ABSTRACT

Chanda R. Waters, EXAMINING THE EFFECT OF IMPLEMENTING MORNING MEETINGS AS A TRAUMA-INFORMED STRATEGY ON TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY IN A LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOL (Under the direction of Dr. Travis Lewis). Department of Educational Leadership, May 2021.

In a low performing school, stressful conditions, lack of resources, and student populations that have been subjected to one or more ACEs can make it difficult for teachers to yield successful outcomes. Maintaining a high opinion of self-efficacy is difficult when working in low-performing schools that are struggling to meet state standards. To meet academic and behavioral demands, there is a need to understand how student conduct, readiness for learning, and the strategies teachers employ within the classroom affect teacher self-efficacy. The purpose of this mixed method action research study was to examine how elementary school teachers, in a low-performing school, perceptions of their efficacy as teachers were influenced by their experiences in implementing morning meetings as a trauma-informed strategy in the classroom. Two study questions guided the study: (1) What effect did implementing morning meetings, as a trauma-informed strategy, in the learning environment have on teacher perceptions of self-efficacy at a low-performing elementary school? (2) What specific teacher self-efficacy skills were affected by the implementation of the morning meetings? These meetings were used by the teachers as a strategy to build relationships with students and aid the teacher in creating a climate for success for teacher and students. This study was grounded in the theoretical frameworks of self-efficacy theory introduced by Albert Bandura in 1977 and expectancy value theory first conceptualized by Victor Vroom in 1964. Conducted in a low-performing elementary school with only beginning teachers, the study looked at the impact of building relationships with students on the teacher's self-efficacy skills- Student Engagement, Instructional Practices and Classroom Management.

Findings from this study indicate that the teacher's relationship with his/her students in a low-performing environment have a direct impact on that teacher's perceptions of self-efficacy. Although teachers may be highly efficacious in one skill set, those skills may not be the skills that will allow the teacher to reach their valued outcomes. However, this study provides recommendations to aid teachers in developing and maintaining efficacy in each of the areas to ensure that individual expectancy outcomes are achieved thereby helping to keep teachers in low-performing schools.

EXAMINING THE EFFECT OF IMPLEMENTING MORNING MEETINGS, AS TRAUMA-INFORMED STRATEGY, ON TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY IN A LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOL

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Chanda R. Waters

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by

Chanda R. Waters

APPROVED BY:

DIRECTOR OF DISSERTATION:_____
Travis Lewis, EdD

COMMITTEE MEMBER:_____
Marjorie Ringler, EdD

COMMITTEE MEMBER:_____
Karen Jones, PhD

COMMITTEE MEMBER:_____
Sheronda Fleming, PhD

CHAIR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP:

_____
Marjorie Ringler, EdD

DEAN OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL:

_____
Paul Gemperline, PhD

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my amazing and loving sons, Donovan and Carson. From the moment I first found out I was pregnant I knew I wanted to always be my best self and give my best self to you both. I know sometimes it seemed like mommy was always working, but I was working to be a positive example for you and show you that with God, ALL things are possible. I love you Donny & Bubba. I hope I make you both proud.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Despite efforts by state legislatures, teacher advocacy groups, and universities to prepare teachers for the massive undertaking of educating our youth, evidence still demonstrates high teacher turnover in public schools. In 2017, Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond cited the U.S. teacher attrition rate at 8%, which is considerably higher than the rate of 5% in the 1990s. It is also almost twice that of high-achieving countries such as Finland, Singapore, and Canada (Sutcher et al., 2016). Furthermore, approximately 90% of the teacher shortage the US is experiencing is due to teachers leaving the profession. In the US, about one third of new teachers quit the profession within the first three years and half quit within 5 years (Sutcher et al., 2016). At the end of the 2017 school year, 12,750 teachers quit teaching in the North Carolina public schools (State of the teaching profession, n.d.). That figure is slightly higher than the previous year. However, countries with low teacher attrition, like Hong Kong, Finland, and Singapore, cite teacher dissatisfaction with educational infrastructures such as salary, resources, supportive school policy, and supports for student achievement as factors that lead to their resignations (Choi & Tang, 2011; Darling-Hammond & Rothman, 2011). Consequently, when these attributes are missing in schools with higher attrition rates, it has a negative impact on teacher job satisfaction, psychological health, and physical well-being (Barmby, 2006; Schafer et al., 2012; Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). These factors create the difficult working conditions in low-performing schools and constant demands to rise above this adversity can cause stress on teachers.

Low-performing schools are faced with the struggle of trying to find qualified professionals to fill vacancies, equipping teachers with the resources and support they need, and trying to build and sustain a positive school culture (Goldring et al., 2014). Table 1

Table 1

Teacher Vacancies and Difficulties Filling Vacancies in Low- and High-Poverty Schools

School Status	Total	Low-Poverty	High-Poverty	Gap (high minus low-poverty school)	Ratio high/low poverty
Schools reporting teacher vacancies	79.8%	81.1%	78.9%	-2.2 ppt	1.0
Of schools reporting vacancies					
Unable to fill a vacancy in at least one field	9.4%	7.2%	10.5%	3.4 ppt	1.5
Found it "very difficult" to fill a vacancy in at least one field	36.2%	34.3%	36.8%	2.4 ppt	1.1

Note. Data from U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, National Teacher and Principal Survey, 2015-2016.

illustrates the difficulty high-poverty schools have in filling vacancies in at least one field. While some complicating factors cannot be impacted immediately by these schools, such as policy, additional resources and salary improvements, schools can seek to enhance teachers' belief that their work is valued and can contribute to successful outcomes. By addressing teacher sense of self-efficacy, low-performing schools can positively impact teacher mental health, physical health, and performance motivation, thereby increasing effort in the learning environment and improving outcomes for teachers and students (Bandura, 1977, 1993; Pajares, 1996; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

According to Victor Vroom's (1964) expectancy value theory, one must perceive that effort will lead to success, and that success equates to a valuable outcome. Albert Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory identifies self-efficacy as one of the most impactful predictors of motivation. A person's ability to exercise influence over the events that affect their lives and their belief in their capability to be successful in completing tasks are constantly modifying their level of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). When this mindset is examined in the context of teachers in low-performing schools, the stress caused from both job demands and job resources can negatively impact a teacher's sense of self-efficacy and have a negative impact on their motivation to be successful in the classroom or in the profession altogether (Bandura, 1997; Powers, 1973; Vancouver et al., 2001).

Low-performing schools present some of the same stressors for teachers as any other school, along with being charged with improving test scores quickly in a high-stakes environment. A school receiving the low-performing designation in North Carolina is one that has received a school performance grade of D or F and also has a growth score of "met growth" or "did not meet growth" (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 2013). The growth score is

derived from all End of Grade exams, which are given in the core subject areas to students grades 3-8, and the high school English II End of Course exam, and Math I End of Course exam scores. Using EVAAS, a value-added growth modeling tool, a school growth accountability score is produced. A school can meet growth, not meet growth, or exceed growth (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 2013). The school performance grade is based upon student testing data from the aforementioned statewide assessments. Proficiency scores are calculated for designated assessments, and the school is given a performance score which is converted to a letter grade. In essence, if a school remains low-performing, or if a class does not meet proficiency or growth standards, state standards would deem that this particular class or school has not been successful. From an expectancy theory standpoint, one, in this case the teacher, would conclude their efforts did not yield successful results on any level and, therefore, did not result in a valuable outcome. Dealing with this reality on a daily basis may be difficult for many teachers and their perceptions of competence may be impacted. Teacher confidence, also referred to as self-efficacy, depends on the teacher's belief that they can engage students and impact their mastery of content (Hoy et al., 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Experiencing so many missed personal and professional goals can cause teacher self-efficacy to suffer and result in the inability or unwillingness to persist in challenging situations.

However, growing research reveals that it may not be a teacher's pedagogy that is ineffective and creating this cyclical battle of poor student performance and poor teacher self-efficacy that low-performing schools are facing. Recently, ACEs, or Adverse Childhood Experiences, are being linked to the performance and behavior issues students exhibit in schools. According to the National Survey of Student Health ACEs conducted in 2011-12, 48% of children 0 to 17 years old reported exposure to one ACE and 22.6% reported exposure to two or

more ACEs (Blodgett & Lanigan, 2018). The most frequently reported experience was economic hardship, followed by divorce or separation, and a caregiver with a substance abuse issue. It is also important to note that the survey was based on parent report (Blodgett & Lanigan, 2018). This number could be higher if reported by the children themselves, health care providers, or school personnel. The physical effects of the experiences often impede learning and make it difficult for the child to connect to the learning environment in a productive way. Teachers may notice these students have behaviors such as poor self-regulation skills, trouble forming relationships, and challenges with executive functions just to name a few (Perry & Szalavitz, 2006).

This relatively recent revelation in the education space gives us some insight into what teachers face on a daily basis with some of the students they are charged to teach. If students are entering the classroom with chemically charged responses to trauma that impact basic brain functions, it can make it very difficult for them to learn. Unintentionally, students may disconnect by disassociating and "leaving" the classroom, not realizing that they have missed out on a large portion of the content being taught (Cole et al., 2005). Teachers not trained on ACEs or strategies to support these students may perceive student disconnection or poor performance outcomes as an indication of their inability to effectively deliver instruction or manage the classroom environment. These perceptions can lead to negative self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997). Based upon this deduction, teachers need to be taught about the neuroscience behind the behaviors, strategies to build relationships in the classroom, and techniques to ready students for the act of learning. Once this takes place, it is anticipated that teachers will be able to be more effective in the classroom, both by state standards and the value standards by which they judge their effectiveness. His or her expectation of outcomes and impact will be adjusted. Armed with

strategies to build relationships with these reluctant learners, and set them up for success, teachers will hopefully yield successful outcomes that will increase self-efficacy and ultimately increase their motivation, dedication, and desire to remain teachers in low-performing schools.

Naming and Framing the Problem of Practice

North Carolina district and school leaders gauge teacher effectiveness through the use of an evaluation rubric which measures attainment of five standards; however, only one of those standards addresses building relationships with students and creating a "respectful environment" (Evaluation training for teachers, n.d.).

Because the expectation of this rubric is that teachers spend their time working with curriculum content, teachers perceive a lack of time to develop relationships with and teach social emotional skills to students. However, according to Rimm-Kaufman et al. (2014), relationships and social emotional learning is essential to preparing the learning environment for all students, and even more essential for students entering the classroom already dis-regulated and on high alert. Consequently, failure to address those two things will continue to yield poor performance outcomes for the students and the teacher, by default.

In a typical classroom of 20 students, 5 or more of those students have had traumatic experiences, which can impact their ability to focus, process and learn content being taught (Cole et al., 2005; Presnell, 2018). A teacher in a rural, low-performing school, whose students come from vulnerable environments, may see this number double or triple in some cases. The research states that in students that experience one or more ACEs, the constant activation of the stress response system, without concrete strategies to help these students regulate, greatly modifies their brain development (Kimple & Kansagra, 2018). Because of this, no matter what content knowledge or professional licensure, a teacher may have some students in their classrooms may

not be physically able to receive the instruction being presented. This results in poor student performance, low test scores, and a low sense of self-efficacy for teachers. This is not necessarily indicative of teacher performance or ability to teach, but rather the teacher's ability to connect with the students and increase student readiness for learning.

It is also important to note, according to Albert Bandura (1997), "People take action when they hold efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations that make the effort seem worthwhile. They expect given actions to produce desired outcomes and believe that they can perform those actions" (Bandura, 1997, p. 6). When teachers receive negative feedback and feel as though they have no control over the outcome, they may doubt their effectiveness, resulting in diminished self-efficacy and the potential to abandon the current career goals (Fonteyne et al., 2018). When this happens, the result is teachers leaving the profession and student achievement gaps continuing to widen as a result of factors that begin for students outside of the classroom. It is for this reason that teachers should be trained on how to connect with students and prepare them to be successful in the learning environment early on in their teaching career.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological action research study was to examine how elementary school teachers' perceptions of their efficacy, as teachers, is influenced by their experiences in implementing morning meetings as a trauma-informed strategy in the classroom. Morning meetings are used by the teacher as a strategy to build relationships with students and aid the teacher in creating a climate for success. According to Bondy and Ketts (2001), morning meetings assist educators in not only creating, but also maintaining a climate of belonging, respect and trust. This study examined the impact of a teacher's ability to develop trusting relationships and a supportive environment with students using morning meetings on that

teacher's perception of his/her self-efficacy as it relates to duties of teaching and assessing the curriculum. In this study, the phenomenon is observed in a low-performing school setting. The study is different from previous studies that have looked at trauma-informed strategies in the classroom in that it involved collecting data on the impact on the teacher. The student experience in the learning environment was not the focus of the study, rather it was the experiences of the teacher and how his/her perceptions were affected by the implementation of the morning meeting.

Background of the Problem

The focused environment of this study was a chronically low-performing elementary school in eastern North Carolina where teacher turnover is above 20% and reported burnout is high. Currently at Bulldog Elementary School, a pseudonym, 78% of teachers reported feeling burned-out. More specifically, 82% stated that they felt their instruction was ineffective most of the time. 61% of teachers expressed that they did not feel they had enough support to do their jobs effectively. At Bulldog Elementary School, a persistently low-performing school, all students receive free and reduced lunch. Of the student population served, 88.7% come from economically disadvantaged homes. Based on this data and the research stated above, we know that there is a high occurrence of ACEs in the classrooms at this school. Teacher burnout is an issue, and turnover has become a destructive cycle. Teacher perception of their inability to make an impact on his/her students becomes toxic over time. Low test scores and negative experiences with students in the learning environment have led to negative perceptions of self-efficacy.

Teachers included in the study are within the beginning teacher category, which only includes those teachers within their first three years of full-time teaching. These teachers are also the full-time teacher of classrooms grades 3-5 since these grades are administered state level tests

by which the school success is measured. This study relied heavily on interviews, surveys, and observation data of the classroom teachers. After initial survey data was collected and synthesized, the teachers received professional development and training on implementing a trauma-informed strategy, morning meetings, in the classroom. The impact of this implementation was compared to the learning environment and teacher beliefs captured prior to implementation. The study was grounded in Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory that focuses on an individual's level of self-efficacy as it relates to their ability to perform, persist, and be successful (Bandura, 1977, 1993), and Victor Vroom's expectancy theory that links individual effectiveness and satisfaction to an individual's ability to see his or her performance as leading to a valued outcome. In this study, the individual was the teacher, and the valued outcome was to increase positive perceptions of the factors that are attributed to the self-efficacy of the teacher. Based on the Teachers' Sense of Self-Efficacy Survey, those factors are student engagement, instruction, and classroom management (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

This study seeks to inform teacher preparation programs, beginning teacher induction programs, and school leaders of the trauma-informed training, relationship building strategies, and efficacy skills needed by teachers to be confident and maintain high self-efficacy beliefs in challenging learning environments. Increased self-efficacy will be evidenced not only by student learning outcomes, but also by teacher beliefs and perceptions needed to continue within the profession beyond the initial three years.

Study Questions

The questions that guided this study are as follows:

1. What effect did implementing morning meetings, as a trauma-informed strategy, in the learning environment have on teacher perceptions of self-efficacy at a low-performing elementary school?
2. What specific teacher self-efficacy skills were affected by the implementation of the morning meetings?

Given the current teacher attrition rates, low-performing schools are having a difficult time recruiting and retaining teachers. Often the difficulties of working in high-poverty, high-stakes, and low resource environments are too much for teachers. The student population in these schools can be difficult to teach because of outside adverse experiences. However, by conducting this study and answering these questions, we have begun the process of identifying strategies to assist teachers in low-performing schools build relationships with students, create an environment that is supportive for all and positively impact teacher self-efficacy. If teachers in difficult learning environments can maintain a high sense of self-efficacy, performance outcomes for teachers and students should increase. If job satisfaction is also positively affected, teacher attrition should be reduced for these low-performing schools.

Theoretical Foundation

The research in this study is grounded in two cognitive theories; each having a link to job performance motivation, goal setting and the desire to continue pursuit of the career goal. Vroom's expectancy value theory, when applied to the workplace, asserts that one chooses and sets career goals based on the expectancy of success which are influenced by perception of difficulty, and beliefs about self – self scheme (Fonteyne et al., 2018). As it relates to early career practitioners, individuals will be less likely to disengage from a career goal when they

believe the work is important and of value, and rate of expected success is high (Fonteyne et al., 2018).

Self-efficacy is a social cognitive theory that asserts that a person's level of confidence in his or her ability to complete a given task determines the quality of the output. In turn, one's self-efficacy can enhance or impair motivation and can determine whether his or her job performance is poor or distinguished (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Achieving high self-efficacy at work leads to high instances of job satisfaction, which in turn will result- in this context- in teachers who believe they can and do have an impact on the educational growth and development of the students they teach.

Both of these theories speak to the need for individuals to believe that they can achieve a task, that their work is valuable, and that more effort equates to success. Additionally, each theory is highly individualistic and centers on individual perceptions. These theories are directly related to this study in that at the core of any professional's hierarchy of needs, he or she instinctually needs to be effective in their work and make a difference. The inability for teachers in low-performing schools to self-identify as effective may be rectified if we look at how to build genuine, supportive relationships with the students whom they must teach every day. Using traditional methods for instruction and management are not always successful for students who have been affected by trauma (Blodgett & Lanigan, 2018). By implementing morning meetings within their classrooms, teachers can regain some control of the learning environment and have a greater daily impact. This will hopefully lead to a rise in student performance and a higher sense of self-efficacy that will satisfy new teachers in their roles at low-performing schools.

Definition of Key Terms

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) - Adverse childhood experiences include childhood emotional, physical, or sexual abuse and household dysfunction. The categories are verbal abuse, physical abuse, contact sexual abuse, a battered mother, household substance abuse, household mental illness, incarcerated household members, and parental separation or divorce (Brown et al., 2009).

Beginning Teacher - A teacher in a public school who has been teaching less than a total of three complete school years (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002).

Low-Performing Schools - Schools that receive a school performance grade of D or F and a school growth score of "met expected growth" or "not met expected growth" (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 2013).

Morning Meeting - An engaging way to start each day, build a strong sense of community, and set children up for success socially and academically. Components include greeting, sharing, group activity, and morning message (Kriete, 2003).

Student Growth - Student growth is the amount of academic progress that students make over the course of a grade or class. Students enter grades and course at different places; some have struggled while some have excelled. Regardless of how they enter a grade or course, students can make progress over the course of the school year (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 2013).

Self-Efficacy - Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997).

Teacher Self-Efficacy - Teachers' beliefs in their own ability to organize and execute courses of action necessary to bring about desired results (Fives & Buehl, 2010).

Trauma - A psychological or emotional response to an event or an experience that is deeply stressful or disturbing (Trauma, n.d.).

Trauma-Informed - Trauma-informed refers generally to a philosophical or cultural stance that integrates awareness and understanding of trauma (Hopper et al., 2010).

Assumptions

There are several assumptions being made with regard to this study. Although Bulldog Elementary School serves an at-risk population of students and the entire school receives free and reduced lunch- a government funded service provided to students that come from low-income households and cannot afford breakfast and lunch, there is an assumption being made that five or more students in each classroom participating in the study have experienced at least one adverse childhood experience. Poverty is included on the formally identified list of ACEs and is certainly thought to be an adversity that affects the students at this school based upon the free lunch identification, but because that information is confidential, there is no way to verify.

Another assumption is that the teachers that participated in the study have had adequate instruction in their teacher education courses and, therefore, are knowledgeable of their content area. This is relevant because this study does not provide teachers with content support and operates on the premise that the teacher is knowledgeable, at least on a basic level, of their classroom content and teaching standards.

The last two assumptions are rooted in beliefs and cannot be proven. The first of these is that the teachers have a desire to be successful in the classroom. This assumption can only be corroborated by a teacher's words and actions, but the true intent cannot be determined. Lastly,

most students can be supported to develop productive relationships with adults outside of the home. This is the main premise by which this study was conducted. This assumption is critical to the study because the morning meetings will not only work to help the teacher build self-efficacy and improve outcomes, but students are direct beneficiaries of the strategy and must respond in order for the teacher to experience change and growth.

Scope and Delimitations

This study worked closely with beginning teachers to implement morning meetings in their classrooms. The teachers worked within the structures of the strategy to build relationships and consistency with only the students in their classroom. This focus was chosen to determine if through building deeper teacher- student relationships, teachers could see a change in their ability to feel in control of the classroom outcomes on a daily basis. This locus of control was affected by the degree in which teachers can support students to be ready and present for learning. The study also sought to find if the self-efficacy of the teacher is impacted at all by the classroom atmosphere they will be working to create. Change will be exemplified by modification of teacher perceptions of students and student abilities, overall teacher affect, instructional efforts, and growth in efficacy skill areas. Although the findings are specific to Bulldog Elementary, it is the expectation that the data collected will inform teacher practice in other learning environments.

Beginning teachers, those being teachers with no more than two full years of teaching experience, were chosen because this is a critical time in their careers. Many new teachers are still deciding whether or not they are competent enough to be effective teachers, and consequently if this is the right career for them. According to the principals in the school district in which Bulldog Elementary is a part, it is a difficult time for many of their teachers. They also

reported that it is difficult to provide support because it is often needed at a very intense level, and personnel to provide this support is lacking.

It is also important to note the teachers in this study are from various ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. However, the majority, 93%, of their students are black and from low-socioeconomic living situations. No race or gender was intentionally excluded from this study. The age of the students range from 8 to 12 years old, and they are in the 3rd-5th grade.

Limitations

Possible limitations that have been identified can be minimized or resolved by working closely with the school's administration during the implementation of the study. The first concern was that the school was entering into the state reform model, Restart. Restart is reform model that gives schools charter school-like flexibility in curriculum choices, hiring practices, and scheduling (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, District and School Transformation, n.d.). Participation in the model resulted in the implementation of new initiatives in the school that limited the time allotted for the study strategy. However, implementation coaching with the teachers helped the teachers logically plan the use of morning meetings and embed them in what he or she was obligated to do to adhere to school-wide expectations.

Another similar limitation is the requirements set forth in an individual teacher's professional development plan (PDP). It was possible that the teachers selected for this study may already be visibly struggling in the classroom and could be on a directed professional development plan. If this was the case, he or she had very specific goals they must work towards that are defined and monitored by the school administrators. PDP goals took priority over the study as the attainment of those goals are linked to the teacher evaluation instrument, and

ultimately continued employment. This had the potential to impede the time and attention they have to implement the morning meetings with fidelity. In this scenario, every effort was made to choose a plan for implementation that compliments what was already being required of the teacher by the administration.

Lack of soft skills needed to implement morning meetings, an inter-relational strategy, was a limitation that could greatly influence the results that a teacher may experience in their classrooms, thereby impacting the results of the study as a whole. Frequent observations of the strategy implementation allowed for coaching and feedback for teachers if data revealed that this was an issue. Lastly, bias of the scholarly practitioner due to the scholarly practitioner's profession as a former low-performing school principal, former trauma-informed schools program coordinator, and now director of student support services, in addition to the scholarly practitioner's professional beliefs about teachers and students in low-performing schools was a possible limitation. To address this possible bias, the scholarly practitioner engaged in member checking during the data analysis phase of the study to ensure participants reviewed the report for accuracy and to acknowledge that no liberties were taken by the scholarly practitioner during data collection or analysis.

Significance of the Study

Teacher self-efficacy beliefs impact motivation. Not just motivation, but it also determines the level of effort a teacher puts forth in the classroom, the rigor of his or her lessons, and their ability to preserve in difficult situations, like working with challenging students who have been affected by ACEs (Pajares, 1996; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Maintaining a high opinion of self-efficacy is difficult when working in low-performing schools that are struggling to meet state standards. To meet academic and behavioral demands, there is a need to

understand how student conduct, readiness for learning, and the strategies the teachers employ within the classroom affect the teacher's self-efficacy (Andreou & Rapti, 2010; Kelm & McIntosh, 2012).

It is crucial for school leadership to take an intentional look at the current state of teacher self-efficacy within their buildings. With higher self-efficacy comes confidence and success, and as a result, better student performance outcomes (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). This study aimed to give teachers solid training and a strategy that will increase teacher self-efficacy by focusing on building relationships and practicing self-regulation through a trauma-informed lens. The focus on the low-performing environment is intentional. Often teachers in these buildings are not given equitable resources and training to be successful in the classroom. By assisting the teachers in the building with self-efficacy beliefs, it helps to increase the rigor and quality of the instruction for the students in those schools.

Advances in Practice

Bulldog Elementary provides educational services to a marginalized community in eastern North Carolina. The school represents a category of schools and teachers that are often the recipients of very few resources and serves a population of students that are impacted greatly by social traumas. Although this school has some challenges that are unique, there are circumstances that plague other low-performing schools. Some of these include a high minority and high poverty population, lack of community resources, an abundance of perceived discipline problems, and high rates of teacher turnover. According to Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is dictated by people's beliefs about their ability to perform and exercise influence over events that impact their lives. Based on this explanation, teachers working in challenging school environments, like Bulldog Elementary School, are at a real disadvantage.

The students impacted by one or more ACEs are bringing many things into the classroom that the teacher may have very little influence over. Training teachers on Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma provided them a different vantage point when considering their locus of control in the learning environment. Then by implementing the morning meeting strategy that began to build relationships with the students and addresses the impact of outside factors on the students' readiness to learn, teachers may be able to feel more confident in their ability to get instruction across to students and to manage their classrooms. This increased sense of self-efficacy could alter the overall school climate and culture.

The effects of teacher self-efficacy, motivation, and mastery experiences can be thought of as a cyclical process and the core belief being that higher self-efficacy leads to better instruction. The self-efficacious teacher is more readily willing to put more effort into his/her teaching and create mastery experiences that, in turn, continue to enhance their self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Wang et al., 2015). Teachers who experience this uptick in self-efficacy take greater responsibilities for their teaching and are more willing to commit to a teaching career. Addressing teacher self-efficacy this way goes beyond pedagogical strategies and classroom management plans, it focuses in on beliefs, an individual's personal affect, and how it can impact instruction and outcomes for the teacher.

Summary

The purpose of this mixed methods action research study was to describe how implementing morning meetings, as a trauma-informed strategy, may impact teachers' perceptions of their efficacy as teachers. Lower levels of teacher self-efficacy can be indicative of a teacher experiencing challenges with instruction, classroom management, disengaged students, and difficult student behaviors (Andreou & Rapti, 2010; Klassen & Chiu, 2010;

Klassen & Chiu, 2011). Previous research studies show that teacher self-efficacy impacts the extent to which a teacher plans rigorous lessons, engages with students in the classroom, and delivers instruction (Andreou & Rapti, 2010; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; Wang et al., 2015). The anticipated result was that teacher self-efficacy would be positively impacted when they begin building relationships with students and establishing a culture of student support through the morning meeting implementation. They would become teachers who are more confident in their ability to educate student in low-performing schools because they understand the necessity of building relationships and self-regulation for themselves and the trauma- impacted students they serve. Chapter 2 provides a review of the current literature addressing self-efficacy theory, expectancy theory, trauma, trauma-informed schools, and morning meetings.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following review of literature provides a background and context for examining the problem in this study which is the lack of teacher skill in dealing with students who have experienced one or more ACEs and the impact it has on the teacher's effectiveness and self-efficacy. The chapter will be divided into five major sections necessary for framing the problem. The five sections are as follows: relevant social cognitive theories- self-efficacy theory and expectancy-value theory, the context of low-performing schools including the presence of adverse childhood experiences and being trauma-informed.

Self-Efficacy Theory

Self-efficacy "refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Gecas (1989) describes self-efficacy as an individual's level of competence, assessment of his/her level of effectiveness, and "causal agency" (p. 292).

Gecas goes on to state that the examination of self-efficacy as an impactful variable in psychology has developed into two ideological constructs that have some overlapping components. The first examines self-efficacy as a motivational theory, and the second looks at the concept of self-efficacy "in terms of expectancies and perceptions of control" (Gecas, 1989, p. 292). Self-efficacy theory as defined by Albert Bandura (1977), utilizes the constructs of the latter.

As a prong of his social cognitive theory (SCT), self-efficacy theory in its simplest form states that the higher an individual's self-efficacy, or belief that they can complete a task and be successful in doing so the higher the level of persistence and performance (Bandura, 1977, 1997). In essence, performance is determined on how effective an individual thinks that he/she

can be (Bandura, 1982; Lunenburg, 2011). It is important to note that self-efficacy is a cognitive function by which an individual makes a judgment about performance capabilities; it is not a trait concept as it is ever-changing (Bandura, 2005; Betz & Hackett, 2006). Bandura (2005) describes this idea by explaining it is not a trait yet a "differentiated set of self-beliefs linked to distinct realms of functioning" (p. 1). This set of self-beliefs is shaped by four sources of efficacy expectations illustrated in Figure 1.

Performance accomplishments or past performances are the first source of efficacy and refers to the direct personal experiences of the individual. An individual that has continued success at a task will develop a strong sense of self-efficacy, experience increased performance in the task, and the failures will have less impact on them versus an individual who experiences a higher rate of failures (Lunenburg, 2011).

Bandura (1977) also suggests that behavior choices are developed based on responses received and the effects of one's actions. For this reason, performance accomplishments are the most impactful of the four sources. Second, are vicarious experiences. This describes the concept that an individual makes an appraisal about his/her own self-efficacy beliefs based on the performance/modeling and experiences of others (Bandura, 1977, 1997; Pajares, 2009). The third source is verbal persuasion, which is exactly what is states-the words of encouragement or discouragement received from others. The feedback received from others can convince an individual of his/her level of competence to complete a task with success. People can be led by a suggestion to persist and overcome situations that are overwhelming (Bandura, 1977, 1997). And lastly, emotional cues are a source of efficacy expectations. Emotional cues can be a variety of physical or mental responses that occur when one is in a situation. This emotional arousal can be interpreted as excitement or anxiety (Bandura, 1977, 1997; Pajares, 2009). In either case, the

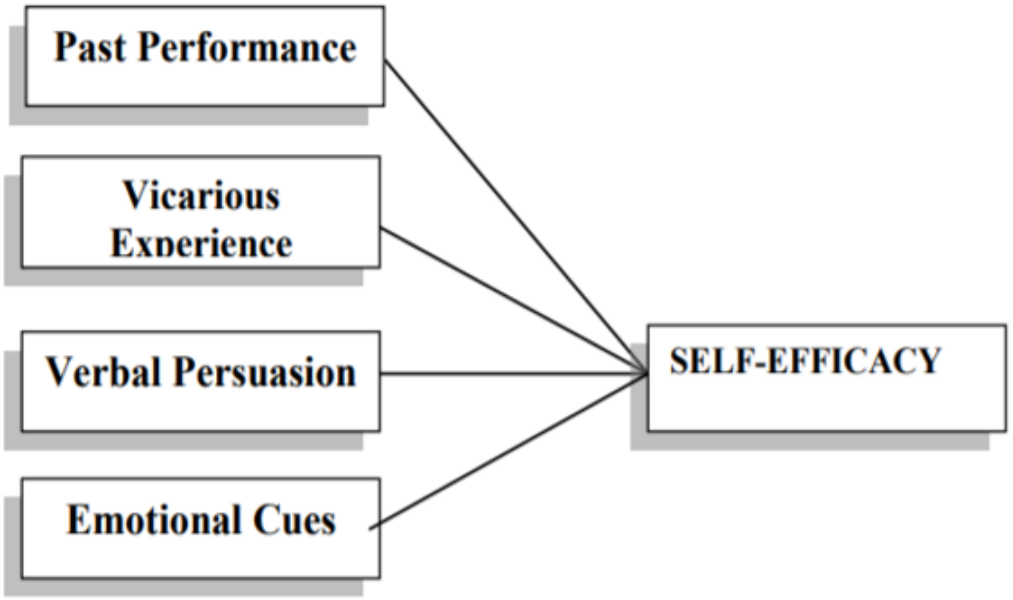

Figure 1. The sources of efficacy expectations.

cognitive interpretation of these sources over time begin to shape and develop one's beliefs of his/her capabilities to perform a task (Bandura, 1977, 1982; Betz & Hackett, 2006; Lunenburg, 2011; Pajares, 2009; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Bandura's (1977) theory purports that people synthesize this feedback over long periods or sequences of events, keeping in mind the situational circumstances, in order to determine the rate of actions that are necessary to produce given outcomes. This social cognitive form of processing gives an individual a sense of self-efficacy regarding a certain task long before they attempt the task.

Self-Efficacy and Job Performance

Perceived self-efficacy has a great influence on a person's choice of settings in his/her social life and workplace. People tend to avoid situations that they perceive to be threatening and will exceed their ability to cope (Bandura, 1977, 1982, 1997, 2001).This is one reason Bandura and Locke (2003), determined that one's self-efficacy is a strong determinant of job performance. Bandura (1982) states that self-efficacy impacts performance and learning in three specific ways. The first effect is that self-efficacy can influence the goals that an employee may set. An employee with low self-efficacy will set low goals for performing tasks at work and the same principle applies to those with high self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1982; Bandura & Locke, 2003). The second way that self-efficacy has an impact on job performance is that it influences learning and the effort that a person puts into doing the job (Bandura, 1982; Bandura & Locke, 2003). Employees with high self-efficacy generally work harder to learn a skill and to perform well because they believe that their efforts will yield successful results (Bandura, 1982, 1997; Bandura & Locke, 2003; Lunenburg, 2011). Lastly, self-efficacy influences the rate of persistence in which an employee will attempt a new or difficult task and continue to work through problems when they arise. An employee with low self-efficacy, who already doubts their

competence in a task will be apt to give up when problems arise because they do not have beliefs of being successful. The opposite is true for an employee with high self-efficacy; he or she will be more inclined to work hard to learn and perform difficult tasks because success is expected (Bandura, 1982, 1997; Bandura & Locke, 2003; Lunenburg, 2011).

When examining self-efficacy in relation to job performance, it is important to differentiate between efficacy expectations and outcome expectancy. Efficacy expectation is the belief that one can successfully perform the behavior or task that is needed to produce a certain outcome (Bandura, 1977; Maddux et al., 1982). Efficacy expectations determine how much effort people will invest and how long they will persist in a difficult task (Bandura, 1977; Lunenburg, 2011; Maddux et al., 1982). Outcome expectancy is a person's belief that a given behavior will lead to a particular outcome (Bandura, 1977; Lunenburg, 2011; Maddux et al., 1982). Understanding each of these is critical because a person can believe that a behavior will result in a certain outcome (outcome expectancy), but if he or she has grave doubts about the ability to perform the tasks needed to achieve the outcomes, it will not influence the behavior or lead to a change in performance (Bandura, 1977; Gecas, 1989; Maddux et al., 1982).

Among researchers, it is widely accepted that performance and self-efficacy have a positive relationship (Bandura, 1982; Bandura & Wood, 1989; Lunenburg, 2011; Stajkovic & Luthaus, 1998). However, studies conducted by Vancouver and his colleagues began to raise doubt about the validity of this generalization of positive correlation (Vancouver & Kendall, 2006; Vancouver et al., 2001). It was during these studies that the hypothesis arose that positive relationships found in previous correlational studies may be due in part to a person's performance influencing self-efficacy and not the other way around as had been described (Vancouver et al., 2002). In addition to this, the research also suggested that the negative effects

on self-efficacy on future performance could be tied to a person's perception of control (Vancouver et al., 2001). Powers (1973) perceptual control theory suggests that when examining self-efficacy through a goal theory lens, it is used to develop a construct of an individual's current state. Higher self-efficacy gives greater weight to current actions and successes, so it can lead to higher states of performance- thereby reaching goals sooner than when efficacy is lower (Vancouver et al., 2001). Stone (1994) asserts that high self-efficacy, or the idea of induced high self-efficacy, led to overconfidence in one's ability and as a result the individuals contributed less effort in the performance of tasks. Research by Bandura and Jourden (1991) had similar findings.

But overall, the research supports Bandura's earlier assertions that self-efficacy and performance have a positive correlation over Power's position (Vancouver et al., 2001). A meta-analysis conducted by Stajovick and Luthans (1998) found a strong positive relationship between self-efficacy and performance based on 109 studies performed on work-related tasks or in work settings. Vancouver et al. (2001) also conducted two studies in which participants played the game Mastermind and various manipulations were done to aid researchers in their quest to identify exactly how self-efficacy negatively impacts performance. What they found is that self-efficacy has a positive correlation to confidence, and those with high self-efficacy were more likely to set a more difficult goal (Vancouver et al., 2001). They also saw a negative self-efficacy effect on performance, but positive impact on errors made (Vancouver et al., 2001). The studies sought to dig into self-efficacy and performance to see why it can have a negative impact and the research resulted in more questions. But one conclusion is important; understanding when and under which conditions self-efficacy is a relevant influence over job performance and attitudes matters (Ozyilmas et al., 2018; Stajovic & Luthans, 1998; Vancouver et.al., 2001). An omission

of contextual and situational factors would then overestimate the power of self-efficacy (Ozyilmas et al., 2018; Stajovic & Luthans, 1998; Vancouver et al., 2001).

Teacher Self-Efficacy

Researchers also agree that when determining teacher self-efficacy, many contextual factors play a role. Teacher self-efficacy has been defined as a teacher's beliefs in their own ability to organize and perform tasks necessary to bring about desired student outcomes (Fives & Buehl, 2010). According to Gedzune (2015), a strong sense of self-efficacy is necessary to help new teachers maintain interest in the profession, and readily use their skills to help all students learn. He stated this is especially true for teachers in high-poverty, low-income based schools (Gedzune, 2015). Ideally, this strong sense of self-efficacy would be developed in the teacher education program. Once this has already been developed, it will be easier for teachers to persist while working in challenging learning environments (Bandura, 1982; Bandura & Wood, 1989; Lunenburg, 2011). Once developed, according to Bandura's (1997) theory one's sense of self-efficacy remained somewhat stable. However, research conducted by Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) led them to draw another conclusion. Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) found that teacher efficacy could be stable over time or change with the teaching experiences of the individual. Although there is disagreement over whether self-efficacy can change or not, one construct is accepted by both sides and that is the impact of repeated success. Bandura (1997) found in his extensive study of preservice teachers that feelings of repeated success were helpful in helping teachers manage the stressor and maintain high self-efficacy as teachers.

Not only does a teacher's sense of self-efficacy enable them to persist in the challenges of the job and the environment, in the case of this study a low-performing elementary school, but also it allows him or her to impact the student outcomes in the classroom. According to Aydin

and Hoy (2005), teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy are more enthusiastic in the classroom. They are willing to try new things and use more rigorous strategies to generate positive student outcomes (Aydin & Hoy, 2005). In essence, it supports Bandura's (1977) theory that an individual with high self-efficacy will expend more effort and time into performing a task. In discussing teacher efficacy, this equates to more time and effort put into lesson planning and execution, setting higher goals for themselves and students, and a high level of resilience when faced with unfavorable circumstances (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). And this relationship was not discovered in isolation, the positive correlation between teacher self-efficacy and student achievement is a pattern that has been observed in 14 countries (Fackler & Malmberg, 2016).

Researchers conducting studies to examine teacher self-efficacy understand that there are many variables that are at play in the school environment. For this reason, researchers focus on the contexts or conditions in which a teacher must perform tasks (Yoo, 2016). Commonly considered are the characteristics of the school environment, job satisfaction, available resources, and the supports that are in place to support teachers (Yoo, 2016). This research has uncovered another pattern that researchers describe as a global phenomenon. High stress for teachers is an issue worldwide and stressors such as discipline problems and stressful working conditions are associated with lower teacher self-efficacy (Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) describe this as a possible self-fulfilling prophecy. If teachers are in stressful working conditions, then their perceptions of the tasks are that the tasks are difficult, and they will not persist when faced with difficulty - even when they know what to do to produce outcomes and support students (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). It is important to note here that a teacher's self-efficacy belief is based on the perceived level of competence and

not on the actual level of competence. In his work with novice teachers, Bandura (1997) found that it is best that the teacher overestimates his or her competence. This confidence will help the individual maintain motivation when faced with adversity in the classroom (Bandura, 1997). When examining the trends of novice teachers, or as they are referred to in this study-beginning teachers, self-efficacy is determined heavily by their personal beliefs and standards for good teaching (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). These standards for good teaching and the ability of the beginning teacher to execute "good teaching" has a direct impact on whether they believe they are capable or not. If the teacher is not successful initially, it may result in a reduction in standards in order for the teacher to find some level of success to continue in the profession (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Previous studies have looked at teaching experience just in terms of years in teaching, and little attention has been paid to the "if and how" teacher self-efficacy evolves as a result of direct teacher training and teacher reflection on practice and outcomes (Yoo, 2016). Consequently, this study will seek to determine if direct training and providing teachers the opportunity to do some focused self-reflection will have an impact on teacher self-efficacy beliefs.

In order to help measure the self-efficacy of teachers and help inform those who support teachers, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) constructed the *Teachers' Sense of Self Efficacy Survey* (TSES). This instrument is now widely used by researchers to measure teacher attitudes towards student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007).

Expectancy Value Theory

Self-efficacy does not have exactly the same influence over employee attitudes and actions (Ozyilmas et al., 2018). There can be many other reasons an individual either performs

well and persists through challenges in the workplace or consistently expends little effort. Essential to providing meaning to this study is to gain some understanding of why a teacher may enter the field of education in the first place. What are the possible motivations for choosing such a demanding, and sometimes undervalued field of employment? How do these initial perceptions of the work impact job satisfaction, or the opposite, abandonment of initial career goals? Although there is no way to know exactly each teacher's perceptions, Victor Vroom's (1964) expectancy-value theory provides some insight into motivations to doing any kind of work. Vroom's theory proposes that motivation is impacted by three distinct factors. The first being the perception that the effort expended will result in success. Next is the perception that the success will result in valued outcomes (Vroom, 1964). Valued outcomes can be different for each individual. At the core of expectancy theory is the concept of human dignity. It operates on the precept that an individual will receive something of value for the work put forth. This can be tangible or intangible. The values associated with the outcomes depends exclusively on the individual's personal belief and value system (Fonteyne et al., 2018). Third, expectancy theory states personal satisfaction will be achieved as a result of the outcomes. All three of these factors must exist for an individual to be motivated (Vroom, 1964). Expectancy value theory, when applied to the workplace, asserts that one chooses and sets career goals based on the expectancy of success which is "influenced by ability beliefs, perceived difficulty, and self-schemes" (Fonteyne et al., 2018). As it applies to teachers, there are many possible valued outcomes. Possible outcomes could include receiving a paycheck, having summer months off, not having to work on weekends, or a host of other perceived perks of being a teacher. But expectancy-value theory clearly focuses on an individual's desire to be successful at what they do and to create results that are of value. So, one can infer when applying expectancy-value theory, that those that

chose to enter the teaching field are: (1) doing so to experience success, (2) expecting to teach and grow students, and (3) measure their success, at least in some part, based on student achievement indicators. As it relates to early-career practitioners, individuals will be less likely to disengage from a career goal when they believe the work is important and of value, and "expectancy of success is high" (Fonteyne et al., 2018). Consequently, if we apply this theory, we must also take into account that if these valued outcomes do not happen, that the teacher will then lose motivation and personal satisfaction.

Low-Performing Schools

The setting for this study will be low-performing schools in Eastern North Carolina. The context of low-performing schools is significant to explore because they have very different characteristics than other schools. Not necessarily that low-performing schools serve different children, but the collective make up of circumstances makes for a unique environment for teaching and learning.

The passing of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 [NCLB] (2002) legislation began the labeling of low- performing and the idea of failing schools. NCLB required states to have a statewide accountability model for schools that gave rewards to those meeting accountability standards and creating sanctions and reform models for those failing and persistently missing student performance targets. Despite its seemingly good intentions to academically move all children, the legislation, as enacted, failed to address opportunity and resource gaps that were occurring in the low-performing schools (Cook-Harvey et al., 2016). The high number of schools being identified as low-performing and priority schools during this time had a significant population of low-income students (Cook-Harvey et al., 2016). These students needed supports such as food security, health checks, and the assistance of student support personnel at times to

be ready to learn. However, with the intense focus on test scores led to the exclusion of programs and initiatives to benefit the whole child.

Kutash et al. (2010) conducted interviews with school stakeholders involved in the turnaround process at low-performing schools. Interviewees included principals, teachers, parents, and district office staff. The study found that years of "chronic failure" led to a student population with severe levels of need (Kutash et al., 2010). The report goes on to describe the surprise of operators, challenged with the task of changing these environments. They were surprised by the amount of violence, number of students in the special education program, and volume of mental health illnesses (Kutash et al., 2010). The prevailing belief is that poverty and lack of resources are the "major contributing factors" to a school's poor performance (McColskey & Monrad, 2004). However, persistent poor performance may also be major factor. The signing of the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, or ESSA (2015), into law signified a move towards a more inclusive accountability model. It filled the gaps left by NCLB and addressed some of the areas of dissatisfaction that both parties had regarding NCLB (Cook-Harvey et al., 2016).

In 2015, North Carolina amended its definition of a low-performing school as one that has received a grade of a D or F and "met growth" or "did not meet growth" (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 2013). This inclusion of schools that "met growth" contributed to a large number of schools being identified as low-performing that were not previously on the list. Specifically, 581 schools entered the 2015-2016 school year as low-performing schools under the new standards; this is up from the 367 schools that were identified the previous year (NCDPI, 2016). Many of the schools that are identified as low performing are high poverty and high minority schools (NCDPI, 2016).

Once a school has been identified as such, there are a series of steps the principal and superintendent must take. These actions include developing a plan for the school to improve the school performance grade and/or growth score, having that plan approved by the local school board, and notifying parents about the low-performing designation of the school. Schools that continue to receive the low-performing status or are "continually low-performing" as designated by the state of North Carolina can apply to participate in one of the four reform models. These models include turnaround, restart, transformation, or school closure (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 2013). Each model, with the exception of school closure, is designed to give the school support to change systems, and staff (turnaround model) if needed to increase student achievement. They come with varying levels of new accountability. The selection of the model is left up to the school's district board.

In North Carolina, no matter the number of times that a school has been identified as low-performing, they must comply with the directives regarding the evaluation of classroom teachers. In addition to the regular mandated evaluation cycle, each teacher at a low-performing school must receive a full evaluation to be completed "early enough within the year" to allow time for development and implementation of a mandatory improvement plan if one is required (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 2013). It can be presumed that this was put in place to ensure monitoring of the instruction being delivered and provided an opportunity for growth for struggling teachers in low-performing learning environments. But from the teachers' standpoint, it can also be viewed as an additional demand in an already demanding environment.

Various studies have found that teacher turnover is high in low-performing schools with low- income and minority students in comparison to those school with high income and low minority (Goldring et al., 2014). When given the same salaries, the claim has been made that

teachers will choose to work where students are easier to teach and less challenges exist (Clotfelter et al., 2004). However, those challenges are not just limited to the students in the classroom. Research conducted by Ladd (2011), centered around indicators listed on the NC teacher working conditions survey, found that working environment had a huge impact on a teacher's decision to stay or leave his or her teaching assignment. Working environment in this context includes relationships with colleagues, school leadership, job responsibilities, and school culture. It is worth noting that this same study revealed that teachers with departure plans were high in schools with a large percentage of black and/or Hispanic students. Ladd (2011) is careful to make the observation "that that the fraction of black students in a school may be serving as a proxy for a variety of student characteristics that are correlated with race, such as a high prevalence of single-parent families and need not indicate race alone" (p. 23).

Overall, the research provides strong connections between the problems of low performing schools and factors of equity that are difficult for some to pinpoint and address aloud. These factors that are prevalent in low-performing schools include lack of access to resources, geographic and community circumstances, public and political levels of support, children from low-income families and environments, high minority populations, and struggles with culture because of teacher and administration turnover (Clotfelter et al., 2004; Cook-Harvey et al., 2016; Goldring et al., 2014; McColskey & Monrad, 2004). For teachers, the prolonged existence of these circumstances can interfere with levels of self-efficacy and effectiveness to the point of abandoning the work altogether.

The adoption of ESSA has helped to include a roadmap for schools and districts that helps identify challenges and potential threats. ESSA gives educators the permission to return some of the focus back on the development of the whole child, and not just test scores (Ferguson,

2016). The law specifically allows "non-academic" factors to be used in accountability models. ESSA also encourages schools to take a close look at the school environment and encourages educators to work on social-emotional learning and skills that are essential for school readiness and academic success (ESSA, 2015; Ferguson, 2016). This creates hope for teachers working in these difficult schools and helps change the idea of what successful, valued outcomes can be. Putting a laser focus on social-emotional learning and assisting students with preparing to learn and receive content may be able to change performance outcomes for not only students, but also for teachers.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

As this study seeks to inform teachers in low-performing environments about the types of external factors that influence a student's ability to learn and provide them with a strategy to build relationships with reluctant students and to increase student readiness to learn, a clear understanding of Adverse Childhood Experiences and how ACEs can impact the learner is necessary. Dr. Vincent Felitti initiated the first formal study of ACEs in 1995. In the study, Felitti asked over 17,000 participants about specific disruptive occurrences in their childhood. His initial motivation was to uncover correlations between traumatic childhood events and major health issues later in life (Cronholm et al., 2015). So, the largest ACEs study to date focused on ten of the most reported experiences his patients had mentioned to him in preliminary interviews. These ten types of exposures that appeared on what is now known as the ACE questionnaire included three types of abuse- physical, sexual and verbal. It also included family dysfunctions such as mental illness, domestic violence, the incarceration of a family member, substance abuse, and loss of a parent through divorce or abandonment. Physical and emotional neglect were added to the list as well (Felitti et al., 1998). This was the largest deep dive, at that time, into the

prevalence of childhood exposure to "potentially traumatic events that may have an immediate and lifelong impact" which we now term ACEs (Blodgett & Lanigan, 2018). The ACE study rests on the idea that these events cause a level of psychological distress that directly affects emotions, cognitive abilities, behavior, and socialization to the point of influencing health outcomes later in life (Finkelhor et al., 2013).

Prevalence of ACEs

In the study conducted by Dr. Felitti, he partnered with the Center for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente, a private insurance agency. The preliminary focus was obese patients who had rapidly regained weight after completing Felitti's weight loss program or dropped out of the program altogether. The study was widened to include those insured by the private agency. The study surveyed over 17,000 people, most of whom were educated, middle-class, and predominantly white (Felitti et al., 1998). The percent of the prevalence of identified ACEs can be seen in Figure 2.

Data from this study revealed that 64% of the respondents reported having experienced one or more ACES. The more ACEs a respondent experienced the higher the correlation with risky behaviors such as substance abuse, overeating, and sexual practices that lead to more serious diseases, social problems, mental health issues, and early death (Felitti et al., 1998). It was concluded that the ACEs experienced essentially created anger, depression, and anxiety in children to the point that the negative behaviors mentioned above were used chronically and relied on as coping mechanisms well into adulthood (Felitti et al., 1998).

Although Felitti's ground-breaking study provided a good starting point, it was lacking in many ways. According to Cronholm et al. (2015), the respondent pool was not diverse, as each individual was privately insured. Based on this fact alone, one can infer that the respondents

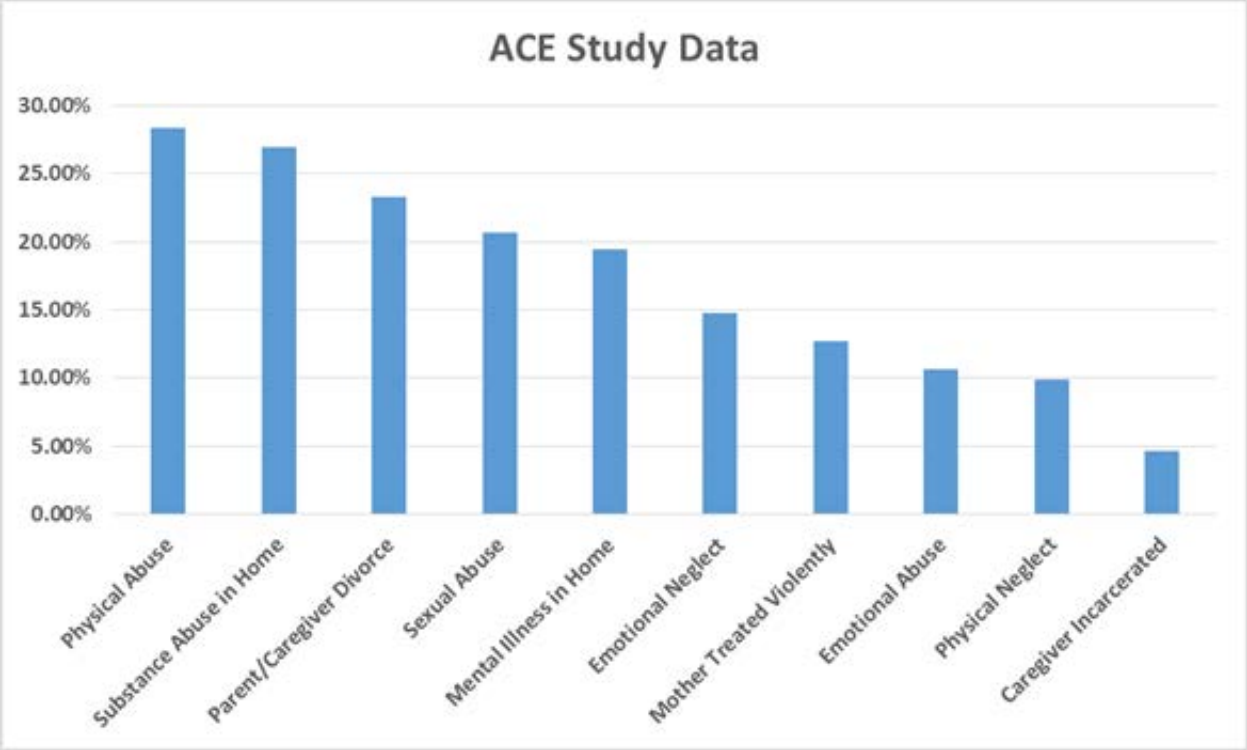

Figure 2. The percentage of ACEs reported in the Felitti ACE Study.

were all employed or had access to an amount of money suitable to pay for private insurance. Secondly, the respondents interviewed were adults. Because these experiences happened years ago for most, the data cannot tell of real-time reactions to the adverse experience. It does not account for or examine physical and mental health outcomes during the time of exposure. Thirdly, Cronholm et al. (2015) noted that the ACE questionnaire only asked respondents about ten specific events. We now know that this is not an exhaustive list of possible occurrences with the potential to lead to prolonged stress.

In 2011, an even larger study was initiated. This study surveyed 248, 934 adults through 2014 (Merrick et al., 2018). The study was more diverse than the initial ACEs study and of the 214,157 participants sampled 51.1% were women, which is significantly lower than the Felitti study (Merrick et al., 2018). This inclusive survey uncovered the race results in Figure 3. The study also discovered that those earning less than $15,000 a year, those who are unemployed, and those who identified as bisexual, gay, or lesbian experienced ACEs at higher rates than their counterparts (Merrick et al., 2018).

Another study conducted in 2013 and 2014 suspected that these "conventional" ACEs utilized in Felitti's ACE questionnaire were not sufficient in measuring the amount of adversity that was present among various subgroups. This study, the Philadelphia ACEs Survey, was conducted using the Expanded ACEs list. These Expanded ACEs were generated by consulting a previous study completed by Finkelhor et al. (2013) that sought to expand the list of ACEs based on data from participants ages 10 to 17 that identified the other experiences as distressing as measured by the Trauma Symptoms Checklist for Children (TSCC). The levels of psychological distress associated with these new adversities were the same or more than the ACEs listed in the original study (Finkelhor et al., 2013). Based on this, the added ACES were validated as

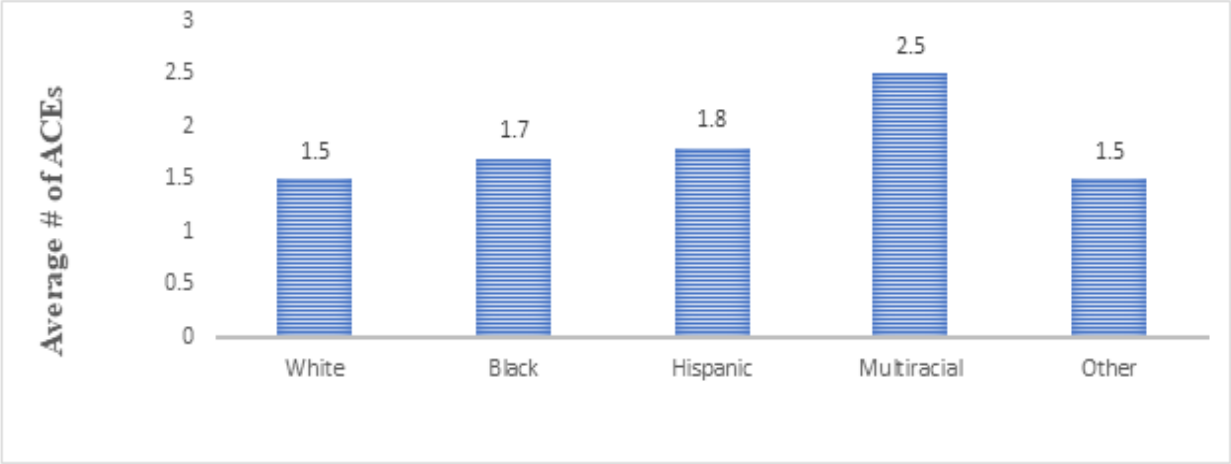

Figure 3. The number of ACEs reported by race, 2014.

significant to the ongoing study of ACEs. Adding these new domains to the scale now increases the number of those impacted by an adverse childhood experience. The domains included low socioeconomic status, peer victimization, and peer rejection/isolation (Finkelhor et al., 2013). The Philadelphia study concluded that while diverse, the sample taken by Finkelhor et al. was still predominantly white (Cronholm et al., 2015). Data later gathered from a group of African-American and Latino youth revealed even more adversities that contribute to high levels of toxic stress among these minority groups.

This list includes experiencing bullying, living in a dangerous neighborhood, living in foster care, witnessing violence, and experiencing racism (Cronholm et al., 2015). These experiences were added to the work of Finkelhor and from this Expanded ACEs list, the Philadelphia study was completed. A total of 1,784 respondents age 18 or older reported the following:

47.6% of respondents experienced 1-3 Conventional ACEs;

20.7% of respondents experienced 4 or more Conventional ACEs;

5% of respondents experienced 1-2 Expanded ACEs;

13.4% of respondents experienced 3 or more Expanded ACEs; and

49.3% of respondents reported experiencing both types of ACEs (Cronholm et al., 2015).

The findings from all of these studies confirm that ACEs can be experiences that happen both inside and outside of the household. The prevalence of these experiences is astounding. Not only are they many in number, but they are also complex in nature. The difficulty in assessing a child's risk level and intervening is, unless asked, most children are unaware that these are considered adversities and not something that everyone experiences. And when a child does recognize that his or her circumstances require support to overcome, they are often intimidated

by fear of repercussions from their caregivers or support personnel (Blodgett & Lanigan, 2018; Cronholm et al., 2015).

Impact on Learning

Gathering accurate data from children about the adversities being experienced is another issue that makes the early identification of ACEs difficult. However, the 2011-2012 National Survey of Children's Health interviewed parents of children ages 0 to 17 and found that 48% experienced at least one ACE and that 22.6% reported experiencing two or more ACEs (Bethell et al., 2014). This definitely helps answer the question of how big the issue could be in our schools, but the literature on exactly how to identify, support, and teach students who have an increased ACE risk is still limited (Blodgett & Lanigan, 2018).

"Extreme, traumatic or repetitive childhood stressors such as abuse, witnessing or being the victim of domestic violence, and related types of ACES are common, tend to be kept secret, and go unrecognized by the outside world. Likewise, the fight-or-flight response among children exposed to these types of stressors, and the attendant release of endogenous catecholamines and adrenal corticosteroids are both uncontrollable and invisible" (Anda et al., 2006). Davies and Forman (2002) asserts when a child's stress response system is constantly triggered, they will be able to readily deal with emergencies, but the physiological responses will begin to break down the body not allowing much else to take place. Prolonged or excessive activation of the stress response system without protective supports due to ACEs is toxic stress (Kimple & Kansagra, 2018). According to Lester et al. (2003), the prefrontal cortex, hippocampus, and amygdala are the most sensitive during the activation of the stress response system. Consistent with this assertion is that the size of the hippocampus and amygdala is diminished with prolonged toxic stress (Anda et al., 2006). Therefore, this is extremely significant as we explore the effects on

learning as the hippocampus is the part of the brain responsible for memory. When the stress response system is activated, and a child is in flight, fight or freeze mode, the diminished capability of the prefrontal cortex impedes most learning. Decision making, processing and affect regulation all take place in the frontal cortex (Lester et al., 2003). Without these functioning at optimum levels, new learning is difficult for these students.

Children who are impacted by trauma and toxic stress also have a difficult time managing big emotions. If children have been neglected or not taught how to soothe or calm themselves, it can equate to chronic dysregulation and major behavior problems in the classroom (Burke et al., 2011). Another reason teachers may observe that traumatized children exhibit disruptive behaviors in the classroom could be due to the aforementioned flight or fight response. When triggered, these children can have difficulty regulating their responses and actions simply due to the responses of the brain and the chemicals flooding their systems (Anda et al., 2006; Burke et al., 2011).

Burke et al. (2011) found that learning and behavior problems increased as exposure to adverse experiences increased for students. Lower school engagement, retention, and high absenteeism are all factors that are likely to occur with a high incidence of ACEs (Bethell et al., 2014). In fact, a study was conducted in 2012 to measure cognitive function, including executive functions, memory, and attention in children with early trauma in comparison to their same-sex, same-age peers. The study revealed that school-aged children exposed to traumatic experiences early in life exhibited "worse performance on attention, immediate verbal recall, and working memory tests than did the age and sex-matched control groups" (Bücker et al., 2012).

However, it is important to acknowledge that ACE exposure does not mean automatic developmental problems or trauma. Protective factors such as "individual characteristics, safe

nurturing relations, and family or community support can mitigate ACE risk" (Brown & Shillington, 2017; Hamby et al., 2018). As Blodgett and Lanigan (2018) point out "exposure to adversity is a risk, not a guarantee, that problems will emerge" (p. 144). This is certainly encouraging information for educators and health professionals that want nothing but success for these children. However, critical research for controlled studies utilizing a trauma-sensitive framework to support student coping and success is still needed (Blodgett & Lanigan, 2018).

Trauma-Informed Strategies

In order for educators to teach students that have an active or overactive stress response system, strategies must be implemented that assist students in being able to regulate themselves and ready themselves for learning. Children, particularly those at the elementary school level, learn about regulation from the adults in their lives by anticipating their parents' or teacher's response to their emotions (van der Kolk, 2005). Trauma- sensitive environments support not only those students with known trauma, but also those with unidentified trauma, and those students that are impacted by their classmates' trauma (Cole et al., 2005).

Being trauma-informed is defined as having a "philosophical and/or cultural stance that integrates awareness and understanding of trauma into practice" (Hopper et al., 2010). Hopper et al. (2010) outline four principles, applicable across various settings, for trauma-informed care including:

> trauma awareness,
>
> emphasis on safety,
>
> opportunities to rebuild control, and a
>
> strengths-based approach (pp. 81-82)

When adopting a trauma-informed approach, there is a paradigm shift by which the school or teacher becomes empathetic and responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable students in the classroom (Hopper et al., 2010). This shift, for most teachers, will need to be aided with formal training because it is a level awareness that is not usually discussed or taught in education preparation programs. The scope of the physiological and behavioral impact of trauma on students, as illustrated in Table 2, can be extensive and teachers can easily feel overwhelmed and hopeless (National Child Traumatic Stress Network Schools Committee, 2008, p. 10). Brown et al. (2009) found that there is a positive correlation between providing training to teachers and a favorable attitude towards adopting trauma-informed care strategies.

Trauma-informed strategies that focus on strengths and not deficiencies in schools have proven to positively impact students by ensuring all students, especially students impacted by trauma, are able to be physically and psychologically in control and are ready to engage in the learning process (Hopper et al., 2010; Walkley & Cox, 2013). Strategies and classroom practices that provide structure and predictability are especially effective for these students because these strategies lessen the need to be on high alert and maintain an activated stress response system (Cole et al., 2005; Hopper et al., 2010; van der Kolk, 2005). The student knows what to expect and a trigger response is less likely. Children impacted by trauma can be unable to control impulses even in the learning environment and preventing behaviors disruptive to learning can be difficult. Communication skills as it relates to emotions and needs can be lacking (Cole et al., 2005; Hopper et al., 2010; Streeck-Fischer & van der Kolk, 2000). Therefore, strategies that provide the opportunity for students to practice structured social interactions where it is

Table 2

Behavioral Impacts of Trauma on Students

Elementary School Students	Middle School Students	High School Students
Changes in behavior: • Increases in activity level • Decreased attention and/or concentration • Withdrawal from others or activities • Angry outburst and/or aggression • Absenteeism	Changes in behavior: • Decreased attention and/or concentration • Increase in activity level • Change in academic performance • Irritability with friends, teachers, events • Angry outbursts and/or aggression • Withdrawal from others or activities • Absenteeism	Changes in behavior: • Withdrawal from others or activities • Irritability with friends, teachers, events • Angry outbursts and/or aggression • Change in academic performance • Decreased attention and/or concentration • Increase in activity level • Absenteeism
Anxiety, fear, and worry about safety or self and others (more clingy with teacher or parent)	Anxiety, fear, and worry about safety of self and others	Anxiety, fear, and worry about safety of self and others
Worry about recurrence of violence	Worry about recurrence or consequences of violence	Worry about recurrence or consequences of violence
Increased distress (unusually whinny, irritable, moody)	Increase somatic complaints (headaches, stomachaches, chest pains)	Discomfort with feelings (such as troubling thoughts of revenge)
Distrust of others, affecting how children interact with both adults and peers	Discomfort with feelings (such as troubling thoughts of revenge)	Increase risk for substance abuse
A change in ability to interpret and respond appropriately to social cues	Repeated discussion of event and focus on specific details of what happened	Discussion of events and reviewing of details

Table 2 (continued)

Elementary School Students	Middle School Students	High School Students
Increase somatic complaints (headaches, stomachaches, overreaction to minor bumps and bruises)		Negative impact on issues of trust and perceptions of others
Changes in school performance		

necessary to communicate thoughts and feelings and find or maintain a regulated state are also extremely impactful because all of these are needed skills to be successful in school (Cole et al., 2005; Streeck-Fischer & van der Kolk, 2000).

Building Student-Teacher Relationships

Teachers and students cannot exist or be successful while isolated from one another as they are interdependent (Souers & Hall, 2016). When teaching students that have been impacted by trauma, these intrapersonal relationships are even more significant. Students who have a trauma background have difficulty communicating emotions and connecting with others (Cole et al., 2005).

It is not uncommon for these students to resist forming relationships and to put-up barriers between themselves and others to avoid further hurt (Cole et al., 2005). In the classroom, a setting lack of relationships can be detrimental to the success of the child. If it occurs frequently enough, it can have impacts on the teacher.

Teacher-child interactions are not only linked to children's development, but may also be linked to the behavior, development, and self-efficacy of the teacher (Tsigilis et al., 2019). As it relates to the teacher, his or her self-efficacy is directly impacted by the engagement, learning and achievement outcomes of the students in the classroom (Goddard & Goddard, 2001; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Malmberg & Hagger, 2009). As it relates to the students, engagement, learning and achievement are all positively correlated with a meaningful relationship of the classroom teacher (Howes, 2000; Wentzel, 2002). Elementary and middle school students who believe that their teachers are supportive and care about them exhibit higher levels of interest in class and higher levels of motivation which can result in academic gains (Howes, 2000; Wentzel, 2002).

Child outcomes have been the dominant focus in most studies related to relationships with teachers and the use of social emotional strategies to impact learning outcomes (Brown et al., 2009). However, there is some promising research out there. For example, research conducted by Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) found that teacher self-efficacy influences the effort and persistence of teachers to develop interpersonal relationships with the students they teach. Studies completed by Guo et al. (2010) and Osher et al. (2008) revealed similar findings reporting that teachers with high self-efficacy make it a priority to develop encouraging relationships with their students. Likewise, teachers who have poor quality relationships with students can have chaotic classrooms that lead to the development of teacher feelings of disappointment and/or failure (Guo et al., 2010; Osher et al., 2008).

Based on this research, it becomes necessary to aid teachers in learning to develop relationships with students despite lower self-efficacy beliefs, otherwise low efficacy will be used to aid in a self-fulfilling prophesy (Schunk & Pajares, 2004). Assisting teachers in developing immediacy is a measurable way to start. Teacher immediacy, according to Frymier et al. (1996), is defined as "eye contact, smiling, proximity to students, and using vocal variety", and verbal immediacy is demostrated by "calling students by name, using personal examples, using humor, and asking for student opinions" (p. 185). These behaviors may not come easily to struggling teachers, but student feedback has shown that students make judgement about teacher investment based on teacher immediacy (Frymier et al., 1996).

Morning Meetings

Building relationships with students who already possess many issues with trust and have up barriers is not an easy task. This is especially difficult if the teacher is already struggling with self-efficacy as a teacher and not achieving the student outcomes that are expected. One strategy

for building relationships with students and cultivating a sense of belonging, particularly with students affected by ACEs is the morning meeting. The morning meeting format was constructed by the Northeast Foundation for Children as a part of the Responsive Classroom approach to teaching and learning (Kriete, 2003; Kriete & Bechtel, 2006). Morning meeting is the practice of gathering the whole class in a community circle to greet each other and to take part in sharing and activities as a collective (Kriete & Bechtel, 2006). This classroom ritual usually lasts from 10-20 minutes a day, which results in over 60 hours devoted to allowing students to practice social and academic skills and build a sense of community with other students and the teacher (Kriete & Bechtel, 2006).

Morning meeting is comprised of four distinct components, all serving an important purpose. Because this is a structured process, it is ideal for supporting students who enter the classroom environment experiencing some dysregulation (Perry & Szalavitz, 2006). The greeting is the first component and it consists of the teacher and students greeting each other by name (Kriete, 2003; Rachel et al., 2019). The greeting can be as simple as a "hello" or as involved as an around the classroom custom handshake with various students. The purpose of the greeting is to welcome each child into the community and to acknowledge his or her presence. The second component is sharing. Sharing allows a few students to share about themselves based on a selected topic or prompt; they then invite others, including the teacher, to ask questions or share comments (Kriete, 2003; Rachel et al., 2019). This process helps others in the community to learn more about each student and allows the teacher to discover more about his or her students than they could learn based on observation alone. Third, in the morning meeting structure is a group activity. The group activity is done as a collective and builds classroom cohesion and community (Kriete, 2003; Rachel et al., 2019). To the advantage of the teacher, these activities

can be academic in content or just something engaging to allow them to practice a desired skill (Kriete & Bechtel, 2006). Lastly, the fourth component is the message, also called the news or announcements. This should be written on the board to afford students an opportunity to practice reading skills and an opportunity to process the information along with the teacher recitation (Kriete, 2003; Kriete & Bechtel, 2006; Rachel et al., 2019). During this time the teacher can share information and expectations and the students are able to learn and get excited about the day ahead (Kriete, 2003; Rachel et al., 2019). This part of the process is extremely important for both the teacher and the student and should not be skipped. Teacher expectations alone are not enough to turn the classroom group into a classroom community (Kriete, 2003). Although the teacher may get along well with his or her class, it does not mean that he or she has a genuine relationship with the students. According to Kriete (2003), the teacher needs the right strategies, time and patience to turn "intention and expectation into action and behavior" (p. 70). In a three-year study conducted by Rimm-Kaufman et al. (2014) it was founded that the implementation of the morning meeting over that time period did not negatively impact student performance. In fact, students showed academic gains in both math and reading as evidenced by their state test scores (Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2014). Implementing the morning meeting format into the classroom daily may assist the teacher in building relationships with reluctant students that may be present in the classrooms in low-performing schools thereby enhancing teacher self-efficacy and improving attitudes towards teaching (Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2014). Building these relationships results in an increase student engagement during the lessons. The increase in student engagement directly impacts teacher self-efficacy as a source of feedback, aligning with performance achievement, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal (Bandura, 1977).

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the existing literature on the following five areas: (a) self-efficacy theory; (b) expectancy-value theory; (c) low-performing schools; (d) adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and (e) trauma-informed strategies, building teacher-student relationships, morning meetings. The review demonstrated that self-efficacy has a strong influence on job performance and the ability to persist in difficult working conditions. In the case of this study, the difficult working environment is a low-performing school and one of the situational factors is the prevalence of ACEs among the students. In an effort to increase beginning teacher self-efficacy in these circumstances, trauma-informed strategy training, and implementation via morning meetings. Additionally, this chapter provided a review of the theoretical frameworks used to guide this study. The next chapter will describe the methodology for the study.

CHAPTER 3: STUDY DESIGN

The purpose of this mixed methods action research study was to describe how elementary school teachers' perception of their self-efficacy is impacted by their experiences in learning about trauma in the classroom and implementing a trauma-informed strategy, morning meetings, in the classroom. As such, the following study questions were examined:

1. What effect does implementing morning meetings, as a trauma-informed strategy, in the learning environment have on teacher perceptions of self-efficacy at a low-performing elementary school?
2. What specific teacher self-efficacy skills were affected by the implementation of the morning meetings?

The questions provided a foundation upon which the scholarly practitioner collected data to discover if self-efficacy perceptions can change with beginning teachers at low-performing schools and if so, in what areas. Moreover, these questions assisted the scholarly practitioner in ensuring that data collected and conclusions drawn were reported in a way that helps improve practice and give insight to educational leaders on strategies to support beginning teachers in these complex environments.

Study Design and Rationale

Teachers in low-performing schools have the same responsibilities of teachers in other settings; however, there are other factors that are present in the low-performing learning environments that greatly impact teacher self-efficacy. Teachers in these schools often encounter a higher number of students who have been affected by more than one adverse childhood experiences. Many world governments, including the United States, believe that poverty and lack of resources are contributing factors to low performance (McColskey & Monrad, 2004). Poverty

is listed as one of the original ten ACEs. Based on the research done in the ACEs study, the trauma these experiences cause can lead to negative changes in brain development (Feletti et al., 1998). Thus, teachers may have a difficult time reaching their goals with students because other brain factors impact student readiness to learn (Bethell et al., 2014). The inability to reach teaching and learning goals has a negative impact on teacher self-efficacy. And low self-efficacy of the teacher results in lack of effort in the classroom, disconnection from students, and abandonment of professional pursuits in teaching.

This study used a convergent mixed methods action research design. Although the study is heavy in the collection of qualitative data, quantitative data in the form of surveys and classroom observations were collected in order to determine teacher perceptions, and implementation fidelity. Convergence allows the scholarly practitioner to utilize both quantitative and qualitative research throughout the course of the study (Creswell, 2015). The qualitative data can be used to further validate quantitative findings (Creswell et al., 2004; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Likewise, the quantitative data can help identify patterns and themes that may not be as apparent when analyzing qualitative data (Creswell et al., 2004). In order for improvement to be realized, it is important to know why something needs to be improved and have a process for gaining feedback to know whether or not improvement is taking place (Langley et al., 2009). According to Langley et al. (2009), careful consideration must be given to developing a change that will lead to improvement. The process of addressing these three indicators of improvement combined with the use of the Plan-Do-Study-Act approach is implementation of the model for improvement framework (Langley et al., 2009). The use of a model such as the model for improvement was necessary for this study to provide structure to

each of the action research cycles and guide the scholarly practitioner and stakeholders through the implementation of morning meetings.

Based on the model, the first question asks what are we trying to accomplish? For this study, the scholarly practitioner sought to implement a change in the teachers' classrooms to positively impact levels of self-efficacy as teachers. Indicators that the change is an improvement are taken directly from the Teacher Sense of Self-Efficacy Survey Instrument. Teachers will experience positive changes in their ability to engage students, manage the classroom environment, and deliver instruction to all students (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Since each of the indicators is reliant on the students' responses to the teacher and student buy-in to the learning process, it was important to implement a change that would allow teachers to build genuine relationships with students so that they would know what strategies to use to expand the teachers' locus of control within the classroom. In an attempt to impact these indicators, the change implemented was the morning meeting along with trauma-informed training.

Stakeholders

The school site selected for this study is Bulldog Elementary School. Bulldog Elementary is a low-performing elementary school in a low-performing district in rural eastern North Carolina. This school received a school letter grade of D when evaluated by North Carolina state accountability standards. Although the school did meet performance growth standards, the school continues to struggle in both reading and math content mastery for students. The school administration experienced a shift with the appointment of a new principal this year. The previous year, the population size increased due to the reconfiguration of another low-performing school in the district. That school shifted from serving Pre-K- 5th grade to only serving Pre-K- 2nd grade. As a result, Bulldog Elementary absorbed some of the 3rd-5th grades

students who were displaced because of the change. In turn, the administration and the teaching staff report that the new dynamic in the classrooms, with the addition of these new students, is especially challenging.

A survey population was identified for this study. According to McMillian and Schumacher (2010), the survey population is often different from the sample that is actually selected. In this study, the survey population consisted of beginning, core subject teachers in a low-performing elementary school who teach students full-time at Bulldog Elementary School. From this survey population, those meeting the delimitations of the study were selected to participate. Beginning teachers, those with less than 3 full years of teaching experience and those teaching in tested grades 3-5, are the focus of the study because they are an at-risk population due to the fact that they are not fully licensed. Previous studies reveal that this group of teachers leave the profession at a staggering rate. In the US, about one third of new teachers quit the profession within the first three years and half quit within 5 years (Sutcher et al., 2016).

Sample and Sampling Procedures

For this study, a purposeful sampling strategy was used. All beginning, core subject teachers at Bulldog Elementary School were asked to complete the Teachers' Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale Survey. Specifically, teachers were asked to respond to the electronic surveys using their initials instead of their names. After the responses were collected, the scholarly practitioner retrieved the surveys of four teachers who identified as having a low perception of self-efficacy as compared to the other respondents at the time of the study. These employee initials were matched by the information in school beginning teacher directory to reveal the identity of the teachers. Prior to the disseminating the survey, school administration were asked to provide a confidential list of teachers, based on classroom observation, who were struggling

with confidence in management, student engagement, and instruction in the classroom. The scholarly practitioner crossed referenced this list with the names of the teachers identified from the survey results to select four teachers for the study. Selecting the four with the lowest self-efficacy scores in the aforementioned scenario helped to ensure that the study findings supported teachers that were in the most need of improvement of their perception of self as a teacher. Although only four teachers participated in the actual study, to ensure saturation, teachers that participated were subject to ongoing interviews to gain participant responses. According to O'Reilly and Parker (2013), saturation does not occur when a certain number of interviews are reached, or by the number of participants in a study, rather when no new data is being collected. If the scholarly practitioner has arrived at the point of no new data, then there is most likely no new themes or coding that can be of use, therefore saturation has been reached. Based on this explanation, the scholarly practitioner is confident that the amount of data collected is sufficient to ground the findings.

The heterogeneous sampling described still allowed for randomized external factors such as race, age, temperament for change, and current teaching performance. This is important because this is a phenomenological study, and it is not required that the teacher possess the personal traits, but it is necessary that the teachers experience the phenomenon in a similar setting so that the scholarly practitioner can build a common understanding (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). The end result will be an "essence of the experiences" from those who have experienced the phenomenon, which in this case is possessing a low sense of self-efficacy as a teacher while teaching in a tested subject area, in a low-performing school with performance mandates (Moustakas, 1994).

Ethical Considerations and Informed Consent

In preparation for this study the scholarly practitioner completed several approval stages prior to beginning research. As outlined by Creswell and Poth (2018), and as required by East Carolina University, the scholarly practitioner completed training modules within the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Certification process. Following the acceptance of the study proposal by the doctoral committee, a detailed letter was sent to the district assistant superintendent for Bulldog Elementary outlining the purpose of the study, the data being collected, and the uses for the collected data. A similar letter was also shared with the building principal. Once district approval was obtained, Institutional Review Board approval was sought.

Once approval was gained by IRB, the initial round of surveys were conducted. Teachers were chosen based on the aforementioned sampling criteria to participate in the study. Selected teachers signed a participation agreement that provided the teachers with details of the study, listed the teachers' obligations during the study, outlined opt-out procedures, and explained how their students would be involved in the study. This participation agreement also requested teachers' consent to access walk-through and evaluation data collected by the school administration. Teachers could opt-out of participation at any time. If this were to occur, the next teacher on the list according to previously collected efficacy data and administrator recommendation would be added to the study if the opt –out takes place within the first two weeks. All efforts were made to maintain four teachers to ensure a diverse group of experiences and to aid in saturation.

Implementation teacher survey data was collected electronically but was not anonymous. However, the data remains confidential, and it continues to be stored in Qualtrics which is an

online survey platform that assists in collecting and analyzing data securely. Teacher observation data and interview data was also collected. Observation data was collected electronically, while interview data was conducted face to face with the scholarly practitioner taking notes and recording the interview on a device. The data collected was only shared with the participants, school administration, and district administration following a written request for the findings. Part of the informed consent specified that this is not observation data to be utilized in teacher evaluations or to be used as a negative data point against teachers. The request form for research data gathered during this study asked the requestor to specifically state the intended use for this data. The hope is that the data that was collected will be used to guide teacher coaching and inform school leaders about the type of professional development needed for new teachers..

This study was conducted in an elementary school located in a district in which the scholarly practitioner previously worked 3-5 hours per week providing trauma-informed support to administration and teachers at other schools. The study site was not a location the researcher is assigned to work, nor is the researcher compensated to provide coaching to this school. The strategy used in the study differed from the strategies already being used in the school's learning environment. Teachers participating in the study were chosen based on survey data and administrator input. Analysis of the survey data is the only role the scholarly practitioner had on the selection process. Teachers received training on morning meetings to implement, and the focus was on the teacher's individual transformation as a result of implementing a new practice. The focus of this intervention was not on creating a trauma-informed school, as was the scholarly practitioner's previous professional role in the district. The only form of incentives used weew those that would naturally occur from the implementation of a new strategy such as implementation coaching, training, and materials.

Instrumentation

Initially, all 11 beginning teachers, the survey population, were asked to complete the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale survey to gauge their level of efficacy in their role as classroom teachers (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). See Appendix B. The study population were asked to complete this survey again at the conclusion of the study. This tool is available in both a long form, which is 24 questions, and a short form that is only 12 questions in length. For this study, the participants completed the long form to identify patterns of specific factors reported. Supplemental data was collected on each person completing the survey. This supplement survey data included the teacher's number of years of experience, grade level taught, and college major. The 24-question survey was self-administered and used a Likert scale measuring teacher perception about how much they can do to impact the classroom factors addressed in the questions. The participants were able to choose a response between one and nine. A rating of one indicated the belief that they believed that they could do nothing to impact that factor, and a rating of nine suggested that the respondent believed that they had a great deal of impact over that particular factor in their classroom. This moderate to highly valid tool sought to identify what causes teachers the most trouble in schools and effects their levels of efficacy; student engagement, instructional practices and/or classroom management (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain information through teacher perspective about strategies implemented during the study (Patton, 2002). The semi-structured interviews used predetermined questions to ensure that not only are the questions related to the problem of practice covered, but also participants are given the opportunity to provide feedback and context for the scholarly practitioner (Yin, 2009). The interviews occurred at the beginning,

middle, and end of the study with the teachers selected to participate in the implementation cycle of the study. The interviews consisted of questions that are specifically aligned to each of the areas on the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale. See Appendix C for the initial teacher interview protocol and Appendix D for the implementation teacher interview protocol. The tools differ in some baseline questions that were asked in the initial interview to capture data regarding current beliefs. Each teacher was asked the same questions in the same order each of the three times. The data captured from these interviews provided insight to the study questions, directly from the teacher participants.

The last instrument used in this study was an observation tool designed by the scholarly practitioner (see Appendix E). The observation differs from the previous instruments in that it records teacher and student interactions in the learning environment. The observations focused on the three self-efficacy factors measured by the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale: student engagement, instructional methods, and classroom management. The observation tool consisted of four evidences for each of the three areas. The scholarly practitioner responded to the components in short answer form only. The reason for this is to remove bias of the presence or absence of the indicators. The observer was able to take notes about what was happening versus merely checking a box. The importance of using this instrument was to provide real-time data for the teachers to consider and process. It was also important to measure the improvement, or lack thereof, in teacher proficiency in the self-efficacy factors. Table 3 identifies specifically which study question each instrument will help to answer.

Threats to Validity

The threat to validity of the TSES is minimal. The developers of the instrument worked extensively with current and pre-service teachers to test the constructs and validity to ensure that

Table 3

Study Questions and Instruments Used to Gather Data Sets

Study Questions	Instrument	Number of Questions	Administration
1. What effect does implementing morning meetings, as a trauma-informed strategy, in the learning environment have on teacher perceptions of self-efficacy at a low-performing elementary school?	Initial Teacher Interview: semi-structured	9 open-ended questions	Week 2 of the study
	Implementation Teacher Interview: semi-structured	10 open-ended questions	Week 7 and 9 of the study
	Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale Survey	24 item long-form version	During survey population phase and at the end of the study.
2. What specific teacher self-efficacy skills were affected by the implementation of the morning meetings?	Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale Survey	24 item long form version	During survey population phase and at the end of the study.
	Classroom Observation	12 behavior indicators	Week 5, 7 and 9 of the study

key factors of self-efficacy are represented in the tool (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Since its publication, the tool has been used and validated in the United States multiple times and in other countries including Greece, Canada, and Singapore (Poulou, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007; Wolters & Daugherty, 2007). Based on the research, the TSES has been identified as "superior to previous measures of teacher self-efficacy" (Hoy & Spero, 2005, p. 354).

Procedures

Action Research Cycle 1

Plan

A survey population was selected from the teachers at the study site. The selected teachers were beginning teachers, who, by definition, are those having less than three full years of teaching experience.

Do

All teachers were provided with an informed consent statement prior to beginning the survey. This statement was placed at the beginning of the electronic survey in Qualtrics. Participants who willingly gave consent were asked to participate in an initial round of surveys to gauge the teacher's sense of self-efficacy. The teachers completed the long form (24 question) version of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) electronically using Qualtrics.

Study

The scholarly practitioner scored the surveys and grouped them by responses. The scores of those teachers, along with principal recommendation were used to select 4 teachers to implement the intervention strategy, morning meetings, in the study. Once the teachers were selected, the scholarly practitioner conducted individual, semi-structured interviews with each of the teachers. The interviews consisted of 9 questions.

There are questions regarding student engagement, inquiring about instructional practices, and addressing classroom management. Also included were questions about trauma-informed practices in the classroom. These interview questions not only align to the TSES, but also connected directly to the study's questions. These initial interview questions differ from the monitoring and final interview questions. Interview data collected during the initial interviews were analyzed at this point to identify response trends.

Act

Using the data obtained from cycle one interviews, the scholarly practitioner designed a training for the teachers who are participating in the study. This training defined ACEs, stress, toxic stress, and how trauma impacts brain development and function. The training also contained a focus on trauma-sensitive strategies to use for self-care and in the classroom when working with students. Specifically, the training addressed how to execute the four components of an effective morning meeting: greeting, sharing, group activity and morning message. During the third week of the study, the four teachers in the study population participated in the virtual training led by the scholarly practitioner.

Action Research Cycle 2

Plan

At the conclusion of the teacher training, the teachers worked with the scholarly practitioner and the principal to adjust their schedule and prepare their classrooms and students for implementation of morning meetings in his or her classroom. The teachers were provided the opportunity to purchase any additional necessary materials needed to fully implement the strategy. These materials were provided to the teacher by the scholarly practitioner and the

school principal and presented no cost for the teacher. In this phase of the cycle, the teachers worked together to create a way to introduce the morning meeting concept to students.

Do

Once implementation began, the scholarly practitioner served as a coach to each teacher to ensure the morning meeting was being implemented with fidelity and that the teacher had everything needed to ensure success. The scholarly practitioner completed a classroom observation for the teacher during the 1st week of implementation (mid-week 4 of the study) and then every 2 weeks which occurred on the 7th and 9th weeks of the study. Teachers participated in the semi-structured interview process, as well, during the 7th and 9th week checkpoints.

Study

During the nine-week data collection period, the scholarly practitioner consistently reviewed the data points collected and determined what coaching, if any, was needed for the implementation of the morning meeting.

Act

The coaching was strictly around the strategy implementation, as this is the scholarly practitioner's area of knowledge. Any changes to instructional practices and/or classroom management procedures and processes were changes designed and initiated by the teacher.

Action Research Cycle 3

Plan

Following the seven weeks of implementation, the scholarly practitioner reviewed all data points to ensure that sufficient data was captured to answer the study questions and conclude the study.

Do

The teachers participated in the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale survey again. This survey also included some short answer questions to gain participant feedback regarding implementation, change in practice, and change in efficacy.

Study

The data was then prepared for analysis. Values were assigned to each variable to allow for a descriptive analysis of the quantitative data. The qualitative data that was not transcribed was transcribed at this point. From there, the coding process started. The data was studied for emerging themes and patterns that exist among the responses and observations of the study participants. The TSES survey data collected prior to beginning the study was compared to that reported after the conclusion of the study. The scholarly practitioner compiled the findings and shared via the study results and findings.

Act

The data collected will be shared with stakeholders including the teachers, principal and district staff. The results of this study will seek to inform and improve practices not only within the study site, but with beginning teachers in all low-performing schools. Sharing this data with these group will also inform administrators and pre-service programs as to the types of concerns and supports beginning teachers need to gain and maintain their confidence and high self-efficacy beliefs in high pressure teaching assignments.

Data Processing and Analysis

The survey data was collected electronically using Qualtrics and was already assigned a value for each variable to prepare for statistical analysis. Data was entered into Microsoft Excel to aid in the analysis and interpretation of the data. This process was done throughout the study

as the instruments were utilized as seen in Figure 4. Doing so assisted in providing insight into any relationships among variables and trends identified by teacher respondents. Despite the desire to conduct face to face interviews, the restrictions dictated by the COVID-19 pandemic- explained further in chapter 4- required that the interview data be collected via Google Meet and the conversations were recorded by hand and Google Meet. Following the transcription using Sonix, an inductive analysis approach was followed to organize, code themes, and interpret themes.

Role of the Scholarly Practitioner

The scholarly practitioner in this study works within the study site on a consultative basis. The scholarly practitioner does have relationships with some of the staff and the administration in the building based on previous work done around trauma-informed systems in schools. The scholarly practitioner recognizes that there is a natural bias because content from her job is being shared with teachers during this study. There could be a tendency to look at this content as a positive and assume that it will yield positive outcomes with the study participants. In order to address this bias, the interview questions were constructed in a manner that identifies the positive aspects, if any, and negative aspects, if any, of implementation of the morning meetings.

The scholarly practitioner provided the training and coaching to the study participants. The scholarly practitioner collected data from the study participants and gave feedback to the teachers on the change implemented. For this reason, additional measures were taken to minimize any potential bias in the study. Member checking was used to ensure that study participant responses were captured and reported correctly. Furthermore, although the content of

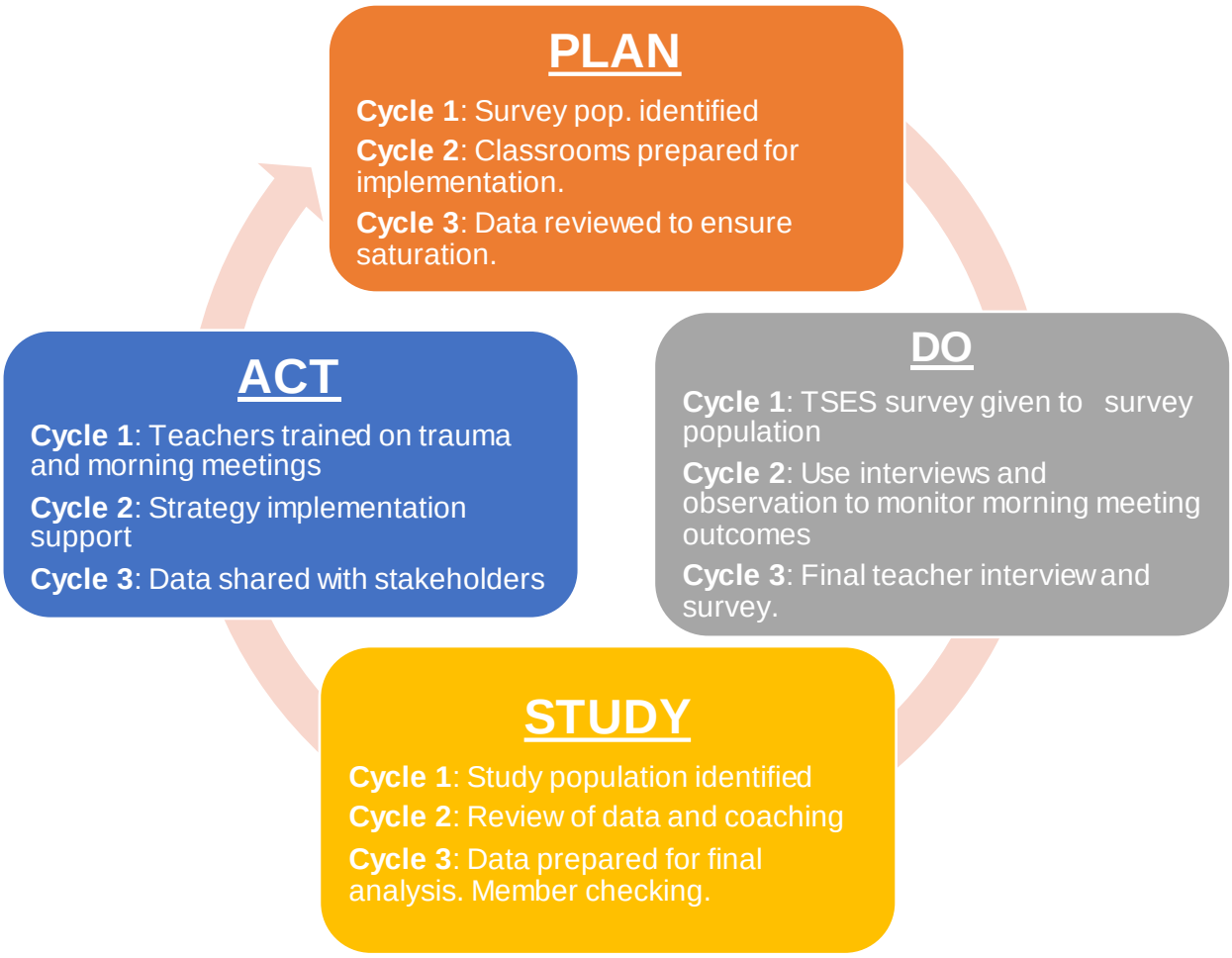

Figure 4. The research study using the PDSA Cycle.

this study is connected to the professional role of the scholarly practitioner, the focus is on teacher efficacy and not trauma-informed strategies.

Summary

In an effort to expand the literature on beginning teacher's low sense of self-efficacy and possible strategies to support positive growth in their sense of self-efficacy as teachers, specifically in a low-performing school, this chapter outlines the methodology of a mixed methods, action research study using the Plan-Do-Study-Act model to guide the process. As described, data was collected from a reliable and valid survey, the TSES. Interview and observation data was also collected and analyzed for themes to not only help define the phenomenon and the essence of the experience, but also to inform those in a position to help provide support and training for these teachers. The findings of this study are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This action research study sought to examine how elementary school teachers' perceptions of their efficacy, as teachers, was influenced by their experiences in learning about the effects of trauma on student learning and the implementation of morning meetings as a trauma-informed strategy in the classroom. The questions that guided this study are:

1. What effect did implementing morning meetings, as at trauma-informed strategy, in the learning environment have on teacher perceptions of self-efficacy at a low-performing elementary school?
2. What specific teacher self-efficacy skills were affected by the implementation of the morning meetings?

A low-performing elementary school in North Carolina was the setting for this study, and the focus was on beginning teachers in this environment. Low-performing schools present some of the same stressors for teachers as any other school, along with being charged with improving test scores quickly in a high-stakes environment. If those scores did not immediately improve the teacher could conclude their efforts did not yield successful results on any level and, therefore, they did not achieve a valuable outcome. Dealing with this reality on a daily basis may be difficult for many teachers and their perceptions of self-efficacy may be impacted. Experiencing so many missed personal and professional goals can cause teacher self-efficacy to suffer and result in the inability or unwillingness to persist in challenging situations (Hoy et al., 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Beginning teachers are particularly susceptible to this situation. The data showed a trend of teachers leaving the public schools, and the profession as a whole, before the completion of their third year (Sutcher et al., 2016). It is important to focus on this group of educators to provide strategies and supports that allow them to build relationships

with students. The hypothesis study was to determine if these strategies could have a positive impact on the individual's self-efficacy in the three areas measured by the TSES instrument: student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Achieving an increase in teacher self-efficacy beliefs can result in an increase of successes in the learning environment, as determined by the teacher's perception. This increased success can yield positive expectancy outcomes and enable beginning teachers to persist in the challenging environment of a low-performing school (Bandura, 1982, 1997; Bandura & Locke, 2003; Lunenburg, 2011).

This chapter will describe the data collection process and any anomalies that may have occurred during the study. The intervention implemented will be detailed along with observations regarding the fidelity of implementation. The data collected will be presented, as well as an explanation of the process for analysis of that data.

Study Environment

The study initially began at the beginning of March 2020. The plan for this action research study was to conduct 3 PDSA cycles using the data collected during each cycle to inform the next steps. The study participants consisted of the beginning teachers at Bulldog Elementary School. When schools were mandated to close in the middle of March 2020 due to the COVID-19 outbreak, some of the participants for this study were in the process of completing the initial TSES through Qualtrics. Per the original study procedures, following the completion of the survey, the scholarly practitioner would have used the results along with recommendation from the administration to identify four beginning teachers that reported having low perceptions of self-efficacy to implement the morning meetings strategy. From there, the teachers would have received the training on ACEs and morning meetings. Following the

training, the implementation of the morning meetings would take place in each teachers' classroom for approximately nine weeks. However, once schools were closed, the study was paused, and at that time there was only one survey that was fully completed. After approximately four weeks, the state governor closed schools for face-to-face instruction for the remainder of the year due to the increasing danger the pandemic caused.

Although the intervention could be conducted virtually, the teachers were overwhelmed by the quick switch to the virtual learning environment and the addition of the intervention at this point would have caused another level of angst for the participants. The school was having a difficult time reaching students to report to class due to the lack of internet access in the rural areas and capable device access for all students. The teacher priorities quickly shifted to trying to meet the needs of students, both educational and personal, and the atmosphere did not exist to train and observe teachers using a virtual adaptation of morning meetings at that time. Many were overwhelmed with the fear of this new disease and how to stay safe, in addition to how to serve students and families during this time. It took months before schools could fully return to full-time teaching because so many families were negatively impacted by the COVID-19 virus.

Over the summer months, teachers from the study site were shifted to other buildings due to typical teacher attrition. This posed a need to collect a new set of initial data. Due to the reassignments, the survey population of beginning teachers changed greatly from the previous school year. Knowing that the first 9 weeks of the 2020-2021 school year were to be completed virtually presented another reason to collect new data from the returning teachers. In August 2020, students were still not allowed to return to the school building in many areas of the country. Numerous school districts decided that the best way to maintain safety and adhere to the social distancing guidelines given by Center for Disease Control (CDC) was to equip students

with laptops and wireless internet hotspots and to have teachers provide instruction only online. This study had to account for the possible shift in self-efficacy beliefs as a result of having to deliver instruction remotely. Of the 11 beginning teachers at Bulldog Elementary School, six teachers responded to the TSES, which was administered electronically using Qualtrics. Adjustments to the interview protocols were made to reflect the added impact of having to acclimate to delivering instruction online and the effect that it may have on beginning teacher self-efficacy beliefs. Specifically, questions were added that prompted teachers to address the impact that the shift to online instruction was having on their efficacy beliefs. When appropriate, teachers were asked to give an account of their pre-COVID experience for context for the scholarly practitioner. Unfortunately, the impact of the virtual learning was not explicitly measured in the TSES instrument. Changing the survey instrument itself may have affected the validity of the tool. However, the potential impact of the change in the teaching and learning environment cannot be ignored.

Upon completion of the TSES, the scholarly practitioner used the data gathered and the feedback from administration to narrow down the six participants to four teachers to participate in the intervention implementation part of the study. First, the survey results were reviewed to identify the teachers who reported having the lowest overall perceptions of self-efficacy. Once identified, these names were cross-referenced with the names provided by administration that were recommended to participate to ensure that the teachers selected would in a position to fully engage in the implementation and not be restricted by other tasks mandated by their individualized professional development plans. The scholarly practitioner reviewed the study consent with the intervention participants to ensure understanding. During this review, participants were reminded that the data would not include any identifiers that would reveal who

they are or the school in which they work. Initial interviews were then conducted to gather baseline data about the participants, their perceptions of self-efficacy and their feelings about their influence in the learning environment. In November 2020, initial interviews with the participants were then conducted using the Google Meet platform to honor social distancing protocols. This was the video conferencing platform that was most familiar to the scholarly practitioner and the teachers. Each interview was recorded using Google Meet and notes were also taken by the scholarly practitioner. Sonix, a transcription service that easily supports Google Meet, was used to transcribe the interviews. Conducting the interviews via video conferencing was a change to the original plan to conduct the interviews in person.

After initial interviews were conducted, teachers participated in a virtual professional development training that combined information about ACEs, trauma, and toxic stress particularly in children. This session also provided examples of how these manifest in the learning environment. The second half of this 90-minute session focused on the four components of morning meetings and suggestions for implementing each. This specific training, delivered by the scholarly practitioner, was selected to provide context for the use of trauma-informed strategies in the classroom. Learning how to implement morning meetings was necessary, but the "why" behind it was equally important to impart lasting change in practice.

The training delivery differed from the original training planned and created since the move to remote learning forced teachers to modify the delivery of morning meetings. All students participated in the learning environment virtually, so this is how morning meetings were implemented. The scholarly practitioner conducted virtual observations of the teachers during morning meetings from December 2020 through February 2021 using a Zoom link to access the classroom. During these observations of the morning meetings, the scholarly practitioner

collected data using the classroom observation rubric. The classroom observations were completed virtually, as well as the accompanying follow-up interviews with the teachers. The observations were not recorded, rather the scholarly practitioner recorded observations on the rubric only shown in Appendix E. This rubric was directly aligned to the TSES and focused on observable indicators for classroom management, instructional practices, and student engagement.

Study Intervention Procedures

Each of the participating teachers participated in two trainings- the first took place in September 2020 and the second one, facilitated by the scholarly practitioner, in December 2020.. The first training was on ACEs and trauma informed practices. The training was administered by a state non-profit agency, the Public School Forum of NC, who used a research based and thoroughly vetted training. The training was conducted virtually and took place before the intervention began. For this reason, the scholarly practitioner only briefly reviewed ACEs and trauma-informed practices in the morning meeting training provided to the teachers. This was a deviation to the proposed study implementation as the scholarly practitioner excluded some of the brain science content related to trauma-informed practices that was addressed by the outside agency.

The professional development training which included a review of ACEs and trauma, as well as how to implement morning meetings was administered by the scholarly practitioner. The scholarly practitioner utilized previously vetted training content from her previous role as a trauma-informed schools consultant. In that role the practitioner was trained on the use and implementation of morning meetings and trained multiple schools on how to successfully implement the strategy. This training was presented virtually at the beginning of December 2020

and lasted for approximately 90 minutes. The training began with an overview of ACEs and the effects of toxic stress. Specifically, the training highlighted how the effects of ACEs are seen in the learning environment including poor academic performance and inadequate socialization skills (Bethell et al., 2014). Although a deep dive into the brain science was omitted from this training, the responses of flight, fight, and freeze were explored. It was stressed in the training that students cannot learn content until their nervous system is regulated, and as such, something must take place between experiencing toxic stress and engaging in the learning environment (Anda et al., 2006; Burke et al., 2011). This is where morning meetings can be effective. Lastly, participants were introduced to morning meetings and the necessary components as outlined by Responsive Classroom. Morning meetings were presented to participants as a way to help students prepare themselves for learning, calm the nervous system, teach social and emotional competencies, and build a mutually beneficial learning environment (Perry & Szalavitz, 2006). Participants were able to engage with each of the components by viewing videos of other teachers facilitating morning meetings in their respective classrooms. The videos shown included teachers who taught the same grade level as the participants. An exit ticket of four questions was administered to participants at the end of the training session to review the learning.

Soon after the four intervention participants were trained on how to conduct morning meetings, the school district decided that due to continued COVID-19 concerns, students would continue to learn virtually and would not come back to school face to face until March 2021. Teachers would provide synchronous instruction to students Mondays through Thursdays, while Fridays would be for asynchronous instruction. Given this change, the scholarly practitioner met with the teachers to create a schedule to conduct morning meetings that would be conducive to the schedule used in the virtual learning environment. All of the teachers participating in the

intervention agreed to conducting morning meetings at least two times a week for 25 minutes per session. The teachers believed it was important to hold true to the intentions of morning meetings to set the tone for the day. For this reason, the teacher participants elected to run morning meetings from 8:10 am to 8:35 am. Students' lack of endurance online and the abbreviated school day schedule were considered in making this decision.

Although teachers were trained on the components of morning meetings and given examples of how they could be conducted in the classroom, many of the widely used components, like the greeting activities, are not designed to be used in the virtual environment. In order to provide teachers with resources to support their efforts in the leading morning meetings in an online environment, the scholarly practitioner proposed that the teachers utilize the virtual morning meeting lessons developed by Responsive Classroom© (2020). This resource provided ten morning meeting lessons for each grade level to use in the virtual classroom. The four teachers used these lessons and divided them such that they would cover 20 days of morning meetings. Splitting the lessons was a suggestion in the directions from Responsive Classroom. This option appealed to the teachers in the study because of the difficulty they experienced, prior to implementation, with getting students to log into class on time and be ready to participate.

From participant training to actual implementation took approximately two weeks due to the uncertainty of how schools could and would continue to operate with COVID-19 still posing a huge problem for building safety. North Carolina was observing increases in COVID-19 cases and deaths increasing daily and hospitalization numbers surpassing 1,500 per week at that time. School districts would make plans to reopen face to face with elementary school students, but then school boards would vote to remain remote as they were unwilling to put staff and students in danger of contacting or spreading the virus. During this time of adjustment the instructional

format for students and making decisions as to how to continue with morning meetings, one of the four original intervention participants was placed on quarantine due to a COVID-19 exposure. At that time, the scholarly practitioner sought another teacher from the survey population to agree to implement the morning meetings. The selected teacher agreed to participate in the implementation and was given the professional development training needed to begin implementation With all of these readjustments, the actual implementation began in December 2020 and ran for nearly six weeks, rather than seven weeks, with all four participants. Another change in plans to return to school by the local school board after the winter break and additional participant quarantines contributed to the altered timeline. Of the four final implementation participants, the two 4th grade teachers facilitated a total of 21 morning meetings sessions each. The other two participants, who were 5th teachers, added a day to their schedule after the implementation started and created their own morning meetings to supplement on those days. These two teachers conducted a total 24 morning meetings each.

It is important to note that the teachers understood how important the greeting component of morning meetings could be in building culture in the learning environment and ensuring that students felt valued and seen. The greeting component welcomes the child into the learning environment and acknowledges his or her presence (Kriete, 2003; Rachel et al., 2019). Therefore, all of the teachers chose to use the greeting component on a daily basis in their classrooms.

Data Analysis

The survey data collected from the sample was accomplished using Qualtrics in November 2020. Eleven beginning teachers were asked to complete the survey and only eight responded. After all responses were received, the scholarly practitioner cleaned the data as a first

step. Of the eight responses received two of the surveys that were started in Qualtrics had less than half of the survey completed, so those surveys were not included in the final analysis. The final sample consisted of six beginning teachers at Bulldog Elementary School. The scholarly practitioner ran a report that merged all of the results. The results were exported from Qualtrics into Excel so that the table could be sorted for analysis. To begin the analysis process with this data set, each participant was assigned a pseudonym that was utilized throughout the study. It was important to be able to identify the respondents so that their data could be compared from the beginning of the study through the implementation of the intervention. Next, the scholarly practitioner calculated the inferential statistics for each of the survey items that participants responded to using the Likert scale. The mean of the responses aided in telling about the perceptions of self-efficacy at the beginning of the study. Identifying the mode made it possible to clearly conduct an analysis while excluding the outliers when appropriate. In addition to factor analysis, Table 4 shows a subscale score that was computed for the correlated factors of Efficacy in Student Engagement, Efficacy in Instructional Strategies, and Efficacy in Classroom Management, as identified by the instrument designers (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). The same analysis process was used on the survey data collected at the conclusion of the study. Additionally, comparative analysis was conducted with the pre- and post-intervention data to reveal any change in perceptions after the intervention implementation.

Both of the other two instruments, the interview questions as well as the observable indicators on the classroom observations, were designed based on the self-efficacy factors in the TSES. An inductive analysis approach was utilized, specifically, thematic analysis with constant comparison. The scholarly practitioner chose this approach to analysis because of the change in the conditions of the study. Moving to an online environment changed the structures in which

Table 4

Groupings to Determine TSES Subscale Score

Efficacy Factor	Corresponding Survey Item
Efficacy in Student Engagement	Items 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 14, 22
Efficacy in Instructional Practices	Items 7, 10, 11, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24
Efficacy in Classroom Management	Items 3, 5, 8, 13, 15, 16, 19, 21

the study took place. Analyzing data as it was collected allowed the scholarly practitioner to ensure that the study instruments were still yielding adequate data to answer the study questions. This real time analysis would allow for the researcher to make any changes to the instruments if needed.

In this process, as the interview and observation data are collected and analyzed, the codes and patterns are compared and synthesized with previously analyzed data sets. The first participant's data was analyzed. The scholarly practitioner read through the data collected and highlighted any responses - sentences, words, or phrases - that appeared to be significant to the study. Next, the highlighted data was coded and clustered. The next participant's data was analyzed the same way and was compared to the codes and clusters in the first participants responses. This process continued with each subsequent participant's data being compared to previously collected and coded data sets (Percy et al., 2015). Through this approach, clusters and patterns had the potential to change during each round of analysis. Once all data was collected from each cycle of the study, patterns that emerged from this analysis were identified first, and from those coding patterns the themes were developed.

Once all themes were identified and sorted with the quotations and data points that triangulated to support these themes, the themes were shared with the intervention participants to ensure that their responses were accurately reported (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This member checking procedure helped to ensure that the participants' voices were heard and that the identified themes were not developed based on any biases held by the scholarly practitioner.

Demographics

The study participants can be divided into two groups, the survey population and the implementation participants. All of the implementation participants were selected from the

survey population. The survey population consisted of six beginning teachers from Bulldog Elementary School. Beginning teachers in North Carolina are those teachers who have not completed three full years of teaching in the classroom. In this group, 50% of the teachers have completed two years of teaching and 50% have completed a year or less. Five of the teachers identified as minority, and one teacher did not answer the question about race. Of the participants, 50% identified themselves as being between the ages of 26-39, 33% selected the 40-50 age range and 17%, or one teacher, identified herself as 25 and under. Table 5 illustrates these data points along with the current teaching assignment of the survey population.

From the survey population, four intervention participants were selected. These participants were selected based upon their responses to the initial survey, principal recommendations, and their willingness to participate in the study. These four participants had quite a few commonalities as seen in Figure 5. Two of the participants identified as fourth grade while the other two identified as fifth grade teachers. They also had similarities in age and race. This data set revealed that the majority of the participants began their teaching career later than a traditional student who follows the traditional path of high school, four years of college, and then begins his or her teaching career. In the initial interviews, three of the four teachers began a career in teaching elementary school after a progression of some other life experiences. Only one participant reported always working towards a career in education, stating "I've always wanted to be a teacher".

Results

As these participants engaged in the implementation of morning meetings from December 2020 through February 2020, the scholarly practitioner was able to conduct observations and interviews with the teachers to gain real time insight into the outcomes of the

Table 5

Initial Survey Population Demographics

Pseudonym	Age	Race	Years of Teaching Completed	Current Grade Taught
Oliver	26-39	Black/Dominican	Two	3rd grade
Nancy	26-39	Black	Two	5th grade
Brenda	40-50	Black	One	4th grade
Silvia	26-39	African American	Two	5th grade
Teresa	25 & under	African American	None	5th grade
April	40-50	None identified	One	4th grade

Figure 5. Teachers who participated in the implementation of morning meetings.

strategy implementation, and the effects on the classroom teacher. This research data, along with the survey data before and after implementation, was gathered through the inductive analysis process and analyzed for emergent themes. Table 6 offers a glance of the themes identified by each study question. The rest of this chapter will provide an in-depth review of the study results.

Study Question One

The first study question used to guide this study asked what effect does implementing morning meetings, as at trauma-informed strategy, in the learning environment have on teacher perceptions of self-efficacy at a low-performing elementary school? The aim of the implementation of morning meetings was to provide a structure by which beginning teachers could build relationships with their students, specifically those students impacted by ACEs. The hypothesis is that developing a relationship and deeper connection with these students could positively impact teacher perceptions of self-efficacy.

Desire to Change Societal Imposed Perceptions Acknowledged and Skills Aligned

One theme that was revealed early on through initial interviews was that all of the participants had a desire to impact the systems and change stereotypes. They were all confident in their ability to impact change in the lives of these students and the environmental systems and structures in which they live and learn. This desire was strong and, in many cases, just as strong as the desire to teach children.

When asked what she hoped to accomplish by being a teacher, Nancy responded, "One thing I want to do is get rid of the negative stereotypes they've placed on people of color. That was my main goal." Brenda also referred to the concept of changing perceptions:

Table 6

Study Questions and Associated Themes Derived from Qualitative Analysis of Data Collected

Study Questions	Themes Responses (# of occurrences out of 4)
Study Question 1: What effect does implementing morning meetings, as a trauma-informed strategy, in the learning environment have on teacher perceptions of self-efficacy at a low-performing elementary school?	Theme 1: Desire to Change Societal Imposed Perceptions Acknowledged and Skills Aligned (4/4) Theme 2: Growing Relationships and Two-Way Communication (4/4)
Study Question 2: What specific teacher self-efficacy skills were affected by the implementation of the morning meetings?	Theme 1: Student Engagement Gained Momentum (4/4) Theme 2: Instructional Creativity was Sparked (4/4) Theme 3: Instructional Confidence Still Lacking (3/4)

> I can prepare them for the real world. It is my opportunity to give back. I take it as an opportunity, like I said, to build that bond and to teach them, you know, this is how you're supposed to do this and set a foundation for them. Some of them don't receive that foundation at home, or they don't see that they are capable of learning or doing certain things.

Silvia stated that "low performing schools are looked upon as lower or less than, but those kids just need teachers that truly care at the school to make them want to do better." Each of these teachers addressed wanting to alter the way either students and families viewed themselves or the current negative perceptions in their school community. April summarized the sentiments expressed by the other participants,

> These are just children. I have to be a voice for them in other places. So that is what I did. …. I went and did my part and let them know until we address some of the issues, we cannot expect the kids to do. They have no control on whether mom was able to afford internet or have a hot spot or provide them a computer. So, we have to adjust and do what we can to support them.

During another interview, Nancy gave an example of a child that was doing great in school, but once he switched living environments his performance began to drop. She continued regarding students in this virtual learning environment by saying, "The ones that have better home environments are the ones that usually show up. The ones that don't, I mean you can call their parents a million times and they still won't show up [to class]."

When asked about ACEs and the impact in the classroom, all of the teachers responded that ACEs do play a part in student success in the classroom. Again, the trend was that of the teacher's responsibility to help students overcome the problems that they may have when they

enter the classroom. Brenda states that she feels her role is to "reassure them" and "help them get through it". Silvia expressed her view on ACEs in the classroom:

> I stand by that their home life affects them tremendously and especially the students that face a lot of adversities. And they're going to come to school, and you want them to be great. You want them to do math, and they won't do it. And they can't do it right now because they're just trying to survive. We don't know if they are even eating at home. We don't know what may be going on.

Her colleagues' views were similar. There was a strong desire to support these students from the initial conversations with the teacher participants. However, initial survey data showed that teachers struggled with the teacher self-efficacy factors that would actually impact the societally-imposed perceptions and beliefs. The participants responded using a Likert scale to questions asking how much they can do to impact various aspects of the learning environment. On the scale, 1 has the value of "Nothing", 3 is "Very Little", 5 is "Some Influence", 7 is "Quite a Bit" and 9 is "A Great Deal". As seen in Figure 6, the first survey revealed that teachers were strongest in classroom management. This is significant because of the three self-efficacy skills, classroom management would be the least effective in changing these perceptions and/or creating more positive outcomes for these students in low performing environments.

After implementation of morning meetings, participants grew in the student engagement skill subset. Responses for the four implementation teachers increased from a mean response of 6.72 on the Likert scale to 6.97. The most change was seen in the item that asked teachers," How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?" The initial survey response mean was 5.75 for the four teachers. After implementation, the mean increased to 7. Other questions in this subset that showed an increase in self-efficacy for these four teachers

Figure 6. Initial survey self-efficacy subset ranking based on participant responses.

include, "How much can you do to foster student creativity?" and "How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork?". The increased response items directly aligned with the valued outcomes that drive their work as expressed in the interviews. The data concretely shows that their perceptions of efficacy have increased in this area since using morning meetings connect with students.

Growing Relationships and Two-Way Communication

Directly related to theme one, there has been growth in the relationships the teachers have with their students since the implementation of morning meetings. This relationship development has had a positive impact on teacher self-efficacy perceptions. Teachers are able to "stay in the game" because of these relationships and the value the teachers place in those relationships with the students in their class.

Initially, teachers reported that connecting with students could be difficult at times and is more challenging in a remote learning environment. Silvia stated that one of her issues connecting with students was because "lots of students are not engaged or logging in at all". Brenda also addressed the virtual learning environment when she described her struggle with building relationships and connecting with students. Brenda rated her current level of effectiveness as less than optimal. She says, "I can't reach them. When we were in the classroom, it was probably easier. But when I'm online, I can't tell if I am reaching any of them." When asked about her level of effectiveness before implementation, on a scale of 1 to 5 with "1" being not effective at all and "5" being very effective, Nancy rated her effectiveness a 3. She attributed this rating to lack of relationships. Nancy says,

> We didn't have that beginning of the year time where we can build relationships. Normally, we have like the first eight days of schools and it gives us time to build

> relationships with our students. I didn't have it this year. It feels like, kind like, I would say we're strangers.

Nancy also shared that she always has an "open door policy" and is "available to talk to students about whatever they want to talk about". When asked if students are taking her up on her offer to talk, she stated, "Not this year." Part of the reason she attributes to students' disengagement from the classroom environment this year is due to the remote learning environment.

According to the data, all of the teachers responded favorably when asked about the impact of morning meetings on their relationships with students in the final survey. Each participant reported that their relationships with students have been positively impacted since implementation. When asked to explain, April commented, "Students are more engaged. I have attempted to remember things that are unique to them. They feel a part of our classroom." Sylvia talks about her improved relationships with students noting that "students are more open to expressing their feeling and concerns". Nancy went on to say that since nurturing her relationships with students they are "more willing to reach out via email." This has strengthened her communication with them. Brenda elaborated on her comment regarding positive impact by sharing, "I've been doing that [pushing students] the entire time, and I still couldn't get them to speak. Now, if I specifically call on them, then they will answer. They will also volunteer their answers." When asked how morning meeting have strengthened them as a teacher, each teacher spoke to how their communication or ability to connect with students has improved. One teacher reported that instead of "talking at students, I talk with the students". Brenda stated, "The morning meeting has helped me with student engagement. I am getting so much more out of them." Silvia echoed a similar sentiment sharing that her skills in the area of student engagement

have been strengthened and that her students are "speaking up more". Nancy added, "I am happy to see them. It makes my day."

Study Question Two

The second study question that guided this study on teacher self-efficacy asked what specific teacher self-efficacy skills were affected by the implementation of the morning meetings? There are numerous studies that show how morning meetings have a positive impact on students. The strategy can increase student social skills, increase in academic performance, and contribute to positive relationships with the adults in the learning environment (Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2014). The data is lacking when it comes to describing how morning meeting s impact the teacher in the classroom. The research conducted in this study on implementation of morning meetings maintained a focus on the impact of the teachers. From the interviews, surveys, and classroom observations, the data was triangulated with the following themes emerging:

- Student Engagement Increased
- Instructional Creativity was Sparked
- Instructional Confidence Still Lacking

The initial survey administered to the six survey participants included 24 items related to the skills that contribute to a teacher's self-efficacy. The skills are divided into three subsets: student engagement, instructional practices and classroom management. The participants responded using a Likert scale to questions asking how much they can do to impact various aspects of the learning environment. Teachers are given the following values for the scale: 1 has the value of "Nothing", 3 is "Very Little", 5 is "Some Influence", 7 is "Quite a Bit" and 9 is "A Great Deal". Table 7 shows the questions with the highest and lowest initial means.

Table 7

Teacher Sense of Self Efficacy Scale Items with the Highest and Lowest Mean Score-INITIAL

Survey Item	Mean	Mode
How much can you do to help your students value learning?	8.2	9
To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior?	7.8	3
How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?	7.5	7, 8
How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?	7.5	7
Lowest		
How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?	5.5	7
How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	5.8	5
How much can you do to foster student creativity?	6	5, 6, 7
How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?	6	7

Student Engagement Increased

The data collected in PDSA Cycle 1 shows that initial teacher perception of self-efficacy in the area of student engagement was the most lacking. Particularly, the survey indicated the lowest mean scores in how much teachers feel they can do to get through to the most difficult students and how much they can assist families in helping their children do well in school. According to the data collected from the second round of surveys conducted after implementation of the strategy, the means increased for both of these factors. Notably, of the eight items on the survey used to gauge self-efficacy perceptions related to student engagement, seven of the items showed positive change based upon the post-implementation survey results. Table 8 reveals that teachers felt they could have "quite a bit" of influence on the factors that contributed to the engagement of students in their class. This increase in efficacy perceptions is important to note because each of these factors requires teachers to be connected to the student. The greatest growth was seen in the factor related to assisting family. Teachers report being more efficacious in their ability to connect with students and offering assistance in the areas that require more than just a surface knowledge of that child.

The survey data aligns with the final interview responses from the teachers. When asked what factors, if any have been positively impacted by the addition of morning meetings, all teachers responded that student engagement was positively impacted. Nancy stated, "I have more people showing up for homeroom since the morning meetings, and that's cool".

Brenda revealed, "I can say since I've started doing the morning meetings, I get more engagement from the children.

Table 8

Teacher Sense of Self Efficacy Scale Change in Mean Scores for Student Engagement

Survey Item	1st Round Mean	2nd Round Mean	Change (+/-)
How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?	5.5	6.75	+
How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	5.8	7	+
How much can you do to help your students think critically?	6.6	7	+
How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork?	7	7.5	+
How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in schoolwork?	7.5	7.25	-
How much can you do to help students value learning?	8.2	7.25	-
How much can you do to foster creativity?	6	6.5	+
How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?	6.5	6.75	+

So, I am more engaged now." She goes on to say that she is more confident about her ability to meaningfully engage students in other parts of the day. April put it simply, "non-engaged students are finally opening up."

This new connection was evident when comparing the first classroom observation data to the last set of observation data. In the first round of observations done using the tool in Appendix E, three teachers were rated a "2" – evident during a limited portion of the lesson- based on student engagement indicators. One teacher was rated a "3"-evident during most, but not all of the lesson. By the third classroom observation, all four teachers received a rating of "3" for the student engagement indicators.

Instructional Creativity was Sparked

As these relationships grew between teacher and student and the student engagement increased, there was a positive impact on instruction. Teachers expressed how difficult it was to instruct students in a virtual learning environment. All of them discussed the challenges for building connection with students in order to get student to engage and value the learning despite all of the issues that online learning and dealing with COVID-19 had created. The implementation of morning meetings had proven to be a positive catalyst for teachers as it relates to their self-efficacy regarding perceptions of their instructional practices.

The post-implementation survey data showed that all four teachers responded the same when asked to rank the impact of morning meetings on the self-efficacy subsets. The results in Figure 7 show that teachers believed student engagement was most impacted followed by instructional practices.

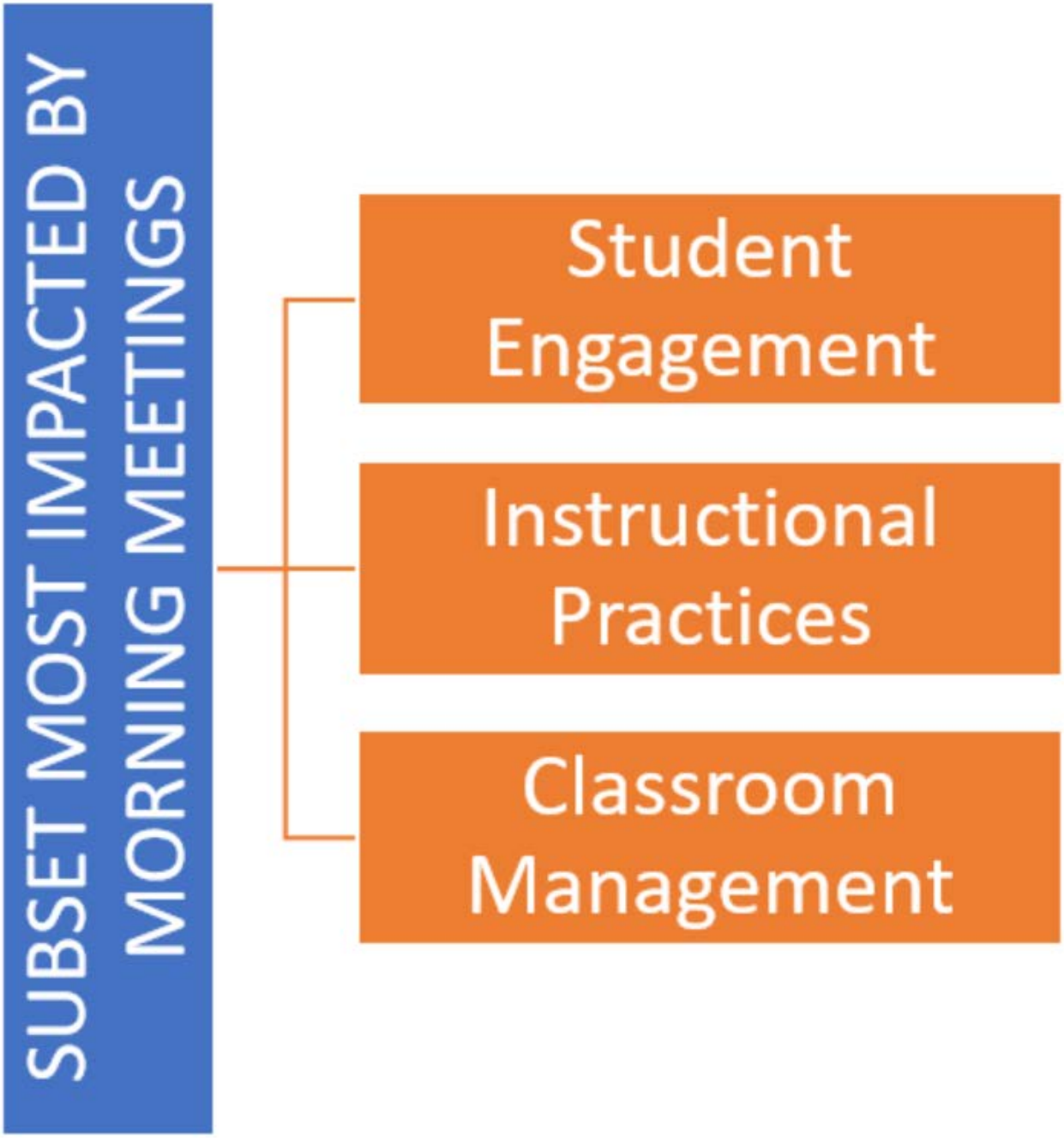

Figure 7. Implementation teachers' ranking of morning meeting impact on skill subset.

The data can be misleading as instructional practices is a broad categorization. But the teachers articulated a focus on being more motivated on discovering, creating, and utilizing instructional practices to reach students. This newfound creativity and motivation to dig deeper and try harder has resulted in an increase in student participation. Brenda explained,

> It [student participation] motivates me to kind of do more and ask more questions. Whereas before, like even from last week you can see a difference in their participation. When I first started, you know, no one really wanted to respond or answer. I feel the need to increase their confidence now.

She continued on to say that since student engagement in the lessons had improved, she can be "more focused on instruction".

Nancy echoed this sentiment by saying, "they seem to like me, so once they seem to be interested in what I'm saying I can get them to follow along." Silvia stated that she "gives 100 percent" to her students every day, but since the implementation of morning meetings, her students are participating more. The survey asked participants since implementing morning meetings if they feel differently about their ability to impact students in the classroom? April answered, "Yes, they encourage me to be creative in reaching them." Brenda also expressed wanting to find "ways to relate to them". These statements are consistent with the data gathered from the classroom observations. By the last classroom observation, three of the four teachers had progressed to a "3" rating on the indicator: Teacher projects enthusiasm and confidence during lesson presentation. The survey data also revealed that 50% of participants increased in their self-efficacy perceptions of the following instructional practices factors:

- To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?

- How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?

The other 50% of participants showed no change in these two factors. April says her attitude toward instruction is, "I have a responsibility to come in prepared and ready to teach you. And you [the students] have a responsibility to come in and be ready to learn." There is a growing mutual respect in the learning environment."

Instructional Confidence Still Lacking

Although the teachers made great strides in their motivation and innovation for reaching students due to the newly developed relationships and student engagement, three of the four teachers still cited instructional practices as the self-efficacy subset that they still feel the least confident. Figure 8 encompasses the words that the teachers used to describe their teaching experience during the implementation period. This selection of words exemplifies the data laid out in response to study question two. Although there are some positive feelings that emerged, there are still some heavy feelings that limit positive self-efficacy perceptions.

The post-implementation survey data revealed that the instructional practices subset is the only category in which 3 or more participants had a negative change in their response across multiple factors. To be specific, participants' level of self-efficacy decreased when asked how well can you respond to difficult questions from your students, and how much can you use a variety of assessment strategies? It should not go unnoticed that these teachers work in a low performing school with low student proficiency scores on state assessments, and these two factors related directly to student assessment.

When analyzing the classroom observation data, the instructional practices indicators were the lowest on the instrument for all of the teachers.

Figure 8. Words participants used when asked to describe their teaching experience this year.

Although it could be due to the observation being virtual, there are other data points that signal there is a true unfavorable perception of self-efficacy among the teachers in this regard. The interview responses reveal some insight into what some of the issues may be. April attributes her lack of efficacy to the fact that she is a new teacher and "learning everyday". And because of the virtual learning requirement, she is responsible for teaching all of the core subjects now- math, English, science, and social studies- as opposed to just the math and science she is accustomed to teaching. Brenda also cites the virtual learning environment as one of the reasons she feels inadequate with instructional practices. She says, "I think it's like the kids, it takes just knowing that you can do it. But until then it can seem intimidating." The virtual learning environment has exacerbated the skills that the teachers were lacking before with face-to-face instruction. "Instruction gets hard," says Nancy, "in homeroom they are engaged when we do our morning meeting and they're engaged. But, when it comes to actually teaching the math lesson, they don't." She goes on to say, "Sometimes they log off after the homeroom, and don't show up for math."

Virtual learning environments are only one of the hurdles. Silvia shared her difficulty in adapting to the district's learning framework. She stated, "I am still learning my way and finding my niche. I am still learning those practices that the district expects to see in the classroom." This is her second year in the school district, and she described her first year as being difficult. She recalled feeling "ridiculed for everything". She reported this year being happy to work with a team of teachers that are supportive and willing to share strategies. When asked about their perceived level of effectiveness if they had proper supports in places, all the teachers stated that they could be very effective if they had support in instruction. Although teachers experienced have experienced growth through this experience and acknowledged a desire to want to perform

better instructionally, teachers are still lacking the instructional skill set to maintain a positive perception of self-efficacy in this subset.

Summary

In this chapter, the results of the study were presented with key themes identified and developed. These key themes emerged from triangulation of the analysis of teacher interviews, surveys, and classroom observations. Study question one explored the impact that implementing this trauma-informed strategy of morning meetings had on teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy. The results revealed that the teachers that participated in this study entered into the profession with a desire to change long-standing mindsets, stereotypes and conditions. However, prior to implementing morning meetings, they lacked the skills to be able to make that kind of impact. The results of this question also confirmed that morning meetings improved student-teacher relationships, including increasing the communication between the two. This led to a higher perception of self-efficacy in some of the factors on the TSES.

Question two sought to determine which self-efficacy skills, if any were impacted by the implementation of morning meeting in the classroom. The results indicated a positive change in the subset of student engagement. Each of the teachers strongly felt that student engagement increased and had a significant impact on their student engagement and instructional practices skills and the culture of their classroom. From this engagement, teachers were motivated to seek out and create instructional strategies to support their students. The growing relationship pushed the teachers to want to do more for their students. In that pursuit, however, teachers indicated that they lack the tools and skills to be confident and efficacious in the assessment and instruction of their students at this low-performing school.

In the next chapter, the key findings will be reviewed along with an interpretation of those findings within the theoretical framework that encompasses this study. The implications for practice will be outlined and recommendations will be made for future studies around this work.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Currently, district and school leaders gauge teacher effectiveness through the use of an evaluation rubric that is heavily focused on skills needed in the classroom to produce positive achievement outcomes for students. However, the ability to form relationships and connect with students, especially those who are experiencing challenges in the learning environment, is not one of the competencies included in the evaluation of teachers. This is problematic as research supports that relationships are essential to preparing students for learning (Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2014).

This is even more pertinent for teachers working in low-performing schools. The stressful conditions, lack of resources, and student populations that have been subjected to one or more ACEs can make it difficult for teachers to yield any successful outcomes if they focus only on instructional practices to the exclusion of building relationships. Poor performance by students can often result in poor outcomes for teachers. This is especially concerning when we consider the number of teachers who leave their schools or the teaching profession altogether within their first three years (Sutcher et al., 2016).

Albert Bandura's self-efficacy theory says that "people take action when they hold efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations that make the effort seem worthwhile. They expect given actions to produce desired outcomes and believe that they can perform those actions" (Bandura, 1997, p. 6). Based on this theory, it is necessary to ensure that teachers in low-performing learning environments experience worthwhile outcomes early and often to increase self-efficacy perceptions. Positive perceptions of self-efficacy in teachers will allow them to persist through challenging situations and set high goals to meet student needs (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Training teachers on how to connect with students and prepare

them to be successful in the classroom is a skill that is not often taught in teacher induction programs. But, if teachers were given strategies to connect to students, these relationships could provide a source of motivation to preserve and reassure beginning teachers that their efforts can result in success and valued outcomes - as stated in Vroom's (1964) expectancy value theory - even if those outcomes are not high test scores.

The purpose of this study was to examine how elementary school teachers' perceptions of their efficacy, as teachers, were influenced by their experiences in implementing morning meetings as a trauma-informed strategy in the classroom. These meetings were used by the teachers as a strategy to build relationships with students and aid the teacher in creating a climate for success for teacher and students. This study, conducted in a low-performing elementary school, also looked at the impact of building relationships with students on the teacher's self-efficacy skills. The focus was placed on beginning teachers who had completed less than three years of full-time teaching.

This chapter will discuss the key findings of the study, as well as an interpretation of the findings, limitations of this study, and recommendations for future studies. Finally, this chapter closes with conclusions regarding the study and the scholarly practitioner's reflections on how conducting this study impacted personal leadership and growth.

Summary of the Findings

The implementation of morning meetings, as a trauma-informed strategy, proved to have some positive effects on teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy. The impact that this implementation had on the actual self-efficacy were varied, but provided some clarity for future direction.

The first question focused on discovering the effect that implementing morning meetings as a trauma-informed strategy had on teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy. The results revealed that each of the teachers had a strong motivation to change societal imposed perceptions about the students, their community situations, and mindsets about school, learning, and life. During the initial interviews, the teachers all revealed that they wanted to impact various stereotypes and belief systems that are traditionally held about persistently low-performing students and the communities they come from. Teacher responses included explanations of how they wanted to be a role model for these students and show students that they are more than capable of being successful in the learning environment. Teachers acknowledged that ACEs played a significant role in the lives of children, and they had a strong desire to help them interrupt the trajectory to negative outcomes.

While this motivation is admirable and not uncommon for teachers who choose to work in difficult learning environments, the initial survey data showed that out of the three self-efficacy subsets – classroom management, instructional practices, and student engagement – the teachers reported feeling strongest in classroom management. This self-efficacy skill set is the one least connected to the desired outcomes of the teachers. In order to effect mindsets and student self-beliefs, teachers need to connect with students on a personal level.

Following the implementation of morning meetings, the survey data showed that teachers increased their self-efficacy perceptions in the area of student engagement. Particularly, all teachers reported a high Likert scale rating on the item inquiring how much a teacher can do to assist families help their children do well in school. This change in perception, especially on this item illustrates an increase in confidence in reaching families. This directly aligns with skills necessary to reach the valued outcomes the teachers are so passionate about.

Another theme that emerged when analyzing data to answer study question one was the growth in relationships and increased two-way communication. Teachers initially cited relationships as difficult to build with students this year. Some of them attribute this issue to the mandated exclusive use of the virtual learning option due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They explain that it is difficult to connect with students using the Zoom virtual conferencing platform. These educators describe several strategies that they have implemented to try to connect with their students including having an "open door policy" and trying to push students outside of their comfort zones.

The post implementation survey asked teachers about the impact morning meetings have had on teacher-student relationships. All of the teachers acknowledged that relationships have been positively impacted since implementation of the strategy. The data shows that student engagement has increased, and teachers are seeing the benefits play out in all aspects of the learning environment. Teachers cite examples such as students now reaching out by email, and students who were reluctant to answer questions in class that are now responding and even volunteering to answer. One teacher stated, "Students are more engaged. I have attempted to remember things that are unique to them. They feel a part of our classroom."

The second goal of this study was to identify what self-efficacy skills were affected by implementation of morning meetings. Data points overwhelming show the greatest self-efficacy skills impacted were those related to the student engagement subset. Survey data show a clear increase in 6 of the 8 TSES items that make up the student engagement subset. Teacher narrative responses to the survey match this finding. Teachers identify student engagement as being the most positively impacted skill. The other comments reference the fact that students are now showing up to homeroom, and "non-engaged students are finally opening up." In addition to this

survey data, the classroom observations data present a similar trend. From the first to the last classroom observation, the student engagement rating on the rubric (see Appendix E) continued to increase for all of the teachers. In the first round of observations done three teachers received an overall rating of a "2" – evident during a limited portion of the lesson – for the student engagement indicators. One teacher was rated a "3" – evident during most, but not all of the lesson. The third classroom observation indicated all four teachers received a rating of "3" for the student engagement indicators.

Although teachers reported the area most impacted by morning meetings as being student engagement, the 2nd most impacted, as reported by all participants, was instructional practices. At first glance it may appear that teachers are alluding to a change in their instructional strategies. But as the data was analyzed, it became evident that another aspect of their instruction had positively grown, namely instructional creativity.

With the increase of student interest in class and participation, teachers' relationships with these students grew stronger. As a result, teachers reported being encouraged to "be more creative in reaching them," and "find ways to relate to them". The responses referenced the fact that students are engaging more, so teachers want to work harder to meet them where they are. This is a shift as teachers initially reported that building relationships and gaining student engagement was really difficult, especially in the online learning environment. Once again, classroom observations clearly align with the other data sets. By the third classroom observation three of the four teachers had progressed to a "3" rating on the indicator "teacher projects enthusiasm and confidence during lesson presentation". The survey data also revealed that 50% of participants increased in their self-efficacy perceptions of the following instructional practices

factors: providing an alternative explanation or example when students are confused, and implementing alternative strategies in the classroom.

The other participants showed no change. Based on the data found here, teachers have shifted their perspectives that students do value the learning environment and therefore deserve to receive excellent instruction.

The third theme identified expounds on the previous findings. Even though instructional practices have been impacted in some respects, it is clear that teachers still need instructional supports and instructional confidence is lacking. Three of the four teachers still identified instructional practices as the area they have the least level of confidence in. The final survey data shows that the instructional practices subset is the only category in which 3 or more participants had a negative change in response in multiple factors. Likewise, the classroom observation data shows the instructional practices indicators were the lowest on the instrument for all of the teachers. The scholarly practitioner was aware that this could be a result of the classroom observations taking place virtually. Teachers also address the difficulty of teaching virtually in their responses, but they also bring to light other factors such as being a new teacher and teaching all core subjects or students not showing up for classes after morning meeting time. The district's instructional framework and improper training and supports were also cited as reasons for the struggle with instructional practices. When asked about their perceived level of effectiveness if they had proper supports provided, all four teachers said they believe they could be very effective. So, despite some new motivation to get the instructional part right, teachers are still lacking the instructional skill set to maintain a positive perception of self-efficacy in this subset.

Interpretation of the Findings

Gecas (1989) stated that self-efficacy has two constructs. One of those is self-efficacy theory as a motivational theory. The other examines self-efficacy in terms of expectancies and perceptions of control. Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory, in which the study is grounded, focuses on the latter of the two and rests on the idea that the higher the belief that one can be successful at completing a task will result in a high level of persistence and performance (Bandura, 1977, 1997). The results of this study confirm this idea in several ways.

Beginning with the findings from the first question, the data showed that teachers felt the most confident in classroom management strategies. Of the three self-efficacy factors as laid out in the TSES study – classroom management, instructional practices, and student engagement – classroom management is the skill that is totally directed by the teachers. In the survey, these items reference how well teachers can perform such tasks as establish routines, create a classroom management system, and control noisy students. As the adults in the classroom, all of the teachers reported a higher perception of self-efficacy in relation to these tasks. This is the only self-efficacy factor in which the teachers have the most control over the outcomes. Therefore, the expectancy of success is high because they have some control and leverage over such tasks and know what to do should a student fail to meet their expectations. Creating a classroom management system and enforcing it is something in which the teacher has a high proximity of control. Instructional practices and student engagement are much more reliant not only on the ability and efforts of the teacher, but also on the interpretation, willingness, and needs of the students. It is not surprising that teachers in this study did not identify either of these two areas as the one they have the highest self-efficacy in. At the time when initial interviews were conducted and the initial survey was administered, teachers had done very little to connect

with students and build relationships. Not quite knowing who they were dealing with or the needs of the students in the classroom created a lack of confidence and low self-efficacy perceptions.

Despite the low efficacy reporting prior to the implementation of morning meetings, teachers were excited and open to the prospect of implementing the strategy so that they could build relationships with their students with the hopes that it will impact the learning environment and overall learning outcomes. According to Bandura and Locke (2003), self-efficacy is a strong determinant of job performance. Low efficacy will result in an individual setting low goals versus someone with high self-efficacy who will set higher goal and work harder to learn a skill because it will yield successful results (Bandura, 1997, 1982; Bandura & Locke, 2003; Lunenberg, 2011). The findings in this study align with this assertion, but include two components that cannot be overlooked. First, in terms of teacher self-efficacy, there are three self-efficacy skills that are operating in tandem. Therefore, low efficacy in one or two of the skill sets does not equate to overall low self-efficacy perceptions for the teachers. Given this, because the teachers perceive themselves as efficacious in at least one area of the job, they can continue to be optimistic, set high goals for success, and persist through difficult situations. Second, it is important to acknowledge the motivational source of work as Gecas (1989) described in his thought of self-efficacy. Each of these teachers are motivated to be change agents for their students. The pursuit of this work was not all rooted in personal interests. This higher purpose continues to allow teachers with lower levels of self-efficacy perceptions continue to set high goals and work hard to learn new skills. So, it is not their efficacy level alone that convinces them that their hard work can yield successful results. It is their continual hope and calling to fulfill a broader goal.

Vroom's (1964) expectancy value theory accounts for this idea of the pursuit of a valued outcome. He explains that individuals will make an effort if they believe it will result in success and that success will result in a valued outcome. The valued outcome for these teachers in a low performing school that work with students who have experienced trauma and/or a high number of ACEs is not only student academic success, but to also as the teachers stated "get rid of the stereotypes" and "make them want to do better". This valued outcome keeps them moving toward success even through difficult challenges such as the shift to online learning and the personal stress and struggles the COVID pandemic presented. Their persistence allowed them to commit to implementing the morning meetings in their respective classrooms.

Prior to implementation, all four teachers reported that student attendance and engagement was lacking greatly. Some teachers cited technology and internet access as part of the problem, however they also noted that students who showed up to class were not engaging in the lesson. Burke et al. (2011) explain that as exposure to ACEs increases, so do learning and behavior issues including low school engagement and high absenteeism. The skill of classroom management that teachers felt confident in was the least effect of the three to impact student beliefs and mindsets. For this reason, it was important to use a trauma-informed strategy that would help teachers establish relationships with students. Trauma informed strategies focus on strengths and not deficiencies and give students the opportunity to gain control and get ready to engage (Hopper et al., 2010; Walkley & Cox, 2013). The use of morning meetings allowed for students in this low performing school, many of whom were experiencing multiple adverse experiences throughout the implementation period, to re-engage in the learning environment despite attending class exclusively on a computer.

The data from teacher interviews told a story of student engagement increasing and student participation increasing. Students who usually did not speak were participating. Students showed up for homeroom sometimes just for morning meetings even if they did not attend class for the rest of the day. Teachers reported learning more about their students and being able create some two-way communication. As student- teacher relationships grew, students in one class began to reach out to their teacher via email more often. Another teacher stated that she had been pushing and trying for students to respond. Now not only are they responding, but students are also volunteering to answer questions. This data is consistent with previous research that says that students, engagement, achievement and learning are positively correlated with a meaningful relationship with the classroom teacher (Howes, 2000; Wentzel, 2002). Abry et al. (2017) also observed higher levels of supportive relationships that occurred when morning meetings were used with similar age groups. This breakthrough and rejuvenation in communication was not only great for the students, but it also had a positive impact on the teacher participants. Final survey, interview and observation data showed a significant increase in teacher perceptions of self-efficacy in student engagement. The participants attributed the increase to the use of the morning meeting strategy with their students.

The positive growth in teacher self-efficacy perceptions is supported by the research that declared that teacher self-efficacy could be stable over time or change with teaching experience (Bandura, 2005; Betz & Hackett, 2006; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Knowing that teacher self-efficacy can be ever changing, it provides hope for beginning teachers in low-performing schools that their perceptions of efficacy as a teacher can continue to grow. This study confirmed that not only can efficacy be ever changing, but it can increase and decrease for specific skills at any time. This study data asserts that self-efficacy is not a singular concept for task, but that each

task can be broken into a set of skills of which individuals can move along a continuum at any time.

Notwithstanding the success of the teachers in the area of student engagement, teachers still report feeling the least confident in instructional practices. However, the student engagement did spark the teachers' desire to want to do better in the area of instructional practices. The teachers expressed wanting to find new and creative ways to reach the students, now that the students were engaging in the learning environment. Fontayne et al. (2018) says that individual will be less likely to engage from a career goal when they believe the work is of value and the individual believes the expectancy of success is high. The data in this study found that to be true. As teacher instructional creativity was sparked, teacher participants were still very transparent about their inadequacies and struggles delivering instruction to their students. Despite this ongoing lack of confidence in the ability to deliver content to students, teachers responded with an increased commitment to work through it and learn new skill to help their students. It was the relationships that developed over the course of implementation that allowed the teachers to be willing to work towards increased efficacy. These demonstrated to teachers that they could be successful and reinforced that the valued outcome was supporting the student and honoring the commitment to them as the classroom teacher, not just performance grades.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations related to this research study. The first involved the survey instrument. The TSES did not account for the fact that teachers were teaching in a virtual environment. This change in environment and instructional delivery could have an impact on teachers' responses to the various items on the survey. Teachers were not given the opportunity at the point in the school year when this study was conducted to deliver face to face instruction to

students due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To account for this deficiency, the scholarly practitioner added several questions to the beginning of the final survey and to the interview protocol to allow teachers to give voice to the unexpected change in the learning environment. In addition to the survey instrument not allowing for the change from face to face, the classroom observation tool proved to be difficult to use as it related to instructional practices. All of the scholarly practitioner's observation were conducted virtually using the teachers' individual Zoom links. Some of the items in the protocol were challenging to rate in this learning environment. In order to account for this, the scholarly practitioner relied heavily on teacher interview data and survey data to inform the data analysis surrounding instructional practices.

Because of social distancing recommendations both by the Center for Disease Control and local school districts, the interviews were not conducted in person. The interviews were conducted using the Google Meet platform. Although this is not an uncommon way to meet or communicate with others, it was definitely less personal. The added recording of face and voice may have been intimidating to some of the participants and caused them not to reveal as much as they would have had their face not been attached to the comments. Time was also a limitation for similar reasons. School districts were unsure about methods of instructional delivery, and the plans for instruction for elementary school students changed quite frequently as a result of rising positive COVID-19 cases in the area. These regular changes and the quarantining of teachers participating in the study led to a reduction in the timeline for implementation. It should also be acknowledged here that all of these events along with the feelings that living and working in a global pandemic generates created a situation in which teacher physical and mental health was heavily impacted. Added stress cause by the anxiety and overall heaviness of increasing COVID

cases, increasing death rates, and attempting to keep family and themselves safe impacted teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness.

Lastly, the scholarly practitioner's former role in the district as a trauma-informed schools' consultant could be viewed as a limitation. Though the scholarly practitioner was no longer serving in that capacity at the time the study was conducted, there are close professional relationships with the school administrators and district administrators that persist. The scholarly practitioner was often privy to conversations regarding the struggles and the perceptions of the school, teachers, and students. The scholarly practitioner's perceived bias surrounding trauma-informed strategies can also be seen as a limitation. However, in each interview, the scholarly practitioner consistently asked questions for clarity and checked for understanding of responses by study participants.

Implications of the Findings for Practice

The final data collected forced the scholarly practitioner to reevaluate the actual outcome in which the participants expected to see success. So, the question arose as to how can the teachers continue to be so persistent and resilient in this profession even though they are not highly efficacious in the one skill that literally defines the primary role of a teacher? Being able to deliver quality instruction is what a good teacher does. But as this study showed, the motivation for these teachers is to impact students and inspire them to want to be successful in the learning environment. This may be a different vantage point for leaders of low performing schools who historically rate and evaluate teachers primarily on how they deliver instruction to students. However, teachers in these complex environments want to make an impact at a personal level before they even get to the academic achievements. When teachers in these classrooms are working with students who suffer from the effects of ACEs and are not making

progress in the classroom, teachers need tools and resources to reach those students. Teachers in these environments may not be persisting because of the difficult working conditions, but it could also be they are not persisting because they are not given the tools to be the change agents for their students as they set out to be.

Teachers can be highly efficacious in different aspects of the job while struggling in others. Therefore, it is necessary that teacher preparation and induction programs do not overlook the required training and resources teachers need to reach students at a heart level. Degrees prove that teachers have mastered the content knowledge and teaching degrees would even imply that the pedagogy is there. But as is, these programs overlook the reason that many teachers enter the field and that is to change the lives of students. That is why teachers in low-performing schools still leave despite incentives. Those teachers do not just need more incentives. At a base level they need to feel like their efforts are leading to valued outcomes and that they maintain a positive perception of control around building relationships and connecting with their students (Bandura 1977, 1997; Gecas, 1989; Vroom, 1964). When that valued outcome includes changing the trajectory of kids' lives, teachers need to receive trauma and resiliency training and strategies early in their teaching career before frustration and inadequacy sets in for them.

As exhibited in this study, once positive relationships begin to form with students, teacher effort and commitment increases. There is a direct relationship between building positive relationships with students and setting high level instructional goals in the classroom. Low performing schools cannot afford to overlook this significant fact in their pursuit for increased growth and achievement.

This becomes a significant point of interest when considering equity and creating equitable learning environments for students. The learning gaps that persist for students in low performing environments can only be filled by confident and efficacious teachers. In order to ensure that this type of teacher is present in every low-performing classroom, administrators must consider more than teacher content knowledge. Leaders will need to ensure that teachers understand how to build relationships with students in these learning environments in order to provide the educational instruction and supports that the students need and not just the instruction and support in which the teacher is proficient. In order to support leaders, teacher education programs can incorporate trauma-informed education classes or modules and expose student teachers to the vetted strategies that exist to connect with these students. The impact on equity could be extraordinary as teachers could begin to use the areas that a teacher may be highly skilled in conjunction with the meaningful relationships, he or she builds with the students, to design an effective and supportive learning environment for all.

Recommendations for Future Studies

This study was designed and implemented to see how teacher self-efficacy perceptions and skills would be impacted if they learned more about the students they served and given a strategy to help build connections with them. Specifically, these elementary teachers in a low performing school were trained on ACEs, trauma and resilience. Following the initial training, teachers were trained on the implementation of morning meetings and implemented them in their classrooms as a trauma-informed way to build relationships with students. The study findings were informative and gave insight into how to impact teacher self-efficacy in these difficult learning environments. Given the fact that this study was implemented in the middle of a global

pandemic that had huge implications for education, there are some modifications that can be recommended for future studies.

Future research could conduct a similar study in-person classroom instruction resumes post COVID-19. The impact of morning meetings on students and teachers could differ in person. Classroom management processes were less of an issue in the online environment where the teacher has all of the control and unwilling students could easily opt out of learning by not logging on to classes. Another possible component that could be added would be recruiting teacher participants from more than one low-performing school. Having another group of teachers from another school to compare results to could potentially strengthen the study findings. This group of teachers could also include veteran teachers and not just beginning teachers. This could give the researcher the opportunity to determine whether or not experience is a variable that makes a considerable impact.

Another future study could further explore the concept of teacher motivations. Using the same frameworks, future research may look at whether or not a change in teacher motivations changes over time. And if so, when these self-efficacy perceptions change, could it be related to a change in motivations? This current study did not reveal any data that suggested that teachers' personal lives continually impact their current levels of self-efficacy or motivations. However, increasing the number of participants and asking more about motivations may yield different data points and findings.

Lastly, although the focus of this study is the impact of morning meetings on teachers, students play a major role in the perceptions of the teachers. Future research may interview students during the study to see what their perspective on the implementation of morning meetings may be. It would be compelling data to see if they feel the same as teachers do about

the relationships being developed. It would also be interesting to know if they are making true connections to their teacher or only to other students during the morning meeting sessions. If the student is primarily connecting to other students, does this matter to the teacher and will it impact self-efficacy perceptions in the areas of student engagement? The student perspective can add another level of rich data to the study.

Conclusions

With the high teacher turnover rates, especially in low-performing schools, learning more about how to grow and support teachers and keep them in the profession is paramount. This study sought to examine the impact of implementing a trauma-informed strategy, to build relationships, on teacher self-efficacy perceptions and skills. The existing body of research laid out the skills that must be considered when assessing teacher self-efficacy perceptions. This study focused on those skills when analyzing whether or not intentionally building relationships with the trauma-impacted students, in low-performing schools could positively impact teacher self-efficacy. Results of this study indicate that the teacher's relationship with his/her students in a low-performing environment have a direct impact on that teacher's perceptions of self-efficacy.

Although teachers may be highly efficacious in one skill set, those skills may not be the skills that will allow the teacher to reach their valued outcomes. If the teacher is not given the supports to grow the skills necessary to reach what they feel to be meaningful outcomes and personal satisfaction, they are likely to disengage from career goals and/or leave the profession completely. The teachers in this study were motivated by the need to be change agents in the lives of the children they serve. As with all attempts to engage in social justice and support marginalized populations, relationships must be developed so that all support can be done with the individuals and not to the individuals. The data from this study showed that once the

relationships began to grow between the teachers and student, the two-way communication increased and did renewed engagement for the students and the teachers. The teachers reported wanting to be more creative and find ways to sharpen their skill so they could help their students. Teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy experienced a positive change. Not only did self-efficacy perceptions change, but teachers were also able to reflect and identify where they had gaps.

These findings are important to the work of those in low performing environments and the entities that are charged with training these educators. Teacher self-efficacy perceptions are real, and they affect the way teachers perform in the classroom and the daily decisions they make about how to serve students. Even though a teacher may be strong and confident in one skill set, it does not mean that those skills will translate well in a low-performing learning environment. Teachers need to be trained early on about servings students who have experiences multiple ACEs. This should be addressed in teacher preparation programs. It takes work to build relationships and trust with students who have been impacted by toxic stress or trauma. The process of building these relationships must be intentional and be done simultaneously with solid instructional practices. Although this is not innate in every teacher, it can be taught using structures like morning meetings.

Teacher efficacy is not a singular thing. It is dynamic, it is complex, and it can be positively impacted by the relationships formed with students. As this study revealed, teachers can teach without the relationships, but they are seldom effective in doing so. The relationships between teachers and students create accountability and responsibility in the classroom that translates in to improved self-efficacy perceptions for each of them.

Scholarly Practitioner's Reflections on Leadership

Through the implementation of this study, my development as a leader has definitely been impacted. I immediately began to realize through the first round of interviews that in my role as a leader, I have never taken the time to explore all of the desires and needs of teachers as thoroughly as I had for this study. My previous interactions with the teachers I served, though authentic, were surface level and based on what I thought they needed to be successful. As a principal, and now as a district level director, it is often part of my job to work with design teams to create innovative ideas for change. Many times, those change ideas do have some positive impact, but sustainable change is less frequent. Leadership change theory scholars state that two-thirds of change initiatives fail. I would argue those that do fail are not successful because they do not take the time to massage the human component of the plan. Although we may all be part of the same organization, we are not driven by the same motivations.

In this study, teacher perception of self-efficacy was explored. This concept is not as singular as it is made to be in our assessment tools. When using walkthrough instruments or the state teacher evaluation rubric, the school leader is expected to assess the teacher's effectiveness in facilitating the learning for students. Most of these tools I have used to evaluate and coach teachers only examine teacher content knowledge, instructional delivery, and management of the classroom. These tools do not have any sections that mandate that the evaluator build a relationship with the teacher being evaluated. I am learning that inspiring change in others is not as simple as checking a box. The results of an unaligned evaluation instrument does not motivate teachers to try harder or persevere through the challenges of working in low-performing schools. When I began working with these teachers, I would have assumed that their reported perceptions of lower self-efficacy were a result of the low-test scores or student failure to excel on

assignments. But to the contrary, these teachers had low perceptions of their self-efficacy because they could not meet their goals of developing, growing, and nurturing their students on a heart level. The conclusion I have drawn from my erroneous assumption is just as intentionally building relationships with students made an impact on the teachers in this study, it is necessary for me as a leader to intentionally build relationships with those I serve.

With the extreme pressures and mandates facing low performing schools and districts, completing the most visible and pressing tasks seem to take precedent. I have found myself checking off the items on the list that others see or tasks that are being monitored. While that is an important part of leadership, true change leadership has to focus on the people doing the work. I am discovering my support of them cannot just be based on the stories I have created about them; I must be willing to ask the questions and invest time in getting to know those I support and serve. The teachers in this study were ever changing and their mindsets were evolving as their relationships with students began to grow. I believe that a meaningful relationship with those I am responsible for growing will make the change I seek much more effective, and the lift a little less heavy for all of us.

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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: Chanda Battle
CC: Travis Lewis
Date: 3/15/2020
Re: UMCIRB 19-001932
The Effect of Implementing Morning Meetings, As a Trauma-Informed Strategy, on Teacher Self-Efficacy in a Low-Performing School

I am pleased to inform you that your research submission has been certified as exempt on 3/15/2020. This study is eligible for Exempt Certification under category # 2b.

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
Appendix E Implementation Teacher Interview Protocol.docx(0.01)	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
Appendix B tSES.pdf(0.01)	Surveys and Questionnaires
Appendix C.docx(0.01)	Surveys and Questionnaires
Appendix D_ Initial Teacher Interview Protocol.docx(0.01)	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
Dissertation Proposal(0.02)	Study Protocol or Grant Application
Study Consent disclosure(0.02)	Consent Forms

For research studies where a waiver of HIPAA Authorization has been approved, each of the waiver criteria in 45 CFR 164.512(i)(2)(ii) has 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.

APPENDIX B: TEACHER' SENSE OF EFFICACY SCALE SURVEY

Teachers' Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale Survey

Greetings Prospective Participant,

You are being invited to participate in a research study titled "EXAMINING THE EFFECT OF IMPLEMENTING MORNING MEETINGS, AS TRAUMA-INFORMED STRATEGY, ON TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY IN A LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOL" being conducted by Chanda Battle, a doctoral candidate at East Carolina University in the Educational Leadership department. The goal is to survey 11 individuals in/at D.S. Johnson Elementary School. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. It is hoped that this information will assist us to better understand the perceptions of self-efficacy/confidence among teachers is persistently low-performing schools. Your responses will be kept confidential and no data will be released or used with your identification attached. Your participation in the research is voluntary. You may choose not to answer any or all questions, and you may stop at any time. There is no penalty for not taking part in this research study. Please call Chanda Battle at 252-885-5344 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. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Chanda R. Battle
Doctoral Candidate
Department of Educational Leadership
East Carolina University

Q1 Please enter your initials and room number here. This will be used to identify you by the researcher for follow up if needed. No identifying data will be shared with administration.

_____

Q2 What grade level do you teach?

o 3rd Grade (1)

o 4th Grade (2)

o 5th Grade (3)

o More than 1 Grade Level (4)

Q3 How many years of teaching have you completed?

o None (1)

o One (2)

o Two (4)

o Three (5)

Q4 What is your age?

o 25 and under (4)

o 26 to 39 years old (5)

o 40 to 50 years old (6)

o Over 50 (7)

Q5 What is your race?

_____

Q6 Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential. HOW MUCH CAN YOU DO?

Nothing (1) (2) **Very Little (3)** (4) **Some Influence (5)** (6) **Quite A Bit (7)** (8) **A Great Deal (9)**

How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students? (1)

How much can you do to help your students think critically? (2)

How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom? (3)

How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork? (4)

To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior? (5)

How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in schoolwork? (6)

How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students? (7)

How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly? (8)

How much can you do to help your students value learning? (9)

How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught? (10)

To what extent can you craft good questions for your students? (11)

How much can you do to foster student creativity? (12)

Q7 Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.

HOW MUCH CAN YOU DO?

Nothing (1) (2) **Very Little (3)** (4) **Some Influence (5)** (6) **Quite A Bit (7)** (8) **A Great Deal (9)**

How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules? (1)

How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing? (2)

How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy? (3)

How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students? (4)

How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students? (5)

How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies? (6)

How well can you keep a few problem students form ruining an entire lesson? (7)

To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused? (8)

How well can you respond to defiant students? (9)

How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school? (10)

How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom? (11)

How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students? (12)

Note: Adapted from Teacher's Sense of Self Efficacy Scale.

Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001

APPENDIX C: INITIAL TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Teacher Name:	**Pseudonym:**
Date:	**Start time:** **Finish time:**

Introduction and Opening Questions

During this interview, the goal is to gain insight into your beliefs about your own self-efficacy. I would like to gather data about what teacher self-efficacy factors you feel are strengths for you and which ones you are pose more challenges for your confidence as a teacher. I will be taking notes on your responses, as well as recording them.

At the conclusion of the interview, the interview will be transcribed, and I will share with you a copy to ensure that I have accurately captured your responses before coding them as data.

1. How many years have you been teaching?

2. What made you choose teaching as a career?
    - What did you hope to accomplish?

Baseline Questions

3. On a scale of 1-5, (1) not effective at all and (5) being very effective, how would you rate your current level of effectiveness with your current students? Why?

4. Using that same scale, how would you rate your potential to be an effective teacher in your current classroom? (1) being no potential at all and (5) being I could definitely be effective with the right supports. Why?

5. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his/her ability to be successful in a situation or the completion of a task. Which of the following 3 factors do you believe you are the most confident in: student engagement in your classroom, instructional practices, or classroom management? Why?

6. Which of the following 3 factors do you believe you struggle with the most: student engagement in your classroom, instructional practices, or classroom management? Why?

7. To what extent do you believe your students' behavior plays a role in your confidence level in the classroom?

- Please give an example

8. Do you believe that the adverse experiences students have away from school have an impact on them in the classroom?

- If so, how?
- Do you feel it is your responsibility to help them work through it?
- If so, how do you do that in your classroom?

9. Lastly, if you could describe your feelings about your teaching experience so far this year using 3 words, what words would you use?

That concludes the interview. I would like to thank you so much for your participation and honesty.

APPENDIX D: IMPLEMENTATION TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Teacher Name:	**Pseudonym:**
Date:	**Start time:** **Finish time:**

Introduction and Opening Questions

During this round of interviews, the goal is to assess the implementation of the morning meetings in your classroom as it relates to your sense of the factors related to self-efficacy. The questions will focus on the changes, if any, that are occurring in your classroom and how they impact your experience as a teacher. I will be taking notes on your responses, as well as recording them.

At the conclusion of the interviews, I will share with you a copy to ensure that I have accurately captured your responses before coding them as data.

RQ1: What effect does implementing morning meetings, as a trauma-informed strategy, in the learning environment have on teacher perceptions of self-efficacy at a low-performing elementary school?

1. Since the implementation of morning meeting, as a trauma- informed strategy, in your classroom, how has the culture in the classroom been impacted?

2. How has this change in classroom culture affected your experience as the teacher?

3. Please describe your feelings about your teaching experience over the last 3 weeks using 3 words.

4. On a scale of 1-5, (1) not effective at all and (5) being very effective, how would you rate your current belief that you can be effective in most of your tasks as a teacher? Why?

RQ2: What specific teacher self-efficacy skills were affected by the implementation of the morning meetings?

5. What factors, if any, have been positively impacted by the addition of the strategy?

- Student Engagement?
- Instructional Effectiveness?
- Classroom Management?

If the interviewee selected a factor in question 5, be sure to ask him/her for an example.

6. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his/her ability to be successful in a situation or the completion of a task. Which of the following 3 factors do you believe you are the most confident in: student engagement in your classroom, instructional practices, or classroom management? Why?

7. Which of the following 3 factors do you believe you struggle with the most: student engagement in your classroom, instructional practices, or classroom management?

8. Are there any negatives that you can identify that have resulted as a result of the

implementation of the strategy?

Questions 9 and 10 will be asked only at the implementation interview - week 3.

9. Given your recent training on ACEs and trauma, do you believe ACEs affect the way students behave and perform in the classroom? If yes, how so?

10. What connection, if any, does trauma have to your sense of self-efficacy and your beliefs in your abilities to be an effective teacher?

That concludes the interview. I would like to thank you so much for your participation and honesty.

APPENDIX E: SCHOLARLY PRACTITIONER CLASSROOM

OBSERVATION RUBRIC

Teacher Name: _____

Observation Date:_____ Observation Time:_____

4	3	2	1
Very evident throughout the lesson	Evident during most, but not all of the lesson	Evident during a limited portion of the lesson	Not evident at any point during the lesson

Student Engagement

	Comments:	**Observed Rating:**
1. Teacher provides an overview/agenda for the day's lesson.		
2. Students willingly participate in class activities.		
3. Students readily asked questions when appropriate.		
4. Teacher talks with students informally before or after class.		
	Total:	**/16**

Instructional Strategies

	Comments:	**Observed Rating:**
5. Materials are ready for the lesson and expectations for the lesson are shared with students.		
6. Lesson is paced to provide rigor and limit time off task.		
7. Teacher activates prior knowledge to assist students in connecting to today's lesson.		
8. Teacher projects enthusiasm and confidence during lesson presentation.		
	Total:	**/16**

Classroom Management

	Comments:	**Observed Rating:**
9. There are clear classroom processes and procedures.		
10. Teacher creates opportunities to remind students of expectations before/ during/after transitions.		
11.Teacher responds appropriately to non-verbal cues of disengagement, confusion, and/or curiosity.		
12. Student misbehavior is corrected by explaining or modeling expected behavior.		
	Total:	**/16**

APPENDIX F: END OF IMPLEMENTATION SURVEY

Implementation Survey

Greetings Participants,

You are currently participating in a research study titled "EXAMINING THE EFFECT OF IMPLEMENTING MORNING MEETINGS, AS TRAUMA-INFORMED STRATEGY, ON TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY IN A LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOL" being conducted by Chanda Battle , a doctoral candidate at East Carolina University in the Educational Leadership department. This is the 2nd and last survey and will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. It is hoped that this information will assist us to better understand the perceptions of self-efficacy/confidence among teachers is persistently low-performing schools. Your responses will be kept confidential and no data will be released or used with your identification attached. As a reminder, your participation in the research is voluntary. You may choose not to answer any or all questions, and you may stop at any time. Please call Chanda Battle at 252-885-5344 for any research related questions. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Chanda R. Battle

Doctoral Candidate

Department of Educational Leadership

East Carolina University

Q1 Please enter your initials and room number here. This will be used to identify you by the researcher for follow up if needed. No identifying data will be shared with administration.

_____

Q2 Since the implementation of morning meetings, would you say that your relationships with students have been positively impacted?

Yes (1)

No (2)

A little bit (3)

Q3 Please explain your answer to question #2.

_____

Q4 Since implementing morning meetings, do you feel differently about your ability to impact students in your classroom? Please explain why or why not.

_____

Q5 Please rank in order of most to least. Which of these has been most impacted by the use of morning meetings in your classroom?

_____ Classroom Management (1)

_____ Instructional Effectiveness (2)

_____ Student Engagement (3)

Q6 What skills have morning meetings help you strengthen in you as a teacher? Please give an example.

_____

Q7 Can you share an example of one thing that stands out about the implementation of morning meetings? It can be positive or negative.

_____

Q8 What impact did the virtual classroom have on you being able to build relationships with students and conduct morning meetings?

_____

Q9 Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential. HOW MUCH CAN YOU DO?

Nothing (1) (2) **Very Little (3)** (4) **Some Influence (5)** **(6) Quite A Bit (7)** **(8) A Great Deal (9)**

How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students? (1)

How much can you do to help your students think critically? (2)

How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom? (3)

How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork? (4)

To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior? (5)

How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in schoolwork? (6)

How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students? (7)

How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly? (8)

How much can you do to help your students value learning? (9)

How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught? (10)

To what extent can you craft good questions for your students? (11)

How much can you do to foster student creativity? (12)

Q10 Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.

HOW MUCH CAN YOU DO??

Nothing (1) (2) **Very Little (3)** (4) **Some Influence (5)** **(6) Quite A Bit (7)** **(8) A Great Deal (9)**

How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules? (1)

How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing? (2)

How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy? (3)

How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students? (4)

How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students? (5)

How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies? (6)

How well can you keep a few problem students form ruining an entire lesson? (7)

To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused? (8)

How well can you respond to defiant students? (9)

How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school? (10)

How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom? (11)

How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students? (12)

Note: Adapted from Teacher's Sense of Self Efficacy Scale.

Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001

APPENDIX G: MORNING MEETING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Morning Meeting Training Overview

Goals:

- **Provide teachers with a review of the definition of and examples of ACEs.**
- **Discuss the impact of ACEs and toxic stress on students.**
- **Identify ways in which ACEs impact students specifically in the classroom.**
- **Define morning meetings and its' components.**
- **Outline strategies for implementation in the classroom.**

Topic	Supplemental Materials	Duration
Data and research: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)		**10 mins**
Toxic Stress and the Stress Response System	Flight, Fight, Freeze Padlet	**15 mins**
The Impact for Students and Our Schools	List of Strategies for Teachers	**20 mins**
Morning Meetings as a Trauma-Informed Strategy		**10 mins**
How to Get Started	Sample Morning Meeting Lessons	**20 mins**
Examples for Implementation	Video Examples	**10 mins**
Questions and Wrap-up		**5 mins**