4-4-2024

Social-Emotional Learning and Teachers' Perceptions Using the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Framework

Louise Simmon
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations

Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Louise M. Simmons

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Christopher Cale, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. Anastasia Metros, Committee Member, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2024

Abstract

Social-Emotional Learning and Teachers' Perceptions Using the Collaborative for

Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Framework

by

Louise M. Simmons

MA, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2006

MA, Mississippi State University, 1986

BA, Mississippi State University, 1984

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

May 2024

Abstract

There is a need for intervention programs that support teenagers' social and emotional development in American public schools. Education stakeholders have observed a disproportionate decline in social-emotional skills among minority and at-risk adolescents in low performing schools, increasing dropout rates and early exposure to the criminal justice system. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the inconsistent application of social-emotional learning (SEL) by high school teachers in a local Southeast regional school district. Semistructured interviews were conducted with 10 English language arts high school teachers to obtain their perspectives on instructional implementation of SEL curriculum using the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework, the consistency with which they employ SEL practices, and the influence of SEL on student outcomes. The CASEL, designed by a foundation with the same name, was the conceptual framework for this study. Data were analyzed using a priori and in vivo codes, revealing six themes: (a) teachers' perceptions, mindsets, and biases drive pedagogy; (b) consistent and continuous training is needed to build teachers social-emotional competence (SEC); (c) SEL instructional planning is key to successful implementation; (d) knowledge and use of SEL strategies are inconsistent and minimal; (e) barriers to SEL impede successful program implementation; and (f) teachers struggle to assess SEC in their students. The study can promote social change by providing policymakers with strategies to increase youths' psychological and physiological well-being and supports using SEL to address the diverse needs of at-risk adolescents and propel students toward academic and life success.

Social-Emotional Learning and Teachers' Perceptions Using the Collaborative for

Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Framework

by

Louise M. Simmons

MA, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2006

MA, Mississippi State University, 1986

BA, Mississippi State University, 1984

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

May 2024

Dedication

I dedicate this page to my daughters, Rochelle and Desire, my sons, Roger and Duma, and my sixteen grandchildren, Charles, Yaseen, Amari, Eric, Brooklynn, Phoenyx, Libby, Chrissy, Kimani, Kiantay, Brooklyn, Brayden, Briton, A'nala, Empress, and Xavion. I also give tribute to Clarencia, Otha, Omnika, and all my siblings, who encouraged me when I felt overwhelmed by my journey. Each gave me sustenance in many ways, from food to forced breaks and reminders of the healing balance provided by family, love, and laughter.

My children never gave up on me and always believed in my success, even when I was in doubt. My siblings understood when I missed family functions and cheered me on when I needed it. Finally, my grandchildren inspired me to continue my research and intently listened as I described the purpose of my journey, which was to impact social change for the betterment of their future and to instill in them the desire to be lifelong learners and change agents. They understood how important it was to me that they, too, carry on a family tradition of being the change you want to see and to complete your life goals.

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my Chair and mentor, Dr. Christopher Cale, for his invaluable and tireless guidance. His unwavering support and insightful feedback guided me through my doctoral journey to completion of each milestone along the way. I am also immensely grateful to my committee member, Dr. Anatasia Metros, whose scholarly advice and challenging questioning enriched the quality of my research study. My gratitude also extends to the participants in this study who voluntarily offered their time, experiences, and ideas, without which my research project would not have been possible. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Koller, whose feedback, tireless editing, and collaboration ensured my project study's refinement and successful completion.

Table of Contents

ii

iii

List of Tables

Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

The problem addressed in this study was that high school teachers in a local Southeast regional school district lacked consistent social-emotional learning (SEL) instructional implementation. Sustained SEL implementation occurs through systemic, constant training and staff awareness of the beliefs regarding this intervention program (Eklund et al., 2018; Hemmeter et al., 2018). According to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (n.d.), the need for social-emotional development has been a focus of the district's prekindergarten, elementary, and middle schools. However, that focus did not extend to high schools, where adolescents have struggled with social and emotional development (Eklund et al., 2018). A review of national research on SEL teacher preservice preparation demonstrated that preservice teachers in the Southeast had completed fewer than 50% of their SEL coursework (Schonert-Reichl, 2019).

Researchers have indicated that social-emotional skills developed best when a schoolwide mindset-changing approach was used in classrooms (Main, 2018). However, students developed these SEL mindset skills when teachers possessed positive efficacy and believed in their ability to teach SEL competencies (Weissberg, 2019). The Collaborative for Advancement of Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) serves as both an organization and framework based on including SEL competencies in school curriculum and best practices. The CASEL organization was founded in 1994 to provide context, structure, and support to schools invested in implementing SEL (Jagers et al., 2019). CASEL was also the conceptual framework for my study and is the paradigm that

high schools in this research have used to structure SEL as an effective intervention program for underserved and marginalized populations of color. The body of literature supported the premise that effectively implemented SEL and CASEL programs relied on the preparation and training of preservice teachers and principals. In addition, teacher self-efficacy and awareness of explicit and implicit biases can sway how SEL is integrated into content and classroom practice.

In this study, I focused on teachers in local high schools in a Southeast district that included both urban and suburban areas. These high schools serve large populations of marginalized learners and are labeled Title I schools, which are indicators of elevated levels of poverty among student and family populations. According to the school district's report cards, low socioeconomic status (SES) students of color comprised most of each high school's population. The local high schools integrated SEL with preexisting multiple tiers of student support (MTSS) to better meet at-risk learners' needs. Accordingly, in 2017 and 2018, each high school added an SEL program to its goals to achieve schoolwide improvement. Following the first year of SEL implementation, minimal progress noted in the schools' Indistar status reports indicated a need for increased integration of multitiered support systems with social-emotional instructional practices. Further, the schools' communities-in-schools coordinators and SEL expert staff (personal communication, December 12, 2019) confirmed that gaps exist between the school district's stated goals and teachers' classroom practices, resulting in low academic proficiency scores among specific student groups.

Information regarding the school district in the state where this study occurred revealed that SEL was included in the district's vision and goals in 2017. However, the district's statements from a report on youth justice indicated that disparities remained prevalent on the state and local levels in racial equity, discipline referrals, suspension among at-risk youth of color, and high school dropout rates. The high schools in this study serve student bodies comprised of more than 85% minority at-risk learners. According to Hegedus (2018), schools that serve free and reduced lunches demonstrated an influx of students from impoverished communities. Discipline referrals, gang violence, substance abuse, high suspension rates, and rising dropout rates remained prevalent in these schools.

Along with MTSS, to improve the low performance status, the district policy makers determined that SEL practices needed to be integrated into the high schools' curriculum and classroom practices to support students. Accordingly, the high schools' leadership teams added Indistar as an indicator of the SEL program initiative's consistency and the accomplishment level of the school improvement goals for 2017 through 2021. Leadership team minutes indicated that Indistar's rubric of completion reported that SEL goals remained only partially met because of a lack of training. Discussions with school experts revealed that professional training for teachers to learn SEL strategies was virtually nonexistent. In 2019, one of the high school communities-in-schools coordinators (personal communication, December 12, 2019) confirmed that breaches existed between the curriculum put forth by the school district and practice in the teachers' classrooms. These schools' leadership meeting notes and professional

development (PD) agendas showed that SEL practices and intervention programs such as SEL should be systemically integrated into instructional lesson plans and daily classroom practices. Furthermore, high school state report cards, which displayed high-needs areas that SEL would address, indicated that deficient and inconsistent SEL employment remained a problem for schools and staff.

Subsequently, the school district where I conducted my study attempted implementation of SEL strategies in high schools where state report cards revealed marginalized students continued to have problems with SEC. The district and school improvement plans indicated teachers' need for modeled strategies to help them understand how to work with struggling students. As a result, in 2017, the school district created a departmental team to address SEL in elementary and middle schools. In contrast, the district's high school policy makers discussed the need for SEL to increase learners' abilities to matriculate from high school into society. Through SEL platforms, learners can be equipped with skillsets that every individual requires to become productive members of their community. The schools' leadership team meeting minutes declared SEL a goal to be revisited; however, no initiatives for training staff in SEL and the CASEL framework for SEL ensued.

Rationale

Durlak et al. (2011) and Domitrovich et al. (2017) emphasized the need for SEL education in all schools and grade levels. Researchers have also provided insight into at-risk populations best served by SEL and the CASEL framework (Elias, 2019; Gayl, 2017; Kwiatkowski, 2019; Musu-Gillette et al., 2017). The school environment can foster or

stifle learning. In effective schools, teachers and staff collaborate with leaders to establish, organize, and facilitate appropriate intervention platforms that help students of poverty mitigate learning barriers (Leithwood, 2021). Additionally, others have expanded on the need for research on SEL in high schools (Beard, 2018; DePaoli et al., 2018; Tan et al., 2018; Taylor, 2020). However, reports for the district selected for this study and published school curriculum from 2017 through 2019 indicated that SEL training and implementation occurred more consistently in the preschool and elementary levels, with character trait lessons serving as the SEL venue in middle and secondary schools.

SEL allows children to make positive choices, proactively problem solve, collaborate, empathize, and develop confidence (Elliott et al., 2018). Consistent SEL integration into classroom teaching and learning strategies can provide at-risk high school students with (a) strengthened relationship skills, (b) positive learning experiences, and (c) improved academic performance (Mahoney et al., 2021). In contrast, the lack of consistent implementation of social-emotional practices can impede adolescents' academic growth, relationship skills, and self-identity (CASEL, 2018; Domitrovich et al., 2017; Weissberg, 2019; Zins et al., 2007). In the current study, I examined local SEL programs based on the CASEL framework. To better understand the schools' and teachers' use of the CASEL framework, I explored the consistency of SEL implementation in classrooms, teachers' perceptions of SEL, and SEL's influence on student outcomes. Through qualitative research, I obtained high school teachers' views regarding their instructional implementation of the SEL curriculum using the CASEL framework and its influence on student outcomes.

Yeager et al. (2018) asserted that ineffective implementation of SEL might create gaps in practice that need additional exploration. Likewise, Tan et al. (2018) noted that SEL programs have a poor record with high school students. My study's results indicated that the current SEL programs were prescriptive and nonspecific to interventions for secondary school students. In contrast, researchers have also established the need for SEL in schools, especially for students with low SES, learning and communication problems, and mental health concerns (Ferreira et al., 2020). All issues addressed in the research literature were relative to the learning barriers experienced by students attending high schools in my study. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of high school teachers in a local Southeast regional school district on their instructional implementation of the SEL curriculum, perceptions of their role in SEL, and views on the influence SEL practices have on student outcomes.

Definition of Terms

Specific terms associated with my study are defined and cited in this section.

At-risk: Frequently connected to poverty and SEL deficits. In this study, it will be used interchangeably with *hypermarginalized* to describe economically disadvantaged African American and Hispanic learners, who comprise more than 45% of U.S. marginalized populations (Karras et al., 2021; Marchbanks et al., 2018).

CASEL: A framework for SEL, which serves as a foundation for training and schoolwide implementation of the five interrelated SEL competencies involving cognitive, affective, and behavior skillsets, which include self-awareness, empathy, decision making, interpersonal skills, and problem-solving skills (Rodriguez et al., 2020).

Hypermarginalized: Youth who may benefit from SEL interventions from prekindergarten through high school. For this study, the term applies to the populations of color whom SEL programs serve in U.S. urban and rural schools. It also refers to a population fragmented by generational economic hardship and suffering, community and home violence, and early and continuous exposure to the criminal justice system (Desmond & Western, 2018).

Poverty: Multidimensional material hardships created through societal and generational trauma linked to the lack of economic advantage (Desmond & Western, 2018). Impoverished youth collectively experience more trauma and may enter schools possessing deficits in social and emotional skillsets (Delale-O'Connor et al., 2017; Karras et al., 2021; Marchbanks et al., 2018).

SEL: A teaching and learning approach that focuses on developing social and emotional skillsets that help learners improve social relationships, self-monitoring, and decision making (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Kress & Elias, 2013). According to Bridgeland et al. (2013), SEL occurs when social development skillsets are in place to help children and adults.

SES: Individuals' and families' economic situation in society. A student's SES can directly affect self-identity and self-efficacy, while consistent SEL practices can place low SES, marginalized, and at-risk learners on positive life trajectories (Ross et al., 2019).

Significance of the Study

A significant body of research supports school districts' implementation of social-emotional teaching practices using the five-construct CASEL framework to improve at-risk students' academic identity and performance. The CASEL organization was founded to help preschool through high school institutions create high-quality SEL programs (CASEL, 2018). Programs for the early school levels have had a positive effect on children in early childhood programs (CASEL, 2018). However, the consistency with which high school teachers implement SEL practices remains unknown (assistant principal, personal communication, August 28, 2019; Ross & Tolan, 2018). Likewise, Barry et al. (2017) and B. L. Kennedy and Soutullo (2018) noted that secondary teachers' perceptions of SEL programs and practices integral to the program's success remain unclear. In this project study, I addressed the problem that high school teachers in a local Southeast regional school district lack consistent SEL instructional implementation.

The goals of SEL are to build students' social and emotional skillsets and to embed the teaching of those skillsets into daily lesson plans and teachers' practices. In the local setting, students of color, particularly Black and Hispanic males, experienced failure academically and socially (Brinkley et al., 2018). According to Brinkley et al. (2018), the local school district where I conducted my study had experienced prominent levels of low academic performance and escalated discipline referrals among marginalized males of color. Brinkley et al. asserted that teachers' relationships, expectations, and biases are vital to addressing the low academic performance and escalating discipline issues noted in this student population.

This study contributes to the educational field by providing information to assist the school and district's stakeholders with policy and curriculum decisions regarding SEL implementation in their high schools. According to Tan et al. (2018), instructors' perceptions about SEL drive how they teach at-risk high school students. Through heightened awareness of SEL competencies and practices, the educational community might benefit from improved teaching and learning practices, enriched student social-emotional skills, and higher academic achievement of at-risk learners. SEL environments can equip students with relationship skills, self-management, and decision-making acumen, resulting in academic confidence and improved self-efficacy (Domitrovich et al., 2017). Armed with those skills, at-risk high school students may have increased opportunities to evolve into proactive adults with an increased capacity to benefit their community and society.

Research Questions

I structured my study's research question (RQ) and sub-RQs to address the problem of high school teachers in a local Southeast regional school district lack consistent SEL instructional implementation. These high schools have characteristics that mirror the urban and rural qualities of the nation's public schools. The primary RQ and associated sub-RQs addressed the purpose of this study, contributing to its basic qualitative design and my exploration of teachers' perceptions of SEL using the CASEL framework. The overarching RQ focused on high school teachers' perspectives regarding implementing the SEL curriculum using the CASEL framework. The sub-RQs were structured to solicit information relative to teachers' beliefs that were influenced by their

perceptions of SEL implementation, consistency, and effectiveness in their classrooms and schools. Moreover, the RQ and sub-RQs facilitated an examination of teachers' beliefs about the influences of SEL on their students' outcomes. The RQ and sub-RQs are listed as follows:

RQ: What are high school teachers' perceptions regarding their instructional implementation of the SEL curriculum using the CASEL framework?

Sub-RQ1: What are high school teachers' perceptions about the consistency with which they employ SEL practices in the classroom?

Sub-RQ2: What are high school teachers' perceptions about the influence of SEL on student outcomes?

Review of the Literature

This literature review for this study included an examination of more than 100 peer-reviewed scholarly articles, reports, and books. Resources focused on (a) SEL in secondary education; (b) the CASEL framework as a guide for SEL program design and implementation; (c) SEL strategies integrated with multitiered student support systems; (d) teachers' perceptions of SEL, their mindset regarding their students and intervention program efficacy, and the possible impact of both on implementation fidelity; (e) challenges to SEL's effectiveness; and (f) the influence of SEL on student outcomes (see Mosier, 2018; Poulou, 2017).

My internet-based search engines and databases included ERIC, SAGE Journals, Science-Direct, ProQuest, Education Research Complete, Taylor and Francis Online, the Aspen Institute, CASEL, EPSCO Connect, and the Brookings Institute. I also used

Google Scholar when searching for specific sources referenced in other articles. Search terms used alone and in combinations to locate peer-reviewed research conducted from 2018 through 2023 included *SEL*, *CASEL, SEL core constructs competencies and goals*, *cognitive and noncognitive behaviors*, *efficacy*, *self-regulation*, *at-risk youth*, *hypermarginalized*, *implicit bias*, *asset thinking*, *the school-to-prison pipeline*, *educational inequities*, *school transformation*, and *SEL implementation.* These terms were central to research regarding SEL, teachers' and schools' roles in SEL implementation, and SEL influences on learners.

In my study, I explored the phenomenon of teachers' perceptions of SEL using the CASEL framework and their perceptions regarding its effectiveness with at-risk, hypermarginalized high school students of color. In the following subsection, I describe and discuss the conceptual framework based on CASEL and its significance in understanding educators' perspectives regarding SEL. The CASEL framework facilitated this basic qualitative study of teachers' and participants' lived experiences. I used CASEL as the basis for my conceptual framework and its competencies and practices to gain insight into the thoughts, beliefs, and lived experiences of teachers related to SEL-challenged students in the classroom.

Conceptual Framework

Research has shown that SEL has played an essential part in shaping successful lives, and schools are considered integral for teaching, modeling, and nurturing social-emotional development (Jones et al., 2020). In this section, I explain the conceptual framework based on CASEL for this study, which serves as the foundation for several

SEL programs. Bandura's (1977) cognitive social learning theory, Goleman's (1995) emotional intelligence theory, and the CASEL/SEL structures were foundational to my study. The CASEL framework was primary to my research because it was the foundation for the SEL curriculum used by the school district in the study. Also, CASEL provided constructs that served as the foundation for SEL programs in numerous school districts. CASEL constructs target areas that address students' needs in the district's local high schools and provides goals that can shape how teachers perceive and implement SEL in their curriculum and classrooms.

The Concept and Phenomenon that Grounds the Study

The conceptual framework that grounded my study was based on the CASEL framework and supported a focus on the phenomenon of SEL as viewed through the lens of high school English language arts (ELA) teachers. Ross and Tolan (2018) described CASEL as a framework for promoting positive development and supporting an SEL intervention program. SEL programs include the development of children's core social and emotional skills and promote the integration of SEL competencies with standard academic concepts or content (Goleman, 2001). Goleman (2001) cofounded CASEL, an organization that has expanded SEL applications across all grade levels in public schools, colleges, and workplaces. Goleman's emotional intelligence encompasses four domains that are integral to SEL: (a) self-awareness, (b) self-management, (c) social awareness, and (d) relationship management. These domains encompass skills that students need to prepare them for navigating the challenges that school, careers, and society present. Schools are the best venue for teaching students social and emotional skillsets, as

children spend 8 hours or more daily, 5 days per week, at school (Hoover & Bostic, 2021).

The CASEL conceptual framework synthesizes key ideas from Bandura's (1977) social learning theory and its focus on five social skills considered essential to success in life: (a) self-management, (b) self-awareness, (c) social awareness of other cultures and beliefs, (d) the ability to communicate effectively with peers and others, and (e) the ability to make decisions that align with positive ethical and moral standards (CASEL, 2018; Ross & Tolan, 2018). Subsequently, I focused on how high school teachers implemented SEL based on the CASEL framework, which the school district adopted to transform impoverished, low performing schools.

Conceptual Framework Description and Justification

The CASEL framework has been employed by some school districts to organize and effectively integrate SEL competencies and practices with classroom instruction and served as the conceptual framework for this study (see Blyth et al., 2018). Through this basic qualitative study, I added to the body of knowledge in the field of education by investigating whether and how teachers implemented SEL competencies in their classrooms through their personal experiences with SEL and its challenges. CASEL, as the conceptual framework, was essential to help me discover factors related to SEL challenges in the classroom based on teachers' experiences. Multidimensional competencies that instructors are required to teach include self-cognizance, self-regulation, social responsiveness, interpersonal relationship skills, and responsible decision making (Gay, 2021). Teachers' perceptions of whether and how to teach these

skills were among the important topics of this study; the interview questions relevant to SEL were based on CASEL goals and competencies.

The CASEL framework provides a guide for how educators and school communities can systemically promote intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive competencies across various settings. CASEL (2018) promotes five principles that serve as constructs that offer extensive advantages to students who experience SEL, including cognitive control and focus. The CASEL framework, Goleman's (1995) emotional intelligence theory, and Bandura's (1977) social learning theory were foundational to this study because of their central focus on teachers' perceptions of SEL. Bandura and Goleman's theories emphasize the social-emotional skillsets necessary for students to become healthy, productive individuals in society (see Campbell et al., 2016; Carroll et al., 2020; CASEL, 2018).

The reason for selecting CASEL as the conceptual framework involved the potential difficulty in assessing my study's findings. Evaluating the perceptions of the lived experiences related to SEL presents challenges for researchers. My use of the CASEL framework grounded the study in five basic constructs. The CASEL framework is multifaceted and facilitated my data collection and analysis of the findings. Because my study focused on the perceived experiences of teachers, I hoped to obtain insight into the primary levels of the SEL program, including its adoption, implementation, and institutionalization.

The schools I selected for this study adopted the CASEL framework to create their SEL programs to fit the needs of diverse at-risk student populations. However, the

gap between goals and classroom practice confirmed the need for additional research

regarding high schools that use the SEL program. The CASEL conceptual framework

directed my research and, through its constructs, enabled my examination of teachers'

views of SEL using CASEL's projected goals and competencies.

Review of the Broader Problem

The body of research underscored that schools seeking improvement in social-

emotional development and academic achievement might find the promotion of CASEL

and SEL competencies useful as both a guide for teacher implementation and a

supportive intervention program for hypermarginalized students of color (Desmond &

Western, 2018). A classroom environment anchored in the CASEL framework can foster

high school students' acquisition of SEL skills and provide a critical perspective

regarding promoting youths' social and emotional well-being in schools (Jones et al.,

2020). The CASEL framework propagates SEL strategies that can provide for the needs

of at-risk students (Beddows, 2016; CASEL, 2018). Advances in SEL intervention

programs and the application of the CASEL framework have provided opportunities to

implement SEL's social and emotional skills development within school curricula (Barry

et al., 2017).

The Body of Research

Studies of CASEL-based SEL practices have shown that schools have

haphazardly attempted to implement SEL with little success (Gayl, 2017; Meyers et al.,

2019). However, the CASEL conceptual framework is considered most successful when

used to measure SEL strategies and effectiveness. Researchers have indicated that

racially and economically marginalized students who transition to secondary schools face academic barriers, display relationship challenges, and experience social and behavioral problems with their peers and teachers (Barry et al., 2017; B. L. Kennedy & Soutullo, 2018). DePaoli et al. (2018) confirmed that low SES students of color constitute a disproportionate number of discipline referrals, high school dropouts, and juvenile delinquency. DePaoli et al. suggested that at-risk students benefit from acquiring SEL-related skills, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy for others, positive relationship skills, and decision-making skills. CASEL provides a five-factor framework embedded with the five SEL constructs that offer a multidimensional lens that deepens both teachers' and students' understanding and success (Delale-O'Connor et al., 2017; Gay, 2021).

According to Ross and Tolan (2018), SEL and the CASEL framework have been used primarily with preschool, elementary learners, and afterschool programs; however, some form of CASEL has been applied to work with adolescents. In this study, focusing on the SEL and the CASEL framework viewed through teachers' lived experiences, there is the potential to (a) guide goals for effective SEL programs in low-income high schools, (b) define the expectations and needs of teachers as they use SEL in their classrooms, (c) contribute to educational leaders' knowledge of support for successful SEL implementation and the effect of teachers' perspectives regarding SEL in high schools, and (d) enhance intentional and consistent implementation of SEL programs (see Beard, 2018). Consequently, the CASEL framework, which I used to explore SEL programs in high schools, was applicable to the current basic qualitative study concerning teachers

who implement SEL with secondary at-risk adolescents. The findings of my study can help shape future SEL programs and guide schools to foster academics and SEL for racially and economically compromised students (see Barnes, 2019; Barry et al., 2017). CASEL, as the conceptual framework, was also appropriate as it facilitated a thorough exploration of how SEL was implemented in secondary classrooms.

The CASEL Framework

The CASEL framework serves as the foundation for numerous SEL programs across the nation, and it is used by the schools in my research study. The CASEL framework was appropriate for the current study as it provided constructs for gathering data concerning social-emotional development and teachers' perspectives regarding SEL. The CASEL framework afforded an opportunity to examine teachers' views about SEL in high schools that serve at-risk adolescents (see Domitrovich et al., 2017; Kamil, 2016; Weissberg, 2019; Zins et al., 2007). In addition, the framework provided a lens through which to examine teachers' perceptions of SEL and its influence on student outcomes, which supported my search for answers to the current study's RQ and sub-RQs.

CASEL's Connection to the Study's Approach and RQs

The CASEL framework relates to my study's RQ and sub-RQs and informed this basic qualitative study's design and structure.

RQ: What are high school teachers' perceptions regarding their instructional implementation of SEL curriculum using the CASEL framework?

Sub-RQ1: What are high school teachers' perceptions about the consistency with which they employ SEL practices in the classroom?

Sub-RQ2: What are high school teachers' perceptions about the influence of SEL on student outcomes?

CASEL, as the conceptual framework for the current SEL study, cohesively aligned with the study's problem, purpose, RQ, and sub-RQs because it was established to improve students' academic performance and place them on a positive life trajectory (see Bridgeland et al., 2013; CASEL, 2018; Eshel et al., 2018). Yeager et al. (2018) emphasized that collaborative models for high school transformation enhance and broaden the SEL program's scope among at-risk students. Similarly, DePaoli et al. (2018) encouraged the use of a cooperative model to identify and efficiently address high school students' needs. CASEL is a framework that supports the integration of transformative competencies and social and emotional teaching and learning. The high schools in this study integrated MTSS with SEL to provide additional support to students on both disciplinary and academic levels. Because SEL focuses on the social and emotional development of the whole child, the program also can foster academic success in at-risk students (Constantine et al., 2019).

The district's schools had incorporated SEL learning practices using the CASEL framework, and the schools integrated it with MTSS intervention practices. However, as in many schools nationwide, the focus of intervention programs had been to reduce behavioral problems and only partially addressed the SEL venue to improve teacher-student and peer-to-peer relationships. Yang et al. (2018) indicated that although early education and primary schools have acknowledged CASEL's proven utility in supporting early childhood intervention, high schools' use of the framework to help at-risk students

of color has yet to be extensively studied. Thus, additional research on high schools'

implementation of SEL using the CASEL framework was required to determine how to

close the gap between SEL goals and classroom practice in secondary schools (see

DePaoli et al., 2018).

CASEL, as a conceptual framework, was feasible for this basic qualitative

research design as it provided tools to gain insight concerning teachers' SEL experiences,

prior research, and published theory. Teachers' perceptions, past experiences, and self-

awareness are the cornerstones of effective SEL implementation (Bridgeland et al., 2013;

Rodriguez et al., 2020). I used CASEL as the conceptual framework to structure

interview questions and probe deeper during each interview. After the interviews were

complete, I analyzed and synthesized the collected data. My study's findings provided

information that could help broker activities to increase effective SEL implementation.

The problem I explored in this study was that high school teachers in a local

Southeast regional school district lacked consistent SEL instructional implementation.

The local problem existed in both the school district and the state. In 2018, an Indistar

report used by school districts to determine the degree to which they have met goals

indicated that schoolwide SEL implementation was not met. Further, the high schools'

public report cards revealed that students' core content performance levels in reading,

math, and science were in the 50th percentile compared to national school districts.

Similarly, the district's third largest high school's student academic proficiency reports

fell far below that of the state and other high schools in the district. My study's hard-to-

staff schools are comprised of 97% students of color and 100% free and reduced breakfast and lunch recipients.

If an intervention program is to be effective and sustainable, continuous, and consistent, two critical attributes need to exist. First, the program must be valued by the facilitator, and adequate support given to educators to help them implement SEL effectually. Second, teachers must acquire knowledge of SEL competencies and practices while staying apprised of how CASEL constructs should be integrated into their curriculum and planning. Awareness of instructors' perceptions of the program could lead to policy changes and systemic practices, which can also improve teachers' self-efficacy in applying SEL strategies (see Rodriguez et al., 2020; Soland et al., 2019; Zins et al., 2007). Referencing Bandura's social cognitive theory, Imants and Van der Wal (2020) defined self-efficacy as the belief that one can perform and effectively complete tasks, achieve objectives, and exercise control over one's life. Imants and Van der Wal's findings supported the idea that optimal program implementation required all stakeholders to embrace the program's vision, value, and potential for success. Moreover, sufficient support can ensure the program's sustainability through ongoing training, funding, and education policy reform to prioritize social and emotional development in public schools (Mahoney et al., 2021).

Researchers have shown that maximum results materialize when stakeholders develop intervention programs with purposeful conception and intentional layering of SEL into existing curricula (Constantine et al., 2019; McKown & Taylor, 2018). Furthermore, instructors' attitudes about SEL, as well as the unconscious, implicit biases

that may influence them, are reflected in the rigor of instruction, the relevance of the

information to the student's background, and how teachers communicate their

perspectives (B. L. Kennedy & Soutullo, 2018). Teachers may convey their beliefs and

perceptions of students and programs through curriculum practice and relationships built

with their students. Students' perception of their teachers can impact performance and

behavior, particularly among hypermarginalized learners and is a key factor in the

success of SEL programs in high schools.

The educational community may benefit from a better understanding of high

school teachers' SEL practices by using this information to aid in the positive

development of students' social-emotional abilities and the higher academic achievement

of at-risk kids. Likewise, research on SEL programs in high schools can improve

curriculum development and education policies that support noncognitive skillsets to

place at-risk students on a positive life trajectory (B. L. Kennedy & Soutullo, 2018).

Policymakers have acknowledged that teachers contribute to student growth beyond

academic achievement (Blazar & Kraft, 2017). Continued research should be conducted

to explore how teachers can contribute to their students' development by increasing their

self-efficacy, adopting a growth mindset, and gauging reliably in implementing SEL.

Learning environments can affect students' self-identity and self-efficacy when

transitioning to high school (Lieber & Tissiere, 2017). Von Keyserlingk et al. (2019)

examined the necessity for expanded studies relative to the effects of students

transitioning from middle school to high school. Findings revealed that students'

confidence levels changed with their shifting environment despite previous positive

experiences in earlier grades (von Keyserlingk et al., 2019). Therefore, teachers' beliefs and values regarding their practices can affect transitioning students in either positive or negative ways.

Similarly, Durlak et al. (2022) explored the adverse effects of social, emotional, and academic failure on older adolescents beyond graduation. Durlak et al. found that students' low self-efficacy affected them for at least 2 years beyond high school. Meyers et al. (2019) conducted studies that supported SEL practices as successful intervention tools that can diminish the adverse effects of youths transitioning to high school. Findings indicated the rising need for SEL programs from preschool through high school as youth have exhibited growing social, emotional, and behavioral issues (Meyers et al., 2019).

Oberle et al. (2016) reviewed studies centered on systemic SEL implementation and considered the systemwide approach optimal for students' success. Freeman et al. (2015) proposed that improvements in social, emotional, and behavioral problems occurred in schools where the SEL curriculum included the CASEL framework and integration with a schoolwide MTSS. Researchers have also indicated that breaking academic and social-emotional barriers requires a systemwide, cohesive, and sustained approach (Meyers et al., 2019; Ramberg et al., 2019). SEL intervention programs serve as platforms that move adolescents toward positive life trajectories (Abrahams et al., 2019).

SEL

SEL is the process through which individuals learn to recognize and manage emotions, develop empathy for others, engage in responsible decision making, and build and maintain positive relationships (Elias, 2019). SEL is considered a culturally

responsive curriculum based on Bandura's social cognitive learning theory (Imants & Van der Wal, 2020). Bandura (1977) introduced the theory to explain how individuals learn and later expanded this ideology to include cognitive processes integral to self-regulation and agency. Bandura (1982) also noted that social life includes harsh realities, but perseverance and resiliency, which are positive social-emotional skillsets, can help overcome hardships (Mosier, 2018). Bandura's social cognitive theory incorporated elements of Vygotsky's human development theory, linking individual development to culture (Beddows, 2016; Brinkworth et al., 2018; Domitrovich et al., 2017; Mosier, 2018). Vygotsky argued that human development is a social process through which children acquire values, beliefs, and critical thinking skills (Jaramillo, 1996). Additionally, Imants and Van der Wal (2020) found that self-efficacy develops when individuals experience success resulting in social-emotional well-being.

Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory states that individuals' capacity to improve their circumstances is interlinked with the experience of success, social-emotional health, and support through positive relationships. Additionally, Bandura (1982) asserted that thought associations and social interactions influence students' behavior, decisions, self-efficacy, and self-management. Students' perceived ability for success directly affects their achieved outcomes (Barry et al., 2017). Bandura (1977, 1982) posited that an individual's experiences are the strongest determinant of self-efficacy or capacity for success. Goleman (1995) noted that individuals' development of agency, academic identity, and self-efficacy prepare them to manage life challenges.

Bandura's (1977) theory and the research literature reflect principles incorporated in 21st-century best practices, including SEL programs and strategies.

SEL and the CASEL Framework

Meyers et al. (2019) noted that societal changes have increased educational stakeholders' interest in school SEL programs. Societal changes include rising unemployment, spiraling health issues among impoverished populations, surging violence, substance abuse, and incarceration among people residing in low SES communities (Desai & Abeita, 2017; Meyers et al., 2019; Taylor, 2020). Additionally, Yang et al. (2018) asserted that children from impoverished communities need additional support to acquire the necessary skillsets and benefit from a whole school MTSS.

Low SES African American and Hispanic youth disproportionately comprise at-risk learners in schools across the nation (Brinkworth et al., 2018; CASEL, 2018; Kress & Elias, 2013). Jones et al. (2020) maintained that whole-school intervention programs could benefit African American and Latinx students, confirming that multilayered intervention programs augment and refine social, emotional, and academic outcomes. For some schools, the solution to the problems associated with at-risk learners emerged in the form of SEL intervention programs. Researchers concluded that SEL teaching strategies could help students proactively navigate hardships (Reed, 2016; Ross & Tolan, 2018). However, if not addressed in schools, poverty and other forms of inequity may stifle at-risk students' sense of efficacy, achievement, and social-emotional development (Gay, 2021; Horn & Carroll, 1997; Kamil, 2016).

At-risk students enter schools familiar with inequality and failure, but schools can shift students from a negative path onto a positive one (Kwiatkowski, 2019; Lieber & Tissiere, 2017; Meyers et al., 2019). Creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment depends on teachers' self-awareness of their implicit biases and willingness to implement evidence-based strategies to benefit all learners (Durlak et al., 2011; Karras et al., 2021). Researchers have demonstrated that teachers' heightened self-awareness and self-efficacy have contributed to positive teacher-student relationships and shaped students' efficacy and academic performance (Imants & Van der Wal, 2020; Kamil, 2016).

Advantages of SEL Programs for At-Risk Students of Color

Britto et al. (2017) confirmed that poverty, trauma, poor nutrition, unstable housing, and violence globally effect children. Britto et al. also concluded that these factors could lead to negative noncognitive behaviors, resulting in an adverse life trajectory. Impoverished adolescents frequently face violence at home, in their community, and at school. Moreover, substance abuse, violence, and frequent encounters with police and the legal system disproportionately occur in low SES communities (Britto et al., 2017; Burchinal et al., 2020; Horn & Carroll, 1997; Hubel et al., 2020). Research findings indicated that these factors place youth at risk of academic failure, learning disorders, and high dropout rates (Hubel et al., 2020; Taylor, 2020).

Prior studies provided evidence—surveys, interviews, student achievement results, and case studies—that school employment of SEL programs helps aid at-risk learners with the development of social-emotional skills (DePaoli et al., 2018). Carroll et

al. (2020) emphasized that SEL provides children with skills that support their

matriculation into productive citizens who can successfully perform life's essential tasks.

Jackson (2018) identified correlations between teachers' use of SEL practices in

classrooms and students' autonomy, collaborative skills, and self-regulation. SEL equips

students of all backgrounds with skills to manage their emotions, build and maintain

positive relationships, and attain agency that can shape self-confidence.

However, researchers have suggested that low SES learners may enter high school

lacking essential social and emotional skills (Horn & Carroll, 1997; Zinskie & Rea,

2016). Seidman (2019) described the trauma experienced by impoverished youth as

disproportionately impactful for African American and Latinx populations. For these

marginalized youth, the conditions intrinsic to poverty may force the development of

offensive and defensive survival skills. The survival skills demonstrated by at-risk

students are often perceived as aggressive by society and schools (Desai & Abeita, 2017).

Inadequate social-emotional skillsets can curtail adolescents' ability to connect

with teachers and perpetuate a negative life trajectory for at-risk students (DePaoli et al.,

2018). For marginalized students, inequities in school and daily life can result in early

contact with the penal system (Delale-O'Connor et al., 2017; Desai & Abeita, 2017).

Underprivileged learners have the highest suspension and dropout rates as well as early

connections with the criminal justice system (Taylor, 2020). In addition, research has

shown that low academic performance is disproportionately prevalent among

disadvantaged SES African American and Hispanic students, a situation worsened by

systemic inequities in schools and society (Eshel et al., 2018; Hammond, 2015).

Subsequently, upon entering high school, barriers to reciprocal and positive relationships, methods of handling stressful situations, and low academic efficacy are stressors that can plague children from underprivileged backgrounds.

Marchbanks et al. (2018) noted that the lack of social and emotional skills often results in a disproportionate rate of disciplinary incidents and harsher punishment for learners of color. Repetitive punitive discipline can perpetuate high dropout rates among hypermarginalized student populations (Desmond & Western, 2018; Marchbanks et al., 2018). Conversely, Ross and Tolan's (2018) research indicated that culturally responsive content and SEL teaching strategies could diminish the negative impact of poverty for at-risk students and may foster their ability to navigate obstacles to success. Mahoney et al. (2018) examined four broad studies and synthesized the findings. The research suggested that SEL competencies facilitate students' academic and social behaviors and increase the likelihood of positive achievement in college and careers (Mahoney et al., 2018).

Challenges of SEL Implementation

Schools should provide safe learning spaces and opportunities to socialize through peer collaboration. However, schools can also be the source of negative experiences for learners who do not easily conform or acclimate to traditional academic environments. Increased stress and other challenges occur when middle school students transition to high school (Oberle et al., 2016). Research has indicated that adolescents' rising socialization needs have increased educational stakeholders' interest in secondary level SEL programs (Mahmud, 2020). However, the lack of policies and funding and a growing movement to remove SEL and other equity programs from public schools

threaten the sustainability of these programs (Camangian & Cariaga, 2022). As more states question whether SEL should be a part of public school curricula, educators continue to help their students develop social and emotional skillsets they will need to achieve in school, college, and the workplace.

Soland et al. (2019) argued that SEL programs function poorly in high schools where students experience extreme poverty. In extreme poverty schools, at-risk youth experience behavioral and academic challenges and frequently find themselves excluded in classes and among their peers (Hegedus, 2018). Several policies have evolved to achieve educational equity for all learners, but these appear deficient in attaining that objective. In 1965, government policymakers established the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, followed by the publication of Lincoln and Guba's (1986) *Education At-Risk Report*. This report prompted legislative action to increase academic gains in prekindergarten through secondary school (Jones et al., 2020; Reed, 2016). Subsequently, Adler-Greene (2019) noted that the Every Child Succeeds Act reauthorized the No Child Left Behind Act established in 2002. In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act, passed under President Obama, prompted a shift from national responsibility for students' success to the state and local levels (Sharp, 2016). By 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act had emerged to close the opportunity gap that prevents students from attaining a quality education (Zinskie & Rea, 2016). The 2016 Race to the Top education initiative followed the No Child Left Behind Act to augment the previous education policy under President Obama's administration (Adler-Greene, 2019). According to Gayl (2017),

despite the success of the Every Student Succeeds Act's goal to provide less advantaged youth with educational equity, at-risk students still face barriers to academic success.

Although legislators continue to focus on high-stakes testing to gauge learning, public policymakers fail to address high school students' social and emotional well-being (Kamil, 2016). Kamil (2016) asserted that despite growing research on SEL's benefits for school age children, policymakers have failed to address public high school students' SEL. However, the literature indicated that when implemented effectively using the CASEL framework, SEL can strengthen students' development skills, resulting in resilience and success beyond high school (Barnes, 2019; Oberle et al., 2016).

SEL and CASEL Competencies and Practices

CASEL is a popular and widely used framework for SEL programs throughout the United States (CASEL, 2018; Domitrovich et al., 2017; Weissberg, 2019). Mahoney et al. (2018) asserted that proficiency in social and emotional skills is essential for success in school and life. Social-emotional skills are required in all facets of society, including positive decision making, empathy for others, and building productive family and community relationships.

SEL consists of five goals, competencies, or standards established to promote equity in education and develop social-emotional skillsets that benefit youth beyond high school (Camangian & Cariaga, 2022). According to Domitrovich et al. (2017), proficiency in social and emotional competencies (SEC) supports resiliency in at-risk children. SEC is a multidimensional construct that benefits children who are experiencing

economic disadvantages, early emotional trauma, and behavioral problems (Domitrovich et al., 2017)

The CASEL (2018) foundation reported that the SEL competency clusters included building students' self-identity, academic identity, self-confidence, and a sense of purpose in society. Main (2018) described the five interrelated sets of SEL and CASEL competencies as integral to attaining psychological well-being and academic performance. According to Jagers et al. (2019), SEL practices can teach students to set and achieve positive goals, empathize with others, build and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

Denham (2018) promoted the importance of developing a sense of success and well-being early in a child's life, leading to high self-efficacy. Therefore, the development of social-emotional skills should begin in early childhood. Ideally, it should continue throughout the elementary, middle, and high school years to facilitate older adolescents' development of ethics, values, and moral judgment. Denham also noted the need to tailor SEL strategies to specific age groups. For example, SEL goals would differ for younger age groups than high school students with more complicated emotions and behavior choices. Classroom teachers play an integral role in developing their students' social-emotional skill sets, and attaining SEL skillsets requires teachers to integrate SEC across academic and behavioral contexts.

Teachers' Perceptions of SEL

Teachers' perceptions play a decisive role in the development of their students. Domitrovich et al. (2017) noted that students whom teachers viewed as successful in

kindergarten were more likely to flourish later in life. Teachers' predisposed perceptions of their students correlate with how well learners perform in cognitive and social-emotional spheres. Kim and Hong (2019) posited that teachers' perceptions of SEL programs could influence their application of SEL practices. Survey findings from both Kim and Hong and Schonert-Reichl (2019) revealed a gap between teachers' understanding of SEL components and how they integrated those competencies across content curriculum and instruction.

Teachers' self-efficacy is strongly linked to student outcomes. Teachers who recognize their asset or deficit perceptions can address and interrupt their personal biases and adopt a growth mindset. Researchers have maintained that efficacy affects the effort teachers invest in their practice, their level of aspiration, and the goals they set for themselves and their students (Brinkworth et al., 2018; Constantine et al., 2019). Teachers with elevated expectations and strong self-efficacy are more open and willing to try new methods to meet their students' needs (B. L. Kennedy & Soutullo, 2018). Efficacy beliefs also affect teachers' perseverance and resiliency when facing challenges with their students (Mosier, 2018). Moreover, efficacy enables teachers to be less critical of students when they struggle (Constantine et al., 2019; Karras et al., 2021).

Developing resiliency is of paramount importance for at-risk learners who have encountered traumatic experiences. According to Wentzel et al. (2010), students who develop resilience and self-regulatory skills can effectively manage and adapt to stress, fear, and frustration within the educational setting and their broader lives. Therefore, the instruction of resiliency skills via SEL programs may function as a protective factor for

youth in the face of traumatic events. Jagers et al. (2019) posited that implementing SEL strategies can foster the acquisition of essential competencies among teenagers, enabling them to navigate educational and personal domains effectively. Researchers also asserted that teachers' opinions of their pupils can significantly influence their ability to effectively foster the development of resilience abilities in their students (Mahoney et al., 2021; Simonsen et al., 2017).

Simonsen et al. (2017) reported that teachers' perceptions of at-risk youth could negatively affect how they view and implement SEL strategies. If educators are unfamiliar with their students' backgrounds, forming meaningful relationships and learning how to meet students' needs can be challenging. Developing relationships with students requires that teachers confront their beliefs and learn ways to shift from deficit mindsets to inclusive, asset thinking. B. L. Kennedy and Soutullo (2018) acknowledged the significance of asset versus deficit thinking among teachers; these attitudes manifest in educators' curricula, planning, and practices.

According to Friedrich et al. (2015), a phenomenon known as the Pygmalion effect supports the idea that teachers' expectations directly affect students' academic progress. Ruiter et al. (2020) acknowledged that some teachers might hold negative perceptions of their low SES students because of stereotyping and conflicts with students from these backgrounds. Negative dispositions damage teacher-student relationships and diminish students' self-efficacy (Newman & Ingraham, 2020; Ruiter et al., 2020). Bandura's (1982) theory of self-efficacy promoted the idea that learners only achieve when they believe in their ability to perform. Bandura also asserted that strong self-

efficacy facilitates a willingness to take risks, heightening opportunities for successful outcomes.

At-risk students frequently attest to distrusting authority figures and academia (Henderson et al., 2019). Teachers may view students from disadvantaged backgrounds as challenging because of their propensity to react adversely to authority and academic tasks. Both perceptions can result in a lowered sense of efficacy. Teachers can inspire positive student outcomes by systematically implementing proactive, evidence-based practices (Henderson et al., 2019; Musu-Gillette et al., 2017). However, Domitrovich et al. (2017) demonstrated that more than 90% of teachers expressed concerns about classroom management, and less than 60% knew about evidence-based practices. Perceptions of intervention programs like SEL can help determine teacher self-efficacy when asked to implement those programs. Approximately 21% of teachers surveyed reported minimal training in behavior interventions (Domitrovich et al., 2017). Although many educators believe that SEC are important, many admit they lack confidence in identifying which SEL competencies should be taught and how to teach them (Main, 2018). Subsequently, teachers have stated they are untrained to implement evidence-based behavior interventions to support marginalized and hypermarginalized learners. Low self-efficacy can result when an individual feels inadequately equipped to perform a task (Hajovsky et al., 2020).

Teachers' positive self-efficacy manifests in enhanced teacher and student outcomes (Ansari et al., 2020; Daneri et al., 2018). Teachers ' praise rate during lessons is also connected to students' academic and SEC (Simonsen et al., 2017). Constantine et al.

(2019) conducted a study on Bandura's theory of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is a widely recognized SEL theory that suggests people can achieve their goals only if they believe they are achievable. Constantine et al. found a strong correlation between high levels of self-efficacy, characterized by confidence and a willingness to take learning risks, and student achievement.

Teachers who replace deficit mindsets with growth mindsets nurture positive teacher-student relationships and create opportunities for positive student outcomes (Barry et al., 2017; Constantine et al., 2019; Kwiatkowski, 2019; Tan et al., 2018). Robust teacher self-efficacy influences practitioners' perceptions of SEL programs and their implementation. Educators who frequently lack confidence in their ability to implement the SEL curriculum might experience low self-efficacy and deficit mindsets about SEL and the at-risk students who benefit from it (Kamil, 2016; Neth et al., 2020). Self-efficacy stems from individuals' belief in themselves; however, that belief is difficult to conceptualize and measure. Despite this difficulty, research has increased as educational focus shifts from students' test scores to a closer examination of the connections between teachers' perceptions and student outcomes.

Also integral to student achievement are adolescents' sense of capability and identity. Many students from disadvantaged backgrounds enter school with a diminished sense of self-efficacy (Hegedus, 2018; Kwiatkowski, 2019; Leithwood, 2021). Mitigating the impact of poverty, learning disabilities, and violence on youth requires that teachers hone their ability to meet students at their academic and social-emotional levels while scaffolding SEL competencies as part of instructional practice (Constantine et al., 2019;

Main, 2018). Newman and Ingraham (2020) purported that teachers' diversity training can enhance their ability to serve disenfranchised student populations. Additionally, research findings have shown that teacher self-efficacy is associated with strong teacher-student bonds and decreased incidents of teacher-student conflicts (Hajovsky et al., 2020).

DePaoli et al. (2018), Domitrovich et al. (2017), and Durlak et al. (2011) conducted meta-analysis studies focused on SEL programming and its implications for students and teachers. The studies' findings indicated that SEL programs benefited low performing schools and were most effective when implemented over time. Strong student efficacy and positive academic identity remain integral to placing low SES students on a positive life trajectory. Therefore, proactive preservice teacher training, SEL PD, and multitiered support systems are important components that schools should consider when developing SEL intervention programs (Friedrich et al., 2015; B. L. Kennedy & Soutullo, 2018; Mahoney et al., 2021). In this current basic qualitative study, I examined the influences of teacher efficacy, implicit bias, and deficit versus growth mindsets regarding the schools' programs and SEL implementation.

SEL Implementation, CASEL, and Instructional Strategies

Challenges emerge when schools attempt to implement social-emotional intervention programs. An inclusive, equitable learning space in a sustainable SEL environment is paramount for positive student outcomes. SEL is considered less effective in traditional schools where authoritarian, teacher-centered practices abound (Ferreira et al., 2020). Therefore, it is incumbent on universities and school districts to provide

teachers with training to enhance self-awareness and help educators address implicit bias (Legette et al., 2022). With the appropriate training, teachers' ability to interrupt deficit thinking and embrace asset thinking enables them to meet students' diverse needs (Constantine et al., 2019).

Educators remain essential elements in the process of school change. Nevertheless, the lack of training in classroom management, diversity, and the implementation of SEL practices may undermine teachers' confidence in effectively implementing SEL programs (Domitrovich et al., 2017; Neth et al., 2020; Perron et al., 2016). Preconceived ideas held by marginalized African American and Latinx students can also have a negative effect on their relationships with their teachers (Elliott et al., 2018).

When teachers' views are influenced by bias, it may disproportionately affect student groups who are considered at-risk, particularly in schools that suffer from limited funding and low academic performance (Taylor, 2020). The importance of PD in diversity, equality, and social-emotional practices cannot be overstated when it comes to the transformation of schools and the academic success of students (Mahoney et al., 2021; Schonert-Reichl, 2019). Despite research findings, teachers lack awareness regarding the beneficial effect they have on their students when they develop positive bonds and communicate belief in students' capacity to succeed (Daneri et al., 2018; Hajovsky et al., 2020). To effectively address the needs of disadvantaged student groups and successfully integrate SEL into their teaching practices, teachers must receive

ongoing training and coaching to enhance their self-efficacy and develop a deeper

understanding of their effect on student achievement (Perron et al., 2016).

Neth et al. (2020) investigated the experiences of disadvantaged minority students

during their transition from middle school to high school, specifically focusing on the

physical, social, and intellectual changes they encountered. The study results indicated

that adolescents frequently hold unfavorable attitudes towards academics and authority

figures throughout the transition from middle school to high school. Therefore,

implementing strategies that promote the development of adolescents' identity, agency,

autonomy, and capacity to maintain positive connections may enhance their social-

emotional abilities and academic identity (Burchinal et al., 2020; Carroll et al., 2020). In

a classroom focused on SEL, the implementation of practices that cultivate these abilities

is evident through well-designed planning that seamlessly incorporates social and

emotional programming into the academic curriculum (Mahoney et al., 2021).

Teachers play a significant role in establishing SEL spaces for their students

(Philibert, 2021). Daneri et al. (2018) linked teachers' capacity to develop student-

centered SEL lessons differentiated for their learners with fostering students' social and

emotional skills, which also helped them succeed academically. Similarly, Hajovsky et

al. (2020) correlated SEL with dyadic social constructs that included school performance

and academic achievement. Dyadic constructs are common within social and behavioral

science studies, where researchers examine two interrelated variables to determine the

significance of their connection (Hajovsky et al., 2020; Wentzel et al., 2010). Dyadic

relationships between teachers and students are crucial to students' perceptions of teacher

caring and expectations, which are directly linked to students' social-emotional development and academic achievement (Jagers et al., 2019).

Researchers have demonstrated the importance of teachers' self-efficacy and students' perceptions (Daneri et al., 2018; Mahoney et al., 2021; Wentzel et al., 2010). Teachers with high self-efficacy rates have a better rapport with their students. The current study addresses teachers' use of SEL practices and their influence on student outcomes. Because evidence-based SEL practices can diminish barriers between teachers and their students, it is incumbent on teachers to plan lessons and use intentional methods to shape and strengthen students' social-emotional skillsets (Bos et al., 2019; CASEL, 2018; Mahoney et al., 2021).

SEL programs in the classroom should incorporate (a) positive relationships between teachers and peers, (b) high teacher efficacy, (c) ongoing feedback between teacher and student, and (d) minimal negative interchanges between teachers and their students (Oberle et al., 2016). Philpott and Oates (2017) asserted that building teachers' awareness of their efficacy would result in effective pedagogy that shapes students' SEC. Denham (2018) claimed that measuring SEL skillsets is challenging for educators and researchers. It is difficult to quantitatively ascertain subjective data, but it is possible through multimodal methodology (Ramberg et al., 2019). Measuring SEL outcomes and SEC is required for teachers to recognize their effect on students, which means establishing valid methods for teaching and measuring SEL skillsets.

SEL implementation using the CASEL framework offers structured and measurable forms for gauging the effectiveness of SEL practices (CASEL, 2020). The

CASEL framework provides the necessary construct that guides educators in planning

and incorporating a social-emotional curriculum. Meyers et al. (2019) noted that CASEL

promotes a schoolwide systemic framework considered influential in transforming low

performing schools, raising teacher awareness, improving teacher and staff attitudes and

practice, increasing student performance, and achieving equity in schools. A whole

school systemic approach to the development, training, and execution of SEL facilitates a

broad analysis of SEL as an intervention program for marginalized and

hypermarginalized students (Camangian & Cariaga, 2022; Desmond & Western, 2018).

SEL's Influence on Student Outcomes and Program Sustainability

SEL builds students' social and emotional skills and improves student outcomes.

Yang et al. (2018) conducted research that indicated schoolwide SEL programs taught

students how to (a) make good choices based on knowledge of consequences and values,

(b) maintain positive relationships, and (c) self-regulate behavior. Findings showed that

SEL practices are more effective with elementary and middle school children (Yang et

al., 2018). Ross et al. (2019) linked both male and female growth trajectories to self-

regulation and noted that females' self-management skills improved over time. However,

studies with analysis of the effect of SEL as an intervention program for high school

students remain scarce. Subsequently, the literature has shown that SEL leads to long-

term benefits for adolescents, including improved mental health, skilled social

functioning, enriched academic performance, and constructive behavior choices

(Burchinal et al., 2020; Durlak et al., 2011; Mahoney et al., 2018). For example,

Mahoney et al. (2018) analyzed results from four large scale meta-analyses of SEL

programs and found that students exhibited improved behavioral and academic outcomes. Similar research also supported the need for teacher preparation, including attention to SEL programming (DePaoli et al., 2018).

Disenfranchised students remain at risk of academic failure, dropping out of school, and early contact with the juvenile justice system. Blyth et al. (2018) claimed that SEL could improve academic and socioemotional outcomes for disadvantaged kindergarten through middle school students. However, the literature indicates that high school adolescents can benefit from consistent participation in SEL programs (Barry et al., 2017; Beard, 2018). Students from low SES backgrounds enter high school with experiences that include low academic performance, disciplinary problems, and issues with self-identity and relationships (Wentzel et al., 2010). Numerous SES students transition to high school exhibiting low academic performance, disciplinary problems, a lack of self-identity, and difficulty maintaining positive relationships. Social and emotional skills may bolster students' sense of belonging as they transition to high school (Blazar & Kraft, 2017; Burchinal et al., 2020; Carroll et al., 2020).

Program Outcomes and Measurement

Schools need reliable and consistent ways of supporting teachers' application of SEL standards, competencies, and practices. I used various methods in the current study to analyze, measure, and synthesize student academic and behavioral data. Few studies have used instruments to measure teachers' perceptions of SEL and the students whom they serve. However, Brinkworth et al. (2018) documented the efficacy of Resiliency Scales for Children and Adolescents to measure personal qualities and vulnerabilities

related to resiliency and adaptability in adolescents and adults. The CASEL framework

supports SEL integrations with multitiered student support systems (Meyers et al., 2019).

The framework allows for data analysis from those systems to measure teacher behaviors

and student outcomes. These evidence-based evaluation tools are effective in the

measurement of SEL program efficacy.

By the time disadvantaged adolescents reach high school, many have experienced

retention and academic failure (Neth et al., 2020). Therefore, these students may distrust

authority figures and react to stress in ways that can be detrimental to their success.

Multiple studies have demonstrated that students of color face severe learning barriers

due to traumatic experiences intrinsic to poverty (Eshel et al., 2018; Hegedus, 2018;

Hubel et al., 2020; Oberle et al., 2016). According to Yeager et al. (2018), older,

impoverished teenagers experience negative emotional and behavioral consequences

because of risk factors like stress and poverty. As a result, it is necessary to provide

marginalized and hypermarginalized adolescents with comprehensive intervention

programs that can effectively guide them in navigating the challenges of high school

(Desmond & Western, 2018). In the current research study, educators provided self-

reported data regarding implementing MTSS and Positive Behavioral Interventions and

Supports (PBIS). The primary objective of these interventions was to foster a positive

student culture, enhance students' academic achievements, and reduce the incidence of

student suspensions. Notably, the at-risk student populations, predominantly composed of

minority and disadvantaged students, experienced disproportionate suspension rates.

Once a student enters the ninth grade, they may find their social and academic skills inadequate. In this study, I addressed economically and racially marginalized youth (see Burchinal et al., 2020; Campbell et al., 2016; Delale-O'Connor et al., 2017). Research concerning SEL intervention programs warranted expansive investigation of SEL and CASEL employment and sustainability. Campbell et al. (2016) demonstrated that low SES African American and Latinx students have typically fallen below grade level by ninth grade and begin high school on a negative life path (Campbell et al., 2016; CASEL, 2018). Researchers have also shown that schoolwide multilevel support systems, teacher buy-in, high teacher efficacy, and SEL spaces could help decrease disciplinary problems and promote program sustainability (Kress & Elias, 2013; Oberle et al., 2016). I explored and analyzed teachers' self-awareness and efficacy concerning SEL application in the current basic qualitative research project study. Further analysis of SEL implementation and factors influencing program efficacy contributes to existing studies and informs social-emotional policy and practice (see Neth et al., 2020).

SEL and MTSS

The feasibility of incorporating multitiered support systems with SEL over an extended period has been demonstrated in research studies (Freeman et al., 2015; Yang et al., 2018). Implemented via the CASEL framework, SEL was intentionally developed to be compatible with MTSS (CASEL, 2018). Ramberg et al. (2019) asserted that failure to incorporate the CASEL framework into multitiered support programs for SEL may perpetuate difficulties for at-risk students, impeding their academic identity and hindering the development of social-emotional skills. Consequently, these students may experience

ongoing frustration and struggle as they navigate the educational environment (Dobia et al., 2019; Marchbanks et al., 2018). The significance of incorporating MTSS into SEL activities was emphasized by Simonsen et al. (2017). Both Meyers et al. and Simonsen et al. (2017) asserted that fragmented endeavors to implement intervention programs have detrimental effects on both children and schools. On the other hand, programs that show cohesiveness and sustainability provide a sense of continuity for children from unstable households and communities. Consequently, I incorporated interview questions designed to facilitate dialogue on educators' thoughts and perspectives concerning SEL, CASEL, and MTSS components. Participants reported that MTSS, including PBIS, had long been programs in the district's schools with minimal success in many of the high needs, low performing middle and high schools. All participants in the current study expressed the hope that integrating SEL with the existing intervention programs would stem the rising drop-out rates, suspension rates, and low academic performance in their schools.

Implications

Based on the literature, implications for this study's findings include expanding strategies for enhanced teacher efficacy through four PD sessions, as shown in Appendix A (see Hajovsky et al., 2020; Main, 2018). The findings of my study allowed me to create a 4-day PD training for educators. The content for the training includes its purpose, goals, and learning outcomes structured from my study's data and analysis.

One pattern that emerged from my research was the need to foster teachers' self-efficacy so they can feel confident in integrating SEL strategies. In addition, teachers identified the support needed to implement SEL consistently. The PD sessions may

encourage teachers to indicate the types of support they require to consistently implement SEL. Suggestions for self-reflection, approaches for using SEL strategies in daily or weekly lessons, and articulating needed support may benefit teachers, students, and their high schools.

According to Philibert (2021), teachers' perspectives shape their practice and require ongoing self-reflection as they strive to instill positive social-emotional skillsets and mindsets in their students. While research indicates that teachers play a significant role in developing students' social-emotional skillsets, educators may lack confidence in their ability to teach SEL skills (Main, 2018). The PD sessions will provide opportunities for teachers to collaboratively learn about SEL, determine what SEL competencies they need to teach, and how to structure their lessons to ensure that instructional practices support SEL goals. The 4-day sessions will provide opportunities for teachers to increase their knowledge of SEL, determine which SEL competencies to teach, and plan how to embed SEL strategies during lesson planning.

During the PD, on Days 3 and 4, teachers will use the standard ELA curriculum plan to refine the integration of SEL goals and objectives, encompassing purpose, grade level, learners, scope, and sequence. The curriculum plan will include descriptions of materials and units and lessons incorporating SEL strategies into daily lessons for ELA for Grades 9 through 12. The curriculum plan will span a minimum of 6 to 9 weeks with usable SEL lesson exemplars. The curriculum plan will foster systemic SEL implementation to ensure equity in lesson planning and instructional practice (see Mahoney et al., 2021)

Through this qualitative project study, I aspire to assist teachers with understanding their role in SEL implementation. The PD sessions may also encourage changes in policy and curriculum, which might evolve into positive systemic changes to benefit the district's high schools. Although the discussions during the 4-day sessions can enhance teachers' ability to connect with their students, teachers' collaborative efforts to build social-emotional practices into lessons could place their students on a productive life trajectory (see Jones et al., 2020). Similarly, a well-aligned SEL curriculum plan will provide a tangible product educators can use to progress from training to practice. The implications for my study can result in positive framing of high school SEL programs and increase the SEL program support by administrators, the school district, and education policymakers.

Summary

Teachers are integral to their learners' achievement, with growing research supporting the idea that students' learning should include social-emotional skills development in conjunction with academic acuity (Main, 2018; Neth et al., 2020; Philibert, 2021). The problem addressed in this study was that high school teachers in a local Southeast regional school district lack consistent SEL instructional implementation. The high schools were selected because of their demographics and academic performance similarities. These schools have predominantly Black and Latino populations. The schools' administration, local reports, leadership experts, and multilevel support staff concurred that SEL was a school and districtwide goal for high schools where SEL was inconsistently applied. This inconsistency in implementation created a gap between

curriculum goals and classroom practice. I selected this phenomenon to research the perceptions of high school teachers relative to their instructional implementation of the SEL curriculum, perceptions of their role in SEL, views on the influence SEL practices have on student outcomes, and the affect SEL skillsets have on students' success.

Research has indicated a strong link between teachers' perspectives and the development of students' social-emotional skills (Main, 2018). Subsequently, in this study, I explored high school teachers' perspectives regarding their instructional implementation of the SEL curriculum, perceptions of their role in SEL implementation, and their views about the influence of SEL practices on student outcomes. This study could be useful in the local educational setting to refine the SEL curriculum and teachers' SEL instruction. I grounded my study using the conceptual framework of CASEL, which served as the development and implementation framework for the study's school district. The CASEL framework guided my RQs, data collection protocol, and analysis of both the problem and findings. The results of my research study of educators' perceptions of SEL can help build an understanding of teachers' roles in ensuring that learners are on a positive life trajectory. This study could aid in necessary policy changes and help shape high school curricula and practice.

Section 2: The Methodology

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of high school teachers in a local Southeast regional school district on their instructional implementation of the SEL curriculum, perceptions of their role in SEL implementation, and views on the influence SEL practices have on student outcomes. To mitigate issues of educational inequity, a school system in the Southeast region of the United States implemented SEL into its academic courses. Based on the analysis of the district's public data and previous consultations with experts in the area, it was determined that the implementation of the SEL initiative had positive effects on various aspects of students' educational experience, including behavior, academic achievement, attendance, and discipline referrals, particularly in elementary and middle school settings. However, despite initiatives to employ culturally sensitive teaching practices, SEL was ineffective in the high schools that initiated this program.

In the local school district, the SEL program that used the CASEL framework was included in the elementary and middle schools' curricula. In contrast, the high school curriculum focused on traditional and hierarchical structures. The disparities between elementary, middle, and high school curricula indicated gaps in SEL implementation at the secondary school level. In my study, I addressed this gap through this basic qualitative project study guided by one RQ and two sub-RQs:

RQ: What are high school teachers' perspectives regarding their instructional implementation of the SEL curriculum using the CASEL framework?

Sub-RQ1: What are high school teachers' perspectives about the consistency with which they employ SEL practices in the classroom?

Sub-RQ2: What are high school teachers' perceptions about the influence of SEL on student outcomes?

In searching for an approach that would facilitate a comprehensive and expansive exploration of the SEL phenomenon, I selected a basic qualitative design. In the current research study's plan and process I focused on individuals' experiences and perceptions based on a common phenomenon (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I used a basic qualitative design to examine educators' perceptions and SEL perspectives. In addition, I explored teachers' self-reported knowledge of SEL strategies that align with the CASEL conceptual framework and their perspectives on SEL's influence on student outcomes. I employed a basic qualitative research approach to investigate the meaning people or groups give to a social or human problem (Burkholder et al., 2016). Through this research study, I strived to comprehend teachers' meanings regarding SEL programs in their schools. As a result, my research focused on high school teachers' thoughts on SEL using the CASEL paradigm.

After reviewing various research methodologies, I selected a basic qualitative study design, which allowed for an in-depth exploration of teachers' opinions on SEL (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Lincoln and Guba (1986) described basic qualitative research as derived philosophically from constructionism, phenomenology, and symbolic interaction used by researchers who are interested in (a) how people interpret their experiences, (b) how they construct their worlds, and (c) what meaning they attribute to their experiences.

The data collection tools I used in this study were semistructured interviews and a field research journal. I conducted all interviews in a relational, contextual, person-centered, and nonevaluative manner.

Qualitative research is considered one of the more effective approaches to understanding social and human problems (Burkholder et al., 2016; Creswell et al., 2007). According to Burkholder et al. (2016), qualitative researchers use data captured in natural settings, which are sensitive to people and places. Qualitative research facilitates both inductive and deductive data analysis and an in-depth view of how concepts, patterns, and themes are related and unfold over time (Rutledge et al., 2015). Additionally, qualitative research allows researchers to focus more on processes than outcomes (Burkholder et al., 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Ravitch and Carl (2016) explained that qualitative research is both iterative and interpretive. Subsequently, this research method allowed me to engage with participants in rich dialogue through interviews and ongoing participant-researcher interaction. My qualitative project study allowed me to use techniques central to teachers' first-hand experiences in specific contexts of what people do and say within unique situations and settings.

Participants

Researchers should consider participants as experts on their lived experiences (Burkholder et al., 2916). Each participant is unique and may view similar events and concepts through very different lenses (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The researcher must carefully consider these variables when determining the sampling approach and data collection method most feasible for the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In this section, I

describe the criteria for selecting participants for my study and the rationale for my

sampling choices. I discuss the procedures I used to gain access to the participants, the

relationship between them and myself, and the measures I took to protect their

confidentiality and rights. I also outline my role in engaging with the participants and

ensuring equity and ethics in selecting individuals based on their suitability to help me

reach saturation.

Sampling and Criteria for Selecting Participants

A critical part of a research design is determining the number of participants to be

selected. I chose purposive sampling, which targets a group with specific characteristics

and is amenable for a study with a small number of participants (see Blazar & Kraft,

2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Burkholder et al. (2016) asserted that purposive

sampling augments exploratory, qualitative research and is conducive to an in-depth

analysis of the phenomenon. Purposive sampling is a dynamic, stratified social process

that supports a scientific and realist approach (Burkholder et al., 2016). Also, purposive

sampling requires that participants have characteristics relevant to the phenomenon

studied and considered adequate to achieve data saturation (Seidman, 2019). Merriam

and Tisdell (2016) concurred that purposive sampling helps the researcher select

participants from a specific group to achieve in-depth insight regarding a phenomenon,

such as SEL. Subsequently, purposive sampling is considered practical in exploratory

research and appropriate for my research project.

Purposive sampling was a viable choice for this project study as it allowed me to

select participants with similar traits that can be transferred to the larger proposition (see

Seidman, 2019). As suggested by Ravitch and Carl (2016), the individuals in my study were purposefully selected based on the core constructs and the contexts of the RQ and sub-RQs. Participants selected for my study had similar knowledge and experiences of the phenomenon. In selecting a sample for this study, I ensured that the selection was expansive enough to minimize bias, determined which attributes mirrored features of the broader population and attain transferability; and discerned the sample's ability to address the research problem, purpose, and questions. In this study, I recruited 10 ELA teachers from a population of both schools' 180 teachers and explored their perceptions regarding SEL using the CASEL framework. The general population in this research study consisted of secondary education teachers from all interdisciplinary content areas. The criteria for inclusion in the study were that the participants must be actively teaching ELA in one of the district high schools and teaching at a school that served 40% or higher Hispanic and African American populations where at least 50% of the students received free or reduced lunch. At each of the high schools in this study, the teacher population consisted of more than 90 teachers serving a minimum of 1300 students; the teacher to student ratio was 16 students per teacher. At each of the two high schools in this study, there were 20 ELA teachers, five for each grade level, including those who cotaught in inclusion and self-contained ELA classrooms. All teachers at both high schools possessed some familiarity with SEL.

As an interpretive researcher, I sought data that yielded fresh, authentic, and quality results. Reybold et al. (2013) asserted that the participant selection process is a blend of underlying choices about assumptions that may guide the inquiry and unintended

consequences that may emerge from those choices. Therefore, I selected my study's

participants through a purposive sampling of teachers actively teaching ELA courses at

four high schools within the district. I based the selection of ELA teachers on the fact that

reading interpretation and language acuity prepare students for success in all other

subjects. Limitations exist for teachers to hone reading skills at high-risk, low

performing, and hard-to-staff schools (Henderson et al., 2019; Mahoney et al., 2021).

Participants for my study were selected based on their status as certified ELA

teachers from Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12, totaling a sample population of 10. I selected

these four grade levels because a study on teachers from these different cohorts

strengthened the continuity and applicability of the findings. Although teachers may have

been new to their schools, all participants had some experience with SEL. The criteria for

participants also allowed me to gain an accurate insight into their perceptions of the SEL

program across grade levels. Each participant's beliefs about SEL varied and provided

rich and diverse data (see Creswell et al., 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2016). All participants

were informed that they could leave the study at any time and that participation was

voluntary; there would be no reimbursement or payment for time.

Justification for Participant Numbers

The appropriateness of participant numbers depends on the researcher's purpose

and goals for data collection. The number of participants can affect data saturation, and

this stipulation guided my choice of the study's population size (see Malterud et al.,

2016; Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Consideration of time, resources, and the depth of

research played a role in the participant selection and my sample size (see Reybold et al.,

2013; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Seidman, 2019). There are no defined sample size guidelines in qualitative studies; nonetheless, the size should be consistent with the study's goal and what is regarded as important and believable (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I wanted to balance the representation and quality of responses in my study, and 10 participants helped me achieve that goal (see Malterud et al., 2016). By recruiting a small sample of 10 teachers to explore their perceptions regarding SEL using the CASEL framework, I was able to conduct extensive interviews with each participant and have the time needed to examine and analyze data to achieve saturation. By keeping my study's sample size small, I allowed for limitations in time and resources while increasing opportunities to gather rich, in-depth data.

Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants

According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), barriers to accessing participants include procuring entry into an organization linked to the study and individuals associated with the fieldwork. Problems can also stem from the school board, superintendents, and the administration's hesitancy to grant on-site research access. Because my research study concerned individuals and not institutions, I was bound by ethical principles to respect all persons involved in my study, acknowledge each individual autonomy, and ensure my research's beneficence (see Burkholder et al., 2016). Subsequently, my process for gaining access to participants minimized risk to the participants and followed the ethical guidelines of Walden's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

I accessed my pool of potential participants by using teachers' emails accessible to the public and through the personal emails of teachers who comprised a group of

collegial professionals. I contacted 10 local individuals who taught high school ELA in

Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12. I also recruited five additional volunteers as alternates if any of

the original participants decided to withdraw from the study; however, I did not need to

use additional participants.

Most public schools provide the email addresses of educators who work in their

districts. Therefore, I accessed high school teachers whose email addresses were a part of

a public database. I sent each prospective participant an email invitation, which included

a description of the study, an invitation to participate, and a consent form. Volunteer

participants were asked to signify their agreement to become a member of the participant

pool by responding to the invitation email with the words, "I consent." The email

invitation and consent section emphasized the nature of the study and ensured that

prospective participants were aware their involvement was strictly voluntary. I am a part

of this community of colleagues; however, I have no power or authority over any of the

teachers in the district. Subsequently, teachers did not feel intimidated or coerced to

participate in the study. By assuring honesty, transparency, and confidentiality to all

potential participants, I fostered collegial support and gained access to participants.

To complete education research fieldwork, most researchers need access to

participants and the school sites that comprise the focus of the study (see Burkholder et

al., 2016). However, my study consisted of virtual semistructured interviews with

participants who did not require observation. All interviews occurred outside of the

participants' workplace. My strategies were appropriate according to Walden

University's IRB stipulations. It was best to access study participants individually rather than the organizations to which they belonged.

Building trust and rapport with the participants and maintaining transparency was paramount to receiving honest, in-depth answers to the interview questions. By discussing the purpose of the research, providing a thorough description of the study, and ensuring participants' confidentiality, I developed trust with my interviewees. I began my basic qualitative research study once the IRB process was completed (approval # 10-28-22-0756021) and the volunteers in my participant pool provided consent forms stating their agreement to participate. Next, I began interviewing my study's participants with no substitutions needed. Throughout all stages of my study, I ensured the quality and trustworthiness of my study remained uncompromised.

Researcher-Participant Working Relationship

In this basic qualitative study, I maintained the role of both researcher and participant. Interpretivist research stems from the assumption that one is aware of the study's topic and context (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Because my research was conducted in a school district where I am currently employed, I considered and explained my positionality, background, interests, and biases. The researcher-participant relationship occurs when a researcher gains access to an organization and works in the same or similar setting. I have been teaching in the district for 23 years; therefore, the participants were made aware of my familiarity with the district's SEL and CASEL programs. They also knew that despite my work at the school, I held no supervisory role, and the research did not interfere with or impede their jobs as educational practitioners.

Establishing a bond with my study's participants helped create rapport and led to honest, authentic responses to the interview questions. Participants responded more openly once I built trust and made personal connections (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012). One commonality I shared with the participants was my role as a teacher of at-risk students at a high-impact school. I believe that my 25 years of experience teaching at-risk youth confirmed my familiarity with and empathy for the challenges they faced. Another aspect I discussed with the participants was my role as teacher-advocate and community-school liaison. I also informed them of my previous National Teacher Association school leader role. This role involved ongoing support, problem solving, and collaboration with teachers in the school, district, and state. I mentioned my researcher's role to dispel any presumption that the interview data might be shared for evaluation or punitive purposes.

According to Walden University's IRB protocol, the participants were assured that their identities and data would be protected. Throughout my study, I reminded participants that I maintained an ethical obligation as a researcher to keep all information identified, and those assurances should augment trust and transparency (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). By fostering a strong rapport with participants, they felt more comfortable sharing experiences openly and honestly. Therefore, the data I collected was rich, in-depth, and authentic, strengthening the trustworthiness of my findings.

Protecting Participant Rights

Protection of participants is the obligation of all researchers (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Data collection and reporting raise ethical challenges, such as (a) informed consent, (b) data ownership, and (c) keeping qualitative data confidential while remaining

authentic with contextual details to facilitate secondary analyses (Jeung et al., 2016).

Maintaining participants' confidentiality is also critical when reusing data and archiving;

in doing so, the researcher is taking steps to protect the participants and maintain the

data's integrity (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). My role as researcher

involved ensuring that participants felt assured that confidentiality would be maintained

with no potential risks to their identity or information shared being disclosed. Also, I

informed participants of any potential risks the current study might impose.

Protecting the participants' rights began with meeting Walden University's IRB

requirements, my continued cognizance of these rights, and my responsibility to see they

did not experience harm (see Burkholder et al., 2016). Throughout the study, I protected

the confidentiality of my participants by addressing ethics aligned with IRB protocol and

the school district. I also provided participants with explanations and descriptions of my

procedures and methods to ensure ethical protections for the teachers, school, and district.

I will store all data for a minimum of 5 years after completion of the study and dispose of

the data securely afterward.

The protection of study participants remained my priority. I adhered to the IRB's

protocol and Walden's Office of Research Ethics and Compliance. Sklar and Crescioni

(2019) maintained that protecting participants' rights should include lawfulness, fairness,

and transparency. Additionally, appropriate protocols for ethical compliance included (a)

protection of human subjects, (b) maintaining partnerships with the school and

community, (c) use of appropriate scholarly tools to collect data, and (d) ensuring that the

data collected pertains to my study's original purpose. Researchers have also warned

against transmitting unintended data, which can be used as secondary sources for publications and research studies (Jeung et al., 2016; Sklar & Crescioni, 2019). I secured all collected data on a password-protected laptop used solely for this study. The laptop, audio files, and my researcher journal will remain secured in a locked location to protect participants' confidentiality.

Data Collection

I collected the data for this study by conducting virtual interviews and using both a priori and in vivo coding to analyze the data deductively and inductively. As Rubin and Rubin (2012) and Ravitch and Carl (2016) suggested, while collecting data, I wrote concise fieldnotes in my researcher journal to assist me with accurate data interpretation. Whereas in-person interviews have been the main tool researchers use, technology offers virtual interviewing as a unique option. Despite possible technical difficulties, Zoom was viable for collecting qualitative data, enhanced interpersonal discourse, was cost-effective, and secure (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012). According to Rubin and Rubin, participants interviewed using virtual technology reported feeling comfortable with the online interview process. Using Zoom as an interview platform facilitated the extrapolation of rich, relevant, and accurate data. The data collection component of my study lasted 3 months; it took an additional 3 months for member checking, iterative coding cycles, and the final analysis to occur.

After receiving IRB approval, I emailed invitations to participate in my study to purposively selected individuals along with consent forms. Once I received the required consent forms, I contacted the study's volunteers and arranged the interview times and

dates. As indicated in Table 1, I conducted interview sessions with teachers, allowing

sufficient time for the participants to respond fully to the interview questions. Table 1

illustrates each session's interview times, dates, platform, and duration.

Table 1

Interview Format

Teacher	Interview date	Location	Duration
T1	Nov. 14, 2022	Zoom	1 hr. 11 min.
T2	Nov. 18, 2022	Zoom	1 hr. 16 min.
T3	Nov. 18, 2022	Zoom	41 min.
T4	Dec. 29, 2022	Zoom	35 min.
T5	Dec. 29, 2022	Zoom	46 mins.
T6	Jan. 7, 2023	Zoom	40 mins.
T7	Jan. 7, 2023	Zoom	46 mins.
T8	Jan 12, 2023	Zoom	1 hr. 18 min.
T9	Jan. 12, 2023	Zoom	40 min.
T10	Jan. 13, 2023	Zoom	45 min.

Note: T = teacher; 1, 2, 3, etc. = participant number.

In preparation for the interviews, I conducted two pilot interviews, which allowed me to vet the process and familiarize myself with techniques to tactfully encourage elaboration on responses. I determined if questions were redundant or overlapping so I could tailor the interview questions to increase clarity and focus. Prior to the interviews, I also developed and applied an interview refinement protocol, aligning each interview question with the current study's RQ and sub-RQs and the CASEL conceptual framework. Each question was open-ended and designed to focus on perceptions rather than being evaluative. I ensured that each question was neutral in tone to avoid bias and scaffolded each to build upon the queries that preceded it. Appendix B shows the interview refinement protocol I used in my study, including the interview questions, how they aligned to help answer the RQ and sub-RQs, and their connection to the CASEL conceptual framework. The interview questions were designed to scaffold inquiries

regarding teachers' mindsets of SEL strategy consistency, their knowledge of and self-efficacy in SEL implementation, and the effects of SEL on student outcomes.

According to Castillo-Montoya (2016), using an interview protocol facilitates improving data quality and eliciting focused and coherent information from the participants. The protocol involved the development of questions in line with the study's objectives, obtaining input on the quality and content of the questions, and conducting preliminary interviews. The preliminary interviews were pilot sessions with education experts, allowing me to refine my interview style and ensure that the questions were clearly stated. It also helped me to practice probing for additional information from the participants' responses.

I used the responsive interviewing model for this study, facilitating a flexible questioning style where the researcher does not dominate the interviews but acts as a session facilitator (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012). According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), responsive interviewing "emphasizes searching for context and richness while accepting the complexity and ambiguity of real life" (p. 37). Using this model encouraged the interviewees to answer the questions thoroughly and in detail (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I audio-recorded the interview sessions with each participant, which allowed me to transcribe the data accurately and transcribed the interviews following each session. Ravitch and Carl (2016) asserted that transcripts strengthen the validity of the data collection process. I used the transcripts and fieldnotes written in my research journal through every stage of the data collection process. I reviewed each transcript immediately following the interview; I used my notes from each transcript to help me accurately

interpret the data. Following transcription and annotations, I emailed each participant their transcript and annotated summaries of my findings for member checking. Each participant and I reviewed my summary notes of the interviews via Zoom to ensure authenticity and accuracy of my interpretations of each response. This member checking process allowed participants to clarify responses as needed, ask any questions, or comment on my summaries of their interview responses.

Description and Justification of Data Collected

In this basic qualitative study, I explored the perceptions of high school teachers in a local Southeast regional school district on their instructional implementation of the SEL curriculum, perceptions of their role in SEL implementation, and views on the influence SEL practices have on student outcomes. I used data to expand knowledge of teachers' perceptions of high school SEL programs that serve large populations of at-risk youth of color. Further, the data collected were used to gain insight regarding strategies schools can use to successfully implement SEL (see Bernhardt, 2015). Data collection using semistructured interviews was appropriate as this provided opportunities to increase understanding of how perceptions prompt specific actions (see Bernhardt, 2015). Data collection occurred by conducting one interview per participant, using a researcher journal, memos, and notes (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

The responsive interviewing model was appropriate for this basic qualitative study. According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), the interviewing process should be intentional, rigorous, and systematic but should not be conducted using overly rigid rules or procedures. Responsive interviewing allows the researcher to conduct flexible, in-

depth sessions that yield rich, detailed data. Subsequently, using the responsive interview model and semistructured interviews allowed me to maintain flexibility in style and approach (see Bernhardt, 2015; Gonzales & Vasudeva, 2021; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Each interview was a conversation that allowed me to gain information that included a combination of facts, opinions, and attitudes.

The semistructured interviews consisted of a limited set of open-ended questions prepared in advance and included follow-up questions as needed (see Burkholder et al., 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I conducted the interviews using 25 questions aligned with my study's purpose and design. The questions were designed to correlate with CASEL goals and SEL competencies and address teachers' perceptions of their school's SEL program and the CASEL framework, both of which the school district used to foster SEL implementation.

Instrumentation

The researcher is the primary instrument in a qualitative study because the methodology determines every facet of the study (Malterud et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Each decision, including the topic of study, methodology, design, sampling, data collection and interpretation, categorization of data, and disaggregation of information, begins and ends with the researcher (Malterud et al., 2016). According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), the researcher is "a central consideration in qualitative research" (p.10). Subsequently, I served as the primary research tool in this study. I remained conscious of my identity and positionality in working at the same site as the participants, as this could have affected each step in the research process (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I employed

reflexivity throughout data collection, analysis, and my summary of results to increase credibility and prevent bias (see Stahl & King, 2020).

In my research study, I used interview questions based on established interview protocols guided by a constructivist and relativist foundation (see Burkholder et al., 2016). When developing my interview protocol and a priori codes, I kept in mind that lived experiences represent the truths of the individual, making all realities valid, and that continuous reflection during each phase of data collection, data analysis, and data summary is one way to accurately determine the overall truths revealed through the data (see Burkholder et al., 2016; Stahl & King, 2020).

To further enhance validity and rigor, I aligned the interview questions with the CASEL conceptual framework, strengthening each interview session's focus and flow. The interview protocol promoted transparency and procedural fluidity. The interview refinement protocol table was based on my study's CASEL conceptual framework, which guided and aided in refining the study's RQ, sub-RQs, and design (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Sufficiency of Data Collection Instruments

When determining data sufficiency, using more than one instrument for data collection allows researchers to achieve triangulation (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I provided detailed, thick descriptions of information and used sufficient data collection tools to ensure data sufficiency. While remaining cognizant that the primary instrument for data collection in a qualitative study is the researcher, I continued to gauge my objectivity using reflexivity and my research notes and memos to ensure my perspectives and

interpretations remained unbiased (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Using open-ended

questions during the semistructured interviews further supported my objectivity during

and after data collection. The interview protocol also helped ensure that I refrained from

influencing the participants and maintained the role of facilitator and guide throughout

data collection. Semistructured interviews provide opportunities for expanded discourse

and extended interaction between the researcher and the study's participants (Rubin &

Rubin, 2012). Analytic memos and my researcher notebook were also used in my

investigation. Using a researcher journal before, during, and after interviews helped

ensure the accuracy of data interpretation. These data collection approaches were feasible

and necessary for gaining a complete and in-depth understanding of how educators think

about SEL and implement it in their teaching (see Gehlbach & Chuter, 2020).

Process for How and When Data Are Generated and Recorded

How and when data are generated and recorded strengthens a qualitative study's

credibility and reliability (Saldaña, 2016). Qualitative research provides detailed

descriptions in different formats. Interviews and descriptive analysis were used in the

current basic qualitative study. Once approval was obtained from Walden University's

IRB, I began recruiting participants for my research. Upon receiving completed consent

forms from prospective participants, I began my basic qualitative study of teachers'

perspectives on SEL.

During the preinterview stage, I ensured the quality of the virtual platform used to

interview the participants so communication during these sessions was user-friendly for

the interviewees. I also informed the participants of my role as an educator in the school

district to build rapport and strengthen bonds. After gaining participants' permission, I audio-recorded the interviews, which increased transparency in my data collection process.

Responses to probing questions add validity to the data analysis, coding, and synthesis processes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Through the refinement protocol, I ensured that (a) the interview questions aligned with the RQ and sub-RQs, (b) inquiry-based conversations occurred during the interview process, (c) a system was in place to receive feedback on the interview protocol, and (d) facilitated two pilot interviews before beginning participant interviews. The interview protocol refinement framework I followed was a four-phase process, which included aligning the interview questions with my study's RQs, organizing the interview to create inquiry-based conversations, having the protocol reviewed by others, and conducting mock interviews with peers or constituents with some knowledge of the topic (see Castillo-Montoya, 2016).

Promptly following the interviews, I analyzed and summarized the collected data. I used DELVE, a computer-assisted data analysis software program, to assist with data analysis. Next, I reviewed and refamiliarized myself with the qualitative body of knowledge and the research literature related to the phenomenon to summarize and report the data findings. Finally, I reported the results and addressed disclosure issues, consequences, and trustworthiness, as well as stated my findings honestly and with transparency.

Process for Tracking Data

My data tracking plan was both manual and virtual. While collecting the

qualitative data, I made detailed notes regarding each interview's context, content, and

tone (e.g., hesitation, sighs, excitement). Repeatedly listening to the audio recordings

before uploading the transcript into computer assisted software helped verify my

annotations and analytic memos. Memos included notations of trends within and across

the data. I matched similar concepts that emerged during each interview and then cross-

checked emergent patterns revealed from my researcher notes and analytic memos made

directly on the interview forms. Next, I used ITranscribe to accurately transcribe the

audio recordings of each interview. I uploaded each transcription into DELVE, which

facilitated my ability to compare, contrast, cross reference, and categorize responses to

determine which data fit the context of the study and which responses fell outside of that

area.

After uploading transcribed data, I completed three coding cycles, which

included open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (see Burkholder et al., 2016). I

had previously created a prior codes based on the research literature. I used open coding

to identify key words and phrases that appeared consistently in the data (see Burkholder

et al., 2016). Axial coding enabled me to organize and group codes and develop

categories and interconnections among codes. I repeated the cycles until I was satisfied

that no new categories emerged, at which time I used selective coding to synthesize

patterns emerging from the data into final themes. I identified and developed categories

by examining repeated patterns and how those patterns fit into categories, which I then organized into prominent, recurring themes.

According to Cloutier and Ravasi (2021), inadequate data tracking impedes analysis and increases the likelihood of errors. To circumvent obstacles to my data collection and analysis process, I tracked and managed the data to enable effective retrieval, interpretation, and comparison. The process by which I tracked data included: (a) initial transcription; (b) annotating and writing memos during the interview process; (c) using DELVE for retrieving, coding interview segments, organizing, sorting, and combining the data; (d) using compilation and description of interview data; and (e) reconstructing all related data into the final report at the end of the current project study. The sorting process consisted of single and multiple coded items from passages in the transcripts containing two or more codes (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In addition, I used DELVE to identify connections between linked concepts and to categorize and label those linked concepts. I used linked concepts to identify emergent and final themes in the data. I stored the electronic data on an encrypted computer to protect the integrity of the data and the study. All data will be stored and protected for 5 years after completion of the study and then destroyed.

Gaining Access to Participants

Studies cannot proceed without the researcher gaining access to participants. I gained access to research participants for this study using my professional network of colleagues in the school district. I had access and permission to contact those who worked in secondary education as ELA teachers. Therefore, I emailed the purposively

sampled teachers within my professional network. The email contained an overview of my basic qualitative study, its purpose, and data collection method. I did not include a detailed discussion about RQs or the specific questions asked during interviews to avoid biasing the participants' responses (see Burkholder et al., 2016). The invitation email contained a section for participants to consent to participate and a guarantee of confidentiality. However, some participants requested that I email them a copy of the questions in advance.

Because public schools provide the email addresses of educators who work in the district and teachers' email addresses are part of a public database, I contacted the select group of teachers using the publicly available contact information. I had no power dynamic role with these public school teachers. Subsequently, participants felt no coercion or intimidation when invited to participate in the study. By assuring all participants of honesty, transparency, and confidentiality, I fostered collegial support for gaining access to participants. I built and maintained trust and rapport with my participants through transparency regarding my study's purpose, data collection methods, and information about how I would share and use the study findings. I began contacting the selected participants once I met all IRB ethical requirements.

Role of the Researcher

Ravitch and Carl (2016) posited that a researcher's role is interrelated with positionality, social location, setting, and participants. Rubin and Rubin (2012) noted that the researcher's role involves carefully considering cultural and political issues, ethical conflicts between researcher and participants, and the methodology for conducting

qualitative interviews. My role as the researcher involved consideration of my connection

to the research site and my position. My role in this basic qualitative study was

interpretive and could be considered subjective as I have 23 years of teaching experience

in the district where I conducted my research. Further, I have extensive knowledge of

SEL strategies through research, professional training, and as a classroom educator,

which could have created subjectivity and personal bias issues. I addressed and limited

subjectivity by assessing my identity and positionality to mitigate biases, personal

experiences, theoretical preferences, and relationships with the study's participants and

through reflexivity at each phase of my data analysis and reporting (see Ravitch & Carl,

2016). Reflexivity is a method for mitigating researcher bias (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Through multiple coding cycles and reflexivity, I strengthened the integrity of my

findings. I used audio recordings as permitted by IRB guidelines to ensure I accurately

transcribed the interviews. Through awareness and acknowledgment of researcher bias, I

limited the risks that positionality and contextualization impose and fortified the validity

and trustworthiness of my study.

Data Analysis

In this section, I present how and when the data were analyzed, including coding

procedures and software applications. My data analysis approach was integrative,

formative, and summative (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rutledge et al., 2015). The

formative approach aided my data analysis process by supporting modification of the data

sets. One example was the use of follow-up questions during the semistructured

interviews. To ensure that I captured the authentic rephrasing and prompting of an

interview question, I used analytic memos to note when a participant needed additional

probing or when I offered participants opportunities to elaborate on a response.

Before the interviews, I established a priori codes using the CASEL framework

for SEL, which guided the semistructured interviews. I designed and ordered the

interview questions to be interconnected to provide greater depth and insight while

creating a segue into asking follow-up questions (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Subsequently, the interview questions were designed to answer the RQs and were based

on the five main constructs of the CASEL framework: (a) self-awareness, (b) self-

management, (c) social awareness, (d) relationship skills, and (e) responsible decision

making. Questions focused on educators' SEC, which is integral to the success of any

SEL program (see Aldrup et al., 2020; Mahoney et al., 2021).

Using field notes in my researcher journal, I noted when a response fit a particular

code as I progressed through each interview question. After each interview, I reviewed

my notes and uploaded the audio recordings of the interviews into DELVE. Coding

electronically, using DELVE, allowed me to code and recode using participants'

verbatim responses. Next, I reviewed and annotated each transcript by inserting my

interpretation of responses into notes and summary sections provided by the DELVE

platform.

Prior to the interview, I told each interviewee I welcomed their feedback.

Following each interview, I emailed the transcripts to participants, reminding them to

contact me if they wanted to elaborate or change any portions of their responses or

discuss my interpretive notes. After each interview, I conducted member checking

necessary for respondent validation (see Burkholder et al., 2016). Member checking occurred virtually, wherein I shared my summary notes from the interview with each participant through screenshare. The participants clarified and elaborated on some of their statements; however, while making the data richer and thicker, the elaborations did not change my original interpretations. For example, Teacher 1 clarified her meaning when making the statement about teachers' mindsets. She verbalized that the term "challenging" made her uncomfortable because when used to describe at-risk students, it insinuates a deficit in that group. Her clarification provided a richer insight into the context of her response. After receiving feedback, I reviewed the transcripts again, adding or condensing codes and categories, comparing and contrasting, and eliminating any when necessary.

I linked my memos to text using a priori and in vivo codes (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Saldaña, 2016). Using the interviewees' exact words, I used inductive in vivo coding to code responses from the interview sessions. The DELVE program allowed me to insert researcher notes while completing a line-by-line review of transcript portions of the participants' responses, as well as establish categories, and examine categories for emerging patterns and themes. During the second and third coding cycles, I continued to use the interpretive and reflexive processes, applying the iterative process several times to ensure data saturation occurred (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Saldaña, 2016). Using interview transcripts, analytic memos, and my researcher journal, I triangulated the data and finalized themes (see Fusch et al., 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Ravitch & Carl,

2016). Through each data analysis phase, I applied reflexivity to mitigate possible researcher bias to strengthen the trustworthiness of my findings.

Coding

In this basic qualitative study, I collected data through semistructured interviews and maintained a researcher journal to identify teachers' perspectives on SEL using the CASEL framework. As suggested by Ravitch and Carl (2016) and Saldaña (2016), my coding process began with deductive a priori coding followed by inductive in vivo coding cycles. I created a priori codes, which I aligned with empirical data and the conceptual framework of my study. I used in vivo coding while reviewing the interview transcripts and researcher notes to detect patterns and trends in the participants' responses based on their lived experiences and in their own words.

After each interview session, I used iTranscribe to transcribe each audio recording from the Zoom interviews. Once uploaded, I used clarifying memos from my researcher journal with coding protocols provided through DELVE, which facilitated my ability to organize and categorize sections of the transcripts. I used researcher journal notes and codes to interpret and summarize cogent components of each transcript before member checking. In vivo coding supported my interpretation of raw data, which I organized using axial and selective coding cycles. Axial and selective coding were completed using DELVE. This further validated the commonalities and differences among the participant group from which I derived the data (see Saldaña, 2016). I used rich and thick descriptions as I processed and summarized my findings. I examined the results, patterns,

and themes that emerged from the coded data to accurately reflect the teachers'

perceptions of SEL using the CASEL framework.

Member Checking

Member checking is a way for the researcher to ensure the trustworthiness of data

and findings in a qualitative study. Iivari (2018) asserted that member checking enables

"participatory interpretive research practices," and the process contributes to "fulfilling

the criteria set for interpretive research" (p. 2). Member checking allows the participants

to check, approve, and comment on the collected data and its interpretations (Lincoln &

Guba, 1986). Member checking is an integral part of triangulation and the establishment

of data validity (Saldaña, 2016). I conducted member checking through personal

conversations with the participants. Using the interview questions, analytic memos,

annotations, notes on patterns and themes that emerged from the participant's responses,

and the DELVE verbatim transcripts, I shared the data with the respondents for checking.

The member checking process allowed me to meet trustworthiness criteria by engaging

the participant in discussions about the summary notes shared with each interviewee

following my reflective summaries of each interview session (see Burkholder et al.,

2016).

Participants engaged with me in member checking by reviewing the transcripts

via email, telephone, or virtual screen sharing. As each member reflected on their

responses with me, none requested I make changes to my summaries. However, I used

our discussions to enrich and thicken my interpretations of the data sets. Participants

confirmed the accuracy of my transcriptions and notes. Member checking allowed me to

interact with participants, maintain transparency, and accurately interpret the data to increase the validity of the findings.

Discrepant Cases

Discrepant cases include instances or exceptions to the findings and can challenge the validity of qualitative research (Saldaña, 2016). Discrepant cases may indicate that more in-depth analysis and reflection are required to resolve inconsistencies (LaDonna et al., 2021). I examined and assessed all data for accuracy and repeated examination of the data as I reached saturation, determined my findings, and described my conclusions (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Minor discrepancies occurred in the mindset of the two teachers who worked in SEL schools. They stated that SEL can be consistently applied in schools where the focus is more on the child's holistic education rather than primarily focusing on the academic aspects of student learning outcomes. These comments only slightly deviated from the mindset of the remaining eight educators in the group, who expressed less optimism that schools will be able to shift from academic and testing outcomes to equally focus on the social and emotional development of the child. However, while the overall mindsets about students remained consistent in their belief that their students were not showing significant social, emotional, or academic improvements, the two teachers who worked at SEL schools felt that growth in these areas was observed each semester despite coming from impoverished and trauma-filled backgrounds. These findings did not change the study's conclusions. All participants shared the perception that teachers need consistent and ongoing SEL training to become sustainable.

Data Analysis Results

In this section, I present the data analysis results of my study in which I explored the perceptions of high school teachers in a local Southeast regional school district on their instructional implementation of the SEL curriculum, perceptions of their role in SEL, and their views on the influence that SEL practices have on student outcomes. I conducted the current qualitative research to determine the perspectives of ELA teachers in Grades 9 through 12 on SEL and its integration into the traditional high school curriculum. I conducted this study because of a lack of research on SEL programs in high schools and existing research that indicated a disparity between the implementation of SEL in prekindergarten and elementary schools with high schools. Lack of research on SEL in secondary schools in both rural and urban areas across the nation. Therefore, I conducted this study to address a gap in the existing literature on SEL programs in high schools. Research indicated that the disparity is related to high school students' academic and social-emotional skills, which can determine their life trajectories (Burchinal et al., 2020; CASEL, 2018; Eshel et al., 2018; Hubel et al., 2020).

In this basic qualitative study, I focused on teachers' perceptions of SEL development integrated into high school learning spaces for Grades 9 through 12. The current study used the CASEL conceptual framework, which the school district incorporated into the curricula to guide their schools' SEL programs. Semistructured interviews, analytic memos, and a researcher journal comprised the qualitative data instruments. The data collected for this study were retrieved from 10 secondary ELA teachers currently teaching in the selected content area. The purposively sampled

participants engaged with me in the virtual platform, Zoom, attending interviews that lasted approximately 45 minutes to 60 minutes. Interviewees' responses were collected, transcribed, member checked, coded, and triangulated with the researcher's journal notes and the computer assisted software analysis program DELVE.

I took an integrative approach when analyzing the data using the CASEL framework. I recursively organized the data using Ravitch and Carl's (2016) three-pronged approach, which included data organization and management, immersive engagement with the data, and writing about and representing the data. The following RQ and sub-RQs guided this study:

RQ: What are high school teachers' perceptions regarding their instructional implementation of SEL curriculum using the CASEL framework?

Sub-RQ1: What are high school teachers' perceptions about the consistency with which they employ SEL practices in the classroom?

Sub-RQ2: What are high school teachers' perceptions about the influence of SEL on student outcomes?

I collected data through semistructured audio-recorded virtual interviews, which allowed me to accurately transcribe the data after each session. The interview questions were designed to align with the aims of CASEL and SEL skillsets. Additionally, the questions were designed to explore teachers' perspectives on their school's SEL program and its alignment with the CASEL framework used by the school system to facilitate the implementation of SEL practices. I used Rubin and Rubin's (2012) responsive interview strategy, which led the participants to comprehensively elaborate on their previous

responses. I established initial a priori codes derived from the research literature and the

CASEL conceptual framework (see Saldaña, 2016). I used the constant comparison

method to analyze and derive categories and themes from the collected data. The

interviews were conducted, transcribed, and member checked over 4 months, after which

I analyzed the data using a priori and in vivo coding.

I used first-cycle coding (a priori) and then applied subsequent coding cycles (in

vivo) on the datasets obtained from semistructured interviews. I used analytical memos

and my researcher journal to better categorize and structure the data into six overarching

themes. I assumed the dual responsibilities of researcher and primary data collector,

employing a cyclical methodology to produce, gather, and document data for the study

(see Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Saldaña, 2016). I gathered and generated my data using

processes, which supported trustworthiness and transferability by considering my role as

the primary research instrument and its overall effect on the study. I reflected on issues

such as saturation, the appropriateness of my overall approach to data collection, and

what my study might add to the existing body of research about secondary teachers'

perceptions and implementation of SEL strategies in their daily practice (see Ravitch &

Carl, 2016). In addition, I used fieldwork notes and analytic memos to support my data

and to connect the data and my analysis processes.

During my data collection, analysis, and generative process, I repeatedly reviewed

the RQ and sub-RQs to ensure the data provided adequate answers to these questions.

Aligning the data with the RQs also provided clarity and insight into the themes and

patterns that emerged during the analysis process. I kept a researcher journal where I

recorded and reflected on interview details, wrote my thoughts, noted repeated patterns, and documented themes, which helped refine my interpretation of the data. Triangulated data insights were crucial when evaluating reoccurring themes, patterns, and novel concepts that arose during the study process. The CASEL conceptual framework served as the guide for this study at each phase of the data analysis process.

In the semistructured interviews, all participants acknowledged the limitations of integrating SEL strategies into their daily high school curriculum. All participants stated limitations included inadequate knowledge, planning time, instructional time, training, support, and resources. The participants agreed that training, planning, and support were key to their self-efficacy and consistent schoolwide SEL implementation. All participants also concurred that schoolwide, holistic SEL use is integral to implementation consistency. Moreover, all participants viewed positive teacher-student relationships as well as teaching students self-management and good decision-making skills to be interrelated with students' success in and beyond high school. They concurred that time intensive SEL planning and instruction are vital in creating an SEL classroom. Two participants presented outlier responses, which showed unexpected variances in perspectives, resulting in discrepant findings displayed and explained in my results. These teachers worked at SEL schools, prompting more SEL informed perspectives than their counterparts. Their experiences working in SEL schools allowed these respondents to observe schoolwide SEL practices that encompassed the integration of social and emotional skillsets into the daily curriculum across grades and content. Unlike the other eight teachers in the participant pool, these two were able to articulate how teachers

consistently planned and employed SEL practices in their classrooms and how teachers'

and students' SEL competence were measured throughout the school year. These

discrepancies between the teachers' perspectives at SEL schools and those who taught in

non-SEL schools helped to answer the RQs for my study and offered possibilities for

future research about SEL in high schools.

      The participants' perceptions regarding how schools implemented SEL provided

insight into methods that teachers and educational leaders can use to improve the

employment of SEL. Methods shared included content embedded with activities that

afforded students opportunities to reflect on characters and situations where learners

considered choices and consequences. The two teachers who taught at the SEL schools

built reflective time into the school day for each student to share their personal goals and

growth. These participants shared that teachers and students are mentored through the

SEL process, keeping journals for reflection. Teachers at SEL schools are observed and

receive feedback based on indicators using CASEL; students take SEL assessments

online. Both participants shared that the SEL curriculum was built into daily lessons and

that each lesson contained some form of SEL activities. The two teachers expressed

concerns similar to those at non-SEL schools regarding ongoing training, teacher

turnover, and the challenges inherent in SEL programming.

      As proposed by Saldaña (2016), I coded and wrote analytic memos concurrently.

The analytic memos served as additional data and guided subsequent coding cycles. I

journaled immediately after each interview, which helped with the organization and

categorization of each dataset. I conducted verbatim transcriptions of the raw data. The

transcriptions were completed using DELVE, which preserved the data's integrity and helped me to complete a range of tasks, including deriving patterns from the data by creating subcodes, establishing categories, and identifying emergent themes (see Saldaña, 2016). After transcribing the raw data, I was able to match in a priori with participants' exact words to sort and compare responses to codes, apply categories to discrete parts of the data, and focus less on data that did not suit or match the codes as seen in Appendix C. DELVE was valuable in facilitating the recoding process and in conducting iterative data reviews with participants when member checking. Using DELVE facilitated the generation of subcodes and the discernment of patterns and shared characteristics within the data, resulting in finalized themes.

At the onset of this study, I anticipated that the participants would be familiar with SEL; however, many faced challenges when offering precise definitions, explanations, or descriptions of SEL, the CASEL framework, or specific SEL techniques. Additionally, seven of the 10 participants were unable to spot deficit thinking patterns in their responses to interview questions about their students. This finding underscores the significance of providing instructors with guidance for engaging in activities that enhance their capacity to identify and address their implicit prejudices toward children from economically disadvantaged homes. Legette et al. (2022) argued that the biases held by instructors hinder their ability to establish positive relationships with their pupils, and conversely, this also affects the students' opportunity to bond with their professors. Legette et al. additionally established that teachers' understanding of self-awareness must include learning the self in relation to structural racism—acknowledging one's racial

biases and understanding how racial biases shape emotions and behaviors toward Black students in the classroom. Within this competency, teachers need to recognize that being colorblind is ineffective in reducing racial inequity and increasing Black youth's positive schooling experiences. (p. 283)

For educators to thoroughly understand themselves, they must cultivate an awareness of their identities within the framework of systemic racism. Realizing and accepting one's preconceptions and biases is a necessary step in this process, as is comprehending how these prejudices affect feelings and actions directed toward non-White students in educational settings (Legette et al., 2022). Therefore, training programs should foster a comprehensive and astute understanding of Whiteness and its ramifications in a racially oppressive society, particularly for individuals who do not self-identify or are not classified as White (Legette et al., 2022). Gardner and Lambert (2019) described implicit bias as automatic cognitive processing based on generalized associations from systematically limited experience or exposure to individuals and groups outside one's familiar societal scope. Inherent in self-awareness and self-identity work is the discourse about explicit and implicit bias and its effect on teachers' classroom practice and the capacity to build meaningful relationships with at-risk students (Rodriguez et al., 2020).

According to Ansari et al. (2020), explicit bias is conscious racism or prejudices and attitudes towards certain groups. In contrast, Gardner and Lambert (2019) described implicit bias as automatic cognitive processing based on generalized associations from systematically limited experience or exposure to individuals and groups outside one's

familiar societal scope. Implicit bias occurs when individuals do not act deliberately but make decisions based on pre-established suppositions (Gardner & Lambert, 2019). Implicit bias can significantly affect the decisions teachers make regarding certain students. It can be challenging to address this issue without proper guidance and training that focuses on increasing self-awareness, recognizing the existence of implicit bias, and providing continued support to help teachers make impartial decisions. Therefore, the PD developed from the current study will include discussions and activities that enhance participants' capacity to address their explicit and implicit biases.

Results for the RQ and Sub-RQs

In this section, I detail how I categorized my themes and describe them based on the RQ and sub-RQs with which they correspond. I used first and second-cycle coding as well as analytic memo writing to synthesize the codes into categories and cohesive themes. Six main themes emerged regarding high school teachers' perceptions on incorporating SEL into the curriculum. The six key themes consisted of (a) teachers' perceptions, mindsets, and biases drive pedagogy; (b) consistent and continuous training is needed to build teachers' SEC; (c) SEL instructional planning is key to successful implementation; (d) knowledge and use of SEL strategies are inconsistent and minimal; (e) barriers to SEL impede successful program implementation; and (f) teachers struggle to assess SEC in their students. A priori codes, interview questions, and categories connected to the RQ and sub-RQs are provided in Appendix D. Appendix E includes in vivo codes and participants' direct quotes that align with each theme.

Theme 1: Teachers' Perceptions, Mindsets, and Biases Drive Pedagogy

The primary RQ was: "What are high school teachers' perceptions regarding their instructional implementation of the SEL curriculum using the CASEL framework?" The emerging theme was congruent with the study's primary research query. The effect of teachers' attitudes on their self-identity, efficacy, and openness to SEL programs in their secondary schools was connected to the first theme of this research. The participants provided their perspectives on SEL objectives and their attitudes toward acknowledging and addressing their biases, which significantly influence the implementation of SEL practices. The participants expressed their belief that all students can learn; however, only one expressed that all students can learn despite their demographics.

Bardach et al. (2022) asserted that teachers who are aware of their perceptions of students' strengths and weaknesses can address and mitigate their personal biases and adopt a growth mindset. Efficacy influences the effort teachers put into their practice, their level of aspiration, and the objectives they set for themselves and their students (Brinkworth et al., 2018; Constantine et al., 2019; B. L. Kennedy & Soutullo, 2018). Teachers with high self-efficacy and aspirations are more open and willing to try new techniques to address the requirements of their pupils (Mosier, 2018). When confronted with obstacles with their students, teachers' tenacity and resilience are influenced by their self-efficacy beliefs (Aldrup et al., 2020; Eshel et al., 2018; Oberle et al., 2020).

At the beginning of each semistructured interview, I asked the participants about their teaching philosophy and the extent to which they perceived it as a guiding principle for their educational approaches. The purpose of the question was to gain awareness of

high school teachers' sense of identity and efficacy, along with their implicit or explicit biases regarding their students. Teachers' mindsets about their students can enable or impede their ability to form essential relationships with their pupils. Studies on education and development have shown that the quality of interactions between teachers and students in the classroom environment is a crucial factor that affects students' academic performance (Ansari et al., 2020; Constantine et al., 2019). Social and relational dynamics between teachers and students play a key role in determining the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes. Incorporating interview questions focusing on educators' teaching philosophies, including their teaching methods, approaches to learning, and social-emotional development, provided valuable insight into their cognitive frameworks and perspectives on SEL in their educational institutions. Participants' responses to questions about their teaching philosophies revealed that 80% believed students lacked essential skills for success in academic and real-world settings. Teacher 1 stated,

> In my view, it is imperative to provide all students, irrespective of their categorization, with challenging and intricate assignments, texts, and chances to interact with these sophisticated tasks and texts in manners that align with their abilities. What is missing sometimes is that there are teacher mindsets in terms of what reading and writing in English classes about [*sic*] what that should look [like]. We try to shut kids up a lot or have them give a unified response when they may flourish when given the opportunities to engage in fruitful discussions . . . but we don't know that if we don't know them.

Teacher 2 responded to a question about their teaching philosophy by sharing that "I've taught Grade 6 through 12 and any student that I've been able to work with, um, may have been teachable and trainable . . . in terms of my own personal philosophy and never give up on a student." Teacher 2 also shared that students may not have a home environment that encourages academic success: "So my classroom dynamics are Latino and Hispanic, and most students come to me reading below grade level and from homes where they may not receive support for reading and studying." Teacher 3 asserted,

> I make a thousand decisions a day. What do I say to this kid? Do I let this one use the bathroom? How should I teach to this one? Uh, you know what I mean? . . . That's all I do. That's awful. I must wear so many hats at once.

Throughout the interview responses, participants expressed concern for their students' educational experiences from early childhood to secondary school. They worried about the negative effect trauma and prior academic failure could have on students' self-identity and engagement with school. Their responses also revealed how teachers' expectations of students affected their application of SEL strategies and how those were applied in their instructional practice. In contrast, Teachers 2–9 reported that based on their background, pupils lacked social-emotional skillsets, resulting in numerous absences, poor decision making, and increased drop-out rates. Instructors also responded that their pupils entered high school reading at an extremely low level, and that instructors should not be held accountable for their students' lack of academic abilities and inability to read at or above grade level.

Eighty percent of the study's participants cited a lack of administrative support, shortened class schedules, and emphasis on high-stakes testing for their skepticism regarding their ability to implement SEL practices successfully. Also, the participants expressed frustration that parents were not supporting their children's educational needs at home and blamed this lack of support for pupils failing high-stakes year-end state tests. Likewise, teachers reported that they believed parents and educational stakeholders carried some responsibility for their students' inability to read at or above grade level. Shifting blame and accountability for students' lack of achievement was a common trend demonstrated in my data analysis, which I labeled as a deficit mindset.

A deficit mindset manifests in negative views of a student's ability to learn for reasons that include the student's background, a pattern of poor performance, and a lack of self- motivation (Jagers et al., 2019). Teacher 5 stated that

students come to us reading below grade level—sometimes in the 11th grade [they are] reading on a third grade level. I try to work with those students, but really, what can you do with that? And on top of that, we're evaluated on those students' performance, which is unfair.

Teachers who adopt negative views of their students often exhibit increased stress, frustration, and exhaustion that emerge in ways that students notice and internalize and may impede academic and relational outcomes (Biesta et al., 2015; Brinkley et al., 2018; Yeager et al., 2018). According to Jagers et al. (2019), teachers with a growth mindset noted more growth in students' academic and SEC. However, educators and educational

stakeholders with deficit or negative mindsets have impeded school equity (Ferreira et al., 2020; Legette et al., 2022).

During the interviews, questions about teacher-student relationships followed the questions about teaching philosophies. Teachers' capacity to build positive relationships with their students is an integral component of SEL implementation (B. L. Kennedy & Soutullo, 2018). Further, without teacher-student connections, the capacity to guide and engage learners in other important SEL activities is limited (Bos et al., 2019). Eight of the 10 participants expressed belief that building teacher-student relationships was essential to student success. Participants who did not strongly believe that instructors should have equal rapport with their pupils stated that teachers should form connections with them but not friendships. These participants provided examples of how to create trust with students but also maintain a tough, no-nonsense position regarding pupils' accomplishments. One response that showed the nuances that must be considered when garnering students' trust was provided by Teacher 4, who shared that she believed it was not wise to try and be a student's friend:

> I don't think it is a good thing to blur the line between teachers and students. You can support students without trying to be their friend, and when you try to be their friend, they may take advantage or not take you seriously.

Similarly, Teacher 5 posited:

> I think that the best tactic is to just be you, to be authentic and be real, because kids can sense that. And so, if you are real with them, then the relationships are

real, and then your relationship with them is not fabricated on some, like trying to

be cool or trying to identify with them as their friend.

Teacher 6 explained that to build effective relationships with students, one must learn

where they come from and who they are:

So, in terms of demographics with our students, um, yes, I don't know the exact

percentage, but the majority were students of color, um, and Hispanic or Latinx

students. Most of them, not all, of course, but most of them come from, um, pretty

high levels of poverty. Lots of struggles, lots of barriers, I mean, what's, what

barriers didn't they have to deal with, you know?

My research findings supported the need for more studies regarding teacher and student

relationships and the influence of those relationships on student outcomes. While the

current study's participants indicated that developing strong and positive relationships

with their students is critical, they struggled to articulate how their own SEC is inherent

to teacher-student relationships and student outcomes. Although research studies indicate

that teachers' relationships with their students are linked to positive social-emotional

development and better academic outcomes, increased exploration of the subject could be

useful to improve SEC in teachers and students (B. L. Kennedy & Soutullo, 2018; Kim &

Hong, 2019).

Theme 2: Consistent and Continuous Training Is Needed to Build Teachers' SEC

The second theme aligned with sub-RQ1: "What are high school teachers'

perceptions about the consistency with which they employ SEL practices in the

classroom?" Respondents were asked to share their experiences implementing SEL

strategies within their pedagogy. Eighty percent of the participants expressed uncertainty regarding the identification of SEL-specific techniques. They also requested comprehensive training to enhance their confidence in designing and implementing SEL activities within the conventional curriculum. Although I expected teachers to have knowledge of SEL strategies, given that the school district's SEL initiative had been in place since 2017, eight of the 10 participants' responses revealed they had little knowledge of SEL classroom strategies.

Most participants indicated that their lack of self-efficacy and inconsistent use of SEL strategies was due to a deficiency in continued training. Eighty percent of the participants admitted they received little to no SEL training. For example, when asked what training she received at her school, Teacher 2 responded: "None. Such as teaching empathy, teaching students specific SEL skills, no there is nothing like that." The participant elaborated, "If you don't train someone on what that [SEL] looks like, then you're out there giving them [students] low quality tasks and texts that lack rigor or relevance."

Comparably, Teachers 1-10 acknowledged that they required prolonged and explicit training in SEL techniques and strategies to enable their planning and implementation of SEL strategies in their daily practice. The same participants expressed dissatisfaction with the unfulfilled promise of SEL training and instruction. Teachers 1, 2, and 3 shared that they received no formal SEL training at their schools or the district level. Teacher 3 explained, "I don't remember any training that was really thorough on that [SEL]." Teacher 4, who recently began working at an SEL charter school, stated,

"Maybe a workshop occurred at my old school, but only that one workshop in 7 years. However, at my current school, formal SEL training occurs monthly with exemplars for SEL lessons shared in PLCs [professional learning communities]." Teacher 5 concurred that "there was no real formal training for SEL." Teacher 6 noted a lack of SEL training and the stress placed on teachers to implement it in their classrooms with little training: "[We] definitely [need] more training on that and then maybe more self-care because people are stressed and not having self-care, we're all ticking time bombs."

Teacher 7 asserted that despite the absence of formal training at their school, they were provided with a book that covered SEL and illustrations of strategies applicable in the classroom. Teacher 9 stated that she learned by independently viewing videos and reading articles on SEL strategies. However, she expressed the need for additional training demonstrating how these strategies can effectively be implemented in a high-needs classroom setting, particularly with at-risk students. Several participants raised concerns over the adverse effects of insufficient training on teachers' inclination and self-assurance in effectively using SEL practices within their instructional environments. Teacher 1 questioned, "If we haven't had that training, then have we actually gotten ourselves prepared to implement it in the classroom?" Teacher 9 stated, "They didn't call it SEL, but we did some intervention training through MTSS and PBIS, but nothing specific to SEL." MTSS and PBIS approaches to discipline and learning problems had been in place in the district's high schools for several years before the SEL initiative began.

In contrast, Teachers 8 and 10 had different experiences with SEL training in their

respective schools than the rest of the participants. Both taught at high schools considered

SEL charter schools where training occurred monthly for teachers and their coaches. In

those schools, teachers were given scripted lesson exemplars that facilitated integrating

SEL activities into each unit. However, Teacher 10 related that since arriving in the

current district (the district for this study), "SEL goals had been mentioned in passing, but

no formal training took place" in the 2 years they had been employed there. Despite

Teacher 8 reporting ongoing training and Teacher 10 not experiencing training, both

concurred with the remaining 80% of participants who felt that SEL training should be

more in-depth and consistent to achieve sustainability.

Theme 2, which emerged from participants' responses to questions about the

consistent use of SEL strategies in daily teaching, indicates a need for consistent SEL

training for teachers to encourage them to employ SEL strategies in their daily practice.

Researchers studying SEL training and PD concluded that PD that supports teacher

autonomy is the most effective and proactive method of teacher training. Imants and Van

der Wal (2020) focused on teachers' SEC, autonomy, and agency by conducting a meta-

analysis in response to rising interest in teacher agency in PD. Imants and Van der Wal

promoted a model to view PD and school reform using a five-prong teacher agency

approach. Subsequently, they analyzed and outlined the agency model as a viable

instrument for integrating school reform and PD. Further, they outlined key components

of teacher agency models to address the need for teacher ownership in the workplace and

increased capacity of schools to promote sustainable transformation. In creating an SEL

PD as the project deliverable for my study, I incorporated the components for teacher agency outlined by Imants and Van der Wal.

Imants and Van der Wal (2020) determined that the key to building teacher agency and thereby promoting school reform was to ensure that PD included five characteristics: (a) teachers as actors, (b) dynamic relationships, (c) ensuring PD and school reform are contextualized on multiple levels, (d) including PD and school reform content as adaptable, and (e) treating PD and school reform as a cyclical continuum. Philpott and Oates (2017) asserted that there is a correlation between PLCs and teacher agency, because PLCs are perceived as a catalyst for the manifestation of teacher agency. Other researchers have argued that there is a dearth of comprehensive empirical data concerning the inner workings of PLCs and the manifestation of teacher agency (Imants & Van der Wal, 2020; Jagers et al., 2019; Mahoney et al., 2021).

Much of this research has been an examination of teachers' responses to mandated educational reforms or forms of externally imposed accountability and their space for maneuvering within these contexts (Imants & Van der Wal, 2020). Additional facets of the research have been conducted within the framework of increasing policy attention toward harnessing teacher agency as an asset for educational and systemic improvement (Gonzales & Vasudeva, 2021; Lefstein et al., 2020).

Based on this study's participants' responses, I designed a PD that reflected Imants and Van der Wal's (2020) agency model, including its design activities to foster teachers' SEL knowledge, awareness, and action. Additionally, I derived the goals for the PD from the Imants and Van der Wal's agency model and the results of the current study.

An additional element was incorporated into the PD components. Given established multitiered supports within the district's high-needs schools, incorporating SEl strategies into these current supports may provide valuable enhancements to the overall holistic intervention platforms. All study participants were convinced that different forms of student support and positive behavior intervention strategies would augment SEL in multiple ways. All participants were concerned about how the lack of specialized SEL training might influence their capacity to plan, implement, and coordinate SEL efforts in the classroom.

Theme 3: SEL Instructional Planning Is Key to Successful Implementation

Theme 3 aligned with sub-RQ1 concerning the consistent implementation of SEL strategies in daily practice through intentional lesson planning. The success of SEL in schools largely depends on the teacher's ability to infuse unit lessons with opportunities for students to practice and apply social-emotional skills. However, research supports the participants in this study's recognition of the difficulty they faced when attempting to integrate SEL into the traditional curriculum (see Ferreira et al., 2020). Significant findings from the data analysis and identification of Theme 3 included the need for educators to receive additional planning and preparation time along with SEL training.

All 10 participants expressed the significance of SEL instructional preparation for teachers. This theme highlights the crucial role that planning plays in enabling teachers to effectively incorporate SEL methods into their teaching practices. Additionally, it emphasizes the need to create SEL learning environments that provide students with ample opportunity to cultivate and use social-emotional skillsets. This theme further

emphasizes the importance of evaluating students' academic and social-emotional development in relation to SEL education. For teachers to experience a sense of efficacy in implementing SEL strategies, it is imperative they receive comprehensive training that encompasses a deep understanding and proficiency in cognitive, social, and behavioral abilities (Goleman, 2001; Imants & Van der Wal, 2020). These skillsets can enable educators to seamlessly integrate SEL strategies and activities into their curriculum and daily practice.

In response to the interview questions related to instructional planning, all teachers agreed that planning lessons fused with the academic curriculum is integral to their ability to effectively implement SEL strategies into daily instruction. While eight of the 10 participants concurred that no planning time had been dedicated to SEL instruction, two specified that instructional planning occurred weekly and that SEL was emphasized in unit planning. Teacher 2 explained,

> English teachers should know how SEL should look in their classes . . . we try to shut kids up a lot or have them give a unified response when they may flourish when given the opportunities to engage in fruitful discussions . . . but we don't know that if we don't know SEL goals and strategies. . . . In terms of planning, which is not happening.

Similarly, Teacher 3 emphasized the importance of implementing a schoolwide planning approach, which remains limited to individual departments, mostly addressing behavior management and state testing. He elaborated, "I think it's getting the whole school

involved, you know, and more schoolwide. But it's also like we're working on dress

codes and classroom management. It's all about the test scores."

Teacher 5 stated that authentic planning for SEL never occurred, and that

planning time should be for teachers to collaborate on how to use strategies and time to

teach to the test. Instead, planning time was led by administrators and learning coaches,

and they only focused on test scores and teacher accountability for students' test scores.

Teacher 5 declared, "As teachers, we don't have enough planning time."

Teacher 6 stated there was "never a real clear strategic plan for how to put it in other than

doing lessons during the homeroom block at the beginning of the year type thing.

Teacher 7 also stated that the only programs that occurred quarterly were PBIS and

MTSS directives passed on through emails from administrators, and those directives

came to teachers via emails with accompanying scripted PowerPoints.

Teacher 9 indicated that planning was needed, but the lack of time was a factor:

"Their biggest thing was time, extra time to plan and be modeling those things we are

expected to teach." Teacher 9 also asserted,

> Each day, we're told that classes are not rigorous enough and kids need to be on
>
> task for the entire 49 minutes versus us spending some of that time to build these
>
> social skills, and that is emphasized as well through administrative walkthroughs
>
> and the feedback that we get.

Teacher 10 expressed that although he had consistent training in the past in

Jamaica, where SEL was used on every grade level, in his current school, frequent

planning needed to be focused on "being able to plan together and to hear feedback as well as to have discussions about how to put SEL into our lesson plans." Teacher 4 expressed that SEL took precedence in teachers' weekly planning at her school. The teacher mentioned that lesson preparation for SEL rotated among teachers and was seamlessly integrated into instructional classes regularly because their school prioritized SEL. Similarly, Teacher 8 mentioned that new teachers received individualized training and mentorship in addition to weekly SEL planning time at her SEL high school.

All participants perceived SEL training as an essential component that should encompass a comprehensive understanding of the objectives and strategies associated with teachers' social-emotional development. Furthermore, all participants preferred a proficient instructor to exemplify SEL methodologies in the classroom, especially when engaging with students classified as high-risk. The teachers in the study agreed that changing the class schedule to incorporate 70–90-minute intervals would be another way to improve planning efficiency. By implementing this modification, teachers would have additional time to effectively design and execute SEL strategies. Moreover, this approach would allow students to engage in collaborative activities, assume leadership roles, and actively employ SEL skills in each instructional lesson.

Educators commonly recognize training as a crucial component in attaining the SEL objectives of the district and schools (Mischenko et al., 2022). The participants of the current study agreed that adopting authentic SEL strategies would benefit at-risk students. These strategies are anticipated to support students in developing and enhancing

their SEC, leading to improving their academic performance. All participants concurred that emphasis on high-stakes testing should not be the central aspect of SEL program design.

Including SEL objectives and strategies that match the CASEL framework was also stressed. Additionally, the participants suggested that experts should demonstrate these aims and techniques. This coordination is essential to ensuring that SEL objectives and the CASEL framework are successfully incorporated into academic units of study. Participants agreed that having the chance to see seasoned educators who have effectively incorporated SEL techniques was advantageous. Considering these findings, it is important to hold introspective conversations about the identified strategies before attempting to independently implement SEL practices.

Theme 4: Knowledge and Use of SEL Strategies Are Inconsistent and Minimal

The fourth theme emphasized that teachers felt compelled to use SEL strategies in their classrooms but believed they were not provided adequate training necessary for applying SEL strategies with fidelity. In addition to lacking the time and training to prepare lessons that adequately blended social-emotional development opportunities into daily academic lessons, high school teachers in the current study shared their concerns that high-stakes testing continued to take precedence over SEL in high school classrooms. Theme 4 aligned with sub-RQ1, which addressed the consistent use of SEL strategies in teachers' daily practice. Conversely, respondents were able to describe techniques they believed resembled SEL strategies but were hesitant to identify those strategies as methods that had a substantial effect on students' social-emotional skills.

Theme 4 also aligned with the primary RQ as well as sub-RQ 2, which focused on teachers' perceptions of SEL, their experiences, and consistent implementation of SEL strategies in their classrooms. The data indicates that teachers' knowledge of SEL is limited, and their implementation of SEL strategies is inconsistent, as shown by responses to Interview Questions 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, and 23.

The participants in the study indicated they attempted to incorporate intervention strategies aligned with SEL programs and the CASEL framework. However, they acknowledged that they perceived their efforts would be more impactful if they received guidance and demonstrations from experts on how to effectively integrate specific SEL techniques into their daily instructional practices. The participants described how they used SEL tactics, such as boosting student participation during academic activities and developing their ability to recognize and sympathize with characters and situations depicted in textual readings. When asked to describe SEL strategies they consistently applied in their instruction, all 10 participants discussed encouraging students to connect to text(s) as the primary approach when employing SEL skills in their daily practice. However, none of the teachers were able to provide specific examples of intentional planning and use of SEL strategies in their practice.

Respondents also commented about giving students group or project-based assignments at least once every unit that required them to collaborate with classmates and present their views and connections to each topic. All 10 participants agreed that teachers have a scarcity of knowledge about SEL, the CASEL framework, the goals and constructs of both, and the strategies involved in SEL implementation. In response to the

interview questions, Teachers 2–9 communicated that teachers lack general knowledge of SEL, CASEL, strategies, and assessment methods to measure students' mastery of SEL skillsets. Teacher 1 stated that SEL strategies at her school consisted of ELA teachers attempting to help students connect with characters and situations in the text but also posited that the texts in the curriculum frequently lacked relevance to students' lives and situations. Teacher 2 indicated that the lead staff in their school talked to them about how to calm students down using intervention strategies to deescalate crises and control outbursts and fighting among students: "Emphasis was placed on creating cooling down points in the classroom, which is something I practice in my classroom." The response provided by this participant showed a positive correlation with the responses of other teachers and aligned with the material available on the school district's SEL website, which emphasized the promotion of character development as a means of implementing SEL.

Schools were encouraged to have students focus on one character trait each month as a schoolwide goal. Participants noted that on the middle and high school level, the character education approach was the focus and labeled as SEL in some leadership team documents shared with the schools. According to Yang et al. (2018), implementing SEL with fidelity requires including the five major SEL goals and CASEL constructs. Character education can address learning to act with integrity, kindness, and other aspects of character objectives; however, it does not holistically encompass SEL elements, such as building and sustaining positive relationships with teachers and peers. Ferreira et al. (2020) affirmed that SEL is a multilayered process through which students develop the

"ability to integrate thought, emotion, and behavior to attain and complete significant social tasks" (p. 22). When students develop these essential skills, it enables them to build healthy relationships, establish positive goals, and empathize in response to their and others' personal and social needs. All participants concurred that only addressing a character goal each month did not address the needs of their at-risk students from a trauma-informed perspective.

Teacher 3 indicated that the use of SEL strategies in her classroom, although not formally described as such, took the form of games, role playing, writing prompts, and visuals to complete tasks created to encourage them to make connections to the texts:

> So, the first game is identity . . . activities we can do for identity . . . what words describe you and like adjectives describing the words, create posters, or something like that. . . . And as far as hands on, that would be like, more like posters and cutting, sketching things.

Similarly, Teacher 5 asserted, "I differentiate my lessons. I tailor them to each student's learning process." Teacher 5 stated that for her, knowledge of SEL strategies emerged from "SEL websites [that] have all these great strategies, but I am not finding what is necessary to aid students from poverty in a specific way because of so many challenges that this population presents." Teacher 6 stated that she learned about SEL by reading books and trying different strategies. She shared that student behavior at her school was problematic and impeded her ability to develop strong relationships with her pupils or teach social-emotional skillsets within the context of the content that she is required to cover for testing. There were disciplinary issues resulting in "classroom disruptions,

instructional interruptions, outbreaks of anger, cursing. It makes it difficult to complete mandatory lessons, much less additional SEL lessons."

Teacher 6 shared that SEL has "just been strategies that I've tried because of reading about SEL and then I saw the CASEL stuff, you know, with the different aspects of it and researching it, but never participated in an actual official SEL program." Teacher 7, after asking me for examples of SEL strategies, stated that SEL activities are "things that I have taken into consideration since I first began working with students." Teacher 7 also stated that "an initial training occurred in Raleigh," but found she uses some SEL strategies because these were those she already used in her classroom in the form of differentiation and student-centered instruction. Teacher 8 stated she attempted to employ SEL strategies to some extent and described: "So, what I had to do was cultivate an interest that would draw them into academics because they had little to no interest in getting back into academics."

Teacher 9 revealed that her strategies were those that teachers have been using for decades, such as building relationships and making learning relevant and student-centered. However, this participant also admitted that her strategies were not officially SEL focused, and she would look forward to specific training in this area of social-emotional development. When asked to share her strategies in response to the related interview questions, she responded:

> I differentiate my lessons. I tailor them to each student's learning process. I
> understand and empathize with where they are. And those students that, vice
> versa, [are] accelerated learners, then I try my best to move them forward and

challenge them with additional activities, and I keep myself two to three steps

forward of what an assignment might be. Okay. So, I keep my best toolkits, the

things that can elevate and challenge the honor student that's accelerating them as

a learner.

It is imperative to establish a clear differentiation between the constituent

elements of social competence as a desired outcome of school curriculum and

instructional approaches specifically designed for implementation inside lessons, such as

socioemotional learning and cooperative learning (Lathrop & Wessel Powell, 2022).

Social competence encompasses various theories that emphasize aspects such as (a)

emotional intelligence (the ability to recognize and differentiate emotions); (b)

interpersonal competence, which facilitates initiating interactions, resolving conflicts, and

providing emotional support; (b) social intelligence, which involves cognitive abilities

related to controlling social behavior, and (c) social skills, which encompass specific

learned behaviors (CASEL, 2018; Chu & DeArmond, 2021; Philpott & Oates, 2017).

Research indicates that confusion over the definition of SEL may contribute to educators'

struggle to describe effective SEL strategies for use in their classrooms (Camangian &

Cariaga, 2022; Tyner, 2021). Chu and DeArmond (2021) proposed that one of the

difficulties in writing about SEL and well-being is the lack of field consensus on its

meaning. While many of these qualities have definitions that are still evolving, the

differentiation between emotional intelligence and emotional competence remains a

subject of ongoing discussion.

According to O'Connor et al. (2019), emotional competence refers to a collection of universally applicable abilities that pertain to various forms of interpersonal interactions, specifically centered around emotions. These important skillsets encompass the capacity to recognize and differentiate between distinct emotional states, ultimately leading to the development of efficient coping mechanisms (Chu & DeArmond, 2021). The differentiation between emotional intelligence and emotional competence is predicated upon the innate capacities of emotional intelligence, which contrasts with the notion of culturally acquired elements in emotional competence. In addition to the theoretical subthemes of social competence, it is imperative to consider the practical teaching skillsets that involve specific methods and strategies tailored to particular contexts. For instance, SEL encompasses competencies in various domains, including personality traits; these include self-awareness, self-management, and empathy, which include social awareness, social skills, and decision making, as outlined by CASEL (2018).

Additional teaching approaches and tactics have been created under CASEL (2018). These methods specifically center around group work, with a particular emphasis on group dynamics and social learning projects. Approaches to SEL should incorporate principles that promote the comprehension and management of emotions, the demonstration of empathy, and the maintenance of positive relationships. Ahmed et al. (2020) suggested that teaching procedures should be used to promote social-emotional skills, such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and decision-making responsibility. These teaching procedures should

include pedagogy that encourages and models the previously mentioned SEC. Ahmed et al. delineated the following:

> The RULER [recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and regulating] approach is founded on the achievement model of emotional literacy and suggests that emotional literacy is acquired through experience and develops through students (a) acquiring emotion-related knowledge and competencies (b) creating climates that are secure and supportive for experiencing a varied range of emotions (c) providing steady opportunities to practice and get feedback on utilizing emotional intelligence so that their benefits become improved and (d) frequent exposure to adults who model emotional intelligence. (p. 667)

In my PD, I will present educators with research-based strategies and approaches that align with the CASEL framework and the RULER model. According to Ahmed et al. (2020), the RULER program is an intervention designed to enhance SEL in children from kindergarten to intermediate/junior secondary levels. Ahmed et al. purported that the aim of the RULER program is to cultivate social and emotional talents by providing instruction on concepts linked to social and emotional development and introduce foundational tools that can be used to effectively manage emotions within the classroom setting. Ahmed et al. used a top-down methodology in their study involving PD workshops for school personnel aimed at enhancing the competencies and expertise of adults to establish a conducive learning environment. Ahmed et al. acknowledged that the RULER model incorporates strategies for students to develop and use emotional skills

within a standard teaching and learning curriculum framework. I used components of the RULER model in creating the SEL PD.

Theme 5: Barriers to SEL Impede Successful Program Implementation

Theme 5 aligned with the primary RQ as the participants' perceived barriers to implementation of SEL programs in high school. According to Mischenko et al. (2022), barriers to SEL implementation consist of relational trust between implementors and the curriculum team. Relational trust is considered the element that binds individuals together and promotes students' education and well-being. Relational trust implies a shared vision and values; school efforts may falter when that relationship erodes. Theme 5 emerged as I questioned teachers about their perceptions of obstacles that impede their successful implementation of SEL practices using the CASEL framework. Participants 1, 2, and 4–9 collectively identified several key barriers to the effective implementation of SEL practices. These barriers included fragmented training, inadequate support from school and district leaders, insufficient time for the application, an overemphasis on academic testing, and challenges associated with student behavior.

Participants in this study expressed experiencing various barriers impeding their capacity to successfully implement SEL practices. When asked about the barriers to employing these strategies in the classroom, Teacher 1 responded that teachers' mindsets formed a primary barrier to the consistent use of SEL in classrooms, stating,

> I think what is missed a lot of times is that there is one mindset about what
> reading and writing in English language arts instruction should look like. But
> that's not true for every culture in every student. Teachers need training to enable

them to take abstract concepts like SEL and ideals from SEL and make them

concrete transformative practices and activities for their subject area.

Teacher 2 also mentioned mindsets, but in this instance, they were referring to

administrators and school leaders who were

more focused on rigor in a delusional frame of mind or mindset that all of the

students need rigor and can learn on grade level, and we [teachers] just need to

stop treating them as if they cannot do the tasks, which is almost against the

concepts of social-emotional learning and IEP's [individualized education

program]. Those things don't exist in their minds.

Teacher 6 described a lack of formal training and pacing in response to the questions

about obstacles to teaching SEL: "Yeah, they want you to make sure you're hitting X, Y,

and Z. You're checking off these marks. Oh, if you have time, fit in SEL stuff. And the

biggest thing for me with SEL is it's not something you do; it's something you are. It's

not like a program that you can say, "Okay, today's an SEL day."

Other participants named pacing as a barrier to the consistent teaching of SEL.

Teacher 2 stated that pacing expectations made the implementation of SEL strategies

difficult. Teacher 3 asserted that

learners definitely need a more hands-on approach for differentiated learning and

the pace at which we need to move to cover all of the material . . . faster than

consumption than they can handle. . . . The pacing guide, in my opinion, is not

accurate for the type of learner and the type of student that we have enrolled in

my present school.

Similarly, Teacher 5 stated, "Each day, we're told that classes are not rigorous enough and, um, kids need to be on task for the entire 49 minutes versus us spending some of that time to build these social skills."

Two participants discussed problematic student behavior as a barrier to using SEL strategies and noted that when trained, they would like to observe other teachers who have successfully used SEL with similar student disruptions. Teacher 6 asserted,

Students come from terrible backgrounds and hard circumstances [and bring] those issues with them to school every day, so every day is a disruption where they're lashing out, and maybe that's the last straw. When students are lashing out, fighting, or having meltdowns, it is impossible to teach class.

Teacher 7 also discussed students' backgrounds and responses to prior trauma as being a significant obstacle that caused difficulty when trying to teach and implement SEL in the classroom. In response to the query about SEL barriers, T8 replied,

You know, a lot of my students are in gangs, on drugs, or working multiple jobs, so they are either fighting rival gangs and get suspended or locked up, are too high, or too tired, or missing school because they must take care of family or work. So, when they've missed so much school or show up after long absences, it is impossible to catch them up on work they've missed, much less having time to teach them SEL.

All participants, including those who taught at SEL schools, shared concerns about teacher turnover and the growing shortage of educators. Teacher 9 stated, "I don't see SEL as sustainable when teachers don't stay." Participant 10 noted that several ELA

classrooms had substitute teachers who were only there for the paycheck, "sitting up reading a book or in their cell phone while the students do whatever."

Out of the 10 participants, eight reported encountering diverse obstacles during their efforts to implement SEL strategies. The hurdles included discrepancies in training, disruptions in behavior, frequent crises involving students, significant staff turnover, regular interruptions in administrative tasks, and demands from management. The intrusive character of high-stakes testing was also considered a barrier. Previous training had been conducted on diverse learning styles and establishing secure and inclusive learning environments. Nevertheless, the prioritization of testing, adherence to a strict schedule, and the emphasis on continuous instruction overshadowed the attention given to nurturing social and emotional growth. The current study's findings indicated that these limitations substantially affected educational emphasis, hindering educators' ability to effectively incorporate SEL into their daily instructional practice.

Additional obstacles to achieving success were inconsistencies in supervision and discrepancies between the social-emotional development objectives and goals and expectations set by the district and the level of assistance provided by school administrators. One participant expressed concern over the limited engagement and lack of support from parents and the community within the prevailing political environment, which was a hurdle to the successful implementation of SEL in schools. Despite the obstacles mentioned here, all teachers expressed a willingness to move forward with engaging their students in SEL in the upcoming school terms and shared an interest in seeing improvements in their students' behavior and academic achievement. There was

an overlap of themes when I asked participants to discuss how they used indicators of students' SEL growth to plan for subsequent lessons. I describe my interpretation of their responses in the discussion of Theme 6, which addressed the need for educators to have tools to measure the influences of SEL on student outcomes.

Theme 6: Teachers Struggle to Assess SEC in Their Students

Theme 6 was derived from participants' responses to sub-RQ2: What are high school teachers' perceptions about the influence of SEL on student outcomes? Nine of the 10 participants found it difficult to articulate what social-emotional skillsets they should assess. They also expressed confusion and frustration about how to assess students' mastery of SEL competencies. Teacher 1 explained that no formal SEL assessments had occurred at her school at any time. Teacher 2 stated, "I observe their interactions and responses to tasks in class, how they collaborate with peers on group projects, but I really don't know if observation is an adequate form of assessment for SEL." Likewise, Teacher 3 asserted that "the only way that I know to assess the students' interpersonal growth is what I am able to observe as they collaborate on instructional tasks." Teacher 4 agreed that only through observation and analysis of students' work were they able to determine the influences of SEL strategies on students, but they did not feel that was an authentic assessment of students' social-emotional skills. In contrast, Participant 5 shared that her current school used surveys to measure students' social-emotional development skills and growth. However, she also stated that this was the first year SEL was implemented fully at her school, and therefore, the data from surveys were still being analyzed to assess the effect on student outcomes.

The need for consistency in the use of SEL practices, training, and assessments emerged repeatedly throughout this study. Mischenko et al. (2022) proposed that assessing teachers' integrity in applying SEL was equally important in determining SEL's influence on student outcomes. One way to assess practitioners' SEL implementation is by their concern and expectations for their students and the tactics teachers employ to empower learners. Mischenko et al. identified observable examples of teachers who used SEL methods consistently throughout their study. For example, teachers may encourage pupils to work collaboratively and lead lessons (CASEL, 2018). However, educators find it difficult to assess student outcomes from strategies they have employed and struggle to ascertain the influences of SEL in their classrooms (von Keyserlingk et al., 2019; Yeager et al., 2018).

When determining SEL influences on students, it is important to consider teachers' SEC (Ruiter et al., 2020). Further, when evaluating SEC in educators or learners, it is imperative to employ a variety of sources for assessment (Xu & Zammit, 2020). In the context of instructional evaluation, assessments may encompass several components, such as lesson plans, observations, and competence ratings. These assessments should be aligned with the indicators commonly seen in formative and summative teacher evaluations. Various assessment instruments have the potential to be productive in evaluating students' proficiency in SEC. Aldrup et al. (2020) developed the Test of Regulation in Understanding of Social Situations in Teaching to assess instructors' understanding of emotion control and relationship management tactics in emotionally and socially stressful circumstances with students. Oberle et al. (2020)

recommended quantifying the quality of student-teacher connections as well as student experiences and learning in the classroom. As supported by the research, it is advisable to use multiple assessments to accurately measure the progress and attainment of skillsets related to SEL in both teachers and students (Abrahams et al., 2019; Mahoney et al., 2021).

To ensure equitable opportunities for academic success among students from prekindergarten to Grade 12, it is imperative that SEL programs receive comprehensive backing in the form of state and district policies, resources, and training. Numerous research studies conducted over an extended period have consistently shown that the acquisition of social and emotional skills plays a significant role in fostering human growth, ultimately resulting in favorable outcomes in various aspects of life (B. L. Kennedy & Soutullo, 2018; Kim & Hong, 2019; Poulou, 2017). Hence, it is crucial to provide educators with the requisite resources to successfully implement SEL initiatives.

Research indicated a rising need to use accurate methods of evaluating teachers' and students' SEC. According to McKown and Taylor (2018), although there has been notable progress in the implementation of SEL policies and programs aimed at fostering the growth of student capabilities, there is a lack of research on evaluating student SEC. Methods for assessing teachers' effective use of SEL strategies that reach all learners pose obstacles to the effective implementation and sustainability of SEL programs (Poulou, 2017; Ramberg et al., 2019). However, based on participant responses and the body of literature, my research study findings demonstrated that educators also find constructing

assessments for specific SEL skillsets among students difficult (see Abrahams et al.,

2019).

Attempting to assess social-emotional skillsets creates methodological challenges.

Abrahams et al. (2019) introduced novel frameworks and methodological methods,

incorporating five essential dimensions of social-emotional development. These

frameworks enhance practitioners' ability to assess the impact of SE on student outcomes.

Upon thoroughly examining the interview transcripts in the current study, I ascertained

the instructors struggled to articulate their analysis of the effects of SEL on their pupils.

This may have been due to their self-reported limitations in understanding SEL objectives

and the constructs established by CASEL. Participants reported gaps between setting

goals for students' social-emotional development and their ability to accurately assess

their mastery of social-emotional skillsets.

Schools have various methods of quantifying students' academic progress;

however, ascertaining adolescents' SEC has presented significant challenges. Assessing

SEL standards across all grade levels is not consistently implemented nationwide. Frye et

al. (2022) acknowledged that with the increasing recognition of SEL, several states have

formulated SEL standards for public schools from kindergarten through 12th grade. Under

established academic norms, SEL standards delineate objectives and developmental

milestones for children to attain SEL competencies throughout different grade levels

(CASEL, 2018, 2020). Further, performance descriptors are frequently implemented to

illustrate how students might exhibit their achievement of a standard, specifically by

showcasing the abilities or knowledge that signify the fulfillment of that requirement

(CASEL, 2018). Learning standards play a significant role in delineating the content educators must instruct and the knowledge and skills students are expected to acquire (CASEL, 2018). When standards are given due importance, they become a comprehensive plan or framework for instructional activities with a significant effect on the dynamics and outcomes of classroom practices (CASEL, 2021).

Bos et al. (2019) proposed the building assets and reducing risks (BARR) model as a strategy to support ninth grade students throughout their transition into high school while also serving as a tool for evaluating their social-emotional skillsets. The BARR model focuses on ninth grade students who face problematic struggles when transitioning from middle to high school. Bos et al. demonstrated that students who succeed in ninth grade tend to graduate, whereas many students who do not experience success in this transition stage eventually drop out of school. Studies on the BARR model indicated that it is best initiated at the ninth-grade level, a critical transition point for adolescents, and continued with those same students through the end of their high school career (Borman et al., 2021). Implementing the BARR model necessitates that educational institutions provide the requisite structural and organizational prerequisites to effectively include student support services into their current framework for addressing nonacademic obstacles to learning.

The BARR model offers teachers the training and opportunities to participate in collective evaluations of all students, engage in collaborative problem solving regarding mastery of SEC, and plan activities that address students' social-emotional development needs (Nenonene et al., 2019). Research showed a modified integration of components of

the BARR model provides strategies that participating schools can use to evaluate

students' and teachers' SEC (Education Trust & MDRC, 2021). When using components

of the BARR model, educational stakeholders can participate in collective evaluation of

all ninth grade students entering high school, assess their risk levels, and determine the

best SEL strategies to apply to the targeted student group. The BARR model, or a

comparable assessment instrument customized for the specific school and student

demographic, can serve as a summative measure to ascertain the initial risk level of 10th

grade students and provide strategies to meet their requirements in the future. Therefore, I

chose to introduce components of the BARR model into the SEL PD as an intervention

and support tool for educators to use with ninth graders and students who fall within the

at-risk population (see Bos et al., 2019). The BARR model can also be used to set goals

for the subsequent grade levels beyond ninth grade (Education Trust & MDRC, 2021).

Quality of Evidence

I used Braun and Clarke's (2021) approach to thematic analysis and that of Xu

and Zammit (2020) to become acquainted with my study's data. I used a priori codes

initially, and after collecting data, I used multiple coding cycles, including in vivo, axial,

and selective codes. As suggested by Saldaña (2016), I performed repeated analysis as

themes emerged and reviewed, defined, and labeled categories and themes. I repeated

these thematic analysis processes until satisfied that no new topics would emerge. Next, I

created the final report and product deliverable.

I ensured transparency through audit trails and a thorough description of my

research process. Transparency augments trustworthiness. I achieved this through

recursive data organization, immersing myself in and engaging with the transcripts and transcript summaries, and using member checking for practical, interpretative, and analytical considerations. When I began the research process, I extensively read the current information on the phenomenon of teachers' perceptions of various aspects of social SEL in high schools. I discovered that research on SEL in elementary and intermediate schools was abundant, whereas research on SEL in secondary schools remained scarce (see Constantine et al., 2019; Gimbert et al., 2023). After thoroughly researching the topic, I designed my study in alignment with its problem and purpose. I established credibility by achieving data saturation, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. I accomplished data saturation by iteratively evaluating the data until I was confident that no new or relevant information surfaced and no unexplained gaps or phenomena developed.

I ensured transferability through purposive sampling, where I selected individuals who mirrored teachers nationwide so that my findings could be applied to populations beyond the local and regional school districts (see Malterud et al., 2016). I used peer debriefing, engaging in discourse about the data with an expert in culturally responsive teaching and SEL. I completed dialogic engagement activities by collaborating with two experts in methodology and culturally responsive teaching, facilitating multiple perspectives, increased reflexivity, and valuable applied knowledge (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Additionally, I acknowledged and mitigated the possibility of researcher bias through reflexive and iterative reviews of the data, analytic memos, and my research journal.

Throughout each phase of the study, I acknowledged my positionality as the primary research instrument and, as a result, avoided researcher biases, which lent credibility to the results (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Saldaña, 2016). To achieve credibility, I asked participants sufficient open-ended and probing questions to examine their range of experience. The responses of my participants were supported by external studies that added reliability to my study. In asking the 10 participants the same questions, I measured their results iteratively and noted that 80% shared the same perspectives about SEL. I member checked to ensure the accuracy of the transcribed data and my summary interpretations of participants' responses. Participants validated my summary interview notes through discussions on Zoom while screen sharing. No changes in my summary notes were necessary.

In addition to member checking, I carefully considered how the current study's findings might be extended to other schools and instructors trying to implement SEL with at-risk adolescents as part of my research (transferability). Participants in SEL research conducted in middle school settings, for instance, expressed similar worries about SEL training, the need for enough resources and support, and having enough time to plan and collaborate when producing an SEL-based curriculum (Neth et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2018).

I provided comprehensive information to enhance understanding of the methodology used in this study. I noted specific details of the sample's characteristics, the conditions under which the participants' experiences were observed, and contextual factors that influenced the data collection process. To strengthen the validity of my

findings and add depth to the data, I used multiple sources, including semistructured interviews, a researcher notebook, analytical memos, and field notes (see Fusch et al., 2018). Furthermore, I identified correlations between my research findings and those found in other countries and educational districts within the United States, which provided depth. The findings of my study can be applied to comparable situations in many high schools across the region and country. In the United States, the contexts of many high schools mirror those in my study that serve at-risk students of color and where teachers' SEC is reportedly low, reflecting their students' social, emotional, and academic skills (see Gonzales & Vasudeva, 2021; Hubel et al., 2020; Jagers et al., 2019; Legette et al., 2022; Mahoney et al., 2021).

Because the method of data analysis is critical to research integrity, I used computer coding software to assist with my coding and recoding cycles, comparing the data, creating categories from codes, and analyzing emerging patterns and themes. To strengthen the accuracy of my data interpretation, I established intercoder reliability by having a research expert examine my coding schematics and theme coding application in two separate data interpretation phases. I applied theoretical research of Bandura's (1977) social learning theory and social cognitive theory (Lincoln & Guba, 1986), developed as a viable alternative to deterministic approaches to learning. The current research study provides further evidence to support that learning is influenced by observing and interacting with others and that teacher-student relationships and teacher training are integral to the success of a sustainable SEL program.

Through the SEL lens, I reviewed participants' responses to the interview questions and considered variants such as teachers' self-identity, self-awareness, and knowledge of SEL goals and constructs when interpreting the data (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The data from iterative reviews of the CASEL framework and SEL goals influenced my interpretation of participants' responses on the five social-emotional competence clusters of self-awareness, relationship skills, self-regulation, social awareness, and traits that drive responsible decision making. Through reflexive analysis processes, such as checking with participants and repeated reviews of memos and research logs, I avoided bias. I did not assert that any one data set encompassed teachers' lived experiences (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). These methods ensured the outcomes' validity, generalizability, and reliability.

Summary of Outcomes

The problem addressed in this basic qualitative study was that high school teachers in a local Southeast regional school district lacked consistent SEL implementation. An evaluation of the school district and state's high school SEL training and programs revealed a lack of uniformity in implementing SEL instruction among educators in regional high schools. The rationale for conducting this study stemmed from the limited availability of research pertaining to SEL programs specifically implemented within high school settings. Researchers have challenged the hegemonic approach used to develop school-based SEL that offers "a color-blind, gender-neutral, heteronormative, one-size-fits-all approach to SEL" (K. Kennedy, 2019, p. 474). Based upon this knowledge, I determined that teachers support a more equity-oriented approach to SEL in

highly diverse high schools (see K. Kennedy, 2019). I used empirical research and CASEL constructs to conceptualize SEL implementation in teachers' classrooms from the perspective of the individuals who are key to implementation success.

Nevertheless, the existing body of research demonstrated that teenagers require SEC to effectively traverse the challenges of high school and subsequent stages of life (Hubel et al., 2020; Jagers et al., 2019; Kress & Elias, 2013). Without these skillsets, students risk academic failure and early contact with the justice system (Horn & Carroll, 1997). Poor decision making and the inability to develop and maintain positive relationships negatively affect adolescents' lives (Ansari et al., 2020; Jagers et al., 2019; Jones et al., 2020). Studies confirmed that teachers lack sufficient SEL knowledge and training to facilitate consistent and intentional use of SEL strategies (Aldrup et al., 2020; Education Trust & MDRC, 2021). Teachers in this study were willing to be trained so they could implement SEL in their daily practice. I based my 4-day PD goals, agendas, and activities on the data collected and analyzed in my study.

The body of literature confirmed that sustained SEL implementation occurs through systemic, consistent training and educators' awareness of beliefs regarding this intervention program (Eklund et al., 2018; Hemmeter et al., 2018). The school district in this study began its SEL program initiative in 2017 in elementary schools. The initiative spread to middle and high schools in the form of character education; however, SEL training stalled when the global COVID-19 pandemic caused school closings for nearly 2 years. Once in-person learning resumed, the need for trauma-informed SEL practices significantly increased because students' academic performance had suffered from 2

years of virtual learning (see Cooper et al., 2023; Katzman & Stanton, 2020). Education

reports revealed that one-third of academic learning was lost among low SES students

during the pandemic (Cooper et al., 2023).

     In addition to discussing the disjointed implementation of SEL in their schools,

my study's participants reported that upon returning to in-person learning, an emphasis

on academics accelerated with no support to address the trauma that adolescents suffered

during the global pandemic. Rigor and accelerated learning paces set the routine for

postpandemic schools, while stress and exhaustion drove massive teacher turnover in

high-risk schools (Cooper et al., 2023; Katzman & Stanton, 2020). In that context, the

study's participants shared their experiences in classrooms where students arrived,

bringing residual trauma and struggling to keep pace with academic demands. The

study's participants provided their perspectives on SEL programs in high schools, some

cynical or disbelieving the possibility that social-emotional skillsets would be prioritized

as essential for students' life success.

     I conducted this study using a basic qualitative design aligned with the CASEL

framework. The purpose of the current study was to explore teachers' perceptions of the

SEL intervention program and their capacity to consistently implement SEL practices in

their classrooms. This study included 10 purposively sampled high school ELA teachers

in one of the largest school districts in the Southeast region of the United States.

     I used a priori coding, creating reference codes relative to the topic and CASEL

framework. This approach allowed me to conduct research and analysis simultaneously.

After conducting each interview, I used audio transcription software to produce verbatim

transcripts, which were then sent to the participants for scrutiny along with my data interpretation notes. I used DELVE for subsequent in vivo coding, which assisted me with an expanded analysis, beginning with breaking the data into discrete parts and organizing those parts into categories. Using computer assisted software also facilitated the subcoding and synthesis of categories to identify emergent patterns and themes.

The primary outcomes of this investigation were derived from the participants' responses to semistructured interview questions designed to correspond with the RQ, sub-RQs, the study's problem and purpose, and the CASEL framework, which served as a guiding framework for numerous SEL initiatives. The main outcomes of this study were obtained by applying predetermined a priori codes based on the CASEL framework to the participants' responses. I organized and categorized the codes, my researcher journal, and analytic memos (see Saldaña, 2016). Data analysis revealed six predominant themes connected to the RQ and sub-RQs: (a) teachers' perceptions, mindsets, and biases drive pedagogy; (b) consistent and continuous training is needed to build teachers' SEC; (c) SEL instructional planning is key to successful implementation; (d) knowledge and use of SEL strategies are inconsistent and minimal; (e) barriers to SEL impede successful program implementation; and (f) teachers struggle to assess SEC in their students. With a continuum of SEL training, administrative, district and policy support, and funding, high schools in the district can develop a sustainable SEL program. The following project deliverable will enable educators to collaboratively develop and implement an effective SEL program grounded in the CASEL framework.

Project Deliverable

Iterative analysis and review of the data collected in the current study revealed that teachers need in-depth knowledge of SEL goals and skillsets to consistently utilize SEL strategies in their daily pedagogy. According to the study's findings, a 4-day SEL PD would help teachers and school administrators implement SEL program goals with consistency and fidelity. Implementing systemic SEL has been enhanced through continuous and regular training (Hemmeter et al., 2018). The components of the CASEL framework and the SEL objectives and goals served as models for the PD, which I described in Section 3. The project deliverable is based on the reported needs of the current study's participants. The PD's purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and daily components are presented in the following section. The PD materials, implementation plan, and evaluation plan are presented in Appendix A of this research project study.

Section 3: The Project

According to Meyers et al. (2019), implementing evidence-based interventions with fidelity positively affects children and schools. In this current study, I explored the perceptions of high school teachers in a local Southeast regional school district on their instructional implementation of SEL curriculum, perceptions of their role in SEL implementation, and views on the influence SEL practice has on student outcomes. Results indicated that the teachers in this study encountered various challenges integrating SEL into their high school curriculum. The data analysis demonstrated a significant need for high school teachers to develop their SEC. Meeting this goal may lead to a more reliable and authentic implementation of social-emotional programs. The effect of this study will be determined by the success of the PD in enhancing the social-emotional capacity of teachers.

My goal in developing this PD was to provide teachers with the information and skillsets needed to fulfill secondary school pupils' social and emotional needs, many of whom come from low-income, traumatic backgrounds. Another goal is to enhance teachers' self-awareness and self-efficacy. Teachers with high self-efficacy tend to have more success in improving their students' self-efficacy, which is a factor in student performance and outcomes (Bardach et al., 2022). Also, instructors can encourage social-emotional activities in their classrooms, but they must possess SEL acuity and an understanding of SEC, objectives, and strategies that support the program's sustainability (Cooper et al., 2023). The 4-day PD is intended to equip teachers with the knowledge, understanding, and skillsets needed to effectively implement SEL.

Rationale

The selection of the PD project genre was based on the participants' responses to scaffolded semistructured interview questions and my analysis of the collected data, which indicated a need for training teachers in SEL. The final deliverable of this study was a PD designed to enhance the training of high school teachers to increase their knowledge of SEL skills, strategies, and empirically sound, evidence-based practices. The results of the current study indicated that a significant majority of the teachers-participants (80%) experienced deficit thinking regarding pupils from underprivileged backgrounds. All participants in the study concurred that the constant implementation of SEL would positively affect students' decision-making abilities, academic achievements, and overall preparedness for postsecondary education and future endeavors. The study's results demonstrated a need for comprehensive SEL training to enhance teachers' self-efficacy and perspectives, enabling them to use SEL in their instructional practices effectively.

Considering Schonert-Reichl's (2019) assertion that implementing SEL in fragmented segments yields limited effectiveness, a 4-day PD program was designed for ELA high school teachers for Grades 9 through 12. The primary objective of this program is to enhance teachers' self-identity and familiarity with SEL and the CASEL framework and augment their propensity to apply SEL strategies. Bardach et al. (2022) conducted an integrative review to provide a systematic account of teachers' psychological characteristics and their influence on critical outcomes such as teacher effectiveness, well-being, teacher retention, and positive interpersonal relations with

students and other multiple stakeholders. Teachers' psychological characteristics were considered integral to their effectiveness (Bardach et al., 2022). The initial day of PD will begin with the educators exploring their identities regarding their beliefs, values, biases, and self-efficacy. Bardach et al. (2022) defined teacher effectiveness:

> An effective teacher contributes to student achievement and provides high quality instruction (e.g., as measured by student ratings of instructional quality or external observer ratings of practice). However, we add to this that an effective teacher promotes a variety of other outcomes as well, such as students' adaptive motivational patterns, development of socio-emotional competencies, self-regulated learning, etc. (p. 261)

Bardach et al. also noted that effective teaching and positive interactions with colleagues are intertwined with other factors, such as the attributes 'of a teacher's students and colleagues, as well as the overall atmosphere of a classroom or school. Therefore, I selected to design Day 1 to provide attendees with tools to identify their attributes and strategies to successfully navigate those mitigating factors.

According to CASEL's (2018) research, all schools should include PD to strengthen teachers' capacity for self-awareness, empathy for their students' individual circumstances, and the ability to integrate SEL into daily practice. The SEL training program will last 4 days, beginning at 8:30 a.m. and ending at 4:30 p.m. Sessions will cover topics such as (a) teacher self-awareness; (b) self-efficacy; (c) critical information about SEL and the CASEL framework used by the study's school district, designated region, and other schools across the country; (d) SEL strategies for everyday practice;

and (d) opportunities for educators to collaborate and develop SEL lesson plans within and across core areas. However, ELA and reading literacy will be the primary focus of this workshop's core content.

Researchers have identified a correlation between the mindsets and self-efficacy of instructors and their capacity to effectively develop SEL environments and cultivate proactive relationships with their pupils (B. L. Kennedy & Soutullo, 2018; Kim & Hong, 2019). Research has also suggested that teachers with strong self-efficacy tend to have positive attitudes toward growth and development rather than adopting a mindset focused on limitations (CASEL, 2021). According to CASEL (2021), teachers' empathy toward their pupils is crucial in effectively incorporating SEL principles into their daily instructional activities. Simonsen et al. (2017) indicated that teachers' perspectives on at-risk children may have a detrimental effect on how they understand and use SEL techniques. Educators who confront their biases are more inclined to establish significant connections with their students (Simonsen et al., 2017). Simonsen et al. (2017) also stated that discerning one's hidden biases can lead teachers to shift from a deficit perspective to an inclusive asset mindset. B. L. Kennedy and Soutullo (2018) noted the importance of asset versus deficit thinking among teachers and that these tenets form central components of PD curricula, planning, and practices. The body of literature supported my determination that helping educators increase their self-awareness and strengthen their efficacy must be a main component of my project.

Based on the results of the current study, I determined that a 4-day PD would be most feasible. The data showed a substantial need for expanding SEL knowledge

throughout high schools in this district and the southeast region. The use of PD and PLCs has been substantiated by research, both theoretically and empirically (Lefstein et al., 2020). These collaborative spaces are necessary for teachers to enhance their knowledge, exchange ideas, and cultivate their expertise to transform their classrooms into responsive learning environments that promote academic achievement and SEC (Gimbert et al., 2023).

Lefstein et al. (2020) provided empirical evidence in favor of PD as an effective strategy for fostering cohesive teamwork among instructors. The data from the present study highlights the necessity for teachers to possess a comprehensive understanding of SEL and the CASEL framework being implemented within the district. Similarly, the participants in the present study agreed on the necessity for clear guidance regarding selecting SEL goals and practices that are most appropriate for addressing the specific requirements of their students. The project is important for stakeholders as it provides opportunities for collaborative efforts to provide teachers with the requisite knowledge and skills to effectively integrate SEL. The higher the level of prioritization given to these activities, the increased likelihood of learners developing social-emotional skillsets that will endure beyond high school.

According to Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, acquiring social and emotional skills empowers teenagers to effectively regulate and manage their emotions, behavior, and decision-making processes. Further, Bandura intimated that individuals mimic what they observe. Bandura's views on social cognitive development further emphasized the need for educational leaders and teachers to model the skillsets they

strive to instill in their students. Within a broader framework, cultivating SEC among adolescents and adults can foster the development of resilient leaders and individuals with strong analytical skills (CASEL, 2018). Additionally, these skills may work to mitigate the prevalence of generational poverty and violence within marginalized communities (Carroll et al., 2020; CASEL, 2021). Adolescents who have acquired problem-solving skills can collaborate with their peers are more likely to transition into competent employees or successful business owners, making valuable contributions to the overall economic well-being of society (Jagers et al., 2021).

Building educators' knowledge of SEL goals and strategies may foster their self-efficacy and agency for implementing SEL in their daily classroom practice. Biesta et al. (2015) asserted that the past few decades have de-professionalized teachers by taking away their agency and "replacing it with prescriptive curricula and oppressive regimes of testing and inspection" (p. 624). In contrast, Bardach et al. (2022) supported the idea that empowering teachers can be achieved through PD because it has the potential to enhance teachers' agency by bolstering their self-efficacy. To effectively implement a sustainable SEL program, it is imperative for educators to have a comprehensive understanding of practices that promote fair and inclusive pedagogical methods. According to Mahoney et al. (2021), SEL is crucial in fostering equitable learning environments for prekindergarten through Grade 12 students, enabling them to develop social, emotional, and academic competencies. Ensuring that SEL programs promote equitable learning environments where students in these grades can develop requires that social, emotional, and academic competencies, state and district policies, and resources and training are in

place. Studies conducted over several decades have consistently shown that possessing

SEC contributes significantly to the development of individuals, leading them toward

favorable life trajectories (Bailey et al., 2019; Britto et al., 2017; Burchinal et al., 2020;

Hajovsky et al., 2020; Ross et al., 2019). Teachers may return to their respective schools

prepared to share the resources used in this PD to promote additional training within their

PLCs and assist with SEL implementation.

Review of the Literature

In this basic qualitative study, I explored secondary teachers' perspectives on

implementing SEL practices in their classrooms. In this section, I describe the project

deliverable based on my data collection and study findings. Through this basic qualitative

study, I sought to understand teachers' perceptions of SEL, their use of SEL in

classrooms, and its influences on their students. The interview questions I asked during

the data collection process aligned with the CASEL conceptual framework, the CASEL

organization's model designed to support effective SEL implementation, and the RQ and

sub-RQs. My findings emerged from semistructured interviews with high school ELA

teachers, addressing the problem of inconsistencies in SEL implementation in their

schools and the gaps in instructional practices caused by those inconsistencies. The 10

purposively sampled high school teachers struggled to discuss specific SEL goals,

experiences, or strategies and reported a desire to obtain more knowledge and training to

address students' need to develop their SEC.

The literature on the SEL phenomenon supported the importance of continuing

the development of social-emotional skills for teachers and students from prekindergarten

through Grade 12. Schonert-Reichl (2019) stated that implementing SEL programs in schools is a promising strategy for fostering all students' crucial social and emotional skills. Schonert-Reichl examined a comprehensive survey encompassing a sample of over 600 educators nationwide. The findings revealed that a sizable proportion of preschool and high school teachers believed SEL skills could be effectively taught. Furthermore, these educators asserted that promoting SEL was advantageous for students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Schonert-Reichl highlighted the many positive outcomes associated with SEL, including enhanced school attendance and graduation rates, improved standardized test scores, overall academic achievement, college readiness, workforce preparedness, and development of responsible citizenship.

The present study's findings indicated that high school teachers are receptive to implementing SEL strategies in their classrooms. They expressed support for the potential positive effects of SEL interventions on at-risk students. Nevertheless, the influence exerted by politicians and the prevailing political atmosphere regarding SEL in educational institutions imposes constraints on educators, impeding their capacity to consistently integrate SEL practices into their daily instructional regimen (Camangian & Cariaga, 2022; Chu & DeArmond, 2021; Tyner, 2021).

A comprehensive examination of the findings from my research indicated that the optimal project outcome would involve implementing a 4-day SEL PD and training program designed specifically for high school teachers. The PD sessions would take place before the commencement of the academic year and continue every month throughout the school year. Formative evaluations would be used to gauge the teachers'

SEC. Teachers and schools should also commit to using the assessment strategies acquired during PD to examine their student outcomes. Teacher assessments would be conducted quarterly during the academic year, using surveys, observations, lesson plans, and round table discussions led by experienced teachers and experts in the SEL field.

Multiple databases were used to review related literature and assist with the design of an effective PD program to address teachers' knowledge and implementation of SE. The review of the literature is discussed in this section and is specific to the product genre I selected for my study outcome. My strategy consisted of an exhaustive review of CASEL and SEL constructs and existing programs. I also searched for related theories on SEL and the core constructs that have served as a foundation for a sustainable SEL program. The PD consists of presentations of interrelated competencies identified by CASEL (2021), the organizing framework. The core components that occurred most frequently across programs were social skills (100%), identifying others' feelings (100%), identifying one's feelings (92.3%), and behavioral coping skills/ relaxation (91.7%). These findings illustrate the feasibility of systematically identifying core components from evidence-based SEL programs and suggest the potential utility of developing and evaluating modularized SEL programs (CASEL, 2021). The research findings from my study provided evidence for developing a PD program that emphasizes activities to enhance teachers' abilities in self-identification, reflexivity, empathy, and comprehensive understanding of SEL curriculum and practice. This outcome was viable based on the findings of my study.

The achievement of the study's prospective outcomes required an extensive review of the existing body of recent literature. I performed electronic searches of Walden University's library and Educational and Social Sciences databases, Google Scholar, ResearchGate, ProQuest, SagePub, and CASEL.org resources. The searches spanned publications from 2018 through 2023 for recent literature, but some relevant sources selected were decades old when the research pertained to education policies and theories. Citation chaining also assisted with locating sufficient literature; I mined relevant articles and reference lists for relevant and useful resources.

Key search terms used to guide the literature review included *SEL*, *CASEL*, *public high schools*, *SEL strategies*, *SEL policy*, *equity*, *cultural competence*, *SEC*, *collaborative PD*, *Common Core standards*, *traditional curriculum*, *SEL curriculum*, *high stakes testing*, *transformative curriculum*, *SEL assessments*, *schoolwide SEL*, *systemic programming*, *structural validity*, *educational policies*, *barriers to SEL*, *social-emotional assessments*, *social-emotional frameworks*, *21st-century skills*, *formative and summative SEL assessments*, *trauma-informed pedagogy*, *cognitive social learning theory*, *Bandura's social learning theory*, *mindfulness*, *self-efficacy*, *growth mindset*, *deficit mindset*, *teacher burnout*, *emotional exhaustion*, and *restorative justice*.

CASEL Content, Training, and Efficacy

To examine the implementation of the CASEL framework in school settings and the specific SEL competencies prioritized by states, Frye et al. (2022) conducted exploratory research to assess the diverse range of state standards for CASEL. Frye et al. analyzed the relationships between the CASEL domains and discovered a consistent

standard for SEL content across nine states. Throughout my research, it became clear that further investigation of SEL state standards was required to determine the appropriate age and grade level learning objectives. Subsequently, the empirical studies assisted me in determining the CASEL competencies connected with SEL goals and objectives on a national scale (see CASEL, 2018, 2020; Frye et al., 2022). It is crucial to highlight the importance of teachers in public schools acquiring a deeper understanding of CASEL-based standards, which can effectively support the implementation of SEL programs over an extended period.

According to Schonert-Reichl (2019), teachers are the engines that propel SEL and its approaches and practices, and their awareness fuels the effective implementation of SEL programs. Teachers must comprehensively understand SEL, the CASEL framework, and SEL/CASEL objectives and constructs to develop the skills necessary for SEL curriculum implementation. In addition, for teachers to be effective SEL practitioners, they must address their self-knowledge, implicit biases, and perceptions that may impede or enhance their capacity for creating SEL spaces for their students. Kamei and Harriott (2021) researched the perceptions of preservice teachers and SEL. Kamei and Harriott's study pertained to what teachers need to implement SEL practices in their classrooms and revealed that teachers' SEC and well-being are critical for providing pupils with social-emotional support. Findings indicated that school leaders should prioritize supporting teachers' social and emotional well-being (Kamei & Harriott, 2021). Effective support should not be provided through one-time training but through continuous discourse and interaction among teachers, coaches, and school administrators

(Cooper et al., 2023). Furthermore, school administrators should provide opportunities for teachers to engage in rich dialogue concerning instructional resources, lesson design, and ways to address difficult situations.

Cooper et al. (2023) asserted that teachers are primarily responsible for promoting SEL and mental health in schools, but many struggle to integrate it into the regular curriculum. Cooper et al. also maintained that adequate preservice preparation and ongoing support were provided to new program developers to help them create the necessary dispositions and skills to carry out their responsibilities successfully. This holds true for innovative approaches to literacy, school climate, character education, and the SEL domain (Cooper et al., 2023; Ferreira et al., 2020). Cooper et al. and Ferreira et al. (2020) also focused on teachers' capacity for self-identity, biases, microaggressions, and personal well-being. Once developed, self-efficacy beliefs continued to influence aspirations, behavior, and ability beliefs. Despite differences in overall skills, beliefs about abilities affect performance due to the mediating effect of effort. In other words, increased efficacy beliefs will result in increased effort and persistence as well as elevated levels of performance, whereas low self-efficacy may cause individuals to give up easily or not begin an activity at all due to a lack of confidence in their ability to succeed (Imants & Van der Wal, 2020).

Kamei and Harriott (2021) stated that teachers must focus on creating SEC to minimize negative emotions in their classrooms and build their self-efficacy, which may help improve student outcomes. Kamei and Harriott concurred that teachers' SEC is a paramount factor in influencing their SEL efficacy and student outcomes, and if teachers

fail to recognize and manage their stress adequately, their instruction may suffer and affect the students' well-being and achievement. Rodriguez et al. (2020) revisited their teaching brain and dynamic skill theories, emphasizing educators' need for self-identity and its affective impact on students.

Rodriguez et al. (2020) posited that a teacher's reflection on their self-identity influences their interpretation of students, behavior, and capacity for academic and SEC. However, a review of the literature confirmed that research, resources, and studies pertaining to whole-school SEL programs in high schools remain scarce. Notably, methods of assessing SEL outcomes remain a source of concern.

Subsequently, the 4-day SEL PD will serve as a venue to increase teachers' awareness of SEL's key components and aid them in successfully incorporating SEL into the existing curriculum. As part of my literature review, I examined SEL and CASEL as essential instruments for training, curriculum development, and implementation. Mosier (2018) and Poulou (2017) focused on (a) SEL in secondary education; (b) the CASEL framework as a guide for SEL program design and implementation; (c) SEL strategies integrated with multitiered student support systems; (d) teachers' perceptions of SEL, their mindset regarding their students and intervention program efficacy, and the possible impact of both on implementation fidelity; (e) challenges to SEL's effectiveness; and (f) the influence of SEL on student academic achievement. A more recent resource that added to my knowledge of SEL, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive practices was helpful in my planning of the current study's product deliverable.

According to Ross and Tolan (2018), SEL and the CASEL framework have been used primarily with preschool, elementary learners, and afterschool programs; however, some CASEL has been applied to work with adolescents. Searching for examples of successful high school SEL programs corroborated the data from my study, confirming the need for consistent rather than disjointed SEL program applications. Ross and Tolan (2018) demonstrated a scarcity of data to show the effectiveness of SEL among adolescents, making it difficult for secondary school teachers to know which practices work best with that age group. SEL practices should simulate the development of four constructs—growth mindset, self-efficacy, self-management, and social awareness—from Grades 4 through 12.

Brinkworth et al. (2018) and Constantine et al. (2019) demonstrated that most secondary schools have haphazardly attempted to integrate SEL with limited effectiveness. Brinkworth et al. and Constantine et al. also noted that systemic social-emotional development occurs when teachers are fully vested in the SEL intervention platform. The data from my study delineated the efforts teachers invest in their practice, their level of aspiration, and the goals they set for themselves. While all participants stated their belief in the capacity of their students to succeed academically and socially, their responses indicated that mindsets determined what teachers believe is possible for their students. Frequently, teachers in my study viewed SEL as controlling student behavior rather than a tool for building skillsets that will foster both academic and career success. According to Carroll et al. (2020), numerous SEL programs have targeted children with emotional and behavioral difficulties due to their potential negative effect

on peers and teachers, with the belief that an intensive individualized or small group approach is more effective.

Research by Bos et al. (2019) validated the importance of teachers' developing asset rather than deficit thinking. Bos et al. addressed deficit thinking and social-emotional gaps during the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced most students into virtual learning spaces. Bos et al. noted that by (a) acting as warm demanders, (b) responding to students' social-emotional needs, and (c) attempting to reconcile the digital divide, educators demonstrated genuine care and cultivated connectedness. As schools, districts, states, and countries contemplate the "new normal" in K-12 education, Bos et al. cited implications for practice and areas for future research. I connected this research with my current study and viewed the suggestions on building positive relationships with students as one of the integral practices that my product deliverable could provide. Days 1–3 of the SEL PD and training will contain activities that give educators opportunities to learn and engage with positive practices vital to the success of a schoolwide SEL program. Day 4 of PD will consist of unit planning and school leaders' review of SEL and the BARR model as a feasible integration of SEL, MTSS, and PBIS. The focus of the leadership teams will be on creating a solid intervention foundation that employs targeted components of each of these entities as it suits their specific schools. While teachers use the ELA content and SEL curriculum to develop unit plans, leadership teams will develop usable platforms to present, train, and employ the intervention tools that SEL, CASEL, BARR, PBIS, and MTSS provide.

Teachers, educational coaches, and SEL experts should plan collaboratively to incorporate SEL practices within the content matter. Further, ensuring that the content remains rigorous and relevant to students' lived experiences is essential. Unit lessons that incorporate SEL components include opportunities for educators to connect to the text topics, foster group discussions, and allow engagement with academic content while also participating in planning, goal setting, and self-monitoring progress. Research has demonstrated strong connections between teacher burnout and teachers' SEL competence (Aldrup et al., 2020; Collie, 2020; Oberle et al., 2020). Researchers also emphasized the benefit of establishing holistic and systemic SEL programs in schools and revealed barriers to successful SEL implementation (Hubel et al., 2020; Mahoney et al., 2021; Mischenko et al., 2022). Researchers have also shared research findings confirming that many educators feel pressured to address multiple competing priorities at once (e.g., teaching the school curriculum, ensuring students' academic achievement, supporting students with special needs) and may view the incorporation of SEL in the classroom as an additional burden on their already heavy workload (Meyers et al., 2019).

Systemic social-emotional programming requires teacher buy-in and a cycle of schoolwide inquiry to guide goal-setting and action plans that will manifest in whole-school SEC for teachers and students (Cooper et al., 2023; Dobia et al., 2019). Oberle et al. (2016) suggested a cycle of inquiry as a reflection process to help school leaders create goals and actions needed to establish a sustainable and systemic SEL program. The cycle of inquiry is key to monitoring SEL outcomes using comprehensive, multimodal assessments and survey results of teacher and student perceptions of the

school climate, which is considered an indicator of program success strategies to gauge program success (Charlton et al., 2021; Jagers et al., 2019; Taylor, 2020). Charlton et al. (2021) confirmed that "the quality of the school learning environment (school climate) is a leading indicator of school improvement and predictor of critical school outcomes" (p. 185). Their research supported the idea that school climate can positively affect students' academic and social-emotional development. School climate is indicative of teachers' and students' perceptions of the workplace and learning spaces and is strongly linked to teachers' and students' self-efficacy (Bos et al., 2019; Oberle et al., 2016). Likewise, teachers' and students' well-being are integral to social-emotional development and learning.

Oberle et al. (2016) confirmed that teachers are the engines that propel students' SEL at institutions and classrooms. Teachers' SEC and well-being are fundamental to the social-emotional support they can offer students. Theory and emerging research have indicated that SEC in teachers is associated with their experience of occupational exhaustion, a crucial indicator of teacher well-being (Jagers et al., 2021; Philpott & Oates, 2017; Taylor, 2020). Further, teachers with greater fatigue tend to score lower on SEC assessments (Bos et al., 2019; Education Trust & MDRC, 2021). Using the literature and my knowledge of teacher burnout rates in the current study's school district, I included activities that will help the PD attendees reflect on their well-being and provide them with opportunities to commit to self-care practices, which are critical for educators' successful SEL implementation (see Carroll et al., 2020).

SEL Strategies

SEL in secondary classrooms has posed challenges for teachers at high-poverty schools in the Southeast. However, school districts in that region put SEL curriculum and practices in place based on the CASEL framework in 2018. Educators in elementary schools applied SEL strategies that had positive outcomes for young learners. Middle and high schools began introducing SEL to their staff to decrease negative discipline and improve academic performance rates among primarily Black and brown children from low SES backgrounds. Research demonstrated that SEL practices, especially teachers' establishing positive relationships with their students, have positively influenced marginalized youth (Seidman, 2019). However, as training for secondary school educators began, the COVID-19 pandemic caused schools in the region to close. Learning would occur online for 2 years, and SEL became more challenging for educators to apply in the virtual classroom.

In-person classes resumed, first in hybrid form, and by the fall of 2022, schools fully opened. However, the pandemic and the isolation it imposed on children manifested in escalated trauma and impeded the social-emotional development of the nation's youth (Cooper et al., 2023; Katzman & Stanton, 2020). At the same time, teachers in this study were challenged to close the gap that 2 years of virtual teaching and learning created (see Cooper et al., 2023; Katzman & Stanton, 2020). Trauma became evident in student behavior, and a teacher shortage in the district diminished their cognitive and social-emotional skills. Teachers reported that recognizing students' SEL remained challenging with mandated distance and mask requirements, further diminishing their capacity to

engage students and provide relationship-building opportunities. The study participants acknowledged that using SEL strategies would have provided opportunities for students to express themselves, develop interpersonal relationships with teachers and peers, and collaborate to accomplish learning tasks.

According to Bandura's (1977) social learning theory and Goleman's (1995) emotional intelligence theory, quality learning requires strong teacher-student connections and compassion for students. The COVID-19 pandemic halted the capacity of the teachers in this study to conduct student-centered lessons and build students' social-emotional skillsets. Although students have returned to on-site instruction, teachers in the current study reported noticing residual trauma and learning loss caused by the global pandemic. During the pandemic, students were forced to isolate isolation, remaining so for over a year, and mandated to learn on a virtual platform, which many found challenging. At-risk children who may have been used to school support no longer had that structure or assistance. The high number of disabled students, a large percentage of whom were minority, were left with insufficient technology and access to the internet and left to learn in a nonstudent-centered environment. Families in the school district where this study was conducted were affected by the pandemic, with many unable to work, which worsened poverty and changed the method and quality of learning. Social school children normally experience increased loneliness, but during the pandemic, they also experienced death, loss, and food and housing instability, especially within disadvantaged communities (Cooper et al., 2023; Hemmeter et al., 2018). Upon returning to in-person learning, many of these students struggled to acclimate due to trauma caused

by the pandemic. Teachers reported that many of their students struggled academically

and lacked social-emotional skillsets, and there continues to be a gap in family support

for students' educational needs at school.

A lack of family support and comprehension of SEL programming hampers

teachers' ability to consistently administer SEL. In addition, education policies do not

provide support for extensive community-in-school initiatives and resources to address

the issue of inadequate family support in schools (Biesta et al., 2015; Eshel et al., 2018;

Imants & Van der Wal, 2020). Tyner (2021) conducted a study on the support for SEL

programs in schools among families and legislators. The findings confirmed that most

parents support SEL programs in schools, but the designation of SEL for such programs

has produced a partisan divide. Tyner advised that when seeking community, parental,

and political support, school districts and states should change the title of SEL. Tyner

also underlined the importance of community support for SEL initiatives. When

discussing SEL implementation, parents and the larger community should be included.

Therefore, I propose that informative workshops be provided to community stakeholders

and that schools partner with community organizations, local colleges, and universities to

familiarize them with the concept of SEL spaces and skillsets, which they can support

through policies, incentives, and other means of advocacy.

Katz et al. (2020) described SEL as a Tier 1 component of a multitiered

intervention system of programs. Katz et al. highlighted SEL approaches that could help

sustain a multifaceted intervention system and noted that continuous improvement would

require efficient and effective measurement of student SEC outcomes. Effective and

efficient monitoring of school and districtwide SEL requires teachers to understand the
fundamentals of program evaluation and how to use both quantitative and qualitative
measures to develop robust, continuous school improvement plans (CASEL, 2020;
Imants & Van der Wal, 2020). Such plans should include developing implementation
strategies, tracking progress, analyzing outcome data, and making appropriate
implementation adjustments based on the unique needs of the school (Schlund et al.,
2021).

PD Purpose and Goals

The purpose of this PD is to expand high school teachers' knowledge of SEL and
the CASEL framework. This PD may also offer teachers strategies they can integrate into
their content areas and use consistently in their daily practice. The literature regarding
workshops for teachers indicated that participation in PD mitigated the negative
relationship between professional investment concerns and emotional support (Meyers et
al., 2019; Oberle et al., 2016, 2020). Similarly, teachers in the current study expressed a
desire to incorporate SEL strategies into their daily practice. However, they also
articulated discomfort because they felt unsupported by school leaders and struggled to
find time to teach skills other than those required for high-stakes end-of-year exams. The
teachers in this study indicated a desire and willingness to receive additional training to
improve their capacity to develop their students' social and emotional skills.

4-Day PD

The recommended duration for the PD sessions is 4 days, with the first 3 days
dedicated to enhancing comprehension and information pertaining to SEC, as well as

strategies for effectively implementing programs. Educators will use the fourth day to progress and conclude their instructional module on writing. The school and district should collaborate to facilitate the development of further units, during which participant volunteers will refine SEL lesson plans. This process will involve input from the participants' peers and field experts.

The primary objective of the PD platform is to facilitate the enhancement of teachers' SEL competencies, which may afterward be disseminated to their peers and pupils. On Day 1 of PD, participants will be introduced to SEL and CASEL concepts and become familiar with implicit versus explicit bias and its impact on teachers' capacity to implement SEL with fidelity. Participants will set SEL goals and collectively establish a feasible vision for implementing SEL using the CASEL framework. On Day 2, participants will learn SEL strategies suited to their student populations. They will also review the SEL standards and curriculum and begin writing Unit 1 for the ELA content across grade levels. Participants will work collectively with peer teachers, academic coaches, and SEL facilitators to create lessons with SEL activities and strategies integrated with the grade level ELA content. The third day of PD will be a review of the SEL and CASEL goals, vision, and strategies and a continuation of Unit 1 lesson planning. At the end of the day, participants will reconvene to share the lessons they developed with the whole group and receive feedback from coaches and peers. The fourth day of PD will consist of completing writing lessons and determining SEL assessments to use as benchmarks for identifying student outcomes.

The attendees of the initial PD sessions will be ELA teachers. However, Jagers et al. (2019) advised that other educational stakeholders should be included in subsequent SEL PDs to facilitate building a systemic SEL school community. Additional PD participants might include other content area teachers, principals, academic coaches, community members, students, and family members (Biesta et al., 2015; Imants & Van der Wal, 2020). The initial proposed SEL PD will provide opportunities for teachers to engage in conversations and activities, such as self-reflection, collaborative discussions, and lesson planning. Attendees will also explore best practices for building positive relationships with their students and training them to become autonomous learners who assert agency in their academic and social-emotional development.

For teachers to help their students establish positive self-identity, practitioners must first become self-aware through reflection and self-identity activities within this training (Kamei & Harriott, 2021). Subsequently, the opening activity on Day 1 of this PD will be a self-identity reflection exercise where teachers will explore their emotions, biases, and preconceptions to create self-awareness of their values, beliefs, and norms in the educational contexts. According to Aldrup et al. (2020), teachers' emotional exhaustion, biases, and low self-efficacy are negatively linked to students' achievement. Building teachers' self-awareness is integral to increasing their SEC, which directly affects their students (Collie, 2020).

Scope and Sequence

The PD will offer multiple SEL resources that can be used to develop evidence-based SEL lessons within specific content areas across grade levels. The 4-day training

platform will include establishing clarity regarding SEL, its meaning, purpose, and modes

of application. For educators to change the traditional academic climate with one that

fosters social-emotional skillsets, they must first adapt their teaching and learning styles

to include the four emotional intelligence domains of self-awareness, social awareness,

self-management, and relationship management (Goleman, 2001). I included Goleman's

(2001) paradigm in the foundation of the PD project, incorporating the primary domains

of emotional intelligence, which CASEL uses for SEL. The scope and sequence of the

PD contains information and activities designed to include the emotional intelligence

domains.

Project Resources Required

The most important resources for the PD are the participants, who are the

educational stakeholders. Expert SEL facilitators will also be required. Resources

required for the professional training include virtual and hard copies of the PD

PowerPoint and videos to inform and facilitate heightened self-awareness and self-

efficacy among the participants. An outline for the 4 days of PD can be found in

Appendix A, along with the PowerPoint that facilitators can use to conduct the PD. The

CASEL organization, as well as daily SEL techniques provided by CASEL, will be

among the tools available to participants online. The SEL guidebook and examples of

evaluative tools will serve as additional resources. Participants should be provided with

the district curriculum and SEL components of that curriculum, which they will use on

the second and third days of PD. Participants will also be given Common Core state

standards for their content areas. The final task of PD will be to bridge the gap between

the academic and the SEL goals that the school(s) determine to be their SEL focus for the year.

Formative and summative assessments will be administered at the end of each day and on the last day of PD. The evaluations will be teachers' self-reported emotional intelligence regarding self-awareness, ability to empathize with others, relationships, self-management, and responsible decision making. Each day, there will also be assessments that allow for participant written feedback, a question/answer forum, and engagement observation. The final survey for this PD will measure participants' knowledge of SEL goals, CASEL framework constructs, and SEL strategies discussed.

Resources are essential to ensure productive and effective PD. Primarily, the most valuable resource for PD will be the participants, including classroom teachers, teacher assistants, administrators, and curriculum coaches. With teachers at the center of SEL, the PD resources should include reading material such as the CASEL guidebook and articles and videos to be read, viewed, and discussed during the 4 days. I prepared a PowerPoint for each day and segment of the PD. Teachers will be provided folders to hold informational materials and copies of the PowerPoint printed with a notetaking design. The in-person PD venue will include post-it notes, writing instruments for notetaking with markers, and chart paper for break-out group segments of the PD. In addition, facilitators will need microphones and computer and wireless projector resources.

Support Facilitating SEL

Principals' support and advocacy for SEL programs are vital to schoolwide implementation. However, all the participants in the current study confirmed that they did

not feel supported when asked to integrate SEL practices into their pedagogy. The expectation that teachers should play a significant role in implementation of SEL in instructional practice continues to be widespread (Collie, 2020). Cooper et al. (2023) asserted that 79% of teachers are expected to successfully integrate SEL techniques consistently and with fidelity. Cooper et al. also noted that less than 20% of administrators have significant responsibilities in implementation of SEL, while the remaining school staff members are responsible for supporting functions. Building a culture of support is essential in teachers' successfully implementing SEL.

Earlier studies showed that principals had greater confidence in their capacity to implement SEL with improved student outcomes when supported by district leaders (Gonzales & Vasudeva, 2021; Jones et al., 2020; Mahoney et al., 2021). School leaders require district endorsement and advocacy to feel empowered to implement SEL school-based programs. Researchers recognized the desire of school administrators to support their staff's sense of collective self-efficacy by increasing schoolwide SEL knowledge and skills (Constantine et al., 2019; DePaoli et al., 2018; Mahoney et al., 2021). In addition, supporting teachers' efforts to integrate SEL strategies in their classrooms promotes a positive school culture, which is needed to successfully implement systemic SEL programming (CASEL, 2018; Collie, 2020). Teachers' self-reported need for leadership support was reinforced in the research of Gonzales and Vasudeva (2021), Jones et al. (2020), and Mahoney et al. (2021), which confirmed the importance of principals' advocacy for SEL implementation in their schools.

In a study by Constantine et al. (2019), principals have reported that district administrators have provided more guidance and support for SEL at higher levels, increasing from 34% in 2017 to 53% in 2018. In addition, principals in districts with a strong emphasis on SEL reported greater success in developing students' social and emotional skills and greater implementation across various benchmarks. Teachers at these principals' schools were expected to integrate SEL into the curricula. In their study, DePaoli et al. (2018) encouraged establishing an SEL planning team to support SEL. Their research showed that principals would like a separate curriculum for teaching students social and emotional skills. These findings highlight the critical role districts play in the implementation of SEL at the school level and the need for additional district-level resources and collaborations to support SEL.

Gimbert et al. (2023) conducted a study of educators' social-emotional competence, which yielded information useful to development of my study's project deliverable. According to Gimbert et al., it is the administrator's responsibility to foster educator SEL competence. School leaders should be exposed to techniques for regulating their emotions and behavior in professional settings if they are to have a positive effect on teachers' ability to implement effective SEL in the classroom. Five of the 10 participants in my study stated that they did not believe that school leaders clearly understood SEL as a program or a practice. Other participants concurred that school administrators did not model SEL traits when handling issues with staff or students.

Barriers and Potential Solutions

The participants conveyed their concerns regarding the behavioral challenges displayed by their at-risk learners as well as the challenges associated with implementing SEL consistently in schools with significant needs. According to Oberle et al. (2016), when one considers the obstacles that impede the social-emotional growth and future success of disadvantaged students, the importance of SEL becomes clear. The current study's findings showed a consistent pattern in the development of the instructors' mindsets concerning the challenges they expected in the classroom and the issues their students presented. It is important for facilitators to guide them in engaging in reflective exercises and meaningful discussions to address concerns or reservations that instructors may have regarding the implementation of SEL and its potential effect on their adaptive teaching practices. This approach was designed to achieve the following objectives: (a) promote self-awareness among instructors, (b) identify and address any biases or fears they may have, and (c) equip them with strategies that will enhance their self-efficacy in implementing SEL. I designed the first day of PD to create an environment where teachers can openly share their worries and anxieties about their ability to successfully apply SEL with a challenging group of students.

Time constraints may be a barrier in presenting large amounts of information to the participants within 4 days. However, I designed the PD to offer teachers key information along with easily accessible resources for each practitioner to use throughout the school year. I crafted each session to give educators strategies and opportunities to collaboratively create lessons that integrate SEL into their daily routines. Further, experts,

teachers, and coaches who attend the PD will have yearlong access to additional mentoring and coaching in best practices for incorporating SEL into their classroom and school. The afternoon session of Day 3 and Day 4 will allow participants to collectively plan Unit 1 and present their best strategies for SEL to the group.

Roles and Responsibilities

According to Meyers et al. (2019), the success of an intervention program is determined by how well each stakeholder fulfills their role in the PLC. One of my roles as the researcher was to create a 4-day PD program to enlighten educational practitioners about SEL as an effective intervention program that will aid in school reform and change. For this project, I used input from SEL experts and independent research on the foundation of effective PD. I used an integrated method to construct opportunities for educators to increase their SEL knowledge and acumen.

Several stakeholders will have integral roles in the PD and the continuation of SEL PLCs in the future (see Meyers et al., 2019). For example, curriculum coaches, district leaders, site administrators, and lead teachers all have responsibilities linked to this initial PD in that they will need to thoroughly understand how to best support teachers in their efforts to plan and implement SEL strategies. Although these stakeholders will not participate in the initial PD developed from my study, they will need to engage in separate SEL training courses, enabling them to support and empower their teachers. SEL training is not a one-time engagement but is iterative and should occur regularly throughout the school year.

In the initial PD, the participants will consist of ELA secondary education teachers. Their role in the PD will entail working collaboratively to determine a unified SEL vision for the district and participating high schools. Because systemic SEL programming requires collaboration between multiple stakeholders, SEL PD for administrators and academic coaches should occur prior to the schoolwide initiation of the program. After school leaders and teachers have participated in SEL PDs, the collaboration will also require administrators and curriculum coaches to engage with teachers democratically and openly to promote the rich conversations needed to shape the SEL program that best suits high schools in the district. Further, district leaders will need to find funds for ongoing SEL PLCs each quarter for each participating school. Methods to acquire resources may involve reallocating funds and finding innovative ways to grant teachers the time needed for subsequent training and planning. Ideally, district leaders', administrators', and academic coaches' roles for the initial PD will be to participate alongside teachers to solidify SEL goals and practices for the school year, work with other stakeholders to include SEL information and practices into the school leadership teams' agenda, and collaborate with teachers to determine the best ways to support their efforts to incorporate SEL goals into instructional practice.

A school district consists of a collective of individuals who are dedicated professionals, united with a common purpose to support children in achieving their maximum capabilities. The strength of the professional community relies on the reciprocal support of several stakeholders, including the teaching staff, district leaders, professional trainers, curriculum leaders, and district policymakers (Biesta et al., 2015;

Imants & Van der Wal, 2020). As a result, the PD project encompasses the entire school

community. District leaders and policymakers can provide financial resources for the

engagement of experts who can help teachers and principals incorporate SEL into the

current curriculum and provide requisite resources. Educational administrators can

arrange designated periods for educators and support personnel to collaboratively develop

instructional units that integrate SEL goals and activities alongside academic content.

Educational administrators can allocate dedicated time, physical facilities, and

necessary materials for subsequent ongoing SEL workshops throughout the academic

calendar. Additionally, they can aid educators, enabling them to witness the

implementation of SEL strategies at schools where such practices are consistently and

effectively employed. Community stakeholders can become active participants in the

SEL collaborative team, assuming a vested role in working toward the common vision for

SEL within the educational institution. This inclusion guarantees a higher level of

commitment and a unified perspective among instructors and students about their SEC.

This PD program will be based on the collaborative experiences of district

leaders, district SEL curriculum consultants, site administrators, and teachers. SEL

curriculum and lesson planning will occur during Day 3, and a fourth day will be

provided for teachers and support staff to complete lessons for Unit 1. Additionally, I will

encourage the school district to allow 3 additional days following the initial PD for

extensive curriculum writing. District leadership must be willing to provide stipends or

financial support for teachers who wish to participate in writing lessons for their specific

content areas. District and school leaders will also need to allocate sufficient time each

quarter for additional PD opportunities, including observing teachers who effectively

employ SEL practices in their classrooms. Building principals should also provide time

within each 9-week academic term for SEL data to be collected and disseminated to

teachers to gauge the effectiveness of SEL practices schoolwide. As this district

integrates SEL as a Tier 1 component of an MTSS, reports that will be used to determine

staff and student SEC will include: (a) discipline referral rates by grade, age, ethnicity,

and gender; (b) teacher and student absenteeism rate; (c) academic performance data, (d)

and school climate surveys for both teachers and students.

Project Evaluation Plan

According to Aldrup et al. (2020), an instrument for assessing the

"specific knowledge and skills that teachers need to master the social and emotional

demands in the classroom is still lacking" (p. 1). Yet research supports the importance of

professional learning that fosters teachers' and leaders' reflection on ways to improve

their learning and teaching practices (Chu & DeArmond, 2021). Teachers'

socioemotional competence is crucial for mastering work demands, developing healthy

relationships, and promoting professional well-being and student development (Aldrup et

al., 2020). Using the findings from my study, which confirmed the need for increased

adult awareness of SEL, I developed a 4-day training for high school ELA teachers. The

goals for the PD will be to (a) introduce and increase teachers' SEL and CASEL

knowledge and self-efficacy, (b) increase teachers' self-awareness of inherent biases and

deficit thinking and guide them in embracing a growth mindset, (c) provide teachers with

resources to develop lesson plans wherein they have infused SEL strategies, and (d) guide

teachers in the development of lesson plans for the first ELA unit for Grades 9–12 with SEL strategies and activities integrated into each lesson. The desired information from the PD evaluation plan includes learner outcomes and proof of teachers' improved skills, knowledge, and practice. The indicators of success will be short-term for this initial PD, with medium and long-term indicators to be determined, developed, and evaluated by individual schools and future research regarding teachers' SEL perceptions and practices.

Evaluation of the proposed PD will determine if the sessions effectively supported teachers' reflection on the concepts discussed in the training. The evaluation will be formative and goals-based. However, a summative assessment will occur in the form of the PD's final tasks, the final lesson plans each teacher will be asked to complete by the end of Day 4. This product will be shared electronically, assessed by facilitators, and feedback will be given as appropriate. The purpose of a goals-based evaluation plan will be to improve the quality of future SEL professional learning programs and to ensure an increased positive effect on learner outcomes. The purpose of the formative evaluation approach is to determine the ability of subsequent training to affect change in social-emotional teaching and learning. Formative evaluative methods also set a precedent for the cyclical nature of continuous school reform and change.

The format for the PD evaluation will be daily feedback from participants, including open-ended questions that will be revisited at the beginning of each subsequent day. Formative assessment will also be daily end-of-day surveys, facilitating discussion about what subsequent training should look and feel like for participants. The desired information gained from the PD evaluation plan includes learner outcomes and proof of

teachers' improved skills, knowledge, and practice. The indicators of success will be short-term for this initial PD, with medium and long-term indicators to be determined, developed, and evaluated by individual schools and future research regarding teachers' SEL perceptions and practices (see Ferreira et al., 2020). Teachers' self-reported emotional intelligence regarding self-awareness, ability to empathize with others, relationships, self-management, and responsible decision making will be evaluated. Each day will also include assessments that allow for written input from participants, a question-and-answer forum, and engagement observation.

Assessing SEC

Studies conducted to gauge the efficacy of SEL programs have shown that students who participated in these programs achieved significant positive outcomes in the six major social-emotional development domains and an 11-percentage-point gain in achievement (Weissberg, 2019). Despite evidence of SEL's positive effect on students, not all stakeholders agree that SEL programs belong in schools. Meyers et al. (2019) clearly defined the concept of SEL, a term often misinterpreted by educational stakeholders, as my research findings revealed. SEL is the process of developing SEC— also known as SEL (Meyers et al., 2019). Through SEL, children, adolescents, and adults learn and employ the knowledge, attitudes, and abilities required to understand and control emotions, create and achieve positive goals, feel and express empathy for others, build and sustain meaningful relationships, and make responsible decisions. (Meyers et al., 2019). I decided to include this definition of SEL and its purpose on Day 1 of the PD, as my study's findings showed that SEL is a confusing term.

Recent literature demonstrated that SEL skillsets overlap. According to Abrahams et al. (2019), not only do social-emotional skill frameworks vary in terms of labels and scope, but their skills overlap and have similar underlying constructs. Abrahams et al. examined skills assessments for children and adolescents and social-emotional frameworks conducive to measuring SEL skillsets. Abrahams et al. also offered methodological approaches that might improve social-emotional programs, which guided my design of the SEL PD. Through my literature review, it became evident that teachers must be skilled in SEC before they can convey these skillsets to their students.

Gimbert et al. (2023) acknowledged the need for school leaders to wholly support teachers' efforts to implement SEL. Gimbert et al. asserted that school leaders must be exposed to techniques for regulating their emotions and behavior in professional settings if they are to have a positive effect on teachers' ability to implement effective SEL in the classroom. The researchers stipulated that school administrators must be able to assess and improve their own and their subordinates' SEL. Understanding how to harness these dispositions and convey SEL knowledge and skills will foster and perpetuate positive relationships between educators and students while exhibiting a positive mindset and modeling optimistic behaviors for educators and students (CASEL, 2020).

Project Description

The findings from my basic qualitative study revealed that the high school teachers, represented by the participants in my study who are from a school district in the Southeast region of the United States, struggled with consistent and authentic SEL implementation for various reasons. The prevalent trend in the data signified that SEL

programs primarily occur in prekindergarten through seventh grade but frequently fail to materialize beyond that point (Blyth et al., 2018; Schonert-Reichl, 2019). When implemented with fidelity, evidence-based programs benefit students and schools (Meyers et al., 2019). The corpus of research literature demonstrated the necessity for high school teachers to gain SEC, which will foster a more consistent and authentic application of social-emotional programs. As a result, the project deliverable for this study is PD training.

As Schonert-Reichl (2019) asserted, SEL is ineffective if implemented disjointedly; therefore, I outlined the 4-day PD for high school educators, targeting building propensity for SEL continuity through increased teacher self-identity and knowledge of SEL and the CASEL framework. Research by CASEL (2018) suggested that professional training should be all schools' goals for building the capacity for teachers' self-awareness, empathy for their students' personal situations, and the ability to weave SEL into their daily practice. The 4-day SEL training is scheduled to begin each morning at 8:30 and conclude each afternoon at 4:30. Sessions will include segments on (a) building SEL and CASEL knowledge, (b) using SEL strategies for daily practice, (c) enhancing teacher self-awareness while fostering asset-thinking, and (d) creating opportunities for educators to collaborate and create SEL lesson plans within and across ELA content for Grades 9 through 12.

On Day 1, teachers will be given a preassessment addressing their SEL knowledge and practice. The same preassessment will be given as a postassessment on Day 4, the final day of the PD. On Day 1, the afternoon session will include discussions

and activities related to growth mindsets and the role teachers' mindsets play in students' social, emotional, and academic performance. The afternoon session of Day 1 will begin with participants taking an SEL-based self-awareness survey designed to make them aware that bias is not a White phenomenon or race-based concept but something that all people inherently possess (Connor & Evers, 2020). According to Vuletich and Payne (2019), implicit biases involve automatic linkages with social groups. Biases occur when social preconceptions relate various connotations to different groups; implicit biases may unintentionally lead to biased treatment, even when a group is associated with stereotyped conceptions (Vuletich & Payne, 2019).

Subsequently, the goal for Day 1 afternoon session will be for participants to engage in activities that will enhance their self-awareness of biases and deficit thinking and guide them toward transforming deficit thinking into growth mindsets. However, the transformation cannot occur in training. As recommended by Durlak et al. (2022) and Jones et al. (2020), an initial PD is an opener for subsequent SEL training that should occur continuously in schools and encourage the participants to be a part of the effort to share their information with leadership and other stakeholders.

The project study's SEL training will follow the guidelines provided by Schonert-Reichl (2019) and Domitrovich et al. (2017), which foster the following concepts: (a) an overview of SEL vision, goals, and CASEL constructs (CASEL, 2018, Jones et al. 2020); (b) increasing teachers' awareness about their self-identity and self-efficacy as it impacts their role in implementing the social-emotional development of their students (Durlak et al., 2022); (c) promoting teachers' knowledge of how to create lessons based upon their

knowledge of SEL goals and competencies (Domitrovich et al., 2017); (d) supporting

participants' capacity to master social and emotional skills needed for self-management,

relationships, and work; (e) encouraging teachers to leave with action plan guidelines and

resources for using SEL teaching strategies in their classroom employing exemplar ELA

SEL-infused lesson plans; and, (f) creating opportunities for participants' agency in the

development of SEL programming in their perspective schools. Educators must possess a

comprehensive understanding of SEL and the CASEL framework to acquire the

necessary competencies to implement SEL curriculum.

Additionally, instructors must familiarize themselves with the objectives and

components of SEL/CASEL, enhancing their expertise in this domain. Therefore,

participants will participate in a daily end-of-session questionnaire that assesses how

much they feel they have accomplished during the day's training. The survey links will

be given to participants prior to the close of the session each day. Time will be allowed

for participants to complete and submit the questionnaire. Facilitators will review the

feedback and reinforce concepts that need clarification or review. Facilitators will

provide supplemental resources to address areas that may need reinforcement. The PD

will equip educators with the information and skillsets needed to satisfy the social-

emotional needs of high school students, many of whom originate from low-income,

marginalized families. However, before teachers can promote social-emotional practices

in the classroom, they must develop SEL acuity, which will increase their efficacy in the

goals and methods that will make these intervention programs effective and sustainable

(Ferreira et al., 2020; Imants & Van der Wal, 2020). The 4-day PD is designed to provide the knowledge, understanding, and skillsets that high school teachers require.

During Day 1 of the PD, educators will participate in activities aimed at providing them with an opportunity to identify and familiarize themselves with SEL and CASEL concepts. The attendees will also learn about district, state, and national SEL priorities and constructs. They will engage in collaborative discussions to establish a vision for their daily SEL instruction. Participants will set SEL objectives that align with the unique needs of their respective schools. In addition, attendees will be provided with opportunities to engage in introspection on SEL and the CASEL material as well as their responsibilities in effectively executing SEL implementation. Moreover, participants will have the opportunity to discuss the advantages and challenges associated with implementing SEL in their classrooms. Later in the Day 1 session, participants will engage with material and activities that will enable them to recognize, acknowledge, and confront both implicit and explicit bias.

The afternoon Day 1 PD will engage educators in self-awareness activities to identify, acknowledge, and address implicit and explicit bias. The objectives for the first day of the program involve enhancing teachers' knowledge of SEL and SEL strategies and collaborating with educators to employ tactics that can facilitate a shift in their mindsets from a focus on limitations to one of growth. The aim is for the participants to collaborate with their peers to cultivate growth mindsets in their interactions with their students, their peers, and their pedagogy. Furthermore, the first day of the PD will consist of an intensive afternoon session focusing on building teacher-student relationships

through awareness of deficit versus asset thinking. Research shows the importance of teachers establishing meaningful connections with their students and cultivating their social and emotional skills (Main, 2018; Seidman, 2019). The PowerPoint presentation used during the PD is designed to facilitate participants' daily professional growth.

Formative assessments consisting of participants' responses to open-ended questions will be administered on both the first and second training days. The summative assessments are scheduled to occur during the third and fourth days of PD. During the afternoon PD on Day 2, teachers will collaboratively read and assess texts and discuss how each text can be taught using SEL strategies discussed on Day 1. The formative assessment for Day 1 will be the product of unpacking the paired texts for ELA ninth grade content, two poems with culturally sensitive subject matter—colonialism. The task for the participants will be to determine how to infuse the content with relevant SEL activities.

On the second day of the PD, participants will review SEL objectives and the fundamental components of the CASEL framework, which serves as the foundation for implementing SEL initiatives at a systemwide level. Next, they will engage in collective discourse about equity and its importance in the classroom. This discussion will center around activities where the participants view and reflect on a video on education equity. They will read and discuss two poems containing explicit bias from two perspectives. As these two texts are recommended topics for ELA in the school district, they can be used as a part of the subsequent lesson planning activity, which will occur on Day 3. The afternoon session for Day 2 will involve reading the paired texts and discussing how they

can approach teaching a lesson using paired texts and the SEL strategies they might want to include as lesson components.

On Day 3 of the PD, the SEL information and strategies discussed on Days 1 and 2 will be reviewed, and there will be opportunities for participants to apply their knowledge of SEL. Participants will review SEL goals and ways to tie them to their subject-matter curricula. Participants will be able to review previously discussed inequities in education and the role teachers play in ensuring that each lesson they create and deliver includes elements of equity. Also, they will discuss the SEL strategies they choose to include in the exemplary lesson and why they think those strategies will benefit their specific student groups.

On Day 4, participants will work collaboratively to organize and write lesson plans containing culturally responsive elements and evidence-based SEL activities. The lesson will require alignment with the Common Core state standards and SEL goals on which the participants will focus as they collectively create their lesson and activities. Teachers will be required to finalize lesson plans for Week 1 of ELA Unit 1, which can serve as an SEL lesson exemplar for Grades 9 through 12. Unit 1 for ELA high schools is similar in context and content, which allows teachers to select varied texts similar to the paired texts selected for this PD and apply them to their grade level content. These lessons will provide them with practical and readily available tools and resources to use in PLCs.

In addition, on Day 4, attention will be given to identifying the necessary measures to ensure the program's sustainability. This will include a discussion of the

participants' role in guiding SEL implementation at their specific schools and ways in which SEL programming could and should be inclusive of educational leaders and stakeholders in the school community. Prior to the conclusion of the 4-day training, participants will be encouraged to organize SEL teams at their schools and receive guidance and information about how they can play significant roles in bringing SEL knowledge and resources to their schools. Research confirms that sustainable SEL programming should occur yearly, with PD ensuing regularly (Ferreira et al., 2020; Hamedani & Darling-Hammond, 2015). Sustainable SEL programming occurs with continuous staff training, which becomes a focus of PLCs supported by school leadership, becoming a part of the school community culture (CASEL, 2020; Imants & Van der Wal, 2020). According to Hamedani and Darling-Hammond (2015), schools that aim to engage and empower the student communities they serve ground their educational approach in an expanded vision of SEL that incorporates a social justice education perspective as essential to their practice.

According to Ahmed et al. (2020), emotional literacy is a skill acquired through firsthand experiences and cultivated through students' active involvement in emotion-related processes and competencies. This PD facilitates learning in an environment that encourages the expression of a wide range of emotions and exchanging feedback to enhance the effectiveness and outcomes of each educational session (see Bailey et al., 2019; Gonzales & Vasudeva, 2021). PD participants should design lessons to establish SEL spaces and experiences. These lessons should incorporate routines that practitioners employ based on group consensus. Moreover, participants will collectively select and

tailor formative and summative assessments for ascertaining students' mastery of lesson content and SEC.

Before the 4-day training's conclusion, participants will collaborate to develop a timeline for returning to their prospective schools to help those institutions' PLCs cultivate SEL. Participants will also brainstorm and identify strategies for routinely continuing PD inside their schools. Teachers and schools in the area will have access to materials for quarterly assessments to determine student and teacher SEL growth and mastery. Attendees will also have access to open-access CASEL tools to share and promote with their coworkers. The summative assessment for Day 4 goals will be the exemplar lesson plans that include SEL strategies for daily instruction of Unit 1, Lesson 1. The exemplar lesson plans should be taken to participants' perspective schools for collaborative review, refinement, and implementation. A follow-up survey will be administered to teachers at the end of Day 4, which will address their knowledge gained and self-efficacy with SEL instruction. Later in the school year, teachers will be asked to participate in a voluntary follow-up survey, which will be given to teachers in the two schools to assess the percentage of teachers who implemented SEL strategies for Unit 1 and their perceptions of the strategies' influence on student outcomes. The survey will also address teachers' willingness to continue integrating SEL strategies into their lessons moving through the ELA units during the school year.

I designed the project based on the current basic qualitative study findings. The study's data supported the necessity for ongoing training to improve educators' knowledge of SEL and enhance their SEC. The project, created to accomplish the PD

goals, is designed to build teachers' self-awareness, self-efficacy, and knowledge of SEL. The PD will serve as the initial stage toward creating a systemic and holistic SEL program, which is vital to ensuring the program's sustainability (CASEL, 2020, 2021). The sustainability of a program is dependent upon stakeholders' belief in the program's role and purpose. The 4-day PD will serve as the platform to promote high school SEL programs in the local district where the schools' SEL programs can serve as models for broader application. PD participants will have access to tools for assessing students' SEL development and be able to use those assessment tools to determine SEL influences on student outcomes as they teach over time. Promoting collaboration among teachers regarding the methods and timing of SEL implementation will enhance the program's unity and uniformity. SEL promotes knowledge and skills in five areas of expertise: (a) creating healthy identities, (b) emotion management and goal achievement, (c) empathizing with others, (d) establishing and maintaining strong and helpful relationships, and (e) making responsible decisions (CASEL, 2018). The benefits of SEL, particularly for at-risk students, have increased demand for the program in the district studied as well as in school districts nationally. According to the data, many high schools in the district do not use whole-school SEL, resulting in fewer student benefits. However, the data also showed that teachers have a high level of interest in using SEL and trauma-informed practices to foster SEC in their students.

Project Implications

The importance of this PD will manifest in teachers' abilities to build positive relationships with their students through heightened self-awareness and enhanced

capacity for planning and consistently implementing SEL practices with fidelity. Research indicates that increasing teachers' confidence in their ability to implement good practices in their classrooms increases their likelihood of engaging in close student-teacher relationships, which helps to position their students on positive academic and life trajectories (Bailey et al., 2019; Britto et al., 2017; Burchinal et al., 2020; Hajovsky et al., 2020). Subsequently, this PD has implications for educators in this district's secondary schools to work together to improve staff and student SEC.

The results of the current study indicated the capacity to foster social change in public education settings. Throughout my study, I presented research on SEL that confirmed the need for increased research on SEL programs and strategies for high school students (Camangian & Cariaga, 2022; B. L. Kennedy & Soutullo, 2018; Legette et al., 2022; Leithwood, 2021). Also, during the study, emerging trends emphasized the necessity for teachers, administrators, and other key education stakeholders to heighten their awareness of the positive influence of social-emotional skillsets and methods that schools can use to develop schoolwide, holistic SEL programs. Consequently, the findings of this study can guide educators to transform schools and place at-risk students on a positive life trajectory.

A significant implication of the study's findings and the resulting project is that well-implemented multiyear SEL programs can have meaningful effects on teachers' social competence and students' social-emotional development and academic engagement in the high school years (see Marsay et al., 2021). Researchers have found that SEL is a prevalent component of education in countries such as Jamaica, South

Africa, and British Colombia (Mahoney et al., 2021; Marsay et al., 2021). Therefore, shared global roundtable discussions could positively affect local, national, and global school communities by promoting a universal SEL discussion and collaboration on evidence-based SEL practices already in European and developing countries (Marsay et al., 2021). One of my participants was Jamaican and confirmed that SEL is uniformly implemented in their country from preschool through high school. The implications from the study hold significance for future SEL research using a global lens that could fill the knowledge and instructional practice gap by finding common trends in American schools and those in underdeveloped countries (see Brush et al., 2022; Camangian & Cariaga, 2022; Ferreira et al., 2020; Marsay et al., 2021). Future studies may reveal effective models and methods for developing a holistic SEL curriculum that requires educators to build their SEC and apply those skillsets to their instructional practices. Similarly, the proposed PD has implications for teachers' role on a local, national, and global scale through collaborative efforts to share knowledge and strategies for effective SEL implementation.

Additionally, this study's findings support future studies on a larger scale wherein at-risk children can benefit from equity in education and restorative justice practices inherent in social-emotional practices (see Gonzales & Vasudeva, 2021). This study's findings can be applied to multiple interrelated, parallel projects that address adolescents' social-emotional development needs, where the gaps in program intervention exist (Grades 7–12), methods of closing those gaps, and the risks involved if the gaps persist. Findings from the proposed research projects should promote teachers' effectiveness by

enhancing their growth mindsets and their capacity to build positive relationships with their students.

Other implications for this study are that educational policymakers should encourage and fund SEL for preservice teachers in higher learning institutions. Subsequently, the gap between teachers' education, training, and the practices they employ in their classrooms might be diminished, and their students' academic and social-emotional skillsets should increase. My PD has potential implications for practice and research. For example, prior work on SEL programming has largely focused on kindergarten through seventh grade settings and alternative or charter schools. Understanding derived from the current study's findings directs future focus on developing the SEC of high school teachers to create effective and schoolwide SEL programs that will promote consistently applied SEL approaches.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

In this section, I describe the project's strengths and limitations as they relate to the problem in the study and the literature. I discuss my reflections on alternative ways to approach the study's problem and what was learned about the processes specific to the research and development of the project. Reflections related to the research project include my learning, growth as a scholar and practitioner, and project developer based on the research. I reflect on the importance of the work, and the potential effect of the study's findings regarding social change. I also describe the methodological and theoretical implications of the study and recommendations for practice and future research.

Project Strengths and Limitations

Transformative SEL is anchored in the concept of justice-oriented citizenship and equity in education (CASEL, 2021). Therefore, a goal of the current project deliverable was to ensure that educational practitioners' PD experience included an exploration of SEL as it pertained to enhancing empathy, tolerance, and equity in education. I created a PD that included experiences of culture, identity, and agency. During the PD, the first focus concerned self-identity, race, ethnicity, and the implications that educators and student power dynamics have on those less empowered, as is the case with minority at-risk students of color. I also structured the PD to engage participants in applying SEL strategies guided by CASEL constructs. The PD elements mentioned in this section represent strengths in daily goals, content, and context designed to foster teacher agency.

Possible limitations in the project deliverable stem from flaws in traditional teacher training. Traditional PD is structured to place participants in passive roles, receiving information. However, implementing a PD that facilitates mastery experiences, particularly through the provision of follow-up coaching, has been found to have the most significant effect on the development of self-efficacy beliefs among literacy teachers (Education Trust & MDRC, 2021; Schlund et al., 2021). On the other hand, teachers who have participated in PD but did not receive subsequent coaching reported a decline in their self-efficacy (Karras et al., 2021). Meyers et al. (2019) promoted building external capacity through PD from developers of evidence-based programs with expertise in the chosen program. Traditional PD that is administrator-led with expectations of positive attitudes from staff frequently ends in the program terminating or being replaced. The use of SEL experts to facilitate training was built into the project deliverable design to mitigate possible limitations,

Another limitation of PD is that they frequently disseminate information in a way that conveys that teachers are not meeting the needs of their students. This does little to strengthen educators' self-efficacy and puts the participants in a defensive role, resulting in a resistance to stakeholder buy-in necessary for the success of the PD. Positive experiences with culturally responsive teaching increase the likelihood that educators will buy into the concept of SEL programs. Karras et al. (2021) suggested that positive attitudes and greater efficacy beliefs increase the likelihood that teachers will succeed in inclusive classrooms. Bandura (1977) advanced that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are associated with the level of effort they dedicate to teaching, the objectives they establish,

their tenacity in the face of unexpected circumstances, and their ability to recover from complications. With resilience strategies at the center of the current study's project deliverable, I structured each day of the PD to include hands-on, learner-centered activities that offered opportunities for participants to practice the SEL strategies presented.

According to Jagers et al. (2019), understanding one's feelings, aspirations, values, and social and personal identities is necessary for self-awareness competence. This entails having a positive outlook, realistically estimating one's abilities and limitations, and feeling optimistic and self-sufficient. High levels of self-awareness necessitate identifying one's prejudices, comprehending the connections between individual and societal histories and identities, and acknowledging the interdependencies between ideas, emotions, and behaviors in various settings. SEL information, practices, and strategies presented in the SEL PD evolve around the concepts of building self-awareness and social-emotional development strategies as levers for educational equity in their classrooms (see Schlund et al., 2021).

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

Schools seeking to improve social-emotional development and academic achievement may find CASEL and SEL skills useful as both a roadmap for teacher implementation and a supportive intervention program for hypermarginalized students of color (see Desmond & Western, 2018). Building teaching environments based on the CASEL framework can facilitate the development of SEL abilities in high school students and provide perspective on promoting students' social and emotional well-being

in schools. To successfully integrate SEL using the CASEL framework, teachers must use their multidimensional talents to combine self-cognizance, self-regulation, social responsiveness, interpersonal connection skills, and responsible decision making into daily instruction (CASEL, 2021; Jagers et al., 2019, 2021). The CASEL framework provides a guide for how educators and school communities can systematically promote intrapersonal and cognitive competencies across a variety of settings. The findings from the present study demonstrate a need to enhance stakeholder's awareness of SEL and the CASEL framework, which serves as a guide for SEL programs throughout the United States.

Based on my study's results, the project deliverable was a PD to train educators about SEL and the importance of its implementation for students in Grades 9 through 12. The PD is also designed to equip teachers with the skills they need to become more self-aware and socially responsive as they forge positive relationships with their students as well as plan and deliver culturally responsive SEL-based lessons (see Ladson-Billings, 2021). To cultivate an understanding of SEL and its associated CASEL framework, I developed a comprehensive 4-day SEL training program firmly rooted in the principles and guidelines outlined by the CASEL framework. The training provides information on the various elements involved in acquiring and expanding knowledge on SEL objectives and appropriate strategies for high school students. Specifically, the training covers the CASEL framework, methods for incorporating CASEL goals and objectives into the school curriculum, and SEL practices. Each day was structured to provide knowledge, foster collaboration, and encourage interactivity.

The presentation format includes a PowerPoint, with the primary objective of delivering up-to-date social-emotional material and interactive activities for practicing teachers to implement social-emotional strategies. The PowerPoint presentation was created to increase the awareness of school leaders and teachers regarding effective strategies for developing (a) a comprehensive SEL vision for the entire school, (b) quarterly goals for the school, and (c) establishing a sustainable process for enhancing existing or implementing new SEL curriculum that promotes the involvement of the entire school community. The program will culminate in a collaborative session focused on constructing open-ended lessons, wherein each exemplar will incorporate the five components of CASEL and SEL. The training program allows teachers to gain knowledge and training in SEL. Furthermore, it provides guidance regarding stakeholders' goals and objectives, evaluations, proposals, inquiries, and concerns concerning the application of SEL in a secondary school context with significant educational requirements (see Campbell et al., 2016; Domitrovich et al., 2017).

Alternative Definitions of the Problem

According to Ferreira et al. (2020), SEL is a relationship-centered phenomenon. This approach to SEL involves fostering relationships with students via questioning and active listening, skills integral to teachers' SEC. My goal with this capstone project was to learn more about high school teachers' views of SEL, which is an understudied topic. The problem in this study is that high school teachers use SEL strategies inconsistently with pupils who might benefit the most from these learning modalities. Learning that is firmly rooted in strong teacher-student bonds and asset-thinking mindsets has the

potential to significantly reduce high school dropout rates and marginalized students' early engagement with the judicial system, a phenomenon known as the school-to-prison pipeline. Inconsistent SEL teaching strategies in high schools could also be viewed as a reason to promote SEL skillsets in these students as a preventative intervention tool that assists socially disadvantaged youth in gaining skills to help them cope and navigate obstacles in high school and beyond.

Alternative Solutions to the Local Problem

Heightening teachers' self-awareness is critical to culturally responsive teaching, which served as a catalyst for the present study (Gay, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 2021). There are alternative solutions to the study's problem and culminating project. One alternative approach to a 4-day PD could be an allotment of time during professional learning sessions, focusing on strategies teachers could use daily to build student-teacher relationships. Collaborative role playing, strategy sharing, and student-teacher roundtable discussions could go far in building teachers' and students' SEC and infusing consistent SEL experiences in classrooms and schools.

A primary component of SEL is the key role teachers' relationships with students play in building students' SEC. It is a significant part of SEL and making that component a vital part of the daily school climate has benefited learners of any age (Jagers et al., 2019). This approach to creating a social SEL school environment could initiate the establishment of daily SEL practices in high schools and immediately affect student outcomes of high school adolescents. It could also be a way to create culturally responsive learning spaces and systemic SEL programming by focusing teachers across

all grade levels and content areas on integrating relationship-building opportunities into each school day while gaining additional SEL training throughout the school year (Gay, 2021).

A second alternative approach to PD is a collaborative SEL round table held in global virtual sessions for teachers and educational stakeholders. This alternative would occur simultaneously with PLCs within the schools or as supplemental discourse about the global impact of SEL. The round table concept stemmed from research conducted in the United States and the United Kingdom that supports equity discussions grounded in SEL goals and focal points (see Brush et al., 2022). Camangian and Cariaga (2022) acknowledged that the United States must address its children's social, emotional, and mental well-being in a manner distinct from other advanced economies. Other nations bear similarities to the United States regarding the enduring effect of colonialism on the health and well-being of their youth. Unlike the United States, these countries may lack comprehensive domestic or educational policies about SEL, as the significance of youth wellness is not adequately recognized. However, many countries have undertaken culturally responsive initiatives to increase school equity and can share concerns and ideas about effective ways to address the problem on a global scale (Camangian & Cariaga, 2022; Ferreira et al., 2020).

My proposed PD will address teacher self-awareness. By gaining insight into self-awareness and self-identity, teachers and other educational stakeholders can achieve heightened awareness of institutional racism and work together to find methods of mitigating those barriers to equitable education (Mischenko et al., 2022). Subsequently,

roundtable discussions, whether schoolwide, national, or global, offer an alternate approach to PD and could create equitable education practices that will benefit all students and serve as catalysts for school reform and transformation. These discussions can advocate for the disruption of harmful school and district-level practices, policies, and norms (Brush et al., 2022; Camangian & Cariaga, 2022). Teachers who are poorly informed about institutional biases may blame learners and perceived cultural deficiencies for academic achievement disparities (Gay, 2021). Teachers informed on institutional bias, where not all learners are equally rewarded for their hard work, would be empowered as advocates for disrupting harmful school and district-level practices, policies, and norms.

Research across multiple fields has demonstrated that reflecting on potential biases, along with emotion regulation, perspective taking, and collaborative partnerships, can help reduce racial bias that contributes to inequitable outcomes (Connor & Evers, 2020; Schlund et al., 2021). Another alternative to solving the problem presented in this study is for the districts in the Southeast region to solicit the aid of CASEL and the Equity Work Group to implement systemic SEL. The Equity Work Group partnered with CASEL and school districts to address the need to enhance SEL implementation efforts and to explore intersections between those districts' SEL and equity endeavors (Schlund et al., 2021; Sharp, 2016). The primary purpose of this group was to establish a community of professionals dedicated to PD in the areas of SEL and equity leadership. The Collaborating Districts Initiative facilitated cooperation between CASEL and numerous school districts, where CASEL has provided support for the implementation of

comprehensive and effective SEL practices (Oberle et al., 2016). The Collaborating

Districts Initiative has also served as a platform for disseminating valuable insight and

knowledge gained through these collaborative efforts (Schwartz et al., 2022). In response

to inquiries and investigations into the relationship between SEL and equity initiatives,

SEL implementation can be more effectively utilized to advance educational equity

objectives.

Scholarship, Project Development, Leadership, and Change

Throughout the course of my doctoral scholarship, I acquired a comprehensive

understanding of the research process. As an English teacher, I used and taught rhetorical

and allegorical devices in writing. My doctorate team and mentor have provided me with

exceptional, individualized support throughout my Walden experience, which has

enabled me to develop my scholarly writing and research skills. All stages of my doctoral

journey culminated in the awareness that my fundamental qualitative research can foster

school and education policy reform. It is my hope that my research study may be a

catalyst for education reform and increased systemic equity. My goal with the PD is to

begin discussions among high school teachers on the local level and create a ripple effect

as those teachers share their expertise within the schools and the broader educational

community. The initial PD might also foster continuous and more inclusive PD for other

educational stakeholders and encourage national and global roundtable discussions about

ways to foster SEC among educators, student families, and policymakers.

One of the goals of my study was to create a collaborative conversation about

SEL. I discovered that research on my subject is lacking and that this study can assist in

filling that gap. Conducting this research resulted in the discovery of underlying societal issues pertaining to SEL. Changes in how young adolescents learn and experience education can influence the trajectory of marginalized, disadvantaged students' outcomes (Jagers et al., 2019). Teaching teachers how to embrace SEL can result in students developing life skills that will help them become positive leaders in their communities. Underprivileged children of color commonly lack healthy social and emotional development abilities, which causes them to join the school-to-prison pipeline at a higher rate than White pupils (Desai & Abeita, 2017; Legette et al., 2022; Mahoney et al., 2021).

SEL has proven successful in early education (Schonert-Reichl, 2019). However, the scarcity of research studies has limited educators' and educational stakeholders' knowledge about SEL programs and the capacity for these programs to transform the lives of at-risk adolescents. My research journey heightened my passion and excitement for the possibility that my work might change and improve the education community and advance effective educational policies. In addition, my research path inspired me to enhance educational methods that advance and expand knowledge and support proactive action that can bring about positive change in educational settings. Moreover, my Walden doctoral experience prepared me for future goals as a researcher and change agent. I found that SEL is employed by schools in Jamaica, South Africa, and British Colombia (see Mahoney et al., 2021; Marsay et al., 2021). My goals entail a national and global comparative study of SEL and its implementation in underdeveloped countries. Based on my study and Walden University academic training as a researcher, I am eager to apply my experience toward enriching education throughout the international community.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

The importance of work involving social-emotional development skills for educators includes enhanced well-being and knowledge of how to model SEL in the classroom (Oberle et al., 2016; Rodriguez et al., 2020). For adolescents, social-emotional skillsets can improve attendance, academic performance, career readiness, and interpersonal relationships (Abrahams et al., 2019). Educators can become more effective in their craft and have positive relationships with their students, which research shows enhances their cognitive and noncognitive skills (Camangian & Cariaga, 2022). CASEL (2018) asserted the importance of SEL lies in its ability to transform students' lives by placing them on a successful life trajectory. Teachers acknowledged that SEL is needed to ensure positive influences can help them meet the needs of disadvantaged children (CASEL, 2021). SEL improves school climate, and when school climate is a problem, SEL offers a solution (Taylor, 2020).

My research demonstrated that 80% of the teachers interviewed felt their school's climate was negative and shared the belief that SEL would improve the school climate and students' behavior. However, my research also showed that those teachers who found the workplace climate negative agreed that developing a SEL curriculum can improve the school environment and enhance students' behavior and academic performance. According to Taylor (2020), students exposed to SEL programs in elementary schools showed higher rates of success in middle and high school. However, Bardach et al. (2022) stated that more research is necessary to expand knowledge of the influences of SEL on diverse populations.

Teachers in my study concurred that SEL is needed in high school to increase the outcomes of economically disadvantaged students who enter ninth grade lacking social and emotional skillsets. Teachers also asserted that there was not enough emphasis on integrating SEL into daily instructional practices and that adequate training and support were integral to their ability to infuse SEL strategies into their lessons. However, the data from my study revealed that the participants believed their high schools lacked consistent SEL knowledge, goals, and training they felt would assist them in creating an SEL environment in the classroom. CASEL (2018) asserted that the importance of SEL lies in its ability to transform students' lives by placing them on a successful life trajectory. Additionally, CASEL reported that teachers using SEL in their classrooms acknowledged positive influences on disadvantaged children. Researchers have maintained that SEL improves school climate, and when school climate is a problem, SEL offers a solution (Durlak et al., 2011; McKown & Taylor, 2018; Taylor, 2020). Students exposed to SEL programs in elementary schools showed higher success rates in middle and high school; more research must occur to expand the knowledge of the influences of SEL on diverse populations (Durlak et al., 2011; McKown & Taylor, 2018; Taylor, 2020). Teachers also asserted that there is not enough emphasis on integrating SEL into daily instructional practices and that adequate training and support are integral to their ability to infuse SEL strategies into their lessons.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of high school teachers in a local Southeast regional school district on their instructional

implementation of the SEL curriculum, perceptions of their role in SEL, and views on the

influence SEL practices have on student outcomes. The results of my study revealed that

SEL programming in high schools in this Southeast region is inconsistently applied

despite existing goals to improve the social-emotional development of students and

teachers. In my study, the data showed that high school teachers and school leaders

support systemic SEL programming. The empirical research suggested that heightened

self-awareness among teachers increases their self-efficacy and SEC (Mahoney et al.,

2021). However, my research study's data showed that the high school teachers in this

study were less confident of their ability to effectively integrate SEL into their

curriculum. These findings suggest that SEL would be more consistently applied if

adequate training were in place to strengthen teachers' self-identity, self-efficacy, and

SEL acuity. The research corpus supports the need for more consistently implemented

SEL in schools on local and national levels. The study's findings confirmed that teachers

can improve their self-awareness and thereby increase their SEC. The potential effect of

this study's findings includes the improvement of teachers' SEC, which can build a

school's capacity for systemic SEL (see Mahoney et al., 2021). This project study has the

potential to guide high school teachers in integrating high-quality SEL programming into

daily classroom and school lessons and activities. This research study showed a need for

a systemic approach to adopting SEL in schools, and the findings provide insight into

what teachers require to assist them in designing and implementing SEL techniques into

their everyday practice. The body of research in this study suggests that teachers' SEC is

important to both teachers' occupational well-being and positive student development

(Aldrup et al., 2020; Mahoney et al., 2021). The current study illustrates that teachers have the capacity and the desire to build SEC skillsets and, in doing so, meet social and emotional challenges inherent in educational settings.

My research study's findings also indicated that instruments for measuring teachers' SEC are lacking, and theory-based models can be useful in developing those instruments (see Abrahams et al., 2019; Aldrup et al., 2020; Ramberg et al., 2019). Further implications of the current research study include the probability that as teachers measure their personal SEC and growth, their improved self-efficacy and self-awareness will manifest in positive student growth and improved student outcomes. The implications for this study include building teachers' capacity to develop positive student-teacher relationships and, in turn, improve student outcomes for at-risk students. This study can also drive educational policy change as it focuses attention on areas where teachers can begin implementing strategies in their daily practice. Further, the findings in this study can help educators improve PD to meet teachers' needs in implementing SEL, such as training in building SEL knowledge, building self-identity, planning ways to integrate SEL into daily lessons, and expanding SEL programming schoolwide.

Additionally, the implications of my study include recognizing the need for holistic collaboration where members represent each aspect of the school community. If schools desire a positive and whole-school transformation, inclusiveness is integral to meeting those goals. After familiarizing school staff with SEL goals and the importance of using the CASEL framework, committees could collaborate with them to create SEL goals, curriculum, implementation, and support that will launch an SEL whole-school

program. The schools that structure and successfully implement SEL can then become models for SEL development for other local high schools with follow-up research that may show the programs' proactive influences on school climate. Furthermore, systemic implementation methodology can expand transferability and sustainability once the transformation occurs (Dobia et al., 2019). The potential for a positive effect on local schools and communities can promote closer bonds between teachers and students (CASEL, 2018, 2020, 2021), enhanced student interrelationships, and increased student identity, which can translate into learning and leadership (Dobia et al., 2019). Based on the literature, the current study's findings support the position that at-risk high school students would benefit from teachers' capacity for modeling and using SEL strategies in their daily practice (see Chu & DeArmond, 2021). These traits can facilitate students' growth into productive and positive leadership, stronger community ties, student agency, and sustained social change (Dobia et al., 2019).

There are also connections between SEL, academics, and classroom conduct (Mahmud, 2020). Research demonstrated insufficient success in SEL programs among teens ages 14 through 17 (Jagers et al., 2019). Little is known regarding the patterns of co-occurring SEL demands among high school first-year students' academic performance, behavioral patterns, and attitudes toward the value of social skills (Tan et al., 2018). Students with low social-emotional skillsets have displayed increased academic and behavioral problems and experiences with law enforcement and the court system more frequently than students with high social-emotional skillsets (Jagers et al.,

2019; Tan et al., 2018). However, teacher practices have proven integral to meeting children's behavioral and social-emotional needs (Jagers et al., 2019).

My direction for future research involves using SEL as the venue to promote social justice in the local and broader educational communities. I am inspired to engage in further research with other practitioners and change agents to generate positive educational experiences in underdeveloped communities in Africa and Haiti. I have begun outlining the foundational research where United States' high schools and Jamaica currently use SEL programs (personal communication, Jamaican educators and parents, 2016–2023). The present study also demonstrated it would be useful to apply SEL as an intervention tool for high-needs secondary schools beginning in ninth grade and extending through 12th grade. In addition, I suggest using this research to inform school communities and policymakers about how SEL can reform societal issues such as early exposure of at-risk youth to the judicial system.

Legislators, parent organizations, and think tanks in some parts of the United States disagree that SEL should be taught in schools and characterize it as a propaganda campaign designed to indoctrinate children to a liberal agenda and make them sympathetic to critical race theory (Lathrop & Wessel Powell, 2022; Tyner, 2021). Providing research that refutes these suppositions could inspire officials to change opposing views, reconsider their stance, and find ways to support and fund SEL initiatives. SEL research opens possibilities for school and community transformation, equipping individuals with the social and emotional skills needed to proactively diminish oppression (Mahoney et al., 2021).

As SEL practices become prevalent in Grades 9–12, graduates will obtain skills that will enable them to leave high school ready to be change agents prepared for the challenges societal inequities create (CASEL, 2021; Jagers et al., 2021). Participatory and transformative forms of SEL help students embrace restorative justice within their communities (Jagers et al., 2019). In the current study, I noted that SEL programs are consistently applied in educational settings in underdeveloped countries such as Jamaica, South Africa, and British Colombia. A future goal for me as a researcher is to collaborate globally with associate researchers to ascertain broader knowledge of SEL programs in countries that have implemented programs, policies, and processes that are working well. These programs should be looked at more closely by the United States as a model to be reproduced here.

Action research is intentional and aimed at promoting positive social change and involves international experts with diverse levels of research and evaluation skills (Burkholder et al., 2016). Future research on SEL programs for at-risk students might include practitioners conducting action research to promote positive social change collaboratively or independently. My steps in the follow-up to the current study will focus on strengthening the collective culture of collaboration to further research on the scarcity of effective SEL programs for at-risk youth. In addition, applications for future studies are advisable to explore the longer-term effects of teachers and students participating in high school SEL programs as well as research on the effectiveness of programs in and outside the United States.

This study's research findings demonstrated that implementing SEL programs in high school settings can be maximized if they occur in supportive situations and build on adult SEC. Future applications for this project may focus on expanding SEL programs to whole-school communities, where workshops and resources are provided for parents as well as teachers, schools, and community organizations participating in career events cooperatively. Further research should be conducted to develop programs, legislation, and financing so that SEL programming benefits adults by helping them strengthen their SEC and students and families by helping improve student abilities, which can propel them on a more successful life path (Paolini, 2020).

Conclusion

Researchers have evaluated SEL in schools, with an increasing emphasis on the necessity for high school students to develop social-emotional skillsets to prepare to be useful members of their communities. However, little is known regarding high school teachers' viewpoints on the application of SEL or the CASEL framework, which is commonly used to construct and lead SEL curriculum (Ross & Tolan, 2018).

The problem addressed in this study was that high school teachers in a local Southeast regional school district lacked consistent SEL instructional implementation. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of high school teachers in a local Southeast regional school district on their instructional implementation of the SEL curriculum, perceptions of their role in SEL implementation, and views on the influence SEL practices have on student outcomes. I conducted this study using a basic qualitative design to explore how educators integrated SEL activities into their

instructional practice. Developing social-emotional skillsets is imperative for individuals to effectively establish connections with others and navigate the complexities and demands of life (CASEL, 2018; Main, 2018).

Numerous studies from various academic disciplines have consistently demonstrated that the practice of introspection regarding one's potential biases, combined with the development of skills in emotion regulation, adopting different perspectives, and fostering collaborative relationships, have the potential to reduce racial bias (Aldrup et al., 2020; Collie, 2020; Jones et al., 2020). Racial bias is a significant contributor to the perpetuation of unequal outcomes (Connor & Evers, 2020; Main, 2018; Schlund et al., 2021).

In this study, I used the CASEL conceptual framework and a constructivist approach. I conducted semistructured interviews to collect data from 10 purposively sampled ELA high school teachers from a local Southeast region school district. A priori codes and first and second cycle in vivo coding were used to analyze the data. Codes were grouped into categories from which themes emerged. Member checks, analytic memos, and my researcher's journal helped assure the accuracy of the findings.

The analysis of the data yielded insight into prevailing themes and patterns. Six themes emerged from the study's findings: (a) teachers' perceptions, mindsets, and biases drive pedagogy; (b) consistent and continuous training is needed to build teachers' SEC; (c) SEL instructional planning is key to successful implementation; (d) knowledge and use of SEL strategies are inconsistent and minimal; (e) barriers to SEL impede successful program implementation; and (f) teachers struggle to assess SEC in their students. The

current study supports using SEL to meet the different needs of at-risk adolescents and propel them toward academic and personal success.

Participants' responses indicated that teachers' mindsets can be deficit or asset-focused when considering their students and which teaching and learning practices can help them be productive. For example, if teachers perceive students from disadvantaged backgrounds as lacking in abilities or undisciplined, a negative mindset can impede positive teacher-student relationships. Eight of the 10 teachers asserted that their school lacked administrative support for discipline problems. Studies supported the idea that teachers who consider their students disruptive often suffer from burnout and emotional exhaustion, which can impact their ability to deliver quality instruction or try new strategies. Teachers' perceptions of their students are directly linked to their behavior and academic performance. To successfully implement SEL using the CASEL framework, teachers must apply multidimensional abilities to infuse self-cognizance, self-regulation, social responsiveness, interpersonal connection skills, and responsible decision making in their daily practice (CASEL, 2020). Participants shared that they needed more information about SEL and how to plan lessons that integrate SEL practices in their classrooms.

The second theme that emerged pertained to teachers' need for SEL training. According to the data, SEL training for high school teachers is disjointed and limited. Participants indicated that teacher training must be consistent and continuous for SEL programs to work. They also noted that inadequate training directly impacted their sense of self-efficacy. Research studies confirmed that low self-efficacy in teachers often

results in low self-efficacy in students, which affects student outcomes. The data revealed a consensus that continuous training is integral to the successful implementation of SEL practices and that sustainable SEL programs require consistent whole-school SEL training.

Needing time to plan and develop SEL lessons was a third theme that emerged in this study. Participants also suggested that instruction should be less test-driven and more student-centered, with lessons that required student collaboration and agency. The data also indicated a necessity for implementing extended or block courses, affording teachers additional time to facilitate student engagement in SEL-oriented projects. Addressing the social-emotional needs of students necessitates the implementation of a comprehensive curriculum that emphasizes the development of SEL competencies, including problem solving and self-management abilities (Jagers et al., 2019).

Moreover, theme four of the study revealed that teachers' knowledge and use of SEL strategies are inconsistent and minimal. Teachers in this study struggled to articulate the definition of SEL or the goals inherent in the CASEL framework. Moreover, the participants were unable to verbalize the specific SEL strategies they used in their classrooms. Research supports that SEL is not consistently part of the secondary school curriculum, with more emphasis placed on students' academic achievement.

A fifth theme that emerged from the study is that numerous challenges exist for teachers employing SEL strategies in their daily practice. For example, participants in the study shared that they lack time and opportunities to collaborate, plan, and apply SEL strategies in their daily lessons. They also stated that in high school, the focus is on

ensuring that academic content is covered, and that takes precedence over giving students opportunities to learn and practice social-emotional skills. Participants also reported that there is a lack of curricular resources that align with the goals and objectives of the CASEL framework and the Southeast region's high schools' curriculum.

The sixth theme revealed from the study was that teachers are not knowledgeable about effective ways to assess the effect that SEL has on their student outcomes. The study's participants described how their method of knowing the effect of SEL on student outcomes was observation of peer collaboration. Discussion of ways in which students empathized with characters and situations was a second way in which participants felt they could observe the impact of SEL in their classroom. Two of the 10 participants stated that their method of assessment was giving students surveys at the end of each quarter.

Previous research studies indicated a necessity for the implementation of SEL programs inside high schools, with a special emphasis on serving at-risk learners (Gonzales & Vasudeva, 2021; Legette et al., 2022; Mahoney et al., 2021). For educators to successfully include SEL in their teaching, it is critical they have access to training, resources, tools, and evidence-based research that offers direction on how to incorporate SEL education into their regular pedagogical strategies (Constantine et al., 2019; Gay, 2021; Hajovsky et al., 2020).

The implementation of a SEL program inside a school necessitates tangible backing from administrators, which encompasses financial support, provision of resources, and a clear articulation of the institution's objectives (Ramberg et al., 2019).

The findings of this study suggest the necessity for further research that encompasses program evaluation and data analysis, specifically focusing on the demonstration of substantial enhancements in students' SEC and academic achievement. Schools can use SEL programs to support students who have experienced trauma and are considered at-risk for dropping out or failing high school.

The current study has implications for educational transformation from traditional approaches to teaching and learning into culturally responsive, trauma-informed planning and instruction (Gay, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 2021). Moreover, the study's results have the potential to facilitate substantial policy modifications aimed at promoting the growth of SEL programs. These changes would also enhance the availability of research, resources, tools, and training based on empirical evidence. Consequently, educators responsible for integrating SEL instruction into their daily teaching practices would receive valuable guidance and support.

An analysis of the data in my study demonstrated that teachers desired in-depth training in SEL strategies and time to plan units to allow them to integrate those strategies into their weekly and daily lessons. Given the high self-reported need for extensive SEL training, I selected the project genre, PD, to expand ELA secondary level teachers' knowledge of SEL and provide strategies they can use to build their own SEC and that of their students. Additional benefits of the PD will be to help teachers become more invested in equity in their schools and classrooms.

To ensure that my PD includes sufficient training, I referred to the body of literature to guide my product's topics, audience, and content. In addition, when planning

the product deliverable, I employed the CASEL conceptual framework (see Mahoney et al., 2021). The CASEL framework was primary to my research project because it is also the foundation for the SEL curriculum used by the school district in the study. The goals encompassed in this PD, grounded in the CASEL framework, addressed teachers' need for increased self-awareness, strengthened collaborative abilities, and enhanced social relationships, all of which are skills necessary for success in school, work, and society (CASEL, 2018; Schonert-Reichl, 2019). Providing a platform such as the PD resulting from this study will grant teachers opportunities to nurture their social-emotional growth and development. They will then be able to foster social-emotional skillsets in their students, which can benefit learners, schools, and the broader educational community.

References

Abrahams, L., Pancorbo, G., Primi, R., Santos, D., Kyllonen, P., John, O. P., & De Fruyt, F. (2019). Social-emotional skill assessment in children and adolescents: Advances and challenges in personality, clinical, and educational contexts. *Psychological Assessment*, *31*(4), 460–473. http://doi.org/10.1037/pas0000591

Adler-Greene, L. (2019). Every Student Succeeds Act: Are schools making sure every student succeeds. *Touro Law Review*, *35*, 11–23.

Ahmed, I., Hamzah, A. B., & Abdullah, M. N. L. Y. B. (2020). Effect of social and emotional learning approach on students' social-emotional competence. *International Journal of Instruction*, *13*(4), 663–676. https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2020.13441a

Aldrup, K., Carstensen, B., Köller, M. M., & Klusmann, U. (2020). Measuring teachers' social-emotional competence: Development and validation of a situational judgment test. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *11*, Article 892. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00892

Ansari, A., Hofkens, T. L., & Pianta, R. C. (2020). Teacher-student relationships across the first seven years of education and adolescent outcomes. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, *71*, Article 101200. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2020.101200

Bailey, R., Stickle, L., Brion-Meisels, G., & Jones, S. M. (2019). Re-imagining: Findings from a strategy-based approach. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *100*(5), 53–58. https://doi.org/10.1177/0031721719827549

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Prentice Hall.

Bandura, A. (1982). Self-efficacy mechanism in human agency. *American Psychologist*, *37*(2), 122–147. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.37.2.122

Bardach, L., Klassen, R. M., & Perry, N. E. (2022). Teachers' psychological characteristics: Do they matter for teacher effectiveness, teachers' well-being, retention, and interpersonal relations? An integrative review. *Educational Psychology Review*, *34*(1), 259–300. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-021-09614-9

Barnes, T. N. (2019). Changing the landscape of social emotional learning in urban schools: What are we currently focusing on and where do we go from here? *The Urban Review*, *51*(4), 599–637. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-019-00534-1

Barry, M., Clarke, A., & Dowling, K. (2017). Promoting social and emotional well-being in schools. *Health Education*, *117*(5), 434–451. https://doi.org/10.1108/HE-11-2016-0057

Beard, K. S. (2018). Standing in the gap: Theory and practice impacting educational opportunity and achievement gaps. *Urban Education*, *53*(5), 668–696. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085915613553

Beddows, C. (2016). Vygotsky's theory (VT) of cognitive development: Sociocultural orientation. In J. D. Wright (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of the social & behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). SciTech Connect. http://scitechconnect.elsevier.com/vygotsky-cognitive-development/

Bernhardt, V. L. (2015). *Data, data everywhere: Bringing all the data together for continuous school improvement*. Routledge.

Biesta, G., Priestley, M., & Robinson, S. (2015). The role of beliefs in teacher agency. *Teachers and Teaching*, *21*(6), 624–640. http://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1044325

Blazar, D., & Kraft, M. A. (2017). Teacher and teaching effects on students' attitudes and behaviors. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *39*(1), 146–170. https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373716670260

Blyth, D. A., Jones, S., & Borowski, T. (2018, September). *SEL frameworks: What are they and why are they important?* (Frameworks brief introductory series No. 1). Measuring SEL. https://measuringsel.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Frameworks-A.1.pdf

Borman, T. H., Bos, H., Park, S. J., & Auchstetter, A. (2021). Impacting 9th grade educational outcomes: Results from a multisite randomized controlled trial of the BARR model. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, *14*(4), 812–834. https://doi.org/10.1080/19345747.2021.1917027

Bos, J. M., Dhillon, S., & Borman, T. (2019). *Building assets and reducing risks (BARR) validation study: Final report* (ED602462). ERIC. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED602462.pdf

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). To saturate or not to saturate? Questioning data saturation as a useful concept for thematic analysis and sample-size rationales. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, *13*(2), 201–216. https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1704846

Bridgeland, J., Bruce, M., & Hariharan, A. (2013). *The missing piece: A national teacher*

survey on how social and emotional learning can empower children and transform schools. *A report for CASEL* (ED558068). ERIC. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED558068.pdf

Brinkley, B., Hines, E., Jones, A., McMillian, E. G., Sturdivant, B., & Walker, M. (2018). *Fixing systems, not kids: Changing the narrative of Black males in Guilford County school* (EJ174511). ERIC. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1174511.pdf

Brinkworth, M. E., McIntyre, J., Juraschek, A. D., & Gehlbach, H. (2018). Teacher-student relationships: The positives and negatives of assessing both perspectives. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, *55*, 24–38. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2017.09.002

Britto, P. R., Lye, S. J., Proulx, K., Yousafzai, A. K., Matthews, S. G., Vaivada, T., Perez- Escamilla, R., Rao, N., Ip, P., Fernald, L. C. H., MacMillan, H., Hanson, M., Wachs, T. D., Yao, H., Yoshikawa, H., Cerezo, A., Leckman, J. F., & Bhutta, Z. A. (2017). Nurturing care: promoting early childhood development. *The Lancet*, *389*(10064), 91–102. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)31390-3

Brush, K. E., Jones, S. M., Bailey, R., Nelson, B., Raisch, N., & Meland, E. (2022). Social and emotional learning: From conceptualization to practical application in a global context. In J. DeJaeghere & E. Murphy-Graham (Eds.), *Life skills education for youth: Critical perspectives* (pp. 43–71). Springer. http://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-85214-6_3

Burchinal, M., Foster, T., Bezdek, K., Bratsch-Hines, M., Blair, C., & Vernon-Feagans,

L. (2020). School-entry skills predicting school-age academic and social

emotional trajectories. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *51*, 67–80.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2019.08.004

Burkholder, G. J., Cox, K. A., Crawford, L. M., Hitchcock, J. H., & Patton, M. Q. (2016).

Research design and methods: An applied guide for the scholar practitioner.

SAGE Publications.

Camangian, P., & Cariaga, S. (2022). Social and emotional learning is hegemonic

miseducation: Students deserve humanization instead. *Race Ethnicity and

Education*, *25*(7), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2020.1798374

Campbell, C., Roberts, Y., Synder, F., Papp, J., Strambler, M., & Crusto, C. (2016). The

assessment of early trauma exposure on social-emotional health of young

children. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *71*, 308–314.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2016.11

Carroll, A., Houghton, S., Forrest, K., McCarthy, M., & Sanders-O'Connor, E. (2020).

Who benefits most? Predicting the effectiveness of a social and emotional

learning intervention according to children's emotional and behavioural

difficulties. *School Psychology International*, *41*(3), 197–217.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034319898741

Castillo-Montoya, M. (2016). Preparing for interview research: The interview protocol

refinement framework. *The Qualitative Report*, *21*(5), 811–831.

https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2016.2337

Charlton, C. T., Moulton, S., Sabey, C. V., & West, R. (2021). A systematic review of the

effects of schoolwide intervention programs on student and teacher perceptions of school climate. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *23*(3), 185–200. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300720940168

Chu, L., & DeArmond, M. (2021). *Approaching SEL as a whole-school effort, not an add-on: Lessons from two charter networks* (ED615152). ERIC. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED615152.pdf

Cloutier, C., & Ravasi, D. (2021). Using tables to enhance trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Strategic Organization*, *19*(1), 113–133. https://doi.org/10.1177/1476127020979329

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (2018). *Core SEL competencies*. https://casel.org/core-competencies/

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (2020). *Fundamentals of SEL*. https://casel.org/ fundamentals-of-sel/

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (2021). *Transformative SEL as level for equity & social justice*. https://casel.org/research/transformativesel/

Collie, R. J. (2020). The development of social and emotional competence at school: An integrated model. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *44*(1), 76–87. https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025419851864

Connor, P., & Evers, E. R. (2020). The bias of individuals (in crowds): Why implicit bias is probably a noisily measured individual-level construct. *Perspectives on*

Psychological Science,*15*(6), 1329–1345.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691620931492

Constantine, J., Fernald, J., Robinson, J., & Courtney, M. B. (2019). *Best practices guidebook: Supporting students' self-efficacy* (ED592850). ERIC. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED592850.pdf

Cooper, C. M., Przeworski, A., Smith, A. C., Obeid, R., & Short, E. J. (2023). Perceptions of social–emotional learning among K-12 teachers in the USA during the COVID-19 pandemic. *School Mental Health*, *15*(2), 484–497. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12310-022-09563-w

Creswell, J. W., Hanson, W. E., Clark, V. L. P., & Morales, A. (2007). Qualitative research designs: Selection and implementation. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *35*(2), 236–264. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000006287390

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Daneri, M. P., Sulik, M. J., Raver, C. C., & Morris, P. A. (2018). Observers' reports of self-regulation: Measurement invariance across sex, low-income status, and race/ethnicity. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 55, 14–23. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2017.02.001

Delale-O'Connor, L. A., Alvarez, A. J., Murray, I. E., & Milner, H. R. (2017). Self-Efficacy beliefs, classroom management, and the cradle-to-prison pipeline. *Theory into Practice*, *56*(3), 178–186. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2017.1336038

Denham, S. (2018, November). *Keeping SEL developmental: The importance of a developmental lens for fostering and assessing SEL competencies* Frameworks briefs special issues series). Measuring SEL. https://measuringsel.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Frameworks-DevSEL.pdf

DePaoli, J., Atwell, M., Bridgeland, J., & Shriver, T. (2018). *Respected: Perspectives of youth on high school & social and emotional learning. A report for CASEL* (ED593319). ERIC. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED593329.pdf

Desai, S. R., & Abeita, A. (2017). *Breaking the cycle of incarceration: A young Black male's journey from probation to self-advocacy* (EJ1150037). ERIC. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1150037.pdf

Desmond, M., & Western, B. (2018). Poverty in America: New directions and debates. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *44*, 305–318. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-060116-053411

Dobia, B., Parada, R. H., Roffey, S., & Smith, M. (2019). Social and emotional learning: From individual skills to class cohesion. *Educational and Child Psychology*, *36*(2), 78–90. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2019.36.2.78

Domitrovich, C. E., Durlak, J. A., Staley, K. C., & Weissberg, R. P. (2017). Social-emotional competence: An essential factor for promoting positive adjustment and reducing risk in school children. *Child Development*, *88*(2), 408–416. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12739

Durlak, J. A., Mahoney, J. L., & Boyle, A. E. (2022). What we know, and what we need to find out about universal, school-based social and emotional learning programs

for children and adolescents: A review of meta-analyses and directions for future

research. *Psychological Bulletin*, *148*(11–12), 765–782.

https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000383.supp

Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B.

(2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-

analysis of school-based universal interventions: Social and emotional learning.

Child Development, *82*(1), 405–432. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-

8624.2010.01564.x

Education Trust, & MDRC. (2021). *The importance of strong relationships: Strategies to

solve unfinished learning* (ED611876). ERIC. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED611876

Eklund, K., Kilpatrick, K. D., Kilgus, S. P., & Haider, A. (2018). A systematic review of

state-level social–emotional learning standards: Implications for practice and

research. *School Psychology Review*, *47*(3), 316–326.

https://doi.org/10.17105/SPR-2017.0116.V47-3

Elias, M. (2019). What if the doors of every schoolhouse opened to social-emotional

learning tomorrow: Reflections on how to feasibly scale up high-quality SEL.

Educational Psychologist, *54*(3), 233–245.

https://doi.org.10.1080/00461520.2019.1636655

Elliott, S. N., Davies, M. D., Frey, J. R., Gresham, F., & Cooper, G. (2018). Development

and initial validation of a social emotional learning assessment for universal

screening. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, *55*, 39–51.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2017.06.002

Eshel, Y., Kimhi, S., Lahad, M., Leykin, D., & Goroshit, M. (2018). Risk factors as major determinants of resilience: A replication study. *Community Mental Health Journal*, *54*(8), 1228–1238. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10597-018-0263-7

Every Student Succeeds Act, 20 U.S.C. § 6301 (2015). https://www.congress.gov//114/plaws/publ95/PLAW-114publ95.pdf

Ferreira, M., Martinsone, B., & Talić, S. (2020). Promoting sustainable social emotional learning at school through relationship-centered learning environment, teaching methods and formative assessment. *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability*, *22*(1), 21–36. https://doi.org/10.2478/jtes-2020-0003

Freeman, R., Miller, D., & Newcomer, L. (2015). *Integration of academic and behavioral MTSS at the district level using implementation* (EJ1080597). ERIC. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1080597.pdf

Friedrich, A., Flunger, B., Nagengast, B., Jonkmann, K., & Trautwein, U. (2015). Pygmalion effects in the classroom: Teacher expectancy effects on students' math achievement. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *41*, 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2014.10.006

Frye, K. E., Boss, D. L., Anthony, C. J., Du, H., & Xing, W. (2022). Content analysis of the CASEL framework using K–12 state SEL standards. *School Psychology Review*, 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/2372966X.2022.2030193

Fusch, P., Fusch, G. E., & Ness, L. R. (2018). Denzin's paradigm shift: Revisiting triangulation in qualitative research. *Journal of Social Change*, *10*(1), 19–32. https://doi.org/10.5590/JOSC.2018.10.1.02

Gardner, A. A., & Lambert, C. A. (2019). Examining the interplay of self-esteem, trait-emotional intelligence, and age with depression across adolescence. *Journal of Adolescence*, *71*, 162–166. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2019.01.008

Gay, G. (2021). Culturally responsive teaching. In H. R. Milner & K. Lomotey (Eds.), *Handbook of urban education* (2nd ed., pp. 212–233). https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429331435-16

Gayl, C. L. (2017). *How state planning for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) can promote student academic, social, and emotional learning: An examination of five key strategies: CASEL Brief* (ED586393). ERIC. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED586393.pdf

Gehlbach, H., & Chuter, C. (2020). Conceptualizing the core of "social emotional learning." *ACCESS: Contemporary Issues in Education*, *40*(1), 24–33. https://doi.org/10.46786/ac20.8910

Gimbert, B. G., Miller, D., Herman, E., Breedlove, M., & Molina, C. E. (2023). Social emotional learning in schools: The importance of educator competence. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, *18*(1), 3–39. https://doi.org/10.1177/19427751211014920

Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. Random House.

Goleman, D. (2001). Emotional intelligence: Issues in paradigm building. In C. Cherniss & D. Goleman (Eds.), *The emotionally intelligent workplace: How to select for,*

measure, and improve emotional intelligence in individuals, groups, and

organizations (pp. 13–26). Jossey-Bass.

Gonzales, D., & Vasudeva, A. (2021). *Looking back to accelerate forward: Toward a*

policy paradigm that advances equity and improvement (ED613689). ERIC.

https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED613689.pdf

Hajovsky, D. B., Chesnut, S. R., & Jensen, K. M. (2020). The role of teachers' self-

efficacy beliefs in the development of teacher-student relationships. *Journal of*

School Psychology, *82*, 141–158. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2020.09.001

Hamedani, M.-T., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2015, March). *Social emotional learning in*

high school: How three urban high schools engage, educate, and empower youth

[Research brief]. Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education.

https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/scope-pub-social-

emotional-learning-research-brief.pdf

Hammond, Z. (2015). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic*

engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students. SAGE

Publications.

Hegedus, A. (2018). *Evaluating the relationships between poverty and school*

performance (ED593828). ERIC. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED593828.pdf

Hemmeter, M. L., Snyder, P., & Fox, L. (2018). Using the teaching pyramid observation

tool (TPOT) to support implementation of social–emotional teaching practices.

School Mental Health, *10*(3), 202–213. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12310-017-9239-

y

Henderson, D. X., Walker, L., Barnes, R. R., Lunsford, A., Edwards, C., & Clark, C. (2019). A framework for race-related trauma in the public education system and implications on health for Black Youth. *Journal of School Health*, *89*(11), 926–933. https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.12832

Hoover, S., & Bostic, J. (2021). Schools as a vital component of the child and adolescent mental health system. *Psychiatric Services*, *72*(1), 37–48. https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ps.201900575

Horn, L. J., & Carroll, C. D. (1997). *Confronting the odds: Students at risk and the pipeline to higher education* (ED414845). ERIC. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED414845.pdf

Hubel, G. S., Davies, F., Goodrum, N. M., Schmarder, K. M., Schnake, K., & Moreland, A. D. (2020). Adverse childhood experiences among early care and education teachers: Prevalence and associations with observed quality of classroom social and emotional climate. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *111*, Article 104877. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.104877

Iivari, N. (2018). Using member checking in interpretive research practice: A hermeneutic analysis of informants' interpretation of their organizational realities. *Information Technology & People*, *31*(1), 111–133. https://doi.org/10.1108/itp-07-2016-0168

Imants, J., & Van der Wal, M. M. (2020). A model of teacher agency in professional development and school reform. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *52*(1), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2019.1604809

Jackson, C. K. (2018). What do test scores miss? The importance of teacher effects on

    non-test score outcomes. *Journal of Political Economy*, *126*(5), 2072–2107.

    https://doi.org/10.1086/699018

Jagers, R. J., Rivas-Drake, D., & Williams, B. (2019). Transformative social and

    emotional learning (SEL): Toward SEL in service of educational equity and

    excellence. *Educational Psychologist*, *54*(3), 162–184.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2019.1623032

Jagers, R. J., Skoog-Hoffman, A., Barthelus, B., & Schlund, J. (2021). *Transformative*

    social emotional learning: In pursuit of educational equity and excellence

    (EJ1304336). ERIC. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1304336.pdf

Jaramillo, J. A. (1996). Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and contributions to the

    development of constructivist curricula. *Education*, *117*(1), 133–141.

Jeung, W., He, D., & Oh, J. S. (2016). Toward a conceptual framework for data sharing

    practices in social sciences: A profile approach. *Proceedings of the Association*

    for Information Science and Technology, *53*(1), 1–10.

    https://doi.org/10.1002/pra2.2016.14505301037

Jones, T. M., Fleming, C., & Williford, A. (2020). Racial equity in academic success:

    The role of school climate and social emotional learning. *Children and Youth*

    Services Review, *119*, Article 105623.

    https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105623

Kamei, A., & Harriott, W. (2021). Social emotional learning in virtual settings: Intervention strategies. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, *13*(3) 365–371.

Kamil, M. L. (2016). Common core state standards and adaptive teaching. *Theory into Practice*, *55*(3), 234–241. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2016.1173991

Karras, J. E., Hernández, G. L., Cabral, P., Nguyen, S., & Suárez-Orozco, C. (2021). Taking a "whole" classroom perspective: Theorizing classroom typologies using a video-based observational protocol. *Urban Education*, 1–34. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F00420859211051378

Katz, D., Mahfouz, J., & Romas, S. (2020). Creating a foundation of well-being for teachers and students starts with SEL curriculum in teacher education programs. *Northwest Journal of Teacher Education*, *15*(2), Article 5. https://doi.org/10.15760/nwjte.2020.15.2.5

Katzman, N. F., & Stanton, M. P. (2020). The integration of social emotional learning and cultural education into online distance learning curricula: Now imperative during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Creative Education*, *11*(9), 1561–1571. https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2020.119114

Kennedy, B. L., & Soutullo, O. (2018). *"We can't fix that": Deficit thinking and the exoneration of educator responsibility for teaching students placed at a disciplinary alternative school* (EJ1187272). ERIC. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1187272.pdf

Kennedy, K. (2019). Centering equity and caring in leadership for social-emotional learning: Toward a conceptual framework for diverse learners. *Journal of School Leadership*, *29*(6), 473–492. https://doi.org/10.1177/1052684619867469

Kim, D. S., & Hong, C. E. (2019). *Social and emotional learning in a classroom: Language arts and literacy teachers' perceptions and practices in South Korea and the United States* (EJ1236218). ERIC. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1236218.pdf

Kress, J. S., & Elias, M. J. (2013). Consultation to support sustainability of social and emotional learning initiatives in schools. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, *65*(2), 149–163. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032665

Kwiatkowski, B. (2019). The symbiotic roles of action research, lesson study and learning study seen in a social-emotional intervention for males with behavioural needs. *Educational Action Research*, *27*(4), 613–630. https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2019.1570858

LaDonna, K. A., Artino, A. R., Jr., & Balmer, D. F. (2021). Beyond the guise of saturation: Rigor and qualitative interview data. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, *13*(5), 607–611. http://doi.org/10.4300/JGME-D-21-00752.1

Ladson-Billings, G. (2021). *Culturally relevant pedagogy: Asking a different question*. Teachers College Press.

Lathrop, B., & Wessel Powell, C. (2022). "We shall take their children away and rear them to the fatherland." A critical discourse analysis of a "parent advocacy" group (EJ1375171). ERIC. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1375171.pdf

Lefstein, A., Louie, N., Segal, A., & Becher, A. (2020). Taking stock of research on teacher collaborative discourse: Theory and method in a nascent field. *Teaching and teacher education*, *88*, Article 102954. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.102954

Legette, K. B., Rogers, L. O., & Warren, C. A. (2022). Humanizing student–teacher relationships for black children: Implications for teachers' social–emotional training. Urban *Education*, *57*(2), 278–288. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085920933319

Leithwood, K. (2021). A review of evidence about equitable school leadership. *Education Sciences*, *11*(8), 377–426. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11080377

Lieber, C. M., & Tissiere, M. (2017). *Embedding social and emotional learning in high school classrooms*. Engaging Schools. https://engagingschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Embedding_SEL_in_HS_Classrooms-rev-10-30-17.pdf

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1986). But is it rigorous? Trustworthiness and authenticity in naturalistic evaluation. *New Directions for Program Evaluation*, 1986(30), 73–84. https://doi.org/10.1002/ev.1427

Mahmud, A. (2020). The role of social and emotional learning during the transition to secondary school: An exploratory study. *Pastoral Care in Education*, *38*(1), 23–41. https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2019.1700546

Mahoney, J. L., Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2018). An update on social and emotional learning outcome research. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 1*00*(4), 18–23. https://doi.org/10.1177/0031721718815668

Mahoney, J. L., Weissberg, R. P., Greenberg, M. T., Dusenbury, L., Jagers, R. J., Niemi, K., Schlinger, M., Schlund, J., Shriver, T. P., VanAusdal, K., & Yoder, N. (2021). Systemic social and emotional learning: Promoting educational success for all preschool to high school students. *American Psychologist*, *76*(7), 1128–1142. https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000701

Main, K. (2018). Walking the talk: Enhancing future teachers' capacity to embed social-emotional learning in middle years classrooms. *Education Sciences*, *8*(3), 143–156. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci8030143

Malterud, K., Siersma, V. D., & Guassora, A. D. (2016). Sample size in qualitative interview studies: Guided by information power. *Qualitative Health Research*, *26*(13), 1753–1760. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1049732315617444

Marchbanks, M. P., III, Peguero, A. A., Varela, K. S., Blake, J. J., & Eason, J. M. (2018). School strictness and disproportionate minority contact: Investigating racial and ethnic disparities with the "school-to-prison pipeline". *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, *16*(2), 241–259. https://doi.org/10.1177/1541204016680403

Marsay, G., Atitsogbe, K. A., Ouedraogo, A., Nsubuga, H., Pari, P., Kossi, E. Y., Park, C. M., & Solberg, V. S. H. (2021). The importance of social emotional learning skills in assisting youth to successfully transition into the professional world. *African Journal of Career Development*, *3*(1), Article 37. https://doi.org/10.4102/ajcd.v3i1.37

McKown, C., & Taylor, J. (2018). Introduction to the special issue on social-emotional assessment to guide educational practice. *Journal of Applied Developmental*

Psychology, *55*, 1–3. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2017.12.002

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Meyers, D. C., Domitrovich, C. E., Dissi, R., Trejo, J., & Greenberg, M. T. (2019). Supporting systemic social and emotional learning with a schoolwide implementation model. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, *73*, 53–61. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2018.11.005

Mischenko, P. P., Nicholas-Hoff, P., Schussler, D. L., Iwu, J., & Jennings, P. A. (2022). Implementation barriers and facilitators of a mindfulness-based social emotional learning program and the role of relational trust: A qualitative study. *Psychology in the Schools*, *59*(8), 1643–1671. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22724

Moser, A., & Korstjens, I. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 3: Sampling, data collection and analysis. *European Journal of General Practice*, *24*(1), 9–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375091

Mosier, A. D. (2018). *Teachers' challenges in implementing personalized learning in content areas* (Publication No. 10974093) [Doctoral dissertation, Walden University]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Musu-Gillette, L., De Brey, C., McFarland, J., Hussar, W., Sonnenberg, W., & Wilkinson-Flicker, S. (2017). *Status and trends in the education of racial and ethnic groups 2017. NCES 2017-051* (ED574873). ERIC. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED574873.pdf

Nenonene, R. L., Gallagher, C. E., Kelly, M. K., & Collopy, R. M. (2019). Challenges and opportunities of infusing social, emotional, and cultural competencies into teacher preparation. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *46*(4), 92–115.

Neth, E. L., Caldarella, P., Richardson, M. J., & Heath, M. A. (2020). Social-emotional learning in the middle grades: A mixed-methods evaluation of the Strong Kids program. *RMLE Online*, *43*(1), 1–13.

https://doi.org/10.1080/19404476.2019.1701868

Newman, D. S., & Ingraham, C. L. (2020). Cross-university dialogues to support multicultural school consultation training. *Journal of School Psychology*, *81*, 11–27. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2020.06.001

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (n.d.). *Defining social and emotional learning (SEL)*. https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/districts-schools-support/nc-social-emotional-learning/defining-social-and-emotional-learning-sel

Oberle, E., Domitrovich, C. E., Meyers, D. C., & Weissberg, R. P. (2016). Establishing systemic social and emotional learning approaches in schools: A framework for schoolwide implementation. *Social and Emotional Learning*, *46*(3), 277–297. http://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2015.1125450

Oberle, E., Gist, A., Cooray, M. S., & Pinto, J. B. (2020). Do students notice stress in teachers? Associations between classroom teacher burnout and students' perceptions of teacher social–emotional competence. *Psychology in the Schools*, *57*(11), 1741–1756. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22432

O'Connor, P. J., Hill, A., Kaya, M., & Martin, B. (2019). The measurement of emotional intelligence: A critical review of the literature and recommendations for researchers and practitioners. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *10*, Article 1116. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01116

Paolini, A. C. (2020). Social emotional learning: Key to career readiness. *Anatolian Journal of Education*, *5*(1), 125–134. https://doi.org/10.29333/aje.2020.5112a

Perron, J., Gomez, A., & Testa, R. (2016). Harnessing the power of rigor and self-efficacy in the classroom. *Leadership*, *46*(1), 8–10.

Philibert, C. T. (2021). *Everyday SEL in early childhood: Integrating social emotional learning and mindfulness into your classroom* (2nd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003140948

Philpott, C., & Oates, C. (2017). Teacher agency and professional learning communities; what can Learning Rounds in Scotland teach us? *Professional Development in Education*, *43*(3), 318–333. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2016.1180316

Poulou, M. S. (2017). An examination of the relationship among teachers' perceptions of social-emotional learning, teaching efficacy, teacher-student interactions, and students' behavioral difficulties. *International Journal of School & Educational Psychology*, *5*(2), 126–136. https://doi.org/10.1080/21683603.2016.1203851

Ramberg, J., Låftman, S. B., Almquist, Y. B., & Modin, B. (2019). School effectiveness and students' perceptions of teacher caring: A multilevel study. *Improving Schools*, *22*(1), 55–71. https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480218764693

Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2016). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual,*

theoretical, and methodological. SAGE Publications.

Reed, D. S. (2016). ESEA at fifty: Education as state-building. *History of Education Quarterly*, *56*(2), 368–374. https://doi.org/10.1111/hoeq.12188

Reybold, L. E., Lammert, J. D., & Stribling, S. M. (2013). Participant selection as a conscious research method: Thinking forward and the deliberation of 'emergent' findings. *Qualitative Research*, *13*(6), 699–716. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794112465634

Rodriguez, V., Lynneth Solis, S., Mascio, B., Kiely Gouley, K., Jennings, P. A., & Brotman, L. M. (2020). With awareness comes competency: The five awarenesses of teaching as a framework for understanding teacher social-emotional competency and well-being. *Early Education and Development*, *31*(7), 940–972. https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2020.1794496

Ross, K. M., Kim, H., Tolan, P. H., & Jennings, P. A. (2019). An exploration of normative social and emotional skill growth trajectories during adolescence. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, *62*, 102–115. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.apipdev.2019.02.006

Ross, K. M., & Tolan, P. (2018). Social and emotional learning in adolescence: Testing the CASEL model in a normative sample. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, *38*(8), 1170–1199. https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431617725198

Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. SAGE.

Ruiter, J. A., Poorthuis, A. M. G., Aldrup, K., & Koomen, H. M. Y. (2020). Teachers'

emotional experiences in response to daily events with individual students varying in perceived past disruptive behavior. *Journal of School Psychology*, *82*, 85–102. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2020.08.005

Rutledge, S. A., Cohen-Vogel, L., Osborne-Lampkin, L. T., & Roberts, R. L. (2015). Understanding effective high schools: Evidence for personalization for academic and social emotional learning. *American Educational Research Journal*, *52*(6), 1060–1092. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831215602328

Saldaña, J. (2016). *Coding: The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. SAGE Publications.

Schlund, J., Jagers, R. J., & Schlinger, M. (2021, September). *Emerging insights: Advancing social and emotional learning as a lever for equity and excellence*. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. https://casel.org/casel-gateway-advancing-sel-for-equity-excellence/

Schonert-Reichl, K. A. (2019). Advancements in the landscape of social and emotional learning and emerging topics on the horizon. *Educational Psychologist*, *54*(3), 222–232. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2019.163392

Schwartz, H. L., Bongard, M., Bogan, E. D., Boyle, A. E., Meyers, D. C., & Jagers, R. J. (2022). *Social and emotional learning in schools nationally and in the collaborating districts initiative: Selected findings from the American Teacher Panel and American School Leader Panel surveys* [Research Report RR-A1822-1]. RAND. https://doi.org/10.7249/RRA1822-1

Seidman, I. (2019). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in*

education and the social sciences (5th ed.). Teachers College Press.

Sharp, L. A. (2016). *ESEA Reauthorization: An Overview of the Every Student Succeeds Act* (EJ1110854). ERIC. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1110854.pdf

Simonsen, B., Freeman, J., Dooley, K., Maddock, E., Kern, L., & Myers, D. (2017). Effects of targeted professional development on teachers' specific praise rates. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *19*(1), 37–47. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300716637192

Sklar, T., & Crescioni, M. (2019). Research participants' rights to data protection in the era of open science. *DePaul Law Review*, 69(2), 699–719.

Soland, J., Kuhfeld, M., Wolk, E., & Bi, S. (2019). Examining the state-trait composition of social-emotional learning constructs: implications for practice, policy, and evaluation. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, *12*(3), 550–577. https://doi.org/10.1080/19345747.2019.1615158

Stahl, N. A., & King, J. R. (2020). Expanding approaches for research: Understanding and using trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Developmental Education*, *44*(1), 26–28.

Tan, K., Sinha, G., Shin, O. J., & Wang, Y. (2018). Patterns of social-emotional learning needs among high school freshmen students. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *86*, 217–225. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2018.01.033

Taylor, K. Y. (2020). The banality of segregation: Why Hirsch still helps us understand our racial geography. *Journal of Urban History*, *46*(3), 490–493. https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144219896575

Tyner, A. (2021). How to sell SEL: *Parents and the politics of social-emotional learning*. Thomas B. Fordham Institute. https://sel.fordhaminstitute.org/

von Keyserlingk, L., Becker, M., & Jansen, M. (2019). Academic self-concept during the transition to upper secondary school. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *56*, 152–160. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2019.01.001

Vuletich, H. A., & Payne, B. K. (2019). Stability and change in implicit bias. *Psychological Science*, *30*, 854–862. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797619844270

Weissberg, R. P. (2019). Promoting the social and emotional learning of millions of school children. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *14*(1), 65–69. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691618817756

Wentzel, K. R., Battle, A., Russell, S. L., & Looney, L. B. (2010). Social supports from teachers and peers as predictors of academic and social motivation. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *35*(3), 193–202. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2010.03.002

Xu, W., & Zammit, K. (2020). Applying thematic analysis to education: A hybrid approach to interpreting data in practitioner research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *19*, https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920918810

Yang, C., Bear, G. G., & May, H. (2018). Multilevel associations between school-wide social-emotional learning approach and student engagement across elementary, middle, and high schools, *School Psychology Review*, *47*(1), 45–61, https://doi.org/10.17105/SPR-2017-0003.V47-1

Yeager, D. S., Dahl, R. E., & Dweck, C. S. (2018). Why interventions to influence

adolescent behavior often fail but could succeed. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *13*(1), 101–122. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691617722620

Zins, J. E., Bloodworth, M. R., Weissberg, R. P., & Walberg, H. J. (2007). The scientific base linking social and emotional learning to school success. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, *17*(2-3), 191–210. https://doi.org/10.1080/10474410701413145

Zinskie, C. D., & Rea, D. (2016). The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): What It means for educators of students at risk. *National Youth-At-Risk Journal*, *2*(1), Article 1. https://doi.org/10.20429/nyarj.2016.020101

Appendix A: The Project

Professional Development Outline

Day 1: Introductions (Facilitators and Participants)

Introducing the Work

A. Participant and facilitator(s) introductions
B. Share group norms for the Day 1 professional development (PD)
C. How training goals will be assessed
D. Resources, notetaking, discussion of goals
E. Social-emotional learning (SEL): What is it and what does it look like? Why do we need it? How do we implement it?
    1. SEL goals
    2. SEL domains
F. Goals for this PD
G. Daily sessions summary

Finding Our Focus: The Key Points of SEL Focus (CASEL, 2018)

A. SEL and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
B. CASEL: What is it, and what is its connection to SEL in the classroom?
D. Building self-awareness and social-emotional competence (SEC). It begins with you.
    1. Identifying your bias
    2. Understanding your bias
    3. Addressing your bias
C. Engaging in the SEL considerations reflection activity and discussions
D. What changes and shifts in mindsets and skillsets did you have to make in when considering self-awareness/implicit bias recognition shift?

Develop Your SEL Vision

A. Discuss the district's focus and vision for SEL.
B. Align your school's vision with that of the district.
C. Tailor the vision to fit your school and student population.

Break for Lunch 12:00-1:00 p.m.

1:00-2:00 p.m.: DEFICIT THINKING

    A.   WHAT IT IS
    B.   EXAMPLES OF DEFICIT THINKING
    C.   IMPACT OF DEFICIT THINKING

2:00- 3:00 p.m.: Deficit Versus Asset Thinking
    A. Defining deficit versus asset thinking
    B. Addressing our biases (self-awareness survey)
    C. Deficit scenarios

3:00-3:15 p.m.: SEL Misconceptions

3:15-3:45 p.m. SEL strategies for the classroom (CASEL, 2021)
BREAK
4:00-4:30 p.m. Regroup as Whole Group for End Activities

Day 2

8:30-9:00 a.m.: Review of Feedback (Facilitators Share)
SEL Misconceptions
A. Building SEC. It begins with you.
    4. Identifying your bias
    5. Understanding your bias
    6. Addressing your bias
  E. Engaging in the SEL considerations reflection activity and discussions
  F. What changes and shifts in mindsets and skillsets did you have to make in when considering self-awareness/implicit bias recognition shift?

DAY 3
8:30-9:00 a.m.--REVIEW NORMS
A. BUILDING AN EQUITABLE CLASSROOM
B. Review information about equity in the classroom

9:00-9:30 a.m. What is SEC? Play video for information on SEC
       (CASEL, 2023)

9:30-10:30 a.m.: Discuss Strategies for Building SEC
      Break (5 mins.)

10:00-11:00 a.m.: Questions for Reflection

  A. Whole-group discussions and take-aways (30 mins.).
  B. Teachers will respond to self-reflective questions and submit before lunch.

12:00-1:00 p.m. - Lunch

1 pm- 2 p.m. -Continued discussion of self-awareness, explicit and implicit bias (1:15-3:30 p.m.).

2:00-3:00 p.m.: Beginning Exemplar Paired Texts

  A. Read paired texts (poems)
  B. In breakout rooms, discuss ways to approach teaching the texts using SEL equitable approaches
  C. Share approaches when group comes together

    D. Teachers will reflect on their results and input their take-aways in the chat.

3:30-4:30 p.m.:

    A. Participants will spend the first 15 minutes reading and sharing feedback on an article called "The Dangers of Deficit Critical Thinking."

    B. Participants will review and discuss deficit versus asset thinking.

Introducing Equity into Education

- Discuss equity and responsibilities of educators to ensure it.
- Teachers will read "Embracing equity: 5 Guiding Principles"
- Review guide for instilling instructional equity
- Complete independent activity in response to reading and share in virtual forum.
- Equity connections, confirmations, contradictions, and challenges

End of Session Ticket out of the Door: Teachers will complete 1.2.3
    1) One bias you identified and your takeaway about the discovery.
    2) Two equity principles that you learned during the session
    3) Three strategies that you would like to incorporate to ensure equity in your daily practice.

Day 3: 8:30-10:00 a.m.: Review Topics From Previous Session
    1) View video on equity in the classroom
    2) How to structure a equitable classroom
    3) What resources are needed to ensure classroom equity?

10:00-11:00 a.m.: Review Each Topic Below With One Sentence or Phrase
Discussion Board: Teachers will enter their responses on the virtual whiteboard.

- How will you use self-awareness to build equity in your classroom?
- What activities promote self-awareness with students?
- How do we connect content to SEL competencies?
- What information are we arming our students with?
- What is it that we are expecting them to do with it?
- How does it affirm them as individuals?

Read and discuss paired text(s)

Discuss how best to construct an equitable lesson plan using the text(s)

Discuss how the text(s) can be used to structure social-emotional learning activities for students.

Video on Equity in the Classroom Followed by Discussion

11:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.- Discussions of equity in the classroom

12:00-1:00 p.m.–Lunch

1:00-3:00 p.m. -- Reading paired texts
> Create equitable lessons using paired text
> Discussing and identifying SEL strategies to use when teaching paired texts lessons.

3:00-4:30 p.m.–Deficit thinking vs. growth mindsets discussion and activities

Day 4

8:45-9:45 a.m.

A. Review norms
B. Review SEL goals
C. Brainstorm ways to gain buy-in at your school for whole school SEL.
D. Set a tentative plan for your follow-up professional learning communities (PLC) SEL components (a tentative agenda for first PLC meeting).
E. Explain where they are with Unit 1 lesson plans and SEL goals.
F. Debrief from previous day's Unit 1 plans reviewing SEL strategies your group selected for Unit 1. Whiteboard share and feedback (5–7 mins.).

10:00-11:00 a.m.

Breakout for discussion of SEL strategies that you would like to see implemented in the remaining Unit 1 lessons. Gauge each activity by:

A. Focus on the SEL goal for each activity. Begin with the end in mind.
B. What skill(s) is the activity allowing the students to practice?
C. How will you assess mastery of the skill?
D. If reteaching is needed, how will you review and reteach the skill in a different way?

11:15 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Breakout and review lessons written so far. Discuss the relevance and rigor of lesson resources and example activities that will foster SEL skillsets.

Break for Lunch 12:00-1:15 p.m.

Lesson writing continues from 1:15- 3:00 p.m. in group breakout rooms with facilitators rotating to breakout rooms for support and guidance.

Participants are to:

- Ensure each lesson content contains sustainable opportunities for students to practice SEL collaborative skills.
- Share lessons in Google Docs with colleagues (coparticipants), facilitators, and academic coaches who will provide feedback in real time.

3:15-4:45 p.m.: End of Day Tasks:

- Take survey assessment.
- Turn in unit plans
- Turn in established curriculum writing schedules for follow up PLC sessions
- Facilitators will guide the following discussions

Possible Follow-up Information contingent upon school leadership approval and consensus
Suggestions for recurring PD sessions for remainder of school year will be a part of the dialogue on the final day of PD
Topics for Final Day Discussions:

- The district will receive and approve these goals and schedules.
- Email updates for stipends and start and end dates and times will be provided.
- As it is typical to anticipate that 100% of the school staff may not attend the initial PD; materials and take aways from the PD will be accessible to staff online.
- Also, department chairs will receive information about the training for new staff and for the purpose of continuing the SEL dialogue in departmental meetings.

Review exemplar lesson resource to prepare for Unit 1 lesson writing component of training.

Exemplar Lesson Resource for SEL Culturally Responsive and Equitable Practices

EXAMPLE FOR CONTENT SPECIFIC LESSON PLANNING
RESOURCES

Texts & Topics

What is the Flag, National Anthem, and/or Pledge of Allegience? Who and what do they truly represent? Does their representation hold true in today's society based on current events?

How are other countries handling SEL Instruction? How do their cultures and systems compare to that of America? OR What are SEL's Influences on the Population? What are the reasons for these discrepencies?

What is the history of voting rights in the United States? How do "people of power" use voter rights today to suppress certain groups of people? How does that directly impact the communities that we live in?

Professional Development Daily Agenda

TIME ALLOCATED	DAY 1 OUTLINE—9 AM-4:45 PM
8:30	WELCOME, SEL, RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS
5 MIN	NORMS
5 MIN	SEL: INTRODUCING THE WORK –WHY WE ARE HERE
15 MIN	WHY IS SEL NEEDED? GROUP DISCUSSION
5 MIN	BREAK
11:00-12:00 PM	• SEL GOALS • SEL DOMAINS • HOW GOALS WILL BE ASSESS • DAILY SESSION SUMMARY
12:00-1:00 PM	LUNCH
30 MIN	TEACHERS AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE
30 MIN	DISCUSSION OF MINDSETS AND DEFICIT THINKING ACTIVITIES
1 PM	Afternoon Session
30 MIN	SELF AWARENESS ACTIVITY (SELF-SURVEY & SHARE OUT)
20 MIN	SHARE OUT ON WHITEBOARD
40 MIN	SEL ROUND TABLE
35 MIN	DISCUSS, VIEW AND COLLABORATE (WORK WITH EXEMPLAR TEXT) – PAIRED POEMS
EXIT SURVEY	

TIME ALLOCATED (8:45 AM-4:45 PM)	DAY 2 SEL PD ACTIVITY
8:30–8:45 **15 MIN**	WELCOME, SEL, RECONNECT, RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS/REFLECTION
2 MIN	NORMS
8-10 MIN	SEL VISION STATEMENT: GROUNDING & REVISION–Move from whole group to small group
5 MIN	SEL: TRANSFORMING FROM SURVIVAL TO SUFFICIENT & SUCCESSFUL
25 MIN	BUILDING COMMUNITY IN REMOTE LEARNING – THIS CONSISTS OF DISCUSSION AND TENTATIVE VOLUNTEERING FOR YEARLONG ROLES ON SEL COMMITTEE
15 MIN	HEALING UNFINISHED TEACHING AND LEARNING • QUOTES, THOUGHTS, DISCUSSIONS • VISUALS OF LAYOUT • INTRO TO DOCUMENT/LAYOUT/PURPOSE • BREAKOUT ROOMS BY GRADE LEVEL, ACROSS CONTENTFOR EXPLORATION • THOUGHTS, TAKEAWAYS, HOW IT (SEL) WILL WORK
3 MIN	BREAK
15 MIN	INSTRUCTIONAL POWER—DR. TANJI REED (video with Guiding speaker) • QUOTES, DISCUSSION (SET THE STAGE) • VIDEO CLIP—DISCUSSION
25 MIN	CASE STUDIES (READ AND ANNOTATE) • BO DISCUSSIONS (Break out)–This may be in-person or virtual depending upon the presentation venue. • WHOLE GROUP

30-40 MIN	SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING BLOCK
	    A. GRADE LEVEL BREAKOUTS TO ESTABLISH HOW TO FIT SEL COMPONENTS INTO THE WEEK
	    B. TEACHER EXPECTATIONS/VIRTUAL NON-NEGOTIABLES FOR YOUR CLASSROOM LEARNING SPACES/MINDSETS

40 MIN	GRADE LEVEL BREAKOUT ROOMS—
	    C. BACKWARDS MAPPING –SEL UNITS (MAPPING OUT THE FIRST NINE WEEKS OF SCHOOL BY CONTENT AND GRADE LEVELS). GRADE LEVEL LEADS TO BE ASSIGNED (TBA).
	    D. UNIT 1 AND SEL GOALS (LEARNING ABOUT SEL AND USING THE CASEL FRAMEWORK TO DESIGN UNIT 1 LESSONS ACROSS CONTENT AND GRADE LEVELS

	E. TEXT SELECTIONS/REVISIONS TO INCLUDE SEL SKILLSETS AND CONNECTIONS F. ACTIVITIES FROM VIRTUAL STRATEGIES GUIDE G. TIMELINE H. COMMUNITY BUILDING PLANNING FOR FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL. THIS WILL INCLUDE A TEAM OF LEAD TEACHERS (1 PER CONTENT AREA AND A MINIMUM OF ONE COUNSELOR AND/OR ADMIN.

TIME ALLOCATED 8:45 AM-4:45PM	DAY 3 SEL PD ACTIVITY
15 MIN	WELCOME, SEL, RECONNECT, CONSIDERATIONS/REFLECTION
2 MIN	NORMS
5 MIN	VISION STATEMENT REVIEW AND REVIEW OF DIRECTIONS
25 MIN	SEL AND EQUITY IN THE CLASSROOM WHOLE GROUP REVIEW
UNTIL LUNCH	VIDEO "EYEING EQUITY IN THE CLASSROOM" AND DISCUSSION
LUNCH	RECONVENE AT 1 PM
25 MIN (WITH WHOLE GROUP)	DISCUSS CONNOTATIONS THAT ARISE WHEN VIEIWNG SLIDE 68
1:30-2:00 PM ET	PLAN WITH PAIRED TEXT(S) STRUCTURING LESSONS THAT INCLUDE EQUITABLE APPROACH TO TEACHING THE TEXTS DISCUSS METHODS OF INTEGRATING SEL INTO THE LESSON

3:00-4:00 PM	REVIEW CCSS AND ELA UNIT STANDARDS AND PACING STRUTURE INTRODUCTORY LESSON FOR UNIT 1 LESSON PLANS
	
	DETERMINE SEL GOALS (LEARNING ABOUT SEL AND USING THE CASEL FRAMEWORK TO DESIGN UNIT 1 LESSONS ACROSS CONTENT AND GRADE LEVELSCOMMITTEE LEADERS PER
	
	ENSURE EACH LESSON FOR EACH CONTENT CONTAINS SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO PRACTICE SEL COLLABORATIVE SKILLS AND MEET THE RELEVANT SEL SKILLSET(S)
	
	END OF DAY TASKS:
	    1) TAKE SURVEY ASSESSMENT
	    2) TURN IN UNIT PLANS (What has been completed to date)
	***Academic coaches and SEL experts (facilitators) will receive and input feedback on submitted lessons turned in on Day 3 and have feedback for participants by Day 4.

TIME ALLOCATED 8:45AM-4:45 PM	**DAY 4 SEL PD** ACTIVITY
15 MIN	WELCOME, SEL, RECONNECT, CONSIDERATIONS/REFLECTION
2 MIN	NORMS
BREAKOUT SESSIONS BEGIN 9:00-11:00 AM	COMPLETE UNIT 1 LESSON PLANS WITH SEL ACTIVITIES
11:05 AM-12:00 PM	INSTRUCTIONAL POWER— TEACHERS WILL SHARE LESSON PLANS AND SELECTED SEL STRATEGIES.
1:00-2:00 PM	DEBRIEF AND LESSON SHARE AGENCY
4:00-4:45 PM	– TEACHERS WILL DISCUSS INFORMATION THAT THEY WILL TAKE BACK TO THEIR SCHOOLS TO SHARE AS TEACHER LEADERS (I.E. DURING PLC'S AND MINI-TRAININGS)

30 MIN	END OF DAY TASKS:
	    1) TAKE SURVEY ASSESSMENT
	    2) TURN IN UNIT 1 PLANS ONLINE

Professional Development PowerPoint Slides

Slide 1:
PROJECT DELIVERABLE:
SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Walden University
Louise Simmons
8390 Capstone
Dr. Cale
January 21 2024

Slide 2:
SOCIAL EMOTIONAL
LEARNING INSTITUTE

SEL: THE "WHAT", "WHY", AND "HOW"

Created by Louise Simmons with some
information and materials provided by, and
Adapted from, UnboundED (2019) and CASEL
(2021)

Slide 3:
PD GOALS

The goals for the professional development (PD) are to:

(a) introduce and increase teachers' SEL and CASEL knowledge and self-efficacy

(b) increase teachers' self-awareness of inherent biases and deficit thinking and begin
developing a growth mindset
(c) provide teachers with resources to develop lesson plans which are infused social emotional
learning strategies
(d) guide teachers in the development of lesson plans for the first ELA unit for grades 9-12
with SEL strategies and activities integrated into each lesson.

Slide 4:
GOALS FOR THE 4-DAY WORKSHOP

To introduce/discuss EQUITY as it relates to
equitable practices and instruction.
To introduce practices that help provide every student
equitable instruction.
To begin to demonstrate the idea that "certain students
can't.
To understand the relationship between asset thinking
and equity in the classroom.
To identify and challenge deficit thinking, by providing
asset thinking replacements.
To analyze our current structure instruction and beliefs,
and to expand and refine our approach to include social
emotional learning activities into our instruction

Slide 5:
ASSESSMENT OF GOALS

• The format for the PD evaluation will occur in the form:
• of daily feedback from participants including open-ended questions.
• Formative assessment (end-of-day surveys)

• Each day will also have assessments that allow for written input from
participants, a question answer forum, and engagement observation.

Slide 6:
DAILY SESSION(S) SUMMARY:

Sessions will include:

• (a) Building SEL and CASEL knowledge,
• (b) using SEL strategies for daily practice,
• (c) enhancing teacher self-awareness while fostering asset-thinking, and
• (d) creating opportunities for educators to collaborate and create SEL lesson plans
within and across ELA content for grades nine through twelve.

Slide 7:
GROUP NORMS

Group Norms
1. Begin and end on time.
2. Take responsibility for yourself as a learner.
3. Be an active and hands-on learner.
4. Use technology to enhance learning.
5. Strive for equity of voice.
6. Contribute to and maintain a "safe-space" learning
environment.

Slide 8:
WHY ARE WE HERE?

Slide 9:
MEET and GREET

Give Your:
✓Name
✓Role for Current
School Year
✓Brief Explanation
of Your Symbolism

Choose a TV
Show, Movie,
Song, or Book
that describes
your philosophy
of teaching. (2
Mins.)

- ICEBREAKER

Slide 10:
ADD YOUR IDEAS TO YOUR "TO-DO" LIST

• Use your notecards or notebook to
brainstorm other things you would like
to accomplish during this 4-day
professional development
• Post 1-3 word phrases that describe your
desired "take aways"

Slide 11:
WHAT YOU'LL NEED

• A copy of Social Emotional Goals and
Standards for Grades 9-12
• Access to the CASEL website
• Unit 1 ELA 9-12 Content Area
• Laptop or Device
• Resource for Planning Sessions
• Strategy Recorder

Slide 12:
WEEK AT A GLANCE— WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Day 1:
Defining SEL
CASEL Constructs
Set SEL Goals using the CASEL
Framework
SEL Strategies
Identify Mindsets
Deficit Thinking, Physicality, and
Language

Day 2
Identifying, Analyzing, and Discussing SEL
Learning Spaces
Constructing SEL Classrooms
Scaffolding SEL curriculum and activities
across grade levels and content

Day 3
Strategy Showcase
Problem of Practice Carousel
Reflection and Commitment
Annotation activity (using ELA
nonfiction text)

Day 4
Discussion of follow-up actions
Continue SEL Curriculum and
Lesson Planning for Unit One

13 — 3-5 MINUTE SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION
- Discuss which goals you would like to focus on in future training and PLC's moving forward.
- Keep in mind that you will be the expert at your school and determine how you will share your selected SEL goals with your school leaders and staff.
- Jot down any concerns, questions, or support(s) you would like to help you with sharing goals and SEL knowledge, goals, and strategies with your school.
- Email concerns, questions and guided supports to PD facilitators by the end of Day 1 for extended feedback and guidance as needed.

14 — WHAT IS (SEL)?
- Social and emotional learning is an integral part of education and human development.
- SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to:
  - develop healthy identities,
  - manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals,
  - feel and show empathy for others,
  - establish and maintain supportive relationships, and
  - make responsible and caring decisions

(CASEL, 2023)

15
- 93% OF PARENTS SAY SEL IS IMPORTANT IN SCHOOLS
- 83% OF TEACHERS SAY SEL IMPROVES ACADEMICS
- 75% OF HIGH SCHOOLERS SAY SEL WOULD HELP THEM PERSONALLY
- 92% OF EMPLOYERS SAY SEL SKILLS ARE AS IMPORTANT AS TECHNICAL SKILLS

"Our generation's embrace of social, emotional, and academic learning in schools is undeniable and unambiguous: Learning does not happen in a vacuum."

(CASEL, 2023)

16 — SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING FRAMEWORK
Fosters knowledge, skills, and attitudes across five areas of competence and four key settings…

17 — Social and Emotional Learning Competencies
- SELF-AWARENESS: Understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts.
- SELF-MANAGEMENT: Manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations.
- SOCIAL AWARENESS: Understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds.
- RELATIONSHIP SKILLS: Establish and maintain healthy, supportive relationships and effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals/groups.
- RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING: Make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations.

(CASEL, 2023)

18 — CORE SEL COMPETENCY — SELF-AWARENESS
Understanding our emotions and thoughts, and how they influence our actions.
Example:
- A leader sense of identity
- Self-reflection
- Understanding thoughts and feelings
- Self-respect
- A sense of success

(CASEL, 2023)

19 — CORE SEL COMPETENCY — SOCIAL AWARENESS
Understanding the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds.
Examples:
- A sense of belonging and trust in others
- Feeling accepted and included
- Understanding others' perspectives
- Showing empathy and compassion for others
- Recognizing why people act the way they do
- Knowing what others expect from us

(CASEL, 2023)

20 — CORE SEL COMPETENCY — RELATIONSHIP SKILLS
Establishing and maintaining healthy, supportive relationships and effectively navigating settings with diverse groups.
Examples:
- Collaborative problem-solving
- Communication, including listening
- Healthy, supportive relationships
- Asking for and offering help
- Standing up for others
- Cooperation

(CASEL, 2023)

21 — CORE SEL COMPETENCY — RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING
Making caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations.
Examples:
- Curiosity: Seeking new knowledge and understanding
- Open-minded investigation
- Critical thinking
- Considering the well-being of others and self
- Understanding impact and consequences

(CASEL, 2023)

22 — Social and Emotional Learning & Key Settings
The skills are developed through the learning experiences and interactions that students have in all of the places they live and learn.

23 — KEY SETTINGS — CLASSROOMS
Students spend the majority of their school day in classrooms, and these spaces are at the heart of the learning process.

In classrooms, students can learn and practice SEL through explicit instruction, trusting relationships, and academic integration.

(CASEL, 2023)

24 — KEY SETTINGS — SCHOOLS
In partnership with families and communities, schools play a central role in supporting young people's social and emotional development.

From the cafeteria to the hallway to the playground, students have opportunities to practice and reinforce SEL.

(CASEL, 2023)

31 — DID YOU KNOW?
Research confirms: Social and emotional learning has long-term benefits.
Follow-up studies show that after SEL programs end, students continue to show significant improvements in...
- Academic achievement
- Social and emotional skills development
- Well-being
- Behaviors

Benefits lasted 6 months to 18 years and were consistent across socioeconomic background, race, and school location.

32 — AFTERNOON SESSION: DAY 1
Changing Mindsets: Self-Identifying Our Own Bias
- Shifting Mindsets
- Centering for Equity Balance

To introduce/discuss/dissect SEL as it relates to equitable practices and instruction.
To introduce practices that help provide every student equitable instruction.
To begin to disintegrate the idea that "certain students" can't.
To define deficit thinking model.
Today—To establish the reasoning behind building academic vocabulary, as well as provide, share, evaluate vocabulary strategies based on statistical data.

33 — EDUCATORS — Support Social and Emotional Learning
- 90% of teachers agree that promoting social and emotional learning improves students' academic achievement.
- 84% of teachers say it has a positive impact on skills such as collaboration, communication, and critical thinking.
- 96% of school administrators believe that social and emotional learning is just as important as academic learning.
- 95% of principals are committed to developing students' social and emotional skills in their school.

(CASEL, 2023)

34 — PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS — Support Social and Emotional Learning
- 93% of parents say it's important that schools teach SEL.
- 88% want schools to teach students social and emotional skills like respect, cooperation, perseverance, and empathy.
- 81% want their children's school to continue teaching SEL or do more on SEL.
- 84% say social and emotional learning has become even more important since the pandemic.

(CASEL, 2023)

35 — EMPLOYERS — Support Social and Emotional Learning
- 92% of surveyed executives say skills such as problem-solving and communicating clearly are equally or more important than technical skills.
- 80% of employers said social and emotional skills are increasingly important to company success.
- 51% of surveyed Human Resources professionals say education systems have done little or nothing to help address the skills shortage: problem solving, critical thinking, innovation, communication.

(CASEL, 2023)

36 — Social and Emotional Learning advances urgent priorities in education.
- Academic recovery
- Mental health
- School safety
- Future readiness

(CASEL, 2023)

Slide 25 — KEY SETTINGS / COMMUNITIES
Students thrive when they're supported by a network of adults working together.
Community organizations play a key role, partnering with schools and families to extend the experience of SEL through trusting relationships and enriching out-of-school time experiences.
(CASEL, 2023)

Slide 26
Hundreds of independent studies consistently demonstrate: Social and emotional learning benefits students.
ACADEMICS + MENTAL HEALTH + SKILLS DEVELOPMENT + SCHOOL CLIMATE
"SEL programs appear to have as great a long-term impact on academic growth as has been found for programs designed specifically to support academic learning."
(CASEL, 2023)

Slide 27 — CHARACTERISTICS AND BENEFITS OF SEL
YOUNG PEOPLE Support Social and Emotional Learning
- 78% of high school students say they want a school that prioritizes social and emotional learning. (CASEL, 2023)
- 75% of high school students say social and emotional learning would help them personally. (CASEL, 2023)
- High school students and recent graduates see the benefits of attending schools that emphasize SEL. But most believe their schools could have done better. (CASEL, 2023)
(CASEL, 2023)

Slide 28 — RESEARCH CONFIRMS
Social and emotional learning supports academic achievement.
Across PreK-12, SEL in schools has consistent, positive impact on student academic achievement.
Brain science shows that social, emotional, and cognitive development are intertwined and integral to academic learning and success.
Academic instruction that makes social and emotional connections results in deeper, longer-term learning.
Years after students participated in SEL, their academic performance was an average of 13 percentile points higher than peers.
(CASEL, 2023)

Slide 29 — RESEARCH CONFIRMS
Social and emotional learning improves student well-being.
Students participating in SEL at school had:
- decreased emotional distress
- fewer externalizing behaviors
- improved prosocial behaviors
Social and emotional learning can also reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety in the short term.
(CASEL, 2023)

Slide 30 — RESEARCH CONFIRMS
Social and emotional learning builds skills that are key to future readiness.
Students with stronger social and emotional skills have been more likely to reach milestones including:
- high school graduation
- postsecondary enrollment
- postsecondary graduation
- stable, full-time employment
(CASEL, 2023)

Slide 37
Social and Emotional Learning helps foster "protective factors" to mitigate the effects of mental health challenges:
- Responsive relationships
- Emotionally safe environments
- Skills development
"The beating heart of effective social and emotional learning programs are relationships—and strong relationships undergird stable mental health."
(CASEL, 2023)

Slide 38
ADDRESSING SEL MISCONCEPTIONS
(CASEL, 2023)

Slide 39 — Social and Emotional Learning / SEPARATING FACT FROM FICTION
- SEL boosts academic performance & deepens engagement with content. — It is not a distraction from academics.
- SEL builds relationships and skills that promote healthy well-being. — It is not therapy.
- SEL helps students understand different perspectives & share ideas. — It is not a way to teach students a specific political agenda.
- SEL is shaped by local priorities set by schools, families & communities. — It is not one-size fits all.
(CASEL, 2023)

Slide 40 — Social and Emotional Learning / SEPARATING FACT FROM FICTION
When addressing misconceptions, it helps to describe what a school with SEL looks like.
- Practicing social and emotional skills, like reflection and collaboration, during academic lessons, such as working in groups on how to approach a math problem.
- Opportunities for students to build supportive relationships with peers and adults, such as a "morning meeting" or a quick check-in with a staff mentor.
- Learning about and practicing social and emotional skills with age-relevant instruction, such as lessons on being a good friend or coping with stress.
- Adults modeling social and emotional skills and proactively looking for ways to support students.
- Families, educators, and students working together to plan and discuss strategies for promoting SEL.
(CASEL, 2023)

Slide 41 — Social and Emotional Learning / SEPARATING FACT FROM FICTION
Now imagine a school without SEL, where:
- Students don't develop practical skills that prepare them for their careers and lives.
- Students don't know where to turn for help when they struggle with academic content.
- Students have little time for discussion and don't feel connected to what they're learning.
- Students feel like they don't matter.
- Students are lonely, isolated, or bullied.
- Teachers don't have tools to engage students and manage their classrooms.
- Parents don't feel welcome in the school.
(CASEL, 2023)

Slide 42 — Social and Emotional Learning / How to spot and respond to misinformation
When you hear a false tradeoff, such as:
- Claims that SEL will harm other priorities, such as academics, are inherently flawed.
Example: "SEL is a distraction that takes time away from academics."
Respond by sharing:
- There is no either/or between SEL and academics.
Research shows clearly that SEL enhances academic achievement, mental wellness, and long-term outcomes.
(CASEL, 2023)

Slide 43 — SEL STRATEGIES
Effective SEL instruction has four elements represented by the acronym SAFE:
- Sequenced—connected and coordinated activities to foster skills development;
- Active—active forms of learning to help students master new skills;
- Focused—containing activities that clearly emphasize developing personal and social skills;
- Explicit—targeting specific social and emotional skills (Durlak et al., 2010, 2011)

Slide 44 — MORE SEL STRATEGIES
Daily Greetings; Emotions Check-In; Class Circle; Journal/Writing; Gratitude List; Morning Meeting; Mindful Morning Check-In; SEL Read-Alouds.

Slide 45 — DAY 2/MORNING SESSION
Building Teacher Social Emotional Competence
- To introduce/discuss/dissect SEL as it relates to equitable practices and instruction.
- To introduce practices that help provide every student equitable instruction.
- To begin to disintegrate the idea that "certain students" can't.
- To define deficit thinking model.
- Today—To establish the reasoning behind building academic vocabulary, as well as provide, share, evaluate vocabulary strategies based on statistical data.

Slide 46 — SEL COMPETENCE BEGINS WITH YOU
A. Building self-awareness and social emotional competence. It begins with:
1. Identifying your bias
2. Understanding your bias
3. Addressing your bias
B. Engaging in the SEL considerations reflection activity and discussions
C. What changes and shifts in mindsets and skillsets did you have to make in when considering self-awareness/implicit bias recognition shift?

Slide 47 — TEACHERS' SOCIAL EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

Slide 48 — WHAT IS DEFICIT THINKING
"Deficit thinking refers to the belief that educational outcome disparities are the result of students' intellectual, dispositional, moral, or cultural deficiencies".

Slide 49 — Examples of Deficit Thinking, (Lasater et al. 2021).

Slide 50
See you at 1 PM.
TIME FOR LUNCH
We'll see you at 1 PM.

Slide 51
What is your mindset?
Awareness Test
Considering implicit bias, social cognition and intergroup relations (Connor & Evers, 2020).

Slide 52
Critical Education
Volume 4 Number 11   October 15, 2013   ISSN 1920-4125
Teach For America and the Dangers of Deficit Thinking
Author Anderson
University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Go to your breakout rooms:
- Find those who share your color group.
- Take 4 minutes to share your index cards with one another (counter-clockwise).
"The Dangers of Deficit Thinking"
Read the section titled "The Dangers of Deficit Thinking".
Locate word/phrase/line that you:
- Agree With
- Disagree With
- Or an idea that challenges your thinking.
Write them on your index card.

Slide 53 — SHIFTING MINDSETS FROM DEFICIT TO GROWTH
Deficit thinking is an equity issue:
- Students attending high impact schools are often:
- Students of color, students experiencing poverty, students with learning and attention differences
- Following a brief video depicting implicit teaching bias, all participants to brainstorm ways in which what they observed might harm or help students.
Asset-based thinking:
- Welcomes students' experiences and strengths and supports them in pursuing high aspirations. It is the antithesis of deficit thinking.
Cultivating growth or asset mindsets involves:
- Creating a supportive and collaborative school culture that values development and learning and cultivates collaboration between students and teachers (Achelpy et al., 2009)

Slide 54
Educational Equity ensures that all children — regardless of circumstances — are receiving rigorous, grade-level, standards-aligned instruction supported by access to high-quality materials and resources.

55 — 2-SIDES—DISCUSSION ON SYSTEMIC BIAS AND RACISM

1. Read and reflect on your statistical data piece on the front side of your cardstock.
2. Write your reaction and reflection on the 2nd side of your cardstock.

Share-out Process

P1—Share the statistical data/quote with your partner. (45 Seconds)

P1—Share your reaction and implications of your data piece. (45 Seconds)

P2—Respond with any thoughts, questions, concerns. (30 Seconds)

56 — Introducing Equity into Instruction

Equity Literacy FOR ALL

multiculturalism—a comprehensive effort to infuse a multicultural perspective into all aspects of school life.

Schools can commit to a more robust multiculturalism by putting equity, rather than culture, at the center of the diversity conversation.

What To Do

Read Sections:
Embracing Equity Literacy
Five Guiding Principles
Principles 1-5

After Reading:
1. Choose a principle that stood out to you.
2. On side 1 of your paper, create a #HashTag that represents the principle.
3. On side 2 of your paper, write an explanation of how your hashtag represents your equity principle.

57 — EQUITY IS TWO-FOLD

Educational Inequity
- Inequities occur when biased or unfair policies, programs, practices, or situations contribute to a lack of equality in educational performance, results, and outcomes.

Equity Literacy
- Equity literacy is a framework for cultivating the knowledge and skills that enable us to be a threat to the existence of inequity in our spheres of influence.
- https://www.equityliteracy.org/equity-literacy

58 — KEYNOTE TAKEAWAYS—THE 4 C'S

1. Confirmation—something you heard affirmed your current practice and/or belief system.
2. Connection—something you heard connected to or expanded on existing/prior knowledge.
3. Contradiction—something you heard contradicts a belief system, instructional practices, or educational trends.
4. Challenge—something you heard challenges some part of you or the education system.

59 — 5 min

60

- Which aspects of your instructional practice provide all students with access to equity? Which aspects do not?

2 Minutes

Turn and Talk

61 — SEL Workshop Series

District Resource Center — Guidance and resources for implementing SEL districtwide.

School Resource Center — Guidance for implementing SEL throughout a school.

State Resource Center — Essential library of resources and tools for state policymakers.

CASEL Guide to SEL Programs — Guide to SEL Programs — Process for selecting a program, including an evidence-based list.

For those implementing SEL schoolwide, CASEL offers a virtual workshop series.

It can be taken live online or self-paced on demand

https://schoolguide.casel.org/sel-workshops/

62 — EXAMINE BIAS AND ITS ROLE IN OUR WORK AND LEARNING

Becoming Equity Change-Agents

We do this by:
- **Acknowledging** that we are part of an systematically racist system of education.
- **Recognizing** that we have participated in this paradigm through instruction and pedagogy.
- **Committing** to ensuring that all students, regardless of how we think they come to us, leave us having grown against grade-level standards, confident in their value and their abilities.

63 — Equity Literacy For All

We are Equity Literate when we are able to:

- Recognize biases and inequities, including those that are subtle first in ourselves (and then in the systems we serve).
- Respond to biases, discrimination, and inequities in a thoughtful and equitable manner.
- Redress biases, discrimination, and inequalities not only by responding to interpersonal bias, but also studying the ways in which bigger social change happens.
- Cultivate and sustain bias-free, discrimination-free communities (and in doing so creating equitable environments), which requires an understanding that doing so is a basic responsibility for everyone in a civil society.

64

Write your responses to the questions below. (5 min). Then post your responses on the virtual whiteboard.

Can you recall a time or event in which your identity (race/ethnicity, social class status or gender) were made obvious or important to you?

What is the connection between your identity and the educational experience you provide your students?

What does it mean to provide a great education for underserved students? OR What types of discrimination are experienced in the US—What types of disadvantage are experienced by your students?

65 — SEL INSTITUTE

Day 3

REAFFIRMING OUR "WHY"...REFINING THE "HOW"

66 — GROUP NORMS

1. Begin and end on time.
2. Take responsibility for yourself as a learner.
3. Be an active and hands-on learner.
4. Use technology to enhance learning.
5. Strive for equity of voice.
6. Contribute to and maintain a "safe-space" learning environment.

237

Slide 67 — Quickwrite: Respond to the following questions. Share in chat.
- What is your idea of an equitable classroom? Share with your group. Use pictures/emojis to illustrate your group's equitable classroom. What elements in your classroom relate to social emotional goals?
- What supports can district and school leaders provide for you to aid in your classroom and instructional design?

Slide 68 — DEFINING DEFICIT THINKING / DENOTATIVE DEFINITION
The idea that low-income, minority students fail due to deficiencies in family structure and/or experiences (i.e. inadequate acumen, lack of drive and insufficient home socialization and stability)

Slide 69 — EYEING EQUITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Slide 70
How might one's background influence others' perceptions about how he/she will fare in society?
Equity systematically promotes fair and impartial access to rights and opportunities.
Equity may look like adding supports and scaffolds that result in fair access to opportunities or creating opportunities for all voices to be heard.
Educational Equity ensures that all children—regardless of circumstances—are receiving high-quality, grade-level, and standards-aligned instruction with access to high-quality materials and resources.
We become change agents for educational equity when we acknowledge that we are part of an educational system that holds policies and practices that are inherently racist and that we have participated in this system. We now commit to ensuring that all students, regardless of how we think they come to us, leave us having grown against grade-level standards and confident in their value and abilities.

Slide 71
See you at 1 PM.
TIME FOR LUNCH

Slide 72 — Text-Complexity Factors
"White Man's Burden" / "Brown Man's Burden"
Read the two poems and annotate this an appropriate text for teaching social emotional skillsets.
Open Discussion: What did we find to be complex about this text? In what ways might we need to scaffold this text to provide everyone access to it?

Slide 73 — REFLECTION
We do not learn from experience… we learn from reflecting on experience. – John Dewey
How does structure playout in your classroom? What changes can you or do you need to make to capitalize on learned SEL strategies in your classroom?

Slide 74 — EXAMINE THE TEXTS AND DETERMINE WHICH ELA STANDARDS YOU WILL FOCUS ON WHEN TEACHING AND WHICH SEL STRATEGIES YOU WILL EMBED IN THE TEXT
- Review and Reacclimate
- Take 5 Minutes to analyze and annotate both documents: White Man's Burden and Brown Man's Burden
- First read for impression, then express thoughts.
- Brainstorm what are ways to employ SEL strategies when teaching each text.
- Report out to your group and then we will meet as a whole group to discuss the strategies.

Slide 75 — AFTERNOON WORK SESSION: DAY 3 http://bit.ly/ELAPOP
Use Common Core standards, planning tools, exemplar from paired texts activities, begin planning of Unit 1 with...
- Select Short Stories to Replace Novel Study in the Core Teaching
- Determine the focus and objective of the texts selected.
- Determine how you will differentiate your teaching methods to meet the unique needs of your specific learning.
- Embed SEL strategies into the lesson plan.

Slide 76 — SEL INSTITUTE — Day 4
REAFFIRMING OUR "WHY"…REFINING THE "HOW"

Slide 77 — GROUP NORMS
1. Begin and end on time.
2. Be prepared with materials.
3. Take responsibility for yourself as a learner.
4. Be an active and hands-on learner.
5. Use technology to enhance learning.
6. Strive for equity of voice.
7. Contribute to and maintain a "safe-space" learning environment.

Slide 78 — WRITE IT DOWN, RIP IT UP, THROW IT AWAY
- Take 2 Minutes to Write Down:
  - Your Stress
  - Your Insecurities
  - Express Your Expectations of Yourself going forward

Slide 79
See you at 1 PM.
TIME FOR LUNCH

Slide 80 — REVIEW: SEL Strategies Activities

Slide 81 — AFTERNOON WORK SESSION: DAY 4
1:30-3:10 PM — Team and Individual Planning Activities in Breakout Rooms; Map Unit 1 (Complete the Unit Map); Re-Align lessons to match Q1 Timeline; Select and integrate SEL activities.
3:10-4:10 PM — Team and Individual Planning Shared with Whole Group; Share out the SEL strategies into daily lessons.; Incorporate discussion protocols into lessons.; Evaluate lessons for equity..

Slide 82
5 min

Slide 83 — WHAT…SO WHAT…NOW WHAT
- What key take-aways do you have after today's session?
- What are you curious to learn more about?
- [http://bit.ly/ELADay2]

Slide 84 — TAKING IT BACK TO YOUR SCHOOLS AS CHANGE AGENTS. DATA DRIVEN INSTRUCTION
- Culture
- Assessment
- Analysis
- Action
(DATA DRIVEN INSTRUCTION: Collect Data, Analyze Data, Make Instructional Decisions, Plan, Reflect)

Social Emotional Competence Survey

This survey is used to measure teachers' social emotional competence by assessing situational judgement in classroom settings.

1. SEL programs in high schools should *
   o set strict standards which teachers create
   o must include relationship building opportunities
   o teaches students to follow rules

2. SEC is a skill that
   o is explicitly taught
   o is explicitly and implicitly taught
   o is based solely on relationships

3. SEL competencies include
   o self-awareness
   o making responsible choices
   o building strong relationships
   o all of the above

4. For successful SEL to occur
   o teachers must possess social emotional competence
   o teachers must build positive relationships with their students
   o intentional planning for SEL opportunities is necessary
   o All of the above

5. Teachers use social emotional intelligence when they
   o recognize their own emotions and feelings
   o find ways to unwind from the stress of their job
   o feel safe in their workplace
   o All of the above

6. Teachers are more likely to have positive student outcomes when they
   o are calm, positive, and content
   o intentionally model SEC for students
   o take time to reflect on their own emotions

- o include all of the above strategies
7. Ways in which teachers can build SEC include
    - o participate in both informal and formal SEL training
    - o seek help when needed
    - o collaborate with other professionals
    - o commit to all of the above

8. To promote equity in the classroom teachers must
    - o identify and address their own bias
    - o avoid stereotypes
    - o celebrate differences among their students
    - o Endeavor to do all of the above

9. Implicit bias manifest itself when educators
    - o Do not pay attention to power dynamics
    - o do not diversify teaching strategies
    - o are not intentional in selecting culturally relevant topics
    - o all of the above

10. Describe SEL strategies that can be used daily in your classroom.
Your Answer:

Submit

Note: Teachers will be given a link which allows them to submit the pre- and postassessment with their email address included. The purpose of the email verification is to give certificates of participation for which the school district assigns CEU's 1.5-3 possible. Further, emails will be used to connect with those participants who want additional resources and the Power Point presentation which they will have permission to use as a resource for continued training of teachers at their perspective schools and any high schools in the district who desire the training. SEL programs are successful and sustainable when employed continuously over a minimum of 3 years (see Imants & Van der Wal, 2020; Jagers et al., 2019; Mahoney et al., 2021).

Appendix B: Interview Refinement Protocol

Interview questions based on SEL goals and the CASEL framework	CASEL competencies	Scaffold questions	RQ	Sub-RQ 1	Sub-RQ 2
Question 1: Describe your teaching philosophy and how that philosophy drives your teaching practices/student relationships/lesson rigor.	X Self-awareness	X	X	X	X
Question 2: Describe your first encounter with the SEL concept(s) and the CASEL framework.	X Self-awareness	X	X		X
Question 3: How would you describe the students in your classroom (demographics, learning abilities/barriers)?	X			X	X
Question 4: What do you perceive to be the needs of your students?	X			X	X
Question 5: Tell me about your experience while teaching in the district and the challenges/benefits of using the CASEL framework in a high-poverty, hard-to-staff school.	X	X	X		X
Question 6: Discuss your feelings about the significance of building relationships with your students. Please give examples.	X	X	X	X	X
Question 7: Describe the dynamics (relationship) between you and your students in the classroom.	X	X		X	X
Question 8: To the best of your knowledge, please describe what you believe to be your high school's goals for SEL strategies.	X	X	X	X	X
Question 9: What SEL training have you received, and how would you describe those training?	X	X	X		
Question 10: How do you explicitly teach SEL skills based upon the goals of the CASEL framework?	X	X	X	X	
Question 11: Discuss your methods/process for infusing SEL/CASEL competencies into your content and classroom practices. Please explain and elaborate as much as you feel is needed to address this question. Describe the SEL practices that you think that you are most accomplished in using in your classroom.	X	X	X	X	X
Question 12: Describe what you feel was a compelling lesson in which you integrated SEL practices into your daily tasks/lessons	X			X	X	X
Question 13: Discuss and give examples of how you assess SEL skills/development and improved outcomes. Elaborate please on how you attain SEL competencies development, progress and/or proficiency.	X			X	X	X
Question 14: Describe your methods of gaining insights into SEL skills (formative and summative).		X	X	X	

Interview questions based on SEL goals and the CASEL framework	CASEL competencies	Scaffold questions	RQ	Sub-RQ 1	Sub-RQ 2
Question 15: Please describe the types of assessments you use to gauge SEL growth or competency.	X				X
Question 16: Explain how SEL has influenced your students. How do you gauge the influences? Please be as detailed as possible.	X		X		X
Question 17: Describe your reflection process for assessing your SEL practice effectiveness and how you work on strengthening areas you think need refining. (Remember, this is your thoughts and feelings about how you integrate SEL into your classroom practices and self-assessing areas where you feel your practices were strong, as well as areas that you think could be refined.		X	X		X
Question 18: Will you explain how SEL training evolved since the SEL/CASEL program was initiated? Describe the training in terms of consistency, depth, and frequency.	X	X	X		
Question 19: What areas of SEL implementation do you feel you need more training or support?		X	X		
Question 20: Which SEL practices have been your focus this year, and why you chose to focus on those practices?	X	X	X		
Question 21: Discuss/describe and explain the types of support you receive from administration, curriculum facilitators, counselors, and/or community partners to aid you in implementing SEL using the CASEL framework.		X	X	X	X
Question 22: Discuss and describe what additional support would assist with your implementation of SEL using the CASEL framework.		X		X	X
Question 25: At this time, please share any other information or thoughts that you may have about SEL, the CASEL framework and SEL practices in your classroom or throughout the school.	X	X	X	X	X

Appendix C: Example A Priori Codes, Participant Quotes, and Themes With Evidence-

Based Research

In vivo code	Participant	Example quote	Theme and evidence-based research
Philosophy	T1	"All students, regardless of how they are labeled, deserve high-quality complex tasks, texts, and opportunities."	Theme 1: Teachers' perceptions, mindsets, and biases drive pedagogy.
	T1	"It is imperative to provide all students, irrespective of their categorization, with challenging and intricate assignments, texts, and chances to interact with these sophisticated tasks and texts in manners that align with their abilities."	Mann, 2018; Weissberg, 2019.
Self-identity	T2	"Every student can learn. I believe that, um, it doesn't matter, um, where they came from."	
	T3	"I make a thousand decisions a day. What do I say to this kid? Do I let this one use the bathroom? How should I teach to this one? Uh, you know what I mean? . . . . That's all I do. That's awful. I must wear so many hats at once"	
Relationships	T4	"Authentic relationships with the students and high expectations that demand rigor."	
SEL training	T2	"None. Such as teaching and emphasizing; teaching students specific SEL skills. No, there is nothing like that."	Theme 2: Consistent and continuous training is needed to build teachers' SEC.
	T3	"We were given a book to read and had book excerpts to discuss in PLCs related to SEL.	Imants & Van der Wal, 2020; Jagers et al., 2019; Mahoney et al., 2021
	T4	"Maybe a workshop occurred at my old school, but only that one workshop in 7 years. However, at my current school, formal SEL training occurs monthly with exemplars for SEL lessons shared in PLCs."	
	T5	"It was talked about in staff meetings."	
	T7	"I don't remember any SEL training."	
	T8	"We watched a PowerPoint, and had two speakers come in and talk about it, and then it was dropped."	
	T9	"[I] learned certain things by independently viewing videos and reading articles on SEL strategies."	
	T10	"SEL goals had been mentioned in passing but no formal training took place in the 2 years."	
SEL experiences	T1	"In terms of planning instruction . . . if we think that students' abilities are low, then we try not to	Theme 3: SEL instructional planning is key to successful implementation.

In vivo code	Participant	Example quote	Theme and evidence-based research
		give them complex texts . . . we are not pushing them to reach for higher."	
	T2	"They're just doing strictly lessons due to rigid, fast pacing. Everyone is expected to have the same lesson plans and not deviate from them. Students have to push fast to get their academic lesson done."	CASEL, 2018, 2020, 2021; Henmeter et al., 2018
	T3	"Principals walk through and never give any feedback. Without lesson feedback, how will we know what is working and what is not? How do we know what to include in our lesson plans? The only person who tells me how I'm doing is the inclusion teacher."	
	T4	"When differentiating tasks and materials, if you don't train someone on what that looks like then you're out there giving them low quality tasks and texts. I fell into a disconnect in terms of differentiating to meet those students' needs."	
	T8	I have to take the prescribed academics and requirements of ____ County or _____County and look at those and then marry them to the training that I had from _____State/____High School. But I had to do that without help from academic coaches or experts because there was never time to consistently plan together."	
	T10	"I differentiate my lessons. I tailor them to each student's learning process: discussion, collaborative grouping, restorative justice, differentiation, text connections."	
SEL resources	T2	"English teachers should know how SEL should look in their classes . . .it would be helpful to have an expert model this for teachers."	Theme 4: Participants shared that the resources for expert training on SEL needed to include time and curriculum in daily practice and administrative support.
	T3	"As teachers, we don't have enough planning time."	Ferreira et al., 2020; Neth et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2018
	T6	"If there is never a real clear plan for how to put it in other than doing lessons during the homeroom block at the beginning of the year type thing, then it is impossible to plan."	
	T7	"[More] specific guidance from experts on how to plan for SEL implementation is needed for teachers to feel that they are correctly implementing SEL on a daily basis."	
	T10	"[Planning should be focused on] being able to plan together and to hear feedback as well as to have discussions about how to put SEL into our lessons."	
	T4	"SEL takes precedence in teachers' weekly planning . . . lesson preparation for SEL rotates	

In vivo code	Participant	Example quote	Theme and evidence-based research
		among the teachers and is seamlessly integrated into instructional classes."	
Barriers to SEL	T2	"Pacing and instruction is more focused on rigor in a delusional frame of mind or mindset that all the students need rigor and can learn on grade level, and we [teachers] just need to stop treating them as if they cannot do the tasks, which is almost against the concepts of social-emotional learning and IEP's. Those things don't exist in their minds."	Theme 5: Barriers to SEL impede successful program implementation

Ferreira et al., 2020; Frye et. al. 2022; Mahoney et al., 2020; McKown, 2017; Mischenko et al., 2022; Yan et al., 2018 |
	T2	"Learners definitely need a more hands-on approach for differentiated learning and the pace at which we need to move to cover all of the material . . . faster than consumption than they can handle. . . . The pacing guide, in my opinion, is not accurate for the type of learner . . . we have enrolled in my present school."	
	T3	"Behavior of the kids is problematic and makes it difficult to develop strong relationships with my pupils or to teach social-emotional skillsets and we are required to teach to the test."	
	T5	"Because each day we're told that classes are not rigorous enough, and um, kids need to be on task for the entire 49 minutes versus us spending some of that time to build these social skills."	
	T6	"[Administrators] want you to make sure you're hitting X, Y, and Z. You're checking off these marks. 'Oh, if you have time, fit in SEL stuff.' And the biggest thing for me with SEL is it's not something you do, it's something you are. It's not like a program that you can say, 'okay, today's an SEL day.'"	
	T8	"A lot of my students are in gangs, on drugs, working multiple jobs, either fighting rival gangs and get suspended, or lucked up, are too high, or too tired, or missing school because they must take care of family or work."	
	T9	"I don't see SEL as sustainable when teachers don't stay."	
SEL strategies to assess SEC			Theme 6: Teachers struggle to assess SEC in their students.

Charlton et al., 2021; Jagers et al., 2019; Taylor, 2020 |

In vivo code	Participant	Example quote	Theme and evidence-based research
	T1	We are not there yet. We give students a false sense of accomplishment and achievement for me and for them when they're assessed quantitatively, they are not able to do what's expected.	
	T2	"The result of having done that [SEL] work has gotten students to do narrative essays and they had a graphic organizer to work from. They had a booklet that they were working on. Everything went in this booklet. These students have excelled beyond my expectations".	
	T3	"I observe how they work together, in teams, and I use their finished product to assess how they are doing…I look at their finished products. For example, they may create posters, or something like that . . . posters and cutting, sketching things."	
	T4	"We use surveys, and everything is on computers. Students and teachers receive scripted lessons that go along with the ELA content."	
	T5	"I differentiate my lessons. I tailor them to each student's learning process. So, each student's outcome may be different"	
	T6	"Just been [assessment] strategies that I've tried because of reading about SEL, and then I saw the CASEL stuff, you know, with the different aspects of it and researching it but I never participated in an actual official SEL program."	
	T7	"We definitely need some sort of data."	
	T8	"Teachers are surveyed and observed quarterly and given feedback from our SEL coach. They have teacher workdays where the SEL coach for our school supports us planning."	

Note. T = teacher. T4 teaches at an SEL charter school. T8 teaches at an SEL high school with at-risk students.

Appendix D: A Priori Codes, Themes, Categories, and Concepts Aligned With the RQ,

Sub-RQs, and Semistructured Interviews

RQ: What are high school teachers' perceptions regarding their instructional implementation of the SEL curriculum using the CASEL framework?
Sub-RQ1: What are high school teachers' perceptions about the consistency with which they employ SEL practices in the classroom?
Sub-RQ2: What are high school teachers' perceptions about the influence of SEL on student outcomes?

Code (aligned with IQ)	RQ and sub-RQs	IQ aligned with codes, categories, and themes	Category	Theme
Philosophy/mindsets Student/teacher relationships Self-efficacy	RQ	1, 3, 4, 6, 7	Growth/deficit SEL/CASEL Bias Teacher burnout Self-identity Perceived SEL benefits	Theme 1: Teachers' perceptions, mindsets, and biases drive pedagogy.
SEL Encounters/experiences/ training	Sub-RQ1	2, 5, 8, 9, 10, 14,	Teachers' lived experiences	Theme 2: Consistent and continuous training is needed to build teachers' SEC.
Integrating SEL strategies	Sub-RQ1	13, 14, 15	Needs and resources	
SEL planning	RQ Sub-RQ1	11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20	Time PLCs Teacher efficacy Reflection	Theme 3: SEL Instructional planning is key to successful implementation.
SEL strategies	RQ Sub-RQ1 Sub-RQ2	16, 17 18, 20, 21, 22, 23	Teachers-student relationships Differentiation Scaffolding Assessing SEL	Theme 4: Knowledge and use of SEL strategies are inconsistent and minimal.
Barriers to SEL implementation	RQ Sub-RQ2	24, 25	High stakes testing Barriers to SEL	Theme 5: Barriers to SEL impede successful program implementation.
SEL influences	Sub-RQ2	16, 18, 19, 24, 25	Student SEC skillsets	Theme 6: Teachers struggle to assess SEC in their students.

Appendix E: Sample In Vivo Codes, Aligned With Participant Quotes and Themes

In vivo code	Participant	Example quote	Theme
Mindsets	T1	"All students, regardless of how they are labeled, deserve high-quality complex tasks, texts, and opportunities."	Theme 1: Teachers' perceptions, mindsets, and biases drive pedagogy.
	T2	"Every student can learn. I believe that, um, it doesn't matter, um, where they came from."	
	T3	"I didn't know better, so I gave them a false sense of confidence and achievement."	
	T4	"Need to have authentic relationships with students and high expectations."	
	T5	"Students need to know you care."	
	T6	"Teachers do students a disservice when we don't give them the grade they deserve. Where else can they go where 50 is a passing grade?"	
	T7	"Make sure what you are teaching them is relevant, so you have to get to know your kids."	
	T8	"First and foremost, let students know you care and that you are there for them. They will shut down if you don't build that trust."	
	T9	Students today learn differently than when I started teaching decades ago. It's a different generation, so you have to meet them where they are."	
	T10	"Teachers come in and outta [*sic*] schools. . . . They try to be a stereotype of what they think is [*sic*] supposed to be—whether that's hard or too nice, or whether they're trying to be friends with the kids or trying to be disciplinarians."	
Bias (Teachers recognize their biases and address them.)	T2	"Students come to me reading below grade level and from homes where they	

In vivo code	Participant	Example quote	Theme
		may not receive support for reading and studying"	
	T3	"Students come to us reading below grade level—sometimes in the 11th grade reading on a third grade level. I try to work with those students, but really what can you do with that?"	
	T5	"The majority were students of color, um, and Hispanic or Latinx students. Most of them, not all, of course, but most of them, come from, um, pretty high levels of poverty. Lots of struggles, lots of barriers"	
Training	T6	"We have a social-emotional learning coach.	Theme 2: Consistent and continuous training is needed to build teachers' SEC.
	T2	"So, in terms of demographics with our students, um, yes, I don't know the exact percentage, but the majority were students of color, um, and Hispanic or Latinx students. Most of them, not all, of course, but most of them, come from, um, pretty high levels of poverty. Lots of struggles, lots of barriers. I mean, what's, what barriers didn't they have to deal with, you know?"	
	T3	"I don't remember any training that was really thorough on that [SEL]."	
	T4	"Maybe a workshop occurred at my old school, but only that one workshop in 7 years. However, at my current school, formal SEL training occurs monthly with exemplars for SEL lessons shared in PLCs."	
	T9	"They didn't call it SEL, but we did some intervention training through MTSS and PBIS, but nothing specific to SEL."	
	T10	"See, I wouldn't know, because no one refers to or has trained me in SEL in our school."	

In vivo code	Participant	Example quote	Theme
Resources	T2	"English teachers should know how SEL should look in their classes."	Theme 3: SEL instructional planning is key to successful implementation.
Time/planning (Time)	T3	"I think it's getting the whole school involved, you know, and more schoolwide. But it's also like we're working on dress codes and classroom management. It's all about the test scores."	
Curriculum	T6	"If there [is] never a real clear strategic plan for how to put it in, other than doing lessons during the homeroom block at the beginning of the year type thing, then it is impossible to plan"	
Training	T9	"Their biggest thing was time, extra time to plan and be modeling those things we are expected to teach."	
Planning	T10	"Being able to plan together and to hear feedback as well as to have discussions about how to put SEL into our lesson plans."	
	T2	"The lead staff talked to them about how you calm students down using intervention strategies to de-escalate crises and control outbursts and fighting among students. Emphasis was placed on creating cooling down points in the classroom."	
SEL strategies	T4	"I don't think it is a good thing to blur the line between teachers and students. You can support students without trying to be their friend; when you try to be their friend, they may take advantage or not take you seriously."	Theme 4: Knowledge and use of SEL strategies are inconsistent and minimal.
	T5	"I think that the best tactic is to just be you, to be authentic, and be real, because kids can sense that."	
	T3	"So, the first game is identity . . . activities we can do for identity . . .what words describe you and, like, adjectives describing	

In vivo code	Participant	Example quote	Theme
		the words, create posters, or something like that. . . . And, as far as hands-on, that would be, like, more like posters and cutting, sketching things"	
	T6	"Just been strategies that I've tried because of reading about SEL, and then I saw the CASEL stuff, you know, with the different aspects of it and researching it but never participated in an actual official SEL program."	
	T7	"[SEL activities are] things that I have taken into consideration since I first began working with students."	
	T9	"I differentiate my lessons. I tailor them to each student's learning process. I understand and empathize with where they are."	
Obstacles/barriers	T1	"Teachers need training to enable them to take abstract concepts like SEL and ideals from SEL and make them concrete, transformative practices and activities for their subject area."	Theme 5: Barriers to SEL impede successful program implementation.
	T2	"[Leadership is] more focused on rigor in a delusional frame of mind or mindset that all the students need rigor and can learn on grade level."	
	T5	Each day we're told that classes are not rigorous enough, and um, kids need to be on task for the entire 49 minutes versus us spending some of that time to build these social skills."	
	T6	"So, in terms of demographics with our students . . . I don't know the exact percentage, but the majority were students of color . . . Hispanic or Latinx students. Most of them, not all, of course, but most of them, come, um, from pretty high levels of poverty. Lots of struggles, lots of barriers, I mean,	

In vivo code	Participant	Example quote	Theme
		what's, what barriers didn't they have to deal with, you know?"	
	T7	"Students come from terrible backgrounds and hard circumstances' those issues [are] with them to [*sic*] school every day, so every day is a disruption where they're lashing out and maybe that's the last straw. When students are lashing out, fighting, or having meltdowns, it is impossible to teach class."	
	T8	"You know, a lot of my students are in gangs, on drugs, or working multiple jobs, so they are either fighting rival gangs and get suspended or locked up, are too high, or too tired, or missing school."	
	T9	"I don't see SEL as sustainable when teachers don't stay."	
	T10	"[Several ELA classrooms had substitute teachers who were only there for the paycheck], sitting up reading a book or on their cell phone while the students do whatever."	
Outcomes	T1	"No formal SEL assessments occurred at my school at any time."	Theme 6: Teachers struggle to assess SEC in their students.
	T2	"I observe their interactions and responses to tasks in class, how they collaborate with peers on group projects, but I really don't know if observation is an adequate form of assessment for social-emotional learning."	
	T3	"The only way that I know to assess the students' interpersonal growth is what I am able to observe as they collaborate on instructional tasks."	
	T4	"Through observation and students' work."	