially engaged" categories.

Teacher 3 noted one student was fully disengaged, and that student was new to the school during the 2020-21 academic year. The teacher indicated that the child was fully disengaged from all academic activity for the first few weeks of the study and the parent expressed a desire

to have the student complete only asynchronous activities. In addition, teacher 3 indicated that two other students had inconsistent engagement that qualified as either "mostly disengaged" or "partially engaged."

Teacher 4 had the only student who unenrolled during the study, which occurred in week 8, although the student stayed on the roster officially for two weeks after the study because of paperwork issues with starting a homeschool. The child whom teacher 4 indicated was "fully disengaged" logged on a few times in the first two weeks and then the mother noted a change in living situations and no longer responded to school communications. Teacher 4 had three other students who had inconsistent participation to varying degrees.

Within team 2, teacher 5 had four students who were occasionally non-participatory. The scholarly practitioner noted through observation of Google Classroom messages and conversations with families that teacher 5 was thoroughly persistent at getting families involved so that students would be engaged and participating. No students in teacher 3's class were disengaged for more than three consecutive days.

Teacher 6 had one student who was new to the school during the 2020-21 academic year who was completely disengaged. The teacher attempted messaging and calling, and the scholarly practitioner deployed the school counselor and social worker to intervene, in addition to the scholarly practitioner and school social worker conducting home visits. However, the parent indicated that the students would complete no work until face-to-face instruction resumed. Another seven students were intermittently engaged to varying degrees, not all at once, but at different points during the study.

Teacher 7 had a pair of students who were the siblings of the child in teacher 6's class who had been the focus of numerous unsuccessful interventions; therefore, these two students

were fully disengaged. Another five students were partially or somewhat engaged at different points of the study. Two of these five students were "mostly disengaged" because their parent removed internet access as a disciplinary measure for nearly half of the study, and during that time, those students only completed paper and pencil assignments.

Teacher 8 had one student who was fully disengaged due to intense complications with the child's living situation. Although the teacher maintained regular communication and numerous interventions were completed by multiple school staff, the student privately expressed reluctance at participating in live Morning Meetings. The teacher indicated that the student was reluctant to turn on the camera and microphone because of embarrassment; therefore, the teacher made private accommodations with the student, but the student did not participate in Morning Meeting with the remainder of the class. Another six students had inconsistent engagement, five of which were "partially engaged."

In addition to class and grade span engagement analysis, additional data were collected to show the levels of engagement disaggregated by ethnicity, English Language Learner (EL) status, and Exceptional Children (EC) identification. Table 14 shows the engagement data sorted by ethnicity in raw numbers and percentages. Table 15 also uses actual numbers and percentages, and it shows engagement information based on special population status, specifically EC and EL, and is sorted by those who receive those services and those who do not.

When comparing the fully engaged rates by ethnicity, a small difference of 6% separates White and Black students, but LatinX students are ten percentage points below the entire school average. However, when combining fully and partially engaged, the two highest degrees of engagement, the rates are nearly identical; Black students were at 88%, White students at 89%,

Table 14

Engagement Data by Ethnicity

	Degree of Engagement								
	Fully Engaged		Partially Engaged		Mostly Disengaged		Not Participating		
Ethnicity	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Total
Black	50	77%	7	11%	4	6%	4	6%	65
White	66	83%	5	6%	5	6%	4	5%	80
LatinX	22	67%	7	21%	1	3%	3	9%	33
All	138	77%	19	11%	10	6%	11	6%	178

Table 15

Engagement Data by Special Population

	Degree of Engagement								
	Fully Engaged		Partially Engaged		Mostly Disengaged		Not Participating		
Population	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Total
EC	11	52%	7	33%	2	10%	1	5%	21
Not EC	127	81%	12	8%	8	5%	10	6%	157
EL	8	67%	3	25%	1	8%	0	0%	12
Not EL	130	78%	16	10%	9	5%	11	7%	166

LatinX students at 88%, and all students at 88%. For the "not participating" category, four Black students, four White students, and three LatinX students were classified as not participating.

For special populations, 52% of students identified as Exceptional Children (EC) were fully engaged while 81% of students not identified as EC were fully engaged. However, when combining full and partial engagement, the ratios become closer, with 85% of students identified as EC noted as fully or partially engaged, and 89% of students not identified as EC noted as fully or partially engaged. The "not participating" rate is also similar regardless of EC status, at 5% for EC and 6% for not EC.

EL students had a lower rate of full engagement than non-EL students, with 67% and 78% of engagement, respectively. However, somewhat like the EC data, when combining full and partial engagement, the numbers not only get closer, but EL students are more likely to be considered fully or partially engaged, at 92%, than non-EL students, at 88%. No EL students were identified as not participating, whereas eleven students, or 7%, of non-EL students were observed as not participating.

At the completion of the eight-week study, teachers assessed each student's cumulative engagement as either "Fully Engaged," "Partially Engaged," "Mostly Disengaged," or "Not Participating." Weekly engagement was determined by the percent of days engaged per week, and cumulative engagement was determined by the number of weeks each student was engaged and to what extent. To be considered "fully engaged" for a week, students must have been in attendance and exhibiting behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement for 75% of the week. To be considered "fully engaged" for the eight weeks of the study, a student must have been recognized as "fully engaged" for 75%, or six weeks, of the eight-week study. "Partial engagement" signified engagement ranges between 50 and 74%; "mostly disengaged" was

described as having engagement between 20 and 49%, and "not participating" meant that engagement occurred less than 20% of the time. Table 16 was compiled for a more complete picture of student engagement during the course of the study.

For study question 1, "To what extent does the implementation of Morning Meeting enhance engagement and learning in online settings for elementary school students?" the scholarly practitioner reviewed the team meeting notes during each week of the study. In each meeting, teachers were asked about the strengths and weaknesses of the week and asked to share details regarding their students' engagement. At the conclusion of the study, the scholarly practitioner reviewed the notes and coded them using Protocol Coding. Specifically, for this study question, the scholarly practitioner applied the following codes regarding engagement: "behavioral engagement," "emotional engagement," and "cognitive engagement," as described by Fredricks et al. (2004, p. 60).

During the eight-week study, teachers provided feedback using their perceived "strengths" and "weaknesses" regarding Morning Meeting to address the study question about student engagement. During the first coding of comments, using the Protocol Coding method, the scholarly practitioner categorized comments into three categories: "behavioral engagement," "emotional engagement," and "cognitive engagement." Then, the comments in each category were analyzed and sorted into themes, shown in Figure 8. Table 17 then shows the comments per category, per theme, and per team.

The student engagement comments were shared on a cumulative, ongoing Google sheets database. The scholarly practitioner summarized what was reviewed the previous week and then shared notes from the prior week. An example in Figure 9 was lifted from the combined "strengths" tab, specifically focusing on the second week, across all grade levels.

Table 16

Summary of Engagement per Teacher, per Team, and Overall

				Measure of Engagement			
Team	Teacher	Grade	Students	Fully Engaged	Partially Engaged	Mostly Disengaged	Not Participating
1	1	K	20	16	1	2	1
1	2	K/1	19	16	1	1	1
1	3	1/2	18	15	1	1	1
1	4	2	19	15	2	1	1
	1/2/3/4	K-2	76	62	5	5	4
2	5	3	21	17	2	2	0
2	6	3/4	25	17	4	3	1
2	7	4/5	30	23	3	2	2
2	8	5	26	19	5	1	1
	5/6/7/8	3-5	102	76	14	8	4
Combined Total	All	K-5	178	138	19	13	8

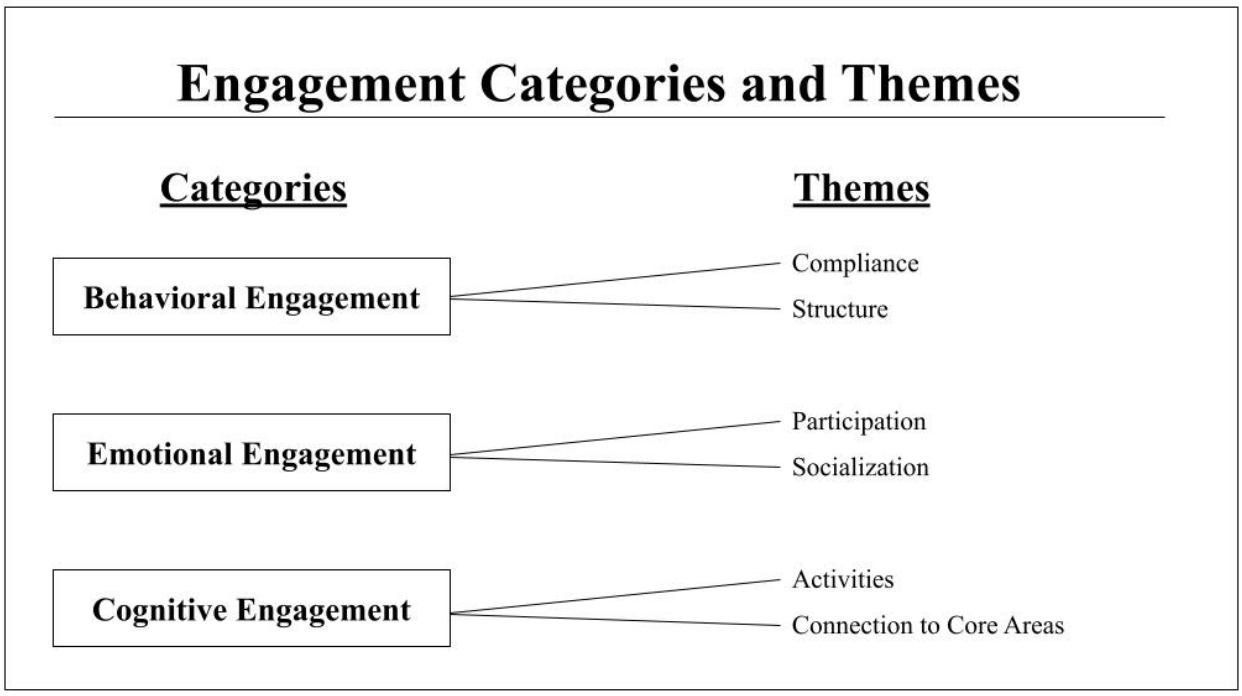


Figure 8. Engagement categories and themes.

Table 17

Engagement Comments Sorted by Category and Theme, per Team and Overall

Category	Theme	Team 1	Team 2
Behavioral			
	Compliance	15	16
	Structure	6	8
Emotional			
	Participation	6	7
	Socialization	4	4
Cognitive			
	Activities	5	1
	Connection to Core Areas	6	6

Figure 9. Sample of student engagement comments reported weekly.

In "School Engagement: Potential of the Concept, State of the Evidence," aggregate assessments of behavioral engagement "combine conduct, persistence, and participation in a single scale" (Fredricks et al., 2004, p. 62). After initial coding of educator comments, which resulted in 45 "behavioral engagement" statements, thematic analysis was conducted, which separated behavioral engagement into two themes: compliance, or adherence to conduct and participation expectations within Morning Meeting, and structure, or the response to the format, layout, and organization of the Morning Meeting construct.

For both teams, behavioral engagement comments constituted most of the comments collected. Of team 1's comments, 50% of them related to a form of behavioral engagement, and from team 2's comments, 57% related to behavioral engagement. Within the behavioral engagement category, 71% of team 1's comments and 66% of team 2's comments fit within the "compliance" theme. Examples of "compliance" statements that were strengths include: "Nearly all students participated and responded to the prompting questions in morning meeting," "Students understand the expectations and are sharing within morning meeting," "All the students got on," and "Students participated in the group activity component well."

Half of the "compliance" statements were identified from the weaknesses question. Examples of these include: "Some of the students got squirmy because they had to share a screen at daycare due to their internet," "Students had a hard time maintaining their attention after a while," "Some of the students misbehaved but to be fair they had to scrunch onto one screen because of the daycare's internet," and a variety of statements about students being absent or keeping their screens turned off. Although the compliance comments were half from weaknesses and half from strengths, most of the weakness responses dealt with some students not being logged on, not having their cameras on, or attention span issues with technology. When students

were logged in, their overall compliance and participation in Morning Meeting was mostly positive.

The "structure" theme made up 29% of team 1's "behavioral engagement" comments and 33% of team 2's "behavioral engagement comments." For both teams, all of these comments were observed as perceived strengths. Examples of these comments include: "The layout of Morning Meeting is helping students know what to do," "Students know what they're doing and what's next," and "Adding the share component of Morning Meeting helped structurally because Kindergarten students always want to share, and now there's a time and method." The comments regarding structure emphasize how the implementation of Morning Meeting had contributed positively to the students doing and knowing what to do.

The "emotional engagement" category is summarized as "students' affective reactions in the classroom, including interest, boredom, happiness, sadness, and anxiety," and in the context of this study, the classroom refers to the virtual classroom used in Morning Meeting (Fredricks et al., 2004, p. 63). One-fourth of the comments overall were in the emotional engagement category; team 1 had ten comments and team 2 has eleven comments categorized as "emotional engagement." Within this category, two themes emerged: "participation," which refers to the students' feelings conveyed during completion of the Morning Meeting, and "socialization," which refers to the students expressing their feelings about being able to communicate with others.

A majority of the "emotional engagement" comments, thirteen of twenty-one, were in the participation theme. Nine of the thirteen participation comments were identified when teachers reflected on the strengths, and these nine comments were iterations about the children expressing that they like participating in the Morning Meeting. The remaining four participation comments

were "weaknesses." Two of these comments were: "A couple of students gave their parents very hard times, behaviorally, afterwards after being tired of being in front of the screen," "Students got visibly frustrated when technology was a problem, then they turned their cameras off. I think it was in response to that issue." These specific statements both address the technology frustrations as potential causes for student dissatisfaction. The two other "participation" statements were "Some kids get so into the Morning Meeting that they keep wanting to share, and it feels like they need more time for that" and "Students are sharing, inappropriately, they're getting bored." The statement about needing more time for sharing came during the second week of the study, and the comment about being bored came during the end of the eight-week study, and both comments came from third, fourth, and fifth grade team.

The remaining eight comments about "emotional engagement" aligned with the "socialization" theme, and all of these were listed as responses to "strengths." The teachers reported through these comments that the children expressed pleasure, laughter, and excitement at being able to see and talk to one another. These comments were reflected by each teacher over the first two weeks of the study.

Cognitive engagement, within this study, refers to being "highly strategic and highly invested in learning" (Fredricks et al., 2004, p. 65). Just under one-fourth of the engagement comments overall were aligned with cognitive engagement. Within this category, two themes emerged: "activities," or the students completing activities within the Morning Meeting, and "connection to core areas," or the students applying Morning Meeting to subsequent subjects, such as in math or reading.

Six of the eighteen comments about cognitive engagement were about activities. Each of these were identified as "strengths." Students "used the whiteboard to draw their feelings,"

"created emojis for their temperature check," and completed other activities within the realm of social and emotional learning. The other twelve comments fit in the theme of "connection to core areas," almost exclusively about how group activities and morning messages segued into activities in reading and writing. Nine of the "connection to core areas" comments were identified as "strengths," while three were "weaknesses." The weaknesses centered on how students did not apply their participation in Morning Meeting activities to subsequent and similar reading and writing activities once the emphasis moved from social and emotional learning to academics.

Study question 1 in this study was "To what extent does the implementation of Morning Meeting enhance engagement and learning in online settings for elementary school students?" Over 77% of students engaged fully during the eight weeks of the study, and just over 10% of students were mostly engaged, as compared to less than 25% of students who had participated to teacher expectations during emergency remote learning the year prior. In addition, student engagement trended upward as the study progressed, and in the final two weeks of the study, each teacher had either their highest or second-highest rate of engagement. The teacher commentary also indicated that students overall were highly engaged and wanted to spend more time in Morning Meeting. The implementation of Morning Meeting, specifically in the online learning environment, contributed to enhanced student engagement.

Study Question 2 Data Analysis

The second study question, "To what extent has the use of Morning Meeting improved (a) teacher self-efficacy and (b) collective teacher efficacy in online settings?" required the collection and analysis of pre-test and post-test Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES) and the gathering, coding, and analysis of comments and statements from teachers during the ten team

meetings. The instructional coach distributed the surveys to teachers with the identifying letters on each survey; teachers then circled which team they were on, and teachers completed the beginning and ending survey and submitted them to the instructional coach, prior to the coach submitting them to the scholarly practitioner. Therefore, the scholarly practitioner could not identify which survey belonged to which teacher, but the data could be sorted by team.

Each statement on the TSES was analyzed for changes from the first assessment to second administration in Tables 18-27. In addition, these tables were arranged by teacher by team. The TSES statements were assessed on the following Likert scale: 1 was "not at all true," 2 was "barely true," 3 was "moderately true," and 4 was "exactly true" (Schwarzer et al., 1999). Tables 19-28 included the pre-study results and post-study results per question, teacher, and team. After those tables and analyses, Table 28 summarized each teacher's scoresheet and change from test 1 to test 2. Then, Table 29 was compiled with average scores per question by team and per test.

For statement 1, "I am convinced that I am able to successfully teach all relevant subject content to even the most difficult students," two of the teachers in team 1 and two teachers in team 2 scored themselves a "2-barely true" on the first administration of the TSES. On the second administration of the TSES, all teachers rated themselves as either a "3-moderately true" or "4-exactly true." Three of the four teachers in team 1 had a higher score on the second survey than the first survey, and two teachers in team 2 had a higher score on the second survey than the first survey. One teacher in team 1 maintained a score of "3-moderately true" on both tests, and two teachers, both in team 2, had a lower score on the second test than the first test.

Table 18

TSES Statement 1: Teaching Content to the Most Difficult Students

TSES Statement 1 Results

Team	Teacher	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score	Change in Score
1				
	B	2	3	+1
	C	2	4	+2
	D	3	3	0
	M	3	4	+1
2				
	E	4	3	-1
	G	2	4	+2
	H	2	3	+1
	N	3	2	-1

Table 19

TSES Statement 2: Maintaining Positive Relationships with Parents

TSES Statement 2 Results

Team	Teacher	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score	Change in Score
1				
	B	4	4	0
	C	4	4	0
	D	4	4	0
	M	3	3	0
2				
	E	4	4	0
	G	3	3	0
	H	3	2	-1
	N	4	4	0

Table 20

TSES Statement 3: Reaching the Most Difficult Students.

TSES Statement 3 Results

Team	Teacher	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score	Change in Score
1				
	B	3	4	+1
	C	3	4	+1
	D	4	4	0
	M	3	4	+1
2				
	E	4	4	0
	G	4	4	0
	H	2	3	+1
	N	3	3	0

Table 21

TSES Statement 4: Feeling Confident in Addressing my Students' Needs.

TSES Statement 4 Results

Team	Teacher	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score	Change in Score
1				
	B	4	4	0
	C	4	4	0
	D	3	4	+1
	M	3	3	0
2				
	E	4	4	0
	G	4	4	0
	H	3	4	+1
	N	3	3	0

Table 22

TSES Statement 5: Maintaining my Composure and Continuing to Teach Well.

TSES Statement 5 Results

Team	Teacher	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score	Change in Score
1				
	B	2	4	+2
	C	4	4	0
	D	3	4	+1
	M	4	4	0
2				
	E	4	4	0
	G	4	4	0
	H	4	4	0
	N	4	3	-1

Table 23

TSES Statement 6: Responding to Student Needs if I am Having a Bad Day.

TSES Statement 6 Results

Team	Teacher	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score	Change in Score
1				
	B	3	4	+1
	C	3	4	+1
	D	3	4	+1
	M	4	4	0
2				
	E	4	4	0
	G	3	3	0
	H	3	4	+1
	N	3	2	-1

Table 24

TSES Statement 7: Influencing Students' Personal and Academic Development.

TSES Statement 7 Results

Team	Teacher	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score	Change in Score
1				
	B	3	4	+1
	C	4	4	0
	D	3	4	+1
	M	4	4	0
2				
	E	4	4	0
	G	4	4	0
	H	3	4	+1
	N	4	4	0

Table 25

TSES Statement 8: Coping with System Constraints and Still Teaching Well.

TSES Statement 8 Results

Team	Teacher	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score	Change in Score
1				
	B	3	4	+1
	C	4	4	0
	D	3	4	+1
	M	2	3	+1
2				
	E	3	3	0
	G	3	3	0
	H	3	4	+1
	N	2	2	0

Table 26

TSES Statement 9: Motivating Students to Participate in Innovative Projects.

TSES Statement 9 Results

Team	Teacher	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score	Change in Score
1				
	B	2	3	+1
	C	3	4	+1
	D	3	4	+1
	M	2	3	+1
2				
	E	3	4	+1
	G	3	3	0
	H	3	3	0
	N	2	3	+1

Table 27

TSES Statement 10: Leading Innovative Projects Despite Skeptical Colleagues.

TSES Statement 10 Results

Team	Teacher	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score	Change in Score
1				
	B	3	4	+1
	C	3	4	+1
	D	3	4	+1
	M	2	3	+1
2				
	E	4	3	-1
	G	3	3	0
	H	3	3	0
	N	2	2	0

Table 28

Teacher Pre and Post Study Changes on the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale

		Questions										
Team	Teacher	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	All
1	B	+1	=	+1	=	+2	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+9
1	C	+2	=	+1	=	=	+1	=	=	+2	+1	+7
1	D	=	=	=	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+7
1	M	+1	=	+1	=	=	=	=	+1	+1	+1	+5
2	E	-1	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	+1	-1	-1
2	G	+2	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	+2
2	H	+1	-1	+1	+1	=	+1	+1	+1	=	=	+5
2	N	-1	=	=	=	-1	-1	=	=	+1	=	-2

Table 29

Average Scores per Question, and Overall, per Team on TSES Administrations

		Questions										
Team	Test	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	All
1	1	2.50	3.75	3.25	3.50	3.25	3.25	3.50	3.00	2.50	2.75	3.13
1	2	3.50	3.75	4.00	3.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.75	3.50	3.75	3.80
2	1	2.75	3.50	3.25	3.50	4.00	3.25	3.75	2.75	2.75	3.00	3.25
2	2	3.00	3.25	3.50	3.75	3.75	3.25	4.00	3.00	3.25	2.75	3.35

For statement 2, "I know that I can maintain a positive relationship with parents even when tensions arise," three teachers in team 1 scored themselves a "4-exactly true" on both the first and second administrations of the TSES. One teacher in team 1 scored a "3-moderately true" on both administrations of the TSES. Two of the teachers in team 2 scored themselves a "4-exactly true" on both tests, one teacher marked a "3-moderately true" on both tests, and one teacher scored a decline from "3-moderately true" to "2-barely true" from the first to second test. No teachers in either group had a higher score on the second test than the first test; however, five of eight teachers scored the highest possible score, a "4-exactly true" on both tests.

For statement 3, "When I try really hard, I am able to reach even the most difficult students," three of the teachers on team 1 scored a "3-moderately true" on the first test and "4-exactly true" on the second test. One teacher in team 1 scored "4-exactly true" on both versions of the TSES. One teacher on team 2 scored "3-moderately true" on both versions of the TSES, two teachers on team 2 scored "4-exactly true" on both versions of the TSES, and one teacher moved from "2-barely true" to "3-moderately true" from the first to second iteration of the TSES. Three teachers in team 1 had a higher score on the second version of the TSES than on the first version, and one teacher in team 2 had a higher score on test 2 than test 1. One teacher on team 1 and three teacher on team 2 maintained the same score from test 1 to test 2.

For statement 4, "I am convinced that, as time goes by, I will continue to become more and more capable of helping to address my students' needs," teachers in both groups scored either "3-moderately true" or "4-exactly true" on both iterations of the TSES. On both teams, two teachers scored a "4-exactly true" on both tests. The two teams each had one teacher score a "3-moderately true" on the first and second TSES, and both teams each had one teacher score a "3-moderately true" on the first TSES followed by a "4-exactly true" on the second TSES.

For statement 5, "Even if I get disrupted while teaching, I am confident that I can maintain my composure and continue to teach well," one teacher in team 1 increased from "2-barely true" to "4-exactly true," one teacher in team 1 increased from "3-moderately true" to "4-exactly true," and all teachers in team 1 recorded "4-exactly true" on the second administration of the TSES. Within team 2, one teacher increased from "3-moderately true" to "4-exactly true," and the other three teachers scored themselves "4-exactly true" on both assessments. All teachers from both teams scored themselves "4-exactly true" on the final TSES administration.

For statement 6, "I am confident in my ability to be responsive to my students' needs even if I am having a bad day," three teachers in team 1 increased their score from "3-moderately true" on the first test to "4-exactly true" on the second test. One teacher on team 1 scored "4-exactly true" on both tests, and all teachers on team 1 scored "4-exactly true" on the second test. In team 2, one teacher scored "4-exactly true" on both tests and one teacher scored "3-moderately true" on both tests. One teacher on team two increased from "3-moderately true" to "4-exactly true," but one teacher decreased from "3-moderately true" to "2-barely true."

For statement 7, two teachers in team 1 and one teacher in team 2 increased scores from "3-moderately true" to "4-exactly true" between tests 1 and 2. Two teachers in team 1 scored "4-exactly true" on both tests. Three teachers in team 2 scored "4-exactly true" on both tests. All teachers scored themselves "4-exactly true" on the second administration of the TSES.

For statement 8, "I am convinced that I can develop creative ways to cope with system constraints (such as budget cuts and other administrative problems) and continue to teach well," two teachers in team 1 increased from "3-moderately true" to "4-exactly true," one teacher

increased from "2-barely true" to "3-moderately true," and one teacher scored "4-exactly true" on both assessments. Two teachers in team 2 maintained scores of "3-moderately true" on both assessments, one teacher maintained "2-barely true" on both tests, and one teacher improved from "3-moderately true" to "4-exactly true."

For statement 9, "I know that I can motivate my students to participate in innovative projects," two teachers in team 1 moved from "2-barely true" to "3-moderately true," and two teachers from team 1 moved from "3-moderately true" to "4-exactly true." All teachers in team 1 improved their score by one point from test 1 to test 2. In team 2, two teachers maintained scores of "3-moderately true" on both tests, one teacher moved from "2-barely true" to "3-moderately true," and one teacher moved from "3-moderately true" to "4-exactly true."

For statement 10, "I know that I can carry out innovative projects even when I am opposed by skeptical colleagues," all teachers on team 1 improved their score by 1 from test 1 to test 2. One teacher from team 1 improved from "2-barely true" to "3-moderately true," and three teachers improved from "3-moderately true" to "4-exactly true." On team 2, two teachers maintained "3-moderately true" on both tests, one teacher scored "2-barely true" on both tests, and one teacher's score declined from "4-exactly true" to "3-moderately true" from the first test to the second test.

For team 1, teacher B showed improvement on eight questions from the first test to the second test. On the second test, teacher B had eight "4-exactly true" scores and two "3-moderately true" scores. Teacher B showed a two-point improvement, from "2-barely true" to "4-exactly true" on question 5. Teacher C showed improvement on five questions from the first test to the second test. In addition, teacher C showed a two-point improvement, from "2-barely true" to "4-exactly true" on questions 1 and 9. Teacher C scored all questions on the second test

as “4-exactly true.” Teacher D showed improvement on seven questions from the first to the second test, and nine of the ten questions on the second test were scored “4-exactly true.” Only question 1 was maintained as “3-moderately true.” Teacher M showed one-point improvement on five questions from the first test to the second test, maintained five scores from the first to second assessment, scored “3-moderately true” on five questions on the second test, and scored “4-exactly true” on five questions on the second test.

For team 2, teacher E declined from “4-exactly true” to “3-moderately true” on two questions, increased from “3-moderately true” to “4-exactly true” on one question, and maintained the same score on seven questions from test 1 to test 2. Teacher E scored seven “4-exactly true” and “3-moderately true” scores on the second TSES administration. Teacher G increased by two points, from “2-barely true” to “4-exactly true” on the first question of the TSES and maintained the same score from test 1 to test 2 for the remaining nine questions. Teacher G scored five “3-moderately true” and “4-exactly true” responses on the second TSES. Teacher H improved on six questions from test 1 to test 2; two questions went from “2-barely true” to “3-moderately true,” and four questions went from “3-moderately true” to “4-exactly true.” Teacher H declined on question 2 from “3-moderately true” to “2-barely true.” Teacher N declined on three questions and improved on one question from test 1 to test 2. On questions 1 and 6, teacher N declined from “3-moderately true” to “2-barely true” and decreased on question 5 from “4-exactly true” to “3-moderately true.” Teacher N increased from “2-barely true” to “3-moderately true” on question 9. Teacher N also scored “2-barely true” on four questions on the second iteration of the TSES.

Table 29 was compiled by calculating the average score per question per team per administration of the TSES. In addition, the table included an average for the entire TSES on the first and second administrations of the assessment.

On the first TSES administration, team 1 had an average of 3.13, and team 2 had an average score of 3.25. On the second TSES administration, team 1 had an average score of 3.80 on all ten questions and team 2 had an average score of 3.35. From the first to the second test, team 1's average increased by 0.10, and team 2's average increased by 0.67. On a question-by-question basis, team 1 marked increases in questions one, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, and ten, and maintained the same score on question two. Team 2 had increased scores on questions one, three, four, seven, eight, and nine; but had lower scores on questions two, five, and ten. Team 2 maintained the same score from test 1 to test 2 on question six.

For the data gathered from teachers in team meetings, each teacher described their strengths, weaknesses, ideas, and miscellaneous other thoughts during the implementation of Morning Meeting in the online setting. The scholarly practitioner entered that data into a Google spreadsheet and reviewed the audio of the meetings to verify that the comments were accurately noted. Team 1 teachers had Kindergarten, first, and second grade students, while team 2 teachers had third, fourth, and fifth grade students. The analysis that occurred during the study resulted in recognizing teachers who had problems that were solvable as they arose. An example that all teachers had was with their ability to run Google meet and see their own content simultaneously; that information was analyzed, and the team determined how to use desktop monitors and create a dual-monitor solution so that teachers could have their students on one screen and their information on another for easy access. During the protocol coding that was used for the statements and comments made in K-2 and 3-5 weekly team meetings, the scholarly practitioner

used codes from the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale: "job accomplishment," "skill development on the job," "social interaction with students, parents, and colleagues," and "coping with job stress" (Schwarzer et al., 1999).

For study question 2, "To what extent does the use of Morning Meeting improve (a) teacher self-efficacy and (b) collective teacher efficacy?" the scholarly practitioner reviewed the team meeting notes during each week of the study, specifically the parts regarding the "impact on self as an educator" and any relevant comments from the strengths and weaknesses questions. These comments were used to collect data regarding teacher efficacy. At the conclusion of the study, the scholarly practitioner coded these statements using Protocol Coding. Specifically, for this study question, the scholarly practitioner applied the following codes regarding engagement: "job accomplishment," "skill development on the job," "social interaction with students, parents, and colleagues," and "coping with job stress," as described in the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer et al., 1999). The themes that were derived from each code are illustrated in Figure 10. Table 30 then shows the comments per category, per theme, and per team.

According to Schwarzer et al. (1999), four areas, "job accomplishment," "skill development," "social interaction," and "coping with job stress" were identified "to be of vital importance for successful teaching." The initial coding of educator comments resulted in 215 comments. Themes were then extrapolated from the initially coded categories. From the "job accomplishment" category, themes of "technology," "comfort zone," "planning," and "relationships" emerged. Within the "skill development" category, "innovating" and "intentionality" were the two themes that were shown. The "social interaction" category featured three themes focused on staff interactions with either other staff, students, or families.

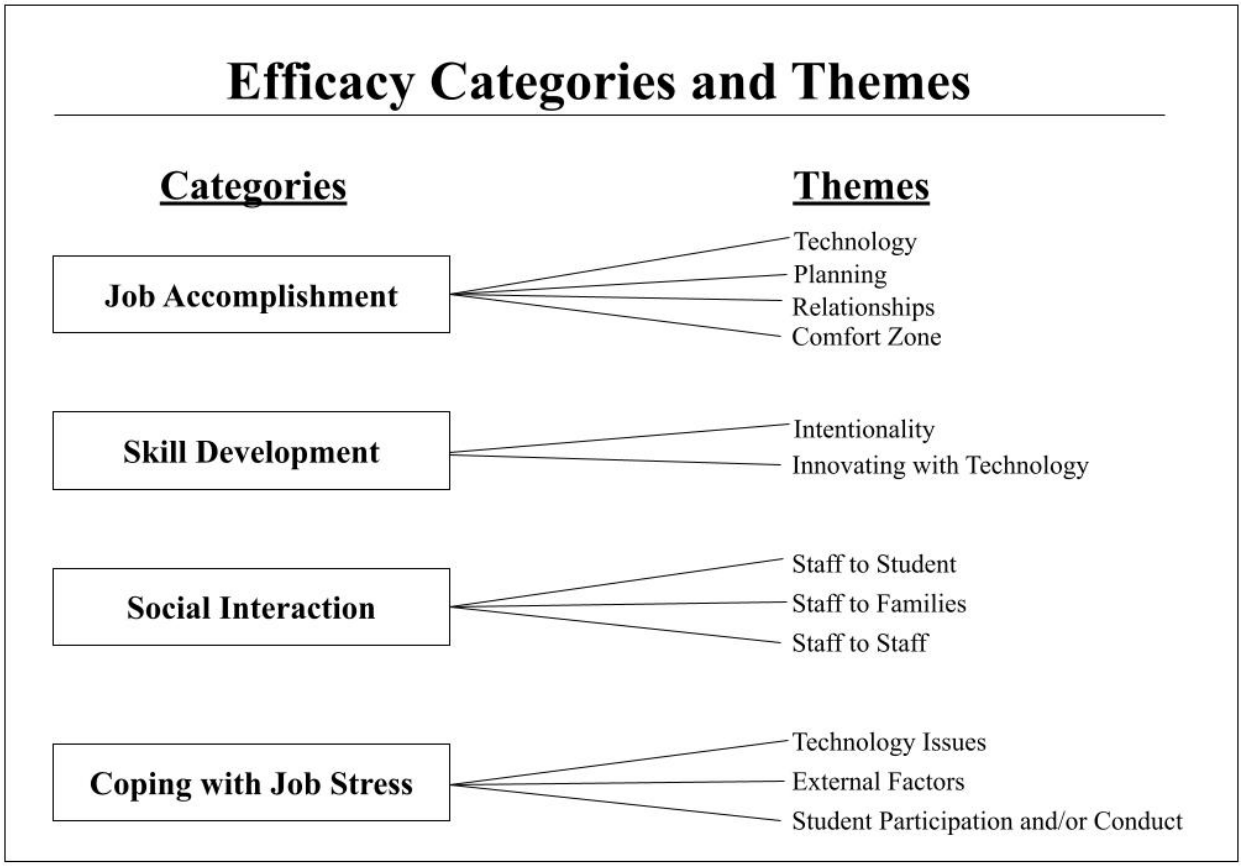


Figure 10. Efficacy categories and themes.

Table 30

Efficacy Comments Sorted by Category and Theme, per Team and Overall

Category	Theme	Team 1	Team 2
Job Accomplishment			
	Technology	4	1
	Comfort Zone	7	7
	Planning	3	1
	Relationships	4	6
Skill Development			
	Innovating	16	20
	Intentionality	14	17
Social Interaction			
	Staff to Staff	6	7
	Staff to Student	20	13
	Staff to Families	4	1
Coping with Job Stress			
	Technology Issues	19	12
	External Factors	3	7
	Student Participation and/or Conduct	8	15

Lastly, the "coping with job stress" category produced three themes: "technology issues," "external factors," and "student participation and/or conduct."

Job accomplishment was the least-common category for both teams; 18 of 108, or 16.67%, of team 1's comments and 15 of 107, or 14.02%, of team 2's comments addressed job accomplishment. Skill development constituted 30 of 108, or 27.78%, of team 1's comments and 37 of 107, or 34.58%, of team 2's comments. Social interaction was attributed to 30 of 108, or 27.78%, of team 1's comments and 21 of 107, or 19.63%, of team 2's comments. Lastly, the "coping with job stress" category addressed 30 of 108, or 27.78% of team 1's comments, and 34 of 107, or 31.78%, of team 2's comments.

Each of the comments regarding job accomplishment were either identified as strengths or reflections on impact to self. Seven comments from each time were about teachers expanding their comfort zone. Example statements include, "This has made me tap into the resources we've been provided to make this more engaging," "I've spent more time learning to release from teacher-controlled to student-centered talking and learning," and "I still prefer face-to-face, but I feel more confident at being able to do virtual if called upon to do it." Ten comments related to relationships, and these comments ranged from statements about building the teacher's own understanding of making meaningful relationships to statements about how Morning Meeting helped build the capacity to address the social and emotional learning aspects of the student-teacher relationship. Five comments addressed how being able to focus on Morning Meeting helped teachers identify what technological programs and tools were beneficial, and four comments were noted where teachers reflected on how Morning Meetings were helpful not only in planning for subsequent Morning Meetings but also related content areas, especially in reading.

The most prominent category, "skill development," featured 67 comments, 36 of which were about teachers innovating. These "innovating" comments were focused on technology, such as "creating lessons to teach explicitly how to mute and unmute," integrating dual monitors, utilizing Google extensions, using cell phones as document cameras, and experimenting and using other applications or programs to address instructional needs. The comments, week-to-week, appeared as almost a progression from the beginning to end of the study; teachers learned about using a variety of tools, then narrowed these multiple instruments into a few tools, then segued into using items that could be usable in face-to-face or the virtual setting. The other 31 comments were thematized as "intentionality," with teachers noting how they are able to focus on a specific area, particularly social and emotional learning, and the aspects of Morning Meeting.

Social interaction comments constituted 51 comments within three teams: staff to staff, staff to student, and staff to families. Most of the comments, 33, were between staff and students. The teachers reported positive interactions at engaging students live and documented a few weaknesses such as students being less open, especially initially, at sharing. However, the comments demonstrated more student comfort at openly sharing by the end of the study. The staff-to-staff interactions were entirely based on collaboration and coaching. The teachers shared practices with each other and borrowed ideas from each other to implement Morning Meeting, and by the end of the study, the teachers reflected on how they supported each other in this implementation and could continue this in face-to-face Morning Meetings and in content planning. Although few, teachers expressed five comments about positive interactions with families. Parents and other family members reciprocating communication with teachers created a positive response by the teachers. Each teacher in team 1, the Kindergarten through second grade

staff, commented that family relationships were better this year than in recent previous years, and one teacher from team 2 observed that families were more consistently responsive.

Teachers had 64 comments about coping with job stress. The nature of this question made these comments more aligned with "weaknesses," and 31 of the comments, almost half, were stresses about technology issues. Teachers expressed frustration at Google Meet glitches, internet bandwidth problems, and issues with muting, unmuting, and turning on and off cameras. Some of these comments were later solved with skill development or job accomplishment comments where a job stress was later solved or prevented. Student participation and/or conduct made up 23 of the comments. About half of these were frustrations about how students would log in to Morning Meeting and then log off afterwards, and other comments reflected either too little or too much student sharing within Morning Meeting. Teachers noted that students across all grade spans had limited attention spans attending to live lessons, and a few inappropriate behaviors, such as showing a weapon and using profanity, caused stresses similar to in-class behavior but also stressed the teachers because those recorded lessons were unable to be uploaded asynchronously. Lastly, teachers mentioned ten comments about external job stresses about a variety of topics; personal dealings with COVID-19, students referencing COVID-19 situations in class, and older students having to miss instructional time to provide childcare.

Study question 2 in this study was "To what extent has the use of Morning Meeting improved (a) teacher self-efficacy and (b) collective teacher efficacy in online settings?" From a review of the TSES pre-test and post-test results, team 1 with the K-2 teachers grew 0.67 points, an increase of 21%, whereas team 2 with the 3-5 teachers grew 0.10 points, an increase of 3.07%. All of the K-2 teachers reported increased self-efficacy on the TSES, whereas half of the 3-5 teachers reported gains and the other half reported declines. The team meeting comments

aligned with the TSES results; the K-2 teachers started with less confidence and all of the K-2 teachers had enhanced perceived self-efficacy by the end of the study. The 3-5 teachers started with more confidence than the K-2 teachers, and two of them had increased efficacy but two showed a decline. One area that teachers reported either no gain or a decline in was in building relationships with parents and families, which aligned with many of the comments about struggling with online learning and students being online alone. The teachers overall showed an increase in their individual and collective efficacy at using instructional technology effectively and at getting students to participate in unique activities.

Study Question 3 Data Analysis

For study question 3, "To what extent does collaborative action research affect the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills?" the scholarly practitioner maintained a daily reflective journal throughout the study and for a few weeks after the study concluded. The journal entries were then coded using Protocol Coding. For this study question, the scholarly practitioner applied the following four codes using Bass's 4 Is: "individualized consideration," "intellectual stimulation," "inspirational motivation," and "idealized influence" (Bass, 1985). Each code was then separated into themes. The "individualized consideration" category includes two themes about coaching, based on either need or to build confidence. The "inspirational motivation" category had two themes, one about serving instructional needs and one about serving social and emotional needs. The "idealized influence" category also has two themes, one about supporting staff and one about supporting students and families. Lastly, the "intellectual stimulation" category had four themes: taking risks, building best practices, creating a sense of urgency, and solving problems. These categories and themes were described in Figure 11. Table 31 shows the overall comments by category and theme.

Among the 48 comments aligned with "individualized consideration," 35, or 72.9%, of the statements referred to "coaching based on need." Sample comments include, "I have to figure out how to help each teacher where they are and with what they need" and other name-specific statements about supporting a teacher based on whatever need was identified, such as technology, implementing the Morning Meeting, and targeted coaching support. To a lesser extent, the scholarly practitioner had 13, or 27.1%, of comments about "coaching to build confidence." These reflections came from the scholarly practitioner providing support that was not based on remedying a deficiency or area of concern but rather a proactive boost. During the pre-study period, the scholarly practitioner identified teachers who were perceived to be leaders by the others, and these conversations and comments focused on coaching to build capacity for broader teacher leadership. Another specific situation was focused on a teacher who did not have any recognizable deficiencies but had been involuntarily transferred due to being the last person hired at two schools in two years; therefore, her personal confidence was low, and the scholarly practitioner proactively provided coaching and encouragement to build individual efficacy and not to change particular actions. In addition, one teacher who has been recognized as a quiet leader received coaching to build her capacity to model and share with others beyond the expertise she has in her own classroom.

The category "intellectual stimulation" was noted with 48 comments, and this code was divided into four themes: "solving problems" with 15 comments, "taking risks" with 14 comments, "building best practices" with 10 comments, and "creating a sense of urgency" with 9 comments. During the preliminary period before the study, most of the comments about "solving problems" were about building consensus and support by and for the staff. As the study proceeded, comments in this area centered on theorizing how to solve problems about

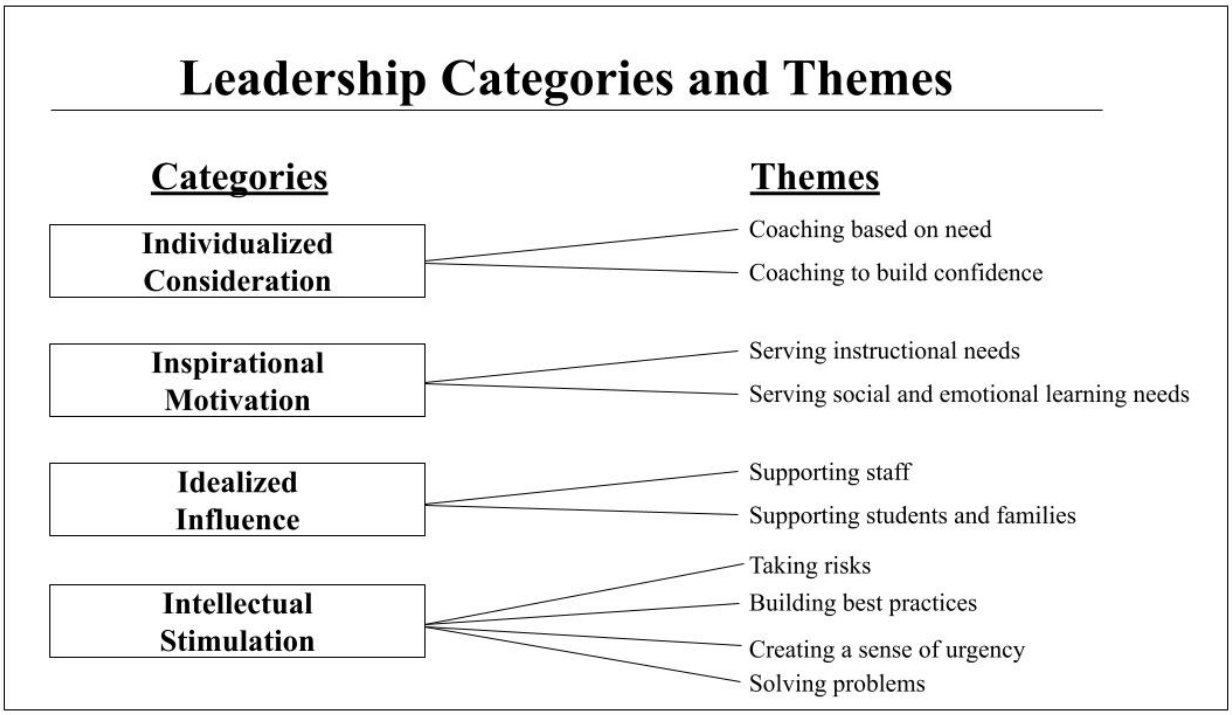


Figure 11. Leadership categories and themes.

Table 31

Leadership Comments Sorted by Category and Theme

Category	Theme	Frequency
Individualized Consideration		
	Coaching Based on Need	35
	Coaching to Build Confidence	13
Inspirational Motivation		
	Serving Instructional Needs	11
	Serving Social and Emotional Learning Needs	30
Idealized Influence		
	Supporting Staff	19
	Supporting Students and Families	9
Intellectual Stimulation		
	Taking Risks	14
	Building Best Practices	10
	Creating a Sense of Urgency	9
	Solving Problems	15

attendance, completion, and consistency between Morning Meeting to subject area lessons. In the post-study, the "solving problems" comments were more reflective about remembering how the scholarly practitioner and staff identified and addressed opportunities and problems, such as deciding on which social and emotional learning program or approach to use, or communicating effectively with staff during a transition.

Most of the "taking risks" comments centered around technology during the middle of the study; teachers experimented with Google extensions and used applications such as Pear Deck to assess and measure engagement in unique ways. In addition, teachers in fourth and fifth grade adjusted the Morning Meeting structure, such as taking the 30-minute period and using the first 25 minutes of the day as an introductory Morning Meeting and then taking 5 to 15 minutes to have a "closing meeting" as a reflection and anticipation for the following day. At the conclusion of the study, the scholarly practitioner's comments about "taking risks" were more individualized, and these statements were more reflective in nature about how individual teachers, in their own way, took risks outside of their comfort zone during and after the study, and during and outside the context of Morning Meeting.

Ten comments in the "intellectual stimulation" dimension focused on "building best practices." During the pre-study weeks, these comments centered on the teachers identifying strategies and criteria around social and emotional learning during the time prior to implementation of Morning Meeting. In the final weeks of the study, the scholarly practitioner reflected on what was observed about and by teachers regarding actions that would be considered best practices. After the study, the teachers indicated that they would use the lessons they gleaned from implementing Morning Meeting for future face-to-face instruction and potential virtual learning in the future.

Nine comments were focused on "creating a sense of urgency" in the scholarly practitioner's journal. At the beginning of the study, the quotes were about action steps done and to be completed regarding students who were disengaged altogether and students who were only partially engaged. Most of the comments, though, were at the end of the study, two of these comments were reflections about how the teachers bristled, initially, at the expectations at regular, ongoing, proactive communications with disengaged students beyond the ClassDojo or text messages. Another series of three comments centered on teachers discussing and the scholarly practitioner reflecting upon how to maintain the urgency of getting students engaged remotely to the day-to-day face-to-face practices and the Wednesday and asynchronous "Virtual Academy" students.

Twenty-eight comments were about the "idealized influence" category, with nineteen about supporting staff and nine about supporting students. Prior to, and at the beginning of the study, the influence was more about building their confidence in me as a leader; for example, "My counselor and coach worked with me to plan the implementation professional development, we're still feeling each other out but spending a good bit of time with each other so that we're comfortable with each other and the teachers see that we're a unified front." There are also comments about "getting the teachers to understand the need of social and emotional learning now and in the long-term," as well as reflections on crucial conversations about requiring the submission of lesson plans. After the first few weeks, these comments changed into reflections about offering and then finding or providing the support that teachers needed, so that they would see that they would get the assistance they wanted. At the end and during the post-study, more of the comments came from reflections based on conversations with teachers, specifically

comments that the teachers made about the scholarly practitioner's persistence to solve problems and lead with visibility and positivity.

Because the contact with students was limited during the virtual context, there were fewer comments about supporting students and families, but an early one came from a disciplinary incident where a student displayed a facsimile weapon on screen. That situation created an early opportunity to lead by responding quickly, and the students were able to see that the situation would be resolved, parents were assured that care was taken, and the staff saw that issues would be handled swiftly. After that negative situation, the remaining comments were reflections on virtual Title 1 and Open House, virtual outreach sessions, virtual office hours, and issues where the scholarly practitioner gathered a team to help families and students with problems such as technology, homelessness, and mental health.

Study question 3 in this study was "To what extent does collaborative action research affect the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills?" Throughout the study, the scholarly practitioner talked with, provided feedback, and worked to support teachers as they provided full-scale live online teaching for the first time. The scholarly practitioner identified two areas, "coaching based on need" and "serving social and emotional learning needs" as strengths that were enhanced. The teachers expressed their needs in the team meetings and individually, which required a collaborative process so that teachers were able to identify their needs so that the scholarly practitioner could either provide or assist in finding the help necessary. In addition, this collaborative action research study featured the implementation of Morning Meeting as a method to address social and emotional learning needs, so improvement in this area was logical. Lastly, the scholarly practitioner identified that the collaborative action research process helped in the development of leadership skills, particularly concerning the very fundamental issue of working

together with a team of people to help individuals and teams solve the problems that they identify in the midst of teaching.

Overall Findings and Analysis

After completing the eight-week collaborative action research study, the scholarly practitioner reviewed all of the data per question and made multiple conclusions. First, despite face-to-face instruction being preferred, students in elementary school could be engaged in the online environment, and an approach that emphasized student engagement was preferential to a content-only approach. Secondly, the teachers also felt much more comfortable if they could have taught in the traditional face-to-face setting, but most of the teachers enhanced their efficacy at teaching in the online setting, especially the K-2 teachers who started more reluctantly. While the online setting included limitations, the collaborative action research process still provided an opportunity for the enhancement of the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills so that teachers could provide effective teaching in the online setting.

Action Research Step 6: Reporting Results

At the conclusion of the eight-week study, information was compiled, aggregated, and shared with the entire staff. In addition, some of this data were also shared with the scholarly practitioner's supervisors. This information was shared in order of study question

Reporting Results for Study Question 1

Study question 1 was "To what extent does the implementation of Morning Meeting enhance engagement and learning in online settings for elementary school students?" As a whole, student engagement grew from the start to the end of the study, particularly in Kindergarten, first, second, and third grades. While there were increases in fourth and fifth grade, it was much less than in the other grades. The difference between Black and White student

engagement was small, but there was a gap of 16% between White and LatinX students. In addition, a large gap was evident between students without disability, at 81%, and those with disabilities, at 52%. Teachers overall reported higher student engagement than anticipated, although there were still difficulties at extending the Morning Meeting engagement to cognitive, or academic, content in the online setting.

Reporting Results for Study Question 2

Study question 2 was "To what extent does the use of Morning Meeting improve (a) teacher self-efficacy and (b) collective teacher efficacy?" Similar to the student engagement data, teacher efficacy grew largely in the K-2 team, and minimally in the 3-5 team. Two of the 3-5 teachers reported efficacy gains, but because the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES) was completed anonymously, with only grade span data identified, the scholarly practitioner was not able to identify which specific teachers and grade levels in the 3-5 span had increased efficacy and which ones did not. On a categorical level, as indicated on both the TSES and through teacher comments in team meetings, teachers grew their skills in implementing technology and in building relationships with students, and there was little-to-no improvement in building family partnerships through the course of the study.

Reporting Results for Study Question 3

Study question 3 was "To what extent does collaborative action research affect the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills?" Since this study question was the scholarly practitioner's self-reflection, teachers were showed how they requested and received assistance during the course of the study. In order to facilitate the collaboration part of the collaborative action research process, the scholarly practitioner, in a staff meeting, requested teachers to indicate the areas they felt the scholarly practitioner had led most effectively. These areas

aligned with the scholarly practitioner's findings; namely, teachers were supported intensely in technology needs and in their work in building relationships and engagement with students.

Action Research Step 7: Taking Informed Action

Throughout the course of the study, the scholarly practitioner took informed action on a daily and weekly basis to support teachers and students with their needs. However, at the end of the study, the scholarly practitioner and the staff as a whole decided to take numerous actions.

In the area of student engagement, one of the gaps that the entire staff expressed concern about was absent and disengaged students. Throughout the study, teachers, the school counselor, the scholarly practitioner, and the school social worker reached out to the families of these students using cell phones and home visits. At the end of the study, the scholarly practitioner collaborated with the LWES staff to continue outreach to improve engagement. Because one of the groups that had lower engagement and attendance was the LatinX students, the scholarly practitioner established an arrangement with the district's public relations assistant, who spoke Spanish and was completing a social work degree, to assist in communicating and serving as a liaison from the families to the school. In addition, the staff all set up Google voice and Google translate accounts so that text messages could be written, translated, then read and translated, in order to communicate more effectively with families.

In addition, to address both student engagement and teacher efficacy, the staff voted unanimously to continue the use of Morning Meeting in the online setting and when face-to-face instruction resumed. The teachers believed that the use of Morning Meeting was helpful in establishing daily connection with students. When students remained online, the teachers conducted the full four-step Morning Meeting at the start of the instructional day. When students transitioned to face-to-face teaching, each teacher integrated the opening greeting at the door,

then conducted the Morning Meeting after the conclusion of breakfast and the morning announcements. The teachers also agreed to make Morning Meeting an ongoing component of weekly lesson plans so that the activities were aligned with the week's content standards. An area that the teams chose to modify regarding Morning Meeting was in the cognitive and content component; teachers used their curriculum plans and then identified small areas to integrate into the Morning Meeting, such as phonics in the lower grades or math games in all of the grades.

For teacher efficacy and the development of leadership skills, the scholarly practitioner collaborated with the teaching staff to build expertise areas among the staff members. Although the scholarly practitioner worked to help the teachers in building their efficacy, the capacity and time-availability was identified as an area of concern, so the teachers decided to build expertise areas so that the teachers had additional resources. The K-2 team identified a teacher who was knowledgeable about the Seesaw learning management system; this teacher agreed to become the school's Seesaw ambassador and led professional development in Seesaw at the school and at the district level. The scholarly practitioner, with consent from the School Improvement Team, funded this teacher's ability to build this capacity. In addition, the school team consented to funding another staff member to become Google Educator certified, which helped in the building of capacity to use the Google tools and Google Classroom.

In the area of the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills, this study helped foster a sense of urgency to create systems of support and accountability so that students would be served, and educators would have problems solved. Teachers shared their desire at having problems solved in an expeditious manner, especially during the course of the study when a new instructional approach was used in the online setting. Therefore, in conjunction with the full school, the scholarly practitioner identified that creating efficacy and expertise had a multiplying effect, as

teachers were able to access more sources of support. The scholarly practitioner collaborated with the staff to build experts in Seesaw, Google classroom, Google voice and Google translate. In addition, the scholarly practitioner acted when teachers recognized content leaders in K-2 and 3-5 who were separate from the technology experts; these individuals were able to support in subsequent team meetings, and these teachers were provided additional "release time" with classroom coverage so that they could support the needs of the rest of the staff with instruction. Also, the scholarly practitioner created a team consisting of the school counselor, school social worker, exceptional children's resource teacher, school secretary, and data manager to be the lead outreach team whenever teachers identified prolonged absences and disengagement. The school counselor led this team and met with the scholarly practitioner weekly so that the team would have the time, resources, and availability to access students and families. These technology, instructional, and outreach teams were small, flexible, and met regularly with the scholarly practitioner so that needs and concerns were acted upon quickly and with a sense of urgency.

Summary

During this eight-week collaborative action research study, the scholarly practitioner sought to address three study questions regarding Morning Meeting and the extent to which its implementation enhanced student engagement and improved teacher efficacy. This study also explored how collaborative action research affected the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills. For study question 1, "To what extent does the implementation of Morning Meeting enhance engagement and learning in online settings for elementary school students?" the number of students engaging in Morning Meeting increased from week 1 to week 8 for each teacher, with occasional week-to-week fluctuations. The majority of students were either fully or partially

engaged, with higher percentages in Kindergarten through third grade and lower amounts in fourth and fifth grade. Regarding engagement differences by ethnicity, a small gap exists in full engagement between White and Black students, and a larger gap is present between White and LatinX students. However, when considering full and partial engagement, the rates are nearly identical. For special populations, exceptional children (EC) and English Language Learners (EL) have lower rates of full engagement than students without those identifications, but the combination of full and partial engagement shows a very small gap.

For study question 2, "To what extent has the use of Morning Meeting improved (a) teacher self-efficacy and (b) collective teacher efficacy in online settings?" both teacher groups quantitatively showed an increase in their efficacy scores, but the Kindergarten through second grade team showed growth on nine of ten questions and increased their collective score by just over 21%, whereas the third through fifth grade team showed growth on six of ten questions and increased their collective score by 3%. The lower-grades team started with a lower efficacy rating before Morning Meeting implementation and ended with a higher efficacy score at the end of the study. In addition, comments from each team reflect a small overall increase in self and collective efficacy from the upper-grades teachers and a larger increase in self and collective efficacy from the lower-grades teachers.

In study question 3, "To what extent does collaborative action research affect the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills?" the scholarly practitioner implemented differentiated leadership based on the needs of staff members. This work pushed the scholarly practitioner to individualize conversations, actions, and goals based on the abilities and comfort of each teacher. Furthermore, this study pushed the scholarly practitioner to establish a vision and influence staff members to implement a program based on the collaboratively agreed upon needs of students

and staff during virtual learning. Lastly, in chapter 5, a summary of findings, interpretation of findings, limitations, implications, and recommendations for further study and consideration will be provided.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the fall of 2020, many schools in North Carolina and throughout the United States started the academic year in remote online learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, students learned through the computer in areas outside of the classroom, including but not limited to homes, places of guardian's employment, and childcare facilities. Since the pandemic necessitated school closings in March 2020, students were out of school buildings for over half of a calendar year when this study began. Because of this reality, and due to surveys and conversations with staff members, community members, and families, the purpose of this study was to help enhance and increase student engagement through the implementation of Morning Meeting (Kriete & Davis, 2016). This allowed for teachers to support students and create "an environment where they feel physically and emotionally safe, connected, included, and supported" (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2020a, p. 6).

During the study, the scholarly practitioner sought to identify and increase the degree of student engagement in remote online learning by using Morning Meeting. In addition, since the scholarly practitioner started the principalship at a new school that had not implemented a specific social and emotional structure or program, another goal of this study was to use Morning Meeting to improve individual and collective teacher self-efficacy and to identify the extent of improvement. Since the COVID-19 pandemic had caused school to be closed to in-person instruction for over five months by the start of this study, the collaborative partners concurred that access to a social and emotional structure that emphasized connection was essential for student development. Also, the scholarly practitioner aimed to improve leadership skills through the implementation of this collaborative action research study. The collaborative action research

process explicitly involved educators as stakeholders, which allowed for the reality of the setting and context to be considered, incorporated shared learning so that the staff members could contribute to and learn from each other, and increased practical expertise at the actuality of implementation (Schenkels & Jacobs, 2018, p. 701). The scholarly practitioner's leadership experiences prior to the study consisted of two years as a high school assistant principal and five years as an elementary principal at two urban schools; this situation differed from the other experiences because this school was rural, smaller, and started in the online setting. Since the scholarly practitioner was new to the school and the academic year was starting like none before, the reflections on leadership were necessary to build confidence with the staff.

Summary of the Findings

The summary of findings is divided into three sections. The first section addresses the findings of the study question pertaining to the extent of the implementation of Morning Meeting enhancing student engagement. The second section summarizes the findings of the study question about individual and collective teacher efficacy. Lastly, the third section features a summary of findings regarding the scholarly practitioner's leadership.

Study Question 1

Study question 1 was "To what extent does the implementation of Morning Meeting enhance engagement and learning in online settings for elementary school students?" Student engagement was enhanced over the eight weeks of the study as Morning Meeting was implemented by each of the homeroom teachers. All teachers had an increase in the number of students engaged from weeks 1 to 2, which is when the childcare facility's internet issues were resolved, and from week 2 to the end the study in week 8. Full engagement per day was calculated by students showing behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement; then, on a

weekly basis, students had to be fully engaged for 75% of the days in a week to be considered "fully engaged" for the week. Then, over the course of the eight-week study, students had to be fully engaged for six of the eight weeks to be considered "fully engaged" for the entire study. The "mostly engaged" criteria required full engagement for between 50 and 74% of the days in a week, and full engagement for four or five weeks of the study.

By the final week of the study, 96% of lower grades students were logging in to participate and 89% of upper grades students were engaging. Over the duration of the study, the kindergarten through second grade teachers reported that 81.5% of students were fully engaged throughout the course of the study, and just over 5% of students were completely disengaged. Comparatively, the third through fifth grade teachers reported that 74.5% of students were fully engaged across the entirety of the study, 7% lower than the Kindergarten through second grade team. The upper grades team also reported that 3.9% of their students were completely disengaged, which is lower than the full disengagement rate of the lower grades team. Just over 13% of students on the lower grades team were mostly or partially engaged, as compared to more than 21% of students in the upper grades team who were only partially engaged.

Regarding potential equity gaps in engagement, this study explored any differences in engagement that may have been present among various groups of students, such as by ethnicity, exceptional children (EC), and English Language Learners (EL). Although a gap of 6% was present between White and Black students with full engagement, and a gap of sixteen points was shown between White and LatinX students, the engagement gap closes entirely when considering both full engagement, which was at least 75% of complete engagement per week for at least six weeks of the study, and "partially engaged," which occurred when students were fully engaged but for only four or five weeks. Each group also had students who were disengaged; 3

of the 21 EC students were disengaged, and one of those students never participated. One of the twelve English Language Learners (ELL) was mostly disengaged. The EC and non-EC rates of students not participating was also nearly the same, at five and 6%, respectively. The EL to non-EL rates of full engagement showed an eleven-point-gap. All EL students engaged in some degree of participation, whereas 7% of non-EL students did not participate.

The forms of engagement described in this study were behavioral, emotional, and cognitive (Fredricks et al. 2004, p. 60). For both teams, behavioral engagement was the most common response by the teachers in the team meetings; students expressed a willingness to log on and participate in the Morning Meeting. The largest obstacle relating to behavioral engagement was with technology, such as students attending to the screen or keeping on their webcams and microphones. Students across the grades expressed a high affinity for being able to communicate with each other and adults. Even the negative responses affirmed this, as a common complaint was that students wanted to continue sharing after the time for Morning Meeting expired, particularly in the final weeks of the study for upper grades and in the initial weeks of the study for lower grades. Overall, the students who engaged in Morning Meeting expressed themselves more throughout the study. Students typically engaged behaviorally through participation in Morning Meeting.

A quarter of the comments for each team related to emotional engagement. One attribute of emotional engagement was the quality of the conversations. Lower grades teachers reported initial concerns with getting students to expand upon their answers, and upper grades teachers reported that students wanted to share a large quantity of comments but had difficulty transitioning that into English and math. At certain points of the study, such as when students had spent a few days on the same or very similar activities or greetings, the emotional

engagement temporarily lagged for a day, or even was negative, such as through the expression of boredom, or deep sighs, or the rolling of eyes with older students. However, teachers quickly recognized these responses and worked collaboratively with the scholarly practitioner to make the Morning Meetings exciting again. Although the teachers did not wish to facilitate negative emotional engagement, they did express an appreciation that they could identify when it was time to progress to the next phase of the meeting or wrap up the meeting and proceed to a new subject. Similar to behavioral engagement, students typically engaged emotionally during Morning Meeting.

Cognitive engagement was described in one-fourth of comments for both teams. The upper grades teachers spoke minimally about the actual activities within Morning Meeting whereas the lower grades teachers reflected about how students responded to some of the activities prescribed by the teachers. Students responded favorably to the Morning Meeting activities except in a couple of situations where teachers used the same one over a lengthy period of time, and those teachers then began using a variety of activities instead. Both teams had six comments about cognitive engagement in the realm of the connection to other content areas such as reading and math. The lower grades team had positive responses and noted how the Morning Meeting provided an effective transition into reading and writing lessons. Team 2, the upper grades team, expressed a mixture of positive responses about logical connections but also frustration that students did not want to transition to the reading and writing components of the school day.

As additional components of Morning Meeting were added, engagement and participation typically increased in the younger grades throughout the duration of the study. Students in the upper grades showed increases from the beginning to the middle and then

plateaued at the end of the study. More students in the lower grades were fully engaged for the entirety of the study than in the upper grades, yet more students in the upper grades were partially engaged, and as a percentage, fewer students in upper grades were classified as not participating. In addition, of those four students identified in the upper grades as "not participating," three were siblings who did not participate in anything virtual or return face-to-face after the study's conclusion, one was an individual child who also did not complete any work during or after the study, and all of the students in the upper grades who were coded as "not participating" were new enrollees to the school when the study commenced. Furthermore, the four students who were noted as "not participating" in the lower grades were also new enrollees to the school when the study began.

The implementation of Morning Meeting positively impacted student engagement during the online learning setting. Teachers embraced Morning Meeting and collaborated to create exciting and intentionally inclusive activities, and that led to students enjoying and looking forward to Morning Meeting. Students started their day in Morning Meeting, so they became accustomed to having it as a part of the day on a consistent basis. A consistent theme across all Morning Meetings was the emphasis on connections with students, and students regularly participated. The teacher-student connection was key to sustaining and building engagement; a 2021 study noted that the student-to-teacher connection and the use of limited, but highly relevant cognitive activities correlated with a higher degree of student engagement (Walker & Koralesky, 2021, p. 3). Even in academic content areas such as reading and math, student engagement was higher when those activities occurred within the context of Morning Meeting as compared to content-only times during other parts of the day when online.

Study Question 2

Study question 2 was "To what extent does the use of Morning Meeting improve (a) teacher self-efficacy and (b) collective teacher efficacy?" The Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES) and teacher comments during team meetings included four categories of efficacy: "job accomplishment," "skill development," "social interaction," and "coping with job stress" (Schwarzer et al., 1999). Although teacher efficacy increased overall during the study, each category and teacher was impacted differently. Six of the eight teachers expressed an overall increase in measured teacher efficacy from pretest to posttest. All teachers on team 1, the lower grades teachers, showed increases of five or more points, and two of the teachers on team 2, the upper grades teachers, showed increases of two and five points, while two teachers on team 2 had decreases of one and two points. Even with those teachers who had overall declines, there was at least one area that showed improvement.

In the "job accomplishment" category, TSES questions 1, 3, 7 were aligned. On statement 1, "I am convinced that I am able to successfully teach all relevant subject content to even the most difficult students," six of the eight teachers showed a positive change, one teacher maintained a 3 out of 4, and one teacher declined. Although the TSES was anonymous, one teacher in team 2 frequently made comments throughout the course of the study about students wanting to stay in Morning Meeting and not transition to classroom assignments, and one teacher from that same team reported a decline on statement 1 on the post-test TSES. Statement 3, "When I try really hard, I am able to reach even the most difficult students," was increased by four of the eight teachers and maintained by the other four teachers. Furthermore, of the four teachers that had the same pretest and posttest score, three of these teachers had the highest mark, 4, on both TSES iterations. On statement 7, "If I try hard enough, I know that I can exert a

positive influence on both the personal and academic development of my students," three teachers increased their scores, and all teachers ended with the highest score of a 4 on the posttest. Lastly, the staff had multiple positive comments about building their job accomplishments. Both teams had an equal number of perceived improvements at expanding out of their comfort zone. Team 1 had more comments about feeling more effective at using technology and planning effectively, whereas team 2 only had one comment apiece in these areas. Both teams had positive comments about building relationships with students, but team 2 had more comments in this area.

In the "skill development" category, TSES questions 4, 8, and 9 were aligned. Statement 4, "I am convinced that, as time goes by, I will continue to become more and more capable of helping to address my students' needs," was increased by a teacher on each time, and was maintained by the other six teachers; however, four of the teachers maintained the highest score on both assessments. On statement 8, "I am convinced that I can develop creative ways to cope with system constraints (such as budget cuts and other administrative problems) and continue to teach well," three teachers from team 1 increased their scores and the other teacher maintained a 4 on both tests. One teacher from team 2 increased from a 3 to a 4, two teachers maintained a level 3, and one teacher maintained a level 2. On TSES question 9, "I know that I can motivate my students to participate in innovative projects," each teacher in team 1 increased their score, two teachers from team 2 increased their score, and the other two teachers maintained the same score, a 3 out of 4, from pretest to posttest. The two teachers who had an overall decline on the TSES each noted an increase on this question. In addition, the teachers demonstrated increased efficacy through their comments in team meetings. The highest area of improvement was in skill development, as teachers practiced using technology tools, identified which ones were most

effective and which ones were not, and planned activities that addressed social and emotional learning and tied into content.

In the "social interaction" category, TSES questions 2 and 10 were aligned. The only area that had a net negative in teacher efficacy was statement 2, "I know that I can maintain a positive relationship with parents even when tensions arise." This aligns with comments from the staff about their frustration at motivating parents and families to keep children engaged, and this also corresponds with the teacher commentary about spending a disproportionate amount of time on the few families whose students were completely disengaged. On statement 2 on the TSES regarding communication with parents, team 1 maintained an average 3.75 out of a possible 4 score, and team 2 actually declined from a 3.5 to 3.25 out of a possible 4 score. Although this does not represent any gain, the average score is not particularly low, which indicated that most staff already felt they had relatively positive relationships with most families, but the implementation in this study did not add to that relationship. These TSES results also correspond with teacher comments about how they missed that initial contact with families during face-to-face Open House, and that their first and only meetings with these families during the course of this study occurred virtually. Team 1 had a few positive comments about building relationships from staff to families, whereas only one teacher on team 2 had a positive comment. On statement 10, "I know that I can carry out innovative projects even when I am opposed by skeptical colleagues," team 1 had consistent positive change, and team 2 had one teacher who had a one-point decline and the other teachers maintained scores of less than 4. This also matched the team meeting comments and observations from the scholarly practitioner, in that the K-2 teachers often collaborated together formally, informally, and whenever they could, whereas the 3-5 teachers were more likely to be isolated unless urged to collaborate.

In the "coping with job stress" category, TSES questions 5 and 6 were aligned. In team meetings, teachers addressed "coping with job stress," and both groups of teachers identified how they overcame technology issues. However, team 1 made more positive comments about how they learned and persisted despite technological glitches, and while team 2 had strengths in this area, the upper grades teachers had more negative comments about external factors outside of teacher control and student participation, especially relating to the transition from Morning Meeting to other content area participation. In statement 5, "Even if I get disrupted while teaching, I am confident that I can maintain my composure and continue to teach well," all of team 1 either grew to a 4 out of 4, or they maintained their level 4. That matched the comments about overcoming technology issues and aligned with the scholarly practitioner's observations about how well that team was able to redirect students as an overall skill. Although technically team 2 had a decline, the post-test score was still a 3.75 out of 4, and that matched the comments and tone of the group as they maintained an ability to adapt to unexpected change. In addition, team 2 was able to use email communications more efficiently with the older students so that if technology hampered the ability to get online live at one part of the day, the teacher and student could schedule an alternative time so that the student still accessed the teacher and content.

Many of the apprehensive comments at the beginning of the study consisted of anxiety about embracing virtual learning and the use of technology, concern about the developmental appropriateness of live, synchronous time in front of the computer, and worry about prioritizing prime instructional time for a focus on social and emotional learning that had not been the emphasis in previous years. The areas with split results, where team 1 showed growth and team 2 showed decline, were regarding "having confidence to maintain composure and continuing to teach well when disrupted," and "being able to carry out innovative projects despite being

opposed by skeptical comments." The statement about having a bad day relates in part to a limitation of outside influences impacting teacher performance and efficacy, and the statement about disruption adds a limitation—technology—that, if connection is disrupted, literally brings live instruction or the reception of instruction to a halt.

The teachers as a whole expressed an increase in their efficacy after implementing Morning Meeting. Teachers as a whole reported positive improvement in being able to "teach relevant content to even the most difficult students," "reach the most difficult students," "continue to become more and more capable of helping to address student needs," "exert a positive influence on the personal and academic development of students," "develop creative ways to cope with system constraints and continue to teach well," and "motivate students to participate in innovative projects." In the areas that most relate to the implementation of Morning Meeting, teacher efficacy improved. A clear structure, focused on building social and emotional learning connections with content integration, with the flexibility to make modifications based on student interests and needs was most impactful to the increase in teacher efficacy.

Study Question 3

Study question 3 was "To what extent does collaborative action research affect the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills?" This was addressed through the review of the scholarly practitioner's reflective journal. Two categories emerged with a higher frequency: individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation. Within individualized consideration, "coaching based on need" emerged as the theme with the highest frequency. This resulted in a differentiated leadership approach where teachers were provided input based on the scholarly practitioner's perceived interpretation of teacher needs and the expressed requests by staff. These

areas varied by educator; one teacher needed instructional planning due to moving to a new grade level for the first time, while another teacher was skeptical regarding the "why" of implementing Morning Meeting, whereas another was fully invested into the "why" before we began but needed technical support. Other teachers needed feedback and support for specific activities. In addition, although themed as "coaching to build confidence," the scholarly practitioner identified staff that needed a boost in either morale or self-confidence. Examples of this included a teacher who had been involuntarily transferred, through no fault of her own, in two of the previous three years, and a teacher who felt uncomfortable with technology. The individual support aligned with a 2016 study on the principal's impact on teacher efficacy; specifically, teachers desired "being heard by their principals" instead of meetings "covering material already understood […] that accomplishes nothing for the purposes of staff or for the kids" (Lambersky, 2016, p.387).

Intellectual stimulation was the next category with a high number of comments, and these were distributed tightly within four themes: taking risks, building best practices, creating a sense of urgency, and solving problems. Because the school year started with a novel problem and the introduction of an initiative, and the staff was dealing with a new principal, a plurality of these comments centered on solving problems, often with technology, communications, or learning about each other. The scholarly practitioner has been a principal at three elementary schools, each unique in size, location, and staff, and the earliest problem was figuring each other out with such limited capacity to be in proximity to each other due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The theme of taking risks was a close second-place, and this involved leading in a way where teachers felt supported and encouraged to experiment, such as by tinkering with Morning Meeting or trying a technology tool. Next, the theme of building best practices emerged in the

middle and end of the study, and this occurred after the teachers began taking risks and identifying what did or did not work, and what was most advantageous to supporting students. Lastly, near the end of the study, the scholarly practitioner noted a more frequent occurrence of creating a sense of urgency, particularly regarding the expectation of student engagement and the requirement to provide outreach to families.

The category of inspirational motivation followed, and nearly three-fourths of these comments pertained to serving student social and emotional needs, followed by eleven comments on serving instructional needs. This category addressed the "why" of the implementation of Morning Meeting, based on the student and family evidence and growing body of literature regarding the impact of isolation and the pandemic on student social and emotional learning needs. A significant portion of the scholarly practitioner's time at the beginning was on addressing the "why" about implementing Morning Meeting at a school that did not have an explicit or specific focus on social and emotional learning prior to the 2020-21 academic year. Furthermore, as job stresses and other items emerged, the need remained to remind staff of the importance of Morning Meeting and social and emotional learning for the virtual learning context and the eventual transition to face-to-face. As the study proceeded, more comments and reflections related to instructional needs as the 2020-21 school year featured remote online learning as compared to the emergency remote learning that concluded the 2019-20 academic year.

Lastly, the journal featured twenty-eight comments about idealized influence, with nineteen about supporting staff and nine about supporting students and families. For supporting staff, the scholarly practitioner reflected on effectiveness of leadership while being new to a school. At first, the goal was to build a team and get to know each other, then establish and

enforce expectations while simultaneously providing heavy support, encouragement, and follow-through on the items that staff needed assistance. These conversations sometimes involved enforcing unpopular expectations that the scholarly practitioner felt were necessary for the effective operation of school, including submitting and providing feedback on lesson plans and participating in regular team meetings and reflections. As the study concluded and the scholarly practitioner wrote journals afterward, the comments were more of notes that teachers made about the desire to create improvement quickly, along with statements about regular check-ins with staff. Although fewer comments were made about supporting students and families, the remote nature of virtual learning made those opportunities more difficult. The first situation noted in the study was about quickly responding to a disciplinary issue, and the remainder of the comments were about building family engagement as a way to increase student engagement, such as through virtual Title 1 and open house events and identifying how to support families with issues such as technology, homelessness, and financial instability, along with academic concerns.

During the course of this study, the scholarly practitioner was able to enhance leadership skills. Since this was the scholarly practitioner's first year in the principalship at the school in this study, both the scholarly practitioner and teachers needed to get accustomed to each other. Teachers were open in sharing their problems, and the scholarly practitioner worked to provide the differentiated assistance each person needed. However, during the course of this study, three areas emerged. The loss of instructional time necessitated the sense of urgency in identifying and solving problems expeditiously to support the overall goal of student learning. Embracing and using the collaborative process to build expertise areas was essential so that more effective and timely support was available to all educators. Lastly, attending to teachers' social and emotional

concerns was crucial because staff members were also dealing with personal and professional stresses before, during, and after the study.

Interpretation of the Findings

Study Question 1

Study question 1 addressed the extent of the implementation of Morning Meeting on student engagement. According to teacher responses, student engagement grew from 66% at the beginning to 91% at the end of the study. When considering that week 1 also had the childcare issue, student engagement grew from 88% in week 2 to 91% at the end of the study. Furthermore, 77% of students were fully engaged in Morning Meeting for the entirety of the study as identified by teachers at the end of the study. In addition, ten students who were disengaged during week 1 due to the childcare situation were also disengaged for only one other week, and that could have added an additional 5.6% to the cumulative rate of 77%. Although gaps of engagement exist between Black and LatinX students with White students in the "fully engaged" category, the inclusion of partial engagement shows no gap. A similar number of students in each ethnicity were identified as non-participating. For EC and EL students, gaps between those populations and students not identified as EC or EL are present, but the consideration of full and partial engagement shows a closure in those gaps. Furthermore, only one EC student did not engage in Morning Meeting; all EL students participated to some degree, and 6% of non-EC and 7% of non-EL students were completely disengaged.

These rates of engagement are higher than those reported by teachers during the spring 2020 emergency remote learning, although that was thrust upon teachers instantaneously while the fall 2020 included planning time. Specifically identifying an individual cause of increased student engagement is not possible due to the limitations of multiple extraneous variables. Prior

research from Hallinger and Heck (1996) indicated that the individual factor of leadership itself had a weak statistical effect on student engagement, but that "achieving results through others is the essence of leadership," so one variable may not capture the true effect (p. 39). This is also conveyed by Leithwood and Jantzi (1999, 2000) when they noted that the single statistical measure "does not inherently dismiss the role of a transformational principal" since leadership impacts the people who make the other, often more substantial effects.

Morning Meeting is a component of the Responsive Classroom series, and a meta-analysis of multiple social and emotional learning programs indicated that nearly all programs "significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behavior, and academic performance" (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 405). This is one program that fits with the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) description of an efficient social and emotional program because it is sequenced, active, focused, and explicit (SAFE) (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 409). In addition, Morning Meeting is focused on all students, not narrowly used for a subsection of children; a 2012 study showed that social and emotional learning programs that had higher effectiveness were those that used the SAFE planning, those that were implemented during school hours, and those that addressed the entire school (Sklad et al., 2012, p. 895).

Bondy and Ketts (2001) studied the improvement of third grade student performance on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), and the self-reported only significant change was the implementation of Morning Meeting. They reported that students indicated that Morning Meeting specifically made the children "feel good," "feel important, included, and ready to help one another," and "was a kind of warm-up for the academic challenges that lay ahead" (Bondy & Ketts, 2001, p. 147). Although students were not interviewed for this study, the teachers

perceived that students in this study had similar responses except for the upper-grades teachers having concerns about the transition from Morning Meeting to reading and writing.

Study Question 2

Study question 2 addressed the extent that the use of Morning Meeting improved individual and collective teacher efficacy. According to the Teacher Self-efficacy Scale (TSES), the school's collective efficacy increased from the pretest to the posttest, both grade spans increased, and the lower-grades teachers started lower by 0.12 points (out of 4) and ended 0.45 higher than the upper-grades teachers even though both groups had an increase. Bandura (1977) noted that individuals who "persist in subjectively threatening activities that are in fact relatively safe" are able to receive and implement modifications, feedback, and changes, which is an increase in confidence and self-efficacy to keep trying more challenging items (p.194). In the context of this study, teachers expressed no concerns about the safety of implementation of Morning Meeting, and they accepted feedback and coaching as additional steps were added into the sequence. Furthermore, since Morning Meeting started small and increased steps throughout, teachers were able to have an "expectation outcome" in which they believed they had the capacity to perform the behavior (Bandura, 1977, p. 193). In addition, teachers built mastery through actual experiences and they had the opportunity to view each other's virtual lessons and gain through "vicarious experiences," or seeing their peers succeed (Bandura, 1995, p. 3).

Hoy and Woolfolk (1993) identify a key element of efficacy as the teacher perception of their ability to teach effectively and impact students, and the authors reference the Organizational Health Inventory (OHI), specifically the statement that if teachers try really hard, they can get through to difficult or unmotivated students (p. 357). Both groups of teachers expressed optimism that they could reach the most difficult students after the TSES posttest, with the

lower-grades teachers improving from a 3.25 to a 4 and the upper-grades teachers improving from a 3.25 to a 3.50. This matches the comments from teachers throughout the study that conveyed an overall optimistic perspective at facilitating improved engagement, with teachers of younger students having a higher degree of positivity than teachers of students in third through fifth grade. Since Morning Meeting was implemented sequentially teachers were able to have what Bandura describes as "safe" risk-taking and an expectation outcome that, since the previous step was implemented and mastered, building the second step was reasonable (Bandura, 1977, pp. 193-194).

Study Question 3

Study question 3 addressed the extent that collaborative action research (CAR) affected the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills. This information was gathered in a daily reflective journal based on the interactions with teachers. In the CAR process, action research is "a disciplined process of inquiry conducted *by* and *for* those taking the action" (Sagor, 2000, p. 3). During this study, the scholarly practitioner and teachers worked together to identify a problem and decided how to address it; furthermore, participants learned during the process and adjusted based on the evidence gathered (Dickens & Watkins, 1999, p. 138).

The journal entries centered on Bass's 4 Is: "individualized consideration," "inspirational motivation," "idealized influence," and "intellectual stimulation." These components of transformational leadership were addressed as the scholarly practitioner reflected on the process of implementing Morning Meeting as a form of CAR. A large number of comments and time were spent on individualized consideration, or helping staff members based on where they are. This corresponds with the Burns definition of transformational leadership "in which leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation" (Burns, 1978, p.

20). Furthermore, this aligns with supporting the growth of teacher efficacy through this study. During the study, the scholarly practitioner frequently worked with teachers in groups and individually to assist them with technology, Morning Meeting implementation, and other problems that emerged. Student engagement rose and teacher efficacy increased collectively, similar to how schools in Canada improved when principals implemented transformative approaches based on using collaboration to address problems that staff members are invested in solving (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990).

Intellectual stimulation was described in 48 comments and was divided into four themes: taking risks, building best practices, creating a sense of urgency, and solving problems. Bandura (1977) noted that teachers were more willing to take risks if it was safe and if they would receive frequent, non-threatening feedback (pp. 193-194). Intellectual stimulation was described in a study using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire as having a significant effect on satisfaction by followers, particularly when leaders challenged their followers with ambitious goals and helped individuals reach the team and individual goals (Kirby et al., 1992). The CAR process, which necessitated a formative approach to adjusting strategies in midstream based on the evidence, was conducive in helping the scholarly practitioner's pursuit to develop leadership skills. This study required making adjustments, additions, deletions, and changes on a daily and weekly basis depending on the needs of students and staff. This study also required the leader and team to reach individual and collective goals regarding increased student engagement week-to-week and enhanced teacher confidence and efficacy at delivering Morning Meeting remotely.

The "inspirational motivation" category had 41 comments, 30 of which addressed serving social and emotional needs and 11 that focused on serving instructional needs. Since the study was focused on Morning Meeting, instructional needs often were addressed outside of the

context of the study, so the only comments included were those pertinent to the study. A study in Singapore showed that leaders who exhibited charisma, an element of inspirational motivation, were marked higher in ratings by teachers (Koh et al., 1995). In the small school in this study, the scholarly practitioner worked to inspire followers regarding the "why" of this work, specifically the enhancement of student engagement and teacher confidence and efficacy. The small number of teachers allowed for more frequent conversations and feedback to focus on the vision of this study as it related to Morning Meeting implementation.

The "idealized influence" category had 28 comments, with 19 related to supporting staff and 9 regarding supporting students. This category focused more on showing staff of the scholarly practitioner's expectations as the leader, which aligns with the description of idealized influence as doing what is ethically right over what is expedient in order to establish consistency (Barling & Kelloway, 2000). The journal reflections in this category are about responding to how teachers initially had adverse reactions to expectations, or questions about the rationale for expectations, or descriptions of how the leader hypothesized improving the establishment of these expectations.

Delimitations of the Study

In reviewing the results and implications of this study, potential limitations should be considered. Since this study included both qualitative and quantitative data, multiple limitations exist. Specifically, these limitations refer to the generalizability, trustworthiness, validity, and reliability of the study.

Because the sample size of this study only included one small, rural elementary school, the results are not necessarily generalizable to all contexts. In addition, this study only featured eight homeroom teachers, and each of the teachers are white women. The diversity of the student

population does not match the distribution of the school staff. None of the teachers at this school are considered beginning teachers, and the only new staff member during the 2020-21 school year was the scholarly practitioner in the capacity of principal.

The study consisted of eight weeks, but the scholarly practitioner journaled for weeks before and after the study in order to address the "prolonged engagement" component of trustworthiness. Because specific details of meetings and minutes include discussion of names and personnel in a way that would be considered confidential, this trustworthiness limitation still exists since a full audit of meetings and day-to-day occurrences cannot be fully completed. In addition, because the context of this school differs from other situations, the credibility of the details can be a limitation, especially when compared and contrasted to other schools.

Validity limitations exist in this study. While and pre and posttest Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale assessments were used to describe teacher confidence before and after the study, it is possible that other factors related and unrelated to school, COVID-19, technology, or other personal issues could contribute to teacher responses. In addition, when quantifying student engagement, although teachers used a consensus definition that they created collaboratively, individual teacher interpretations could have influenced the results. In addition, external factors such as technological access on a daily and weekly basis could have impacted engagement in an adverse way.

Reliability limitations are present in this study. Regarding quantitative statistics, the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale is only ten questions and is used as a pre and posttest. In addition, only eight teachers at one school participated, so the number of participants completing the study is limited. Also, the technical reliability regarding student access to the internet and computers impacts the quantitative engagement data collected by teachers.

Even though there are some quantitative limitations described in this section, the findings outweigh the limitations listed, especially when considering the circumstances of this study, specifically that the study was conducted in a rural setting during the COVID-19 pandemic. The qualitative components of this study provided for authentic feedback and support based on teacher and student needs, particularly regarding the stressful conditions of the pandemic, the facilitation and participation in online learning, and the concerns about the health and well-being of the educators and their students. In addition, the design of this study required teachers to engage students, but the scholarly practitioner engaged the teachers to support the needs of the adults and children in the school. While the Morning Meetings were designed to facilitate teacher-to-student and student-to-student engagement, they were also great opportunities for the administration to engage teachers to support their needs and the student needs during the stressful periods of the pandemic and online learning. The team meeting agendas and topics aligned with what was experienced and planned with Morning Meeting, so the data was relevant and specifically tied to what teachers and students actually did. Consequently, the authentic qualitative data collected during this study outweighed the quantitative limitations.

Implications of the Findings for Practice

These results may have an impact on current practice within the context of the school in this study and potentially across other elementary schools. The implications are related to the impact of Morning Meeting on student engagement, the impact of implementing Morning Meeting on individual and collective teacher efficacy, and the impact of using the collaborative action research process on the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills. These will also be primarily centered within the context of the remote online environment.

The improvement in student engagement corresponds with the assertion that the implementation of Morning Meeting helped "build and enhance connection" and addressed "the human need to feel a sense of significance and belonging" (Kriete & Davis, 2016, p. 11). Within the virtual context, the implementation of social and emotional learning programs like Morning Meeting may provide an outlet for students to connect and allow teachers to build relationships. Even outside of the virtual context, the literature regarding the importance of connection, especially among elementary students, and the results of this study indicate a potential positive impact on students when Morning Meeting or almost any structured social and emotional learning program is implemented. During the middle of the study, a newspaper article in *The New Yorker* was published about the negative impact of remote learning on numerous studies, and the scholarly practitioner's discussion of this article with staff served as an additional reminder about the "why" of this work. While the context of this study is a rural, small school, the need for students to have connection is not limited to this particular type of school. Therefore, this study's results may provide an impetus to prioritize resources to implement Morning Meeting or a similar social and emotional learning program, regardless of the size and demographics of the school. Instead, those factors may instead impact the choice of program to use more than the decision to use something.

Although gaps existed in full engagement between White students and Black and LatinX students, the inclusion of partial engagement shows almost no difference between the ethnicities. The non-participating rates are also similar, so an implication of this information would be to persist on persistent and differentiated outreach to build full engagement and participation in whatever the initiative is. The discrepancy between EC students at full engagement and non-EC students is 29 percentage points, but that gap narrows to four when including partial engagement.

Teachers with EC students commented that parents would sometimes opt their children out of Morning Meeting or special areas on days when the students were in groups with the EC teacher or related services staff because the parents perceived that the students were unable to handle that much time on the computer. Therefore, consideration should be made for accommodating and supporting EC students and their families when balancing the combination of social and emotional needs, academic instructional time, and specially designed instruction time. Having all of these actually makes the EC students have longer quantities of instruction than non-EC students. For EL students, an eleven-point gap between them and non-EL students existed with full engagement, but when partial engagement was considered, EL students had higher engagement. In addition, no EL students were non-participatory. The implication with this part of the study is to ensure that consistent and persistent outreach is made to all families.

The growth in individual and collective teacher efficacy was limited to the confidence developed through using Morning Meeting in the virtual setting. At the school in this study, teachers were unaccustomed to focusing explicitly on social and emotional learning, so a large amount of time was spent explaining why this initiative was important. However, the lack of engagement during the spring emergency remote setting helped in convincing teachers of the need for explicit social and emotional learning instruction. As virtual learning continued for some students after the study, the results of this study may provide longer-term needs to continue focusing on social and emotional learning for students who return face-to-face and students who remain virtual. In addition, the explicit lessons and cycle of formative adjustments based on teacher need assisted teachers in building their efficacy. The results of this part of the study may affect the prioritization of social and emotional learning as part of the school day and as part of virtual learning. In addition, the results of this study may influence schools, regardless of size or

demographics, to use a whole-school program instead of simply programming focused on students perceived as high needs. However, these impacts include a few cautions; first, programs need to be implemented to fidelity (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 421). Furthermore, when schools are identified as having significant behavior problems, implementation of social and emotional programs may intensify the problems that children already have (Garner et al., 2014, p. 166).

The development of the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills by using collaborative action research (CAR) provides support for encouraging the use of CAR for principals as a means of school improvement. Sagor (2009) juxtaposes the use of CAR with the process of top-down choosing a program to implement with fidelity and notes that although CAR is criticized for statistical critiques, CAR allows for practitioners in the field to conduct relevant research and make adjustments throughout. The results of this study may encourage leaders to support principals in facilitating CAR for school improvement initiatives and the school improvement planning and monitoring process. Both CAR and school improvement planning involve multiple stakeholders, and these processes can be done on real-world situations in schools.

Recommendations

Multiple areas exist for further research related to the areas within this study. These recommendations are divided into the areas of virtual learning, student engagement, social and emotional learning, teacher efficacy, and leadership. These suggestions are based on the review of current literature as well as the strengths and limitations of this study.

Regarding virtual learning, the first recommendation is to conduct a longitudinal study beyond the eight-week scope of this study. This information would expand beyond a quarter of the year and could be used to assess the impact on students. A similar suggestion would be to study the impact on students when face-to-face learning resumed, especially since some children

returned and others remained in the virtual context. This study could be centered on social and emotional learning but could also be focused on academics. A multi-school study, perhaps on schools of similar size and scope, or comparing and contrasting different types of schools, could be beneficial for researching best practices for use during virtual learning.

In addition, since the current literature is minimal regarding the best practices of online elementary school, further studies are necessary to identify effective virtual learning and teaching. These studies could include a review of programs, pedagogy, structure, and organization. Since online learning has incorporated live synchronous instruction and asynchronous lessons, further studies could examine the benefits and detriments of both for learners and teachers. In addition, a review of online platforms, such as Seesaw, Google Classroom, and Canvas would be beneficial for leaders in deciding tools to use going forward.

For student engagement, studies that incorporate student feedback to determine engagement would be beneficial since this study only included the teacher perception of student participation. Further studies that featured both objective measures, such as documentable "log-in time" or anonymous student surveys would be helpful. One of the areas that was identified as a weakness in the upper grades was in the transition from Morning Meeting to content; therefore, further study comparing engagement in social emotional lessons to reading or math, within the content of online learning, would be useful. Also, studies measuring student engagement based on the style of online learning (synchronous or asynchronous or both) would be useful.

Within the context of social and emotional learning (SEL), studies assessing the impact of a variety of programs would be beneficial, both those that are for the entire school and those that are targeted to special populations. In addition, comparing these impacts across a variety of types of schools would be helpful, especially considering the literature indicating that

implementation of social and emotional learning programs has been difficult and even negative at schools that had significant behavior problems. When face-to-face instruction resumes, further studies linking the impact of SEL program implementation to student discipline would be useful.

In addition, more studies involving Morning Meeting would be helpful to principals and school personnel. Longitudinal or comparative studies about the full implementation could provide insight into how the structure works in various contexts, schools, and grade spans. With some online schools operating, studies could be done about implementation of Morning Meeting in a full-time online setting. Since many schools were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, additional studies could be completed about Morning Meeting implementation after online learning. Since Morning Meeting includes activities and daily messages, studies could be conducted on how academic content, such as mathematics or English Language Arts, could be supported by Morning Meeting implementation. Because Morning Meeting is a component of Responsive Classroom ®, further studies about Responsive Classroom ® techniques and student behavior, teacher perception, or links to student discipline would be beneficial.

In the category of teacher efficacy, the first recommendation would be with a variety of self-assessment tools. Further studies using the ten question Teacher Self-efficacy Scale would provide a larger body of data using that study. However, this study could have used the larger efficacy assessments, such as the lengthy ones from Bandura, and analysis using statistical reliability could provide more insight. A comparative study between school levels, types of schools, and whether schools used face-to-face, online-only, or hybrid, could also be beneficial in the context of assessing teacher efficacy. Also, a longitudinal study during extended periods of virtual learning could allow for an additional assessment to measure efficacy over time.

Depending on the social and emotional learning (SEL) program being used, studies could incorporate pretest and posttest questionnaires about how teachers felt before and after implementation of the program. Furthermore, if leaders use collaborative action research, additional studies could examine in greater detail the process by which teams decide on identifying and then problem-solving situations. Some SEL programs incorporate surveys for teachers to assess students, and further studies could examine how the implementation of these programs, particularly in a virtual context, impacts the results of those surveys.

For leadership purposes, multiple studies could be conducted for further review. Since schools have been in various stages of reopening since August 2020, studies could be done to identify the needs and self-reflections of principals and leaders navigating the complexities of virtual learning. Similarly, studies of teachers, families, and students could be done for their perspective, but studies could also be done regarding their perception or interpretation of leadership qualities and practices. Furthermore, studies that assess leadership practices in the virtual setting would be helpful; these studies could delve into instructional leadership approaches, transformational or transactional approaches, or on specific practices.

Conclusions

During the fall of 2020, schools engaged in remote online learning. The school in this study implemented Morning Meeting to enhance student engagement and improve individual and collective teacher efficacy. In addition, the scholarly practitioner used the collaborative action research process to affect self-leadership skills. Although teachers signaled a clear preference for face-to-face learning, the virtual learning context expanded the skills of teachers and allowed for students to engage in learning.

The focus on social and emotional learning through the implementation of Morning Meeting benefitted overall student engagement. Student engagement increased throughout the span of study across each grade span. As the study progressed, teacher activities became more complex, but the structure remained familiar, so students knew what to expect, but the activities had variety. In addition, the school's collective effort to engage families as soon as the staff observed disengagement for more than a couple of days contributed to building and then maintaining student engagement.

The specific emphasis on Morning Meeting implementation, a structured process that took a half-hour or less as teachers navigated live online teaching for the first time, allowed for teachers to improve their individual and collective efficacy. The teachers understood that the goal was to engage students for a small period of time at the beginning of the day, which then allowed building up lengthier periods of time that students would build stamina to engage further. The structure of Morning Meeting allowed for social and emotional learning to be addressed, and the layout was easy to follow. Teachers collectively increased their confidence at operating online platforms and addressing social and emotional learning; furthermore, all teachers increased their efficacy in supporting "hard to reach" students.

The transformational leadership approach had a positive impact on staff, students, and the scholarly practitioner. Teachers were supported on an individual basis depending on their specific needs. Students were supported by their teachers, and by the process by which Morning Meeting and student engagement was implemented and monitored. The collaborative action research process also helped the scholarly practitioner by having staff members as stakeholders contribute to the understanding and attempts at solutions of problems. This allowed for the educators to take ownership in the implementation of Morning Meeting. Lastly, the intentional

focus on applying transformational leadership benefitted the scholarly practitioner in the role of principal by forcing an emphasis on leading by doing, providing a compelling vision, and supporting the school as a whole and the teachers based on their individual needs. This process helped in creating a sense of urgency to make essential adjustments.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic created suboptimal conditions for teaching and learning, teachers were able to build their skills for effective virtual teaching and identify best practices to use in online learning and applicable components of in-person instruction. Student engagement increased during the use of online Morning Meeting, collective teacher efficacy increased during the time of the study, and the scholarly practitioner's leadership skills improved in the context of applied transformational leadership.

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APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board
4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building· Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284** · **rede.ecu.edu/umcirb/**

Notification of Exempt Certification

From:	Social/Behavioral IRB
To:	Daniel Barnes
CC:	Marjorie Ringler
Date:	6/7/2021
Re:	UMCIRB 20-002714 Enhancing Student Engagement, Teacher Self-Efficacy, and Principal Leadership

I am pleased to inform you that your research submission has been certified as exempt on 6/7/2021. This study is eligible for Exempt Certification under category # 1 & 2ab.
It is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted in the manner reported in your application and/or protocol, as well as being consistent with the ethical principles of the Belmont Report and your profession.

This research study does not require any additional interaction with the UMCIRB unless there are proposed changes to this study. Any change, prior to implementing that change, must be submitted to the UMCIRB for review and approval. The UMCIRB will determine if the change impacts the eligibility of the research for exempt status. If more substantive review is required, you will be notified within five business days.

Document	Description
Consent Paragraph for Exempt(0.04)	Consent Forms
Dissertation Proposal Defense(0.01)	Study Protocol or Grant Application
Questions for Groups(0.01)	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
TSES(0.01)	Surveys and Questionnaires

For research studies where a waiver or alteration of HIPAA Authorization has been approved, the IRB states that each of the waiver criteria in 45 CFR 164.512(i)(1)(i)(A) and (2)(i) through (v) have been met. Additionally, the elements of PHI to be collected as described in items 1 and 2 of the Application for Waiver of Authorization have been determined to be the minimal necessary for the specified research.

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

IRB00000705 East Carolina U IRB #1 (Biomedical) IORG0000418
IRB00003781 East Carolina U IRB #2 (Behavioral/SS) IORG0000418

Study.PI Name:
Study.Co-Investigators:
Wilson County Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, marital or parental status, in admission, to access, to treatment in its programs and activities.

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Survey Consent for Exempt Survey Research

You are being invited to participate in a **research** study titled "*ENHANCING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY, AND PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS THROUGH MORNING MEETING IN AN ONLINE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT*" being conducted by *Daniel Barnes,* a *student* at East Carolina University in the *Educational Leadership* department. The goal is to survey *13* individuals in/at *Lee Woodard Elementary School*. The survey will take approximately *30* minutes to complete. It is hoped that this information will assist us to better understand *your self-efficacy, or confidence, at delivering instruction during online Morning Meeting*. Your responses will be kept confidential and no data will be released or used with your identification attached. The data will be collected using paper/pencil surveys that cannot be traced back to an individual respondent.

In addition, during grade-span meetings and in individual meetings, you will be interviewed and asked questions about the positives, negatives, and areas for clarification and improvement with regards to Morning Meeting. You will also be observed in the facilitation of Morning Meeting. All of this data will be provided by you orally and will be kept in a notebook, secured and locked away, with the researcher. In addition, no identifying data from the interviews and observations will be used.

Your participation in the research is **voluntary**. You may choose not to answer any or all questions, and you may stop at any time. We ***will not*** be able to pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study. There is **no penalty for not taking part** in this research study. Please call *Daniel Barnes* at *252-289-0014* for any research related questions or the University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) at 252-744-2914 for questions about your rights as a research participant.

☐ I AGREE to participate in the research study. I know that I may stop at any time.
☐ I DO NOT AGREE to participate in the research study.

Name (Print):_____

Name (Signature):_____

Date:_____

APPENDIX C: WILSON COUNTY SCHOOLS RESEARCH APPROVAL

Request For Research Application

SUMMARY

Wilson County Schools (WCS) endeavors to provide opportunities for research studies of quality to be conducted within the system by graduate students and by other professionally and technically qualified individuals and research organizations.

Factors which are considered in assessing whether the school system will cooperate in a proposal for research include the following:

1. The technical soundness of the proposal design
2. The appropriateness of the research topic
3. The availability of research sites and subjects of the kinds requested
4. The nature and amount of the interruption required in the ongoing educational program
5. The privacy of respondents
6. The kind and number of data-gathering procedures or instruments to be used in the study
7. The need for the schools to safeguard the personal and legal rights of students, parents, and staff

The following categories of research will be accepted for screening and evaluation:

1. Unsolicited research proposals from individuals or organizations independent of WCS
2. Proposals for studies for masters' theses and doctoral dissertations originating from WCS employees
3. Proposals for studies for doctoral dissertations originating from proponents other than WCS employees
4. Responses to WCS requests for proposals for external audits and research
5. Proposals for research activities originating within WCS offices, departments, divisions, and other units, transmitted through their central office administrative channels.

Applications will be reviewed by Accountability/Technology Services. Final approval is given by the Superintendent. Legal reference: G.S. 115C-36, -47 Article 16

Accountability/Technology Services does not provide applicants with assistance in research design, instrument development, data analysis, or report writing except as authorized by the Superintendent in the application.

Student and parent participation in a study is voluntary. Participation of WCS personnel also is voluntary unless specifically indicated by the Superintendent. Any instruments to be administered to the research subjects must display a clarifying statement to this effect on its fact sheet. Anonymity of any participant must be preserved. The identity of schools, offices, or the school system cannot be revealed *unless* authorized by the Superintendent.

INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants wishing to conduct research in WCS are required to complete the *Request for Research Application* and submit two copies to: Accountability/Technology Services, Wilson County Schools, 117 NE Tarboro Street, Wilson, NC 27893-4016.

Office Use Only: Processing Status

Date Forms Received 5/7 Date to Reviewer 5/10 Date from Reviewer 5/12

Reviewer Decision: ☒ Accept ☐ Revise ☐ Reject

Date Revisions Sent _____ Date Revisions Received _____ Date to Superintendent _____

Final Decision: ☐ Accept ☐ Revise ☐ Reject

E. REQUESTED PARTICIPATION OF WCS STAFF

1. Will teachers be asked to assist with the study? ☑ Yes ☐ No

If "Yes," for how much time? as part of their instructional day, not extra, and as part of PLC meetings, not extra

2. Will other school system personnel be asked to assist with the study? ☐ Yes ☑ No

If "Yes," who and for how much time? _____

F. SIGNATURE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Researchers must provide one complete copy of each report or product developed as a part or outcome of the research project, and, upon request from WCS, an executive summary of no more than 25 pages. Researchers may not charge WCS for any of these reports, products, or summaries; and all will be provided within 30 days of the development of the report or product. I acknowledge that WCS reserves the right to immediately revoke its approval to conduct research if it should be determined that any terms or conditions of the application have been breached.

Indicate compliance with the above statement: I have read the requirements and understand that I must comply.

Daniel M. Barnes — *Signature, Applicant*

05/07/21 — *Date*

G. SIGNATURE OF THESIS COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

The following is to be signed by the chairperson of the applicant's thesis/dissertation committee (if applicable). I have reviewed the enclosed research proposal and find it to be technically competent, theoretically sound, and significant in focus.

_____ — *Signature, Chairperson Title*

_____ — *Date*

Title of research Enhancing Student Engagement, Teacher Self-Efficacy, and Principal Leadership

To Be Completed by Accountability/Technology Services

1. Clearance Recommendation:

☒ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☐ Provisional Approval (approval contingent on acceptance of modifications indicated below.)

2. Remarks (Include specific modifications needed or reason(s) for disapproval, as appropriate.) _____

Scott Sage — *Signature, Accountability/Technology Services*

5-12-2021 — *Date*