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Exploration of Final-Year Teacher Preparation Through the Lens of Emotional Intelligence

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
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Walden University
2024

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MA, University of Massachusetts, Boston, 1998

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Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Although research has suggested that emotional intelligence (EI) is an important factor in career and life success, teacher preparation programs often fail to include topics for developing EI. The college of education that participated in this study sought to explore EI development in its teacher preparation program. This multimodal descriptive qualitative study explored the EI experiences of final-year preservice teachers to determine the extent to which their teacher preparation program developed EI from the participants' perspectives. The conceptual framework combined transformative emotional intelligence (TEI), the emotional learning system (ELS), and an EI self-assessment of TEI skills. A normed EI profile of the teacher candidates ($N = 20$) was developed to address RQ1. From this group, 10 participants were selected for semistructured interviews to (a) explore participant experiences related to previous EI learning, (b) understand their experience with the EI assessment, (c) identify strengths and opportunities for EI skill growth, and (d) explore their understanding of EI skills. Axial coding and thematic analysis of interview transcripts revealed the four themes of (a) anecdotal EI learning unrelated to the program; (b) empathy, open-mindedness, and self-awareness are principal components of EI; (c) assessment results require guided interpretation to increase EI with fidelity, and (d) EI is important for healthy, productive inter- and intra-personal relationships. To promote positive social change, a nine-week TEI curriculum was developed to offer prospective K–12 teachers the opportunity to learn and practice EI in ways that will allow them to model EI skills as they enter the teaching profession.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my husband, Desmond Nduka Ebuwa. Throughout this journey, you have been my steadfast anchor and guiding light. Your unwavering support and authentic TLC^2 (tender loving care and tough love culture) has been instrumental in helping me navigate my way through the ebbs and flows of this academic voyage. You, my love, are just like Neruda's The Sea, "I need the sea because it teaches me" and "What it taught me before I keep".

To the public-school teachers of the world, whose dedication and passion plant seeds of knowledge into the hearts and minds of our children, and selflessly nurture them so they may flourish…this is for you. Working together, I dream to see this work reflected in continuous personal and professional learning for teachers and teachers-to-be in every country. Working together, may all the teachers be well.

Acknowledgments

So many deserve acknowledgment. To my committee chair, Dr. Richard Hammett, whose insight and knowledge of this subject matter and incredible patience with my process of learning, steered me throughout this journey. Without the guidance, mentorship, and coaching of Dr. Hammett, I would have left the program. I am *Dr. Dorito* because of you. Thank you is not enough. A special thanks to my second committee member and former university research reviewer, Drs. Joanna Karet and Kelly Hall, respectively.Their support and input made me a better writer and researcher and vastly improved this work. Thank you, also, to Dr. Kim Miller for the encouragement and accountability check-ins. To Dr. Gary Low, whose kindness, wisdom, life's work, and silent coaching kept me going. May this work honor you and the late Dr. Darwin Nelson; may perpetual light shine upon him. Your work lives on in every page of my study.

To the NNSTOY Family and Walden University. Without your collaboration and mutual dedication to the belief in higher education degrees for teachers, I would not be here. I am forever grateful. Part of the NNSTOY family are my NNSTOY sisters, my friends, and Walden Ed.S., Ed.D., and Ph.D. graduates with whom I have had countless calls, cries, conferences on Zoom, texts, talks and late night DMs: Monica Washington Ed.S, Dr. Kathy Assini, Dr. Megan Allen, Dr. Daniele Massey, and Dr. Megan Hall.

Finally, I wish to thank my family: Daddy, Mommy, Dez, David, Deborah, Nana, Rosie, Joey, Sofi, Megan, Ginger, Frederich, Penny, Liesl, Brigitta, Gretyl, Tippy, Stuey, LuLu, Zsa Zsa, DDL, and the entire Sackman/DeAcutis/Franch Clan…I believe.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

Teachers' effectiveness is reflected in teachers' abilities to enhance the academic

growth of students as they progress with their education. The term *effectiveness* has been

used to conceptualize how teachers support their students' learning by helping them build

quality academic knowledge through their teaching practices (Adeyemo & Chukwudi,

2014; Bİlge et al., 2014; Cheng & Chau, 2016). P. Allen et al. (2016) argued that

education goals related to student growth should not be limited to academic performance

alone. Sound education should entail both the physical and psychological development of

students. When viewed in this more holistic way, teacher effectiveness is also

operationalized as teachers' nonintellective abilities that increase their readiness to teach.

Epstein (2012) suggested the term *emotional intelligence* (EI) as a construct that includes

nonintellective abilities and skills.

Based on contemporary education theories for developing healthy and productive

children, educators must develop acumen in the integration of EI within their

instructional strategies and practices (Adeyemo & Chukwudi, 2014; Nelson et al., 2017).

The challenge is that many teacher preparation programs do not incorporate content to

develop EI in teachers, and as a result teachers may have deficits in their readiness to be

effective classroom leaders who can develop EI in their students. The graduates of the

South State College (SSC, a pseudonym) College of Education teacher-preparation

program were the focus of the current study. This section provides the problem statement,

purpose, framework, research questions, and the first of two reviews of literature for the study.

The problem for this study was that a local preservice teacher preparation program did not include EI in the curriculum, and as a result final-year teacher candidates were entering their profession with EI deficits. The problem manifested in postpracticum feedback that indicated the graduating teacher candidates' lack of confidence and feelings of stress when faced with the emotional challenges of teaching in public school settings following the practicum (Director, College of Education, personal communication, August 15, 2019). The local gap in practice was reflected in the literature as deficits in new teachers' readiness to learn and teach with a pedagogy that incorporates EI (Dolev & Leshem, 2016; Nelson et al., 2017; Shahinzadeh & Ahmadi, 2015). The purpose of the current study was to explore final-year preservice teachers qualitatively to understand the omission of EI from the perspectives of the preservice teachers who went through the teacher preparation program at SSC and to make recommendations for adding EI content based on graduating students' perspectives.

A detailed review of the local teacher preparation curriculum revealed no EI or related content, a situation that was confirmed through discussions with an SSC official (Director, College of Education, personal communication, August 15, 2019). In addition, the Director expressed the need to have a study of final-year teachers' readiness to teach from a framework that includes EI and wass interested in facilitating a study with final-year teacher candidates at SSC. This gap in local practice was echoed more broadly for

teacher preparation programs in the literature (Adeyemo & Chukwudi, 2014; Dolev &

Leshem, 2016; Nelson et al., 2017; Shahinzadeh & Ahmadi, 2015).

Dolev and Leshem (2016) lamented the absence of EI content in most preservice

teacher preparation programs and acknowledged the need for EI among teachers to buffer

them from stress while strengthening their instructional performance. Shahinzadeh and

Ahmadi (2015) confirmed that new teachers have very few opportunities to study EI

content, while Nelson et al. (2017) agreed and recommended the inclusion of EI content

with an embedded affective learning model for prospective educators to develop EI in

their teaching and learning. Without content that addresses the development of the

affective domain, educators will continue to enter the workforce with deficits in their

ability to cope with contemporary education challenges (Adeyemo & Chukwudi, 2014;

Nelson et al., 2017). It would be imprudent, however, to add EI curriculum to teacher

preparation programs without first obtaining a thorough understanding of the final-year

preservice teacher candidates' perspectives about the EI construct and its inclusion in

teacher preparation programs.

<h3 style="text-align:center">Rationale</h3>

The rationale for this study stemmed from SSC's teacher preparation leaders'

recognition that EI is not a part of the teacher preparation curriculum combined with the

expressed need for better preparation by final-year teacher candidates when they

complete their practicum experiences (Director, College of Education, personal

communication, August 15, 2019). Furthermore, the school's administrator of the teacher

preparation program expressed a desire to better understand the omission of EI content

from the perspectives of the final-year teacher candidates to develop related curriculum for the program (Director, College of Education, personal communication, August 15, 2019). Combining the recommendations of Dolev and Leshem (2016) and Nelson et al. (2017), there was a research-derived rationale for conducting a study to understand the need for and how to best implement EI content in teacher preparation programs. The purpose of the current qualitative multi-modal descriptive study was to explore the perceptions of final-year teacher candidates about their readiness to learn and teach as understood from a framework of nonintellective skills and abilities operationalized as EI.

Definition of Terms

Appreciative inquiry: A change management approach that seeks to understand the most effective alternative and repeat it effectively. Appreciative inquiry can help individuals and organizations to recognize outstanding strengths and use them for improvement (Grieten et al., 2018).

Emotional intelligence (EI): An individual's ability to accurately identify their emotions and the emotions of others (Hoerger et al., 2012). From an educational perspective, Nelson et al. (2017) defined transformative EI as the learned and developed ability to think constructively and act wisely. EI focuses on the effective handling of personal emotions and demonstrating understanding about the emotions of others.

Emotional labor: A construct that addresses how individuals express themselves in socially acceptable ways when confronted with stressful situations at work (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). According to Lee (2019), emotional labor requires displaying situation-appropriate feelings without expressing a person's true emotions, a process that can have

negative consequences for teachers. Those consequences can include stress, burnout, and negative interaction with students and colleagues, and can result in teacher attrition. EI mitigates the negative aspects of emotional labor by using several EI skills including comfort, self-awareness, constructive thinking, appropriate assertion, stress management, self-esteem, and anxiety and anger control management (Nelson et al., 2017). EI acknowledges the importance of feelings and teaches people to develop a process to deal with anger, fear, and sadness in ways that respect both self and others (Nelson et al., 2017).

Emotional learning: A growth process in which an individual gains an understanding of the positive contributions of the emotional system (Nelson et al., 2017), and the importance of managing and regulating emotions (Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014). Emotional learning involves the resolution of conflicts without emotional overreactions and outbursts (Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014).

Emotional learning system (ELS): A five-step systematic learning model that emphasizes emotional learning for developing wiser, more appropriate behavior (Nelson et al., 2017). The brain is a social organ (Cozolino, 2014), and the ELS represents an important brain development process that helps an individual understand ways of interacting with others, deal constructively with emotions, and respond effectively to difficult circumstances (Brownell, 2017).

Hidden curriculum: The informal and unwritten value systems, perspectives, and lessons that students experience within the school setting (Brownell, 2017). The aspects

learned through the hidden curriculum are not intended, but occur as a result of effective socialization.

Preservice teacher: An individual undergoing preservice training with the objective of becoming a teacher (Bedel, 2014). Preservice teachers focus on gaining adequate competencies in their career of interest.

Preservice teacher programs: A range of programs used in teacher education and training to prepare preservice teachers for their careers in education (Bedel, 2014). These programs include field experiences, coursework, and various assignments.

Self-awareness: The ability to alleviate stress and improve self-development by understanding a person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in everyday life (Gu et al., 2016). The development of EI focuses on how intentional, self-directed behavior requires reflective thinking (Nelson et al., 2017). Educators who are more self-aware may respond more effectively to difficult circumstances by incorporating EI (Brownell, 2017; Nelson et al., 2017).

Skills for Career and Life Effectiveness (SCALE): A positive assessment instrument used to measure 11 EI skills and three potential problem areas (Nelson et al., 2017). According to Hoerger et al. (2012), SCALE focuses on assessing interpersonal, intrapersonal, and career dimensions. The tool also examines personal wellness and challenging areas that may adversely affect the individual's ability to regulate emotions (Hoerger et al., 2012).

Social-emotional learning: A growth process wherein an individual obtains a deeper understanding of the management of emotions and establishes positive relations

with others (Dabke, 2016). Social-emotional learning emphasizes gaining critical social skills combined with the ability to regulate emotions.

Social learning: A growth process in which individuals learn through the observation and imitation of others through active socialization (Gilar-Corbí et al., 2018). Social learning allows individuals to obtain knowledge of skills from each other.

Teacher evaluation: Various assessment approaches used in determining whether new education professionals have developed the required competencies, skills, and knowledge to be effective teachers (Dabke, 2016). Teacher evaluation focuses on the skills and competencies of each person in the teaching profession.

Teacher preparation: A rigorous process used to equip individuals with the requisite competencies, skills, and knowledge for meeting the needs of learners (J.M. Allen & Innes, 2013). Teacher preparation introduces the preservice teachers to the realities governing the teaching profession.

Teacher self-efficacy: An innate self-belief that the teacher possesses the ability and skills to achieve specific goals. Teacher self-efficacy is a key determinant of the level of confidence and motivation that the individual demonstrates (Şahin, 2017).

Theory of emotional intelligence: A theoretical construct that includes several models providing different frameworks for understanding the various dimensions and approaches for explaining the construct (Neophytou, 2013). The theory serves as the basis of understanding how individuals can regulate and manage emotions.

Transformative emotional intelligence (TEI): is the learned and developed ability to understand and regulate personal emotions in a manner that leads to the transformation

of processes and culture (Neophytou, 2013). TEI has a significant impact on the individual from their unique perspective that helps the person undergo personally meaningful growth. According to Nelson et al. (2017), EI becomes transformational when it is practical and applied by an individual daily to improve their productivity, effectiveness, and life.

Significance of the Study

Teachers are often not formally prepared to deal with the emotions of children. An important pedagogical skill for highly qualified teachers is to help children adapt to life circumstances in healthy ways (Nelson et al., 2017). The hidden curriculum, according to Brownell (2017), includes socialization and mores taught through interactions and relationships. With the development of social-emotional learning models in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, there is no reason to leave the development of healthy emotions and socialization to the hidden curriculum (Nelson et al., 2015). In addition, teachers experience stressful situations daily in their dealings with peers, supervisors, and parents; a situation that over time leads to burnout and attrition of underprepared teachers (Farmer, 2020).

EI helps mitigate the stress of daily work and life by facilitating accurate self-knowledge and appreciation, a variety of healthy relationships, and the ability to work well with others (Nelson et al., 2017). Increasing teacher candidates' EI may increase their career satisfaction and longevity. Positive social change may result from increased understanding of teacher preparation based on social science exploration. Future teachers may benefit from new EI curricular objectives that can be developed based on increased

understanding of their teacher preparation experiences absent EI curriculum. In addition, administrators may benefit from a better understanding of gaps in the curriculum that, when filled, will benefit the students and college. As educators become more aware of and develop their own EI, they may be better prepared to facilitate the development of EI in their students. Finally, improving the teacher preparation curriculum at SSC may make the college more attractive to future students who are considering careers as professional teachers.

Research Questions

Although questions identify the researcher's purpose for understanding the perspectives of others in everyday situations, in qualitative research these questions also represent an ongoing process (Creswell, 2015). The purpose of the current study was to explore and understand the perceptions of final-year teacher candidates about their readiness to learn and teach as understood from a framework of nonintellective skills and abilities operationalized as EI. Five research questions were used to guide this study. The first research question focused on gathering descriptive statistics but did not include inferential analysis expected of quantitative studies (see Asadoorian & Kantarelis, 2009). The other four research questions were qualitative and focused on understanding the participants' perceptions related to the research phenomenon, which was the omission of EI content in the teacher preparation curriculum at SSC (see Creswell & Poth, 2018).

RQ1: What is the normed SCALE profile for final year teacher candidates at SSC?

RQ2: What are final-year teacher candidates' experiences with learning about EI in their teacher preparation programs?

RQ3: What are final year teacher candidates' perceptions of EI based on their experience

  with SCALE?

RQ4: What are final year teacher candidates' perceptions of their EI strengths and areas

  to develop based on their SCALE results?

RQ5: How do final year teacher candidates understand EI skills in terms of making them

  more or less ready to teach?

<div align="center">

Review of the Literature

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The purpose of the literature review is to inform the researcher of previous studies

on a topic to equip them with the necessary knowledge to analyze and synthesize research

in a way that is meaningful, sophisticated, and comprehensible in their study (Boote &

Beile, 2005). Researchers must become well versed in the literature of their topic for

quality, scholarly writing, and mastery of the topic. To achieve the level of topic

synthesis suggested by Boote and Beile (2005), I began my review of literature with the

theoretical and conceptual frameworks that guided my study, followed by a review of the

broader problem including preservice teacher preparation, EI, and EI assessment.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptual frameworks are important for grounding qualitative research.

Conceptual frameworks help researchers represent constructs for the exploration of

research to better understand behavior and trigger mechanisms within research

participants (Dabke, 2016). EI theory was chosen for my study because it was the topic

that needed to be investigated at my partnering institution. More specifically, TEI

(Nelson & Low, 2011) was chosen because I sought to clarify the role of EI in a higher

education teacher preparation program and TEI was developed within a college of education (Vela, 2004). The TEI framework provided the most relevant theory for my EI query into a higher education teacher preparation program. To enhance the conceptual framework for my study, I included appreciative inquiry because this concept has been a successful and effective methodological model for researchers who sought to understand education programs through the lens of EI (DeWitt & Hammett, 2015; Yoder, 2005). In this section, I present the tenets of TEI and AI as important elements of my conceptual framework, and then review recent education research, and alignment considerations of the framework relative to my study.

TEI

The construct of EI was first published by Salovey and Mayer in 1990. Mayer et al. (2003) referred to their approach as an ability-based model that was constructed from an intelligence-testing tradition. Given their emphasis on ability and intelligence testing, this model has also been referred to in the literature as an expert-based approach for defining and measuring EI (Epstein, 2012). Intelligence testing has been used to rank and categorize people, rather than transform them. The ability model of EI is often abbreviated EQ, and like the IQ model, implies that intelligence is somewhat fixed from an early age. The applications associated with an ability-based approach, therefore, would not be transformational in the sense that their associated assumptions are not concerned with transforming people in personally meaningful ways.

Epstein (2012) clarified different EI approaches by highlighting the differences between measuring people's intelligence about emotions and measuring people's abilities

to use their intelligence about emotions to create emotionally intelligent behavior. According to Epstein, "as intelligence refers to solving problems, emotionally intelligent behavior would be exhibited by having emotions that helped to solve problems in everyday living" (p. 111). An emphasis on the latter principle articulated by Epstein (2012, as cited in Nelson et al., 2015) is an important differentiating aspect of transformative approaches to EI.

To be transformative, Nelson et al. (2015) and Nelson et al. (2017) established the four transformative conditions of EI models as (a) research derived, (b) person centered, (c) skills based, and (d) relationship focused. The TEI approach of Nelson and Low is based on over 4 decades of research by the authors, their doctoral students, and others (Nelson et al., 2017). Because the approach was based on the same underlying principles and pool of over 1,300 original assessment items Nelson and Low created in the 1970s to assess healthy and effective being, using any of their family of positive assessment instruments combined with their transformative conditions constitutes a transformative approach (Nelson et al., 2015).

Integral to the approach to teaching and learning EI is a five-step learning model called the ELS (see Figure 1). The ELS's five steps include (a) explore, (b) identify, (c) understand, (d) learn, and (e) apply and model EI skills to achieve wise and effective behaviors for work and life (Nelson et al., 2004; Nelson et al., 2017). In the first step, participants explore their current levels of skill development and satisfaction using a positive self-assessment process. In the second step, participants develop self-awareness about their current strengths, as well as opportunities for growth. The third step integrates

active imagination to understand how life and work could look different if identified skills were learned and applied. Finally, in the apply-and-model step, participants experiment with what they have learned with the goal of achieving wiser, more appropriate, and more effective behavior. The five steps of the ELS provide a learning framework for developing EI skills in oneself and others (Nelson et al., 2017), and provided the framework for developing Research Questions 3-5 in this current study.

Figure 1

The Emotional Learning System
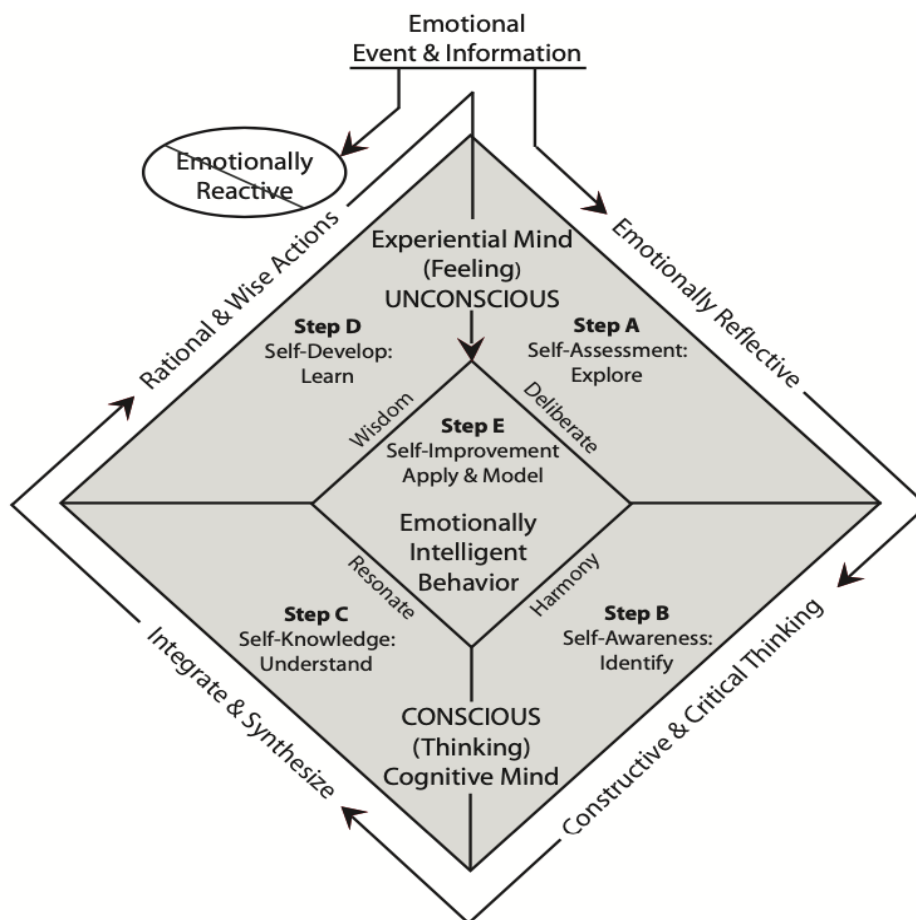
Note. From "Emotional Intelligence: Achieving Academic and Career Excellence," by D. B. Nelson and G. R. Low, 2011. Used with authors' permission.

Recent related research. There have been several studies in which EI was used as a learning and capability building model. Joseph et al. (2015) studied the relationship between EI and job performance. With a sample of 47, Joseph et al. used several measures and constructs of EI to assess its relative job performance strengths. The results indicated that several job performance constructs, including ability, conscientiousness, emotional stability, extraversion, general mental ability, self-efficacy, and self-rated

performance, were strongly related to EI. These variables also predicted learning ability, personality, and cognitive ability.

Taliadorou and Pashiardis (2015) conducted a study with and 182 principals and 910 teachers of public elementary schools to examine the relationship between EI, political skills, and the extent of teachers' job satisfaction. A survey instrument with multiple constructs was administered to the respondents, and the data were correlated for significant relationships. The findings indicated that the EI of school principals was related to applied leadership style and lead to the outcome of teachers' job satisfaction. Taliadorou and Pashiardis concluded that improving the EI levels of principals through a transformative approach had positive outcomes on teachers' job satisfaction, and this led to further improvement in teachers' abilities to teach and develop their students. The implications reported by Taliadorou and Pashiardis included that EI and the inclusion of EI in training must involve a top-down approach and involve all levels of the schools.

Wang et al. (2016) examined the relationship between EI, transformational leadership, and emotional competence in K–12 school leaders as a function of congruence between teachers and leaders. The study showed that for teachers for whom the self-assessment of leaders was aligned with that of the subordinates, the self-ratings of EI were significant, strong, and aligned with transformational leadership measures. Conversely, a lack of congruence between self-ratings implied an overestimation of the transformational leadership characteristic. The study showed that for leaders who agreed with the teachers' assessments of leaders' social and emotional competencies, there was an increase in the tendency to estimate EI correctly, which correlated with more positive

educational outcomes. The study is significant for school settings, in which teacher performance can be enhanced through an emphasis on authentically developing EI, and may be similarly significant for teacher preparation programs.

How TEI Informed the Current Study. The ELS five-step learning framework (see Nelson and Low, 2011) in conjunction was used to guide the development of my research questions. The first two research questions were concerned with understanding the EI normed profile and EI training experiences of preservice teachers during their last year of college studies. Obtaining a normed profile of a population is important when measuring latent human constructs, such as EI (American Educational Research Association et al., 2014; Nelson et al., 2004). In addition, obtaining the normed profile and introducing research participants to EI using a positive self-assessment instrument provided a common EI vocabulary to facilitate my interview of participants (see DeWitt & Hammett, 2015; Yoder, 2005). Finally, following an appreciative inquiry perspective, the remaining three research questions followed the first three steps of the ELS to explore, identify, and understand the role that EI could serve in a preservice teacher preparation program from the perspective of final-year teacher candidates.

Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative inquiry is a positive theoretical approach commonly used in organizational development and research. The tenets of appreciative inquiry include the constructionist principle, the simultaneity principle, and the poetic, anticipatory, and positivity principles (Grieten et al., 2018). Appreciative inquiry connotes a change management approach, the main purpose of which is to identify the most functional

aspects with emphasis on why the aspects register remarkable functionality. One of the critical aspects of appreciative inquiry is that an organization is likely to register growth in various directions (Royer & Latz, 2016). However, there must be a particular way of determining the direction of growth or interactions.

Each of the tenets of appreciative inquiry focus on an important direction. The constructionist principle of appreciative inquiry respects both the subjective and objective status that occurs as people engage in conversations (Lane et al., 2018). The simultaneity principle centers on establishing the manner of change creation in an organization. Under the constructionist principle, it is possible to create both reality and identity, and the concept of absolute truth does not exist. The poetic principle emphasizes the habits of seeing and the ability to focus on aspects that register growth. The simultaneity principle promotes inquiry and questioning concepts to develop deeper understanding. The anticipatory principle centers on creating a better future through the development of a vision. The positive principle brings together positive emotions that foster the development and establishment of a better future. These tenets were relevant to my study because like appreciative inquiry, a tenet of applied TEI is that EI has no meaning except through the subjective experiences of individuals (see Nelson & Low, 2011). Another tenet shared between the two frameworks is that growth derives from experiences within carrying relationships. Table 1 presents the tenets of appreciative inquiry and TEI to show how they are complimentary.

Table 1

The Complementary Nature of Appreciative Inquiry and TEI

The Appreciative Inquiry principles	Related TEI principles
Growth derives from identifying high functionality.	Exploration with positive assessment.
Constructivist subjectivity.	Person-centered approach.
Simultaneity.	Research derived and skills based.
Anticipatory.	Relationship focused and applied to encourage personally meaningful change.

Note. TEI principles adapted from "Transformative Emotional Intelligence: Achieving Leadership and Performance Excellence" by G. R. Low and R. D. Hammett, with D. B. Nelson 2019.

Appreciative Inquiry in Research and Education. EI enhances academic success in higher education settings (Buzdar et al., 2016; Ebrahimi et al., 2018; Nelson et al., 2017). Like EI, using appreciative inquiry in academic environments is an approach that may bring forth positive personal change that creates positive professional change among colleagues and teams (Hollywood et al., 2016). This also holds true for students. According to Lane et al. (2018), including appreciative inquiry in the investigation of student experiences helps research consumers better understand the AI process itself. Moreover, J.M. Allen and Innes (2013) explain how AI has both generated scholarship and resulted in many recommendations for future research.

How Appreciative Inquiry Informed the Current Study. Appreciative inquiry serves as a remarkable framework that governs transformative learning and enhances life coaching. Appreciative inquiry has been shown to facilitate adult transformation and learning that enhances the relationship between the coach and client (Radford & Bodiford, 2018). The principles of appreciative inquiry undergo integration into the life-coaching practice, making it easier to understand the entire process of life coaching. Appreciative inquiry also enhances the understanding of the favorable conditions of the coaching practice with the purpose of registering specific outcomes (Bergmark & Kostenius, 2018). In the case of TEI, the principles of appreciative inquiry helped guide the interview questions that governed the positive learning framework. The five principles of appreciative inquiry also informed the concepts of EI and its significance among teachers (see McIntosh et al., 2013). Finally, appreciative inquiry informed my thematic analysis of interview transcripts during the data analysis phase of my study.

Review of the Broader Problem

To gain insight into the current literature on preservice teachers through the lens of EI, I read several books on the construct of EI, and conducted literature searches using several online databases provided by the Walden University Library. The databases used were Google Scholar, Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), and Sage Journals. I ran most of the searches through Walden Library and Google Scholar. The search terms used were *Emotional Intelligence, Transformative Emotional Intelligence, Emotional Intelligence and Preservice Teachers, Preservice Teacher Programs, History of Emotional Intelligence, RULERS and Social Emotional Learning, Teacher*

Preparation Programs, Emotional Intelligence Assessment Tools and Emotional Quotient, Teacher Efficacy, and Theory of Emotional Intelligence. I read many peer-reviewed journal articles and books on EI and identified a troubling pattern; that including EI in preservice teaching programs is uncommon despite research-derived and best practice recommendations for doing so. I organized my literature around three related topics of (a) EI in preservice teacher preparation, (b) EI, and (c) EI assessment.

Emotional Intelligence in Preservice Teacher Preparation

Studies have acclaimed the benefits of EI training for preservice teachers. According to Chesnut and Cullen (2014), courses in preservice training should be designed to include EI skills and topics related to managing expectations. The researchers emphasized that the availability of such trainings enabled preservice teachers to manage personal and environmental expectations, thus improving teacher satisfaction. When teachers become aware of their EI early on in their preparation courses, their ability to balance the pressures of teaching and unexpected challenges in and out of the classroom, as it pertains to education, increases (Rey et al., 2016). An emotionally intelligent teacher may remain an educator longer because they are more prepared for the mental and emotional stresses that come with the profession.

Educators of varying content areas can benefit from documenting EI skills. Waajid et al.'s (2013) school of music study revealed the use of an EI checklist to assist in developing preservice trainees' skills in EI. The checklist included social skills, self-control, emotional stability, and relationship management. Based on their findings, the researchers recommended that the checklist p be used to help develop teachers who are

more emotionally aware and suggested the checklist process be adopted by preservice

teacher preparation institutions. Using a checklist gave teachers new to EI a heightened

awareness of both cognitive and emotional skills, how the skills are used, and when they

are needed. As teachers become more emotionally intelligent, the checklist can be

replaced by mindfulness, which can transform teachers' thinking and emotional reactions

to more healthy emotional reflections. Through this scaffolding process, the checklist is

used to introduce e, build, and then help maintain EI skills.

In the United States, much recent focus has been on the development of cognitive

components of teaching, yet the teacher certification does not include certification of EI

of teachers graduating from their preparation programs (Yeigh et al., 2016). Koçoğlu

(2011) indicated that the EI competency of teachers is of little concern in many

preservice teacher preparation programs and in most schools. EI and cognitive

intelligence are not mutually exclusive constructs and an emphasis in both are required to

achieve balanced pre-school training programs (Buuml & Erbay, 2013). Clearly,

researchers have begun to create awareness about the important role that EI plays in

improving teaching efficacy and effectiveness (Adeyemo & Chukwudi, 2014). Yet, for

most schools in America, cognitive intelligence remains the exclusive domain for most

teacher certification programs, even though cognitive intelligence alone cannot guarantee

teaching effectiveness and has done little to improve overall student success. It is

therefore necessary that EI be incorporated in training programs in schools.

EI has been shown as integral to teachers' academic success in their own teacher

preparation programs. Yildizbas (2017) conducted a study in a pedagogical teacher

education program to explore the relationship between the EI level of teachers, their leadership styles, and their own academic success. Determined was that increased EI improved the teachers' leadership styles and lead to improved performance and success. The researcher recommended that preservice education programs include EI training because it helps develop personality traits of teachers in desirable ways making them role models for students while improving their professional competency (Yildizbas, 2017). This research seems to corroborate the ways of teaching and learning EI enumerated by Nelson and Low (2011). When teachers model EI skills and act as guiding mentors to their students, the important skills are reinforced for both.

Preservice teachers with high levels of EI may pose higher levels of self-confidence while teaching. High self-esteem levels can be useful when evaluating positive and negative events more objectively when they occur within a classroom (Șahin, 2017). A teacher who is emotionally intelligent can therefore build an effective and higher quality student-teacher interpersonal relationship thereby increasing engagement (Brackett et al., 2011). Because TEI is relationship focused (Low et al., 2019), it would provide the needed framework to encourage such interpersonal relationships. Interestingly, Pugh (2008) purported that teaching with EI makes teaching less tiresome, improves the standards of teaching, and brings with it a great job satisfaction. Teaching with emotional awareness creates an enabling environment where teachers can motivate students and thus improve teaching productivity (Hall & West, 2011). Positive, emotionally safe, and respectful environments where the learner is

empowered to take risks, fail, and learn is a condition that all of us would hope for our schools.

Even short training programs in topics of EI have shown positive results. Joshith (2012) developed an EI training process and applied it to a sample of teachers and students. The training involved topics in emotional awareness, self-motivation, emotional management, and relationship management. The study findings indicated that emotional awareness improved student and teacher innate potential understanding and problem tackling techniques. In a previous similar study, EI helped the teachers and students express emotions freely and openly, hence improving their EI and relationships (Evelein et al., 2008). When teachers and students, parents and children, and co-workers and supervisors gain competence in communicating feelings in constructive ways, it seems that schools, families, and workplaces can become more goal focused and balanced. The importance of maintaining rigor and relevance in education needs to co-exist with the importance of retaining emotionally intelligent relationships, with all stakeholders, to successfully prepare students for the future.

One aspect of EI refers to the learned ability to distinguish and comprehend emotions in others and in oneself, the learned ability to accurately express emotions and synchronize them with self-thoughts (feelings), and the learned ability to regulate emotions both in others and in oneself (Buuml & Erbay, 2013). Research has indicated that individuals possessing emotionally intelligent skills are better motivational speakers and perform best in a team (Evelein et al., 2008).

Jaleel and Verghis (2017) conducted a study to explore the relationship between EI and aggression among pre-school teacher trainees at the secondary level. The findings showed that the percentage of teachers who have high EI levels expressed low aggression while those with low EI had more than average levels of aggression. The study recommended that schools should be graduating teachers with high levels of EI. This research compliments the findings of multiple studies using the Emotional Skills Assessment Process, a positive EI assessment published by EI Learning Systems (Nelson et al., 1998) wherein the problematic measures of aggression, deference, and change orientation were significantly inversely related to the 10 EI skills measured by the instrument (Cox & Nelson, 2008; Hammett et al., 2012; Nelson et al., 2004).

Recently Yildizbas (2017) found that students who were emotionally intelligent had higher success rates in school and were more often found in positions of leadership. Furthermore, McGinnis (2018) determined that EI mitigated bad moods and created a positive spirit hence improving student-teacher relationships. From a teaching perspective, positive attitudes by teachers are associated with teaching effectiveness and improved student performance (Soibamcha & Pandey, 2016). A study conducted by Wahyuddin (2016) determined that teachers with skills in EI possessed higher self-efficacy. The study found that improving teacher's EI lends itself to improved teaching efficacy, which led to better student performance and success (Wahyuddin, 2016). Clearly, high levels of EI skills seem to engender better performance in teachers and students. Teachers who are emotionally aware can help students develop their EI. They can achieve this result by highlighting the value of positive individual character

difference thus emphasizing the importance of teamwork (Sahin Baltaci & Demir, 2012).

Yildizbas (2017) agreed, asserting that EI assisted students in the development of their

communication skills, helped students understand the importance of taking up

responsibilities, and improved their attitudes toward learning.

A study with Australian elementary and high schools reported how preservice

teachers used a reflective process to understand and use their emotional experiences in

class (Joshith, 2012). It was determined that the use of feedback by teachers in training

was fundamental in their development professionally because it boosted their pedagogical

confidence and emotional competence. The author noted that pre-school teachers can use

feedback from students and self-reflections during their lesson preparations, which helps

in achieving authenticity in teaching. Therefore, the research recommended that

preparation of pre-school teachers should adopt an effective-reflective skills training to

provide the teachers with emotional literacy (Joshith, 2012).

According to Hen and Sharabi-Nov (2014), there is a need for the training of

preservice teachers to include EI. The study conducted by these authors revealed that

training preservice teachers on EI could register positive outcomes. Dolev and Leshem

(2017) also emphasized the need for EI development programs for preservice teachers. EI

development programs have the potential to register a positive impact on the

competencies of teachers and their effectiveness in the classroom. Integrating EI

programs in preservice training courses is likely to register positive outcomes in

enhancing the efficacy of teachers. The preponderance of these studies has demonstrated

the need for preservice teachers to experience specific programs that empower them to

develop higher levels of EI. According to many, it is possible to teach EI in higher education programs, precisely where the majority of teacher preparation programs exist (Gilar-Corbí et al., 2018; Nelson et al., 2017).

Specifically, training colleges for preservice teachers should develop remarkable programs that seek to increase EI capabilities among preservice teachers. DeWitt and Hammett (2015) emphasized that preservice teachers need effective training on EI. The study revealed that teaching colleges could adopt various strategies for promoting EI among preservice teachers with the core objective of increasing their confidence, self-esteem, and efficacy in the classroom. Thus, introducing EI programs in colleges that prepare preservice teachers is likely to register positive outcomes. Notably, the researchers reviewed so far agree that introducing EI programs has the potential to foster a better attitude among preservice teachers and prepare them for the challenges they are likely to face in the classroom setting.

Positive teaching attitude and EI are interconnected constructs (Dewaele, 2018). The teacher's attitude lays a foundation for emotional and intellectual skills and abilities that are reflected in the students' social learning experience (Ezzi, 2019). The more confident a teacher is about their EI, the more a student is likely to emulate the behavior witnessed in the classroom. Nelson et al. (2017) would agree, teaching through modeling is another form of teaching EI. Therefore, the preparation of teachers should include EI as a key contribution to prolonged educator success.

The faculty in the SSC College of Education expect their teacher candidates to not only master their content area but also to incorporate and demonstrate a readiness to

effectively manage a classroom; an expectation that is necessary for giving students the opportunity to learn in a safe, comfortable, and organized environment (SSC Faculty Member, personal communication, January 30, 2020). These SSC expectations were confirmed by Nathanson et al. (2016) who operationalized the sentiment using SEL terminology. The researcher admonished that a classroom teacher must be aware of the content they teach, the methods how they teach, and the social emotional engagement of students as they learn (Nathanson et al., 2016).

Teachers with EI not only increase the students' social emotional skills but also enhance the psycho-social process of learning. Teachers need to be aware that learning is a socially interactive process where an individual first learns independently. The learning is then enhanced by observing and modeling others (Fani & Ghaemi, 2011; Punia et al., 2015). Students who see emotionally intelligent adults in schools are more likely to observe EI skills and model them. A disturbing finding is that, despite the preponderance of research evidence that lauds the inclusion of EI content for preservice teacher preparation programs, there was an obvious absence of EI content in most preservice teacher preparation programs with very few opportunities to study EI (Shahinzadeh & Ahmadi, 2015).

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) promotes capabilities that empower an individual to express and regulate personal emotions and successfully assess and understand the emotions of others. People with EI exhibit outstanding abilities in their perception of their own emotions, the synthesis of emotions, and a measure of self-control that determines

how they express their emotions (Neophytou, 2013). EI brings into context both social and emotional abilities that help individuals to express themselves and comprehend others more accurately and empathically.

According to Nelson et al. (2007), EI theories had gained popularity over the years. Many scholars have explored EI as a transformative theory that can promote positive personal changes. These authors provided a detailed description of how EI has become a remarkable theory used in promoting positive behaviors. There are various instruments used in the assessment of EI with the purpose of helping individuals to develop a significant mastery of their social and emotional capabilities. Scholars have embarked on demonstrating how EI is a transformative theory that can foster positive outcomes in the workplace (Punia et al., 2015). The four decades of related research by Nelson, Low, and others has emphasized EI in promoting the efficacy, effectiveness, and the resiliency of teachers.

Nelson et al. (2015) presented a research-derived framework of EI and discussed the importance of EI in meaningful learning and coaching. They also presented some studies affirming the value of EI to both a learner's achievements and effective education. Moreover, they discussed the importance of EI for transformative learning. The authors made the case for the inclusion of a skills-based approach to EI in 21st-century education curricula. Extending this finding to non-teaching environments, a more recent study conducted by Low et al. (2019) reported that the EI skills were also negatively related to the non-leadership styles of laissez faire and management by exception, and the skills were positively related to more authentic ways of leading, like the four measures of

transformational leadership. In the same study, the problematic indicators of aggression, deference, and change orientation were positively correlated with the non-leadership styles and negatively correlated with transformational leadership. Nelson et al. (2017) also stressed the importance of reflection over reaction for developing EI skills and modeling competencies.

The role of EI among preservice teachers has emerged as a critical aspect in the 21st century. Particularly, teachers with remarkable levels of EI are likely to demonstrate self-awareness and a proper mastery of how to regulate their emotions (Nathanson et al., 2016). EI empowers preservice teachers to understand the issues of their students, especially the ones who display behaviors that are disruptive or counterproductive in the classroom. With high EI, preservice teachers are more likely to exhibit higher levels of teacher self-efficacy. The influence on teacher self-efficacy is related to preservice teachers' perceptions that EI facilitates teaching confidence and performance (Onen & Ulusoy, 2015). This research provides evidence that preservice teacher programs would benefit from having EI courses embedded in the teaching certification programs.

EI leads to positive attributes among preservice teachers that lead to effective learning (Onen & Ulusoy, 2015). Emotionally intelligent teachers are in a better position to understand the emotional needs of students and to motivate them accordingly. Without EI, preservice teachers are likely to exhibit significant challenges in classroom management and successfully promoting effective learning. Emotionally intelligent preservice teachers experience higher levels of job satisfaction and are confident in their efforts to register positive teaching outcomes (Valente et al., 2018). The most important

aspect of EI in teaching is that it empowers teachers to develop an empowering environment that enables them to promote successful learning. Specifically, emotionally intelligent preservice teachers understand the needs of students and their radically distinctive learning styles (Colomeischi, 2015). As a result, EI helps preservice teachers to be prepared to overcome some of the common challenges that come with the teaching profession and school environment.

Nathanson et al. (2016) sought to determine whether it is possible to create emotionally intelligent school environments in terms of learning organizations. The main reason for this approach was to establish the most important aspects in helping teachers to manifest high levels of EI and have a positive impact on students. The research demonstrated that school-based interventions can register positive outcomes in enhancing the EI of teachers. Clearly, there is a need for school-based interventions that help teachers develop their nonintellective skills and abilities.

Emotional Intelligence Assessments

Multiple researchers have developed assessment tools for measuring EI (Basu & Mermillod, 2011). The Emotional and Social Competence Inventory (ESCI) developed by Goleman and Boyatzis (2017) has gained popularity as a tool for the assessment of EI among leaders and professionals. Jan and Anwar (2019) used the ESCI to investigate the EI of teachers in relation to gender and performance. The study aimed to determine whether EI dimensions can be included in pre- and in-service training programs. The level of EI was evaluated based on emotional self-awareness, conflict management, positive outlook, empathy, coaching and mentoring, and inspirational leadership. An

independent samples *t* test was used to examine the difference in EI and teachers' performance based on gender. The results indicated that female teachers are less job affiliated as compared to male teachers. Additionally, it was concluded that male teachers were emotionally intelligent relative to their female counterparts. Studies of gender differences in EI and education are important because it is estimated that there are 3,827,100 teachers in the United States with 77% being self-identified as female (Taie & Goldring, 2018). For these reasons, the author recommended that in-service and preservice teachers training programs should include EI dimensions in their curriculum.

Moreover, Bedel (2014) conducted a study to examine the social-emotional intelligence (SEI) of preservice teachers according to their gender and major. The author gathered and analyzed data from the faculty of education students in preschool teachers, secondary school biology teachers, and mathematics teachers. Clusters of an emotional and social competence inventory (self-awareness, social awareness, social skills, and self-management) were used in the conceptualization of the SEI construct. The findings of this work indicated that preschool preservice teachers had a lower SEI score as compared to both mathematics and biology preservice teachers. With a larger percentage of preservice teachers entering the education field to teach lower level grades, this literature is pertinent to the study because teachers' EI is related to child development and personality (Ulug et al., 2011). Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that pre-school preservice teachers with knowledge of EI using the ELS five-step learning model could learn to apply the five steps of explore, identify, understand, and learn, to model these EI skills to the younger children (Nelson et al., 2004, 2017).

Other researchers have reported the use of the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) for determining the levels of EI among various individuals (DeWitt & Hammett, 2015). The MSCEIT is comprised of different subtests and has demonstrated reliability to determine EI in leaders and others (Sánchez-Álvarez et al., 2020). The test measures the different components of EI as defined by Mayer and Salovey's model. Gilar-Corbí et al. (2018) conducted a quasi-experimental study with the objective of determining the efficacy of EI training intervention among teacher trainees. The authors used the MSCEIT to measure the teacher trainee's EI. The intervention included eight group sessions within a regular course of instruction for the purpose of increasing students' EI. A multi-level analysis was used to ascertain the effectiveness of the intervention and the MSCEIT questionnaire was administered in the learning sessions. The findings were that there was a significant increase in EI of the trainee teachers in the experimental group compared with the control group, based on the expert definition of EI used by Mayer et al. (2003).

There is a relationship between cognition and emotion in the processes of thinking and decision making among teachers. Enhanced self-awareness among teachers through EI improved their relationships with learners and promoted more effective teaching (Dolev & Leshem, 2016). The EI of teachers is essential for the development of healthy student relationships. Human beings rely on rational and experimental systems for information analysis (Epstein, 2012). Therefore, if a student, especially one in pre-school or lower grades, experiences a confrontation with a teacher with negative emotions such as anger and disappointment, the student can develop a psychological fear of teachers,

and also perceive them as having low EI. Teachers of young children in the early years of

their emotional and educational experiences can apply and model the ELS to approaches

of instruction that nurture the social emotional needs and development of the student.

Following these concepts, the continuous provision of a conducive environment for

learning by the teacher through improved EI evoke positive emotions for the learner in

early school grades and consequently promotes their eagerness to learn.

Another assessment to measure EI is the Skills for Career and Life Effectiveness

(SCALE; Nelson & Low, 2011) and has emerged as a tool used for measuring the five

dimensions of EI (as cited in Schutte et al., 2009). Specifically, the five dimensions of

SCALE include the (a) interpersonal dimension, (b) interpersonal, (c) career-life

effectiveness, (d) personal wellness, and (e) problematic behavioral patterns. The

Emotional Skills Assessment Process (ESAP) is an assessment model for determining the

levels of EI among college students (Yi Yi & Andrew, 2007). The ESAP focuses on all

the components of EI such as interpersonal skills, intrapersonal skills, self-management

skills, and personal leadership.

Yet another assessment created by Bar-On (1997) assesses non-cognitive

capabilities that are responsible for empowering individuals to develop coping

mechanisms in different situations (Meyer & Fletcher, 2007). The Bar-on EQ-I and the

EQ-I 2.0 is one of the most widely used assessment tools of EI. It is comprised of 133

items of performance in developing a better understanding of EI broken down into five

meta-factors that determine how well an individual understands and expresses oneself

(Bar-On, 2006). This method has been criticized due to the incorporation of attributes

that are not necessarily emotional which differs from Seymour Epstein's (2012) cognitive-experiential self-theory (CEST). CEST is a psychodynamic personality theory developed by Epstein (2012). According to this theory, human beings operate through the interplay of the predominantly conscious, verbal, and rational information processing system, as well as the predominantly preconscious, automatic, and experimental systems (Epstein, 2012). The conscious system is deliberate, slow, and logical, while the intuitive system is fast, automatic, and driven by experience. Nonetheless, despite the two systems operating under different rules, they interact frequently to produce behaviors and conscious thought.

CEST measured and applied using the Constructive Thinking Inventory CTI (Curtis et al., 2017). This instrument is based on the concept that people operate primarily within intuitive-experiential and automatic system reserving the rational-analytical mind energies for more taxing tasks. Whereas the rational-analytical mind can be measured with the use of IQ tests, the intelligence accrued by the intuitive-experiential mind, which is also associated with EI, can in turn be measured using the CTI (Cerni, 2015). Within the constructive thinking paradigm, the experimental system is employed to solving problems encountered in adaptive ways that minimize stress (Cerni, 2015). Viewed through this lens, individuals with high EI are more constructive thinkers. A teacher with a high EI can perceive new situations as challenges and actively seek solutions, rather than viewing them as threats. Where other assessment tools or instruments are used to measure EI, CTI measures the thinking needed for EI (Cox & Nelson, 2008).

Each of these assessment processes measures a nuanced version of what EI is, even though they all have reported evidence of reliability and validity associated with them. The differences manifest because the developers of the tools each had a unique understanding of the most important aspects that should be examined using assessment, and those understandings were based on their own definitions of EI (McEnrue & Groves, 2006). Each of the tools focuses on the most important aspect among all the five components of EI from the authors' unique perspectives (Petrides et al., 2016). The result is that different assessments have emerged for different purposes and for different audiences.

An objective of TEI is to explore emotional skills so that meaningful conversations can take place about how to develop EI in individuals and within institutional programs (Nelson et al., 2017). The SCALE and ESAP are assessment instruments that derived from the same TEI theory and definitions of EI, so both were considered as candidates for use in my study. The SCALE is comprised of 98 items. As compared to the 213-items of the ESAP, and it was determined that the shorter instrument would be better received by busy professionals. It is used primarily in business settings and generates feedback (i.e., an EI profile) that the individual can use in self-directed coaching, active imagination, and guided mentoring for EI skills development (Fiori et al., 2014). For this reason, the tool can be useful for individuals seeking improvement in career performance and development.

While historically used with students in higher education, the education version of the ESAP has also demonstrated utility for employees in business settings (Śmieja et al.,

2014). Onen and Ulusoy's (2015) work and several other studies have given insight on the importance and effects of EI on the self-esteem of preservice teachers using EI tools such as MSCEIT and ESCI. However, no study has been done to ascertain EI of preservice teachers nearing graduation using the SCALE instrument. Because SCALE is based on a transformative approach to EI, and measures skills that are important to teacher success (i.e., interpersonal skills, career-life effectiveness, problematic behavioral patterns, intrapersonal skills, and personal wellness), preservice teachers could benefit from experiencing exposure to this particular model. Because teachers' EI is related to child development and personality (Ulug et al., 2011) there is need to ascertain whether the extent to which preservice teachers have had the opportunity to develop EI before employment in public schools.

When comparing the content and construct validity of ESAP and SCALE, both instruments have demonstrated evidence of validity and reliability for measuring a skills-based approach for conceptualizing EI. Because SCALE is the shorter of the two instruments and more appropriate for use with busy professionals (Low et al., 2019), I chose this instrument for use in my study. The TEI model and ELS are appropriate for this study because they emphasize learning from emotional experiences in ways that enhance future life efficacy and satisfaction (Epstein, 2012; Nelson et al., 2017).

Emotional Intelligence and Teachers

Thus far evidence has been presented that demonstrates the importance of EI, teacher job satisfaction, and efficiency that teachers register in their daily practice. EI empowers teachers to foster successful relationships with students and their colleagues

(Dolev & Leshem, 2017). Through both social and self-awareness, teachers who model EI establish a learning environment of trust and empathy where students feel more open to communicate (Williams, 2020).

Scholars have associated EI with the performance of teachers in various schools. Specifically, teachers who have high ratings in EI demonstrate a critical understanding of all the stakeholders involved in the school system. Moreover, they can exhibit self-awareness, which is a defining aspect of fostering success. Adduced is that EI registers high levels of teacher effectiveness and remarkable levels of performance in the classroom (Miyagamwala, 2015). EI promotes the establishment of outstanding relationships with other teachers, parents, and students; factors that facilitate better teacher performance (Corcoran & Tormey, 2013). With EI, teachers can better understand the needs of students as well as the concerns of parents. In summary, the studies have demonstrated that emotional intelligence is a key driver in the achievement of exemplary performance among teachers.

Students' success is a key determinant of the effectiveness of teachers. For this reason, various studies have explored how EI among teachers can register better student achievement. Self-Awareness and Social awareness of teachers can also be a determinant of student achievement and increased motivation. This link to student motivation has been confirmed by more recent research (Alam & Ahmad, 2018; Asrar-ul-Haq et al., 2017). Schools that introduced emotional training for teachers registered better outcomes as measured by student performance (Alam & Ahmad, 2018; Asrar-ul-Haq et al., 2017).

Consequently, participating schools have been registering higher rates of student success because of the increased levels of EI among teachers.

There is evidence that leaders rely on their EI skills to establish effective relationships with their followers (Miyagamwala, 2015). In the teaching context, teachers must exhibit EI skills that will foster better relationships with students and parents. Teachers are leaders of their classrooms. It is their responsibility to foster task completion within the classroom while inspiring and motivating students. With EI, these roles become easier for the teacher.

Effective teachers can demonstrate empathy towards learners, their colleagues, and parents (Goroshit & Hen, 2014). Empathy explains why teachers can demonstrate concern and care towards the needs of students. Empathy fosters a positive environment that enhances the security of students. Empathic teachers are in a position to understand the perspectives of students and create a favorable environment for establishing relationships based on trust (Goroshit & Hen, 2014). Such relationships allow the students to express their concerns and share their views with teachers. EI has the potential to equip teachers with the knowledge they need in establishing a deeper understanding of student needs that facilitates engagement and learning (Dolev & Leshem, 2017). According to Goroshit and Hen (2014), empathy helps teachers to meet the expectations of students through the development of effective teaching approaches based on the unique learning needs of the students.

EI is a key determinant in the development of important interpersonal relationships. EI can empower teachers to establish approaches to nurturing academic-

social relationships with the needs of students as a priority (Poulou, 2016). There must be successful relationships between teachers and their students so that there is a positive environment for learning. In many instances, barriers make it difficult for teachers to foster seamless relationships with students. Many teachers recognize the need for investing in the development of a successful relationship with their students but may not have a good model for doing so. Transformative EI provides a model that can help teachers better position themselves to demonstrate how successful teacher and student relationships can influence the learning process in positive ways. Some people may be skeptical of the construct of EI and caution against its inclusion in education for its negative potential for manipulating the emotions of others. I found no such reason for caution in my review of literature; however, and I suspect that such devious applications would be quickly unearthed by informed constituents.

Implications

A goal of the EdD doctoral project capstone is the creation of a context-based project that improves educational practice (Walden University, 2016). In response to RQ1, I anticipate producing a normed EI profile that reflects both strengths and opportunities for EI development among the final-year teacher candidates. The normed profile could serve as a needs assessment for final-year preservice teachers graduating from SCC. Combined with relevant themes from my thematic data analysis of interview transcripts, one direction for project development may be an EI-centric recommendation for new course offerings in SSC's preservice teacher program. Another possibility would be teacher training using a professional development protocol that could be implemented

in conjunction with the practicum phase of the degree or certificate program. Finally, if my findings are less substantive than I anticipate, then another project possibility would be a white paper sharing my findings but making less sweeping recommendations for change.

Summary

The doctoral project study consists of four main sections with a final project contained in Appendix A. The first part of Section 1 included the local problem pertaining to SSC's gap in practice of not including EI content in its teacher preparation program, as well as the rationale for studying the problem, definition of terms, and significance of the study. These elements were followed by my conceptual framework that combines TEI and AI, as well as my explanation of how the framework informed the development of my research questions for guiding the study. An exhaustive literature review then delved into the history of EI, EI assessment, and teacher preparation, with contemporary articles bridging the history and current problem. Section 1 concluded with implications for the development of projects based on findings.

Section 2 is devoted to the methodology of the study, including the qualitative design approach, participants of the study, my plans for data collection and analysis, limitations, and conclude with data analysis results. Section 3 presents the project proper beginning with an introduction, the rationale for project genre, a second review of literature based on the selected project genre, project description, project evaluation plan, and project implications. Finally, in Section 4, I present the project's strengths and limitations, recommendations for alternative approaches, my reflections on scholarship,

the project development process, and leadership and change, the importance of the work, and implications, applications, and directions for future research. Section 4 and the capstone proper ends with a strong take away message that captures the key essence of the study.

Section 2: The Methodology

This section includes a description of the research design and approach, including the rationale for using an EI assessment instrument, the participant selection and protection processes, the planned data collection protocol and analysis methods, limitations of the study, evidence of quality of the design approach, and plan for handling discrepant cases.

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

Systematic inquiry into natural phenomena is the basis of qualitative research methodology (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative descriptive studies are used to understand the nature of a research problem guided by conceptually aligned research questions. Baškarada (2014) explained how qualitative descriptive designs give the researcher an opportunity to interview participants in a real-world setting (e.g., college school of education) about their real-world experiences (e.g., a preservice teacher preparation course). Moreover, a descriptive study design in qualitative research adds knowledge about a contemporary issue or topic within the context of a group or organization (Caelli et al., 2003; Jiggins-Colorafi & Evans, 2016). Exploring final-year preservice teachers' readiness to teach through the lens of EI was a newly explored phenomenon that required more research and understanding (Shahinzadeh & Ahmadi, 2015).

The problem addressed in the current study was that a local preservice teacher preparation program did not include EI in the curriculum, and as a result final-year teacher candidates were entering their profession with EI deficits that, if eliminated,

would help their students and themselves develop in important ways. The purpose of this study was to explore and understand the perceptions of final-year teacher candidates about their readiness to learn and teach as understood from a framework of nonintellective skills and abilities operationalized as EI. The qualitative approach was appropriate because it provided a powerful inquiry into the everyday world and natural setting of the subject (see Kim et al., 2017), in this case preservice teachers and their teacher preparation experiences with EI. Qualitative research can go into greater depths of understanding of a studied human experience with the gathering of data through interviews, open-ended questions, recordings, transcription, and analysis of data to identify patterns, categories, and themes in participants' experiences.

Sometimes qualitative researchers add different kinds of information using alternative modes of inquiry because drawing from a naturalistic perspective and examining a phenomenon in its natural state may be insufficient to fully understand and explain the phenomenon of interest (Sandelowski, 2010; Serafini & Reid, 2019). In the current study, the addition of an EI self-assessment to describe and understand the EI of final-year teacher candidates and teacher candidates who completed their practicum provided additional granularity about the phenomenon and added a multi-modal aspect to the study that specifically addresses the EI profile normed for the final year preservice teacher participants. Furthermore, adding the SCALE assessment and profile interpretations helped me establish an appreciative inquiry rapport with participants and introduce a positive vocabulary for discussing EI during the semistructured interviews that were conducted (see DeWitt & Hammett, 2015; Yoder, 2005).

The purpose of quantitative research is to collect numerical data and subject those data to inferential statistical analyses to test hypotheses and answer research questions (Creswell, 2013). In much of the research on EI, quantitative research was the selected approach because of the various EI assessments that determine a person's or a group's level of EI. Most of the quantitative research done on EI included a large sample of participants in which EI variables were needed to answer the research problem. In my multimodal qualitative study, I had collected from a small group of teacher candidates without the identification of quantitative variables, which was an approach more suited to a qualitative design.

When choosing the design for this study, I considered many qualitative designs. Wredt (2020) used a descriptive phenomenological design, to explore the lived experience of individuals as it was happening. Because the participants in the current study were final-year teacher candidates who were not yet certified teachers, a phenomenological design was not appropriate. I explored the perceptions of EI as a teacher candidate and not the lived teaching experiences of EI.

Ethnographic qualitative research occurs when researchers observe and/or interact with subjects in a natural setting (Creswell, 2013). DiDonato Dillon (2020) used an ethnographic case study design to examine three school leaders using a similar method of social emotional learning implementation and their interactions with community through norms, values, and beliefs. I am interested in comparing, observing, or interacting with participants in their natural environment to understand the phenomenon. Therefore, the ethnographic design was not appropriate for my study.

Multimodal qualitative design was selected over the basic qualitative design because of the addition of the SCALE assessment. The SCALE was used to understand the EI of first-year teachers and to introduce EI vocabulary that could be used during the interviews. The multimodal design allowed for the inclusion of the SCALE instrument and non-verbal data to augment the verbal data through interviews (see Sommer, 2021).

Criteria for Selecting Participants

The population for my study consisted of SSC teacher candidates in their final year of study at the SSC College of Education. Researchers conducting qualitative research often use purposeful sampling because this protocol allows the researcher to select participants who meet specific participation criteria (Palinkas et al., 2015). I used a purposeful sampling protocol to recruit participants. The purposeful sample, which was heterogeneous with maximum variation among gender and age (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016), included SCC teacher candidates in their final year of study. Maximum variation of gender and age was operationalized as the stratification of the selected sample based on gender and age.

During the 2021–2022 school year, there were 100 students enrolled in the SSC's teacher education program (SSC Assistant Director of Education, personal communication, January 31, 2022). Creswell (2013) indicated a sample size of four to 10 participants is often employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the topic for a qualitative study. My multimodal design incorporated an assessment instrument with an adequate number of participants ($N = 20$) to address the norming of the instrument (RQ1) for this group. According to Nelson and Low (2011), positive assessment instruments

should be normed when used with new groups. Two reasons for including the instrument were (a) using it as an intermediate vehicle for selecting interview participants and (b) establishing rapport and common EI vocabulary to use in the follow-up interviews. From the qualified participants who completed the assessment, I recruited a purposeful sample of 10 participants for the interview portion of my study (see Walker Taylor, 2012). The participants were preservice teacher candidates attending SSC.

After I obtained permission from SSC College and Walden University's Institutional Review Board, (IRB), 09-06-22-0548253, the SCC gatekeeper (SSC college interim program director and field coordinator of the education department) emailed a letter of introduction to potential participants who were in their last year of teacher preparation within the college (see Appendix F). The introduction email instructed interested students to contact me using my Walden University email account. Once contacted, I sent an invitation email to interested participants with the informed consent form, my personal contact information, and an offer to answer any additional questions. If I did not hear back from an interested participant after 1 week, I provided one reminder email asking them to review the informed consent. Within each email, there was a request to print, sign, and return the consent form by scanned email attachment or U.S. Postal Service. If a willing participant indicated an inability to print and return the form, my plan was to offer to assist with that process by meeting them in person at the office of the director of education at SSC. None of the participants required my help with the informed consent form.

Once the informed consent was received, I sent a personal email invitation with the instructions and credentials to complete the online SCALE assessment. Anyone who had provided informed consent but did not complete the SCALE assessment was sent a 1-week and if necessary, a 2-week email reminder (see Appendix H). If after two reminders the interested participant had not completed their online SCALE, I removed them from the sampling frame for participating in the qualitative interviews. The goal was to have a sample large enough for saturation and to produce enough insight into the investigation without the generalization often sought in quantitative studies (Baškarada, 2014). This approach also led to more opportunity to have direct contact with and easier access to participants.

Procedures for Gaining Access to the College

I received verbal permission from the director of education at SSC to conduct the study after the college's IRB approval (SSC Director of School of Education, personal communication, January 30, 2021), as well as email permission from the education program's interim program director (see Appendix B). Once I received approval from my Walden University capstone committee, I completed my Walden University IRB application. After the Walden University IRB approved my application, I began collecting data.

Researcher-Participant Relationship

When establishing a researcher–participant working relationship, there must be clear communication with a clear understanding of how the participant will benefit from participating (Yin, 2014). In the current study, participants benefitted by providing their

perceptions of preservice teacher preparation through the lens of EI. Participants also benefited by learning about their EI as they began their teaching career. Because the literature highlighted a gap in research on EI in preservice teacher programs for K–12 professional learning, the participants in the current study engaged in conversations that may engender positive change in future preservice teacher preparation programs by incorporating EI into the curriculum.

Creswell (2013) advised that participants should be invited to review transcripts of the interviews using the member-checking process. This process maintains the importance of the working relationship and encourages open communication between participants and researchers while establishing expectations and integrity of participants. For these reasons, member-checking was used in the current study.

Protection of Participants

It is the ethical duty of the researcher to ensure consent, privacy, and equitable participant selection as part of the research process (Yin, 2014). Protecting participants from harm is a process that started with my completing the National Institutes of Health online course, Protecting Human Research Participants. The process continued with the supervision of the development of my research proposal, IRB applications and approvals at Walden University and SSC, and the safe-keeping of data. Participant confidentiality was protected by using a coding index to remove participant names from transcripts. The first participant I interviewed was coded as P1, the second as P2, and so on until all participants were interviewed. I used their codes in my data analysis and reporting to ensure confidentiality. Participants' rights were explained through the informed consent

process, including the right to withdraw from the research at any time without fear of reprisal.

Participant responses to the online SCALE were contained on the secure server's database and were available only to me and the participant. After the SCALE assessment was completed, each participant had access to their SCALE profile which was protected by their secure login on the DoScale.com website. One of the features of online SCALE is the generation of a normed (average) profile for any cohort or group who has completed the assessment. The online system uses de-identified data to create the normed profile. Once the SCALE assessments were complete, I downloaded the normed profile for the final-year teacher candidates for inclusion in my data analysis results section.

The partnering college asked that all interviews be conducted in an unused classroom so that the interviews would be convenient and comfortable for the final-year teacher candidates (SSC Interim Program Director and Field Coordinator of the Education Department, personal communication, May 23, 2022). I conducted the interviews in a corner of the unused classroom furthermost from the door and I taped a piece of paper over the window of the classroom door for privacy. I also posted a sign on the door indicating that an interview was in progress.

Data Collection

To address RQ1, my multimodal research design incorporated the SCALE instrument with a larger number of participants ($N = 20$) and then an interview of a purposeful selection ($N = 10$) of those participants for RQs 2-5. The normed SCALE profile for final year teacher candidates at SSC is presented in the data analysis results

section of this paper. From the qualified participants who completed the assessment, I worked to obtain a purposeful sample of 10 participants for the semi-structured interviews. All participants were preservice teacher candidates.

Instrumentation

The SCALE instrument is copyrighted by Nelson and Low (2011) and administered securely online through their company's proprietary system using https://www.doscale.com. Permission to use online SCALE in my study was granted by the authors (see Appendix C). The online instrument and delivery process had demonstrated evidence of reliability and validity for measuring TEI as defined by Nelson and Low. With a Chronbach's alpha of 0.94, the instrument's internal reliability was excellent for the 11 combined skills of self esteem, assertion, comfort, empathy, drive strength, decision making, time management, influence, commitment ethic, stress management, and physical wellness. For the combined problematic indicators measured by SCALE (aggression, deference, & change orientation), the internal reliability was also high at $\propto = 0.89$ (Hammett, in press). Each of the 14 subscales measured by the instrument has seven items for a total of 98 items. Most (90) items included a standard 3-point ordinal scale scoring approach where *"most like me"* = 2, *"sometimes like me"* = 1, and *"least like me"* = 0. There were eight reverse-scored items where *"most like me"* = 0, *"sometimes like me"* = 1, and *"least like me"* = 2. The instrument's items, dimensions, and 14 subscale definitions are provided in Appendix D. A sample SCALE profile, the horizontal bar graph like the one each of the participants received after completing the instrument, is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Sample SCALE Profile
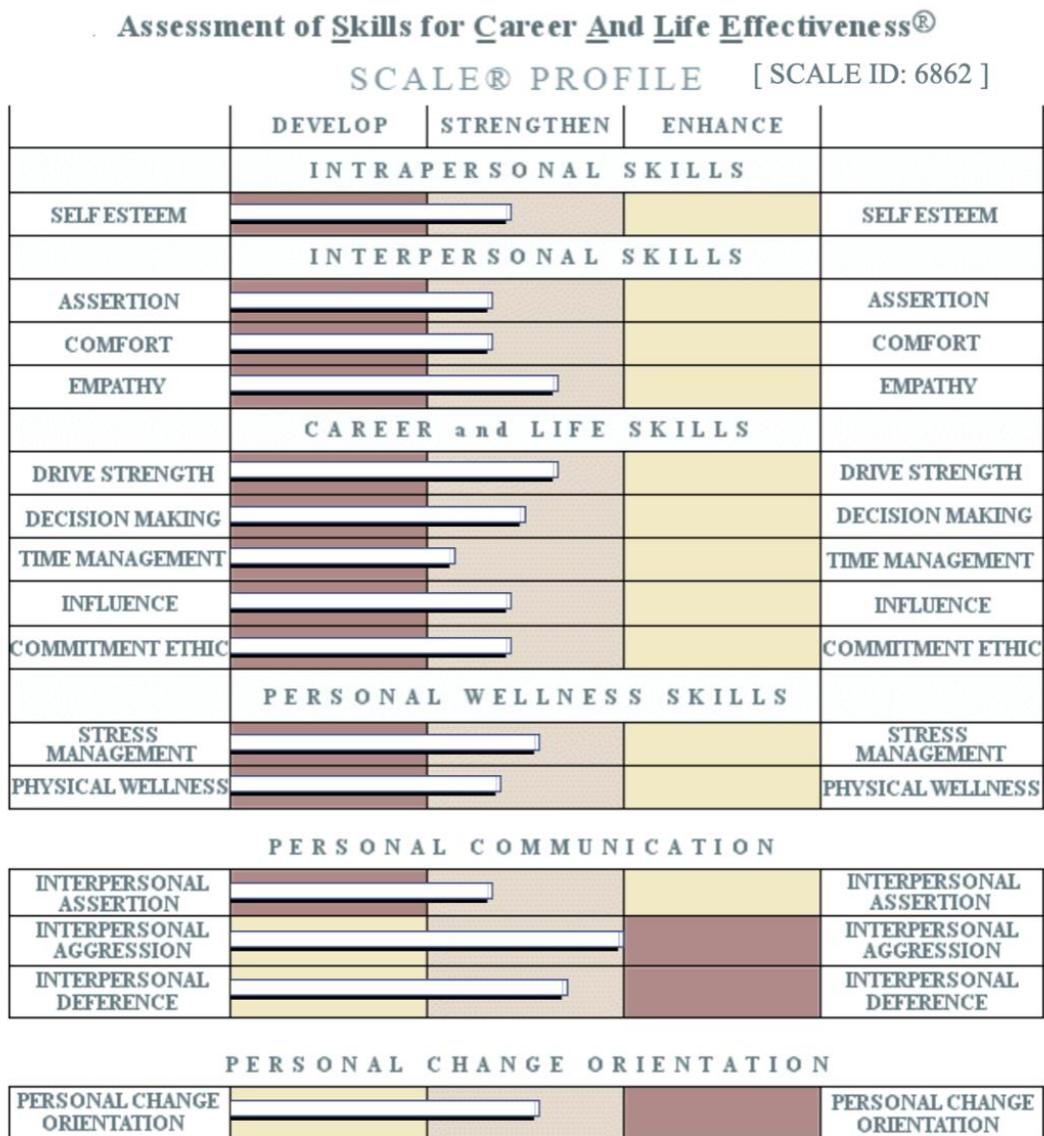
Note: SCALE profile reproduced with authors' permission.

The instrument is scored automatically online to produce the SCALE profile. The profile's scoring is separated by subscales into three vertical color bands reflecting approximately ± 1 standard deviation with average score ranges located in the middle, salmon-colored band. For the 11 skills, the low-range (left-hand band) is colored red, and the high-range (right-hand band) is colored yellow. This vertical band coloring protocol is reversed for the three problematic indicators to reflect the idea that higher scores in the problematic areas is less desirable. The three problematic areas have consistently been statistically significantly inversely correlated with the 11 skills (Hammett, in press).

Sufficiency of Data for Answering Research Questions

The TEI skill and problematic indicator scores from the participants' SCALE were used to create an average (i.e., normed) profile for the group. There are several reasons for doing so. First, doing so follows the explore step of the ELS wherein participants are engaged with EI content in a personally meaningful way (Nelson et al., 2017). As such, a normed profile for the group (RQ1) provides a baseline that participants may use to compare their own assessment results with the results of the group. The purpose of this initial comparison was to introduce EI and the interpretation of the SCALE assessment to study participants before moving forward with the semi-structured interviews.

Having access to the normed SCALE profile, which I provided during the interviews, and their individual SCALE profile, which each participant received after completing the instrument, was meant to facilitate my administration of the interview questions that were used to pursue RQs 2-5, the research questions that corresponded to

steps 1-3 of the ELS. The ELS is an emotional skills learning system that was included as part of my study's conceptual framework. Finally, the SCALE assessment and self-interpretation information provided within each individual profile was there to provide a common, positive EI vocabulary for the interviews. In addition, having experienced the SCALE and responded thoughtfully to the interview questions, the participants were exposed to positive EI assessment, developed a TEI vocabulary, and experienced steps 1 (explore), 2 (identify), and 3 (understand) of the Nelson and Low's (2011) ELS.

Generating, Gathering, Recording, and Storing Data

For this study I used the online SCALE assessment combined with participant interviews to generate, gather, record, and store data. The SCALE and interview processes are explained in further detail in this section.

The Online SCALE Process

The online SCALE assessments are managed by individuals who have been certified by EI Learning Systems to work within the assessment system above the level of end user. I completed my EI Learning Systems certification in 2018. Called *Project Managers* (PM), these individuals have access to functionality to create and manage time-delimited projects, assign assessment instances to those projects, generate random credentials for end users, and then provide instructions to end users to use those credentials to login and complete an online SCALE. The system automatically records item-level and total subscale scores for each of the 14 areas measured by SCALE. Once an individual completes an assessment, the PM can access the continuously updated normed, and individual profiles for the project participants, and an Excel file for the

project containing demographic information, subscale totals, and item-level data for each project participant. Demographic information collected by online SCALE includes the following:

- name

- age

- gender

- education level

- occupation

- nationality

- date completing the instrument

Because of the small population enrolled at SCC's College of Education, I decided that 20 SCALE assessments would suffice for creating a normed SCALE profile for the final-year teacher candidates. Therefore, the SCALE portion of the data collection effort ended after 20 participants had completed the instrument. At this point, I downloaded the Excel file containing all the data for each participant. I then used the demographic data to stratify and begin contacting potential interview participants. All hardcopy SCALE residue was stored in a locked file cabinet in my home office. All computer file residue was stored on my password protected computer that I keep in my home office. The PM SCALE data that remain on the secure server are only available to me through my password-protected PM account. The SCALE data for the individual participants (SCALE profile, definitions, and additional information about how to develop TEI skills) remain online indefinitely for each participant.

The Interview Process

In qualitative methods using semi-structured interviews, researchers must gain a more in-depth understanding of what is behind an individual and find out about the topic from the participant's viewpoint (Rosenthal, 2016). The interview plan I created is provided in Appendix E. Using these multiple modes of data collection can improve the overall quality of the collected information and help establish triangulation, adding to the validity of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

I began the interview process using one-to-one face-to-face audio recorded interviews that were 45-60-minutes in length. Although they were semi-structured interviews that should flow like a conversation, I followed a scripted guide with specific questions for structure, organization, and time management purposes (Appendix E). Having an overall consistent structure for the interviews to follow improves consistency and trustworthiness of the qualitative data collection process.

In-person face-to-face interviews began with a pre-interview introduction and review of the purpose of the study, reminder of the right to withdraw at any time without fear of reprisal, and then the interview. To create a comfortable environment for the participants, I asked if the participant needed any additional explanations of what I had reviewed. I summarized the consent form completed by the participant and verified the date it was signed. I asked participants for their permission to audio record the interview and explained how the audio recordings were to be transcribed using speech recognition software for post-interview data analysis. I asked for permission to record the interview

and when given, started the recording and began the interview. All participants who agreed to be interviewed agreed with these procedures.

The interviews were conducted in a manner that allowed for private focused discussion (Creswell, 2013). During the interview, I asked the open-ended questions and recorded the conversation using a digital recorder. The one-on-one face-to-face meetings helped to establish a personal connection with each participant and the script provided a guide that helped maintain professionalism and consistency (Garbarski et al., 2016). It is important for participants feel comfortable during the interview process. The interview questions (IVQ) were aligned with the research questions and provided in Appendix E.

Once I completed the interview questions, I followed a post-interview protocol with each participant. I thanked them for their participation, reassured them of their anonymity, and verified the information I had for them member checking. According to Saldaña (2018) member checking is conducted after initial data analysis and preliminary theme development. I use TEMI transcription software to transcribe the audio recordings immediately following each interview. After my initial data analysis and theme development were complete, I emailed the transcribed interviews with initial themes to each participant for them to verify their interviews for accuracy. This member checking process further enhances the trustworthiness of the data, data analysis, and results (Goodell et al., 2016).

I use a reflective journal to keep field notes about my initial impressions as each interview unfolded. I also used a digital All hardcopy residue from the interviews, including my field notes, are stored in a locked file cabinet in my home office. All

computer file residue, including the digital audio recordings are stored on my password protected computer that I keep in my home office. All data will be kept for 5 years in accordance with standards for doctoral research. After 5 years, all paper documents will be shredded, and all digital and electronic communications will be deleted and cleared from the computer.

Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants

After I obtained permission from both SSC and Walden University's IRBs, I emailed the gatekeeper to request that initial email invitations be sent to students who meet the participation criteria. The gatekeeper sent the initial email to invite qualified students who were in their last year of studies to participate in my research project using the email provided in Appendix F. The invitation email instructed interested students to contact me directly using my Walden University email account. Once contacted by potential participants, I sent an introductory email with the informed consent form, my personal contact information, and offer to answer any additional questions. In the email, I reassured the potential participant that this was a voluntary study with no compensation and that they could withdraw at any time without fear of reprisal. Furthermore, I explained that there would be an informed consent form and if after reviewing, their email reply to continue as a participant would convey their consent. Once I received informed consent, I created a participant information email thread and saved it into an Outlook Inbox Folder labeled "Survey Participants". The informed consent described the study, potential risks and benefits of participation, measures taken to protect participants' identities, and the participants' rights to withdraw from the study at any time without

repercussion or reprisal. The consent form included measures taken to protect participant identities including that no participants' names would be used in any written reports. Once the informed consent was received, I sent a personal email invitation with instructions to complete the online SCALE assessment.

During this portion of my study, I checked SCALE progress daily using my SCALE PM portal. To monitor who had completed the assessment, I downloaded an Excel file that contained completed assessments by participant in rows along with their demographic and SCALE results by columns. From this spreadsheet, I contacted SCALE completers through email to gauge their interest in completing a 45 – 60-minute interview. Once they replied with interest, I used another Outlook Inbox Folder labeled "Participant Interviews" to keep track of my communication with each participant by email thread. Once 20 SCALE assessments had been completed, I scheduled individual interviews based on mutual availability.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument of investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To the extent that the researcher authentically serves in this role, participants and the data produced increase in value (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) as well as validity, transparency, and replicability of qualitative research and its findings (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019). I served as the interviewer during interviews and because of this proximity, it was imperative to note that I did not have any personal relationships with the participants in my study. In the past, I was invited to speak as a keynote speaker to previous final year students at SSC's back to school and spring events, but I did not work

in the participating school's environment or have any authority over potential participants. Moreover, I did not hold any bias towards anyone in the preservice teacher program or their viewpoints and I respect varying cultural perspectives. Therefore, I saw no conflict of interest that could arise due to my participation in the study.

This study was important to me personally and professionally. As a K–12 public school teacher for 24 years, I have observed and researched the struggles of new teachers and challenges with their retention. I value EI and engaging new educators in learning about EI. I want to support my colleagues in developing the best ways possible to understand the nonintellective domains, as well as the conventional content and intellective ones. I acknowledge my bias in this regard and endeavor to monitor it for undue influence in my data analysis in the following section.

Data Analysis

A normed profile of final-year teacher candidates (RQ1) was generated from the assessment website. Referring to the normed profile, particular standout strengths and areas for development may be informative for guiding discussions or interpreting comments from the interviews. For qualitative data analysis, I followed the six steps for analyzing data suggested by Creswell (2013). They are the following: (a) preparing data for analysis, (b) initial examination and coding of the material, (c) developing themes to give a bigger picture of the data, (d) creating visuals and narratives to represent and report the findings, (e) reflecting on findings and comparing them to literature, and (f) validating the accuracy of the findings. Saldaña (2018) suggested two rounds of coding for categorizing and then developing themes derived from patterns. Therefore, I used this

multi-round method during my data analysis of the coded transcripts to develop themes and help control for my biases (see next section). It is important to understand when the data analysis should be concluded in qualitative research. The data analysis conclusion is referred to as saturation and occurs when no new themes are unpacked during successive thematic analysis rounds (Creswell, 2013). I used technology for data collection and assistance but inevitably, it is up to me, the researcher to interpret the data and findings.

Evidence of Quality

In qualitative studies, researchers attempt to collect and interpret data without personal bias. An accepted way to mitigate any personal bias is to state what one's biases are, be reflective in data collection, and seek other methods to ensure a credible study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Tufford and Newman (2010) shared a method for qualitative researchers to mitigate the potential for "deleterious effects of preconceptions that may taint the research process" called *bracketing* (p. 80). Considering the need to state my biases for this research as advised by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), and based on the advice by Tufford and Newman, my biases were bracketed in terms of my assumptions about the value of EI in education and expectations about its benefits for developing more capable teachers. As a result, I was careful to monitor my thematic development to include themes that may not support my assumptions and expectations.

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), qualitative design uses the term credibility whereas quantitative design uses validity (Yilmaz, 2013). To maintain credibility in my study, I checked for accuracy in all transcriptions, data collection, and data analysis. I invited participants of the study to look at, read, check, and verify my

work through a 2–3-page summary of their individual interviews and transcripts to ensure

I captured what they said and encouraged them to inform me of any inaccuracies from

their perspectives. Member checking increased the credibility of my synthesized data and

helped me further identify bias or misinterpretations that may be in my findings (Merriam

& Tisdell, 2016; Yilmaz, 2013).

Discrepant Cases

To ensure the credibility and integrity of my study and data collection, I actively

looked for findings from other studies that challenged or contradicted my data or findings

(Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yilmaz, 2013). Disconfirming cases should only be identified

after a researcher has completed initial data collection and analysis. Once found, the

discrepant cases assist in establishing additional credibility and trustworthiness of

qualitative research (Booth et al., 2013). If any internal discrepant cases came up in my

research, I would include them in my second literature review with a contrastive analysis

of the data of my research to that of the disconfirming case. If applicable, I would amend

my findings to reflect this information.

<div align="center">

Limitations

</div>

There were a number of limitations that could have impacted this qualitative

research. There was a potential of the influence of personal bias due to the dependence on

individual skill of the researcher in qualitative study. Additionally, the impact of the

researcher's presence during data gathering could affect participants' responses.

Furthermore, findings may be more difficult to characterize in a visual manner

(Anderson, 2010), although including the normed SCALE profile helps mitigate this

potential limitation. Generalizability can be a limitation of quantitative research. Rather, researchers often speak to the transferability of qualitative research findings. For transferability to be possible, the researcher must describe the setting and context with sufficient detail that consumers of the research are able to evaluate how similar or different their own context is compared to that of the researcher's. Trustworthiness enhances the transferability of qualitative research findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Data Collection and Analysis Processes

This section is devoted to the methodology of the study, including the multimodal design approach, participants of the study, data collection process, data collection analysis, findings, and themes.

Creswell's (2013) six-step approach to data analysis was used to analyze the interview data. The six steps are as follows: (a) organizing and preparing the data, (b) reading and knowing the data, (c) coding the data, (d) revising the codes to form categories and initial themes, (e) finalizing themes and creating a narrative, and (f) interpreting the findings. In the first step the transcriptions were organized and uploaded into NVivo 12 software package. NVivo 12 software was used to help organize the data and make visualization of trends easier.

In the second step, I read and re-read all of the transcripts, to get a deeper familiarity with the interview data. In the third step, I used open coding as suggested by Saldaña (2018). In open coding the researcher assigns descriptive labels to chunks of text that have meaning in answering the research questions (Saldaña, 2018). Different colors were used to denote different meanings.

Then, the initial codes were grouped into categories, and eventually organized into initial themes. Then, initial themes were revised, much like codes and categories were in the proceeding steps. Similar initial themes were combined, and others that did not address the research questions were discarded. Saldaña (2018) suggested two rounds of axial coding for categorizing and then developing themes derived from patterns. Therefore, I used this multi-round method during my data analysis of the coded transcripts to develop categories, initial themes, and help control my biases. In the fifth phase, I finalized the themes and provided robust descriptions which help to inform the narrative regarding the research questions. Finally, I used my findings to address the research questions.

Data Analysis Results

Two methods of data collection were used in this qualitative multimodal study. The online SCALE instrument ($N = 20$), a proprietary EI assessment located at www.DoScale.com, was used to collect data on 11 skills and 3 potential problem areas measured under the TEI model, and these data were used to address RQ1. As each participant completed the assessment, the system automatically generated and stored their results in my password-protected PM account project database created for this research. The second form of data collection was one-on-one interviews with 10 participants to generate qualitative data for thematic analysis as guided by RQs 2-5. I audio-recorded each interview using a digital recorder and saved the digital files to my password-protected home-office computer. The transcription service TEMI was used to create digital transcripts which were also saved on my password-protected home-office

computer. Any hardcopy residue generated from the data collection and analysis processes were stored in a locked file cabinet in my home office.

The problem addressed in this study was that a local preservice teacher preparation program did not include EI in the curriculum and as a result, final year teacher candidates may be entering their profession with EI deficits. The purpose of this multimodal qualitative study was to explore and understand the perceptions of final-year teacher candidates about their readiness to learn and teach as understood from a framework of nonintellective skills and abilities operationalized as EI. The five research questions that guided this study were:

RQ1: What is the normed SCALE profile for final year preservice teachers?

RQ2: What are the final year preservice teachers' experiences with learning about EI in their teacher preparation programs?

RQ3: What are the final year preservice teachers' impressions of EI based on their experience with SCALE?

RQ4: What are the final year preservice teachers' perceptions of their EI strengths and areas to develop based on SCALE?

RQ5: How do final year preservice teachers understand EI skills in terms of making them more or less ready to teach?

The five RQs were aligned with the first three steps of Nelson and Low's (2011) five-step learning model for developing EI, the ELS. The first three steps of the model are (a) self-assessment (explore), (b) self-awareness (identify), and (c) self-knowledge (understand). While the ELS steps are sequential, it is not uncommon to return to a

previous step or even engage with more than one neighboring step at nearly the same time when working with emotional skills development (G. Low, personal communication, February 11, 2019). Table 2 provides an overview of the data analysis and findings which are presented with detail in the succeeding discussion.

Table 2

Overview of Data Analysis and Findings

RQ	RQ type	ELS step	Subtheme	Finding/theme
1	Numerical: Descriptive	Self-Assessment (Explore)	Not applicable	Normed SCALE Profile
2	Narrative	Self-Awareness (Identify)	1. Limited EI learning from the program. 2. Indirect EI learning.	Anecdotal learning about EI unrelated to the teacher preparation program.
3	Narrative	Self-Awareness (Identify) Self-Knowledge (Understand)	1. Having limited self-awareness. 2. Becoming more caring and empathic. 3. Becoming more open minded.	Principal components of EI include caring, empathy, open-mindedness, and self-awareness.
4	Narrative	Self-Awareness (Identify) Self-Knowledge (Understand)	1. Skepticism about EI measures. 2. Potential opportunities for EI growth. 3. EI skills for teaching.	Guided interpretation of the SCALE profile is needed to increase EI with fidelity for teacher candidates.
5	Narrative	Self-Knowledge (Understand)	1. Developing a good foundation in dealing with students. 2. Becoming a better version of oneself. 3. Being better towards others.	EI is important for healthy inter- and intra-personal relationships and health.

RQ1: Normed SCALE Profile for First-Year Teacher Candidates

The first research question, guided by the ELS Step 1 (Explore) was concerned with norming the SCALE instrument results (i.e., SCALE profile) based on the descriptive statistics for the 20 first-year teacher candidates who completed the instrument. Descriptive statistics are measures of central tendency (Kaliyadan & Kulkarni, 2019). Common descriptive statistics reported by researchers include the mean and standard deviation. In addition to these, I have included the minimum and maximum actual scores measured for each of the SCALE skills and problematic indicators (Table 3). SCALE completers included both males ($n = 2$) and females ($n = 18$).

Table 3

Preservice Teacher Descriptive Statistics for SCALE (N = 20)

SCALE measures	Mean	Standard deviation	Observed minimum	Observed maximum
SCALE Sills				
Self Esteem	10.50	2.26	6	14
Assertion	8.70	3.76	3	14
Comfort	11.40	1.73	9	14
Empathy	12.75	2.42	4	14
Drive Strength	10.75	2.42	3	14
Decision Making	9.60	2.66	4	14
Time Management	10.15	3.44	2	14
Influence	9.00	3.21	2	14
Commitment	11.25	2.40	6	14
Stress Management	8.25	3.89	1	13
Physical Wellness	8.35	3.17	3	14
SCALE Problematic Indicators				
Aggression	2.65	2.68	0	9
Deference	6.70	4.40	0	14
Personal Change Orientation	5.80	3.35	0	13

Note: The theoretical minimum and maximum scores were 0 and 14, respectively, for all 14 measures.

Normed profiles are computed based on the average scores of a group of participants (Nelson et al., 2004). The normed SCALE profile for final-year teacher candidates at SSC is presented in Figure 3 (Panel A). As shown in Panel B, the original normed profile based on a group of international professionals ($N = 162$) was approximately a vertical line down the middle of the Strengthen band with a *Z*-score of 50 (Hammett, in press). Comparing the SCALE skill results between Panel A and Panel

B shows that the final year teacher candidates' average scores fell within the middle (strengthen) band with the skills of assertion and decision making falling most-left compared to Panel B. Conversely, the final-year teacher candidates' skills of comfort, empathy, and influence fell most-right. Similarly, comparing the problematic indicators, the final-year teacher candidates' aggression measure fell considerably left compared to the international professional group, with all three measures still falling in the middle band. Because aggression is a problematic, patterned way of communicating, a lower score in aggression combined with the skill of assertion, reflects more productive communication in team and family environments (Low et al., 2018).

Figure 3

Comparison of Normed SCALE Profiles

Panel A: Pre-Service Teacher's Average Profile (*N* = 20)   Panel B: International Professional's Average Profile (*N* = 162)
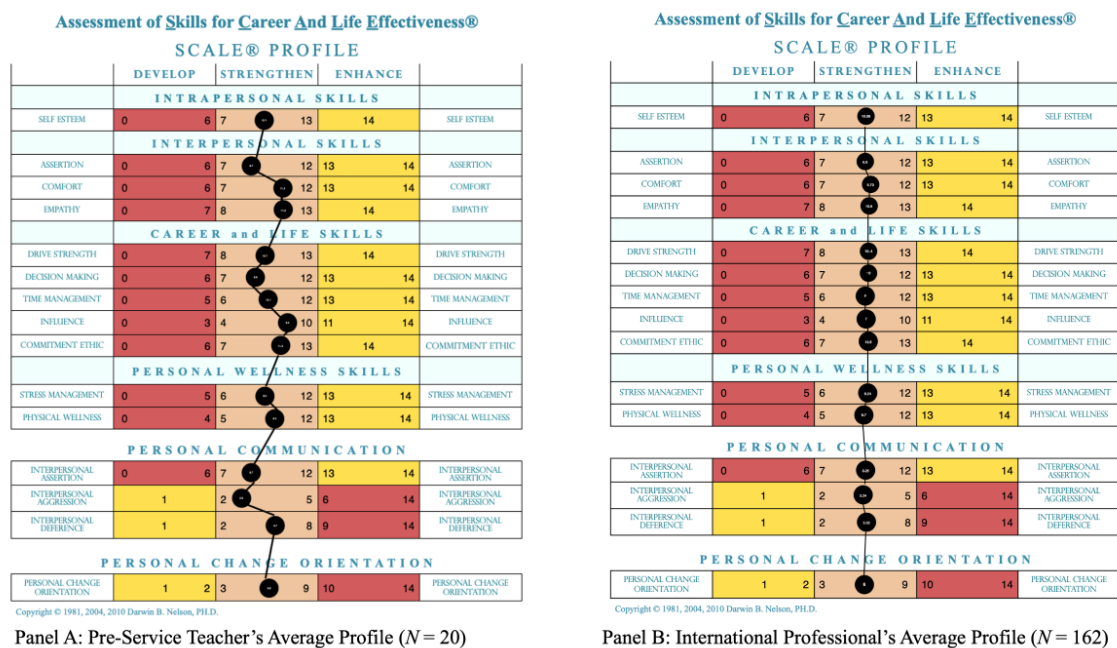
Figure 4 is an illustration of the initial word codes with the highest frequencies from the interview data. The word cloud was generated using a free online word cloud generator (https://www.freewordcloudgenerator.com) to understand which phrases or sentences in the transcripts might be relevant to the study. The results of the word cloud have no thematic meaning but revealed patterns across the interview data about the EI conversations. As shown in Figure 4, the words "know," "think," "need," "going," "feel," and "things" had the highest frequencies. The nouns "self," "person," and "time" were also frequently mentioned. Adjectives with the highest frequencies included "different," "better," and "little."

Figure 4

Word Cloud Derived From Initial Coding

Note: Generated by FreeWordCloudGenerator.com

RQ2: Participant Teacher Preparation Experiences Learning About EI

The second research question, guided by the ELS Step 2 (Identify), was about the final year preservice teachers' experiences with learning about EI during their teacher preparation programs. Interview responses relevant to RQ2 involved patterns on the lack of courses and instruction directly equipping preservice teachers with EI. Additionally, interview responses also involved patterns of indirect learning about EI through experiences related to the teacher preparation program, but not from the program itself. To elaborate, two subthemes emerged to unpack the theme for RQ2. The subthemes were (a) limited EI learning from the program and (b) indirect EI learning. The themes are described in the following discussion.

Limited EI Learning During the Program

Eight participants shared their perceptions about the limited opportunities to learn about EI directly from the teacher preparation program. The participants shared that some aspects of EI were discussed in lectures, but no specific course was dedicated to teaching EI. Participant three shared, "[EI] wasn't really discussed much in the college…we did talk about things like stress management but not like in-depth." Stress management is a skill measured by SCALE and may have triggered P10's reference to it. Participant 10 shared that the term "Emotional Intelligence" was mentioned at some point in the program, and the participant perceived that EI was associated with addressing students' needs and growth. Participant ten stated:

> I feel like in school, we didn't learn very much about emotional intelligence…I think we touched that like briefly, but not too much…Maybe like one or two times in the entire program. They mentioned about emotional intelligence and, like, how to deal with children and how to [address] their needs for growth like what to do for [the] children…I don't feel like it's mentioned very much at all.

Participants one, six, and nine perceived that learning EI in the program was limited. Specifically, in Participant 1's experience, EI was taught at the final semester of the program. Thus, participant one expressed that the EI content they learned during the final semester could not be applied to their studies anymore. Participant one articulated, "I didn't really get to apply much of it to my studies because I did it at the end of my semester." Participants six and nine shared that they learned aspects of emotion regulation and handling stressful situations in the classroom through their classroom

management course. Participant six stated, "With the classroom management classes, we learned quite a bit with how to deal with certain emotions, how there are certain things teachers can do and not do." Thus, while EI content was embedded in some courses in the program, no specific course focused exclusively on EI content.

Indirect EI learning Experiences

According to six participants, EI content was not directly taught in the teacher preparation program, but that they learned about EI through their own unique experiences. The experiences included facing challenges in life as well as preservice teaching experiences. Two participants shared that they learned about EI from going through changes in life. For example, Participant one shared, "I think it's part of a person's life, where they're at in their ways of thinking, where they are emotionally at…it's just a part of who they are at that time."

Five participants shared that they learned about EI from their preservice teaching experiences, four of whom had learned about EI from teaching students with special needs. Participant two stated, "I'm a para educator, so we've done an emergency ethics training and that looks at…like if you are a more detail-oriented person, or if you…think of others' feelings and stuff first…but that was five years ago." Participant nine shared that they learned about aspects of EI such as empathy and emotion regulation from interacting with non-verbal students with special needs. Two participants shared that they had experiences of teaching socioemotional learning (SEL) to students with special needs, which made them aware of EI. Participant three shared, "And the SEL versus the emotional intelligence of the teacher…not knowing and then learning about it."

According to Participant 7, SEL was also taught among children in a preschool setting. Participant 7's experiences teaching in preschool was reported to be an indirect experience of learning EI. Participant 7 explained:

> I would have to say I work with preschoolers, so we do social, emotional, so we work with their emotions…Nobody can take that ownership of those feelings. So, I would say that would be emotional intelligence because I'm teaching the children how what they're feeling, the words to describe how they're feeling.

Combining the two subthemes of (a) limited EI learning during the program and (b) indirect EI learning experiences, an overarching theme unpacked for RQ2 is "Anecdotal learning about EI in the teacher preparation program".

RQ3: Impressions of EI Based on SCALE Experience

The third research question, guided by the ELS Steps 2 (Identify) and 3 (Understand), was an inquiry on the final year preservice teachers' impressions of EI based on their experience with SCALE. During this part of the interview, I shared the normed profile with each participant and asked them to share any insights comparing the normed profile to their own scores. The comparisons are somewhat evident in the discussions that follow. Although each participant acknowledged the normed profile for the group, their attention immediately returned to their own individual SCALE profile. Overall, the participants' responses to the interview questions related to RQ3 included patterns about self-awareness, empathy, and open-mindedness. After exposure to the SCALE assessment, the participants associated EI with having a deeper understanding of self, of others, and of the different contexts of self and others. The three subthemes

related to RQ3 were: (a) having self-awareness, (b) becoming more caring and empathic, and (c) becoming more open-minded.

Having Self-Awareness

Five participants shared that the SCALE assessment helped them understand how EI was related to self-awareness and better understanding of self. The participants attributed EI to awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses and of one's attitudes and behaviors in different situations. According to the participants, EI and self-awareness involve reflection. Participant three shared, "I think it's like a deeper understanding of the different skills…like a reflection of your feelings in different areas." Participant one stated, "It made me think in different ways about what I'm seeing."

Four participants described an increased understanding of themselves after taking the SCALE assessment. Most participants easily acknowledged areas of need for improvement, but seemed to find it more difficult to acknowledge strengths. Participant 2 stated:

> I know that self-esteem is something that I just struggle with…I still have those self-esteem and those doubts that creep in and it's good that I'm aware of that. Because then I can… I know how to prepare myself, so I'm able to kind of [knowing I] needed that time to just take a minute to breathe.

Participant 6 noted that taking the assessment strengthened their beliefs about themselves especially when answering questions without doubt. Participant 6 elaborated:

> There are some [questions] where I could go, I know right away this is what I'm like as a person. I can do that, so I think that's where I've improved in my

emotional intelligence, and I could identify that on the assessment. But there are others where I'm like, these are some places I still need to work on so that I can fix like. So, I can answer right away…yes, I'm mostly this or I'm not this at all.

Becoming More Caring and Empathic

Nine participants shared that they developed a deeper understanding of other people and became more caring and empathizing after being exposed to EI through the SCALE assessment. Before and after taking the SCALE assessment, four participants described EI to involve empathy, which they perceived was to understand other people. Participant 5 described, "In my own words, emotional intelligence is a way that you can, can read a room and see how others are feeling and how to react to that." Participants six and eight stated that being empathic and caring involved personal judgment and reaction about situations. Participant eight stated, "Basically, how people interpret things and how they react to it…Like, if you get upset or happy and then just how you deal with it going forward."

With an understanding of others and their situations, two participants believed that they could help others better. For participants eight and nine, EI involved being able to help others more effectively. Participant nine perceived that they were a "good listener" and with skills in understanding other people, they were able to be more "compassionate" towards other peoples' problems. According to Nelson and Low (2011), compassion and empathy are very similar skills. Participant eight shared that they showed empathy through helping others resolve their issues. Participant eight also stated that they liked fixing issues as a reaction to other people's negative emotions. Participant 8 stated,

"After taking the assessment…it does make you think about how you react in certain situations…If I'm in that situation and somebody's upset, I want to fix it."

Becoming More Open-Minded

Six participants shared that their understanding of EI, especially after taking the SCALE assessment, involved becoming more open-minded towards others and towards new experiences. For this group, being open-minded was associated with EI developed often through life experiences. For instance, Participant 1 shared that they recently became quick and firm in making decisions because they had to take care of their sick mother. Participant 4 shared an experience of becoming more independent after recently moving out of their parents' house. As a result of her experience with the SCALE assessment, Participant 6 reflected about how she had become more self -aware. She shared that her EI "got worse" after the COVID-19 restrictions, stating, "My emotional skills just…it felt like they got worse. I think like maybe anger got a bit worse than usual. I had to learn a different way to deal with it." In this instance, the SCALE assessment experience facilitated a shift in thinking that reflects improved emotional awareness and personal skill development.

Participant 1 perceived the need to be open-minded to experience new situations and learn new things from the experience. Participant one articulated, "You have to be really open-minded…kind of made me go off on other roads that I wouldn't normally thought about." Participant nine reported that open-mindedness was a result of learning about EI. Participant nine learned about avoiding preconceived notions about other people before knowing their situation:

That really opened my eyes because…I'm not an open person sometimes, so

whenever I'm approached by somebody, even though I don't really know them…I

don't know if I want to talk to them, but then they come to [me], and they say

something and then you turn into this big old conversation and then [I'd] realize

that, okay, it really wasn't that bad. But yeah, it really opened my thoughts on to,

how, how I should look at situations instead of how I think in my mind, like you

know, everybody's always, like I said, oh, she looks mean.

Combining the three subthemes of (a) having limited self-awareness, (b) becoming more

caring and empathic, and (c) becoming more open minded, the overarching theme

developed for RQ3 is "Principal components of EI include caring, empathy, open-

mindedness, and self-awareness".

RQ4: EI Strengths and Areas to Develop Based on SCALE Results

Initially RQ4 was intended to be guided by the ELS Step 2 (Identify) because its

purpose was to identify areas of strengths and opportunities for improvement. During the

interviews related to RQ4, however, some of the participants shared their skepticism

about the SCALE assessment identified areas to develop, while others shared hope about

areas of potential for EI growth. Some shared both skepticism and hope. As a result of

the confusion associated with identifying strengths and areas for growth, it was

determined that a substantial amount of clarification was needed during he interviews,

reflecting the ELS Step 3 (Understand). The three subthemes that emerged for RQ3were

(a) Skepticism about EI measures, (b) Potential opportunities for EI growth, and (c) EI

skills for teaching.

Skepticism About EI Measures

Nine participants expressed some degree of doubt towards the identified areas of development based on the SCALE assessment. Specifically, seven participants shared their thoughts about the accuracy of the questionnaire. Participant eight reported finding the questionnaire long with 92 items, and perceived that some questions seemed redundant. The participant said, "As far as I noticed that some of the questions were similar, they were just asked in another way… I mean, it was 92 questions." The SCALE instrument actually has 98 items and while some items are redundant, that redundancy is what creates such strong internal reliability (Hammett, in press).

Participant five expressed that some questions were difficult to answer, while five participants disclosed that they might have misunderstood the meanings of some questions or the results. Participant two explained, "It just surprises me…like comfort, you know, I consider myself I'm pretty comfortable in what I'm doing…it could do with me having a different definition." This participant's observation about skill definitions was insightful in its own right and speaks to the theme related to guided interpretation. The skill of comfort is also defined in terms of social awareness (Nelson & Low, 2011), so it has more to do with being comfortable and putting others at ease in social situations.

Participants one, four, six, and nine also reported skepticism about some of their results. Participant nine scored low on self-esteem, but perceived themself to have average self-esteem. At the same time, however, the participant also shared that they were often hard on themself. According to Nelson and Low (2011), self-esteem requires both an accurate self-knowledge and self-appreciation. Participant one perceived that they had

higher empathy than their SCALE score indicated. Participant one believed that they were adequately understanding of other people. Participant six specified instances of coping during the COVID-19 pandemic as support for their perception of having higher change orientation than indicated by their SCALE score:

> I was surprised with the personal change orientation, like dealing with your what's going on around you…Because I thought I was good at that, but I see mine getting closer to the red…when COVID and everything happened, I think I was a lot better at adapting.

This statement clearly demonstrates the need for clarification, both about the problematic measure of change orientation and its corollary skill, positive change. The research-derived definition of change orientation is a measure of personal dissatisfaction with one's EI skill acumen (Nelson & Low, 2011). As with the other two potential problem areas, low scores actually reflect the corollary skills of anger management (in the case of aggression) and anxiety management (in the case of deference). This participant's low score in change orientation actually reflected the skill of positive change, which is a strength. It was a good result that was misinterpreted as negative by the participant.

Nine participants shared critical thoughts about the SCALE results being linked with a growth mindset (Dweck & Yeager, 2021). The perceptions were typically in the areas of interpersonal assertion, deference, and aggression. For interpersonal assertion, four participants shared their insights about having self-inhibiting personality traits, which they perceived as not necessarily something they needed to change. Participant three explained:

>Well, growing up, I always feel like being shy was a bad thing because…It was very hard for me to just, like, speak up, but I feel like, these skills kind of, like, intertwine. Like they're like a little mix. So, there's not like black and white, maybe something like in between.

Similarly, for interpersonal deference, four participants who scored low perceived that they did not necessarily need to change, and they were right. Rather than interpreting this result and interpretation as positive, however, they interpreted it as negative.

>Participants two, three, and nine expressed being uncomfortable when faced with conflicts and tended to avoid them for their own comfort. Participant four shared that being confrontational did not necessarily resolve conflicts. The participant shared,

>At some point during a class that we had, someone was very upset about how the professor was running it, so they decided to go above and speak to higher powers. I remember them coming to me because I was close friends with the person…I don't think you should have gone to the hierarchy first I feel like you should have gone spoke to the professor themselves first and that was I was very calm about it…Having that conversation, not arguing, and saying, oh, why did you do that? Just having that conversation, I feel like she, in a way, saw why I thought that way. She was like, oh, next time I probably would do that.

On the SCALE profile the skill of assertion is shown twice, once under the composite scale of Interpersonal Skills, along with the skills of comfort and empathy, and again under the Personal Communication composite scale with the problematic measures of aggression and deference. This repetition is because assertion is both a needed

interpersonal skill and also needed to offset the deleterious relational effects of patterned aggression or patterned deference (Nelson & Low, 2011). The confusion about the relationship between skills and potential problematic measures created skepticism among the participants and points to the need for guided, strengths-based interpretation of individual SCALE profiles from someone who has been trained to understand the instrument (Nelson & Low, 2011).

Participants one, two, and nine scored low on interpersonal aggression, and high on empathy. The participants shared their perceptions that they tended to be considerate of other people's feelings and subordinate their own feelings while elevating the importance of other person's feeling. Participant two stated, "So kind of I sometimes sacrifice my, what I'm feeling for other people that makes actually complete sense. Because I'm a mom and I see that all the time. So, I get that 100%."

On the contrary, participant five expressed doubt about the benefits of scoring high in empathy when faced with situations outside of the workplace. Participant five perceived that individuals who prioritize empathy over being honest in expressing themselves might not be truly happy. Participant five stated, "Well, based on, for, after I took it, I thought that emotional intelligence is great for the workplace, but it feels like it could be like a game of pretend where, and it can be emotionally draining to try to work the room." Again, statements like these demonstrate an elementary and sometimes incorrect understanding of EI skills, the potential problem areas, as well as their relationships with one another. High empathy, when unsupported by assertion and

amplified with deference, is a harmful combination, whether at home or at work (Nelson & Low, 2011).

Participants 7, 8, 9, and 10 focused on time management. Participant 9 admitted to completing tasks at the last minute, while Participants 7, 8, and 10 stated that they had difficulties with time management because they had too many obligations. Participant 8 expressed:

> I'm alright with [low time management score] because I have a lot going on.
> Some of our other friends probably don't have as much going on. Because I have
> a part-time job. Yep, I have a family. Yep, and I'm a full-time student.

This reflection is accurate, yet an elementary interpretation of time management relative to TEI. Time management is defined by Nelson and Low (2011) is the personal management of self relative to the time one has (noting also that everyone has the same amount of time). Therefore, an important complimentary skill to time management is the skill of assertion, and the learned ability to say no to taking on too many things.

Perceptions of SCALE Areas to Develop as Opportunities for Growth

Eight participants perceived that at some degree, the results of the SCALE assessment could be considered as opportunities for growth. The participants supported the growth mindset especially in their goal of learning to improve themselves as individuals. Participants four and seven who scored low in commitment ethic acknowledged their tendency for people pleasing and expressed their efforts to set boundaries. Participant seven shared, "For a long time, I was the person that people would take advantage of. I was a people pleaser. I am learning to say no."

In terms of interpersonal aggression, participants one and three shared that they were in the process of learning to speak up for their beliefs. Participant one stated, "I still don't get into politics. That's just way over my head. But I do start jumping in…I'm not going to hold it back." Participants three and six also shared that they were learning to set boundaries to address their low scores in interpersonal deference as a way to take care of themselves. Participant six elaborated:

> I've seen it multiple times where people try to take advantage of you if they understand you're gentle or you let things slide because you don't want to cause problems. And I've learned that a lot more over the years, and I've been trying to change that more recently with…like putting my foot down…Even though I know you're gonna be upset with me. I need to take care of myself first because I know it's gonna put me in a bad spot.

Participant 10 attributed physical wellness to physical health and reported their need to have healthier habits to become a better teacher. Participant nine perceived the need to improve their stress management despite several stressful situations to avoid "trickled down" stress and to become a better individual. Participant nine stated:

> And you don't realize it, the stress from school just kind of trickled down to family, to work, and it, just like, I, I wasn't, I didn't emotionally handle things the way that I should have. I should have sat back and thought, okay, right now you're, you're, you're stressed. Maybe you need to take a break from what you're doing and think about the situation instead of acting immediately on what's

happening because sometimes I let my anger or my emotions overcome my thought at the moment.

Moreover, eight participants perceived that the SCALE assessment results were a guide in reflecting upon their strengths and weaknesses and grow from their experiences. Of the eight participants, seven perceived that having strengths and weaknesses was a normal part of growing and improving oneself. Participant three shared, "It kind of tells me that nothing is, like, fixed and you can work towards your goals, like, for me…for my profession and my personal life." Participant nine stated, "Everybody needs an area that they need to grow in. But, I mean overall, I have a lot that I need to grow in and I see, some of them, I've gotten pretty good [at] getting there."

Participants two, three, and six perceived the importance of striking a balance in the way they treated themselves and the way they treated others. Participant two expressed, "It should be somewhere in the middle where you're still respecting your own feelings enough, but still being respectful of someone else's thoughts and opinions and behaviors." Participant three shared:

> I feel like it's, it's really important to kind of balance that because empathy can get in, in the way. Like, if you feel too bad all the time, that's not going to be good and I already know that I have to improve in, like, my classroom management and be a little more firm.

Perceptions of SCALE Strengths as Possessed Skills Valuable to Being a Teacher

Six participants perceived that their EI strengths identified from the SCALE assessment were important to being a teacher and an individual. The important EI skills

they associated with the SCALE results included completing tasks efficiently, dealing with students, and improving themselves for themselves and their students. Four participants who had strengths in the aspects of decision making, influence, and time management perceived that completing tasks correctly and on time was important to teachers. Participant ten shared that making fast and firm decisions was vital to addressing students' needs. Participants one and six shared that planning and being conscious of the time consumed for tasks were important to getting things done and reducing stress. Participant eight stated that being able to influence and lead could impact classroom management.

Three participants with strengths in commitment ethic, empathy, and interpersonal assertion respectively perceived that their skills could help them prepare to deal with diverse students. Participant one stated, "I mean, cause, when you're a teacher, you have to really commit to what you're doing and the ethic of it." Participant four perceived that empathy was important in addressing the needs of the students. Similarly, participant seven stated that interpersonal assertion was also important in addressing students' needs. Participant seven believed that as a teacher, they led the students by example, and that interpersonal assertion meant speaking up for themselves. Participant seven expressed:

> Well, I think a lot of it goes through teaching the kids that about feelings and talking and giving them their words to express themselves, especially when they have a conflict. And teaching them how to resolve the conflict. I think with that it gives me the power for myself to use the words to express how I feel, especially if you know there's a conflict or a resolute, you know, conflict resolution.

In the strengths important to improving oneself, participant one believed that the aspects of decision making and physical wellness were important. Participant one recently experienced having their mother fall ill which they attributed to their improved decision making and physical wellness skills. Participant one stated, "I've been trying to not overthink as much in certain things that I know I don't need to think about, and really just saying, "You know what? I'm on the end of that word, I'm jumping in. I'm going for it."

The three subthemes of (a) skepticism about EI measures, (b) potential opportunities for EI growth, and (c) EI skills for teaching, combined to unpack the overarching theme of "Guided interpretation of the SCALE profile is needed to increase EI fidelity among teacher candidates." The fidelity of each subtheme for improving teachers' readiness to teach with EI would improve with a review and clarification of the research-derived definitions of the skills and potential problem areas measured by SCALE.

RQ5: Final Year Preservice Teachers Understanding of EI Skills for Making Them More or Less Ready to Teach

The fifth question was a question about the final year preservice teacher's understanding of EI skills in terms of making them more or less ready to teach. This RQ was based on Step 3 of the ELS, where active imagination is needed to understand how each EI skill is or can be beneficial. The participants shared in the interviews that EI was important not just in being ready to teach, but also in becoming a better individual. The patterns relevant to RQ5 included being aware of how to improve and conduct oneself in

front of the students, as well as treating oneself and others with more kindness and empathy. The three subthemes that emerged from the patterns that address RQ5 were: (a) developing a good foundation in dealing with students, (b) becoming a better version of oneself, and (c) being better towards others.

Developing a Good Foundation in Dealing with Students

Nine participants perceived that EI was important in teacher readiness especially in being prepared to face the students. Participant one stated, "I think it would give them a great foundation… I think it would help the teacher a lot more in understanding of emotions of anybody." Participant one added that preservice teachers being equipped with EI skills to teach SEL was as important as having the pedagogical knowledge in teaching students to read. Participant four shared that the physical wellness aspect of EI helped them realize the need to have healthier habits to keep up with the students:

It did lead to me with more physical wellness. I was like, I need to be prepared. So, I need to prepare these meals so that I'm eating healthily, and I'm not going out every night. I'm trying to go and find dinner. But I need to be, like, in a sense, fit, to be able to be around all of these first graders. What if I need to take off running after one of them?

Six other participants reported preparing to face students through developing their emotion regulation skills. The participants perceived that as the teacher, their emotions could impact the students if they did not handle them well. Participant two stated, "In a classroom, your whole attitude can completely change that classroom." Participants three

and six spoke about feeling stressed and how failing to regulate stress could impact the students. Participant three elaborated:

> Well, I think it would be amazing for, like, teachers to have courses on this so that they can deal with the stress, they can deal with all the changes and things that happen, especially in the field of education. It's ever changing. So, you know, and there's a lot of emotions… it's important to kind of learn how to deal with your own emotions and all that, because that affects your students.

Five participants shared that they could continue preparing to teach and improve themselves for their students through stepping out of their comfort zone. The participants perceived that EI was associated with being open-minded to new experiences and having appropriate reactions to changes, which was the reason stepping of the comfort zone was essential in teacher preparation. Participant seven articulated, "Because I want my kids to see that no matter what, you can do anything that. You put your mind to. And I want to set that example and be the example." Participant three, who scored low in influence, perceived that they could go beyond their comfort zone through improving their leadership skills so that their students would follow their lead.

Four participants stated that forming a good foundation for teacher preparation through developing EI equipped them with knowing how to help their students and deal with others. The participants perceived that students typically had different individual needs that should be addressed by teachers and that EI skills could help teachers address those needs. Participant seven elucidated:

It's a very good question because whenever you're preparing to teach, you have to

make sure that you yourself can handle taking care of 18 to 25 children because

you have several different personalities…And you can't please everybody. And it's

not just the students, it's the parents, too. So, you've got to be emotionally

prepared.

Becoming a Better Version of Oneself

Seven participants stated that learning about EI helped them in teacher

preparation through becoming better versions of themselves. Particularly, four

participants stated that they have learned to be aware and embrace traits that were unique

to them. Participant six stated, "This is where I'm different, but I can identify with it."

Participants seven and eight shared that being exposed to EI helped them reflect about

themselves and be confident in themselves. Participant seven stated, "I'm pretty satisfied

with who I am. And it took me a long time to get to where I'm at. I've done a lot of

growing." Participant seven added that assessments such as SCALE was helpful in

improving one's confidence, as one's understanding of oneself is strengthened and one's

decision becomes justified. According to participant seven, being confident in one's

decision was important for teachers. Participant seven detailed:

Like whenever you do the when you come into the program do like the little

assessment and have like a little little half a day of something with that and then

do that at. The end and just see where you are, where you started and where you

come to see if your perspective has changed. I think that would be good because

you might go in. Yes, I want to be a teacher by the end of. Like I don't even want to do this anymore and it's important to know what you want.

Four participants perceived that they were becoming better versions of themselves after learning about EI as they tended to be kinder towards themselves and to have the courage to speak up for themselves. Participant two stated, "This is kind of good to be aware…and kind of maybe be a little bit more assertive about what you think." Participants 2, 3, and 7 shared that they treated themselves better and with more understanding after learning about EI. Participant three stated:

Sometimes I do get stressed out, but like you know, I'm, I'm like, I know I'm like, well, you know, I did the best I can. I try to like, I try to talk to myself, you know, give myself positive like, you know, put myself up and like you know, I did the best I can, you know, this is all I can do and. And just and then another thing that I do is like I take breaks like if I see that I'm like just so tired with my schoolwork, I'll just take a little break.

Being Better Towards Others

Five participants shared that they learned to treat others with more empathy and maturity while maintaining healthy boundaries after learning about EI. Participant four described maturity as "being the bigger person" when faced with conflicts, which they perceived as important in being a teacher. Empathy with boundaries was also considered as important in teacher preparation by five participants. Participant eight described having boundaries as caring for others without sacrificing oneself:

How would you handle even more drama? Would you bring it home with you? Would you sit there and just let it affect you every day? I normally would because, you know, [of] trying to fix what you can. I mean, I'm learning. I still care, but less affected.

Participant nine stated that being a teacher meant interacting with different students. Participant nine shared that in learning EI, they learned to accept differences among people:

You know each person is different in their own way and you have to learn how to be able to deal with difficult situations because this person might be a sweetest, most young, you know, person, but this person might be the hardest, but you've got to learn how to make things where it's comparable for everybody. Yeah, not just you.

The three subthemes for RQ5 of (a) developing a good foundation in dealing with students, (b) becoming a better version of oneself, and (c) being better towards others, combined to unpack the overarching theme that "EI is important for healthy inter- and intra-personal relationships and health".

Summary

Section 2 is a critical component of the project study because it contains not only the methodological plan for collecting and analyzing the research data, but also the resulting data analysis and findings. Guided by five research questions, the purpose of this qualitative multi-modal descriptive study was to explore the perceptions of final-year teacher candidates about their readiness to learn and teach as understood from a

framework of nonintellective skills and abilities operationalized as EI. The five RQs were aligned with the first three steps of Nelson and Low's (2011) five-step learning model for developing EI, the ELS. The first three steps of the model are (a) Self-Assessment (Explore), (b) Self-Awareness (Identify), and (c) Self-Knowledge (Understand).

In the self-assessment explore step, RQ1 developed descriptive statistics and a normed SCALE profile for the final-year preservice teachers in the participating college. Twenty respondents completed the SCALE assessment. While the group's normed profile of SCALE skills fell in the middle (expected or average) band, some observable differences were made between the final-year teacher candidate participants and the original norm group of 162 professionals. For example, by comparison, the teacher candidate respondents' assertion and decision-making skills, offered opportunities for strengthening compared to the original norm group. Also, the skills of comfort, empathy, and positive influence tended to be higher among the teacher-candidates. A comparison of the final-year teacher candidates' and professionals' average SCALE profiles was provided in Figure 3.

Moving from the ELS Self-Assessment (Explore) step to the Self-Awareness (Identify) step, RQ2 sought to clarify final-year teacher experiences with learning about EI prior to participating in this study. Recounting EI learning experiences prior to taking the SCALE, 8 of the 10 interview participants revealed that they had limited exposure to EI and 5 of the 10 interview participants stated that they learned about EI not directly from the teacher preparation programs, but from life and work experiences. The participants who faced personal challenges, like taking care of an ill parent for example,

were more familiar with EI. The participants who worked with preschool children and students with special needs also reported more exposure to SEL and claimed more familiarity with the EI construct. None of the participants were able to recall a concerted effort during their teacher preparation program to teach EI. The theme unpacked for RQ2, therefore, was *Anecdotal learning about EI unrelated to the teacher preparation program*.

Engaging both in the ELS Self-Awareness (Identify) and the Self-Knowledge (Understand) steps, RQ3 inquired about final-year preservice teachers' impressions of EI based on their experience with the SCALE assessment. The participants generally perceived EI to involve caring, empathy, open-mindedness, and self-awareness. Therefore, the theme unpacked for RQ3 was, *Principal components of EI include caring, empathy, open-mindedness, and self-awareness*.

Again, encompassing both the ELS Step 2 – Self-Awareness (Identify) and ELS Step 3 – Self-Knowledge (Understand), RQ4 sought to have the participants discuss their EI strengths and areas to develop based on their SCALE results. Generally, the participants had some knowledge and doubts about the growth mindset associated with EI (Dweck & Yeager, 2021). Some participants expressed doubts about the accuracy of the questionnaire, while others questioned the results and perceived that their interpretation of the results were different from the definitions of the EI skills included with the assessment profile. These subthemes led to the theme unpacked for RQ4, that *Guided interpretation of the SCALE profile is needed to increase EI fidelity among teacher candidates.* Importantly, most participants saw the resulting areas of development as an

opportunity to improve themselves. The participants perceived that having strengths and weaknesses was natural and a part of growth. The goal of developing EI was to find a balance between taking care of oneself and of others. The resulting strengths were perceived to be skills that were important to be possessed by teachers.

Finally, focusing only on the ELS Step 3 (Understand), RQ5 sought to clarify how the final-year preservice teachers understood EI skills in terms of making them more or less ready to teach. The participants generally perceived that EI skills were important for interacting with students. The participants reasoned that they could not teach students and address their needs effectively if they themselves were not emotionally prepared. As a result of having participated in the study, some of the participants shared a goal to become better at treating themselves with kindness, as well as to treat others with empathy while creating healthy boundaries. These subthemes were unpacked to reveal the last theme, that *EI is important for healthy inter- and intra-personal relationships and health.*

Project Deliverable

One of the main outcomes of the study was to confirm that the students did not have a planned opportunity to have an in-depth experience with EI learning. There was no formal plan. The participants who expressed an experience with EI learning attributed those experiences as coincidental to the curriculum rather than having a course on EI within the curriculum. These surreptitious examples included advice from experienced teachers about avoiding burnout in teaching practicum, a paragraph recalled from unit on

K–12 student SEL, or a mention by a professor about teacher best practices outside of teaching the content.

As we discussed EI during the interviews, the prospective teachers expressed a strong desire to learn more. These sentiments have been expressed in the literature in terms of the indirect ways of learning EI through the covert curriculum (Low & Hammett, 2021). As a result of these findings, the project genre chosen for this study was a transformative EI curriculum to offer prospective teachers the opportunity to learn EI in ways that enable them to model EI-based skills in K–12 classrooms to engender a more sustainable learning environment for teacher and student success.

Section 3: The Project

The purpose of this qualitative multi-modal descriptive study was to explore the perceptions of final-year teacher candidates about their readiness to learn and teach as understood from a framework of nonintellective skills and abilities operationalized as EI. Section 3 details how the project at the center of the study was carried out. The project entails a 9-week curriculum focused on teaching EI. The course is focused on final-year teacher candidates in higher education. Its implementation is bookended by two iterations of the assessment for Skills for Career And Life Effectiveness (SCALE) instrument. This instrument illustrates the final-year teacher candidates' change in EI through the course.

The course has seven modules that are each addressed in one or two weeks of the course. In addition to the pre-test assessment, Week 1 includes an introduction to the concept of EI and its relevance. Weeks 2 and 3 involve a module on interpersonal relationships. Weeks three and four entail a module on self-management. In Weeks 5 and 6, a module on personal leadership is presented. Then, Weeks 7 and 8 address a module on healthy interpersonal relationships. The final week include a final course project and the post-test evaluation.

Overall, the goal of the project is twofold. First, the project is intended to develop, strengthen, and enhance the personal, emotional, relational, and life ([PERL]; Low & Hammett, 2021) skills of final-year teacher candidates. Second, the project is intended to assess the effects of the course in achieving that goal, both qualitatively through the final project and quantitatively using the SCALE assessment. Understanding The evaluations contribute to understanding the efficacy of the proposed nine-week curriculum and help

to build upon and refine it for future iterations. Ultimately, EI is a vital skill for teachers, and this project can help to develop it (Abiodullah & Aslam, 2020). The EI curriculum project experience contributes to positive social change by helping future teachers be better prepared for entering the teaching profession and thus be a better teaching resource for their future students.

<p style="text-align:center">Rationale</p>

As stated from the outset, the problem for this study was that a local preservice teacher preparation program did not include EI in the curriculum and as a result, final year teacher candidates may be entering their profession with EI deficits. The benefits of EI for teachers are substantial. These benefits extend to both the teachers themselves, through improving their learning (García-Martínez et al., 2021), and to their students. Teachers with EI demonstrate greater ability to connect with their students (Peláez-Fernández et al., 2021). Such teachers are also typically more effective at classroom management (Valente et al., 2020) and may be more aware of when students are struggling to learn content. As a result, EI can be considered a high priority competency for preservice teachers. However, at both the local site and more broadly, EI is lacking in preservice teacher training (Turner & Stough, 2020).

The deficit in EI-related education for teachers combined with the findings from the current study created the need for this project. To address the deficit in EI education the themes reported in Section 2, a curriculum project was appropriate. This project, which entails the development of new educational materials (Santoso & Murod, 2021), addressed the problem at the local project site through creating an EI education course.

Although EI is an essential competency, a lack of EI training is not only a local problem, but a wider one (Turner & Stough, 2020). With this in mind, I developed a new EI course based on best practices in the literature rather than borrowing from an existing course that would not have aligned with the TEI framework that grounded this study.

If effective, the 9-week curriculum could make a significant contribution to the literature. An effective EI course would solve the local problem, but the course proposed herein is not exclusively applicable to local school characteristics. The course could be transferred to contribute teacher training sites more generally. The use of the SCALE assessment and qualitative interview data allows for a comprehensive assessment if the course is effective. The ability to assess the curriculum for efficacy allows for an authoritative appraisal of whether the course was an effective solution to the local problem. In addition, this comprehensive assessment provides evidence of whether the course is appropriate to use more broadly. Such iterative appraisal and refinement is considered a best practice for course development (Breen-Wenninger & Louis, 2020; Singh, 2021). A curriculum development project approach was the most appropriate project genre for addressing the local problem.

Review of the Literature

Research indicated that education needs teachers with EI (Kovalchuk et al., 2022; Tejada-Gallardo et al., 2022). However, many preservice teachers are not getting the training they need to succeed in their role as educators (Delk, 2019; Tejada-Gallardo et al., 2022). If they are, they are not given the opportunity to practice their skills before entering the classroom (Tican & Deniz, 2019). The problem the current study addressed

was that a local preservice teacher preparation program did not include EI in the curriculum. As a result, final-year teacher candidates were entering their profession with EI deficits. The graduates SSC's College of Education teacher preparation program were the focus of this study. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of final-year teacher candidates concerning their readiness to learn and teach as understood from a framework of nonintellective skills and abilities operationalized as EI. Content knowledge was obtained from this project's literature review and the interviews.

This study included a qualitative multimodal interview methodology following Creswell's (2015) six-step data analysis approach and Saldaña's (2018) suggestion of open coding. The findings from the interviews were shared in Section 2. This section provides a discussion of the findings within a literature review of the curriculum project genre selected for this study. Courses are most effectively designed when aligned with the intended outcomes of learning (Breen-Wenninger & Louis, 2020). The current project followed this suggestion by addressing outcome needs that were taken from the themes that were identified through participant interviews. The interviews in the current project and the literature review acted as a needs assessment and formative assessment to determine the course's design. The purpose of the course is to support preservice teachers' readiness to learn and teach using the nonintellective skills and abilities operationalized as EI.

Title Searches and Documentation

The Walden University Library databases used in this review included the Directory of Open Access, PubMed Central, ERIC, Taylor & Francis Online, Jstor,

Research Gate, Wiley Online Library, National Library of Medicine (NIH), Science Direct, SAGE Journals, and Google Scholar. The inclusion criteria were met if the study had been published in a peer-reviewed journal, addressed topics of focus for the current study, and was published within the last 5 years (2018–2023). The exclusion criteria were met if the study was not published in a peer-reviewed journal, did not address topics of focus for the current study, and was published prior to the last 5 years. Search terms included *emotional intelligence, course creation, teacher, efficacy, outcomes, teacher training, preservice, first-year, preparation, defined, stress, classroom management, emotional intelligence, cultural competency, diversity, special needs, outcomes, readiness, open-mindedness, self-awareness, empathy,* and meaningful combinations of these terms.

Course Creation Definitions and Approaches

There are many different approaches to course creation. Courses in this context are educational programs that provide theoretical knowledge to students in an area that can support their skill development (Santoso & Murod, 2021). The current project is a 9-week course created to support EI. Course creation benefits from providing students with opportunities to practice the principles being taught. Additionally, courses may be required or elective, giving preservice teachers many choices for learning, refining, and practicing their skills (Tican & Deniz, 2019). The appropriate choice for course creation may be dependent on the context in which the course is being given.

Often courses are created with a traditional lecture style in mind. However, it is possible that a class on EI may not benefit from a conventional course approach of

lecturing, because the preservice teachers may benefit more from a hands-on, experiential approach toward the concepts and practice of EI (Breen-Wenninger & Louis, 2020). Six categories have been identified as beneficial for developing higher order thinking as a foundation for building courses aligned with nontraditional learning outcomes: (a) remembering, (b) applying, (c) analyzing, (d) understanding, (e) evaluating, and (f) creating (Pierce et al., 2018). Fitting this approach into the learning aims of the EI course, including Nelson and Low's (2011) five-step ELS, may address the gap in EI training currently reported by preservice teachers. The EI course needs to address the caution identified by Breen-Wenninger and Louis (2020), that "the assessment of skills and tasks that students have to develop and prove under circumstances that ask for creativity and include conditions of uncertainty" (p 65). Synthesizing Pierce et al.'s (2018) and Nelson and Low's (2011) learning systems can help address the caution identified by Winninger and incorporate the EI principles that need to be applied in nontraditional ways to support preservice teachers work with students.

EI assists people with making meaning. EI has been found to help individuals manage uncertainty (Hussien et al., 2020) and become more creative (Silva & Coelho, 2018). The current project contains a 9-week curriculum focused on teaching EI, supported by the current literature review. Research indicated that meaning is not shared through direct instruction but created by the students through their learning activities (Ali, 2018). The current course may benefit from having many learning activities aligned with the learning objectives, providing preservice teachers with many opportunities to make their meaning of EI (Ali, 2018). Designing a nontraditional EI course for preservice

teachers using the principles and benefits of EI may overcome any andragogic limitations through creative, flexible andragogical approaches that help students make meaning.

This project includes appreciative inquiry as a conceptual framework. Course creation using appreciative inquiry may help preservice teachers change their thinking about their work. Appreciative inquiry allows individuals to move from deficit-based thinking to a strengths-based perspective (Armstrong et al., 2020). The current 9-week curriculum on teaching EI also benefits from appreciative inquiry through increased cognitive flexibility. Appreciative Inquiry can inform course creation by identifying areas to improve teachers' EI and increase the emotional and cognitive resources to turn those areas into strengths (Armstrong et al., 2020). Appreciative inquiry may support EI's capacity to empower educators.

There are many ways in which appreciative inquiry and EI may complement each other. Appreciative inquiry helps support strengths-based thinking (Armstrong et al., 2020). Research has shown that when leaders use a strengths-based approach, it enhances the strengths of those who follow (Ding & Yu, 2021). Teachers are leaders, and developing a course supporting their EI likely translates into more successful students (MacCann et al., 2020). However, the relationship between teachers' EI and their students' outcomes may be moderated by how course content overlaps with EI (MacCann et al., 2020). EI-centric teaching necessitates the internalization and integration of PERL skills, the ELS, and the three ways to teach and learn EI: (a) active imagination, (b) self-directed coaching, and (c) guided mentoring (Nelson & Low, 2011). Teachers integrating

these EI skills are likely to have more tools on hand for managing the complexities of their role.

Best-Evidence-based Approaches for Course Creation

Course creation is a dynamic topic with many elements to it. Research has suggested that effective course creation is informed by evidence-based recommendations (Pierce et al., 2018). The information gathered from the current project's literature review and analysis of interview data provided evidence supporting course development. Additionally, content knowledge drives how courses are created (Pierce et al., 2018). Real-world challenges require educators to transform their pedagogical approach based on the needs of students, organizational goals, and societal expectations (Berardi et al., 2018). However, balancing the practical demands of teaching with personal beliefs about the pedagogic approach is challenging (Berardi et al., 2018). This challenge is supported by assessments that refine and adapt course content (Breen-Wenninger & Louis, 2020; Singh, 2021). Providing a course with the right assessments helps to align outcomes and design.

Course creation benefits from evidence-based suggestions, which are methods found to be successful through experience and empirical study. Evidence-based suggestions are often considerations of the timing of using tools. One suggestion is to use student assessments at the beginning of a course so that the teacher has the information to individualize their course approach (Amerstorfer & von Münster-Kistner, 2021). If the course delivery is not individualized, students may lack engagement due to the topics being perceived by students as lacking value (Amerstorfer & von Münster-Kistner,

2021). Value can also be supported by course design, which increases the perception of a nurturing environment in the school (Khanna et al., 2021). Individualizing course learning activities and content can be supported by effective and timely assessments.

The literature is replete with course creation examples that included different sources of evidence. One professional development course creation approach included the SHARE model, which is rooted in evidence-based practices (D'Amico et al., 2020). According to D'Amico et al. (2020), the SHARE model consists of

> (a) [S stands for] Show consideration for the expertise of others, (b) [H stands for] Heed contextual factors, (c) [A stands for] Achieve group solutions to identified implementation problems, (d) [R stands for] Reflect on implementation and enhance it if needed by making appropriate modifications, and (e) [E stands for] Evaluate outcomes. (p. 5)

The professional development course creation initiatives that used the SHARE model to collaborate with students, teachers, and faculty to enhance material retention. For example, as a part of this collaborative team, one teacher shared infused course materials with a faculty member who provided course content guidance through the perspective of goals and expectations. Collaborative decisions from all shareholders were made based on those who had expertise. The current curriculum plan benefits from the SHARE model by including the final-year preservice teachers as collaborators.

Often courses are created to meet an identified need. For example, Pierce et al. (2018) performed a case study of how to bridge theory and practice in the development of a course for leadership cultivation. The course in the case study was developed by

engaging educators and learning the community's needs through community activities (Pierce et al., 2018). Actors collaborating with those they will act upon to support course development is seen throughout the scholarly literature (D'Amico et al., 2020; Pierce et al., 2018). TEI is research-derived, person-centered, skills-based, and relationship focused (Nelson et al., 2015; Nelson et al., 2017); TEI tenets that require dynamic collaboration. This course development approach may assist with teacher turnover problems and teachers' difficulty implementing best-evidence-based practices.

There is considerable research on using best-evidence-based practices for course creation. Kumar et al. (2019) interviewed eight award-winning faculty about the best methods for course creation. The researchers found that courses were often designed using a backward approach. A backward approach to course development begins with the desire learning outcomes (Kumar et al., 2019). Learning outcomes are determined by identifying learning objectives, resources for the course, and the course topic. A course syllabus can be created to outline the learning objectives (Gin et al., 2021; Kumar et al., 2019). However, syllabi are often found to be created without aligning and sharing expectations or clarifying criteria and outcomes (Gin et al., 2021), difficulties that can be mitigated by incorporating D'Amico et al.'s (2020) SHARE model for course development. Leaving these crucial elements out may increase student confusion and misalignment with learning goals. A syllabus is a form of course alignment that helps the course design express the learning objectives (Ali, 2018). Learning activities during the course can help students develop familiarity with the course topics. Learning objectives can be shared with students at the beginning of the course to help them align their work

(Ali, 2018). These best-evidence-based practices can be applied through the lens of EI, appreciative inquiry, and the SHARE model to keep the course elements tightly aligned.

Educators Interacting With the Community (Pierce et al., 2018) was a partnership that provided a needs assessment to inform the creation of a new course in ways that were similar to how my study uses interview data to guide the creation of a course that addresses specific educator needs. Research-based recommendations drive the choice of course content (Pierce et al., 2018). Knowledge of the content needed for the course may be conceptualized and broken down in ways that align with the needs of those stakeholders who may use the course (Pierce et al., 2018). If knowledge of the course content is conceptualized and broken down using transformative EI, appreciative inquiry, and the SHARE model for course development, it may find unique, and perhaps unintended applications.

The purpose of this qualitative multi-modal descriptive study was to explore the perceptions of final-year teacher candidates about their readiness to learn and teach as understood from a framework of nonintellective skills and abilities operationalized as EI. The problem the current study addressed has been identified as a problem within scholarly research, as illustrated by several studies (Tejada-Gallardo et al., 2022). An online survey of 208 preservice teachers was conducted on their experience and expectations of using EI. This survey found that most preservice teachers were never taught about EI during their four-year teacher preparation programs (Tejada-Gallardo et al., 2022). Courses can help improve preservice teacher preparedness (Goudarzian et al., 2019; Ma et al., 2022). For example, a skill-based course was found to help preservice

teachers improve their self-efficacy (Ma et al., 2022). This course succeeded through focused content area design, developing skills, engaging in reflection, and including appropriate assessments (Ma et al., 2022). Another course taught self-care and found a subsequent improvement in nursing students' EI (Goudarzian et al., 2019). When EI courses are included in higher education programs, they fill an identified gap in practice.

The Problem of Preservice Teacher Needs

The problem this study addressed was that a local preservice teacher preparation program did not include EI in the curriculum, and as a result, final-year teacher candidates may be entering their profession with EI deficits. The interview conducted in this study affirms preservice teachers' need for improved EI training. The five themes unpacked from my data analysis included (a) limited opportunities to learn about EI directly from the teacher preparation program; (b) EI training embedded but not explicit in classroom management courses; (c) the benefits of EI learned indirectly; (d) the value of the EI assessment, and; (e) teacher readiness. The themes can help inform the current projects' curriculum that needs to focus on teaching EI in teacher preparation programs.

Limited Opportunities to Learn About EI

An important theme unpacked in Section 2 was that participants experienced limited opportunities to learn EI while studying in their teacher preparation programs. Limited opportunities are addressed by providing nine-week curriculum focused on teaching EI in their teacher preparation program. The scholarly literature also affirmed this finding (Tejada-Gallardo et al., 2022). The study of 208 preservice teachers found that while these students expected to learn about EI in their teacher training programs,

most were never exposed to EI education or training (Tejada-Gallardo et al., 2022). One participant in the Tejada-Gallardo et al. (2022) study shared EI was taught only during the final semester of the program. As such, the EI content they learned during the last semester could no longer be applied to their studies. The EI information was forgotten as students were not allowed to apply what they were learning. One aspect of AI is that an organization is likely to register growth in various directions (Royer & Latz, 2016). However, there must be an established way of determining the direction of growth or interactions, which cannot be ascertained if students are given little or no chance to practice and apply what they are studying. Practice, therefore, should be embedded in any course that purports to teach EI.

Participants recognized their need to improve their stress management skills in preparation for classroom management. This finding supports the alignment of EI in the current projects' nine-week curriculum focused on teaching EI. This finding shows that the best-evidence-based approach to course design was not applied in their preservice teachers' learning process. Fundamentally, the best-evidence-based approach as laid out by Ali (2018) was (a) a systematic approach to content, (b) backward design, (c) course organization, (d) meeting the learning needs, and (e) student interaction. This best-evidence-based approach should be directly applied to the proposed course for increasing preservice teachers' EI to improve their readiness for success as public-school teachers.

One of the benefits of learning and applying EI is improved stress management. However, many preservice teachers are not equipped with appropriate stress management training (Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2019). This finding was echoed in the scholarly

literature, emphasizing that even if preservice teachers learn about stress management techniques, applying them effectively in the classroom is even more rare (Gilar-Corbí et al., 2018; Pozo-Rico et al., 2024). In review, according to Nelson and Low (2011), the longer definition of TEI is that it is a confluence of learned skills and abilities on the four pillars of (a) accurate self-knowledge and appreciation, (b) a variety of healthy relationships, (c) working well with others, and (d) *coping healthily with the demands and pressures of everyday work and life*. Studying, learning, and applying TEI will empower teachers with stress-reducing psychological tools (Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2019). Teachers with lower EI have been found to experience more burnout related to poor stress management (Fiorilli et al., 2019; Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2019). EI helps educators develop the self-awareness and skills to persevere in their jobs.

Preservice teachers who learn EI techniques may be more supportive of their peers during the crucial first years. Research has found that social support from peers at work was more helpful in reducing burnout for teachers than support from outside work (Fiorilli et al., 2019). This finding emphasizes that EI helps teachers more accurately perceive support offered from peers; support that may otherwise be overlooked by teachers who have not learned to apply EI (Mérida-López et al., 2020). Failing to acknowledge peer support may increase teachers' stress, burnout, and turnover (Mérida-López et al., 2020). As such, a course designed to improve preservice teachers' EI may support teachers entering the profession by better equipping them to offer and receive much-needed peer support, thus increasing the likelihood of teacher retention. This best-

evidence-based finding could be directly applied to the proposed course for increasing

preservice teachers' EI to improve their capacity to provide and recognize peer support.

EI Training Sometimes Experience by Chance, but not Intentionally Embedded

Some participants shared that they learned about EI indirectly through their

preservice teaching experiences, specifically when teaching special needs students. A

lack of EI training in classroom management courses left the participants in the current

study learning EI indirectly from their own experiences. This finding was echoed in the

scholarly literature, which emphasized that preservice teachers admit to not having

enough opportunities to learn and develop their skills during practicum (Tican & Deniz,

2019). This limitation is addressed in the current project by providing learning and

practice opportunities in EI explicitly through the weekly modules.

The lack of EI in teachers may contribute to systemic problems in the profession

of education. One-third of new teachers quit within the first three years (Chambers-Mack

et al., 2019). Research has indicated that if new teachers have lower EI, they are likely to

have lower organizational commitment and are more likely to quit (Mérida-López et al.,

2020). One of the causes of the higher rates of new teacher attrition is poor student

behavior (Harmsen et al., 2018). First-year teachers may not have learned the stress and

behavior management necessary to transition from learning to being an educator (Fitchett

et al., 2021). Research has shown that teachers with higher EI are more successful in

classroom management (Wu et al., 2022). As such, a course preparing teachers to manage

classroom behavior challenges using EI likely reduces new teacher turnover. Reducing

the turnover of new teachers can lessen the impact of the shortage of teachers and support

teachers staying in the profession long enough to gain mastery (van Rooij et al., 2019). This best-evidence-based suggestion could be directly applied to the proposed course design for increasing preservice teachers' EI to improve their readiness and reduce turnover.

The Benefits of EI Learned Indirectly

The interview results found that participants understood the benefits of EI as (a) having self-awareness, (b) becoming caring and empathic, and (c) becoming open-minded. The participants correlated EI with a deeper understanding of self, others, and the differing contexts of self and others. This finding is affirmed in the scholarly literature (Roth et al., 2019; Tejada-Gallardo et al., 2022). The proposed curriculum plan benefits from the SHARE model by including the final-year preservice teachers in opportunities for relationship building that may help build EI.

Self-Awareness. Self-awareness was shown by participants drawing connections using EI, such as when Participant Three stated, "I guess maybe stress management is something that affects your physical wellness." Self-awareness was found to help participants identify their weaknesses, choose to work on them, and use emotions as a guide. This finding is addressed through the opportunities for learning self-awareness provided in the projects' curriculum focused on teaching EI. The empathy developed through the SCALE assessment helped participants better understand how to communicate with children. This section briefly details study participants' perceived benefits of EI, emphasizing the problem of the lack of EI due to inadequate preservice teacher training.

Self-awareness is an outcome of EI. The benefits of the EI aspect of self-awareness for teachers have been identified in scholarly research as integral to personal and professional success (Krishnan & Awang, 2020). Self-aware teachers understand themselves and others better and become more effective communicators (Krishnan & Awang, 2020). Additionally, more self-aware teachers are more equipped to cope with the stress that naturally arises in their profession (Krishnan & Awang, 2020). Teachers without the EI competency of self-awareness may be less sensitive to and less able read the emotions of others; less able to balance their own cognition, emotions, and behavior, and less likely to make ethical choices due to inadequate self-awareness (Ahad et al., 2021). Considering that EI has no meaning except through the subjective experiences of individuals, increases in self-awareness may also contribute an increased quality of life.

Research also emphasizes that teachers' body language is an implicit resource for teachers. For example, "non-verbal language positively contributes to the development of EI in the teaching–learning environment. It assumes a primordial role in teaching and learning, generating empathy between teacher and student and amongst students themselves" (Puertas-Molero et al., 2018, p. 524). Teachers who lack the EI aspect of self-awareness may communicate non-verbally which may not benefit their students and their relationships with them. The inability to know the relationship between non-verbal language and student interactions may increase teacher stress and burnout (Puertas-Molero et al., 2018). A course that helps preservice teachers cultivate self-awareness may equip new teachers with the tools to use non-verbal language in alignment with their teaching goals.

Caring and Empathy. An additional benefit of EI is increased empathy and capacity for caring. The benefits of the EI aspects of caring and empathy for teachers have been identified in scholarly research as valuable for connecting with students and being aware of the impact of the hidden curriculum (Omid et al., 2018). Caring and empathy are a natural extension of EI and are included in the opportunities for learning provided in the projects' curriculum focused on informed teaching with EI. As such, without empathy, teachers may unconsciously act out the hidden curriculum in ways that alienate diverse students (Akran & Koyuncu, 2018). Researchers emphasize that students learn more from teachers than they intend to teach in class and that awareness of the hidden curriculum is needed to support students' emotional health (Abroampa, 2020). Some researchers have gone as far as to assert that empathy may be the key to effective teaching (Aldrup et al., 2022). When teachers have empathy, the quality of their interactions with students tend to be higher, warmer, and more meaningful from the students' perspectives (Aldrup et al., 2022). However, empirical evidence for the relationship between empathy and student outcomes is limited, and research is ongoing (Aldrup et al., 2022). This project may contribute to that lack of literature by exploring final-year teacher candidates' readiness to learn and teach using the EI skill of empathy.

There are many ways that a teacher's caring and empathy may facilitate job satisfaction and student outcomes. One way is through reducing harsh disciplinary practices that decrease students being pushed into the criminal justice system (Basford et al., 2021; Morgan & Hu, 2023). Students who believe their teachers do not care about them are likelier to have behavior problems (Basford et al., 2021). Many diverse students

encounter no teachers sharing their ethnicity and perceive a great deal of stereotypical behaviors that threaten and come across as uncaring (Basford et al., 2021). Research has shown that teachers' lack of training and education in working with diverse students contributes to higher rates of harsh discipline for minorities (Morgan & Hu, 2023). As such, the EI course produced in this study may help increase teachers' self- and others-care, and as a result, reduce harsh discipline practices. Best-evidence-based approaches to courses emphasize the influence of caring student-teacher interactions (Kumar et al., 2019). Caring and empathy can be taught by the teacher of the proposed EI course through their approach to student interactions.

Open-Mindedness. In many ways, the EI element of open-mindedness may assist teachers with balancing the various demands of their work and life. Open-mindedness can help individuals see how to turn problems into solutions, but without an open mind, issues may be viewed as intractable (Alzoubi & Aziz, 2021). Individuals with the EI aspect of open-mindedness may be more accepting of collaborating with individuals with differing levels of expertise (Kwapisz et al., 2022). This aspect of open-mindedness may help teachers offer more peer support to each other. Open-mindedness may be cultivated through EI development, which is provided in the current projects' curriculum focused on teaching EI.

Increased peer-support in the teaching community may result from investments in EI. Research also indicates that open-mindedness helps create psychological safety, which supports expansive pathways for team learning (Harvey et al., 2019). Applying this concept in the classroom could dramatically impact teacher and student

psychological safety, teamwork, and classroom culture. Research has shown that courses with a climate of psychological security help students engage (Roth et al., 2019). Psychological safety is essential for teachers and students to feel safe in classrooms in which the threat of violence is ever-present (Cohen et al., 2023). Research has shown that healthy relationships between teachers and students support psychological safety and moderate peer victimization in schools (Jia et al., 2018). The proposed EI course may support the cultivation of open-mindedness, which has the potential to improve teacher-student relationships and reduce violence in schools. These best-evidence-based suggestions could be directly applied to the proposed course design for increasing preservice teachers' self-awareness, empathy, and open-mindedness.

The Value of the SCALE Assessment

The interview results of three participants with SCALE assessment strengths in the domains of commitment ethic, empathy, and interpersonal assertion believed that their skills could help them prepare to support diverse students. Research has affirmed using positive assessment to train, educate, and assess teachers' EI (Ali, 2018; Chen & Guo, 2020; Fiorilli et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2022). Positive assessment can be used to determine if the course design is successfully aligned with the learning objectives (Ali, 2018). One method the literature highlighted as not conducive to preservice teachers' readiness was courses designed loosely (Ma et al., 2022). It is helpful for courses to be tightly designed around learning objectives rather than loosely aligned with learning objectives. Assessments can be used during the class and course development to ensure learning objectives maintain a central focus.

Teacher Readiness

A finding from my study's interviews was that EI was believed to provide a foundation upon which to support teacher readiness to interact with students, which is related to self-directed learning. Stress management was another aspect of readiness shown through the interview, as one participant commented that EI would likely help them deal with the stress of working in a constantly changing environment. Research has successfully correlated EI with the capacity for self-directed learning (Koç, 2019). While this is helpful for students, it is a relationship that supports the ongoing professional development and learning teachers must adopt (Caena & Redecker, 2019). Self-directed learning is supported by teachers sharing the learning objectives with students at the beginning of the course (Ali, 2018). EI helps develop positive self-assessment, which is likely to support teachers' readiness to interact with students and improve self-directed learning.

Research on teacher-student partnerships in course creation has particular applications for preservice teachers. Teacher-student partnerships in course creation are influenced by teachers' valuing student feedback and inviting students to co-create courses (Martens et al., 2020; Wallin, 2020). The project seeks to support the personal, emotional, and relational capacities of preservice teachers, which may support readiness for teacher-student partnerships.

One researcher suggested that engaging students at the beginning of a course to co-create timescapes could provide valuable capstone learning opportunities (Wallin, 2020). The concept of co-creating timescapes was analyzed through an interdisciplinary

course titled "Environments for Learning in Higher Education" at a Norwegian university (Wallin, 2020). This course had similar learning outcomes to the EI course, such as "students should develop abilities to reflect on, evaluate, understand, and alter their approaches concerning the group" (Wallin, 2020, p. 767). The course comprised 20-30 Master's degree students from different study programs working together on self-defined projects in alignment with the learning outcomes for the course. The concept of timescape informed how teachers and students co-create using time and space to achieve learning outcomes (Wallin, 2020). This approach relies on communication between teachers and students, similar to how EI may be intentionally practiced within learning contexts (Wallin, 2020). For courses with preservice teachers, supporting teacher-student partnerships may help empower preservice teachers and provide valuable opportunities to put EI into practice.

Course Creation

The information gleaned from the Section 3 review of literature on course creation, combined with selected interview findings from my study provide best-evidence-based suggestions for the project's course creation. The aim is to create an EI course that supports preservice teachers' self-awareness, empathy, and open-mindedness as the learning outcomes. This study found that using the SCALE assessment improved preservice teachers' empathy. As such, the SCALE assessment would be a valuable introductory aspect of the course suggested in this project. The SCALE assessment could help preservice teachers identify their strengths and weaknesses. As the approach continued, EI could be applied to build awareness and tools for improving those

weaknesses. Using assessments provides opportunities for self-reflection, which may benefit teachers throughout their careers as they are presented with multitudes of challenges in the classroom.

Creating an EI Course That Supports the Development of Preservice Teachers' Tools for Classroom Management

Using best-evidence-based information is helpful when designing a course. The EI project is one such best-evidence-based approach that may be positively correlated with classroom management self-efficacy (Agbaria, 2021). The development of the proposed EI course for preservice teachers may be supported by a brief literature review of the best-evidence-based methodologies for classroom management utilizing EI. Additionally, the literature suggests that courses be designed with the learning outcomes held firmly in mind (Breen-Wenninger & Louis, 2020). The intended learning outcome for the proposed course is to improve teachers' EI to support the development of self-awareness, empathy, and open-mindedness. Keeping these learning goals as a finish line, the course may be backward' designed with the learning activities and coursework supporting these outcomes (Kumar et al., 2019). Additional best-evidence-based suggestions on course creation indicate that assessments are used to refine course content (Breen-Wenninger & Louis, 2020; Singh, 2021). The proposed EI course for preservice teachers could use classroom management and EI assessments throughout the course to determine the effectiveness of the approach of course content. This course is guided by the appreciative inquiry approach, which encourages the conversion of deficit-based thinking into strengths-based perspectives (Armstrong et al., 2020). Positive assessment,

as proposed by Nelson and Low (2011) can be used to show the pathways from deficits to strengths as the course progresses.

Using best-evidence-based findings to guide how classroom management techniques are presented in the course may help teachers prepare for successful behavior management utilizing EI. The element of self-awareness in EI may support classroom management through teachers gaining greater emotional sensitivity toward students' needs and finding creative management techniques based on their sensitivity (Agbaria, 2021). The project course may support this learning outcome through directed discussion about students' emotional development and communication styles. The element of empathy in EI may support classroom management through teachers' gaining a greater capacity for putting themselves in their students' place and using this form of reframing to make healthy classroom management choices. The element of open-mindedness in EI may support classroom management through teachers developing a less rigid behavior management structure and preparing a flexible approach to classroom management. One such flexible approach to classroom management has been proposed in the literature in which the teacher uses their EI to shift behavioral management responsibility onto the students (Agbaria, 2021). Such a transfer of responsibility rests on teachers cultivating a solid relationship with students, establishing trust, and empowering rationality in students (Agbaria, 2021). The proposed EI course supports this learning outcome by leading preservice teachers through role-play to develop their communication and management approaches.

Course creation using best-evidence-based methods may ensure the most essential EI elements are included. The best-evidenced method for course creation offers that content knowledge drives how courses are created (Pierce et al., 2018). As such, this project supports content knowledge development for the researcher creating the course. However, as the course creation continues, more in-depth research may be needed to develop the most appropriate learning activities to align EI to each desired learning outcome. Additionally, best-evidenced methods suggested that learning objectives be shared with students at the beginning of the course (Ali, 2018). Applying this suggestion may help preservice teachers gauge their EI growth over the length of the course. The initial sharing of learning objectives could lead to a discussion at the beginning of the course that may assist the teacher in getting to know their students individually by identifying their EI strengths and weaknesses.

My study's interview results found that some aspects of EI were learned by teaching students with special needs. The research provides direction that best-evidence-based information helps design a practical course (Pierce et al., 2018). The development of the proposed EI course for preservice teachers may be aided through a brief literature review of the best-evidence-based methodologies for utilizing EI for teaching students with special needs. Additionally, the literature suggests that courses be designed with the learning outcomes guiding course creation (Breen-Wenninger & Louis, 2020; Kumar et al., 2019). The proposed course is designed to cultivate emotional sensitivity and creativity by balancing the development of EI capabilities with the unique needs of the special needs student population.

Teachers may be one of the most influential actors in their students' lives, and as such, they have a great responsibility to empower students with special needs. Teachers with higher EI may help support students with special needs through more tailored instruction, interaction, and relationships. In turn, it has been found that when teachers working with special needs students have lower EI, they may struggle with instruction and managing this population (Skura & Świderska, 2022). The proposed project course may help preservice teachers prepare to work with special needs students by expanding their EI and providing them with many tools to recognize diverse emotional experiences.

The support of appreciative inquiry guiding the development of the project in Appendix A (Armstrong et al., 2020). One way the transition to strengths-based thinking may be supported is through educating preservice teachers on what is known about the emotional approach, strengths, and needs of special needs students. The participants in the current study's interview found that they learned about EI from working with special needs students. This student group may help promote EI in teachers as they may approach emotions from a non-traditional method. A learning activity that may assist preservice teachers in growing from deficit-to-strengths-based thinking regarding special needs student capacity is having a guest speaker with a long history of successfully working with special needs students. Hearing first-hand accounts of successes with special needs students through creative and emotionally intelligent ways may provide preservice teachers with tools and confidence that build up strengths-based thinking. Additionally, the best-evidence-based approach of sharing learning objectives at the

beginning of the course may assist preservice teachers in cultivating open-mindedness toward their capacity to support students with special needs (Ali, 2018).

Creating the EI Course

The research I have reviewed emphasizes that best-evidence-based practices should inform course creation. As such, developing the EI course for preservice teachers may be aided through a brief literature review of the best-evidence-based methodologies for utilizing EI to improve teachers' cultural competency for diverse students. Ideally, new teachers could survey their classrooms at the beginning of the year to identify the mix of cultural backgrounds present in their student populations. New teachers could use survey data to inform their EI in culturally relevant teaching methods that help them connect with their students and cultivate respect for all cultures.

The course included as the project for this study shares how research has suggested culturally responsive approaches draw on the funds of students' experience, speak in ways that reflect respect, and promote relationships with students (Rodríguez-Izquierdo, 2018). Teaching the EI course from a culturally relevant approach may support preservice teachers' transformation of the beliefs surrounding diversity from a deficit-based thinking to a strengths-based perspective (Armstrong et al., 2020). After all, culturally relevant pedagogy is a perspective that sees diversity as a strength. However, preservice teachers have shared the challenges they have experienced in training regarding diversity as generalized assumptions that undermine real learning and connection with students (Borrero et al., 2018). The proposed course includes implicit bias training for preservice teachers to help identify generalized assumptions that may

undermine connecting with diverse students. Additionally, the course addresses this challenge by using positive assessment to gauge the effectiveness of culturally relevant EI teaching.

Best-evidence-based methods may be applied to course design to ensure alignment of content and goals. The literature suggests that courses be outlined with the learning outcomes in mind (Breen-Wenninger & Louis, 2020; Kumar et al., 2019). Using EI competencies to improve cultural competency is well-established in the scholarly literature (Guntersdorfer & Golubeva, 2018; Kai Liao et al., 2021). Some research is beginning to explore the possibility that EI is culture-specific and culturally embedded (Pathak & Muralidharan, 2020). This perspective asserts that EI may be implicit and is a form of a social resource that influences behavior (Pathak & Muralidharan, 2020). Including discussions on ideas such as this in the proposed course may help preservice teachers come to a deeper understanding of their cultural alignment and its impact on their teaching. Such an understanding may help teachers examine their implicit bias, and the hidden curriculum, and have good implications for EI. A course that provides learning activities and opportunities for EI to support intercultural competency must be designed with diverse learners in mind. The goal of the current project is to help develop the personal, emotional, and relational lives of educators. Such developments are likely to facilitate the flexibility needed to support diverse learners.

Creating an EI Course That Supports Preservice Teachers' Readiness to Interact with Students

An identified need found in the current study's interviews was the need to help with preservice readiness to teach. The current project of a nine-week course focused on teaching EI provides opportunities to enhance teacher readiness to teach. One method to support teacher readiness is through preservice courses that help students integrate their knowledge and skills to prepare for their own teaching, as is the current project (Gryzun, 2018). Research has found that even when preservice teachers are provided with adequate instruction, they often lack the opportunities to practice their skills during practicum to the degree they feel ready to teach (Tican & Deniz, 2019). One aspect of readiness is preservice teacher expectations of the coming profession (Tejada-Gallardo et al., 2022). If the proposed course can help build up preservice teachers' positive expectations about the job, they are more likely to feel the confidence necessary to cultivate creative solutions (Tejada-Gallardo et al., 2022). Enjoyment of teaching helps to balance the stress of teaching, and increasing preservice teacher readiness may be done through leveraging EI training to enhance teachers' enjoyment of the job (Tejada-Gallardo et al., 2022). Teacher readiness which is supported by a foundation of enjoyment may go a long way to reduce negative outcomes.

Considering that from an evidence-based perspective, content knowledge drives how courses are designed, this project investigated elements of teacher readiness (Pierce et al., 2018). Research on preservice teacher readiness indicated that readiness was related to how preservice teachers have been trained or educated on students, knowledge

of inclusive policies, knowledge of characteristics of students, and knowledge of different teaching models and methods (Rabi et al., 2018). These aspects of readiness may provide a blueprint for EI learning outcomes related to preservice teacher readiness. Additionally, assessments for preservice teacher readiness may help these students identify areas they may need to focus on to develop their readiness.

There may be diverse reasons preservice teachers feel a lack of readiness for teaching. Preservice teachers may perceive they lack readiness based on anxiety about the job requirements, which may stem from a deficit-based perspective (Vitsou & Papadopoulou, 2023). As such, the proposed course may apply appreciative inquiry to support preservice teachers' development out of deficit-based thinking to a strengths-based perspective rooted in appropriate learning activities geared toward developing readiness (Armstrong et al., 2020). One best-evidence-based method that would assist in this effort is using assessments to gauge preservice teacher readiness. Additionally, preservice teachers could be encouraged to ask their students to write down their expectations for the class to begin supporting responsive readiness (Vitsou & Papadopoulou, 2023). Such assessments could be done pre and post-course to illustrate to preservice teachers their increased readiness based on their assessed growth.

Creating an EI Course That Supports Preservice Teacher Awareness of the Interconnection of Emotions and Physicality

The current study's interview found that EI helped participants recognize the interconnection of emotional experiences and physical manifestations. The proposed EI course aims to help cultivate the awareness of the holistic interconnection of mind and

body to support teachers' longevity in the profession. The current project has the goal to enhance the personal, emotional, and relational strength of educators, which is aligned with strengthening the mind-body connection. The research reviewed found that best-evidence-based practices should determine course creation (Pierce et al., 2018). Considering this, developing the proposed EI course for preservice teachers may be aided through a literature review of the best-evidence-based methodologies for utilizing EI to improve teachers' holistic understanding of the mind-body connection. Assessments could gauge how much to focus on this element of EI, reflecting on the preservice teachers' needs continually throughout the course (Breen-Wenninger & Louis, 2020; Singh, 2021). Additionally, learning activities could be organized and assisted by assessing preservice teachers' knowledge of the mind-body connection at the beginning of the course.

Strengthening the mind-body connection through EI may reduce many problems new teachers face. Accomplishing a deeper understanding of the mind-body connection may be supported through inclusion in the EI course of mindfulness, meditation, or yoga aspects with a long history of dealing with the mind-body connection (Bringmann et al., 2021). Mindfulness techniques may assist preservice teachers with the cultivation of emotional reappraisal and improve their emotional regulation (Drigas & Karyotaki, 2018). Including mindfulness techniques in the proposed EI course may provide preservice teachers with additional tools for managing stress and student behavior and recognizing how stress impacts their physical body (Holmes, 2019; Valosek et al., 2018). However, one aspect to consider is that preservice teachers may have deficit-based

thinking regarding their mind-body connection, which may dramatically impact their EI capacity (Armstrong et al., 2020). Addressing deficit-based thinking early in the course through sharing learning objectives, discussion with preservice teachers, assessments, and introductions to the concepts of the holistic mind-body connection may be an excellent start to developing EI.

Best-evidence-based methods can be aligned with EI principles to enhance learning outcomes in course design. Additionally, the literature reviewed clarifies that courses be outlined with the learning outcomes in mind (Breen-Wenninger & Louis, 2020; Kumar et al., 2019). Using EI competencies to support the development of a holistic understanding of the mind-body connection may inform many, if not all, of the learning activities in the course focusing on EI. For example, when EI is discussed in the course, preservice teachers could be given short mindfulness practices as homework to explore the concepts more deeply.

Creating an EI Course That Supports Preservice Teacher Stress Management

A preservice teacher course that aids in developing resilience and flexibility may help prepare the next generation of teachers for the demands of today's education. Teachers must integrate and share their knowledge, continually develop skills, and be flexible to re-train in always-changing conditions (Gryzun, 2018). The current project of a nine-week curriculum on EI is a form of professional development seeking to increase resilience. Teachers are also required to apply technology tools, gear instruction towards employability, manage competition, and balance the requirements of online educational needs (Khanna et al., 2021). All of these demands put teachers under a great deal of

stress. Having a stress management practice helps increase teachers' resilience (Schussler et al., 2018), and EI successfully promotes stress reduction by encouraging psychological well-being (Kamboj & Garg, 2021; Manikandan et al., 2022). Additionally, the development of EI supports self-awareness, prompting self-care activities that reduce stress (Bermejo-Martins et al., 2021) and job satisfaction (Manikandan et al., 2022). The many demands on teachers call for a stress-management approach built into their teaching approach to avoid burnout.

The proposed EI course for preservice teachers aims to support stress management by supporting the development of EI's capacity for psychological well-being and self-care (Bermejo-Martins et al., 2021; Kamboj & Garg, 2021). It is proposed that this can be done through teaching a course on the fundamentals of EI, using this as a guide for learning objectives, and designing learning activities that provide preservice teachers the chance to learn through doing that helps create lasting meaning.

Project Description

The project consists of developing a nine-week course. The course would be designed to be a course for final-year teacher candidates, and its efficacy in teaching EI would be assessed both quantitatively and qualitatively. To carry out the creation of this course, several key resources are needed. There first is the administering of an initial SCALE assessment for each participant in the course. However, there is also be a virtual survey host, namely SurveyMonkey, through which to host other assessments/surveys throughout the course. The second is the physical classroom in which to present the

course over a nine-week period. The third is the post SCALE assessment of final reflection project about their experience learning about EI.

As the researcher, I assume primary responsibility for creating the curriculum. I prepare teaching materials and ensure that they are appropriate and complete. Once all of the materials are prepared, I carefully prepare educational materials that align with each week of the course. The course has four pillars as well as introductory and concluding materials. Such a structure ensures that there is adequate time in the course to cover all of the key material. The modules/pillars are as follows.

First, the introductory week covers the basic concept of EI. Per (Amerstorfer & von Münster-Kistner, 2021), it is important to establish the relevance of course content to students to make them more likely to engager with the material. Then, the first module, which lasts a single week, addresses the pillar of interpersonal relationships. Interpersonal relationships are one of the key reasons for learning EI skills. The other modules each last two weeks. Module two addresses the pillar of self-management. The ability to manage the self is a central component of the concept of EI. The third module then addresses the pillar of personal leadership, which reflects another of the desired outcomes from learning EI skills. The fourth and final module addresses healthy and interpersonal relationships, which is the ultimate goal of prior EI competencies. The final week involves reflection on the key ideas of the course and a final project intended to serve as a capstone and demonstrate mastery of the tenets of EI. This overall structure ensures all content is taught in an adequate amount of time, and also allow for further reflection on EI and the course itself on the final week.

Project Evaluation Plan

The evaluation of the project is goals-based. The goals are to teach the knowledge and skills of TEI to make teachers more capable and qualified. The three learning outcomes (goals) are (a) ethically coaching to improve performance, (b) modeling EI skills with ethical behavior, and (c) the ethical use of positive EI assessment with students. Due to the multifaceted nature of the project goals, the project evaluation consists of both quantitative and qualitative assessments. The quantitative project assessment includes a pre- and post-test administration of the SCALE assessment, which measures 11 self-reported EI skills and three potential problem areas. As per Amerstorfer and von Münster-Kistner (2021), a pre-test assessment has the additional advantage of personalizing the course content based on the students' different skill levels, thereby improving engagement. According to Nelson and Low (2011), the first step in the ELS; *Self-Exploration Using Positive Assessment*, is to *engage* from the perspective of the student. In addition, the pre- and post-test scores were quantitatively compared to gain an empirical numerical assessment of the extent to which the course affected the participants' EI skills. Given the lack of true experimental conditions, the assessment cannot unquestionably prove causation but, under the circumstances, an aggregate improvement in EI across all participants could reasonably be attributed to the course. Also, findings from this study (see Section 2) and experience of the assessment authors have found that the participants sometimes misinterpret their SCALE profile because they do not initially understand the researched-derived definitions of the skills (i.e., what the SCALE items actually measure). In addition, if sufficient rapport has not been

developed prior to the administration of SCALE, a participant may hurry through the process and unintentionally elevate their scores. For these reasons, there should be an expectation that some post-test results might actually be lower than pre-test scores due to a more accurate understanding of the skills and/or more trust in the assessment process (Low et al., 2019, Feb. 11-12). For these and other reasons, qualitative evaluation was also included in the project.

There are benefits to including qualitative assessment in project evaluation. Open-ended qualitative data are ideal for exploring a full range of outcomes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Such data are descriptive in nature, and capture nuances that quantitative data cannot (Moen & Middelthon, 2015). The use of qualitative data allowed for a more in-depth examination of how the participants perceive EI and its application to teaching after the course. Through qualitative description, it is possible to assess not only if participants' EI knowledge and skills have increased, but also the importance they place upon it. This aspect of the assessment has a particular importance given that the participants must value EI knowledge and skills internally before they can apply EI in the classroom.

The goal-based evaluation is divided into two parts. In the quantitative portion, the project is judged based on improving the participants' understanding of EI skills and problematic measures from the SCALE instrument. Without the baseline SCALE scores provided by the pre-test, it would not be possible to establish an initial threshold. The second part of the evaluation is based primarily on qualitative assessment and include the aforementioned administration of the post-test SCALE instrument. The internalization of

EI in a personally meaningful way is ascertained qualitatively during the post-test phase, where a comparison of scores is required with a written explanation from each participant for any significant increase or decrease in skill or problematic scores between their entering pre-test and exiting post-test SCALE profiles. The number and depth of those explanations reflect the level of learning. Also included in the qualitative evaluation are questions to ascertain participants perceptions of EI in terms of importance for teaching, as well as their ideas about specific ways they plan to apply EI in the classroom.

Project Implications

A best-case outcome is that the project affects both the participants and their future students in positive and perhaps profound ways. EI is the confluence of learned skills and abilities that facilitate self-understanding and appreciation, a variety of healthy relationships, productive work with others, and healthily dealing with the stress of everyday work and life (Nelson & Low, 2011). As teachers internalize these four EI pillars for themselves and transfer them to their students, they affect lives (both theirs and their students') in personally meaningful ways.

There is also evidence of positive implications for instilling EI in teachers from the recent literature. EI has been shown to improve preservice teachers' own learning (García-Martínez et al., 2021). Such improvements help the participants to better learn key materials and succeed in other aspects of their training. EI can also be an antidote for burnout (Peláez-Fernández et al., 2021). Burnout is a significant problem for teachers and represents a significant driver of attrition among teachers (Schoeps et al., 2021). Therefore, EI can help teachers maintain better mental health once they start teaching.

Perhaps most importantly, EI improves teachers' ability to do their jobs (Abiodullah & Aslam, 2020). Better teaching performance in the classrooms helps teachers to succeed professionally. Such success can also improve their mental health through building self-efficacy and confidence in their abilities.

The results of this project may also help students. Though teachers also benefit when their pedagogical skills improve, students are the main beneficiaries of such improvement. Emotionally intelligent teachers are more empathic (Xiang et al., 2022). Empathy helps students engage with their teachers and as a result, better learn the content. Emotionally intelligent teachers can also better identify students who are struggling and help those students overcome their struggles (Abiodullah & Aslam, 2020). In addition, EI can contribute to better overall classroom management (Valente et al., 2020). Better classroom management, in turn, reduces distractions and helps students remain focused on their studies. Therefore, improving teachers' EI through this project has important implications for student learning as well as for the teachers themselves.

The implications for positive social change derive from the implications discussed above. Overall, improving teachers' ability to teach with EI benefits society through improved education. Moreover, EI does not only improve educational outcomes, but the psychosocial outcomes of both teachers and their students. Improved ability to build and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships can help teachers cultivate productive relationships with their colleagues and also more effectively engage with their students. Improving the experiences of both students and teachers makes teachers more likely to

stay in education and students more likely to meaningfully learn. These outcomes, in turn, may help promote a more educated and happier society.

Conclusion

In summary, Section 3 shared a literature review and discussed the findings gleaned from Section 2's interview results. Following the conceptual framework that combined TEI, the ELS, and AI, I created an EI course that supports preservice teachers' self-awareness, empathy, and open-mindedness as some of the learning outcomes. Doing so addresses the gap that this project focused on; that a local preservice teacher preparation program did not include EI in the curriculum, and as a result, final-year teacher candidates may be entering their profession with EI deficits.

As supported by the literature, there are many benefits related to developing EI in teachers. The benefits of EI for teachers are multifaceted, such as: (a) EI may improve teacher job enjoyment (Tejada-Gallardo et al., 2022); (b) reduce harsh disciplinary practices (Basford et al., 2021; Morgan & Hu, 2023); recognize and improve the mind-body connection (Holmes, 2019; Valosek et al., 2018); (c) improves stress management (Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2019); (d) reduce burnout (Fiorilli et al., 2019; Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2019); (e) improved perceptions of support (Mérida-López et al., 2020); (f) improve classroom management (Wu et al., 2022), and (g) improved self-awareness, open-mindedness, and empathy.

Course creation is the best method to fill this gap as it is an educational method that provides theoretical knowledge to students in a specific area that supports their skill development (Santoso & Murod, 2021). Preservice teachers need EI to support their

readiness, enjoyment, and student outcomes (Delk, 2019; Kovalchuk et al., 2022; Tejada-Gallardo et al., 2022). The Section 3 literature review defined course creation and gave a short overview of the best-evidence-based methodologies of course creation, which are: (a) course creation guided and informed by evidence-based recommendations (Pierce et al., 2018); (b) content knowledge determines how courses are created (Pierce et al., 2018); (c) course design aligned with the intended outcomes of learning (Breen-Wenninger & Louis, 2020); (d) use assessments and continually refine and adapt course content accordingly (Breen-Wenninger & Louis, 2020; Singh, 2021); (e) individualize course approach (Amerstorfer & von Münster-Kistner, 2021); (f) use backward design (Kumar et al., 2019); (g) make a syllabus (Gin et al., 2021), and; (h) share learning objectives at the beginning of the course to help students align their work and expectations (Ali, 2018).

These best-evidence-based methodologies of course creation were supported with scholarly research in discussing why course creation is the best method to address the identified needs of preservice teachers from Section 2. Those identified needs were: (a) limited opportunities to learn about EI directly from the teacher preparation program; (b) EI training embedded but not explicit in classroom management courses; (c) the benefits of EI learned indirectly; (d) the value of the SCALE assessment, and; (e) teacher readiness. In addition to these needs a brief inclusion of the benefits of EI for cultural competency was included (Rodríguez-Izquierdo, 2018).

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

In this section, I offer my insights and findings derived from the process of writing and carrying out a research project. I share my thoughts on the strengths and limitations of the project, explore alternative approaches of the project study implementation, and present my conclusions. Drawing from the research and interviews, I developed a 9-week course focused on TEI and teacher preparedness for instruction.

Project Strengths and Limitations

There are several strengths related to the 9-Week EI course contained in Appendix A. The course is designed to promote a strong comprehension of EI, emphasizing its relevance and practical application in preparing teachers for the classroom. The course's objectives are to equip teacher candidates with essential skills to navigate the complexities of classroom dynamics and student interactions. Teacher candidates have the opportunity to learn how to understand and regulate their emotions, which was noted in the interviews of the project study. The teacher candidates felt empowered for maintaining composure and professionalism in challenging situations in the classroom. Moreover, teacher candidates who complete the course should feel a greater awareness of empathy and assertion, enabling them to connect more authentically with their students to create more emotionally supportive learning environments. Additionally, the course integrates EI concepts into teaching readiness, highlighting its potential to foster successful teaching and learning experiences while promoting collaborative learning, self-reflection, and professional growth through an EI lens.

Finally, the course encourages teacher candidates to engage in meaningful discussions, appreciate differences, and cultivate intentional learning from peers. Furthermore, the development of EI skills within the course may equip teacher candidates with valuable tools for effective interpersonal interactions within educational settings and in everyday life. Integrating EI into teacher preparation programs may promote well-being, enhance classroom management, and contribute to student success and achievement.

As with any project, limitations must also be highlighted. The 9-week curriculum aligns with a 10-chapter book, resulting in a compressed schedule, for Chapters 9 and 10. The compressed schedule could curtail in-depth exploration and meaningful discourse. Given the complexity of EI as a discipline a 9-week framework could be rushed. A longer course, such as a full semester spanning 16 weeks or even two separate courses would provide for more comprehensive learning and engagement. Finally, the focus of my research was delimited to final-year teacher candidates. This delimitation should not be construed to imply that the course should only be delivered to teacher candidates in their final year of teaching. On the contrary, the literature on the topic of when EI content should be offered suggested that earlier is better (McDonald, 2021).

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

There are two ways to interpret alternative approaches with resulting recommendations. One is to consider alternative approaches to address the problem based on the findings of the study and another is to conceptualize alternative definitions of and solutions of the problem. I briefly address each separately in this section.

Based on the findings of the study, there were few alternatives for approaching the project based on the four project genre options of (a) evaluation report, (b) curriculum plan, (c) professional development plan, and (d) policy recommendation. Because the findings suggested that the absence of an EI curriculum necessitated the need to create one, the curriculum plan was the clear project choice. The only real barrier that challenged me in creating the curriculum plan was the periodicity. I opted for a 9-week rather than a 16-week curriculum because the shorter length would fit easily into a busy, final-semester practicum experience for final-year teacher candidates. The participants of were final-semester, final-year teacher candidates, and so that was the phase of education that was my focus when I developed the curriculum project. Based on my literature review and what I learned about teaching EI, earlier is better. Therefore, one recommendation would be to modify the 9-week curriculum to make it a 16-week course and include it early in the education phase, perhaps as an Introduction to EI and Education course.

I found it difficult to conceptualize alternative definitions of and solutions to the problem. The research problem was the lack of a formal course in EI in a teacher preparation program and the college leadership's desire to investigate the impact of that absence on teacher candidate preparedness to enter the profession. An alternative approach may be to create a purely quantitative approach, but without a control group for comparison and no course to compare to, a quantitative approach would lack power. Another recommendation is to make the EI class an elective and compare students who complete the course and those who do not take or fail the course using measures of

teacher preparedness. Measures could include overall college GPA, SCALE skill scores, and Readiness to Teach.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

Throughout my doctoral journey, I have experienced profound personal and professional growth, grappling with challenges that shaped my understanding of myself and my capabilities in scholarly writing and higher education. One significant hurdle was my struggle with writing. Sitting down to compose, I often found myself overwhelmed by the task, unable to translate my thoughts into coherent text. This difficulty led me to reflect on my aspirations as a doctoral student, confronting the discrepancy between my intentions and my perceived shortcomings. I often experienced challenges in getting my thoughts into prose, staring at a blank Word document for hours. I cried often wondering why I was frozen, despite having the strongest desire to work hard. This is particularly important to mention because it is the reason I took so long to complete this program. Although receiving assistance provided clarity, it also marked the beginning of a journey toward developing more effective writing strategies. With unwavering support from my committee chair, who recognized my challenges, I embarked on a path of growth, evolving not only as a doctoral student but also as a writer, leader, and researcher.

My struggles began with the challenge of writing my prospectus; however, I grew as a writer. I honed my writing and organizational skills through feedback, appreciative inquiry (developing a more positive intrapersonal voice), and self-reflection. As a naturally expressive writer, I struggled with integrating emotions into academic work, which posed challenges in maintaining objectivity. I often had to check my bias,

particularly during the interview and data analysis processes. However, embracing structured frameworks such as the main point, evidence, analysis, lead-out plan, a paragraphing tool recommended by my chair, proved instrumental in helping me organize my thoughts and fostered clarity in my writing process. Additionally, recognizing the unique pace dictated by my disability, I adopted the necessary skills to complete work while living by a personal motto (do not compare your Chapter 1 to someone else's Chapter 20) to anchor my progress within realistic expectations.

Transitioning to the proposal phase marked a turning point as I began to discern the interconnectedness between the problem, purpose, and research questions. The concept of research alignment solidified. I began to see a formula and embraced the discipline of adhering to prescribed formats from feedback and keeping it simple by refining flowery ideas and explanations succinctly—reflected in the motto "less is more." It enabled me to navigate the challenges of literature review and data analysis, when my chair told me that I was beginning to embody the essence of scholarly writing. I became a researcher.

The interview process afforded me invaluable lessons in organization. From scheduling to conducting interviews to the post interview processes of transcribing and analyzing the data, I internalized the complexities of the doctoral process. At this stage, I understood experientially why only 0.01% to 0.04% of the world's population completes a doctoral degree. This experience illuminated the arduous yet transformative nature of my doctoral journey, revealing the importance of research and reaffirming my advocacy

and commitment to conducting unbiased research on EI and public education as a catalyst for positive social change.

Throughout this project, I considered my experiences as a 26-year teacher and consultant for public education. I anchored my doctoral inquiry in a deep-seated passion for EI, the professional development of teachers and future teachers in public education, and the preservation of pedagogical excellence. During my project study, the study site exhibited a reduction in student enrollment within the College of Education, particularly in Grades 6–12, with two key elements of decreased enrollment being (a) increased challenges in classroom management and (b) behavior and stress. My overarching objective throughout this project was to gain insights into the essential requirements for prospective teachers to support students and communities in achieving academic and social success. Leveraging the research, knowledge, and experiences acquired during my doctoral journey, I aspire to develop and deliver professional development programs, courses, curricula, and keynote presentations on EI at conferences in the K–12 public school sector. These initiatives are aimed at inspiring, motivating, empowering, and elevating prospective educators and seasoned educators in their personal and professional EI journeys.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

Through my research, I have read many statistics and articles on teacher shortages, attrition rates, and the challenging experiences faced by new teachers. I have come to recognize the role of EI in teacher training and education. I also learned the importance of interaction and collaboration while conducting this project study and

creating Appendix A. Additionally, I gained insight into the importance of using facts over feelings and incorporating peer-reviewed sources in course materials to facilitate meaningful discussions among participants. Despite the challenges with writing EI curriculum, this complexity highlights the importance of thinking constructively and behaving wisely in teaching and in life.

My goal is to initiate a pilot course at the participating College of Education for teacher candidates at the beginning of an academic year. Throughout my doctoral journey, I have acquired substantial knowledge and skills to hone my own EI. The interview process also taught me the power of active listening, data collection, and analysis to inform educational practice. I hope the less conventional, more hands-on experiential approaches to the courses I create empower others to apply the knowledge and skills acquired in their EI coursework to enhance their teaching and everyday lives. This coursework may effect social change by promoting a collective understanding of the need for empathy, understanding, and positive intra- and inter-personal relationships within teachers and communities. My objective is to create carefully crafted, evidence-based EI courses that contribute to the creation of a more empathic, inclusive, and socially conscious society.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

This project has positive social change implications. Through the inclusion of EI strategies and skills for new teachers, teachers may be better equipped to work with children, peers, and administrators. Through the interview process, I discovered that teachers at SSC lacked both formal and personal knowledge of EI. As a result, I created

a 9-Week course using an unconventional method of course design and an EI textbook that served to ground my study (see Appendix A). The course aims to promote teachers' readiness to teach.

The course may impact teachers, students, administrators, and communities. Teachers may have more enhanced intrapersonal skills to assist in strengthening interpersonal relationships and collaborations. Moreover, they may be better equipped to handle stressful situations inside and outside of the classroom where conflict resolution and problem solving are needed. EI fosters a more supportive and inclusive teaching and learning space. Teachers with a strong preparation program that includes EI also improve emotional resilience and decision-making capabilities. Combined, these EI skills contribute to safer school environments. Teachers who are prepared to teach with strong EI skills have more empathy and understanding of diverse perspectives leading to culturally responsive teaching methods and a more positive school climate that values diversity, equity, inclusion and social cohesion. With these team leadership skills that contribute to social cohesion and more positive engagement with parents and the community, educators may model EI through trust, inclusion, respect, and civic engagement, principles that foster cooperation, collective agency, and peaceful communities. These outcomes may reflect positive societal change by preservice teachers modeling the competencies required for effective teaching, leading to enhanced communication and collaboration and an improved classroom, school, and community environments.

Conclusion

Through this qualitative multi-modal descriptive study, my aim was to explore the perceptions of final-year teacher candidates about their readiness to learn and teach as understood from a framework of nonintellective skills and abilities operationalized as EI. Engaging in this research has deepened my appreciation for scholarly writing and research as ways to convey critical findings to encourage positive societal change, particularly by identifying gaps within teacher preparation programs related to EI. I have also come to value qualities such as perseverance, seeking assistance when needed, embracing feedback with an open mind, and not being ashamed of my modified time frame regarding doctoral pursuits. Concerning the self-management SCALE skills of commitment ethic, time management, drive strength, and desire to become an agent of positive personal change, the research project was a personal growth opportunity and a lesson. As I evolved as a scholar and researcher, I was committed to developing my EI skills to effectuate meaningful change and model the transformative behaviors I wish to see in public education classrooms.

This study culminated with the development of a 9-week course, stemming from the insights extracted from my research on teacher candidates' ways to understand, navigate, and harness their EI by developing EI skills for success in the classroom, school, and community. The course holds promise in effecting positive social change by equipping new teachers with the tools to cultivate safe, effective, and empathic learning environments so all children may thrive. Furthermore, the project marks the start of broader changes within teacher preparation programs, extending beyond content mastery

and individual growth. Teacher candidates, exposed to EI training during their preparation have the potential to foster social change by modeling empathy, understanding, and compassion thereby inculcating future generations with these vital skills. The course aims to foster rich and meaningful discussions among peers, impart strategies and skills for enhancing EI to bolster teacher effectiveness and job satisfaction, and pave the way for sustained partnerships supporting future educators in their quest to cultivate a more empathic, inclusive, and socially conscious society.

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Appendix A: Transformative Emotional Intelligence Nine-Week Curriculum

Course Overview

The purpose of this 9-week curriculum plan is to teach transformative emotional intelligence (TEI) for final-year teacher candidates to support a more thorough preparation for the profession of teaching. TEI is a specialized interpretation of emotional intelligence (EI) that includes a learning model, engagement strategy, and tenets of a research derived, person-centered process for teaching and learning EI. The 9-week curriculum is research-derived and based on a doctoral project study that was approved in the spring of 2024. The plan provides an in-depth learning opportunity in the affective, nonintellective domain of emotional intelligence (EI). The curriculum plan was designed to provide final-year teacher candidates opportunities to learn and model EI-centric skills to engender a more sustainable learning environment for teacher and student success.

The 9-week curriculum plan is designed to teach TEI utilizing an emotional learning system (ELS) learning framework (Low & Hammett, 2021). The ELS is a five-step learning model for engaging participants in learning emotional intelligence (EI) skills. It is a central learning model highlighted in the text that has been identified for use in this 9-week curriculum plan (see Low & Hammett, 2021). As expounded on by Nelson et al. (2017), the ELS is a five-step systematic learning model that emphasizes emotional learning to support wiser, more effective, and appropriate behavior using EI skills. The ELS incorporates the brain is a social organ construct (Cozolino, 2014) and provides a helpful brain development method supporting individual awareness of healthy interpersonal interaction, managing emotions healthily, and responding effectively to

when emotions are strong (Brownell, 2017)**.** As reported by Sackman-Ebuwa (2024), the cultivation of emotional intelligence for new teachers who will be entering public education will help them better relate to their students affectively and potentially increase the longevity of their teaching careers.

The content for the curriculum plan mirrors Low and Hammett's (2021) *Transformative Emotional Intelligence for a Positive Career and Life*, the book that will be used as the text in the course. The curriculum is broken into four parts:

I. Part 1: The Positive Contributions of the Emotional Mind for a Positive, Healthy Life (Weeks 1 – 2, Chapters 1 – 2)

II. Part 2: A Two-Mind Theory of Emotional Intelligence (Weeks 3 – 4, Chapters 3 – 4)

III. Part 3: Develop, Strengthen, and Enhance Skills (Weeks 5-9, Chapters 5 –9)

IV. Part 4: Capstone Experience (Week 9, Chapter 10)

Figure 1 illustrates further how the chapters will be distributed among the four parts.

Figure 1

9-Week Curriculum Layout
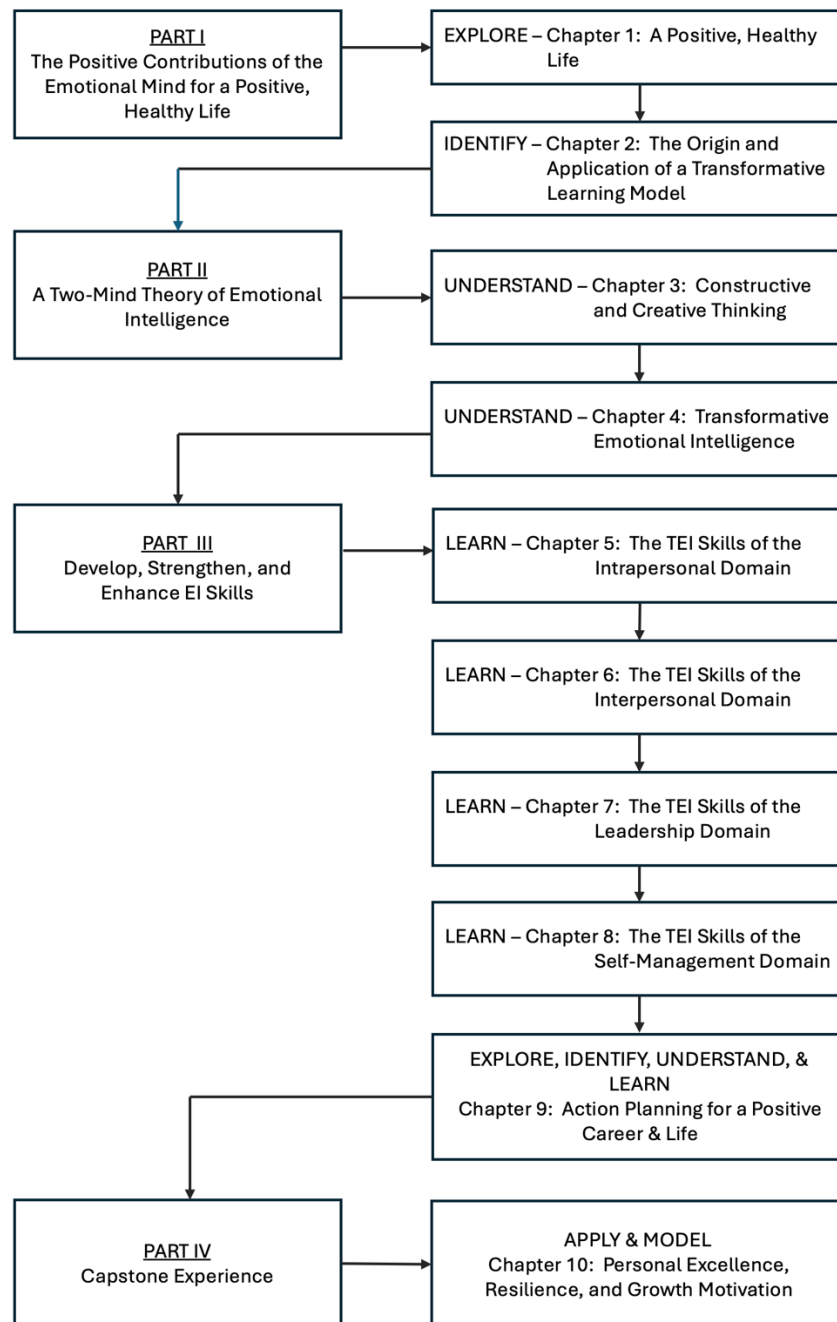
The Curriculum

Part I (Week 1 – Chapter 1)

Introduction - A Positive, Healthy Life

The goal of Week 1 is to introduce the skills-based learning approach of TEI and how it supports a happy and productive life. Main concepts included are that a person is never too old to learn, and people continue to develop and evolve throughout their lives. The challenges of life provide opportunities for developing self-knowledge that includes self-reflection and lifelong learning. This chapter provides the groundwork for the TEI approach to EI and introduces a two-mind (emotional & rational) theory of emotional intelligence. This chapter discusses emotions and their relationship with actions (behavior) and sense of self. This chapter can be used to develop TEI through increased awareness and consideration of how emotions work.

Transformative Emotional Intelligence for A Positive Career and Life: Readings

- Related, Integrated, Higher Learning Processes: pp. 2-3

- Breaking the Emotional Reactivity Habit: pp. 6-7

- Dealing with Strong Emotions: p. 8

Learning Objectives

- Your mind communicates through emotions as well as logic.

- How to use TEI to manage strong emotions and grow self-awareness.

- Develop the emotional curriculum attitude to cultivate higher achievement.

SCALE ASSESSEMENT

The EI competency that corresponds with Chapter 1 is commitment ethics and self-esteem. Commitment Ethic is supported through this chapter's novel conceptions about emotions. Armed with the outside perspective on the emotional mind, concepts about reactivity, and the empowering activities to manage difficult emotions, change seems possible, even simple. Self-esteem is supported by the commitment ethic supported by the information provided in the chapter. Provided in clear and accessible language, the maze of emotional reactivity is deactivated, and students become more committed to applying growth principles through the simple activity provided. Self-esteem grows as the activity shows positive results.

Discussion

- How emotions impact our daily life both personally and professionally.

- What are emotions?

- How the mind uses emotions.

- Breaking cycles of emotional reactivity.

- Dealing with strong emotions.

- Managing emotions to reduce stress and burnout.

- Introduce the emotional curriculum and its relationship to attitudes and behaviors.

- Results: higher achievement levels and greater life satisfaction.

Activities

- The activity uses the Dealing with Strong Emotions from page 8 of Chapter 1. This is a personal reflection activity.

- This is an ELS process to identify, understand, label, and express strong emotions. This activity can help to reduce emotional reactivity, reduce stress, and increase self-knowledge.

- This ELS activity asks participants to create a personal and truthful model for understanding their emotional self through the steps of (1), Develop emotional self-awareness (2), Feelings signal important experiences; 3) Emotions are neither negative nor positive (4), Identify the feeling you are having and (5), Choose how to express this emotion healthily.

- The authors suggest practicing this activity until it becomes second nature as a means of cultivating TEI. The group portion of the activity will be a brief sharing about the experience with the group.

Application Observation

From week 1 Chapter 1, students are expected to gain a novel perspective on emotions, on their emotional experience, and their relationship to their emotions. TEI will help students gain mastery over their emotions rather than be subject to them. The applications of emotional mastery may manifest as the heightened capacity for focus through enhanced self-awareness. Greater self-awareness of emotions may help to decrease emotions' power to distract, distort, and complicate both the personal and professional life. Greater self-awareness may reduce students' reactivity to emotions, promote new emotional depths, and capacity for appropriate and novel responses, and result in greater satisfaction personally and professionally.

Portfolio/Journal Entry

The SCALE assessment is a personal map used to heighten self-awareness and reflection. Chapter 1 aligned with the week's commitment ethic and self-esteem. The activity helps to reduce emotional reactivity through the process of Dealing with Strong Emotions. This activity helps lessen the stress and power of strong emotions, providing students with an empowering way to cultivate self-knowledge, resulting in greater commitment to change and self-esteem. The application observation notes how learning (reading Chapter 1) builds on hands-on activities (Dealing with Strong Emotions) and translates into personal development and TEI empowerment. Together, this method can activate and support lasting skills development which may result in greater commitment to change and self-esteem.

Conclusions and Homework

- Practice Dealing with Strong Emotions, throughout the week.

- Keep records of your experience. Note any challenges, improvements, results, or lessons learned.

- Investigate the concepts introduced in Chapter 1 in novel ways throughout the week, and prepare a brief reflection on what you took away from the process.

Part I – (Week 2 – Chapter 2)

Introduction –The Origin and Application of a Transformative Learning Model

Week 2 will cover content in Chapter 2, which presents the background for the learning model presented in the book. Darwin Nelson and Gary Low began to ask three research questions in the 1970s. These questions were (1), What differentiates healthy,

successful people from those not so healthy and successful? (2) How could we help others learn the key skills, strategies, and behaviors of PERL skills to improve their success, health, and well-being? (3)Can we be excellent and equal too? Nelson and Gary began to seek to answer these questions by: identifying the factors and skills of success that could be taught and learned through the creation of a PERL skill survey; the publication of a positive assessment; performing doctoral research with the PERL skill assessment; developing the EI learning model, and its cultivation into TEI; creating a professional association; spreading research globally; publishing research, and; writing this book on the completed model. This chapter provides the background for the positive outcomes promised by the TEI learning model.

Transformative Emotional Intelligence for A Positive Career And Life: Readings

- Timeline: The Development of TEI, pp. 17-18

- Historical Roots & Branches of TEI

- Work-Life Excellence: Needs, Beliefs, and Skills

- Whole Person Learning p. 23-25

Learning Objectives

- The Development of TEI

- The other researchers and theorists who contributed to the development of TEI

- The relationship between what one's needs are, the beliefs related to those needs, and the skills required to satisfy those needs.

- Whole Person Learning

Discussion

- The Development of the TEI learning model

- How other researchers and theorists contributed to the TEI learning model

- How personal needs are related to beliefs and skills

- What is the whole person learning?

Activity

The activity for Chapter 2 is the cultivation of Whole Person Learning in the five

steps:

- Self-assessment/EXPLORE

- Self-awareness/ IDENTIFY

- Self-knowledge/UNDERSTAND

- Self-development/LEARN

- Self-improvement/APPLY & MODEL.

- Whole person learning is the process of engaging the entire being in learning, and

  not only relying on the mind and reacting to emotions. In Self-

  assessment/EXPLORE, the student chooses an intentional self-assessment habit

  such as asking themselves probing questions (What am I feeling? What thoughts

  accompany this feeling?).

- The next step, Self-awareness/ IDENTIFY, is the student clearly and accurately

  identifying what they are feeling. In the next step, Self-

  knowledge/UNDERSTAND, the student makes insightful choices on the right

  action after identifying their emotion.

- The next step, Self-development/LEARN, is cultivating the learning process of adapting many different wise actions resulting from correct identification.

- The final step, Self-improvement/APPLY & MODEL, asks students to use TEI to apply and model wise behavior to achieve personal and professional goals.

Application Observation

The Whole Person Learning activity expects students to apply what they have learned in both thought and action. This is an activity of personal reflection. Step one's process of exploration supports the development of TEI by slowing down and considering emotions independently. Step two may have multiple levels, and the feeling of anger may block a deeper feeling of sadness. This step helps develop TEI through conscious probing and the reframing technique of identification. The third step is based on the belief that wise actions result from clear thinking, resulting in improved TEI. The third step empowers students to allow for mistakes and learn from those mistakes. The final step can be applied in any situation, and the term modeling is used because it is alright to "fake it until you make it" while TEI develops. This activity provides students with the opportunity to build on the activity from week 1 by applying the more complex knowledge developed in the course. The group portion of the activity will be a brief sharing about the experience with the group.

Portfolio/Journal Entry

The Whole Person Learning activity aligns with the SCALE assessment as it provides a personal map of emotional experiences. For example, this activity may reveal repetitive emotions that arise from situations that the student may feel powerless to

change. The application observation resulting from this activity may provide the student with emotional insights which provide a new pathway to act or feel about the situation which may resolve it. Building on the activity from week 1, TEI may develop naturally as self-awareness grows from practicing these principles.

Conclusions and Homework

- Do the activity once daily.

- Observe any repetitious emotional experiences throughout the week.

- Take notes during the activity.

- Observe and note any changes to your emotional experience and actions resulting from the activity. Try to provide specifics.

- If you can, try to prepare a funny anecdote about this activity and reflection to share with the class next week.

Part II (Week 3, Chapter 3)

Introduction –Constructive and Creative Thinking

Week 3 builds on Chapter 3 of the text, the growing awareness of emotions by engaging the logical mind in relating with the emotions. However, that is related to, not dominating with logic and cold reason. Balancing engaging the creative problem-solving mind constructively while honoring the role of the emotions builds TEI. This chapter emphasizes emotions alone cannot guide a person through life, but the constructive mind must be used to be informed by valuable emotional experience.

Transformative Emotional Intelligence for A Positive Career And Life: Readings

- Destructive (Preconscious) Thoughts/Dialogues p. 39

- Constructive (Preconscious) Thoughts/Dialogues p. 39

- Four Ways of Thinking pp. 40-43

Learning Objectives

- Become aware of the difference between destructive and constructive (preconscious) thoughts/dialogues

- What are the four ways of thinking?

- What are thought domains?

Discussion

- TEI is the learned skill of thinking constructively and acting wisely, which is done by becoming conscious of what was once unconscious and using these insights to inform choices.

- There are four ways of thinking: critical, experiential, constructive, and visual. Which way of thinking do you use most, least, or not-at-all? How can this knowledge inform your development of TEI?

- How can you use thought domains to support the cultivation of TEI?

Activity

- After reading the Five Thought Domains on p. 44-45 develop a brief comic strip or single art image illustrating each thought domain.

- A brief reflection should be written to provide an artist statement interpreting the art for each thought domain.

- For example, thought domain 1 discusses the uniqueness of each individual. This concept could be expressed as a selfie, a comic strip of identical forms seeking to differentiate, or a self-portrait in college of meaningful colors/designs/textures.

- Doing one art image for each thought domain will help build empathy and awareness. Which thought domain the student is most prone to will become clear, but doing a piece of art for each will give them the time to learn about how others think, which will enhance the development of TEI.

- The group part of the activity will entail the student being prepared to share their personal thought domain representation and discuss it.

Application Observation

Students are expected to be challenged by this activity as some may find it difficult to translate abstract concepts into a physical manifestation of an art image. However, translating the abstract into the real is the focus of the chapter on balancing the rational mind with the emotional experience. This activity will help promote emotional plasticity and creative problem-solving. The ability to empathize will be cultivated through constructive thinking about thought domains different from their own, which is essential for teachers needing to know how different students think.

Portfolio/Journal Entry

The SCALE assessment contains the EI skill of empathy, which is important for successful teachers. This week's activity will likely draw on and cultivate empathy as students are forced to take complex abstract domains they may not identify with and make them their own through representation. The application observation emphasizes the

challenge of balancing the rational mind with the emotional experience. Ideally, the week will show how the development of TEI translates into skill development as students are pushed beyond their comfort zones.

Conclusions and Homework

- The activity will most likely take all week to complete and is the totality of the homework for this week.

- Observe your baseline empathy throughout the week.

Part II (Week 4, Chapter 4)

Introduction –Transformative Emotional Intelligence

This chapter addresses that the simple foundation of TEI, Think Constructively, Act Wisely, can be challenging. Understanding how to meet those challenges is outlined in four domains (1), enhanced awareness, understanding of current emotional skills, strengths, and weaknesses (2), developing and maintaining healthy relationships (3), working well with others for enhanced productivity (4), manage everyday stress while improving quality of life and career. This chapter reflects on the past three to show how they are building blocks for each other and deepens the applicability of the framework for positive change and growth.

Transformative Emotional Intelligence for A Positive Career And Life: Readings

- TEI Tenets p. 49

- TEI Enduring Qualities pp. 53-56

- The Emotional Learning System p. 57

Learning Objectives

- What are the tenants of TEI?

- What are the enduring qualities of TEI?

- Personal Science Model of Excellence

Discussion

- Why is it important to know the tenants of TEI?

- How do the enduring qualities of TEI manifest as positive change and growth?

- TEI is a personal science model of excellence.

Activities

- The activity for this week is a close personal analysis of The Emotional Learning System.

- This is a map of the unconscious and the conscious emotional information with the different domains of TEI (Emotional reflective, constructive or critical thinking, emotional reactive, and rational and wise actions).

- The activity is for students to look closely at the exhibit, and begin to see themselves in it. The page the model is on, 57, will need to be photocopied and printed out so that students can change and manipulate it.

- After analyzing the exhibit students will begin to write in their thoughts/reflections, draw in meaningful images, and expand on the exhibit so that it reflects their own EI experience where they are at today. This is also an opportunity for goal-setting.

The next four chapters provide the student with the learning and development in each of the 13 EI skills, and so this activity is a type of pre-test of where each student is with their emotional intelligence. At the end of the 9-week course, students could return to this activity to observe and note their TEI growth. The group portion of the activity will be a brief sharing about the experience with the group. Group goals could also be made at this time.

Application Observation

Students are expected to think about this activity as the beginning of an emotional journey, and that this is the map they start out with. However, the T in TEI stands for transformational, and this may be transformed as the journey goes on. The T of TEI may need to be emphasized this week, as some people fear and resist change. A group discussion could ensure transformation and change, providing students with a chance to explore their thoughts and hear those of other students. Being that these are teachers in training there is a good chance they will be lovers of learning, and thus open to transformation. How learning is a transforming power could be pointed out in the week's lesson.

Portfolio/Journal Entry

The SCALE assessment includes the skill of growth motivation, which is reflected in this week's assignment. All students will likely desire to grow their TEI a great deal after analyzing the exhibit. The past three chapters provided the positive psychology foundation which should support empowering feelings about this growth. The activity observation may help students to prepare for a mindset of continual growth

throughout their teaching career. This chapter provides some of the specifics students can use to begin their transformative journey to greater positive and skill with TEI.

Conclusions and Homework

- The activity may need to be continued and completed during the week depending on how deep students go into it.

- Goal setting as a result of the analysis of the activity.

- Consider the cultivation of being a lifelong learner and the humility of always developing.

Part III (Week 5, Chapter 5)

Introduction -The TEI Skills of the Intrapersonal Domain

This chapter provides a discussion on the four competency areas of TEI and the skills needed to achieve each competency. One competency for each chapter for the next four chapters. The authors emphasize that EI skills are intentionally made habits, and not inborn traits. This chapter's competency focus is intrapersonal competency, and the skills needed are self-esteem, stress management, and positive change. Intrapersonal is a term of experience and beliefs related to oneself. This chapter (as well as 6, 7, and 8) are designed: a discussion of the skill; a TEI lesson, and; an exercise. The design of the chapter fits perfectly with this 9-week curriculum.

Transformative Emotional Intelligence for A Positive Career And Life: Readings

- Self-Esteem Assessment pp. 63-64

- Stress Management Assessment pp. 71-73

- Stress Sources and Recommended Coping Skills

- Positive Change Assessment pp. 89-90

Learning Objectives

- What is the role of self-esteem in developing TEI?

- What is the role of stress management in developing TEI?

- Developing a positive attitude about change.

Discussion

- Using the assessments in the chapter to take stock of competencies and skills present and needed.

- Self-esteem is a pathway to getting to know oneself and cultivating a healthy relationship with oneself which is the foundation of all other relationships.

- Stress management is essential for developing TEI, as stress can limit wise action.

Activities

- This week's chapter has three assessments, three exercises, and three apply and model worksheets. This is sufficient for the individual activity for the week to explore the concepts of TEI in-depth.

- Working through this chapter will provide students with chances to link concepts with their emotional and cognitive experiences both personally and professionally.

- The group portion of the activity will be a brief sharing about the experience with the group. During this sharing, the teacher could identify similarities and differences between how students understood and worked with the concepts. Drawing attention to these similarities and differences by listing them on a

whiteboard may help show how these concepts adapt to individualized experience and understanding.

Application Observation

Students are expected to think deeply about the chapter's competency focus on intrapersonal competency, and the skills of self-esteem, stress management, and positive change. This week's chapter assessments, exercises, and apply and model worksheets provide opportunities for thinking to be reflected in self-analysis and preparation for wise action. The skills discussed in this chapter have widespread applications both personally and professionally. Additionally, these skills provide a foundation for the continual positive growth supported throughout the rest of the book and the 9-week course.

Portfolio/Journal Entry

The SCALE assessment has self-esteem as one of its measurable strengths, and this chapter helps to place self-esteem into the context of intrapersonal competency as the foundation for personal growth. The activities throughout the chapter provide an in-depth reflection on the SCALE assessment skills, and how to build on them. The application observation reflects the focus of the chapter on intrapersonal competency and encourages students to see themselves from a new perspective. As a foundational step in developing TEI, this week's work helps students gauge where they are and move towards established goals.

Conclusions and Homework

- The assessments, readings, and activities from this week are homework for the week.

- Consider this week the role of self-esteem and stress management in your relationship with yourself.

- Try to incorporate one self-care activity each day.

Part III (Week 6 – Chapter 6)

Introduction –The TEI Skills of the Interpersonal Domain

The last chapter discussed one's relationship with oneself. This chapter presents the next step in wise action, healthy relationships with others, or the interpersonal domain. Others play a large role in TEI development as humans are social beings who rely on the community for meaning-making and survival. The more successful a person is at interpersonal relationships the more successful they will be in most areas of life. The three skills of the interpersonal domain are assertion, anger management, and anxiety management. These skills represent the balance needed for success in interpersonal relationships, and provide the student opportunities to delve into TEI development.

Transformative Emotional Intelligence for A Positive Career And Life: Readings

- Assertion Assessment pp. 97-98

- Anger Management Assessment pp. 106-107

- Anxiety Assessment pp. 114-115

Learning Objectives

- Assertion: Cognitive focus- How to say what you really think and feel. Emotional focus- How to feel better when communicating. Action focus- Choosing how to communicate while stressed.

- Anger Management: Cognitive focus- Manage anger to communicate authentically. Emotional focus- Feel better about working with anger. Action focus- Choose assertion when under stress.

- Anxiety Management: Cognitive focus- Manage anxiety to speak authentically. Emotional focus- Feel better about working with anxiety. Action focus- Choose assertion when under anxiety.

Discussion

- What is assertion, what does it do, and how does assertion support TEI?

- What is anger management, what does it do, and how does assertion support TEI?

- What is anxiety management, what does it do, and how does assertion support TEI?

Activities

- This week's chapter has three assessments, three exercises, and three apply and model worksheets. This is sufficient for the individual activity for the week to explore the concepts of TEI in-depth and build on last week's activity.

- Working through this chapter's activities will provide students with chances to grow and link concepts with their emotional and cognitive experiences both personally and professionally.

- The group portion of the activity will be a brief sharing about the experience with the group. During this sharing, the teacher could identify similarities and differences between how students understood and worked with the concepts. Drawing attention to these similarities and differences by listing them on a

whiteboard may help show how these concepts adapt to individualized experience and understanding.

Application Observation

Students are expected to think deeply as they work through the assessments, readings, and worksheets on the competency of the interpersonal domain and the skills of assertion, anger management, and anxiety management. These skills are necessary for success every day both personally and professionally as countless stressors are vying for attention today. Learning to manage anxiety and stress while remaining assertive is valuable for teachers who will be working in challenging classrooms with complex students.

Portfolio/Journal Entry

The SCALE assessment has assertion as one of its measurable strengths, and this chapter helps to place assertion into the context of intrapersonal competency as the foundation for personal growth. The activities throughout the chapter provide an in-depth reflection on the SCALE assessment skills, practice in assessments, and how to use assessments on the journey of positive development. The application observation reflects the focus of the chapter on interpersonal competency and encourages students to see themselves from a perspective of continual growth. As a foundational step in developing TEI, this week's work helps students gauge their ongoing progress and move confidently toward their goals.

Conclusions and Homework

- The assessments, readings, and activities from this week are homework for the week.

- Consider this week the role of assertion, and anger and anxiety management in your relationship with yourself.

- Try to incorporate active assertion and anxiety management in a small way each day.

Part III (Week 7 – Chapter 7)

Introduction-The TEI Skills of the Leadership Domain

This chapter discusses the competency of the leadership domain, and the skills of social awareness, empathy, and positive influence. The skill of empathy is important in interpersonal relationships, especially for teachers, as the ability to understand how others are thinking and feeling is imperative for effective communication. The skills in this chapter emphasize that emotions are valuable for informing decision-making. The assessments in this chapter will help students explore where they at with social awareness, empathy, and positive influence while educating them on the concepts.

Transformative Emotional Intelligence for A Positive Career And Life: Readings

- Social Awareness Assessment pp. 125-126

- Empathy Assessment pp. 131-132

- Positive Influence Assessment p. 144

Learning Objectives

- Social awareness- Cognitive focus: Learning to listen and hear others. Emotional focus: Learning how to feel greater comfort while relating with others. Action focus: Choosing how to build comfortable relationships.

- Empathy- Cognitive focus: Learning to listen and hear others. Emotional focus: Feeling better about understanding others. Action focus: Making wiser choices communicating in relationships.

- Positive Influence- Cognitive focus: Positively impacting others. Emotional focus: Feeling better about being a leader. Action focus: Using coaching to be a positive influence.

Discussion

- What is social awareness, what does it do, and how does assertion support TEI?

- What is empathy, what does it do, and how does assertion support TEI?

- What is a positive influence, what does it do, and how does assertion support TEI?

Activities

- This week's chapter has three assessments, three exercises, and three apply and model worksheets on TEI skills. This is sufficient for the individual activity for the week to explore the concepts of TEI in-depth.

- Working through this chapter will provide students with opportunities to link concepts with their emotional and cognitive experiences both personally and

professionally. With a focus on leadership, this week is a chance for prospective teachers to prepare for their roles in the classroom.

- The group portion of the activity will be a brief sharing about the experience with the group. During this sharing, the teacher could identify similarities and differences between how students understood and worked with the concepts. Drawing attention to these similarities and differences by listing them on a whiteboard may help show how these concepts adapt to individualized experience and understanding.

Application Observation

Students are expected to think deeply as they work through the assessments, readings, and worksheets on the competency of leadership domain and the skills of social awareness, empathy, and positive influence. These skills represent the beginning of integration of TEI principles and can be applied in all interactions as the chance to be a leader appears often. Students who may be parents will likely find these skills support their role as leaders for their children. Learning empathy and positive influence is valuable for teachers who will be working with students in need of role models and encouragement.

Portfolio/Journal Entry

The SCALE assessment has empathy as one of its measurable strengths, and this chapter helps to place empathy into the context of leadership competency as an expression and platform for personal growth. The activities throughout the chapter provide in-depth reflection on the SCALE assessment skills, practice in assessments, and

how to use assessments on the development of TEI while being a leader. The application observation reflects the focus of the chapter on leadership competency and encourages students to think deeply about how they feel about being a leader. As a foundational step in developing TEI, this week's work helps students build on their ongoing progress and continue towards their goals.

Conclusions and Homework

- The assessments, readings, and activities from this week are homework for the week.

- Extra-motivated students may want to try doing assessments for each skill with one person or context in mind. Explore the many ways to be a leader.

- Consider this week the role of the skills of social awareness, empathy, and positive influence in your relationship with others.

- Try to incorporate empathy and positive influence in a small way each day.

Part III (Week 8 – Chapters 8 & 9)

Introduction –The TEI Skills of the Self-Management Domain

This week's chapter presents the competency domain of self-management as the skills needed to drive strength, commitment ethics, and time management. One of the key aspects of self-management is not looking to others to hold oneself accountable for reaching goals, but to become one's manager. This chapter places competency within the fast-paced globalized world of today, with its demands on productivity, innovation, and personal accountability. Continuing in the format of the last three chapters, this week's focus has three assessments, three exercises, and three apply and model worksheets.

Transformative Emotional Intelligence for A Positive Career And Life: Readings

- Drive Strength Assessment pp. 153-154

- Commitment Ethic Assessment p. 159

- Time Management Assessment pp. 164-165

Learning Objectives

- Drive Strength- Cognitive focus: Feeling good achieving goals. Emotional focus: Feeling better through achieving. Action focus: Making wiser choices that reflect my values.

- Commitment Ethic- Cognitive focus: Finishing what was begun. Emotional focus: Feeling good about finishing what has begun. Action focus: Making wiser choices about personal ethics.

- Time Management- Cognitive focus: Getting important things done. Emotional focus: Feeling better about how the resource of time is used. Action focus: Making wiser choices about how time is used.

Discussion

- What is drive strength, what does it do, and how does assertion support TEI?

- What is commitment ethics, what does it do, and how does assertion support TEI?

- What is time management, what does it do, and how does assertion support TEI?

Activities

- This week's chapter has three assessments, three exercises, and three apply and model worksheets on TEI skills. This is sufficient for the individual activity for

the week to explore self-management competency and the skills of drive strength, commitment ethics, and time management.

- Working through this chapter's activities will provide students with opportunities to link concepts with their emotional and cognitive experiences both personally and professionally. With a focus on self-management, this week is a chance for prospective teachers to prepare for their roles in the classroom.

- The group portion of the activity will be a brief sharing about the experience with the group. During this sharing, the teacher could identify similarities and differences between how students understood and worked with the concepts. Drawing attention to these similarities and differences by listing them on a whiteboard may help show how these concepts adapt to individualized experience and understanding.

Application Observation

Students are expected to think deeply as they work through the assessments, readings, and worksheets on the competency of the self-management domain and the skills of drive strength, commitment ethics, and time management. These skills represent the beginning of developing mastery of TEI principles, and must become a way of life to sustain TEI growth. Being one's manager entails personal accountability that goes beyond any external standards. In their role as teachers, self-management will be required daily to stay on course while supporting students.

Portfolio/Journal Entry

The SCALE assessment has drive strength and time management as strengths, and this chapter helps to place these skills into the context of self-management competency as the foundation for maintaining personal growth. The activities throughout the chapter provide an in-depth reflection on the SCALE assessment skills, practice in assessments, and how to use assessments on the journey of cultivating TEI. The application observation reflects the focus of the chapter on self-management competency and encourages students to see themselves from a perspective of personal accountability. As a foundational step in maintaining the growth of skills and TEI, this week's work helps students gauge their ongoing progress and continue toward their goals.

Conclusions and Homework

- The assessments, readings, and activities from this week are homework for the week.

- Consider this week the role of the skills of drive strength, commitment ethics, and time management in your relationship with self-management.

- Try to identify your worst time management habit this week, and attempt to change it.

Part IV (Week 9 – Chapters 9 & 10)

Introduction –Action Planning for a Positive Career & Life

This chapter brings together the last four chapters working on competencies and skills with action planning. The Action Planning Guide uses all the competencies and skills of the last four chapters (and the introductory chapters) to help students maintain their focus on continual growth. This is a review chapter of the skills and competencies placed in the context of action planning and is a relatively brief chapter. However, since week 9 combined chapters 9 and 10, this is to the curriculum's benefit.

Transformative Emotional Intelligence for A Positive Career And Life: Readings

- Emotional Skills Profile (Assessment) p. 172

- Identify Strengths and Skills and Change p. 174

- Skill Definitions pp. 178-179

Learning Objectives

- Action planning to continue skill-building

- What is your emotional skills profile

- Creating learning pathways

Discussion

- Creating an emotional skills profile for continual change.

- What skills are needed to embrace change?

- Apply and model TEI skills for personal growth

Activities

- The activity for this half-week portion of Chapter 9 is a creative thinking exercise.

- This chapter discusses learning pathways based on assessment data. This activity asks students to creatively create their learning pathway based on their unique personal and professional context and goals.

- Look back over the assessments from the past four chapters and the assessments in Chapter 9 to inform a creative learning pathway. Write a brief write-up on this process to share with the class.

Application Observation

Students are expected to think deeply about the work they have done over the past four chapters while they review their progress in this chapter. The skills presented are necessary for sustaining positive growth using TEI principles, and if embraced as a daily habit can be transformative. Students can think and apply this process in creative ways to improve their relationship with themselves, others, and their manifestations of personal and professional success. Creating a unique creative pathway using data will help prepare prospective teachers for using data in creative activities with their students.

Portfolio/Journal Entry

The SCALE assessment illustrates how assessments can be used to gauge progress and set goals. This process is represented in this book. The activity of reflection in this chapter emphasizes that TEI supports creative problem-solving grounded in facts. The application observation emphasizes using assessments and goal setting to support creative growth. This brief lesson will culminate in the next and final chapter. No homework this week.

Week 9-Combined Chapters 9 & 10

Introduction –Personal Excellence, Resilience, and Growth Motivation

As the last chapter in the book *Transformative Emotional Intelligence for a Positive Career and Life* by Low and Hammett (2021) this chapter wraps up the methodology presented throughout. This chapter presents a review of the concepts in their full manifestation and asks students to integrate them into their personal and professional goals.

Transformative Emotional Intelligence for A Positive Career And Life: Readings

- A Personal Excellence Activity pp. 183-185

- Resiliency pp. 186-190

- Cultivating Well-Being with TEI Skills pp. 194-196

Learning Objectives

- Become a personal scientist

- A benefit of TEI and ESL=Resiliency

- Welcome personal excellence.

SCALE ASSESSEMENT

As chapter 9-10 is a summary of all the EI skills used in the ESL system it contains all the SCALE competencies and skills. The book broke down the skills and competencies throughout the chapters with assessments, activities, and worksheets that culminated in a working knowledge of TEI ready to become a living habit. The SCALE assessment can be retaken at any time to gauge progress and make new goals.

Discussion

- Using TEI to create continual growth and development

- What is resiliency, and what place does it have in the TEI framework? Exhibit 10.3 p. 192-193

- Long-term benefits of TEI, well-being.

Activities

- The activity for this final lesson is for students to write a brief summary of their journey through the 9-week curriculum.

- This activity is aided by students laying out all the activities, assessments, and materials they used in the course for reference.

- This process should help students gain perspective of the value of TEI, and solidify the commitment to continue to develop this life skill.

- The student should identify their biggest gain, and what their biggest goal is. These two items are shared in the group discussion.

Application Observation

Students are expected to think deeply as they reflect on the 9-week curriculum, their journey, their growth, and their continued investment in TEI. The process of reflection, growth, and goal setting are applied throughout their professional career. The skills gained through the TEI method have the potential to enhance capacity as well as enjoyment of both personal and professional life. This final activity emphasizes the positive gains present and possible.

Portfolio/Journal Entry

The SCALE assessment has shown its value throughout the 9-week course, and the assessments present throughout the book emphasize the effectiveness of this tool. The activity of reflection in this final week mirrors the self-awareness that grows with the practice of TEI. The project manager hopes that the many layers of benefit and accessibility of the TEI method will make itself clear during this final activity and sharing. The application observation reflects the power of emotional intelligence to reorder how people see themselves and others. The liberating power of TEI has the potential to support teachers throughout their challenging careers.

Packet Conclusion

Low and Hammett's (2021) *Transformative Emotional Intelligence for a Positive Career and Life,* breaks down the complexities of TEI's competencies and skills into their most applicable forms. This 9-week curriculum is a reflection of the personal journey these researchers embarked on to answer the research questions that drove their life's focus. The resulting personal growth map of the emotional learning system and TEI is made clear and digestible in this book and course. From beginning with simple concepts, and working towards enhanced understanding and complexity, this process may help develop EI simply as a reflection of the awareness of the authors.

The first chapter illustrated the many different theorists which this TEI system is built upon, emphasizing the need for continuing research on emotional intelligence. Continued research in different fields, with differing applications, in different cultures, and through different methodologies may promote a more widespread application of the much-needed skill of emotional intelligence. Considering the stress and challenges

present for all people today, TEI provides a method far beyond simple coping, and

moving into making changes in the minds and hearts of individuals that may contribute to

changes much needed globally.

Appendix B: Permission from Participating College (Redacted)

Dorina Sackman
Wed 7/7/2021 5:04 PM

To: ███████████████████████████████

Bcc: Rick D. Hammett

📄 210625_EDD_Project_Stu...
2 MB

Dear Sharon,

I hope this email finds you well.

To facilitate the processes for ████████████ and Walden University, I am hereby requesting your acknowledgement of your intent to cooperate in my research by providing gatekeeper support to introduce your final-year teacher candidates as potential participants in my study. My emerging research proposal which is nearing committee approval is attached for your review at your convenience.

Please contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Dorina
Dorina Sackman-Ebuwa

Research Request and Approval

███████████████████████████████
Wed 7/7/2021 8:25 PM

To: Dorina Sackman

Cc: ████████████████████████

Yes, I give permission to utilize final year teacher interns (candidates) during Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 if applicable. Please send all materials for further approval to ███.
I look forward to this great opportunity!

███████████████████████████

Interim Program Director
Field Experience Coordinator
Education Program
████████████
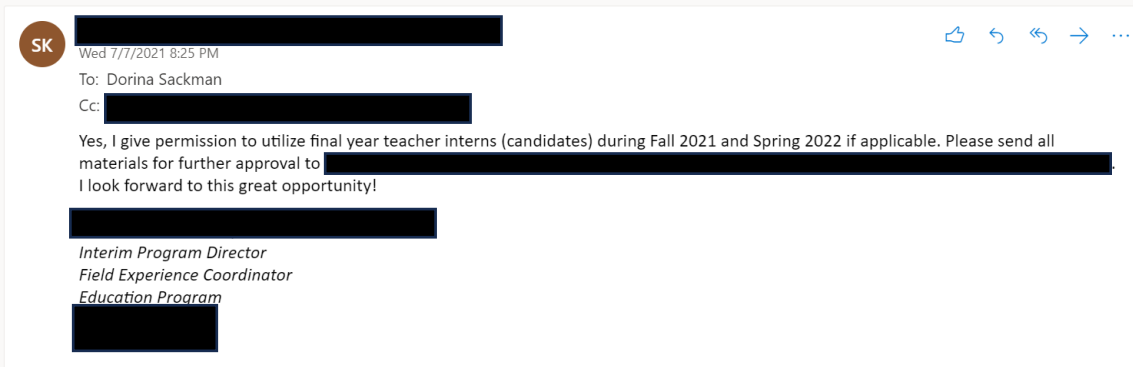
Appendix C: Permission to Use SCALE Instrument

Emotional Intelligence Learning Systems, Inc.
Emotional Intelligence Is Our Voice In The World

October 10, 2020

Dear Ms. Dorina Sackman-Ebuwa,

I and my good friend/colleague, the late Dr. Darwin Nelson, have always encouraged and supported quality doctoral research with emotional intelligence and skills vital to personal, academic, career, life, and leadership performance. We are pleased to grant you permission to use our EI-centric learning models, positive assessment instrument; the Skills for Career And Life Effectiveness® (SCALE®), and skill definitions for your doctoral dissertation in the department of Education-Higher Education and Adult Learning at Walden University. You may include a copy of the SCALE® profile and other information as an appendix if you decide to do so. Copyrights of all SCALE® assessments are retained by Darwin Nelson and Gary Low.

We are pleased that you are using the SCALE® in your dissertation. Your study titled "Exploring Teacher Candidate Preparation Through the Lens of Emotional Intelligence" is an interesting, relevant, and needed study. Your study will add to the growing research base of emotional intelligence and its value and role in developing healthy and productive students, teachers, educators, and families. Through research, our learning model of emotional intelligence is linked in many ways to effective teaching, learning, and professional development in education.

When your dissertation is completed, we would like a bound copy of your thesis and one copy of all papers, reports, and articles that make use of the SCALE®. We try to keep up with all graduate research, doctoral studies, and articles used with our positive and research derived assessments. I wish you the best as you add to the professional literature and increase the heuristic value of our education and transformative assessments and learning models of emotional intelligence.

I wish you, your chair Dr. Richard Hammett, and committee at Walden University the very best as you pursue this important research. If you need additional professional literature references or technical assistance regarding the SCALE® assessment, please let me know.

Take care and warmest personal regards.

Gary R. Low, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus of Education, Texas A&M University-Kingsville
Founding Faculty, Emotional Intelligence Training & Research Institute (EITRI)
Principal, Emotional Intelligence Learning Systems (EILS)

Appendix D: Skills for Career And Life Effectiveness

Item Number	SCLAE® Item	Composite Scale
1	I am a self-confident person.	Self-Esteem (EI Skill)
2	I like myself, and I feel very comfortable with the way I am as a person.	
3	I am regarded by others as a leader.	
4	I have the ability to change or grow in ways that I decide are good for me as a person.	
5	For me, anything is possible if I believe in myself.	
6	I feel in control of my life.	
7	My daily life is full of things that keep me interested.	
8	When another person makes an important request/demand of me, I usually feel comfortable about saying "yes" or "no" to the request.	Assertion (EI Skill)
9	When I make an important request/demand of another person, I usually feel confident and comfortable in my right to make requests of others.	
10	When I am around a new group of people and need to initiate communication, I usually behave in a relaxed manner by introducing myself to someone who looks interesting or by just visiting around.	
11	When another person makes an important request/demand of me, I usually behave in line with my true feelings at the time, and tell the person "yes" or "no" comfortably.	
12	When I communicate with an "Authority" person, I usually feel comfortable and straightforward in my approach to the person.	
13	When I communicate with an "Authority" person, I usually behave comfortably and at ease with the person.	
14	When I am really angry with someone, I usually think Okay, I'm angry and need to deal with it constructively.	
15	I am confident in my ability to be comfortable and effective in communicating with other people.	Comfort (EI Skill)
16	I can tell how friendly I can be with a stranger.	
17	I know how to ask a favor without imposing.	
18	My ability to use my whole body (eyes, facial expressions, voice tone, and touch) make communication with others easy for me.	
19	My handshake is confident and firm, and communicates a solid feeling about myself to others.	
20	I have the ability to be comfortable with all kinds of people.	
21	I know how close I can be to another person without making that person uncomfortable.	
22	I have a good ability to listen to and really understand another person's feelings.	Empathy (EI Skill)
23	I am a warm and accepting person, and people seem comfortable talking to me about really private concerns and feelings.	
24	My friends tell me that I am an understanding person.	
25	When another person tells me what he or she is feeling, I can understand the feelings and really listen to him or her.	
26	I seem to be able to accurately feel what another person feels.	
27	I am considered by my friends to be a good listener.	
28	I can understand and be patient with someone who is experiencing a lot of emotions.	
29	I set specific goals for my career and life.	Drive Strength (EI Skill)
30	When I begin a difficult task, I am motivated more by the thought of success than by the thought of failure.	
31	I am an achiever.	
32	Despite the uncertainty of the future, it pays to make plans.	
33	I willingly undertake challenging projects that involve some risk of failure.	
34	I know how to set goals for myself.	
35	I prefer things to be challenging (involving some risk of failure).	
36	I am a good decision maker.	

37	I make decisions easily and with good results.	
38	I am able to be decisive when a stressful situation calls for an immediate decision and action.	
39	My decisions are usually accepted as "good" by the persons affected.	Decision Making (EI Skill)
40	If I am involved in a group project, I can suggest a solution that other group members accept.	
41	When facing a difficult decision, I am good at seeing several alternatives and making a priority decision.	
42	I seldom regret the decisions that I have made.	
43	I have a good ability to plan and complete my work on schedule.	
44	I have the ability to organize my responsibilities into an efficient personal time schedule.	
45	If I were being evaluated in terms of job effectiveness, I would receive high ratings in managing my work day.	
46	I am able to set objectives for myself and then successfully complete them within a specific time frame.	Time Management (EI Skill)
47	I am able to manage my time in the present so that I am not pressured by always trying to catch up with things that I have not done in the past.	
48	I waste very little time.	
49	I am able to effectively work on several projects at the same time with good results.	
50	If a group that I am in needs a spokesperson, I am usually elected.	
51	I am a good salesperson.	
52	I have the ability to make a strong and positive impact on the majority of people that I meet.	
53	I am able to be persuasive without taking advantage of others.	Influence (EI Skill)
54	I feel comfortable about approaching another person with the idea of selling him or her something.	
55	My friends involve me in solving their problems.	
56	Because I am a convincing and believable person, my friends often ask me to "talk to" someone for them.	
57	When I decide to do something, I carry through and do it.	
58	I am considered a dependable person.	
59	People admire my ability to accomplish what I set out to do.	
60	In almost any area that I go into, I am able to do well.	Commitment Ethic (EI Skill)
61	I have a solid feeling of confidence in my ability to create a good life for myself.	
62	I have rarely failed at anything that I have considered important.	
63	I live my life according to my own personal values.	
64R	My friends often say that I look worried, tense, or uptight.	
65R	I am under so much stress that I can feel the tension in my body.	
66R	I have become extremely nervous and tense at times, and doctors have advised me to slow down and relax.	
67R	I feel tense and pressured by the way I have to live.	Stress Management (EI Skill)
68R	I am a tense person.	
69R	When I see someone attempting to do something that I know that I can do much faster, I get very impatient.	
70R	On the job, I work under a great deal of tension.	
71	I am a healthy person, and I take good care of myself emotionally and physically.	
72	Physically, I feel healthy and full of energy.	
73	I see myself living a long and healthy life.	
74	I do not tire quickly and have good physical stamina.	Physical Wellness (Skill)
75	I wake up fresh and rested most mornings.	
76R	I have been unable to break negative habits that are a problem for me (drinking, smoking, overeating, etc.).	
77	I have developed nutritious and healthy eating habits.	
78	When someone is really angry with me, I usually feel angry and hostile and the need to attack.	

79	When I am really angry with someone, I usually think attack and powerfully show my anger.	
80	When someone is really angry with me, I usually behave by showing my own anger, and escalating the fight.	
81	When I am really angry with someone, I usually feel hostile, and a need to verbally attack.	Aggression (Potential Problem Area)
82	When someone is really angry with me, I usually think that I need to respond even stronger so as not to be overwhelmed.	
83	When I am really angry with someone, I usually behave by angrily expressing myself and getting into an argument.	
84	When I make an important request/demand of another person, I usually think that what I need or want is more important and that the other person should respond immediately.	
85	When I make an important request/demand of another person, I usually feel anxious or reluctant about approaching him or her.	
86	When I communicate with an "Authority" person, I usually feel nervous and hesitant about approaching the person.	
87	When I communicate with an "Authority" person, I usually behave apologetically and awkwardly with the person.	
88	When I am around a new group of people and need to initiate communication, I usually feel anxious and confused about how to start conversation.	Deference (Potential Problem Area)
89	When I make an important request/demand of another person, I usually behave hesitantly and awkwardly in making the request.	
90	When someone is really angry with me, I usually feel confused and afraid, and the need to avoid him or her.	
91	When I am really angry with someone, I usually feel anxious and confused about what to say.	
92	I am not satisfied with my ability to handle problems in conflict situations with others.	
93	I am not satisfied with my decision-making ability.	
94	I am not satisfied with the amount of energy I put into being successful in life.	
95	I need to change the way that I handle stress and tension.	Change Orientitation (Potential Problem Area)
96	I am not satisfied with the way that I manage my time.	
97	One of the things that I need to change most is the way that I relate to other people.	
98	I am not satisfied with my skill and ability to sell myself (or a product or service) to others.	
Note:	R = Reverse scored.	

SCALE skill and problematic indicators definitions and interpretation information. Reproduced with authors' permission.

Skill Dimension II: Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal Assertion (IA): Your score on this scale indicates your current level of skill in positively communicating to others in varied situations. A high score (*enhance*) indicates that you possess assertive communication skills and have the ability to directly and honestly express your thoughts and feelings to others in a way that respects your personal rights and the rights of others. A low score (*develop*) indicates a lack of assertive skills and a tendency to rely on self-defeating communication styles. Low assertive skills may lead to giving into others constantly (Deference) or overreacting and overpowering others (Aggression) in conflict situations. For a more comprehensive interpretation, including suggestions for pursuing growth in **Interpersonal Assertion (IA),** click here

Interpersonal Comfort (IC): Your score on this scale is an indication of your current skill and ability to judge appropriate social and physical distance in verbal and nonverbal interactions with others. High interpersonal awareness (*enhance*) would indicate an ability to express feelings appropriately and spontaneously and to be comfortable, self assured, and relaxed with others. A low score (*develop*) on this scale would indicate some difficulty in comfortably relating to others and a possible hesitance, holding back, or inhibition in interactions. For a more comprehensive interpretation, including suggestions for pursuing growth in Interpersonal **Comfort (IC),** click here

Empathy (E): Interpersonal Sensitivity: Your Empathy score is an indication of your current skill and ability to accurately understand and accept another person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Accurate empathy is a well-researched characteristic of skilled communicators. Research on this scale indicates that high empathic skill tends to be characteristic of warm, social, outgoing people. A high score (*enhance*) on Empathy would indicate an ability or skill to accurately understand and feel what others are saying, feeling, and doing. A low score (*develop*) may indicate personal difficulty or skill deficits in understanding and communicating with others on an emotional level. For a more comprehensive interpretation, including suggestions for pursuing growth in **Empathy (E),** click here

Skill Dimension III:
Career/Life Effectiveness Skills

Drive Strength (DS): Personal Motivation, Action Goal Setting: This scale measures your personal skill and ability to effectively direct your energy and motivation to accomplish personal goals. Persons scoring high on Drive Strength on the SCALE® may be described as synergistic, and they seem to share and live by many of the values of self-actualizing people. High Drive Strength seems to be related to high self-regard and inner directiveness. A low score (*develop*) may indicate difficulty in accomplishing personal goals, a reluctance to experiment or risk in the area of personal achievement, and a lack of energy or motivation in the present. Low Drive Strength may lead to reactive or "determined" behaviors when a person becomes unwilling to choose a course of action and to accept personal responsibility for one's actions. For a more comprehensive interpretation, including suggestions for pursuing growth in **Drive Strength (DS),** click here

Decision Making (DM): Your score on the Decision Making scale of the SCALE® indicates your perceived ability and skill to initiate, formulate, and implement effective problem solving procedures. Research on this SCALE® scale indicates that persons scoring high (*enhance*) on Decision Making tend to be described as self-actualizing, assertive, and inner directed. Good decision making skills are an important factor in personal mental health. The ability to effectively make decisions is a key factor in self-acceptance and positive self-regard. A low score (*develop*) on this scale indicates a lack of personal decision making skills and difficulty in effectively solving personal problems. For a more comprehensive interpretation, including suggestions for pursuing growth in **Decision Making (DM),** click here

Time Management (TM): This scale provides a self-assessment of your skill in the ability to effectively organize and utilize time in the present for the accomplishment of individual and career goals. Good Time Management skills (*enhance*) are related to high self regard, sensitivity to one's own needs, and task persistence. A low score (*develop*) indicates a lack of skill or inability to meaningfully organize time, difficulty in efficiently completing daily tasks, and a tendency to be controlled by events or responsibilities rather than "taking charge" and doing what one has agreed or accepted to do. For a more comprehensive interpretation, including suggestions for pursuing growth in **Time Management (TM)**, click here

Influence (I): Leadership, Interpersonal Impact, Persuasiveness: This scale score reflects your self assessed skill to positively impact and influence others. A high score (*enhance*) indicates self assured behavior and assertiveness in one's relationships with others. Persons scoring high on this scale may demonstrate leadership tendencies in a group and be described as enthusiastic, energetic, and warm. A low score (*develop*) would indicate a perceived inability or lack of skill to positively impact or influence others. Persons scoring low on this scale may be unable to see themselves as having a positive influence on others, and may be uncomfortable or unsure about approaching people in a powerful or impactful manner. For a more comprehensive interpretation, including suggestions for pursuing growth in **Influence (I)**, click here

Commitment Ethic (CE): Task Completion, Commitment to Goals: Your score on this scale indicates your perceived level of skill in the ability to complete projects and job assignments in a dependable and successful manner. Persons scoring high on this scale (*enhance*) tend to be inner directed and willing to dependably complete projects even when difficulty is encountered. Persons scoring high on Commitment Ethic trust themselves and are usually perceived as dependable and "committed" by others. A low score (*develop*) indicates a perceived inability or lack of skill to follow through and complete personal responsibilities and a tendency to accept and begin projects without a strong personal commitment. For a more comprehensive interpretation, including suggestions for pursuing growth in **Commitment Ethic (CE)**, click here

<div align="center">

Skill Dimension IV:
Personal Wellness Skills

</div>

Stress Management (SM): Your score on this scale of the SCALE® reflects your perceived skill in the ability to positively manage personal stress and anxiety. A high score (*enhance*) indicates that you have developed stress skills and that you are able to positively manage life stress. Persons scoring high on the Stress Management scale of the SCALE® are described as time competent, flexible, self-assured, stable, and self reliant. Good Stress Management skills are essential to creative and healthy living, and are a key factor in healthy personality. A low score (*develop*) indicates an inability or lack of skill in dealing with personal stress. Extremely low stress management skills may result in negative reactions to life stress with behavioral patterns and habits that may be psychologically or physically self-destructive. Eating and sleep disturbances and physical symptoms such as persistent headaches, digestive problems, and hypertension are negative reactions to life stress and the results of stress skill deficits. For a more comprehensive interpretation, including suggestions for pursuing growth in **Stress Management (SM)**, click here

Physical Wellness (PW): Your score on this SCALE® scale reflects the extent to which you have currently developed healthy attitudes and living patterns that are important to your physical health and well being. Physical Wellness is closely related to positive stress management and self esteem as measured by the SCALE®. A high score (*enhance*) on this scale indicates that you see yourself as a person who has developed healthy self-control of potentially harmful behavior patterns and who is currently physically healthy. A low score (*develop*) indicates perceived problematic behaviors and the awareness of a personal need to further develop life skills that are important to physical and emotional health. For a more comprehensive interpretation, including suggestions for pursuing growth in **Physical Wellness (PW)**, click here

Skill Dimension V:
Problematic Behaviors

SCALE® research has demonstrated that self-assessed change areas on the Interpersonal Aggression (IAg) Interpersonal Deference (ID), and Change Orientation (CO) scales are reflective of problematic behaviors. If a person has three or more ***develop*** areas on the eleven skills scales, a primary communication style other than assertion, and a high score on Change Orientation (CO), there is clear awareness and recognition of the need for specific skill learning experiences to further develop and strengthen career/life effectiveness skills.

Appendix E: Participant Interview Plan

Pre-Interview/Introduction:

1. *"Thank you, (interviewee) for participating in this study. I will now review the name and purpose for the study. My dissertation is called: Exploring Preservice Teacher Preparation Through the Lens of Emotional Intelligence. I will explore the perceptions, experiences, and understanding of final year preservice teachers' readiness to learn and teach as understood from a framework of nonintellective skills and abilities operationalized as Transformative Emotional Intelligence (TEI). Do you need me to explain the purpose in more depth?"* (wait for reply and reply as applicable).

2. *"I will now review the purpose of the interview, data that will be collected, and confidentiality and protection of identity. Do you need me to explain any of what I just reviewed in more depth?"* (Wait for reply and reply as applicable. If completed go to script #3).

3. *"I will now read the informed consent form you completed and verify the date you signed."* (After it is read and verified go to script #4).

4. *"I would like to audio record the interview to have an accurate record of our conversation and observations. As explained in the review of data, I will be transcribing our conversation using TEMI, a speech recognition software. Besides the consent form for permission to record, I would like to obtain your permission for the recording right here. Upon permission to record, I will start the recording. Do I have your permission to record?"* (Wait for reply and reply as applicable. If permission is granted, go to script #5).

Interview Questions

The research questions (RQ) are written above the Interview Questions (IQ) in bold type. They are included in this section for alignment and organizational purposes only and will not be read to the participants.

"The first two questions I am going to ask have to do with your personal knowledge and experience with Emotional Intelligence."
　　　IQ1: Before taking the SCALE assessment, what were your experiences and/or knowledge of Emotional Intelligence?

　　　IQ2: In your own words, what is Emotional Intelligence?

RQ1: What is the normed SCALE profile for final year preservice teachers?

"The next two questions I am going to ask have to do with your perceptions of the SCALE assessment and the average SCALE profile for your (insert number) classmates who completed the assessment. A profile is simply a picture of the average scores in a bar graph. First, I am going to share with you the average SCALE profile for you and your peers. Then we will discuss the profile.

> IQ3: Please share your personal thoughts, perceptions, or observations about your experience with the SCALE Assessment.

> IQ4: Please share your personal thoughts, perceptions, or observations about the average SCALE profile of the college's final year preservice teacher participants in this study.

RQ3: What are the final year preservice teachers' impressions of EI based on their experience with SCALE?

"The next two questions I am going to ask have to do with your perceptions of Emotional Intelligence after taking the SCALE assessment, as well as your SCALE Assessment results.

> IQ6: Please share your thoughts, impressions, and observations of EI after taking the SCALE Assessment.

> IQ6: Comparing your assessment results with the normed profile for final year preservice teachers. Please share any reflections you have.

RQ4: What are the final year preservice teachers' perceptions of their EI strengths and areas to develop based on SCALE?

"The next two questions I am going to ask have to do with your perception of your EI strengths and areas of development based on your SCALE Assessment.

> IQ7: What are your perceptions of your EI strengths based on the SCALE assessment results?

> IQ8: What are your perceptions of your areas to develop based on your SCALE assessment results?

RQ2: What are the final year preservice teachers' experiences with learning about EI in their teacher preparation programs?

"The next two questions are where I want to discuss any specific learning of EI in your teacher preparation programs."

IQ9: As a final year preservice teacher, please list any other your experiences learning about EI.

IQ10: Describe any EI content that was taught or covered in your preservice teacher preparation program?

RQ5: How do final year preservice teachers understand EI skills in terms of making them more or less ready to teach?

"The last two questions are about your understanding of EI Skills and how EI might assist in preparing you for the teaching profession."

IQ11:   How do you understand EI skills in terms of readiness to teach?

IQ12:   How do you think EI skills could help prepare preservice teachers for the career as a teacher?

IQ13: Based on your experience with the SCALE assessment and any insights gained during this interview, please share your thoughts about the importance of incorporating emotional intelligence into your professional development and future learning.

Post-Interview/Conclusion

1. "*Thank you, (interviewee) for your meaningful participation in this study. I appreciate your time and contribution to this work.*"

2. *"I want to reassure you of your protection of anonymity. Before we complete our time together, I would like to make sure you are aware of the next phases of this study. I want to verify that I have your permission for future contact with you for member checking. This will occur after the data has been collected, transcribed, and analyzed. Do I have permission to contact you for this phase of the research?"* (Wait for reply and go to script #3).

3. *This concludes our interview. Thank you again, (interviewee). I will now press stop on the recording.*

Appendix F: Gatekeeper Forwarded Letter of Introduction (Redacted)

The purpose of this email is to introduce you as a potential participate in a doctoral research project on exploring preservice teacher preparation through the lens of emotional intelligence at ████████████. You have been identified as a potential participant because you are in your final year of teacher preparation studies in the college. More information about the researcher and the research is provided below from the researcher herself. If, after reading the information provided below, you are interested in participating in the study, please contact the researcher, Dorina Sackman-Ebuwa, using the Walden University email, dorina.sackman@waldenu.edu.

████████████████████

Interim Program Director
Field Experience Coordinator
Education Program
████████████

Dear potential participant,

I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University's College of Education and Leadership. Currently, I am in the process of completing my dissertation, titled *Exploring Preservice Teacher Preparation Through the Lens of Emotional Intelligence*. This research will explore the perceptions, experiences, and understanding of final year teacher candidates' readiness to learn and teach as understood from a framework of nonintellective skills and abilities operationalized as Emotional Intelligence (EI).

I am seeking volunteer participants for a multi-modal qualitative descriptive study to explore teacher preparation through the lens of EI. Your initial time requirement would be 15-20 minutes to respond to 98-item 3-point Likert scale positive assessment of EI. The name of the instrument is the Skills for Career And Life Effectiveness (SCALE). The purpose of the SCALE assessment is to establish a normed profile of teacher candidates who are preparing to enter the teaching profession.

I am requesting that you notify me by email to participate in this study. Upon receipt of your email, I will send you instructions with credentials to enable your completion of the assessment on the proprietary website www.doscale.com. If selected-in for an interview based on the demographic information you provide when completing the SCALE survey, I will contact you to schedule a 45-50-minute audio recorded face-to-face interview about your SCALE assessment impressions and to explore your perceptions as a final-year teacher candidate regarding your readiness to learn and teach from a framework of EI.

Toward the end of my data analysis, I will ask you to review the interview transcript and my thematic analysis of the transcript to ensure their accuracy from your perspective. This member checking will be done using email communications.

Once again, if you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me at dorina.sackman@waldenu.edu. I look forward to hearing from you.

Dorina Sackman-Ebuwa
Doctoral Candidate, Walden University
dorina.sackman@waldenu.edu
Phone: 407-456-4740

Appendix G: Instructions for Completing SCALE

Dear _____,

The Skills for Career And Life Effectiveness (SCALE®) is a 98-item instrument that you are asked to complete online. The SCALE® is a self-report measure of emotional intelligence (EI). The purpose of experiencing the SCALE® is two-fold. First, the combined results will provide an average profile to help describe and understand the last-year, preservice teachers' overall EI as measured by this instrument. Secondly, your survey results will be shared back with you and help provide a common vocabulary for a follow-up interview, should you be selected for and desire to participate in the interview portion of the study.

Instructions

1. Visit the SCALE® assessment portal at https://doscale.com. The homepage provides background information about SCALE®, how the instrument should be experienced and used, and basic instructions for completing the assessment. If you are a visual learner, the DEMO section of the website provides two short video tutorials; one on logging in and completing the assessment, and one for accessing and using the profile report and interpretive information that come with SCALE®. The basic instructions are also provided below for your convenience.

2. When you are ready to begin the assessment, click the login button in the upper right-hand portion of the homepage. Use the system's randomly generated login credentials assigned for your personal SCALE® use. Your credentials are:

User Name: <System-generated User Name for this participant>

Password: <System-generated Password>

3. After successfully logging in you will see a screen that requests you to fill in some information about yourself. The purpose of the screen is twofold. First, the system requires your name and an email address (you must type in your email address twice), as well as a personally meaningful password. The email address and password that you provide will be used by you to access your online SCALE® and assessment results in the future. Your SCALE profile and results are provided for your benefit and will never be shared with anyone. Names are collected only to determine whether assessments have been completed as assigned. After entering your demographic information, click on Submit. You may then begin your assessment immediately by clicking on the *Next* at the bottom of the screen.

4. Respond to each question/item using Most Like or Descriptive of Me, Sometimes Like or Descriptive of Me, or Least Like or Descriptive of Me. There are no right or wrong answers, and your SCALE® results are for you alone. Your SCALE® profile results will be displayed automatically after you respond to the last item. If you want to return and review your profile later, login using the email address and password you provided in Step 3 and then click on *Select* under the *Completed SCALEs* section in your account portal. Select the instrument ID number that appears. Your profile and basic report, which you may print from your browser window, will be displayed. Embedded within the basic report you will also see links to additional interpretive detail for each of the eleven SCALE® skills. Clicking on those links will open .pdf files that you may also print for your own information and use. The interpretive information was developed by best-selling author Margo Murray (Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring,

2001, Jossey-Bass) based on her many years of using positive assessment processes as a consultant to business, industry, and government clients worldwide.

Enjoy your SCALE®!

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dorina Sackman-Ebuwa.

Appendix H: Participant Email Reminders

Reminder of Invitation

Dear _____,

On _____, I emailed you an Informed Consent Form and Invitation to participate in my doctoral research about your perceptions, experiences, and understanding of final year teacher candidates' readiness to learn and teach as understood from a framework of nonintellective skills and abilities operationalized as Emotional Intelligence (EI). This is a one-week and final email reminder to ask you to consider participating by reading the Informed Consent Form and signing and returning the form if you wish to participate.

Please call or email me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Dorina Sackman-Ebuwa
(407) 456 – 4740 (Mobile)
dorina.sackman@waldenu.edu.

Reminder to Complete the SCALE® Assessment

Dear _____,

On _____, I emailed you instructions to complete the online Skills for Career And Life Effectiveness (SCALE®), a 98-item positive assessment of emotional intelligence (EI). As of today, your SCALE® has not been completed. I wanted to send this friendly reminder for you to complete your SCALE®. It is the first step for your possible selection to participate in a follow-up interview about your teacher preparation program experience.

Please call or email me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Dorina Sackman-Ebuwa
(407) 456 – 4740 (Mobile)
dorina.sackman@waldenu.edu.