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**UNLOCKING CLASSROOM DISCOURSE: SUPPORTING EARLY CAREER
TEACHERS IN THEIR DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE SOCIAL-
EMOTIONAL TEACHING PRACTICES**

KELLY L. FALVEY

A DISSERTATION

In the

Isabelle Farrington College of Education and Human Development

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Degree of Doctor of Education

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IN THEIR DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL
TEACHING PRACTICES**

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ABSTRACT

UNLOCKING CLASSROOM DISCOURSE: SUPPORTING EARLY CAREER TEACHERS IN THEIR DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL TEACHING PRACTICES

Kelly Falvey

T. Lee Morgan, Ph.D., Dissertation Chair

This Improvement Science research study investigates how school districts can support educators with one to three years of experience in developing culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices (CISEL). This mixed-methods study aimed to understand the early career teacher experience and their perspectives on CISEL to identify structures that support this area of pedagogical development during the transition from preparation to employment. First, an initial root cause analysis exposed the need for more explicit integration of cultural inclusivity into educator preparation and early career teacher professional learning in the state and district that employs the scholarly practitioner. Secondly, the root cause analysis confirmed that early career teachers perceive the social teaching practice of “responsibility and choice” as an area for growth. Combining these findings with a literature review on early career teacher support and culturally inclusive teaching practices, the researcher developed and implemented an intervention focused on classroom discourse. Classroom discourse is relevant to the development of CISEL because it relies on the teacher’s instructional choices to facilitate student voice, student choice, and student interaction. The research participants who volunteered for this study participated in two interviews, implemented a classroom discourse structure four times, and reflected on their implementation using a targeted rubric and questions. This study converged

descriptive and correlational analyses from the rubric data with coded themes from the written reflections and interviews. Results show that teacher delivery correlates to student communication and interaction. Additionally, the use of targeted and explicit reflections on social-emotional teaching practices can offer teachers support in their development of culturally inclusive classroom practices. These findings lead the researcher to recommend policy changes that include explicit guidance for culturally inclusive teaching practices across teacher preparation, onboarding, and evaluation. The research findings also ask magnet districts to consider professional learning that is differentiated and collaborative based on the strengths of each unique school. This study recommends future research on student perceptions of CISEL and mentor awareness of CISEL-related practices and resources.

Keywords: social-emotional competence, cultural competence, inclusivity, early career educators, magnet school, social-emotional teaching practices, classroom discourse, culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices

DEDICATION

I completed this step in my educational and personal journey during a time of grief and renewal. Sacred Heart University's Educational Leadership program taught me how to lead with science, and I will do so in honor of the 6 million+ lives lost to the COVID-19 pandemic. Sacred Heart University's Educational Leadership program expects leadership for justice, and I will lead in honor of the profound losses and profound gains society experienced during the timeframe of this program.

To my family and friends, thank you for the unconditional love and laughter throughout this process; it is a feeling that goes beyond a 2D page.

To S.A.E.B., you were an unexpected gift during this process.

To my school communities and mentors, you ask me questions that prompt me to grow, inspire me, share your time, and maintain the focus on learning and relationships.

To encounter groups, I refresh myself with new perspectives and the pursuit for that gift of discernment.

To every person doing the best that they can in this moment, your kind words, smiles, and tenacity unknowingly helped me achieve.

To moments of grace and "moments we'd love to live forever," thank you for keeping me grounded and present as a doctoral student.

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To the inaugural cohort- I take a piece of each of your insights and leadership with me to be the best version of myself.

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Chapter I: The Problem of Practice

Improvement Science is an inquiry and change implementation process similar to the process of personal development. This Improvement Science research focused on the professional and personal support that early career teachers receive from school districts in their first few years of teaching, specifically in developing culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices. This inquiry began with an extensive root cause analysis that exposed how a system contributes to an educational problem of practice (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020; Perry et al., 2020). The process continued with the researcher's search for evidence of improvement during cycles of change, reflection, and adjustment in an authentic education setting (Bryk et al., 2017). As The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) (2021) advises, such a research study is a collaboration between the researcher, also referred to as a scholarly practitioner, and stakeholders within the school district where the researcher is an active participant.

Equity and social justice are two key focus areas of the professional doctorate in education; this study supported early career teachers' understanding and application of both (The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2021). Throughout the research process, the scholarly practitioner inquired into an authentic problem of practice to develop understanding, experiment with effective solutions, and communicate current educational research (The Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, 2021). The researcher sought to create sustainable recommendations for continuous improvement of early career teachers' growth and application of culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices (Bryk et al., 2017). These recommendations also aimed to elevate student voice in the learning process through student discourse.

The formal and informal structures that prepare early career teachers to address Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) vary in approach, frequency, and format. Explicit integration of cultural inclusivity within certified teachers' social-emotional teaching practices also varies in consistency. This Improvement Science study stemmed from the practitioner's interest in pre-service and early career teachers' self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills competencies. These competencies, set forth by the Collaborative of Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework (2022), can positively impact educator workforce sustainability, educator classroom management, educator family engagement, and educator mental health approaches (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). If schools are to educate the whole child, then learning should incorporate social and emotional elements through human relationships (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018). Darling-Hammond and Cook-Harvey (2018) explain that "When adults have the cultural competence to appreciate and understand children's experiences, needs, and communication, they can offset stereotypes, promote the development of positive attitudes and behaviors, and build confidence to support learning in all students" (p. vi.).

The key features of schools designed for healthy child development parallel positive systems for educator development: supporting educator growth in the establishment of physical and psychologically safe classrooms, socially, emotionally, and culturally responsive practices, and student and family relationships (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018). Additionally, the focus of this study intended to support equity through the development of empathetic, cooperative, and rigorous learning environments (CASEL, 2022; Jagers et al., 2018). The scholarly practitioner leading this study believes that competence in self-awareness and social

awareness builds a foundation for early career teachers to develop a holistic, culturally inclusive approach with students.

Cultural competence is interrelated with social and emotional competence. For example, CASEL's 2020 revision of its SEL definitions is more encompassing of the cultural contexts of student development (CASEL, 2022). Author, activist, educator, and former Assistant Director of Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, Dena Simmons, called on educators to integrate SEL through debate, community, and current cultural context to “foster courageous conversations across difference so that our students can confront injustice, hate, and inequity” (Simmons, 2019, p. 3). This study intentionally integrated classroom dialogue and cultural inclusivity with the premise that both are integral to SEL.

Background of the Problem

This Improvement Science research focused on educator development, specifically during the first three years of teaching. Each district in Connecticut determines the learning foci and resources to support professional development. The researcher sought the perspectives of early career teachers on how they experience mentoring and professional development in the competencies of self-awareness, social awareness, and relationships skills through a phenomenological, scholar-practitioner approach. The assertion that “socially, emotionally, and culturally competent teachers are better equipped to reach and equitably teach students with a broad range of backgrounds (e.g., socioeconomic) and social identities (in terms of culture, racialization, etc.)” (Donahue-Keegan et al., 2019, p. 154) guided this research. This Improvement Science research explored explicit links between the supportive systems for early career teachers and their development of culturally inclusive social emotional teaching practices.

Self-awareness is a foundational competency interrelated with relationship skills and social awareness competencies (Dolev & Leshem, 2017). Dolev and Leshem's (2017) teacher development study found that growth in teacher self-awareness improved their awareness, knowledge, and openness to their students' diverse identities and interests while minimizing judgmental reactions. Focusing on an explicit SEL competency led to teachers' affirmation of the individual identities of their students and improved learning outcomes (Dolev & Leshem, 2017). CASEL (2022) defines self-awareness as knowing one's strengths and challenges through examining identity, feelings, and biases. Self-awareness is a gateway to the growth mindset needed for authentic SEL and culturally inclusive practices in schools. Yoder (2014a) further characterized self-awareness as identification skills related to one's emotions, needs, and values. Self-awareness is at the root of what Yoder (2014b) called "Social Teaching Practices," which occurs alongside "Instructional Teaching Practices." Both sets of practices support effective SEL in the classroom.

The guiding research questions of this study explore how to support teachers in developing social and instructional teaching practices that align with culturally inclusive teaching practices. The following observable teaching approaches relate to the competencies of social awareness and relationships skills: student-centered discipline; teacher language; responsibility and choice; and warmth and support (Yoder, 2014a). Culturally competent teaching approaches advises educators to better connect with students by developing cultural awareness, applying this awareness to dialogue and learning tasks in the classroom (University of Delaware, 2017).

Statement and Definition of the Problem

Facilitating student voice is essential to student development of decision-making skills, self-determination, civic engagement, and creativity (Toshalis & Nakkula, 2013; Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy, 2019). Facilitation of student voice involves educators viewing students as stakeholders and collaborators (Toshalis & Nakkula, 2013). Engaging early career teachers in reflection and expression of their implicit beliefs and personal constructs that may influence and obstruct self-awareness (Jennings & Frank, 2015) relates to the development of inclusive instructional practices. The process narrowed in focus from educators' self and social awareness competencies (CASEL, 2022) to social, emotional, and cultural competence (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020), and ultimately focused on the culturally inclusive classroom (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2021). Yoder's social teaching practice of responsibility and choice shaped the formation of an intervention that intended to support early career teacher development (Yoder, 2014b) as viable approaches to supporting early career teachers' awareness and implementation of culturally inclusive teaching practices.

This problem of practice is urgent as Connecticut schools swiftly act to grow their Social-Emotional Learning programs through pandemic phases and federal relief funding, such as the CARES Act, which supports professional development related to implementing an SEL, research-based framework (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2020b). Furthermore, inconsistencies related to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as staffing, modes of learning, and social distancing prompt prioritization of social emotional development via communication in classroom communities. A critical examination of new teacher support is also timely because of

the inconsistent field experiences by teaching candidates enrolled in Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) throughout the period of preparation impact the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, as more Teacher Residency Programs develop in Connecticut school districts as alternative pathways for training, certifying, and diversifying Connecticut’s educator workforce, school districts must mentor and support new educators with effective, evidence-based practices that are mindful of the personal and professional journey of everyone. This Improvement Science research aimed to serve as a resource for differentiating and personalizing the professional development of new educators while encouraging inclusive, student-centered practices.

Intentionally incorporating SEL has the potential to help teachers navigate the complex demands of the profession, minimize teacher attrition, and better support the mental health of PK-12 learners (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). Specifically, self-awareness is a sustainable pathway for preventing teacher burnout (Zakrzewski, 2013). Self-awareness builds an understanding of culture and is an essential frame or lens of SEL (Hecht & Shin, 2015, p. 50). Discussions of pedagogical development are interrelated to social, emotional, and cultural development. Consistency in training, support, and feedback supports adult SEL and leads to student outcomes in academics and SEL (Elliott et al., 2015). Thus, research reinforces that time and frameworks should exist for educators to reflect and communicate about SEL competencies (Patti et al., 2015); these structures can range from aspirations to emotional reactions to an inquiry into the “deep habits of thought and action” that affect our perceptions and decisions (Patti et al., 2015, pp. 442–443).

Drawing parallels between civic identity and stages in SEL, Jagers et al. (2019b) explain that recognizing personal bias connects to the impact of history and identity on how individuals

think and feel in various situations. Educators' culturally inclusive practices in a workforce that do not currently reflect the demographic makeup of Connecticut's students could grow from experiences with the individual and "communal" orientation that stems from critical self-awareness (Jagers et al., 2019, p. 196). The seven anchors of the Social, Emotional, and Cultural Framework (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020) guided the analysis of how social, emotional, and cultural competence integrates into early career teacher support structures, specifically to "build trusting relationships, foster self-reflection; foster growth mindset; cultivate perseverance; create community; promote collaborative learning; respond constructively across differences" (p. 34). Embedding and supporting SEL reflections about teacher efficacy positively impacts the teachers' skills to effectively apply SEL in the classroom (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017); consequently, this study sought to ensure this practice during the first few years of teaching.

The Setting and the System

The setting for this study is the State of Connecticut, where the scholarly practitioner has served as an educator for 16 years. The dedication of Connecticut schools to SEL, pre and post the COVID-19 pandemic, is apparent in teacher professional development priorities.

Connecticut's State Department of Education announced in March 2021 that all districts would utilize the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) System and the DESSA-mini to provide statewide data on student wellbeing and shape SEL instructional decision-making (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2021b). Additionally, teacher evaluation flexibilities during the pandemic resulted in a statewide focus on student learning goals related to SEL (Connecticut State Department of Education, n.d.b).

Features of Magnet Districts

This research study occurred in a Connecticut Magnet School District (MSD) that will remain anonymous in this reporting. The school district exists within a broader, interconnected system that the Improvement Science process analyzes for challenges, opportunities, and solutions (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). An examination of the more extensive system sometimes uncovers unintended consequences, identifies influential stakeholders, or prioritizes the order of desired change (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). For example, focusing on cultural inclusivity in a magnet school setting relates to Connecticut's history of racially and socioeconomically isolated communities (Eaton-Robb, 2022). The 1996 *Sheff v. O'Neill* Connecticut Supreme Court case underscored how segregated communities and resources throughout Connecticut communities impact student learning. The researcher looked at how Connecticut certification pathways and school systems can prepare beginning educators in practices that integrate culturally inclusive SEL (CISEL) that fosters student and educator development.

Focusing on early career teachers at magnet schools exposed similarities and differences between Connecticut's regionalized school options and municipal school districts. Some similarities included adherence to the State Department of Education mandates, notably standardized testing and federal mandates, such as compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. A major difference exists in the funding of magnet schools and how the lottery system determines access to magnet school applicants. The thematic focus of magnet schools is a factor that influences the curriculum and instructional choices of magnet school educators. The added layers of magnet standards and grant funding are distal requirements that

may impact the perceptions of early career teachers in a way that differs from their colleagues in other districts.

Magnet School District Overview

The Magnet School District (MSD) serves a diverse student body, with each school representing between 11 and 40 Connecticut towns (District, 2020). Educators taught 2,359 students enrolled during the 2020-2021 school year (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2021a). The classrooms of this district are representative of many Connecticut classrooms with learners ranging from pre-kindergarten to grade 12. For example, the percentage of enrolled students with disabilities is 16.4%, which closely aligns with the state average of 16.3% (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2021a). The percentage of enrolled students learning English as a Second Language is 9%, which is slightly higher than the state average of 8.3% (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2021a).

This study prioritizes CISEL because of the MSD's educator workforce is disproportionate to the diverse student composition of the district's students (see Table 1 and Table 2). The district employed 260.4 certified full-time staff (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2021a). The racial and ethnic composition of educators in the district is representative of Connecticut overall; however, this composition is not representative of the district's student body as seen in Table 2.

Table 1*District Minoritized Student and Educator Proportions*

School Year	Minoritized Students	Minoritized Educators
2020-2021	69.4%	10.6%
2019-2020	67.7%	9.5%
2018-2019	66.2%	10.8%

Note. Public data obtained from Edsight.

Table 2*2020-2021 District Proportion of Students and Teachers by Racialized Classifications*

Racialized Origin	Students	Educators
Asian Origin	.02%	1.5%
African Origin	17%	4.2%
Native American Origin	-	.04%
Hispanic Origin	41%	4.6%
Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Origin	-	-
Multiple Origins	.08%	-
European Origin	30%	88.5%

Note. Public data obtained from Edsight; * represents omission to maintain confidentiality.

² Edsight does not include teacher data of multiple origins

The disproportionality between the cultural and linguistic diversity of Connecticut students compared to Connecticut educators reinforces the need for an examination of effective practices for social-emotional teaching skills. Tables 1 and Table 2 show a need for this examination in the MSD setting. Educators’ social, emotional, and cultural competence contributes to building relationships with students and families and making instructional choices that promote rigorous, inclusive learning environments.

This MSD prioritizes professional learning, teacher development, and pathways to certification. For example, one of the district’s professional development goals is “to promote school communities that ensure an emotionally and physically safe environment, built upon clear expectations that promote respectful and inclusive classroom interactions, supported by

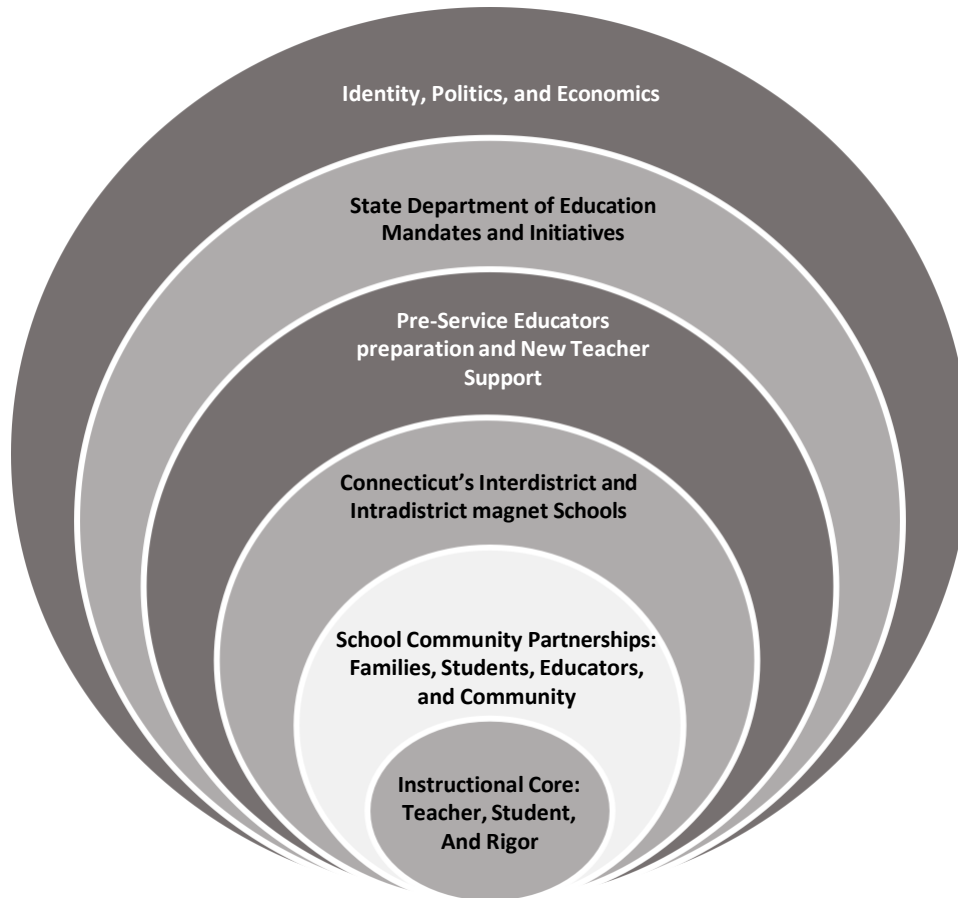
celebrations of effort and accomplishments, which lead to the development of positive relationships” (Magnet District, 2021, p. 3). In addition, the district (personal communication, December 11, 2020) has developed a partnership with the University of Connecticut Teacher Certification Program for College Graduates with a specific focus on increasing the number of Special Education certified staff and launched a Teacher Residency Program to serve the primary region of the district. The district also partners with a university to co-maintain two magnet schools that span PreK through Grade 12. The university is also a setting for Connecticut’s Alternative Route to Certification program. These partnerships are integral to fulfilling certifications in shortage areas, diversifying Connecticut’s educator workforce, and building bridges between preparing pre-service candidates and supporting newly hired staff.

This MSD has an expansive network of partnerships throughout the State of Connecticut because it serves as a hub of magnet schools and professional learning. Inquiry into this problem of practice aligns with the district’s Professional Development. Researching how to best support early career teachers also connects to the Professional Development and Educator Evaluation Committee pillar “To promote school communities that ensure an emotionally and physically safe environment, built upon clear expectations that promote respectful and inclusive classroom interactions, supported by celebrations of effort and accomplishments, which lead to the development of positive relationships” (District, 2021, p. 3). Though the previous pillar guides the professional learning of the district magnet schools, the MSD also provides professional learning to other Connecticut school districts. It is important that widely accessed professional learning integrate evidence-based supports in CISEL.

The system that supports teacher preparation and development is influenced by proximal and distal factors. For example, legislated mandates and certification pathway field experiences shape an early career teacher's awareness of CISEL (see Appendix L). The MSD is responsible for the support and development of new teachers who enrich the workforce with differing personal, cultural, and professional backgrounds. The Public Education Leadership Project (PELP) Coherence Framework graphically represents the interdependence amongst systems that affect instructional change (Harvard University Public Education Leadership Project, 2021) (see Figure 1). While local and national factors influence the district setting, this Improvement Science research focused on the relationship amongst educators, students, and inclusivity as its foundation. A major proximal factor of magnet districts is the responsibility of educators to transition students and families from a variety of locations and backgrounds into an inclusive and safe school climate.

Figure 1

System Setting of Study



Note. System setting adapted from Harvard University Public Education Leadership Project (2021). *PELP coherence framework*. <https://pelp.fas.harvard.edu/coherence-framework>.

Statewide mandates play a significant role in broader educational systems, which includes the MSD setting of this study (see Figure 1). For example, Connecticut's state mandated TEAM mentoring process and System for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED) processes are key systems for teacher development related to the setting of this study. While SEED is a framework for evaluating teachers, TEAM is a system that pairs trained teacher mentors with beginning teachers during their first and second years of teaching. The Common

Core of Teaching: Foundational Skills Domains of 2010 instead of the Connecticut Rubric for Effective Teaching 2017 guides the learning modules of the TEAM process. Domain 6 (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2010) and Domain 4 (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2017) focus on professionalism, collaboration, and leadership, which incorporate SEL broadly or inferentially.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The purpose of this Improvement Science research sought to determine highly effective support systems for early career teachers that target culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices. The mixed methods design of this study gathered themes related to how schools support early career teachers and how these teachers perceive their school's support during the first through the third year of teaching. A quantitative instrument provided details on how early career teachers evaluated the cultural inclusivity of their instruction and the student interactions, specifically during classroom discourse. The aspects of culturally inclusive social-emotional support experienced by early career teachers in their support structures were the phenomenon of interest. Student interaction and student communication served as the dependent variables of the quantitative research; teacher delivery and teacher questioning served as the independent variables. This study and its corresponding intervention intended to provide school districts and Educator Preparation Programs with practical suggestions on how to effectively facilitate personal and professional reflection that leads to greater awareness of how teaching practices affect the inclusiveness of classroom environments.

This study was relevant and timely as the global pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus stimulated a critical moment in how schools support new teachers. During the 2019-2020

and 2020-2021 school years, first-year teachers may have had limited interactions in their field placements during educator preparation coursework. Newly certified and employed teachers teaching during the pandemic experienced limited classroom management and community building and received atypical feedback and observations throughout the teacher evaluation process. Examining early career teacher support in their first few years of teaching also connects to the TEAM mentor findings of Hanita et al. (2020) that describe inconsistencies in the fidelity of program implementation but stress a positive relationship to teacher retention. The authors concluded that more mentoring hours and module completion occurred among educators in Connecticut's highest-need districts (Hanita et al., 2020).

How to facilitate and elevate student voice through inclusive teaching practices is a related phenomenon to the goal of increasing culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices into ubiquitous support systems like mentoring. The Connecticut State Department of Education included SEL and equity as guiding principles of the reopening guidelines in fall 2020 (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2020c). Supporting early career teachers in their social, emotional, and cultural competence can lead to transformative SEL: the intersection of equity, history, and SEL (Jagers et al., 2019). Jagers et al. (2019b) advise that adult SEL competence precedes student SEL in systemic SEL school frameworks. Some of the manifestations of transformative SEL in schools align with the effective support of new educators, such as critical self-analysis, diversity salience, and collective efficacy (Jagers et al., 2019). Educators promote transformative SEL environments for schools and partnerships through authenticity, an essential aspect of relationship-building skills (CASEL, 2020). Authenticity stems from personal and professional reflection and growth in who educators are

and what they value. Transformative SEL focuses on student voice through identity, belonging, collaborative problem solving, and leadership, leading to short and long-term academic and personal growth (Jagers et al., 2019). This study examined how to support early career teachers in the inclusive facilitation of student voice through analysis of educator voice.

Root Cause Analysis

The complexities of early career teacher support in Connecticut can be understood through a causal analysis and represented in a fishbone diagram (see Figure 3) (Bryk et al., 2017). The root cause analysis phase of Improvement Science research examines why a problem exists through a detailed analysis of structural, organizational, policy, and ideological causes (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). This root cause analysis concluded that the awareness of Social-Emotional Learning, culturally responsive professional resources, and new teacher support structures exist to support early career teachers, but the foci of culturally inclusive teaching practices are inconsistent within these realms.

Root Cause Analysis Research Question

This study's root cause analysis and intervention phase aimed to collect data that informs school districts of high-leverage approaches to supporting early career teachers' development of CISEL. The following question guided this root cause analysis:

⇒ What are the early career teachers' perceptions of job embedded support to build teacher competence (e.g., self-awareness and social awareness) to support CISEL?

A mixed-methods convergent design provided the foundation for this Improvement Science inquiry because qualitative and quantitative research informed the researcher on how to build the intervention that occurred in Phase 2 (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

Research Design and Data Collection

A humanistic theoretical framework informed the exploratory nature of this study. The researcher is committed to opportunities in which pre-service educators and early career teachers see connections between their social-emotional development and changes in their professional practice. An interpretivist paradigm relates to the scholar practitioner's interest in the self-reflective process of educators and intention to understand the unique experiences of colleagues at the start of their career (Morgan, n.d.). Specifically, this scholar practitioner employs the three conditions of Roger's (1961) Person Centered Approach in educational settings: empathy, authenticity, and unconditional positive regard. The following changes that can grow out of Person Centered self-reflection are highly relevant to educator growth: acceptance of feelings and self; growth in self-confidence and efficacy; adapting perceptions; relevant goal setting; and increasing acceptance of individuals (Rogers, 1961, p. 280). A phenomenological approach to Improvement Science research further connects to self-awareness and Palmer's (Center for Courage and Renewal, 2016) connection between "selfhood" and teaching as an extension of individual experiences and identities.

Both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this research study followed a mixed-methods design that utilized quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative research during the root cause analysis aimed to collect baseline data on social-emotional skills related to the teaching experiences of new teachers. Qualitative data collection during the root cause analysis used empathy interviews to collect information from stakeholders to help the researcher better develop a problem statement or understand the system in which participants exist (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020) (see Appendix B). Empathy interviewing "seeks to understand some concept or experience from the

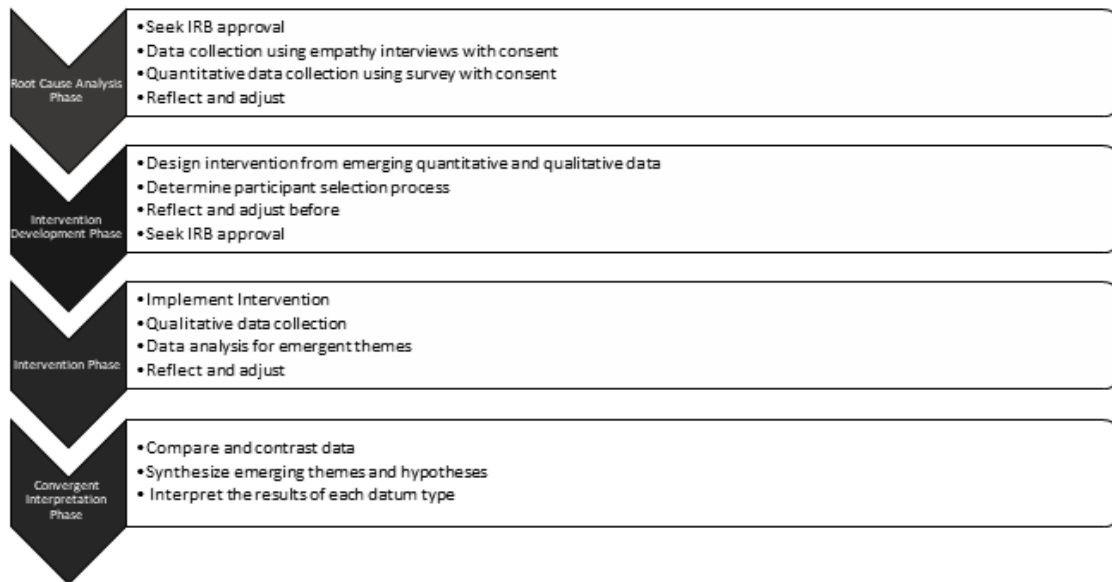
perspective of the interviewee” (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020, p. 59). The quantitative research utilized Part A and B of the Self-Assessing Social and Emotional Instruction and Competencies tool published by the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at the American Institutes for Research (Yoder, 2014b) (see Appendix D).

This mixed-methods research design collected quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously (see Figure 5). A phenomenological approach is a means of uncovering how a phenomenon manifests itself in everyday life and how the individuals involved see themselves related to the phenomena (Vagle, 2018). This study focuses on the phenomena of early career teacher support, not the teachers themselves, which further supports a phenomenological approach (Vagle, 2018). Collecting many perspectives is imperative to the multi-school site approach of this study as the researcher works in a district that maintains multiple magnet schools. Each school's thematic nature and individualized culture support the phenomenological idea of exposing emergent themes from how new teachers in any setting experience their structured support (Vagle, 2018).

Emerging themes from the root cause analysis focused on developing an intervention that can adapt to the specific needs of each school's culture (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). The intervention phase of this study elicited perceptions around a new method for early career teachers to facilitate culturally inclusive classrooms and social teaching practices. This design approach provided insight into the intervention's viability for use in the mentoring process of any new Connecticut educator. Figure 2 visualizes the intent of the two phases of this Improvement Science research.

Figure 2

Improvement Science Mixed Methods Research Design



Note. The “reflect and adjust” components stem from the suggestions of Vagle (2018).

The first phase collected data at the end-user level from school leaders and early career teachers. This information influenced the development of the second phase, specifically the focus for the intervention. The research findings converged to offer suggestions for policy, practice, and research.

Each step in the research design integrated what early career teachers thought, felt, and observed about their preparation, support, and instruction. This design offered a phenomenological approach for both a description and interpretation of how early career teachers experience their support in social, emotional, and cultural competence and quantitative analysis of their perceptions. Vagle (2018) points out that this approach allows for triangulation but could also rely on singular participant insights. This option is significant for the semi-structured

interviews of both phases of research. Analyzing primary resources related to professional development and new teacher onboarding plans seeks to identify Yoder's (2014b) Social Teaching Practices and Markowitz and Bouffard's (2020) Social, Emotional, and Cultural Anchor Competencies. Markowitz and Bouffard (2020) summarize examples of "teacher moves" that represent each social, emotional, and cultural competence anchor in a practical way (p. 34).

Data Collection Instruments

Various forms of data collection described below, including empathy interviews, gathered initial insights on the phenomenon of how schools' support of early career teachers incorporates building teacher competence to support culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices (CISEL). Purposive sampling determined the intervention participants for this study. Because the MSD employs the researcher, the study applied convenience and snowball sampling. The researcher worked with the TEAM district facilitator and school leaders to attend new teacher meetings, hold information sessions, and seek voluntary participants through communication efforts. Seeking participation from various school sites in the district supports the generalization of findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

Survey. The root cause analysis used Part A and B of Yoder's (2014b) *Self-Assessing Social and Emotional Instruction and Competencies* tool to elicit an area for growth among early career teachers in the district during the fall of 2021 (see Appendix D). Experts in social-emotional competencies helped develop this tool for the purpose of identifying professional learning (Yoder, 2014b). An analysis of descriptive statistics determined responsibility and choice as an emerging area for growth. The researcher used these data to develop an intervention explicitly tied to the teacher's role in facilitating classroom discourse. The researcher requested

completion of the social teaching-related questions by teachers in their first and second years of teaching.

Interviews. During the root cause analysis, the scholar practitioner conducted interviews with a high school principal, a school counselor, a TEAM mentor, and two beginning educators. The researcher engaged in "empathy interviews" (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020), which is an organic process of collecting information from stakeholders to gain further insight into the problem of practice. Empathy interviewing is "a data collection strategy that seeks to understand some concept or experience from the perspective of the interviewee" (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020, p. 59). The researcher utilized a semi-structured interview protocol that consists of open-ended questions related to educators' experiences developing social-emotional competency through professional activities and resources. Empathy interviewing relies on self-reported perceptions.

The researcher followed a protocol for consent and questioning that maximizes privacy, confidentiality, and objective recordings to minimize guiding questions. These end-user consultations followed question protocols to maintain consistency (see Appendix B). Each interview began with a verbal consent agreement. The interviews took place virtually with audio recordings during the fall of 2021, while COVID-19 pandemic safety protocols existed.

Document Review. The scholar practitioner analyzed documents associated with state and district professional learning and mentoring. The researcher also reviewed public data regarding the characteristics of the school district.

Environmental Scan. The scholar practitioner interviewed three District Facilitators/Leaders who coordinate new teacher development in districts representative of research setting district. The researcher connected with school leaders in three districts to

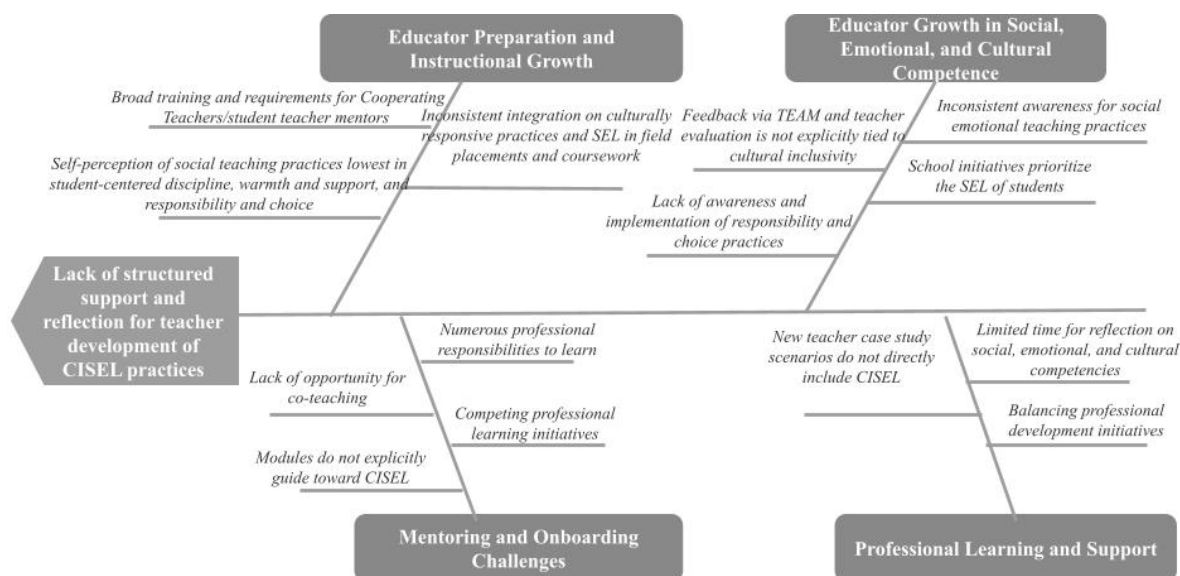
represent the variety of communities within this study site's magnet district. The researcher coordinated discussions with school leaders, specifically District Facilitators, via cell phone. The researcher followed the protocol questions (see Appendix B) and inquired into the supportive structures available to early career teachers in different Connecticut districts.

Root Cause Analysis Findings

The purpose of this study started with understanding the root causes that highlight the support needs of early career teachers while they learn to balance numerous professional responsibilities. This section presents the findings of Phase 1 of this Improvement Science research related to new teacher development of culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices. The fishbone diagram presented in Figure 3 provided a detailed model outlining the four root causes and the factors that contribute to the problem.

Figure 3

Fishbone Diagram of Phase 1 Root Cause Analysis



1

A lack of explicit learning and support for CISEL is the problem of practice that exists for early career teachers (see Figure 3). The researcher gathered a cross-section of perspectives and experiences from school leaders and early career teachers for the root cause analysis and uncovered implications, recommendations, and areas for future research. The root causes describe themes that emerged during Phase 1, which are graphically represented in Figure 3. The researcher created the Fishbone Diagram with awareness for the contextual system and setting of this problem of practice, including systemic challenges. Teacher retention, time constraints, and historical and systemic obstacles to diversifying the educator workforce are underlying problems that impact culturally inclusive pedagogical development.

Themes drawn from the analysis of the data collected during this initial research study phase exposed a need for an adaptive and flexible approach to supporting early career teachers. Each environmental scan underscored the competing interests for professional time for learning on literacy and math learning loss, project-based learning, and other professional responsibilities. Another challenge raised is the personalization of the learning for any grade level or discipline. District Facilitators shared the need for timely, relevant learning topics that integrated into the current work of educators. The researcher intentionally used this information to design an intervention that could accommodate for any teaching scenario, from advisory sessions, pre-K classrooms, and school counseling workshops.

The researcher's interviews identified a lack of discussion around explicitly preparing teachers for culturally inclusive practices. The theme of relationships and connection appeared in different forms, such as new teachers accessing human resources, relying on teams during the early years of teaching, and applying culturally responsive practices. One empathy interviewee stated:

I'm going to choose relationship skills only because I think it encompasses self-awareness and social awareness and relationship skills. Because I think they're those all three are really important, but I would say the relationship skills because I think especially if you're trying to be culturally inclusive, you really need to be aware of the other person and also how you interact in relationships. And so I think that relationship skills help you not to take things personally, to be more just socially aware and self aware.

The empathy interviews and professional learning analysis reinforced the theme of facilitating responsibility and choice in learning. One participant stated:

but I think that classroom discussions are one of the major like high leverage practices that are emphasized in school through systems of accountable talk. And I guess going back to social teaching practices, I think that what one might say is that through academic like instructional practices, like accountable talk, I think the idea of like, responsibility, listening, that is wrapped into that in some ways, but it still has more of an academic focus.

One early career educator discussed the struggle of classroom management and the process of dismantling preconceived notions of effective instructional practices. The colleague stated, “And for me, it's also been a development of how much do I have to be the one in control and how student-centered can it be? It's just this back-and-forth balance and every block is a little bit different even still today?” These responses prompted the researcher to examine classroom discourse further to facilitate culturally inclusive, student-centered learning.

The environmental scan of new teacher support in three Connecticut districts stressed a trend toward professional learning that is educator-driven and differentiated while relying on the foundation of the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching and TEAM mentoring. The environmental scan exposed that professional development for Social-Emotional Learning appeared commonly in the forms of restorative and trauma-informed practices. Responses in the environmental scan interviews also focused on the social-emotional competence of relationship skills. One large district formed a system of peer support persons in every school. Another district structured the support system for new teachers to make connections outside of their mentors. This study's root cause analysis and literature review conclude that interpersonal relationships provide guidance and support in any form of early career teacher development.

Root Cause 1: Educator Social, Emotional, and Cultural Competence

Interviews with school leaders who mentor and support new educators provide further insight into how to support early career teachers. Educators interviewed discussed relationship skills and self-management of numerous teaching responsibilities as competencies that early career teachers rely on while developing their practice. When asked about the competencies in which early career teachers need support, one response connected to the cultural inclusivity through the competency of relationship skills. The educator stated:

If I have to pick one it's hard so I guess I'm going to choose relationship skills only because I think it encompasses self-awareness and social awareness in relationship skills. Because I think um all three are really important, but I would say the relationship skills because um I think especially if you're trying to be culturally inclusive you really need to be aware of the other person and also how you interact in relationships. So, I think that relationship skills help you not to take things personally to be more um socially aware and self-aware.

One empathy interview shared a perspective that guided this study's work in culturally inclusive practices. The colleague stated, "So in terms of their instruction, I'm not sure that they do have all the time the social awareness of understanding how culture can influence the social structures in a classroom. And I think that that's something that they easily overlook and then make assumptions about based on that lack of awareness." The Social Teaching survey results also highlighted competencies that are apt for further development, notably areas in social awareness and relationship skills (see Table 4). Consequently, the researcher designed Phase 2 of this study to maximize CISEL.

Root Cause 2: Mentoring and Onboarding

Though each U.S. state mandates a form of SEL for certification, self-management and self-awareness are the least represented competencies in these mandates (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017). An important opportunity exists within the TEAM mentoring program to reinforce self-reflection of social, emotional, and cultural competence. Districts have autonomy over enacting the TEAM program in each district (Hanita et al., 2020). The features of the TEAM program differ by school and district. For example, there is more adherence to the program requirements amongst preschool/elementary schools and Alliance districts over secondary schools and non-Alliance districts (Hanita et al., 2020). These findings show inconsistencies in how early career teachers may experience their mentoring support, but the study underscores the importance of mentoring as a support measure to minimize teacher attrition (Hanita et al., 2020). Aronson (2020) reinforces the importance of mentoring for first-year teachers looking to apply critical social justice in the classroom. Early career teachers and their mentors in Connecticut districts have autonomy in their goal setting. The TEAM Module process is not arranged for direct research and application of CISEL. With the thematic focus of magnet schools, some empathy interviews discussed the competing professional learning initiatives related to grants and curricula development.

A study on the changing beliefs of first-year teachers underscored the significance of collegial interactions during early career teaching (French, 2018). The study of urban schoolteachers stressed that ECE's beliefs about teaching are malleable and impact instructional choices in the classroom (French, 2018). French (2018) applied Moir's six phases of beginner teachers and witnessed the most changes in beliefs during the early survival stage and third

disillusionment stage. This research reinforced the relationship between personal beliefs and teachers' behavior; consequently, early career teachers benefit from supports that may extend beyond professional reflection. The empathy interviews discussed co-teaching as a beneficial mentoring strategy but a rarity in implementation.

Root Cause 3: Educator Preparation and Instructional Growth

The problem of developing the culturally inclusive practices of Connecticut teachers is timely and begins at the certification pathway experience. Legislated mandates and statewide expectations for educator preparation are interrelated to this study of early career teachers (see Appendix L). State policies exist to promote SEL preparation at the EPP level; however, these mandates do not advise EPPs on best practices, especially adult candidates' SEL. For example, Statutory Public Act 15-108 Section 9 integrates SEL and cultural competence; however, specifics relate to intervention for social and emotional problems. Additionally, the integration of cultural competence is broadly directed as “The training in cultural competency shall include instruction concerning the awareness of students' background and experience that lead to the development of skills, knowledge and behaviors that enable educators and students to build positive relationships and work effectively in cross-cultural situations” (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2022a). EPPs also have autonomy in program development. As a result, disparities exist in pre-service teachers' explicit connections to their EPP experiences and their culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices.

District early career teachers' reflections on Yoder's Social Teaching Practices found the Teacher Language category the highest self-reported score area. There is a common theme amongst the self-reported data that teaching practices involving student ownership and

autonomy, which is at the center of culturally inclusive practices, are less consistently applied in the classrooms of early career teachers (see Table 3 and Table 4). Yoder’s Teacher Social and Emotional Skills asks educators to reflect on their “social and emotional competencies” and how these competencies impact the classroom use of Yoder’s “social interaction teaching practices.”

Table 3: Social Teaching Practices Survey Results

Social Teaching Practices Survey Results

Practice	Criterion	M (SD)
Student-Centered Discipline	I respond to misbehavior by considering pupil specific social, affective, cognitive, and/or environmental factors that is associated with the occurrence of the behavior.	3.64 (0.67)
	I teach students strategies to handle the emotions that affect their learning (e.g., stress, frustration).	3.45 (0.68)
Responsibility and Choice	I let my students help plan how they are going to learn in developmentally appropriate ways.	3.27 (0.90)
	I arrange experiences that allow my students to become responsible (e.g., classroom aids or jobs, peer tutoring, specific roles in group work) in developmentally appropriate ways.	3.55 (0.93)
Warmth and Support	I create structures in the classroom where my students feel included and appreciated (e.g., morning meetings, small moments, whole class share outs).	3.73 (0.79)
	I check in with my students about academic and nonacademic concerns they might have.	3.91 (0.94)

Note. The rubric response choices ranged from 1=I do not implement this practice; 2= I struggle to implement this practice; 3=I implement this practice reasonably well; 4= I generally implement this practice well; 5= I implement this practice extremely well.

Table 4*Survey Responses Denoting Competencies Apt for Growth*

Competency	Survey Descriptor	M (SD)
Self-Awareness	I can effectively implement social teaching practices with my students.	3.09 (.30)
	I am usually aware of how my emotions, culturally grounded beliefs, and background are precursors to my emotional reactions, and	3.18 (.60)
	I understand how they impact my social teaching practices with my students.	
	To effectively implement positive social teaching practices, I usually understand the perspectives of my students and can pay attention to their emotional cues during classroom interactions.	3.18 (.60)
Social Awareness	I try to understand why my students are or are not actively participating, and I am usually successful at providing my students the necessary skills to participate in the social teaching practices.	2.90 (.30)
	I successfully support positive emotions and respond to negative emotions during social teaching practices.	3.09 (.30)
	I address the commonalities and differences (e.g., racial, ethnic, cultural) that exist among students when I implement the social teaching practices.	3.18 (.40)
Relationship Skills	I clearly communicate behavioral and academic expectations in a manner that addresses students' individual needs and strengths when implementing social teaching practices.	2.90 (.30)

Note. The rubric response scores ranged from 1=Strong Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Agree; 4=Strongly Agree.

Table 3 summarizes the criteria that early career teachers expressed having difficulty or lack of awareness related to teaching; these criteria were also not reported as a strength in implementation. Table 4 lists responses with disparities in the competencies that the researcher connected to CISEL and exhibited disparities, primarily self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills. The first social awareness and relationship skills criteria with the lowest mean connected to student engagement and teacher delivery (see related rubric criteria in Appendix G).

Self-reporting by early career teachers in district provides insight into how schools can support early career teachers with teaching SEL with cultural inclusivity. While relationship skills initially appear as a priority in relation to their connection with self and social awareness, this root cause analysis exposed teachers' capacity at promoting responsibility and choice as the

area in most need of support. As reported on the survey, two respondents disagreed with the other nine respondents on how they apply relationship skills in the classroom. These differences exist within the following categories: “clearly communicate behavioral and academic expectations in a manner that addresses students’ individual needs and strengths;” “use social teaching practices to help form meaningful relationships with my students and cultivate their SEL skills, and I am usually successful at building meaningful relationships;” and “use the social teaching practices to help cultivate my students’ SEL skills, and I am usually successful at building their SEL skills.” The criterion with the lowest median scores involved instructional practices that teach students self-regulation strategies, planning and monitoring their learning, and developing responsibility and self-efficacy (see Table 3). These findings encouraged the researcher to examine classroom discourse to promote responsibility and choice in the classroom.

Root Cause 4: Professional Learning and Support

The formation of magnet schools in Connecticut is a result of the *Sheff v. O’Neill* Connecticut Supreme Court settlement of 1996. A cross-cutting professional development theme related to adult SEL and cultural competence is common in this MSD because of the theme’s alignment with the integration goals of magnet schools. Although this work might look different in each school, the district schools engage in professional learning related to restorative practices, Reimagining Integration: Diverse and Equitable Schools, and Great Schools Partnership.

The modules of Connecticut’s TEAM program focus on educators’ new learning, changes in practice, and student outcomes. There is an opportunity for this reflection to center

around culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices. However, the Facilitator’s Guide to the Professional Responsibility module, “Ethical and Professional Dilemmas for Educators” (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2015), pronounces this gap. The mandatory scenarios discussed by early career teachers focus on professional boundaries while building relationships. Relevant and important ethical responsibilities, such as equity, mental health, and cultural inclusivity, are missing from this codified step for early career teachers across Connecticut. The scenarios described in the 2015 supplemental resource on ethical and professional dilemmas include “professional attire,” “providing personal/financial support,” “TEAM program completion,” and “promoting a safe, productive learning environment” that focus on teacher mistreatment of a student. These professional learning resources are also changing to include more CISEL, which relates to a recommendation discussed in Chapter 5.

Limitations of the Root Cause Analysis Study

The scholarly practitioner coordinated this study to minimize validity, generalizability, and applicability limitations. The quantitative component of Phase 1 aimed to understand early career teachers’ perceptions of their social teaching practices (Yoder, 2014b). This quantitative research tool utilized Parts A and B of the *Self-Assessing Social and Emotional Instruction and Competencies* tool published by the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at the American Institutes for Research (Yoder, 2014b). Specifically, the researcher sent a digital version of “Section 1: Social Interactions” to certified teachers participating in TEAM during the 2021-2022 school year or having completed TEAM in the previous school year. The researcher requested colleagues complete this voluntary survey via school email (Appendix D). The American Institutes for Research noted the review of this reflective tool by practitioners,

researchers, and school and policy leaders for the integration of evidence-based Social-Emotional Competencies; however, this tool has not been tested for reliability and validity within teacher evaluation systems (Yoder, 2014b). The definitions of each social teaching practice support the understanding of survey participants.

Conducting this research study from August through March is a short period of time for this phenomenological design. Inter-rater reliability is not a major limitation with an individual researcher managing this study. One shortcoming and strength of the action research methodology is that the researcher actively participates in the phenomena to be studied. Reflexivity served as a central component of these phenomenological research components (Vagle, 2018). The purposive sampling and small sample size of three to six early career teachers' experiences may affect the generalizability of the qualitative research. Additionally, the focus on one district, specifically one district that maintains thematic magnet schools, may impact generalizability to other school settings. Applicability is a concern because the participants would have begun their teaching careers during an unpredictable and stressful pandemic that altered the way schools managed onboarding, professional learning, and teacher evaluation.

The Researcher and the Problem

Uncovering one's positionality aids researchers in seeing how their values, experiences, and roles may impact the research data collection and design (Darwin Holmes, 2020). Reflexivity is a process, not an end-result, that eradicates partiality or bias (Darwin Holmes, 2020). As a researcher, I view information and problems through an inductive, constructivist lens (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). Social constructivism prompts me to look for subjective, complex

interpretations gathered from a phenomenological research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). I gather data from open-ended questions and interpersonal interactions; I cannot disconnect the social and historical experiences related to data (Creswell & Creswell, 2020).

I care deeply about personal development and self-reflection. I reflect on my social-emotional self-awareness and social awareness competencies through meditation, which improves my listening skills and understanding of how my biases may shape my interpretations. Though my social science research interests often exemplify a transformative paradigm that focuses on inequities and systemic change, my interpretivist nature of seeking to understand has largely influenced this Improvement Science research study (Morgan, n.d.). This interpretivist paradigm influenced my undergraduate and graduate studies in teaching the social sciences at the secondary level. This social science background encourages my interest in discourse as the conduit for discussing diverse perspectives in a democracy.

My selection of research focused on new educators stems from my professional mentoring experiences. I have formally mentored numerous first- and second-year educators in various fields. I also informally mentor countless colleagues. These experiences catalyzed my current work with pre-service teachers in a university EPP, where I supervise and mentor student teachers. I am fascinated by andragogy and differentiation for the needs of adult learners. This passion led me to teach in a local public adult education program. My mentoring and teaching are an integration of personal reflection and development that seeks to build the efficacy of the learner. I value the melding of identity, emotions, and experiences into adult and adolescent learners' learning environment and experiences; the qualitative processes with end-users in

Improvement Science research place a high value on these three aspects. Focusing this research on classroom discourse connects to my student-centered approach to teaching.

My experiences as a lifelong learner shape who I am as a researcher and teacher leader. As a graduate of Connecticut public schools and universities, I believe that high quality education should be accessible to all. I also view schools as a collective social safety net. These safety nets also allowed my younger sister to be enrolled in Birth to Three services and continue her public school programming until the age of 21. These experiences and others have shaped my view that government, employers, communities, and individuals are responsible for contributing to the greater good. My hope that learning experiences can breakthrough zip code barriers and my passion for interdisciplinary, thematic learning prompted me to teach for a MSD. While I believe in the civil rights mission and integration efforts of Connecticut magnet schools, I worry about the sustainability and exclusivity of school choice. I want to know that everyone receives the resources they need from school, and this desire applies to new educators. I value educational systems that combat systemic racism and bias so that families, learners, and educators get what they need from schools while feeling included. My work in the field is to ensure that high quality, inclusive instructional practices are the norm for all learners.

Having more than one professional role in education allows me to work with various schools and teachers each week. I witness disparities and variability amongst Connecticut's classrooms from this vantage point. Part of my search for equity and consistency in education stems from my work in understanding the privilege in the United States society attached to my 20th Century European immigrant lineage. This search also stems from raising a sister with disabilities for whom civil rights protections are imperative. I observe silent students in various

learning settings, and I observe how society can treat some voices as if they are invisible. While I fluidly move through different educational settings and initiate reflections and conversations about my biases, I have grown to be passionate about instruction that facilitates student voice inclusively. My professional learning from the magnet school setting stresses relationships and culturally responsive pedagogy. I used my social sciences background to seek opportunities to develop my cultural competence, which is a lifelong process that my relationships within school communities have significantly shaped.

My interpretivist worldview prompted me to participate in national professional learning to support my development as an early career educator. I have taken long pauses between graduate studies so that I could learn experientially from experienced educators. I desire for new teachers to feel supported in the way I have felt grounded in my extensive family and professional network. My family's approach to communication is forthright, which may explain my focus on transparent, targeted feedback in educational environments. I see Social-Emotional Learning as a way to form healthy intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships; my upbringing invited emotional expression in various ways. I seek to facilitate honest expression through my phenomenological research approach.

Summary

The root cause analysis phase shaped the design of this study, aligning with the essence of Improvement Science. School leaders and mentors across districts noted the connection and continuation of educator preparation into the first few years of teaching; they expressed numerous areas of pedagogical development during the onboarding practice. The root cause analysis survey and end-user interviews showed the importance of relationships in teacher

development, but the analysis also exposed a need for explicit guidance on how to incorporate culturally inclusive teaching practices. The researcher did not anticipate early career teachers' perceptions of their social teaching practices. The practice with the lowest self-reported mean, "responsibility and choice," shaped the focus of this research. In addition, the researcher applied the self-evaluations of self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills competencies in the development of this study. The researcher determined classroom discourse as a practical training focus for integrating CISEL and responsibility and choice in the classroom. After analyzing the data gathered for the root cause analysis, the researcher developed recommendations relevant to the school district as it considers how to support new teachers in developing culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices.

Definition Of Terms And Abbreviations

Connecticut Early Career Educator - Connecticut certified educators who became employed by a school district between 2019 and 2021. These educators may be in Year 1 or 2 of the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program or have completed the TEAM mentoring program. Their Connecticut license is categorized as Initial or Provisional.

Cultural Competence – Mayfield (2020) synthesizes cultural competence descriptions into the following definition: “The ability to use critical-thinking skills to interpret how cultural values and beliefs influence conscious and unconscious behavior; the understanding of how inequity can be and has been perpetuated through socialized behaviors; and the knowledge and determined disposition to disrupt inequitable practices to achieve greater personal and professional success for yourself and others (Clark, Zygmunt, & Howard, 2016; Gay, 2010; Howard, 2010)” (p. 15).

Cultural Inclusivity - “A culturally inclusive environment requires mutual respect, effective relationships, clear communication, explicit understandings about expectations and critical self-reflection. In an inclusive environment, people of all cultural orientations can: freely express who they are, their own opinions and points of view fully participate in teaching, learning, work and social activities feel safe from abuse, harassment or unfair criticism” (University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia, n.d.).

CISEL - Culturally inclusive social emotional learning is exemplified by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (n.d.) definition of culturally responsive and sustaining SEL: “practices that actively draw upon (responsive) and explicitly support (sustaining) students’ diverse backgrounds, identities, strengths, and challenges as a

strategy to deepen learning” (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, n.d., p. 2). These teaching practices maintain asset-based views of diversity, integrate and affirm students’ lived experiences, and view social interaction, collaboration, and community as key to SEL (Villegas and Lucas, 2007; Ladson Billings, 1995; Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020).

District Facilitators - School leaders who oversee and coordinate the TEAM program and student teaching arrangements for Connecticut school districts. These school leadership roles may be combined within other leadership roles, such as Assistant Superintendent, or a standalone position.

Magnet school - Magnet schools are an example of school choice programming in Connecticut. Magnet schools offer a specialized theme and bring together students to “attract students from diverse social, economic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds” (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2022b). Enrollment is optional, and there are no prerequisites or application requirements except for enrolling in the annual lottery. In Connecticut, magnet schools can be interdistrict or intradistrict. These schools may be maintained by a municipality’s Board of Education or by Regional Education Service Centers that offer districts services such as professional learning or support.

Pre-service teachers - Candidates enrolled in an Educator Preparation Program or certification pathway who are completing the coursework and field placement to earn certification.

Sheff v. O’Neill - A 1989 lawsuit originating in Hartford and 1996 Connecticut Supreme court case with the civil rights goal “to provide an integrated, equal educational opportunity to

both urban and suburban students” (Rioul, 2016). The ruling charged government and communities to address this civil rights issue and one attempt in the last two decades resulted in Open Choice and magnet schools to reduce isolation amongst Connecticut communities.

Social-emotional competence - Teachers with social emotional competence have high self- and social awareness which enhances their skills to cultivate classroom environments that build positive relationships and facilitate student (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Social-Emotional Learning - A commonly used definition of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) stems from CASEL (2022): “SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions” (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2022). The following is Connecticut’s definition of SEL: “The process through which children and adults achieve emotional intelligence through the competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (Public Act 19-166)” (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2022c).

Social-emotional teaching practices – Instructional practices that provide students with the opportunity to practice and reflect on “knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors” associated with social-emotional competencies (Yoder, 2014).

Supportive structures- Activities and systems implemented to support new teachers within their district. Examples include the TEAM mentoring process, onboarding, professional development, and group meetings.

Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) - Connecticut's mentoring program required in public school districts for teachers in their first and second year of certified employment. Teacher Education and Mentoring requires successful completion of five distinct modules that lead to the next certification level.

Teacher Residency Programs (TRP) - In 2019, the Connecticut State Board of Education approved the TRP alternative pathway to certification that involves 18 months of coursework and mentoring in a school while receiving pay. A teaching position is guaranteed upon successful completion/licensure (CREC, 2020).

Transformative SEL - According to Jagers et al. (2019), “transformative SEL represents an as-yet underutilized approach that SEL researchers and practitioners can use if they seek to effectively address issues such as power, privilege, prejudice, discrimination, social justice, empowerment, and self-determination. In essence, we argue that for SEL to adequately serve those from underserved communities—and promote the optimal developmental outcomes for all children, youth, and adults—it must cultivate in them the knowledge, attitudes, and skills required for critical examination and collaborative action to address root causes of inequities” (Jagers et al., 2019, p. 163).

Chapter II: Review of Literature

The integration of SEL in schools connects to the personal and professional development of educators just as it expands the skills and perspectives of students. Educational responsibilities require modeling, planning, and evaluating for students' holistic and academic development. Adults' self-awareness and social awareness are essential to accessing and growing the social, emotional, and cultural competence required for SEL. The intersection of intrapersonal and interpersonal development while developing teacher identity can be challenging for early career teachers. This problem of practice focuses on how schools can more explicitly support early career teachers in building their competence toward culturally inclusive social-emotional practices. Aronson (2020) describes the struggles of implementing “culturally relevant education through (a) a caring community, (b) holding high expectations, (c) cultural competence, and (d) sociopolitical awareness as a teacher” (p. 1115). This literature review will synthesize the complexity of preparing and onboarding teachers into the profession while maintaining a social justice focus on inclusivity and SEL.

This Improvement Science research focused on the competencies of self-awareness and social awareness as conduits to culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices. Self-reflection is key to teaching; self-awareness integrates a critical exploration of identity, bias, and emotions (Center for Reaching and Teaching the Whole Child, 2020; Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2022). Affirming diversity is also key to teaching; social awareness integrates perspectives, empathy, and collaboration (Center for Reaching and Teaching the Whole Child, 2020; CASEL, 2022). It is essential to examine how early career

teachers experience supportive structures and evaluate the extent to which this support integrates cultural competence into SEL for adults and students.

Student Lens

Supportive structures and strategies that develop teachers' skills can increase students' competence. Students desire voice and recognition and a need for narrative that can foster self- and social awareness in both teachers and students (Cormier, 2021; Kumar et al., 2019). New teachers' emotional self-expression training leads to greater empathy for students (Zach & Rosenblum, 2021). The Social, Emotional, and Cultural Anchor Competencies Framework highlights the explicit connections between “teacher moves” and student outcomes, such as safety, equity, and academic success (Center for Reaching and Teaching the Whole Child, 2020; Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020).

Studies of culture and pedagogy include critiques and changes. One such educational change includes culturally sustaining pedagogy. Paris (2012) views major differences in the terms “relevant” or “responsive” when juxtaposed with “sustaining.” Paris (2012) stressed this difference by stating:

it requires that they support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence. Culturally sustaining pedagogy, then, has as its explicit goal supporting multilingualism and multiculturalism in practice and perspective for students and teachers. That is, culturally sustaining pedagogy seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling (p. 95).

Pedagogical changes that are culturally inclusive and student-centered will improve student outcomes. For example, students need teachers to shift to intergroup dialogue (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Research on K-12 education and preservice teacher education found similar best practices and outcomes, such as “Education should not be about transference of knowledge but rather collaborative and collective production of knowledge grounded in the reality of students’ lives (Lata & Culbreath, 2019, p. 96). Critical pedagogy (Giroux, 2013) supports teacher and student inquiry and agency to question and affect social change. Also, Aronson (2020) discusses culturally responsive and culturally relevant practices in describing teaching for critical social justice. The skills required for critical pedagogy are rooted in SEL. Jagers et al. (2019) exemplify this integration in their research on transformative SEL. Transformative SEL examines SEL from the context of citizenship and identity; the framework is communal, self-reflective, and intersectional (Jagers et al., 2019). Transformative SEL supports the holistic growth of students and collaborative inquiry into students knowing themselves and members of the learning community.

Although research correlates positive student outcomes with culturally inclusive instructional practices, cultural competence and teaching practices are often researched separately from social-emotional competence and teaching practices. Although strategies such as Culturally Inclusive and Responsive Curricular Learning Environments (CIRCLEs) and Equitable SEL strategies integrate both, educators can benefit from more research on methods and tools to employ inclusive practices (Kumar et al., 2019; Samuels, 2018; Ramirez et al., 2021). Padua and Gonzalez Smith (2020) confirm this need by stating that “teachers with a high level of cultural competence have an ability to integrate and translate knowledge about students’

cultures into attitudes, practices, and standards to increase the quality of classroom instruction and improve student outcomes” (p. 62). Cultural competence integrates seamlessly with social-emotional competence through skills in self-reflection and relationship building; students observe these skills from teacher modeling (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020).

Culturally inclusive values and practices in schools are integral to the changing student population and identity in the United States (Kumar et al., 2019; Rana & Culbreath, 2019), coupled with the lack of change in more racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse educator workforce (The United States Department of Education, 2016). The relationship between culture and pedagogy is fluid and changing. The history of the intersection of cultural, social, and emotional competence is essential to understand outcomes for students. Shifts toward culturally relevant teaching and culturally responsive teaching (CRT) evolution show the evolution of multicultural education. CRT applies SEL competencies like social awareness, relationship skills, and self-management to enhance student learning (Hammond & Jackson, 2015; Sobel & Taylor, 2015). Additionally, teachers use their awareness to foster safe environments of belonging for students (Hammond & Jackson, 2015; Sobel & Taylor, 2015).

Positive youth development outcomes from short and long-term SEL interventions are well-supported, but quality implementation amongst teachers is needed to maintain that impact (Taylor et al., 2017). These outcomes include consistent positive effects for students' academic and skill growth, such as decision-making, connectedness, classroom culture, engagement, and authentic dialogue (Taylor et al., 2017; Samuels, 2018). Student outcomes from CISEL include empathy, equity, and academic success (Center for Reaching and Teaching the Whole Child, 2020; Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020, Zach, 2021; Jagers et al., 2019; Mahoney et al., 2018). SEL

competencies can guide self-directed learning when teachers foster a sense of belonging and differentiation in classroom environments (Samuels, 2018; Hammond, 2015; Sobel and Taylor, 2015). Choice is essential to student engagement and self-directed learning.

Educator Lens

Teacher competence development related to CISEL is foundational for culturally inclusive SEL of students; however, gaps exist in this realm. There is limited focus on SEL in EPPs (Flushman et al., 2021). Practices like New Teacher Learning Communities offer a sense of belonging and reflection to build educator self-awareness and social awareness competencies, directly influencing cultural competence (Flushman et al., 2021). Examples of supportive structures and strategies that grow self-awareness include activities that promote self-efficacy in professional learning and self-reflection on cultural competence, especially during pre-service teacher preparation (Cormier, 2021; Summers, 2020).

The framework of Confluent Teacher Education expresses the relationship between self and cultural context (D’Emidio-Caston, 2019). The three domains of Confluent Teacher Education include the intrapersonal, the interpersonal, and the sociocultural (D’Emidio-Caston, 2019). These three domains relate to Cormier’s (Cormier, 2021) Cultural Proficiency Continuum, which ranges from reactivity to tolerance and proactivity to transformation with greater cultural competency (see Table 10). Cultural simulations and critical self and social reflection are some ways of moving along the continuum (Padua & Gonzalez Smith, 2020). More tools are needed to impact social awareness, such as a culturally responsive pedagogy scale to facilitate the process of critical consciousness (McDonough, 2009; Whitaker & Valtierra, 2018). Research themes lead to reflective questions for schools, such as cultural competency

norms, student and family involvement, professional development for everyone, etc. (Poplack & Dlesk, 2018).

The research underscores standard practices that support educator development, with mentoring as the most prevalent. Some Educator Preparation Programs and universities view continued mentoring as a bridge that should continue between graduation and (Aronson, 2020). The following frequent supports were reported as helpful by new teachers in a study by Chaney et al. (2020): “...modeling teaching (48% said the supports were extremely helpful), setting up the classroom (45%), professional development for new teachers (44%), and observing other classrooms (40%)” (p. 19). According to reported teacher and mentor perceptions, mentor pairing for early career teachers is essential but lacks explicit connections to social awareness (Schwan et al., 2020). Luet et al. (2018) encourage selective/rigorous selection criteria for mentors.

Other supportive structure ideas center around relationships. Professional Learning Communities offer supportive conditions and shared practice centered around learning (Nenonene et al., 2019). The Peer Support Partnership places highly selected in-district Consulting Teachers on temporary leave from the classroom to mentor new teachers and receive monthly professional development (Dubin, 2018). A similar program called the Peer Assistance and Review Program noted decreased teacher turnover, resulting in increased student learning (Wiens et al., 2019). The systems do not explicitly address culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices, which is why some schools and Educator Preparation Programs attempt Community-Based/Place-Based Teacher Preparation. Morettini (2021) studied a community-focused teacher education through partnership with a district, university, and a Community

Advisory Board comprised of families and community members (Morettini, 2021). The study concluded challenges and resistance to the hypothesis that asset-based views would strengthen from intentional community partnership (Morettini, 2021).

Review of Practice

Supportive practices for beginning teachers intersect with teacher preparation before certified employment. Parallels exist between *A National Scan of Teacher Preparation and Social & Emotional Learning* (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017) and the Connecticut State Department of Education educator preparation requirements. For example, Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) in Connecticut must align their programming with the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (inTASC) standards. CAEP's description of Content and Pedagogical Knowledge supports the development of culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices. Standard 1 states:

The provider ensures that candidates develop an understanding of the critical concepts and principles of their discipline and facilitates candidates' reflection of their personal biases to increase their understanding and practice of equity, diversity, and inclusion. The provider is intentional in the development of their curriculum and clinical experiences for candidates to demonstrate their ability to effectively work with diverse P-12 students and their families (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, n.d.).

The *National Scan's* recommendation to conduct more research on the impact of adult SEL training in pre-service and in-service professional learning connects to this study's problem of practice (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017). The scan also recommended practical applications of

supporting teacher SEL through maximizing access to professors, leaders, and mentors who are skilled and knowledgeable on current SEL research and application (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017).

While the CAEP standards guide EPPs to engage pre-service candidates in culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices, the Connecticut State Department of Education EPP public accountability dashboard does not include data points on the integration of CISEL (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2022a). Data points include but are not limited to completion rates, assessment data, employment data in high-need schools, and demographic data for the accountability categories (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2022). EPPs are encouraged to focus on their candidates' cultural assets (Borrero, 2016) and incorporate coursework that builds community and promotes authentic dialogue as a step toward systemic change (Borrero, 2016). Additionally, Donahue-Keegan et al. (2019) advocate for candidates to have time and structure to develop their social-emotional skills. These suggestions are also applicable to PreK-12 school settings, with student discourse recognized as a common trait of culturally inclusive educational practices.

Newly certified educators who obtain teaching positions in Connecticut must participate in Connecticut's Teacher Education and Mentoring Program (TEAM) to maintain licensure. TEAM, the statewide mentoring and professional learning structure in Connecticut public school systems, matches TEAM-trained mentors with pre-service teachers during student-teaching practicums and certified teachers during their first two to three years of employment. Because school districts select mentors and prioritize educational initiatives, the experience of each mentee differs by school setting and mentor. TEAM is customized to each district and organized

by modules in classroom management, planning, instruction, assessment, and professional responsibilities. These modules do not explicitly focus on social-emotional teaching practices or cultural inclusivity (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2010). Connecticut educators who qualify as Cooperating Teachers, mentors to Student-Teachers, and TEAM mentors, mentors to employed certified staff, are essential to developing early career teachers. The prerequisites for obtaining these roles are important because early career teachers need consistent feedback and informed approaches to develop culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices. Statewide educator preparation and teacher evaluation are influential resources and opportunities for policy and practice changes that explicitly integrate CISEL.

Synthesis of Research and Practice

Research shows a solid focus on pedagogy and procedures in preparing teachers, but that preparation does not consistently or explicitly embed cultural inclusivity. Commonly embedded teacher preparation themes include “(a) individual relationships, (b) pedagogical knowledge, (c) teacher perception of their perceived competence, (d) mentoring, (e) professional learning, and (f) reflection” (Reitman & Karge, 2019, p. 14). Such opportunities often focus on guidance and practical strategies/practice toward organizational commitment (Hong & Matsko, 2019).

Culturally inclusive frameworks and goals are integral to examining and creating structures to support early career teachers. For example, teacher reflection and preparation can apply Nodding’s Caring Classroom model “—(1) modeling, (2) dialogue, (3) practice, and (4) confirmation (Lucey & White, 2017a, p. 11). Asset-based mentoring Luet et al. (2018a) also focused on the importance of asset-based mentoring after studying structured community interactions that were ineffective at altering deficit-based views of the community. In summary,

the preparation, onboarding, and support of early career teachers could more explicitly focus on CISEL as it relates to the development of teaching practice.

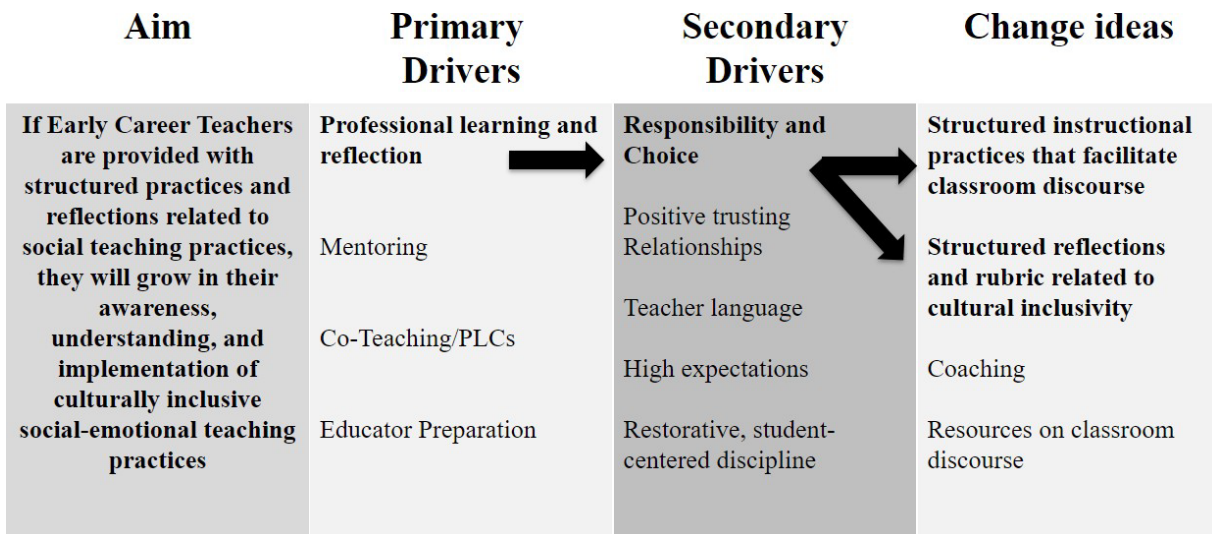
The root cause analysis exposed elements that led to the Driver Diagram and strategies for change. Common themes stressed the need for collaboration in supporting new teachers. For example, colleagues can offer different perspectives on applying social-emotional competencies in the classroom using Yoder's (2014b) framework. Additionally, early career teachers could reflect on these topics in a structured and consistent way to observe patterns and changes. Experienced educators called for a team-oriented approach to allow for greater reflection time on decision-making in the classroom.

As mentioned in the statement of the problem, school districts need to explore and develop a system that supports new teachers in developing culturally inclusive teaching practices. One environmental scan interview sees this role as induction into the professional and district values. The patterns synthesized from the environmental scan include districts focusing on local peer support, coaching, and relationships; teacher-driven professional learning topics that integrate the vision and everyday routines of the school; and a continual focus on the modules and the Connecticut Rubric for Effective Teaching. Examining the Connecticut Rubric for Effective Teaching for gaps in expectations and strategies that cultivate culturally inclusive classrooms could lead to more explicit guidance for early career teachers.

The Driver Diagram in Figure 4 visualizes the relationship between the research purpose and the primary drivers that directly contribute to the problem and the secondary drivers and specific change ideas that potentially change the secondary drivers. Based on the driver diagram, the researcher planned a small test of change within a plan, do, study, act framework.

Figure 4

Driver Diagram



The driver diagram as shown in Figure 4 aims to provide a focused structure for teachers to implement and reflect on culturally inclusive instructional strategies and their impact on students' inclusivity when engaging in interpersonal communication and listening skills.

Strategies to Mitigate the Problem

This study summarizes strategies that seek to grow early career teachers' understanding and application of CISEL while ensuring they feel the support needed to remain in the field. Specifically, this Improvement Science research examined how professional learning and pedagogical expectations can lead to student centered discourse that affirms all students' voices.

Mentoring

Connecticut's TEAM program and the State Department of Education are changing the mentoring resources that integrate culturally responsive practices in mentor training and professional responsibilities modules. For example, the TEAM mentor refresher training includes a module on Culturally Responsive Teaching. An additional sub-strategy could examine and suggest criteria for mentoring as it relates to culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices. Because of the prescriptive state and local guidelines for Connecticut mentoring, this study explored a localized classroom-oriented strategy. The researcher recommended an intervention that examines the viability of supportive structures that facilitate culturally inclusive dialogue in the classroom and structured reflections. The interviews mentioned breaking down support structures for timely and targeted topics. For example, one district developed reflective research grids with guided questions to assist early career teachers in focusing on areas for development. While teachers have autonomy in selecting goals for their development through the TEAM mentoring process, a more structured opportunity for growth and reflection could improve the social teaching practices of educators.

Protocol and Professional Learning Communities

Professional learning is key to promoting inclusive classroom discourse. Based on the document review and environmental scan with district facilitators, the Common Core of Teaching is a major component guiding feedback about teacher development. These standards could more explicitly embed cultural inclusivity as a scaffolded instructional guide. As stated in one root cause analysis interview, one school leader witnessed staff growth in CISEL from engaging with a routinely used group protocol. The strategy of professional learning committees

could mandate the incorporation of CISEL; however, the MSD schools have pre-established professional learning outcomes for the school year, which also relate to grant funding. Educators develop their practice from “evidence-based collaborative inquiry” for examining student work and tools and routines (Windschitl et al., 2011). With pre-established professional learning communities currently examining data, developing curricula, and discussing problems of practice in the district, this study will explore an individualized, classroom-centered strategy for early career teacher development. The intervention borrows from the protocol idea of specific guidelines and structure for enacting pedagogical changes.

Onboarding Co-Teaching

As described in more than one root cause analysis interview, experienced mentors are partial to a co-teaching model. Co-teaching as a means for building culturally inclusive practices is another instructional recommendation. Experienced educators referenced more collaboration or co-teaching models for early career teachers. These ideas ranged from extending mentorship into the third year or instituting a co-teaching model for the first year. Co-teaching could offer more differentiation of resources and choices in the classroom. A scan of research on this topic primarily connects co-teaching to specialized instruction. Though their study focuses on co-teaching in middle school for emotional and behavioral disorders, Jackson et al. (2017) provide a concise summary of co-teaching models: one teach, one observe; one teach, one assist; teaming; alternative teaching; station teaching; and parallel teaching (Jackson et al., 2017). A co-teaching professional development program for teachers within the first five years led to increased confidence and self-efficacy amongst early career teachers, while students gained from the differentiated support and attentive classroom management (Sasson & Malkinson, 2021).

Although co-teaching could focus on CISEL and positively influence early career teachers' perceptions of their practice, this strategy has logistical barriers to implementation during this study.

Educator Preparation

Another strategy is integrating culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices into the educator preparation curriculum. In alignment with the social teaching practice of responsibility choice, studies show that candidates demonstrate growth through collaborative coursework activities that combine theory with practical application (Senyshyn & Martinelli, 2021). Successful examples from educator preparation programs incorporating literacy and culturally sustaining pedagogy include peer analysis of culturally relevant children's literature and multicultural read alouds that occur within field placements (Lohfink, 2014; Senyshyn & Martinelli, 2021). Another example engages pre-service teachers in Humanity Centered Design (HCD). Similar to Improvement Science, HCD is grounded in empathy for the community of focus; one community HCD project collaborated with community literacy centers (Lawless Frank & Bogard, 2022). Preservice educators grew their cultural competence and awareness of self and students through authentic, culturally inclusive coursework (Lawless Frank & Bogard, 2022; Lohfink, 2014). Although this scholarly practitioner works in an Educator Preparation Program setting with student teachers, the design of this study examines how school districts support certified educators transitioning to employment.

High Impact Strategy

This study will focus on supporting early career teachers in the high-impact strategy of classroom discourse for CISEL. Classroom discourse is listed seventh in effect size out of 150

classroom practices (Fisher et al., 2016). The researcher looked for guidance from an educational organization known for promoting inclusive discourse, Facing History and Ourselves, and a Denver Public Schools Framework for Effective Teaching district that embeds culturally inclusive practices into educator instructional expectations (see Appendix G). The strategy of creating a personalized tool for guiding teacher delivery connects to the promotion of the scientific method in developing “ambitious pedagogy” (Windschitl et al., 2011). A smaller, targeted approach addresses the lack of tools available for inward reflection on equity, especially in “micro-moments” during classroom discussion (Patterson Williams et al., 2020). The continued prevalence of teacher talk or teacher control of class discussion reinforces that training and structures are needed for teachers to develop classroom talk that moves away from the teacher-student response (Edmondson & Choudhry, 2018; Khong et al., 2019). The strategy developed for this study will provide a concrete tool for facilitating culturally inclusive classroom discourse.

Summary

The researcher created an intervention focused on direct application in the classroom to make a more explicit connection between culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices and educator instruction. For implementation, selecting classroom discourse allowed early career teachers to “see” and “hear” the impact of culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices. The researcher also created this intervention in a format that balanced teacher agency and adaptability. The high impact of this intervention stems from a student-centered focus throughout the process.

Chapter III: Methodology

This mixed-methods study focused on the phenomenon of how early career teachers experience their school's support in their development of culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices. The scholarly practitioner conducted this study through the methodological framework of Improvement Science (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020) and the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) guiding principle that the research examines a problem of practice from a lens of equity and justice (Perry et al., 2020).

Theory of Improvement

A theory of improvement grows from the Improvement Science process of examining a problem within its existing system or context (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). A theory of improvement co-exists in three realms, including the system's current state, a research synthesis, and informed development (Bryk et al., 2017). First in the context of this study is the current state of the system, which consists of the state-mandated mentoring program and school onboarding/professional learning initiatives. Second to this study's theory of improvement is a synthesis of the research related to the support of early career teachers. Third, as reported in Chapters 4 and 5, is the informed development and utilization of practical and effective changes. This study's working theory of improvement is that if districts provide early career teachers with structured learning, strategies, and reflections on classroom discourse, they will grow in their awareness, understanding, and implementation of culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices. This working theory of improvement hypothesizes that providing early career teachers with structured reflections and practices of CISEL will increase teacher efficacy of inclusive student discourse.

The primary drivers or initial target areas for improvement (Bryk et al., 2017) include Educator Preparation/Certification Pathways, Mentoring, Co-Teaching/PLCs, and Professional Learning and Reflection. Based on the scholarly practitioner's awareness of the MSD setting and the synthesis of Phase 1 empathy interviews, the primary driver of Professional Learning and Reflection is the focus of this design. The secondary drivers, or the more specific actionable steps supporting the primary drivers (Bryk et al., 2017), include social teaching practices from Yoder's (2014b) work synthesized from Phase 1. Examples include teacher language; positive, trusting relationships; restorative, student-centered discipline; and high expectations. The practice of responsibility and choice is the selected secondary driver of this research design. The survey results showed the teaching practice of responsibility and choice as an area for improvement. Teacher's intentional use of choice and student autonomy can aid cultural inclusivity in the classroom. The ideas enacted to drive classroom changes include using a reflective Framework for Culturally Inclusive Classroom Discourse and instructional strategies for inclusive classroom discourse (see Figure 4). Coaching and recommending resources are helpful to early career teachers. Still, the Framework's intention and strategies for implementation offer adaptable support to each unique magnet school setting.

Purposes of the Study

Educational responsibilities require modeling, planning, and evaluating students' social-emotional and academic development. Self-awareness and social awareness competencies are conduits to culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices and serve as a guide for this dissertation's exploration of early career teachers' views. Self-awareness integrates a critical exploration of identity, bias, and emotions (Center for Reaching and Teaching the Whole Child,

2020; CASEL, 2022). Social awareness integrates perspectives, empathy, and collaboration (Center for Reaching and Teaching the Whole Child, 2020; CASEL, 2022). This problem of practice focuses on how schools can more explicitly connect early career teachers with the development of culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices. As this scholarly practitioner has observed in the research setting, early career teachers need a structured mechanism for timely and consistent reflection on their role in facilitating culturally inclusive spaces.

This Improvement Science research study gathered data through the methodology of action research. Action research complements Improvement Science because the researchers seek to solve a problem within their field and organization. Like Improvement Science, action research may result in changes for the practitioner and the setting (Ary et al., 2014). The action research process involves a cycle of reflection, planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Ary et al., 2014). This process aims to develop sustainable change through experience, inquiry, and examination (Ary et al., 2014). The overarching goal of action research is to improve a local problem systemically. A phenomenological approach described the professional learning experiences of early career teachers to support district-wide action research and Improvement Science. Participatory action research complements Improvement Science because it supports the scholar practitioner in pursuing equity and social justice. The intention of participatory action research is “to explore practices within social structures (emancipatory); to challenge power differences and unproductive ways of working (critical); and to change theory and practice (transformational)” (Ary et al., 2014, p. 515). This Improvement Science inquiry sought to gain

early career teachers' insights on how their supportive structures may be maintained or adapted for districtwide impact in culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices.

The survey portion of this study's root cause analysis uncovered that early career teachers self-reported the lowest scores in Yoder's (2014b) social teaching practice of responsibility and choice, specifically, "I arrange experiences that allow my students to become responsible (e.g., classroom aids or jobs, peer tutoring, specific roles in group work) in developmentally appropriate ways." The root cause analysis also reinforced that early career teachers need explicit structures to develop teaching practices for culturally inclusive Social-Emotional Learning. The intervention phase of this study also aimed to measure the impact on perceived classroom inclusivity from the choice and responsibility that results from student discourse.

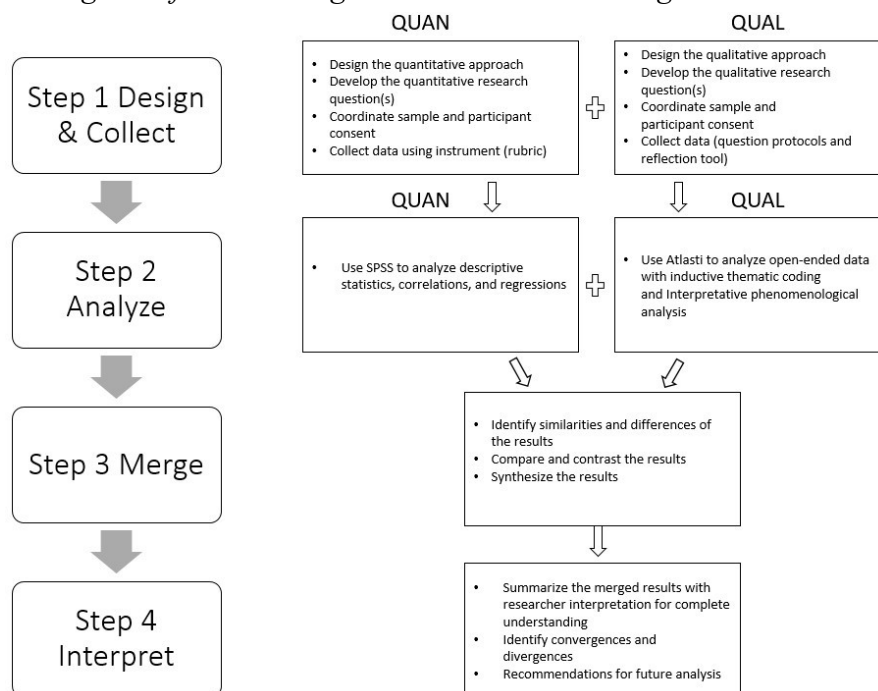
This study's design aimed to develop and strengthen the structures that support new teacher development of culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices. Research focuses on pedagogy and procedures in preparing teachers, but that preparation does not consistently or explicitly embed cultural inclusivity in teaching practices. The research underscores mentoring as a common practice to support educator development. This study hypothesized that facilitating new teachers in their self and social awareness will positively impact both educators' and students' social, emotional, and cultural competence toward inclusivity. The supportive structure utilized for this Improvement Science research could be a resource for mentor-mentee pairings in Connecticut districts. SEL frameworks, curricula, and resources assist educators in employing SEL in the classroom; however, this study examined the viability of classroom discourse to support the self and social awareness of teaching practices that facilitate culturally inclusive environments.

Research Design

When determining effective support methods for early career teachers, the researcher collected different data types to present a broad view of their experiences. With limited time for the intervention cycle, each participant provided both types around the same time (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017), and the researcher could establish patterns from participant voice and quantitative responses trends (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). More specifically, parallel databases of data offer two sets for analysis and comparison. A convergent mixed methods design is the best fitting for this Improvement Science, action research study. A solely quantitative design focused on the relationship amongst variables does not support the inductive process of this study (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). Exploratory and explanatory mixed methods designs did not apply to the purpose of this study.

Figure 5

Procedural Diagram of the Convergent Mixed Methods Design



Note. Adapted from Creswell and Plano-Clark (2017) *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*.

As shown in Figure 5, a mixed-methods research approach relies on the interrelatedness of quantitative and qualitative data to offer a complete outlook on the lived experience of early career teachers from their insights (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). The merging of two phases, one based on perceptions and one based on an intervention, focuses on the user experience, which is most conducive to this study's Improvement Science research questions (see Figure 5). Unlike an explanatory design driven by quantitative research, this study needs qualitative research to shape the implementation of new ideas.

A phenomenological approach will guide this study's qualitative data collection and analysis, aligning with its purpose to understand the experiences of early career teachers. Vagle

(2018) describes the history and meaning of different phenomenological approaches. Vagle's description of Max van Manen's interpretive approach prompted this research design to focus on how new teachers live and experience their supportive structures instead of how they conceptualize that early career experience. An interpretive phenomenological approach is best for this study because it requires "reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon" (Vagle, 2018, p. 64). van Manen also reinforces the importance of structure when looking at the phenomenon, which complements the structured reflection and interviews of this study's primary drivers (Vagle, 2018). Phenomenology is an appropriate extension of action research about early career teachers because of the goal to make meaning from the experiences of participants themselves at the start of such a complex career (Tuohy et al., 2013). An interpretivist phenomenological approach specifically because "IPA (interpretive phenomenological approach) is a particularly useful methodology for examining topics which are complex, ambiguous and emotionally laden" (Smith & Osborn, 2015, p. 41).

The research design planned for the subject population to include between 6 and 18 primary and secondary education teachers in Years 1, 2, and 3 employed by the magnet school district. Teachers invited to participate were over age 18 and included various teacher certification/endorsement areas. There were no restrictions on any of the participants as this study involved normal educational practices that currently take place in established educational settings. The researcher sought volunteers through email notices, in-person connections, collaboration with school leaders, and overviews at meetings. The researcher presents the Improvement Science research so that the participants are not identifiable, directly nor through

identifiers linked to the participants themselves. The broad subject population derived from multiple schools further deidentified teachers.

The framework of Improvement Science, specifically the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) inquiry cycle, guided the development of procedures for this study (Bryk et al., 2017). The PDSA inquiry cycle is relevant to a phenomenological design because the hypothesized result is compared to the intervention outcomes to determine what happened at a microscopic level so that effective change decisions can be made (Bryk et al., 2017). The design phases are outlined in Table 5.

Table 5*Design Phases*

Research Question	Root Cause Analysis (August through December)	Qualitative Phase (August through February)	Intervention Phase (February through March)	Data Interpretation (February through April)
Root Cause Q) What are the early career teachers' perceptions of job embedded support to build teacher competence (e.g., self-awareness and social awareness) to support culturally inclusive social-emotional practices (CISEL)?	Obtain IRB permissions Conduct empathy interviews with administrators, mentors, and new teachers Research teacher preparation and ECT support Conduct a quantitative survey on Social Teaching Practices Examine and code to inform the intervention cycle	Obtain IRB permissions Observe and analyze new teacher related events and resources Research teacher preparation and ECT support Examine and code to inform the intervention cycle		
RQ1) To what extent are teachers' actions (teacher questioning, teacher delivery) to promote culturally inclusive social-emotional learning predictive of students' actions (student interaction, student communication)?			Track participants' completion of 4-week intervention cycle and reflections Analyze quantitative data from rubric scores	Reject or accept null hypotheses Examine analyses for similarities, differences, and convergent trends
RQ2) What are teachers' perceptions on how targeted implementation and reflection on social-emotional teaching practices impact early career teachers' knowledge, skills and attitudes related to cultural inclusivity?			Conduct qualitative initial interview Code data	Examine and code data for similarities, differences, and convergent trends
RQ3) Is structured classroom discourse a viable practice for districts to use as a support for teachers' increased practice of CISEL?			Complete qualitative exit interviews Code data	Examine and code data for similarities, differences, and convergent trends Discuss results

The “plan” stage corresponds with the root cause analysis for this Improvement Science research (see Root Cause Research Question in Table 5). The “do” stage corresponds with the procedures described in this section (see Research Question 1 in Table 5). The “study” stage exemplifies the data analysis stage (see Research Question 2 in Table 5). The “act” culminates with the results and discussion sections of Chapters 4 and 5 (see Research Question 3 in Table 5). The procedures that led to understanding the experiences of early career teachers in developing culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices are outlined below in Table 5.

The perceptions gained from the Phase 1 of the Root Cause Research Question informed the creation of the research intervention. Research Question 1 of the intervention examined teacher actions and student actions (see Table 5). The intervention began and ended with interviews of each participant, which connected to Research Question 2 on early career teachers perceptions of their practice and development related to cultural inclusivity (see Table 5). Research Question 3 examines the intervention’s influence on practice and policy (see Table 5). The participants selected a classroom discourse practice to employ over a four-week time period (see Appendix I). The intervention focused on how early career teachers’ skill development in facilitating classroom discourse could impact classroom cultural inclusivity. The structured practices supported teacher facilitation of student dialogue and diverse perspectives.

Data Collection Instruments/Measures

This research design collected qualitative and quantitative data using two initial and exit interviews and documents that included numerical and narrative reflection on the guide created for this study. Interviews separate from classroom implementation provided participants with the flexibility and autonomy to practice the interventions and self-reflect in an authentic setting. The

researcher used a consistent question protocol for each interview (see Appendix F and Appendix J). Additionally, this study's working theory of improvement aimed to grow students' inclusivity through teacher practice; teachers' written and verbal reflections provided evidence for this process. The researcher also measured the impact of the intervention via the participants' self-scored Framework for Culturally Inclusive Discourse (see Appendix G).

Inquiry Session

The Inquiry Session Question Protocol (see Appendix F) served as an initial evaluation for the teacher and researcher to evaluate the kinds of support early career teachers receive and how they perceive their professional application of CISEL. The researcher asked the protocol questions consistently during approximately 30- to 45- minute interviews.

Culturally Inclusive Classroom Discourse Instructional Strategies

The intervention required participants to initially select one Culturally Inclusive Classroom Discourse Instructional Strategy from the three strategies provided. The strategies represent varying levels of difficulty that are scaffolded. The practices, in order of difficulty, included structuring discussion, structuring peer responses and eliciting diverse perspectives (see Appendix I). Structuring Discussion (Practice A) aimed to develop teachers' support of students in cooperatively solving problems or examining an issue. Structuring Responses (Practice B) aimed to help teachers guide students in the types of questions and phrases they can use to respond to their peers. Eliciting Diverse Perspectives (Practice C) aimed to develop teachers' capacity to provide a structure for all students to share their interpretations and listen to the interpretations of their peers. The strategies are sequenced by level of difficulty to allow the educator to have choice based on the varied experience and expertise of each participant in facilitating classroom dialogue.

Framework for Culturally Inclusive Classroom Discourse

The researcher created the Framework for Culturally Inclusive Discourse (see Appendix G), which is a reflective rubric and open-ended questions. The researcher developed the Framework on the premise that reflective educator practice includes assessment of both teacher and student actions to determine the level of efficacy. The Framework for Culturally Inclusive Discourse Framework is informed by the Facing History and Ourselves' (2021) Levels of Questioning and Denver Public Schools' (2021) Framework for Effective Teaching. The researcher created the Framework to resolve the broad guidelines outlined in teacher frameworks, such as Ohio State's Candidate Preservice Assessment of Student Teaching (CPAST), the American Association of Colleges and Universities' (AACU) Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Value Rubric (2017), and the Connecticut State Department of Education's (2017) Rubric for Effective Teaching. Therefore, the rubric for this intervention hyper-focused on the specific skill set of teacher delivery and questioning along with student communication and interaction. While educational research elicited many strategies focused on facilitating student voice, the research selected and adapted strategies that intentionally embedded cultural inclusivity.

Follow-Up Inquiry Session

The Follow-Up Inquiry Session served as closure to the implementation cycle and prompted the participants to reflect on instructional growth and student growth as a result of the

intervention's strategies. The researcher consistently asked protocol questions in approximately 30- to 45- minute interviews (see Appendix J).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following working theory of improvement guided the hypothesis of Phase 2 of the research design: providing early career teachers with structured reflections and practices of CISEL will increase teacher efficacy and thus the efficacy of inclusive of student discourse.

The following research questions tested the working theory in this study's intervention phase:

RQ1: Teacher actions to promote student discourse

To what extent are teachers' actions (teacher questioning, teacher delivery) to promote culturally inclusive social-emotional learning predictive of students' actions (student interaction, student communication)?

- H1₁₋₀*** Teacher questioning (open-ended questions intended to provoke a discussion of an abstract idea or issue) to promote culturally inclusive social-emotional learning is not predictive of student interaction.
- H1_{1-a}*** Teacher questioning (open-ended questions intended to provoke a discussion of an abstract idea or issue) to promote culturally inclusive social-emotional learning is predictive of student interaction.
- H1₂₋₀*** Teacher questioning (open-ended questions intended to provoke a discussion of an abstract idea or issue) to promote culturally inclusive social-emotional learning is not predictive of student communication.
- H1_{2-a}*** Teacher questioning (open-ended questions intended to provoke a discussion of an abstract idea or issue) to promote culturally inclusive social-emotional learning is predictive of student communication.
- H1₃₋₀*** Teacher delivery (explicit structures to support teacher facilitation of classroom discourse) to promote culturally inclusive social-emotional learning is not predictive of student interaction.
- H1_{3-a}*** Teacher delivery (explicit structures to support teacher facilitation of classroom discourse) to promote culturally inclusive social-emotional learning is predictive of student interaction.

- HI₄₋₀** Teacher delivery (explicit structures to support teacher facilitation of classroom discourse) to promote culturally inclusive social-emotional learning is not predictive of student communication.
- HI_{4-a}** Teacher delivery (explicit structures to support teacher facilitation of classroom discourse) to promote culturally inclusive social-emotional learning is predictive of student communication.

RQ2: Teacher perceptions of targeted implementation

What are teachers’ perceptions on how targeted implementation and reflection on social-emotional teaching practices impact early career teachers’ knowledge, skills and attitudes related to cultural inclusivity?

RQ3: Viability of structures classroom discourse

Is structured **classroom discourse** a viable practice for districts to use as a support for teachers’ increased practice of CISEL?

Procedures

Table 6 outlines the order of procedural steps for Phase 2 of the Improvement Science research design.

Table 6

Phase 2 Intervention Procedures

Facilitation Step 1- Consent	Research participants agree to participate based on the research guidelines (see Appendices Appendix E and Appendix H).
Facilitation Step 2- Inquiry Session	Facilitator inquires into early career teacher perceptions on early career teacher support and self-development of CISEL practices (see Appendix F).
Facilitation Step 3- Planning Session	Meeting with facilitator to review strategies for integration into classroom (Appendix I).

Facilitation Step 4- Weekly Implementation	Participant use of the strategy with students at least once per week (see Appendices G and I) for four weeks.
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Facilitation Step 5- <u>Follow-Up Inquiry</u>	Facilitator coordinates closure to the cycle and discusses next steps <u>using the protocol questions (see Appendix J).</u>
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The procedures of the Phase 2 Intervention relied on consistent communication between the researcher and each participant; the steps of the researcher are described below in detail.

Phase 2 Facilitation Step 1

After communicating the research opportunity with early career teachers via district email, TEAM meeting announcements, and collegial conversations, interested volunteers arranged a private meeting with the researcher. At this initial meeting, the primary researcher outlined the intervention process and purpose. Early career teachers willing to participate signed the consent form (see Appendix E).

Phase 2 Facilitation Step 2

After providing consent, participants engaged in an initial inquiry session (30-45 minutes) that investigated the educators' awareness and application of culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices. The researcher asked for participants' insights into supportive structures that have facilitated the development of these practices, specifically the MSD's support systems for early career teachers. First, second, and third-level coding deduced themes from the data (see Appendix H) from the interview transcripts. The researcher structured the protocol questions to build a foundation for selecting the appropriate strategy to implement.

Phase 2 Facilitation Step 3

Participants met with the researcher to discuss and select one of the three structured practices provided in the list of Culturally Inclusive Classroom Discourse Instructional Strategies (see Appendix I) in relation to their current teaching. Participants planned to implement their selected practice weekly over a time period of approximately four weeks. Participants had the opportunity to discuss their experiences with the intervention at any time by contacting the researcher. The researcher notified participants of the option to change strategies during the four weeks, but the researcher encouraged participants to remain consistent in their application.

Phase 2 Facilitation Step 4

After each implementation of the chosen strategy, the educator completed the Framework for Culturally Inclusive Classroom Discourse. The reflective rubric and open-ended questions existed on a shared digital form between the researcher and participant (see Appendix G and Appendix H). The Framework assessed teacher and student competency by asking teachers to reflect on their perceptions each week. The researcher monitored participants' progress weekly via the shared digital document; the researcher used the responses to reach out weekly to each participant via email, noting their progress and seeking any questions. The researcher organized the quantitative rubric data and the participants' written reflections weekly using Excel.

Phase 2 Facilitation Step 5

The intervention cycle culminated with a Follow-Up Inquiry Session (see Appendix J). The researcher's questions focused on the process and the outcomes of participating in the intervention and using the Framework. First, second, and third-level coding analyzed the transcripts for broad themes.

Data Analysis Methods

The researcher organized the data each week in a password protected Excel spreadsheet with tabs by data source. The researcher used transcriptions of the interviews and the Framework's narrative reflections for the qualitative analyses. A reputable and password-protected transcription service titled Transcribe.me transcribed the interviews. After the researcher's initial scan of the data, the researcher used the software analysis program ATLAS.ti for coding. The researcher completed three tiers of coding for the narrative and verbal data. The researcher used the self-reported data from the Framework's rubric to conduct descriptive, correlational, and simple linear regression statistical analyses.

Threats to Validity

The small sample size of five research participants from different certification areas may appear as a threat to validity; however, Creswell and Creswell (2020) estimate that between three and ten individuals are conducive to phenomenology, which is approximately 30 percent of the new teachers enrolled in TEAM in the district. Validity strategies strengthened the accuracy and credibility of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). If concerns about credibility or accuracy arose, the researcher employed member checking to seek confirmation from the participants. As a scholarly practitioner with experience in the field and site, the researcher meaningfully cared about transparency with details and discrepancies and planned to initiate peer debriefing when needed (Creswell & Creswell, 2020).

Creswell and Creswell (2020) note the risks associated with the data types used in this study. For example, interviews did not occur in the real-time classroom setting, and the researcher's presence or bias as a mentor may influence data interpretation (Creswell &

Creswell, 2020). For this reason, the researcher followed and recorded using an interview protocol. Documents provide insight into the priorities and language of the participant, but there is a risk that materials could lack detail or accuracy (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). The researcher reviewed data analysis at numerous points to ensure “particularity” to the findings and site (Creswell & Creswell, 2020).

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is essential when discussing the credibility of the participatory action research design. Although the researcher has little experience working with the variety of schools within the magnet district, it is still significant to note any experiences that could influence the interpretation of qualitative data (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). The primary researcher works with most participants as a TEAM mentor within the study site. Additionally, the primary researcher works in Education Preparation Program advising, teaching, and supervising pre-service teachers. The researcher’s choice in methodology connects to the researcher’s desire to improve her practice as a mentor of early career teachers. The experiences and perspectives of teachers in the first few years can inform the researcher’s support and preparation of candidates before their certification and employment in schools.

The researcher also identifies with the majority demographic of the teacher workforce as a female of European descent. The researcher’s experience teaching in a setting where the educator demographics are not reflective of most learners’ identities has prompted the researcher to self-reflect on the inclusivity of her teaching practices and relationship skills. The researcher’s certification background in Social Studies and partiality to student-centered inquiry drive her research interest in increasing inclusive classroom discourse. The person-centered approach of

the researcher increases her curiosity about how to support educators in their differentiation to meet diverse learner needs and their facilitation of diverse perspectives in their classroom communities.

Summary

This study's convergent research design integrates early career teachers' perspectives with responsibility and choice for teachers' development of culturally inclusive instruction. The design offers support from the scholarly practitioner and incorporates teacher autonomy. The focus on classroom discourse provides an opportunity for the teacher to intentionally observe and examine how the students interact and communicate while reflecting on the impact of their instructional choices and delivery. The intervention is designed for implementation in any grade level or discipline because CISEL applies to all learning environments.

CHAPTER IV: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Students benefit when educators can facilitate inclusive classroom dialogue (Samuels, 2018). The research questions explored how to support the development of culturally inclusive teaching practices amongst educators in the first three years of teaching. The results discussed in this chapter relate to Phase 2 of this Improvement Science research, in which the researcher investigated classroom discourse as viable support for early career teacher development of CISEL. This study sought to integrate a social teaching practice with a cogent reflective process that guides the educator to center inclusivity around teacher moves and decisions. Although the sample size of five research participants is smaller than initially intended, this allowed the researcher to work closely with each educator in planning and discussing the intervention. These informal opportunities to collaborate with the early career teachers strengthened this concurrent research design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

The convergent mixed methods design of merging quantitative, narrative, and verbal reflections from the intervention provided insight into how educators can develop social-emotional teaching practices, specifically responsibility and choice. The qualitative interviews asked about teacher preparation and support, particularly in the development of CISEL. The intervention phase of the research study focused on the second and third research questions: how does targeted implementation and reflection of social-emotional teaching practices explain the perceptions and impact of early career teachers related to cultural inclusivity? And is structured classroom discourse viable for districts to support teachers' increased practice of CISEL? Combining the quantitative and qualitative results from three research questions led to a

thorough understanding from multiple, validated perspectives; this chapter summarizes the merged results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

Description of the Sample

Using purposive and convenience sampling techniques, the researcher requested volunteers for this study who met the following criteria: certified educators in their first, second, or third-year teaching. A call for volunteers went to each magnet school in the district, specifically to each administrative team, followed by outreach to each school's new teachers via email and information sessions. The researcher attended TEAM meetings and reached out to TEAM mentors to publicize the opportunity and seek volunteers. Five volunteers participated in this study for various reasons, including pandemic staff shortages and stress during the academic year.

The research participants had different levels of involvement with the district's Teacher Education and Mentoring Program (TEAM). At the time of this study, three research participants in the subject population actively worked with a TEAM mentor, one participant completed TEAM, and one participant did not need to complete TEAM. The sample population represented a variety of pathways to licensure: public university Educator Preparation Program, Alternative Route to Certification, private university M.A. and DSAP, and private university M.A. with certification. Although this sample size is small, it aligns with Connecticut's efforts to offer alternative certification pathways for professionally experienced educators entering the field. The researcher omitted demographic characteristics to maintain the confidentiality of this small sample size. As seen in Table 7, the sample population ($N = 5$) includes a range of professional experiences and endorsement areas.

Table 7*Research Participants*

Colleague	Cert. Tch.	Rel. Prof. Exp.	Grade Level	Endorsement
Anyé	3	7	Pre-Kindergarten	Pre-Kindergarten
Braelynn	2	4	Comprehensive	Technology
Clarise	2.5	N/A	Comprehensive	School Counseling
Dayana	2	5	Pre-Kindergarten- Grade 12	Special Education
Emi	1	4	Secondary- Grades 7-12	Mathematics

Note. Cert. Tch = Number of Years Teaching with Certification, Rel. Prof. Exp. = Number of Years with Related Professional Experience

^a Participant descriptors are limited to protect confidentiality within a small sample size.

^b The researcher reviewed and confirmed endorsement codes using the C.T. State Department of Education EDS Assignment Codes for 2021-2022.

Research Participants and Structure Choice

The initial interviews referenced how the research participants promote student voice in the classroom context through structures including small groups, morning meetings, closing meetings, gallery walks, helping peers, sentence frames, sign language, word clouds, and sticky notes. The researcher also met with participants to review the intervention guidelines and determine the selection of one of three CISEL choices (see Appendix I). Each participant sustained their selected Practice throughout the intervention, which the researcher encouraged for reliability. Researchers provided proof of student work via weekly check-ins and during the exit interview. For example, Braelyn and Dayana shared examples of students' written brainstorming using the prompts and Anyé shared a video of the culminating drawings representative of the students' discussions.

Clarise and Emi implemented Practice A, which focused on structuring small group discussions. Clarise has the unique role of counseling and teaching in the high school setting, primarily for ninth and tenth graders. Clarise's teaching integrates discussions of family and cultural background and focuses on the personal development of each learner. Emi teaches high

school mathematics, primarily ninth and eleventh graders, and facilitates a ninth-grade advisory. Emi is excited to try new techniques, which shows in her desire to make connections between research and practice. Emi is patient about pacing and willing to differentiate in multiple ways to reach each student. The research participants who selected Structuring Discussion had the least amount of teaching experience in the sample group. Clarise's written reflections about growth primarily focused on teacher growth, which could connect to the lack of pedagogical training in school counseling programming. Emi balanced teacher growth and student growth in her written responses about the intervention process, which aligned with her fluid discussions about the interrelatedness of educator and learner during instructional time. Clarise's and Emi's choice in Structuring Discussion seemed appropriate for the early career teacher stages of classroom management and student-centered learning.

Research participants Braelynn and Dayana implemented Structure Choice B. Braelynn's integration of Social-Emotional Learning and her passion for diversifying the technology field workforce manifests in her application of culturally responsive teaching practices. Both research participants brought prior professional experience into the classroom and earned their certification in alternative ways. Braelynn achieved her certification through the Alternative Route to Certification, and Dayana's certification field experience in her university program occurred under a Durational Shortage Area Permit. Dayana's attention to developing students' self-advocacy shows in her co-teaching examples and small group Special Education teaching experiences. Both Anya's and Braelynn's written reflections about the intervention process focused primarily on perceived student growth. Their choice of Structure B allowed both

candidates to continue with their high expectations of integrating academic content through differentiation.

Anyé's seven years of experience working with the Prekindergarten age group prior to certification developed her values in utilizing resources that represent learners' identities and integrating multiple languages for communication. The concept of teaching to the individual for adult and youth learning experiences is a constant in Anyé's responses. She stated that "you have to try to support everybody, you know, to make everybody grow?" These qualities are representative of her choice in implementing Structure C: Eliciting Diverse Perspectives. Anyé's written reflections focused on overall student growth in listening.

Statement of the Results

The researcher designed this convergent mixed-methods study to provide an understanding of CISEL from the early career teacher perspective. The researcher compared, contrasted, and synthesized quantitative and qualitative data collected during the intervention. Inductive coding elicited themes that converged with the quantitative data. Table 8 summarizes the concurrent results; the subsequent tables and figure outline the quantitative results.

Table 8

Synthesis of Results

Quantitative Results	Qualitative Results
Consistent improvement in efficacy of teacher actions and student actions based on use of CISEL structures	Themes of relationships, connection, voice, intercultural competence, and educator intentionality
Teacher delivery significantly predicts student interaction and student communication	Perceived growth in teacher delivery to facilitate discourse amongst students
Convergent Results	
The qualitative and quantitative data show an increase in teacher awareness of the impact of delivery on inclusive discourse	
The use of a targeted reflective Framework elevates educator intentionality for student-centered learning and high academic expectations	
The incorporation of classroom discourse provides opportunities for the development of self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship skills	

The quantitative and qualitative results aligned in the reported impact of teacher delivery on student outcomes (see Table 8). Integrating teacher facilitation of classroom discourse with a targeted reflective process increased opportunities for student development of skill, content, and CISEL.

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative data collection of Phase 2 relates to the research question: To what extent are teachers' actions (teacher questioning, teacher delivery) to promote culturally inclusive social-emotional learning predictive of students' actions (student interaction, student communication)? Research participants self-reported their perceived levels of efficacy with teacher delivery and teacher questioning on the rubric portion of the intervention's Framework.

Additionally, teachers report students' level of efficacy with student interactions and student communication. These observations represent time series data capture of the intervention. The researcher used SPSS software to analyze the four rubric categories from the four implementation reflections of each colleague. The intervention purposefully scaffolded the structure choices. Two participants selected Structuring Discussion (Practice A), which aimed to support students in cooperatively solving problems or examining a situation. Two participants chose Structuring Responses (Practice B), which provided phrase starters for students engaging in discourse in pairs, groups, or whole class. One participant selected Eliciting Diverse Perspectives (Practice C), which focused on a protocol for sharing and digesting diverse perspectives amongst students. After each implementation, research participants completed the reflective tool with rubric scoring and open-ended questions.

The researcher analyzed descriptive statistics for each rubric category. Compared to the student categories, the teacher categories had the overall highest means and lowest standard deviation (see Table 9). Figure 6 shows an increase in the mean efficacy for all variables depicting student and teacher actions.

Table 9

Intervention Descriptive Statistics

	Week 1		Week 2		Week 3		Week 4	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Teacher Questioning	3	1.414	3.8	1.095	4.2	.447	4.8	.447
Teacher Delivery	3.4	.894	4.2	.447	4.4	.547	4.6	.547
Student Interaction	2.8	.837	2.8	.447	4.0	1.00	4.0	.707
Student Communication	2.4	.547	3.0	1.225	3.6	.548	3.6	.548

Figure 6

Efficacy of Teacher and Student Actions

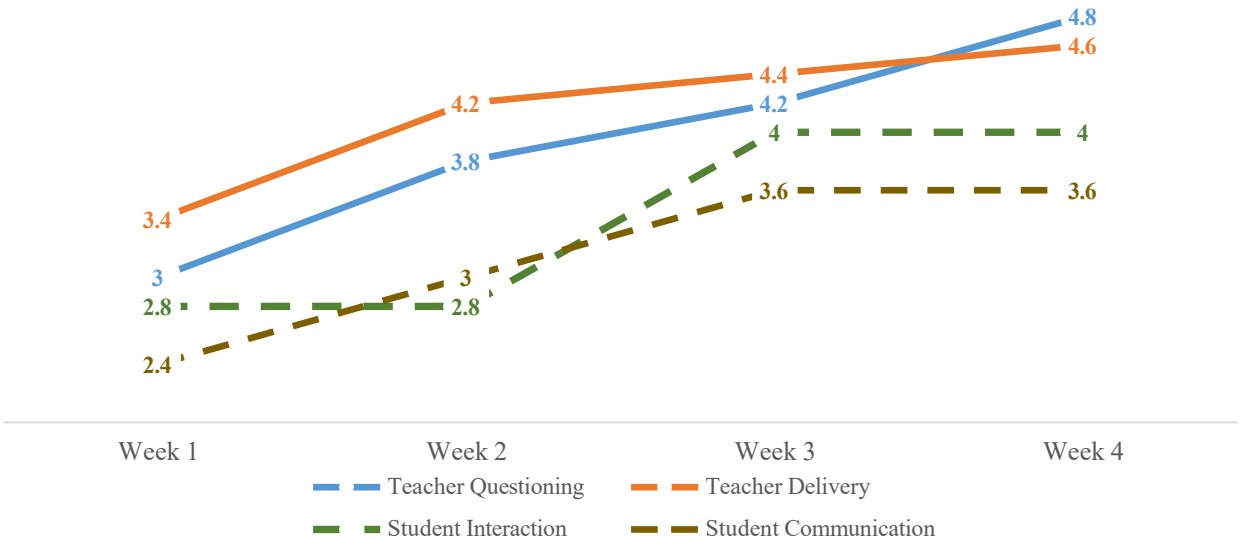


Figure 6 visualizes the change in efficacy over time. This visualization indicates that teacher growth occurs before student growth. Specifically, teacher delivery and questioning improved from week one to week two, while student communication and interaction were relatively stagnant. Subsequently, from week two to week three, student communication and student interaction increased in efficacy while the teacher demonstrated minimal growth in delivery and

questioning. Descriptive statistics supported the future convergent analysis of the growth research participants described in the qualitative phase.

Correlational analyses supported an investigation into the third research question: Is structured classroom discourse a viable practice for districts to support teachers' increased practice of CISEL? SPSS utilized $\alpha = .05$ for correlational analyses of the four rubric categories for the participants' four implementations (see Table 10). The correlational analysis shows mixed results of statistical significance for the independent variables of teacher delivery and instruction "varying together" with the dependent variables of student interaction and communication (Stockemer, 2019).

Table 10

Means, Standards Deviations, and Correlations with Confidence Intervals

	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Teacher Questioning	3.95	1.099	–		
2. Teacher Delivery	4.15	0.745	.267 [–0.20 – 0.63]	–	
3. Student Interaction	3.40	0.94	.224 [–0.24 – 0.61]	.511* [0.09 – 0.78]	–
4. Student Communication	3.15	0.875	.337 [–0.13 – 0.68]	.448* [0.01 – 0.74]	.627** [0.26 – 0.84]

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Teacher delivery is statistically significant in its relationship to student interaction and student communication (see Table 10). These results indicate that teacher delivery and student outcomes of moderately correlated to each other. Additionally, these results indicate student interaction is strongly correlated to student communication. Therefore, when students are more effective at interacting in diverse groups and attempt to understand others' perspectives, they are also more

likely to communicate for the intended purpose and expand on others' thinking. This study hypothesized that explicit structures to support teacher facilitation of classroom discourse will affect classroom inclusivity in the form of student interaction and communication. To determine the ability of teacher actions to predict student outcomes, the research counted each reported instance of teacher and student efficacy as a case for analysis.

To investigate whether teacher questioning (open-ended questions intended to provoke a discussion of an abstract idea or issue) to promote culturally inclusive social-emotional learning is predictive of student interaction, a simple linear regression was conducted. The predictor variable was teacher questioning and the outcome variable was student interaction. The predictor variable was not found to be statistically significant [$B = 0.192$, 95% C.I. (-0.221, 0.605), $p = .342$]. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained.

To investigate whether teacher questioning (open-ended questions intended to provoke a discussion of an abstract idea or issue) to promote culturally inclusive social-emotional learning is predictive of student communication, a simple linear regression was conducted. The predictor variable was teacher questioning and the outcome variable was student communication. The predictor variable was not found to be statistically significant [$B = .268$, 95% C.I. (-0.103, 0.639), $p = .147$]. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained.

To investigate whether teacher delivery (explicit structures to support teacher facilitation of classroom discourse) to promote culturally inclusive social-emotional learning is predictive of student interaction, a simple linear regression was conducted. The predictor variable was teacher delivery and the outcome variable was student interaction. Tests to see if the data met the assumption of collinearity indicated that multicollinearity was not a concern (Teacher Delivery,

Tolerance = 1.00, VIF = 1.00). The data met the assumption of independent errors (Durbin-Watson value = 1.375). Teacher delivery significantly predicted student interaction [$B = .645$, 95% C.I. (0.107, 1.182), $p = 0.021$], indicating that for each increased level of teacher delivery effectiveness, student interaction effectiveness increased .645 units. The model explained a significant proportion of variance in the efficacy of student interaction, $R^2 = .261$, $F(1, 18) = 6.354$, $p = 0.021$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is retained.

To investigate whether teacher delivery (explicit structures to support teacher facilitation of classroom discourse) to promote culturally inclusive social-emotional learning is predictive of student communication, a simple linear regression was conducted. The predictor variable was teacher delivery and the outcome variable was student communication. Tests to see if the data met the assumption of collinearity indicated that multicollinearity was not a concern (Teacher Delivery, Tolerance = 1.00, VIF = 1.00). The data met the assumption of independent errors (Durbin-Watson value = 1.733). Teacher delivery significantly predicted student communication [$B = .526$, $t(18) = 2.126$, 95% C.I. (0.006, 1.1046), $p = 0.048$], indicating that for each increased level of teacher delivery effectiveness, student communication effectiveness increased .526 units. The model explained a significant proportion of variance in the efficacy of student communication, $R^2 = .201$, $F(1, 18) = 4.519$, $p = 0.048$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is retained.

The quantitative data analysis of Phase 2 supported two of the study's alternative hypotheses (H_3 and H_4) and retained the null hypothesis for two (H_1 and H_2). Implementing

culturally inclusive classroom discourse strategies support teachers in their instructional delivery and developing students' communication and interaction.

Qualitative Analysis

The researcher conducted two interviews virtually via Zoom and four interviews in-person. Four research participants consented to have the interviews recorded using a password-protected software and device. The initial interviews inquired into how the research participants experienced onboarding and structured support in the district, which also allowed the researcher to get to know each colleague. The exit interviews occurred after participants completed and submitted four implementation evaluations of the CISEL structures and corresponding reflections. The exit interview also provided an opportunity to share personal and professional changes during the intervention period and discuss the end-user experience implementing CISEL. A trusted transcription service, TranscribeMe, transcribed the interviews' audio recordings. The pre-established questions (see Appendices F, G, and J) of this semi-structured protocol and written reflections sought to answer the research question: What are teachers' perceptions on how targeted implementation and reflection on social-emotional teaching practices impact early career teachers' knowledge, skills and attitudes related to cultural inclusivity? This integrated approach, merging written and verbal qualitative data, is a defining feature of the convergent mixed-methods approach.

The researcher completed three levels of process coding, specifically codes, categories, and themes (Saldana, 2011), using the cloud-based software application ATLAS.ti. The software allowed for seamless data manipulation with respondent anonymity and distribution frequency. The software also aided in the synthesis and grouping of broader themes. The researcher began

coding themes from the initial responses before completing the intervention. This initial inductive process determined themes of relationships, voice, and intercultural competence had a mean of 17.4 (*S.D.* = 7.6), 15.2 (*S.D.* = 3.49), and 13.6 (*S.D.* = 4.83), respectively. The high *S.D.* for the theme of “voice” resulted in a high frequency by each research participant, with one colleague making 30 references to facilitating student voice. The coding of the exit interviews paralleled the initial interviews. The coding software Atlas.ti provided multiple levels of coding and reporting for the inductive process of creating themes. The researcher used data from the final interview with each research participant to uncover the themes of educator intentionality and connection. The first tier of coding resulted in 27 codes clustered into three categories: rigor, intentional instructional practices, and connection.

Themes

Teacher as Facilitator- The Beginning Stages

The Association of American Colleges and Universities Intercultural Values Rubric integrates self-awareness, global or social awareness, communication, and empathy, key components for inclusive facilitation (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2017). This rubric can serve as a starting point for early career teachers to assess how their cultural competence affects their personal and professional decision-making toward facilitation that produces inclusive and equitable results (Mayfield, 2020). Research participants began the intervention with expressions like “apprehensive” and ended using terms like “confidence.” This change in mindset represents the importance of cultural awareness in planning student-centered choice and discourse. The initial interview responses recognized opportunities for student voice and self-advocacy, especially within the context of the pandemic. Clarise stated:

And especially when it comes to COVID, it's a lot harder to read scholars' faces and to make them feel comfortable enough to be open, to share, and share their voices. So I think that was another challenge and was something that I definitely did not think about prior to really entering the role [of teaching].

Anyé reinforced the role of the teacher as facilitator. In Anyé's first reflection, she wondered how students would feel about sharing each other's comments. With a sense of insecurity, she asked, "will it work?" That last question evolved into her observation that "students are beginning to turn and look at their peers who are discussing. They like the feedback I give when they can say what their peer had just said." Dayana's described her earliest implementation attempt as:

The first week was a bit awkward, and although I have a good rapport with my students, they were hesitant to begin sharing their perspectives and points of view as a whole class discussion. This [the intervention] being my first time with the cards, I also felt apprehensive and unsure of where the topics of discussion were going to lead to, so I had posted the questions on the whiteboard and gave students post-its so they could generate their thoughts on paper and post them 'anonymously,' and then we had a discussion about responses.

Research participants referenced the struggles of facilitating student voice in the classroom. Challenges included using technological devices, eliciting responses, avoiding teacher-centered lecturing, and structuring for more social learning during and after the pandemic. The theme of voice relates to the social-emotional competencies of self-management and social awareness (CASEL, 2022). Dayana described that some students express that they

“don’t like being called on.” The research participants showed nascent signs of integrating classroom discourse as a form of culturally relevant pedagogy. Dayana and Clarise raised points about self-advocacy that connect to the theme of student voice. Dayana stated in the initial interview, “how are you going to feel most comfortable, you know, advocating for yourself, for your needs, but also in a professional way?” Clarise stated, “And we talked a lot about advocacy as well and how our personal opinions and our own personal culture really plays a big role in how we feel comfortable advocating.” The topic of self-advocacy is one way to reach academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness in the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 1995); however, classroom discourse is an opportunity to engage deeper in dialogue about identity and dissent (Mayfield, 2020, p. 19).

Cultural Inclusivity- The Missing Link

The examples of student voice in these qualitative data connected to relationships but did not explicitly reference cultural inclusivity. For instance, Dayana stated, “and it's been better now that we have kind of built those relationships and they're more comfortable with each other. I've noticed that they're more, you know, they want to speak up more.” Additionally, Braelynn stated, “I don't think you can teach a lesson without having an understanding of this [SEL] at all. Like then you lose the scholar, you lose the connection with them.” Anyé underscored the importance of cultural competence when she stated, “But I want to continue to grow to understand and consider all of the students with the different backgrounds in my, you know, my classroom so that they feel supportive, that they feel seen.” Teacher instruction inconsistently applied cultural awareness and appreciation as exhibited in the participants’ responses. Two initial interviews mentioned “culture shock” in describing the lack of understanding when teaching in a

community different from the educator's cultural or geographic background, whether local or international.

Teacher Bias- Intentionality in Instructional Choices

Educators must intentionally look at their biases when making instructional choices. Teacher bias shows the conflict in what the teacher may consider off-task but highly relevant and significant to the students. If educators are to truly value student voice, the cultural context of the students' lives is significant to classroom learning. Ladson-Billings states, "culturally relevant teachers utilize students' culture as a vehicle for learning" (161). Dayana maintained high expectations and relevance by requiring evidence when using the prompts to discuss policy issues of student interest for a civic action project. Dayana suggested adding content and behavioral focus to the rubric portion on student observations to avoid distractions and digressions during discourse. This feedback shows teacher growth in clear expectations for student discourse.

The intervention's rubric guides teachers to see where they have control in their practice to merge culture, equity, and instruction, primarily to ensure everyone gets the opportunity to share. Clarise recorded on the document in the first attempt:

I observed the most growth in teacher delivery by setting clear expectations for the activity. When I push in to do lessons, I encourage all scholars' participation, however, I was very explicit in this activity that all students are expected to participate.

Anyé mentioned, "Sometimes when we talk about new learning, we feel like you can learn something new, but it also sometimes new learning means like pausing and reflecting on the importance of something that you have learned before." The research participants differentiated

in various ways to engage all learners in the structures; classroom discussions are one of the ten teaching practices that promote social and emotional competence while aiding in positive learning environments (Yoder, 2014).

Research participants preferred the adaptability of this intervention. The study reminded teachers to be conscientious about their support that builds cultural inclusivity. The arrangement of the room, the learners, and task choices is influential to the success of inclusive classroom discourse. Clarise mentioned that teaching in other classrooms means they adapt to the assigned seats provided or if the educator does not assign them. As a result of this experience, the research participant will be more intentional about planning. An essential part of planning to support the integration efforts of a magnet setting includes student groupings. Clarise stated, “knowing that we're trying to encourage everybody to feel comfortable having this culturally inclusive discussion...they're sometimes matching with people that might not be in their specific friend group, and that kind of opens their eyes up a little bit.” Classroom discourse structures are also significant for students who may be perceived as disconnected from the school culture. Clarise stated:

And if you're struggling with chronic absenteeism, you also are missing plenty of opportunities to connect as well. So, somebody I would see like a scholars' eyes light up when somebody would say something about their family or their culture or just a thought process that they had that really related to them, and they would kind of light up even if they didn't share.

Trust through Connection- High Expectations

Inclusive classrooms foster connection amongst all community members. Student-teacher trust solidifies from relationship building, integrating student ideas, valuing students, offering collaborative opportunities, and giving clear instructions (Keyes, 2019; Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020). A theme of self-trust amongst students and teachers led to higher academic expectations. For example, Emi recalled, “I think the biggest growth in this week was teacher questioning because scholars engaged in discussions of an abstract idea.” Dayana’s exit interview response shows how classroom discourse can build trust between students and teachers:

The first week was a bit awkward, and although I have a good rapport with my students, they were hesitant to begin sharing their perspectives and points of view as a whole class discussion. This being my first time with the cards, I also felt apprehensive and unsure of where the topics of discussion were going to lead to, so I had posted the questions on the whiteboard and gave students post-its so they could generate their thoughts on paper and post them ‘anonymously,’ and then we had a discussion about responses.

Dayana stated in Week 4 Question 4 that the discussions were “amazing” because the students were very passionate. This outcome connects cultural relevance with the social-emotional teaching practice of responsibility and choice.

The coding of these data elicited the theme of trust in students' choices and social connections. Clarise reinforced the importance of establishing a safe space for classroom discourse:

With this implementation, I witnessed the most growth with my questioning of the large group. I was able to use more examples when I proposed the question based on the previous implementations. It is important to mention that the weakness of this group was the student communication because students struggled to expand on others' thinking due to a negative comment made. This created an environment that was not safe to share, and it took some time to encourage students to re-engage with their small groups.

Clarise also described, “Students who do not share often to the large group explained that they like the activity because it took the pressure off of them having to decide if they were going to share or not. They also liked how they got to connect with students whom they generally do not speak with.” Clarise’s comments connect to the instructional practice of responsibility of choice.

The research participants found the intervention to connect to academic rigor, as seen in students using more academic language and evidence in their discussions. The educators referenced how explicit they needed to be for engagement in the structures. This explicitness led to examples in the exit interview of academic language, elaborated responses, and critical thinking because of student engagement in practices A, B, and C. Coding synthesized patterns in academic rigor and high expectations, which are characteristic of culturally responsive practices (Samuels, 2018). One participant mentioned the strength of this intervention in meeting the students where they are. Another participant spoke of facilitating connections for students by using resources that reflect the students’ identities making up the class. Anyé stated, “I always think it's helpful for them to see themselves, and they're really good about being able to make those connections.” One participant found that Structuring Discussion led to consensus building

and productive struggle through the students listening and respecting each other. The human connection also led to academic growth via peer feedback. Clarise stated:

And it's different having feedback from your peer versus an educator because then it also encourages other scholars to say, okay, I'm going to share. I'm going to be open and honest and share my truth. So I think that was something cool about the structures when I was able to tour the room and the small groups to be able to give them that support and encourage that empathetic feedback with one another.

High academic and personal development expectations are the cornerstone of culturally inclusive SEL.

The qualitative data from the interviews and written reflections support the viability of this intervention. Requiring early career teachers to evaluate their instructional practices related to the inclusivity of the students' interactions supports their understanding and development of CISEL. Participants appreciated the reminder about how they can facilitate social, emotional, and cultural competence through discourse. They also felt comfortable building their skills with the scaffolded choices provided. Targeting specific skills, such as teacher delivery, helped teachers to focus their reflections on CISEL.

Summary

The open-ended interviews reinforced that the targeted approach of the Framework kept the focus on student-centered learning and student voice. The educators consistently referenced how explicit they must be when facilitating classroom discourse. The written and verbal qualitative responses made nuanced connections to cultural inclusivity, but the reflective rubric process kept teachers looking inward at their responsibilities. This inward reflection and

respective shifts benefitted student learning outcomes. Instead of early career teachers viewing discourse contributions as the students' responsibility, they began to see how intentional questions and instructions could guide students toward inclusive and engaging discourse (Howard et al., 2021). Descriptive and correlational statistics rejected the null hypothesis. The significant rejection of the null hypothesis supported a cascade effect of intentional instruction, class connections, and inclusivity. The data sets showed how the early career teachers grew away from hesitancy and apprehensiveness into confidence and comfort in adapting to their students' needs respective to classroom discourse.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

Chapter 5 provides an overview of educational policy and practice recommendations within the research site and throughout Connecticut. The data analysis in Chapter 4 informs practitioners and stakeholders of ways to support early career teachers effectively and sustainably in their development of CISEL. Phase 1 of this Improvement Science research examined early career teachers' perceptions about 1) how they perceive their implementation of CISEL and 2) how they experience the district's systems for onboarding and supporting new teacher development. The study results align with the professional learning trend processed from the environmental scan in Phase 1, indicating that districts should utilize educator voice to provide targeted and differentiated professional learning.

Phase 1 shaped the intervention that the scholarly practitioner enacted in Phase 2. The self-reported need to improve the social-emotional teaching practice of responsibility and choice led to a focus on classroom discourse. Classroom discourse is student-centered and requires the teacher to act as a facilitator. The intervention provided the research participants with a professional learning choice in improving their capacity to facilitate students' responsibility and choice. Not only did the early career teachers have a choice in their professional learning during the intervention, but the intervention also increased the students' experience with responsibility and choice. Being culturally inclusive is a responsibility; participating in discourse offers many options. The study's results underscore the need to intentionally include cultural inclusivity in all educator preparation, professional learning, and instructional decision-making. Therefore, this discussion explores practical ways to support early career teachers in understanding and

integrating CISEL. The findings and limitations of this study catalyze future educational research opportunities.

Summary of the Results

Convergence of the data sets shows that teacher planning and practice can improve student classroom discourse by intentionally focusing on teacher delivery. Classroom discourse is essential to building culturally inclusive academic spaces (Howard et al., 2021). Through student voice, student choice, collaboration, and family partnerships with consistent and high expectations, responsibility and choice strengthen the learner's autonomy (Howard et al., 2021). Fostering these changes in practice requires more than skill development (Howard et al., 2021). One divergence amongst these data is how early career teachers want to be supported. Some research participants expressed a need for flexible and systemized professional learning throughout the district; however, these data did not manifest into clearly defined patterns or suggestions for the MSD.

Coding both interview data sets uncovered areas lacking in perceived support, such as student development of empathy, discourse responses, and cooperative learning. Both quantitative and qualitative data highlight that a narrow focus on one social-emotional teaching practice can lead to student and teacher growth, specifically in teacher delivery and student interaction and communication. The researcher developed the tool to maintain a reflective focus on the interrelatedness of teacher actions and student interaction; the research participants suggested minimal to no changes in the Framework. This chapter describes the evidence-based need for an explicit focus on CISEL and the recommended steps to support early career teachers in this social, emotional, and cultural shift.

Discussion of the Results

Applying the social teaching practice of responsibility and choice stemmed from Phase 1 of this Improvement Science research. Responsibility and choice relate to both educator and learner agency. The findings showed growth in early career teachers' integration of responsibility and choice with attention to social, emotional, and cultural competence. Participants expressed increased teacher awareness of the impact of delivery on inclusive discourse. Research participants rarely discussed the criterion of teacher questioning. Such an omission aligns with the quantitative analysis acceptance of the null hypothesis for teacher questioning. This study's targeted reflective Framework elevates educator intentionality for student-centered learning and high academic expectations. A pedagogical focus on classroom discourse can be a conduit for discussing identity, foundational for culturally inclusive spaces. The researcher conducted this study during a time of polarity in how the United States federal system perceives which identity topics are open for classroom discussion (Schwartz, 2021). This Improvement Science research discusses policy and practice suggestions in the context of schools impacted by this politicized climate in the United States.

The Cultural Proficiency Continuum (see Table 10) could guide the intentional selection of resources and practices that foster inclusive connections in classrooms. The Cultural Competency Continuum outlines a spectrum for developing knowledge, behaviors, and dispositions educators may bring into the classroom environment (The Center for Culturally Proficient Educational Practice, 2020). The researcher reflected on the cultural inclusivity of the participants' responses using this spectrum as a guide. The Center for Culturally Proficient

Educational Practice (2020) in Table 11 summarizes the right three qualities of educators’ practice as viewing and integrating the diversity of culture from an asset-based perspective.

Table 11

The Cultural Proficiency Continuum

Compliance Based Tolerance for Diversity			Transformation for Equity		
Cultural Destructiveness	Cultural Incapacity	Cultural Blindness	Cultural Pre-competence	Cultural Competence	Cultural Proficiency

Note. Source The Center for Culturally Proficient Educational Practice (2020)

Early Career Teachers mentioned the following resources as supportive to their culturally inclusive teaching practices: *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain* by Zaretta Hammond, Second Step curriculum, Culturally Responsive Teaching course, Kagan Cooperative Learning, and Conscious Discipline. These resources did not stem from districtwide onboarding or early career teacher supportive structures. The continuum shown in Table 11 could help early career teachers who join a magnet school better understand the districtwide focus on equity. Additionally, it can help early career teachers manifest the purpose of magnet schools through culturally inclusive practices in the classroom.

Intentional Choice

Intentionality is an example of where research data converged. The researcher intentionally built an intervention for early career teachers around clarity, autonomy, and differentiation of the intervention’s format. The targeted Framework guided educators in the implementation of CISEL. One research participant noted the lack of planning around individuals learning differently regarding options for adult learners. The focus of the rubric on teacher delivery amongst the participants reinforced the literature review connection between teacher instructional choices and positive student outcomes in safety, equity, and academic

success (Center for Reaching and Teaching the Whole Child, 2020; Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020). Research participants meaningfully used the structured practices of the intervention to provide an amount of choice from which students felt secure in contributing to discourse. For example, research participants shared expectations intentionally to minimize dominant voices and ensure that all students could respond and listen. The intention of teacher questioning and selection of choices can also lead to more cultural and academic understanding. How educators plan for student-centered, participatory learning and group students for collaboration can also intentionally foster cultural inclusivity (Hammond & Jackson, 2015; Howard et al., 2021). Yoder (2014a) stresses the importance of meaningful, structured choices that strengthen student accountability.

Research in the choice-overload effect, the concept that too many competing options may obstruct efficient decision-making, is viewed as fragmented and inconsistent (Zhang & Heng, 2021). Although the researcher intentionally allowed for changes in the structure during the implementation period, no research participant changed their practice selection. Consequently, more meta-analyses are needed. It is worth considering the paradox of choice work of psychologist Barry Schwartz and psycho-economist Sheena Iyengar to question assumptions on how individuals perceive choice (Schwartz, 2005; Iyengar, 2010). The findings for Research Question 1 on teachers' actions (teacher delivery) as predictive of students' actions (student interaction and communication) supports adult professional learning choices focused on teacher delivery. Classroom discourse is one of many social-emotional teaching practices that educators can choose to implement; district professional learning and support could focus early career teachers around these practices.

Intentional Inclusivity

Students need opportunities to share and learn from the cultural diversity in the classroom. The attitudes of intercultural competence can be observed through discourse that inquires into the complexity of culture, fosters cross-cultural interactions, and gains awareness of multiple perspectives, including one's own (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2017). Both Phase 1 and Phase 2 research data inconsistently referenced ties to intercultural competence. Phase 1 mentioned examples of intercultural competence related to trauma-informed practices and relationships. In Phase 2, classroom discourse opportunities expanded to integrate CISEL and content learning. One participant reflected on student discussions about how culture and family impacted their course selection pathways during one implementation. Student-centered discourse in the classroom provided a foundation for early career teachers to reflect on Research Question 2, specifically how their knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to cultural inclusivity. For example, Emi's final written reflection stated: "Instead of posing a math problem every time, I would pose general questions that my scholars prefer to talk about." Structured classroom discourse strategies can support early career teachers in creating routines and expectations that establish trust in the classroom

Teachers must be intentional about incorporating inclusive classroom discourse. Two participants mentioned the role of cultural identity in communication. One research participant referenced multiple examples of using the structure for evidence-based Civics content. Discourse that relies on evidence can combat assuming, stereotyping, and overgeneralizing in the classroom. Some research participants said students acknowledged the opportunity to share their opinions in the structures but wanted more support in structuring empathetic responses. When

educators intentionally observe the inclusiveness of their class communities, they incorporate the key elements of culturally responsive teaching, such as authentic dialogue and high expectations through choice (Samuels, 2018). Research Questions 1 and 2 findings show that teachers perceived positive outcomes for students, such as academic and social-emotional growth, from the student-centered learning and discourse opportunities.

Intentional Reconnection

Each class meeting is a chance for reconnection; students need more opportunities for classroom discourse. The research participants' intervention experiences highlighted the unexpected gains and challenges of structured discourse in each class setting. Braelynn reflected that "the students are finding it a little bit difficult because again, that's not because of this structure, but more so because they are not used to having such a culture of having a dialogue and discourse." Professional learning on classroom discourse is an area for growth, especially during inconsistent schooling because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, student and teacher relationships can change the power dynamics in the classroom so that the students are trusted to lead with their voice (Tolbert et al., 2018). Students recommend that teachers incorporate space for discussions of culture, race, and goal setting (Bunner, 2017). The research participants prioritized building relationships by sharing what they ask the students and being open to meeting individual student needs where they are. The prioritization of relational pedagogy is explicit and intentional on the part of the teacher and requires both educator and student vulnerability (Brantmeier & McKenna, 2020; Reeves & Le Mare, 2017). Providing teachers with professional learning that builds cultural awareness, practices engaging in

discussions, and applies inclusive pedagogical strategies is a pathway to culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices (Samuels, 2018).

Triangulation of the data revealed no mention of vulnerability in a study focused on social, emotional, and cultural competence through discourse. Critical characteristics of pedagogy of vulnerability include relevance, trust, and transformation via diverse perspectives (Brantmeier & McKenna, 2020). These qualities parallel or foster a culturally inclusive classroom. This study confined classroom discourse to the classroom; the overall systems for incorporating and valuing student voice in schools is an area for future research. A quantitative preassessment would have elicited more responses on how the early career teachers perceived student voice in their different class groupings. “Elevating student voice” is stressed by CASEL for authentically integrated social-emotional competencies and fostering student agency (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, n.d.). A resource that supports the development of early career teachers’ integration of student voice in the classroom is the explicit Ladder of Meaningful Student Involvement. This flowchart describes a scaffolded approach to student engagement with classroom tasks and environment student-centered, with students informed and consulted as the second tier (SoundOut, n.d.). According to this framework, the goal for student engagement is student/adult equity (SoundOut, n.d.). The research participants expressed their value in relationships with students, but detailed resources like the Ladder diagram can assist in self and social awareness that manifests into instructional practices.

Implications for Policy

Make Cultural Inclusivity Explicit

This study's intervention provided a bridge between theory and practice. The structures challenged early career teachers' perceptions of their role in facilitating a culturally inclusive classroom. Although the qualitative analyses in research Phases 1 and 2 observed language about CISEL, educational policy in Connecticut could encourage more explicit expectations and teacher moves conducive to cultural inclusivity. As mentioned in the initial interview, Braelynn would like to see a "sustained effort" for culturally responsive teaching. According to The Social, Emotional, and Cultural Anchor Competencies (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, n.d.), engaging families is a teacher move and condition of CISEL. Dayana spoke highly of their certification program in the initial interview but stated preparation lacked in how to interact with parents.

The Connecticut Common Core of Teaching (CCT) Rubric for Effective Teaching (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2017) could make changes that explicitly include teacher actions or scaffolded steps. For instance, Domain 1 of the CCT connects to CISEL and focuses on the classroom environment and student engagement. Indicator 1a describes the classroom environment with terms such as "positive," "responsive," and "respectful." While this indicator focuses on all students' needs, explicit teacher action steps toward inclusivity are unclear. The Massachusetts Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubric includes teacher action and student action indicators and "look-fors" that can support teachers' development of social-emotional teaching practices (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2021). These explicit connections will provide examples of how early career teachers

can facilitate learning inclusively. The perspectives of the early career teachers raise the following question related to Indicator 1 of the CCT (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2017):

⇒ How can teachers support positive interactions and respect cultural differences while reinforcing student responsibility and encouraging student questioning?

Examine Teacher Preparation Content

During the 2021-2022 school year, the TEAM program began requiring first-year teachers to complete a survey at the start of each module. The survey asks questions about their certification program preparation compared to practice in the classroom. The Connecticut State Department of Education could use the data gathered from early career teachers' perspectives to see how often cultural inclusivity intersects between practice and preparation. The participants shared positive comments about the targeted foci of this study's intervention. Exposure to instructional strategies that facilitate inclusive classroom discourse applies to educators of all experience levels. Because of this study's focus on early career teachers, EPPs could evaluate the extent to which licensure assessments, such as edTPA, reflect CISEL. Ensuring that EPP benchmarks explicitly incorporate CISEL could further support the development of pre-service teachers.

Personalize and Differentiate Onboarding

Unexpectedly, the research participants who volunteered to participate in this study entered teaching with previous professional experiences related mainly to education (see Table 6). As Connecticut seeks to diversify its educator workforce and promote alternative pathways to certification, this study suggests that policymakers examine how school districts can ensure

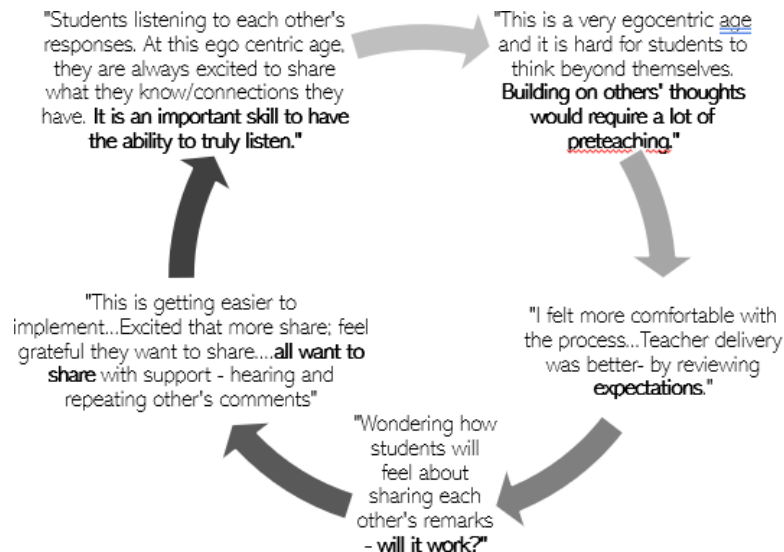
support for teachers who were not raised in similar school cultures or have adaptive roles. The initial interviews raised key points about cultural competence in understanding the educational journeys of early career teachers. One research participant emigrated to the United States and noted the appeal of the magnet setting's diversity; however, they learned some school routines, such as lockdown or fire drill procedures, from their students. Another initial interview discussed the lack of student-teaching mentoring through DSAP pathways.

The study's qualitative findings show a need for differentiated district onboarding. One participants' development journey throughout the intervention is represented in Figure 7.

Although this research participant is newly certified, the participant has years of experience in early childhood roles. The quotations in Figure 7 relate to a class reading and discussions of *Hey Wall* by Susan Verde.

Figure 7

Educator Development Journey



These educator reflections during the intervention showed awareness for diverse resources, strategies, and perspectives with growth in social emotional teaching practices (see Figure 7).

The first quote shows educator doubt while the final quotation shows inclusive dialogue amongst the learners. The implementation of intentionally structured, inclusive classroom discourse enhanced sharing and interaction amongst students' reactions and ideas. Early career teachers deserve onboarding that values their prior knowledge and encourages personal reflection.

The United States Department of Education Report on the State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce (2016) compared the enrollment demographics of alternative teacher certification pathways outside of higher education institutions and inside compared to traditional EPPs. The report summarizes more diverse candidates enrolled in alternative certification pathways than traditional university pathways (The United States Department of Education,

2016). The State Department of Education or a neutral research entity could scan the onboarding procedures across the state to examine best practices for educators entering from alternate professional and certification pathways. With increases in adults with prior professional experience and staff turnover in schools, this information is a priority for district onboarding and support of DSAP candidates. One research participant who started in the certified role midyear faced a very different onboarding experience than teachers experience at the start of the school year. Educational policy needs research on certification pathways that build supportive networks and comfort for all teachers. Additionally, this policy research could examine how districts can receive the support they need for successful onboarding during various times throughout the school year.

Implications for Practice

Collaborative Professional Learning

This research exposed a theme of autonomy that extends to educators and learners. During classroom discourse, teachers give up some control so that students can initiate self-expression. The intervention provided both students and teachers with the opportunity to build their autonomy. While this study focuses on student-centered learning, how early career teachers learn is another focus. The literature review, root cause analysis interviews, and intervention debriefs with early career teachers reinforced how relationships are essential to new teacher development. This group includes cooperating teachers, mentors of student teachers, and TEAM mentors, other mentors of newly certified and employed educators, guide early career teachers. Essential questions emerge from this research concerning collaborative professional learning:

- ⇒ How can the district bring together the distinct schools to create a diverse professional learning network?
- ⇒ How can collaborative learning opportunities across the district become a part of the district culture with schools with distinct initiatives and themes?

The theme of relationships appeared more frequently when referencing support amongst colleagues than with student-teacher relationships. Phase 1 and 2 interviews reinforced research findings that relationships are vital in supporting early career teachers. Mentoring is essential to the transition and development of new educators from education to practice (Chaney et al., 2020; Dubin, 2018; Kent, 2018; Schwan et al., 2020). Empathy interviews, the environmental scan, and intervention interviews mentioned various human resources within school settings, such as social workers, security, TEAM mentors (within and outside their certification area), department members, and colleagues who share a classroom. One participant stressed the positive impact of meeting weekly with an administrator who shared the same endorsement background.

Administrators are essential to the individualized support of early career teachers. Research recommendations include releasing support providers or mentors for coaching, establishing a 24/7 hotline for early career teaching questions, and onboarding for any position change regardless of experience (Reitman & Karge, 2019).

The strength of a magnet district exists in the diversity of each school and the many communities served. Yet in the strength, the question that arises is:

- ⇒ How can a diverse district structure support professional learning so that colleagues collaborate and practice strategies?

The research participants mentioned their professional learning related to CISEL occurred mostly through professional development by personal choice, school professional development, or certification pathway, not districtwide events. Although the data trended positive, there is the question of how to converge resources across school to produce the desired results. Therefore, the researcher asks:

⇒ How can each magnet school in the district share its assets?

Perhaps an “unconference” approach to classroom discourse would work effectively with the unique magnet school system. The acceptance of the null hypotheses on teacher questioning recommends developing questions for inclusive discourse as a topic for future professional development. The quantitative and qualitative data converged on the positive outcomes for students when teachers intentionally incorporate CISEL; each school in district deserves an opportunity to share its effective CISEL practices.

Systematized Resources for CISEL

Research participants recommended minimal changes to the intervention that could positively impact teacher practice and student learning. Two research participants found that pre-writing before speaking enhanced student discourse. The exit interviews mentioned empathy and listening as strengths and areas of challenge for promoting student discourse. The research participants adapted instruction to encourage listening, engagement, and modeling empathy. They also mentioned wanting different structures to support cooperative learning and empathetic responses. The scholarly practitioner relied on CISEL-related resources like Facing History and Ourselves (Facing History and Ourselves, 2022) and Kagan Cooperative Learning (Spencer, 2011) to create the intervention, but numerous resources support CISEL. The early career

teachers did not list an abundance of resources related to CISEL, and some mentioned their desire to have easily accessible and practical resources for the classroom. The research participants like the fungibility of the three structures for this intervention; however, participant responses about the CISEL resources currently accessible underscore a need for resource organization and dissemination at the district level. Currently, each school maintains its professional learning resources. More accessible sharing of professional resources aligns with the magnet setting goal of integration over isolation. Consequently, the question emerges:

⇒ How can district leaders expand teacher access to CISEL-related resources?

Recommendations for Further Study

Districtwide professional development could utilize the format of this study's Framework and structured implementation choices. The participants preferred the option to choose their learning pathway; consequently, the researcher is interested in how other education initiatives would perform using this intervention's format. Participants mentioned the need for more support in how students could structure their responses. The researcher recommends that the participants who started with Practice A or B continue until they have accomplished Practice C. Districtwide discussions about CISEL are an additional step to building the collective efficacy of the MSD staff. The researcher also recommends peer observations when implementing the strategies and partnering for the Framework reflection. Additionally, the researcher suggests collecting input from students about how they experience the discourse opportunities. Multiple views on the perceived inclusivity of instructional approaches support the development of self awareness and social awareness competencies.

This research study began as a phenomenological exploration of early career teachers' perspectives as the scholarly practitioner hoped to inform her work with pre-service educator preparation. This study recommends further research on reflections of self- and social awareness competencies that effectively move pre-service teacher delivery toward facilitating student-centered learning. The researcher recommends further research on how EPPs teach about classroom discourse and cultural inclusivity. Although this research could be an international inquiry, the scholarly practitioner recommends starting with Connecticut EPPs to support districts' awareness. Comprehensive evaluation tools, such as CCAST or edTPA, focus on general instructional expectations and broad student-centered learning. Questions related to future research include:

- ⇒ How can these tools be used to promote student-centered and culturally inclusive practices?
- ⇒ What identity topics are discussed openly and inclusively in certification pathway programs?

Connecticut's history and culture of local, municipal control shape the decentralized implementation of TEAM. TEAM has made recent, evidence-based changes in the TEAM Program Guidelines for 2021-2022. The book resources listed for each module range in publication year from 2001 to 2009 (Connecticut State Department of Education, n.d.). Module 5 on Professional Responsibilities and Teacher Leadership contains supplemental scenarios in the facilitator and participant guides from 2021 on Culturally Competent and Culturally Responsive Teaching. These scenarios grapple with identity, relationships, and restorative practices contrasted to the 2015 Ethical and Professional Dilemmas for Educators scenarios in

transportation, social media, TEAM completion, and professional attire; one scenario 2015 focused on the classroom environment. Another change is integrating Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) Program and the Sanford Inspire Modules Crosswalk. One module is titled Linking Identity and Achievement Through Cultural Competence. This scholarly practitioner who serves as a TEAM mentor inquires:

⇒ To what extent are mentors aware of these revisions and using these resources that integrate culturally responsive topics?

⇒ What additional bridges could exist between certification pathways and school districts to best support early career teachers now that first-year teachers complete evaluations about their certification preparation through TEAM?

Results related to Research Question 3 find classroom discourse as a viable approach to support early career teacher development of CISEL. The findings conclude that classroom discourse is a viable practice for the development of CISEL amongst early career teachers. The researcher recommends further studies related to students' perceptions of the social-emotional teaching practices they interact with each school day. With a study centered around the classroom, the priority should be expanding the research on how learners perceive “student voice” integrated into classroom practices. Scholarly practitioners could do this through a Participatory Action Research design in which the students are the researchers to integrate their assets into academics (Goodman, 2018; Walsh, 2018). Another idea for student-led Participatory Action Research could focus on student attendance and the lived experience of returning to school after an absence. For example, pursuing the question,

⇒ To what extent and how does the inclusivity of the classroom expand outside of the school's walls?

Future research could also explore other vital components of dialogue, such as the skill of teaching listening. A change to this intervention could consist of reflections that incorporate the perspectives of both the educators and students. Because classroom discourse is a viable approach to developing CISEL, this study recommends the district focus instructional rounds on classroom discourse to examine how all educators, not solely early career teachers, incorporate student voice. A follow-up to this micro-focus on discourse could include three structures that promote listening.

Limitations

Improvement Science relies on implementing Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) inquiry cycles with new knowledge and data refining the solution each cycle (Bryk et al., 2017). The condensed research period of six weeks did not allow for repeating the Plan-Do-Study-Act inquiry cycle (Bryk et al., 2017). The researcher conducted this study in the 2021-2022 school year following the reopening of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. The school year remained a transition for districts with changing safety regulations and a return to in-person learning from hybrid and remote learning models. This study did not rely on the Lincoln and Guba (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006) qualitative research evaluative criterion of prolonged engagement to ensure credibility; the scholarly practitioner had developed the trust of colleagues from working in the district, which helped with credibility in such a short timeframe (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). The researcher holds no formal leadership roles and is present part-time in the district, so a minimal to rare risk existed of power dynamics influencing the data reporting.

Consequently, the researcher chose not to complete the criterion of an inquiry audit for dependability (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). The vantage point of the scholarly researcher within the research site strengthens Improvement Science. When discussing the research opportunity, the scholarly practitioner remained transparent about the purpose of the study and how it would inform the researcher's work with pre-service educators.

This Improvement Science study relied on a small sample size. The researcher intended to seek volunteers across schools and grade levels in a district representing multiple Connecticut communities to strengthen transferability. The researcher infers from conversations with school leaders and mentors that the pandemic byproducts of staff shortages and teacher stress impacted the availability of volunteers. The researcher suggests future studies of this intervention in magnet school districts to determine the patterns of larger sample sizes, specifically related to the acceptance or rejection of the null hypotheses.

The scholarly practitioner found the small size to allow for more collaborative planning with the early career teachers. Using Lincoln and Guba's (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006) Evaluative Criteria, the researcher tested validity by asking clarifying questions throughout the weekly reflective process and during the exit interviews (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). For example, one conversation with a participant explained that their mention of a digital form had to do with students brainstorming their verbal responses, not sharing dialogue in a digital format. The frequently written reflections completed and shared digitally in real-time allowed for confirmation of the data in real-time. Some research participants shared student work, which could have been another form of required document analysis. While reviewing the weekly data,

reflexive notes allowed for constant reflection on personal bias. Document analysis coding completed in summation allowed for more distance and objectivity.

Triangulation of multiple qualitative and quantitative data sets aided confirmability. The researcher built the reflective from credible educational resources; however, validity testing did not occur before this intervention. Validity of the quantitative measures existed both in content and construct because the variables of teacher delivery and questioning related to the variables of student interaction and communication (Heale & Twycross, 2015). A limitation existed in the self-reported score choice amongst a score of 3 or 4, which allowed educators to select from a range using one description. The researcher set the range out of professional trust for teacher self-reporting; however, the variability in perceptions could have minimized reliability.

The intervention allowed participants to choose which interventions they applied in their classrooms and how they integrated curriculum standards and learning goals. No participants changed structures during the intervention time period; however, the extent of choice meant to build professional trust and efficacy could minimize reliability. Triangulation of sources and methods triangulation using a convergent design ensured consistency in reported data throughout the process (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). The researcher examined her personal bias through a reflexive process and positionality statement included in this study.

Conclusion

This Improvement Science study explored the perspectives of early career teachers while encouraging that their views and those of students are seen, heard, and affirmed. Although a focus on cultural inclusivity is timeless, the significance of communicating and connecting is

highly relevant to post-pandemic transitions. The important focus on learning loss includes missed opportunities for the development of social, emotional, and cultural competence. Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this study showed that the district and environmental scan sites integrate culturally responsive practices and social-emotional learning to varying degrees. Additionally, the impact on SEL related to the 2020-2021 Teacher Evaluation flexibilities is unclear. While school districts invest in SEL, they must also invest in preparing teachers to develop culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices. Without a culturally inclusive lens integrated into SEL, there is a danger of equating student competence to conformity to the dominant culture of schools (CASEL, 2022a). Discourse is an authentic way to improve teachers' capacity to integrate culturally inclusive social-emotional learning as a lever for student belonging and success.

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Appendices

Appendix A District Permission to Conduct Research

Phase 1 District Permission to Conduct Research Sacred Heart IRB Approval 210726B- Exempt Review



July 8, 2021

Permission to Conduct Research

To Whom It May Concern:

This signed letter serves as consent from the [REDACTED] for Kelly Falvey to conduct research in [REDACTED] magnet schools during the 2021-2022 school year, contingent upon the approval of the Institutional Review Board at Sacred Heart University. The [REDACTED] organization understands that this research aims to complete an Improvement Science Dissertation in Practice Doctorate in Social, Emotional, and Academic Educational Leadership.

The researcher will complete this study in two phases. Phase One of the Improvement Science research study is to perform a root cause analysis of a problem of practice within the context of the educational setting. It is expected that Phase One will start in July 2021 and end in October 2021. The researcher will submit an amendment or additional IRB specific to the Phase Two intervention and measurement analysis.

Phase One of this study aims to

1. Define the problem of practice and analyze root-causes for the investigator's Improvement Science Dissertation in Practice (ISDiP) study.
2. Evaluate the perceptions of early career educators related to their social-emotional development and reflection within the teaching profession

In Phase One, the researcher will conduct qualitative interviews with school/district leaders, educators who mentor new teachers, and teachers with two to three years of experience. The interview questions will examine the extent to which social, emotional, and cultural competence intersect in the supportive structures of Early Career Teachers (ECTs). The quantitative portion of Phase One seeks to understand ECT perceptions of their social teaching practices (Yoder, 2014). This quantitative research will utilize Part A and B of the *Self-Assessing Social and Emotional Instruction and Competencies* tool published by the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at the American Institutes for Research (Yoder, 2014). Specifically, the researcher will send a digital version of "Section 1: Social Interactions" to certified teachers participating in TEAM during the 2021-2022 school year or having completed TEAM in the previous school year. Participation in this survey is voluntary. All qualitative and quantitative responses will remain confidential and password protected.

The outcome of this data will inform the larger Improvement Science Dissertation in Practice. Allowing the researcher to conduct this research in the [REDACTED] community will support the



personal and professional development of Early Career Teachers and the development of SEL programming throughout the district. The researcher commits to making the study process and results transparent and available for the district to use as it sees fit.

By signing this document, [REDACTED] consents to Kelly Falvey conducting Phase One of her research according to the outline above.

[REDACTED]

Kelly Falvey 7/13/21
Kelly Falvey, EdD Candidate and Researcher Date

Phase 2 District Permission to Conduct Research
Sacred Heart University IRB Approval 211129B - Expedited Review

Permission to Conduct Research

Dear Sacred Heart University Institutional Review Board:

This signed letter serves as consent from the [REDACTED] for Kelly Falvey to conduct research in [REDACTED] magnet schools during the 2021-2022 school year, contingent upon the approval of the Institutional Review Board at Sacred Heart University. The [REDACTED] organization understands that this research aims to complete an Improvement Science Dissertation in Practice Doctorate in Social, Emotional, and Academic Educational Leadership.

The researcher will complete this study in two phases. Phase One (approved IRB#) of the Improvement Science Dissertation in Practice (ISDiP) study performed a root cause analysis of a problem of practice within the context of the educational setting. Phase 2 includes the implementation of an intervention, measurement, and analysis of the qualitative data collected from the perspective of new teachers. This research will not include observations of students or collect student work. It is expected that Phase Two will start in December 2021 and end in March 2022.

Phase Two of this study aims to have Early Career Teachers (Years 1, 2, and 3)

- Reflect on the competencies of self and social awareness
- Implement culturally inclusive Social Emotional Learning teaching practices
- Evaluate the impact of using a reflective tool to grow their culturally inclusive teaching practices
- Identify the perceptions of Early Career Teachers related to their social-emotional development and reflection within the teaching profession

In Phase Two, the researcher will identify between six to eighteen certified educators with one to three years of teaching experience. Participation in this intervention is voluntary; all responses

will remain confidential and password protected. Colleagues who volunteer to participate will be asked to complete the following process:

1. Consent to engage in an initial interview and self-reflection facilitated by the primary researcher, Kelly Falvey.
2. Implement three culturally inclusive SEL strategies in their classrooms over a period of 3 to 6 weeks.
3. Record written reflections using the reflective organizer for each implementation.
4. Engage in a post-interview and self-reflection facilitated by the primary researcher, Kelly Falvey.

The outcome of this data will inform the larger Improvement Science Dissertation in Practice. Allowing the researcher to conduct this research in the [REDACTED] community will support the personal and professional development of Early Career Teachers and the development of culturally inclusive SEL programming throughout the district. The researcher commits to making the study process and results transparent and available for the district. This research process and data collection will remain separate from the district's Teacher Evaluation.

By signing this document, [REDACTED] consents to Kelly Falvey conducting Phase Two of her research according to the outline above.

[REDACTED]


Kelly E. Falvey
Ed.D Candidate and Researcher

Date: 11/1/21

Appendix B Empathy Interviewing Questions

Phase 1 Empathy Interviewing Questions

Educator Questions

1. Which social-emotional competency do you feel most prepared to utilize in your role?
2. Which area of cultural competence would most benefit your practice?
3. As a teacher, how have you been supported in your development of culturally inclusive social emotional teaching practices?
4. How would you like to be supported in your [social-emotional] development as a new educator?
5. Is there anything else you think is important about your social teaching practice that we have not talked about?

School Leader/Mentor Questions

1. Which social-emotional competency do you feel early career teachers (ECT) are most prepared to utilize in their role?
2. Which social-emotional competency would most benefit the [culturally inclusive] teaching practices of ECTs?
3. How does your school/district support ECTs in their personal and professional reflections of Yoder's Social Emotional Teaching Practices?
4. How would you like to see ECTs supported in their growth?
 - a. Probe- Growth toward [culturally inclusive] Social Emotional Learning?
5. Is there anything else you think is important about supporting new teachers that we have not talked about?

Environmental Scan Questions

1. Warm up [demographic & work history]
 - a. Can I ask some details about you and your job?
 - b. Now I am going to ask you some questions about your experiences as an administrator /a teacher in this district/school.
2. Student Outcomes
 - a. 1A- What are your district's major professional development goals this school year?
 - b. Probe: In what ways do you see the professional learning that your district provides impacting students?
3. Supporting Early Career Teachers
 - a. 3A- What formal and informal methods do you use to support new teachers in years 1 through 3?
 - i. Probe: Regarding TEAM, what training or prerequisites are required for mentors? What training is required for mentees?

- b. 3B- What topics and research does your district focus on when supporting teachers in years 1 through 3?
 - i. Probe: How have these foci changed in recent years or throughout your career? How do you anticipate it will change in the next five years?
- 4. Strategies
 - a. 4A- What resources, structures, and systems does your district perceive as highly effective in supporting new teachers (in years 1 through 3)?
 - i. Probe: What outcomes have been impacted by your district's support structures? How do you measure the impact of this programming?
 - b. 4B- If you could change or add one thing about onboarding and mentoring year 1 through 3 teachers, what would it be and why?
 - i. Probe: What would your district need to make this change happen?
- 5. Closing
 - a. Is there anything else you think is important about your supporting teachers in their first, second, or third year that we have not talked about?

Survey Participant Consent

Mail - Survey Research Request (Teachers Year 1-3)

7 messages

There will be no identifying characteristics associated with your responses, only your years of teaching experience and primary or secondary certification. Your IP address will not be included in the data from participants nor linked to your

responses. Additionally, all survey results will be kept on a password protected computer belonging solely to the researcher.

What are the risks and benefits of participating?

There are very minimal risks to participating in this study. If you do participate, you may skip any questions you do not want to answer and you may stop filling out the survey at any time.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact me at falveyk5@sacredheart.edu or [REDACTED]. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Sacred Heart University Institutional Review Board at alpfi@sacredheart.edu or (203) 396-8241.

If you are interested in participating, please click on the link below

<https://forms.office.com/r/HHwFDvARd5>

--

Kelly Falvey (she/her)
[REDACTED]

Appendix D Yoder (2014) Self-Assessing Social and Emotional Instruction and Competencies: A Tool for Teachers

Yoder (2014) Self-Assessing Social and Emotional Instruction and Competencies:
A Tool for Teachers

Center on
GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS
at American Institutes for Research

Self-Assessing Social and Emotional Instruction and Competencies

■ A Tool for Teachers

FEBRUARY 2014



Self-Assessing Social and Emotional Instruction and Competencies: A Tool for Teachers

February 2014

Nicholas Yoder, Ph.D.

Center on
GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS
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Introduction

The educational community is increasingly focused on the development of students' social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies and the link between SEL and improved educational attainment and achievement. SEL is the process through which students develop the skills necessary to recognize and manage emotions, build relationships, solve interpersonal problems, and make effective and ethical decisions. The significance of SEL continues to grow in the context of policy debates concerning school improvement and individual student achievement. As a result, educators must understand how best to implement the most effective strategies to promote students' development of SEL competencies. They must understand, too, how to build and improve their own SEL competencies, because teachers' social and emotional competencies directly affect how they interact with students on both social and instructional levels.

This self-assessment tool is designed to help educators reflect upon (1) their current teaching practices that impact student SEL, and (2) their own SEL competencies to implement those teaching practices. Essentially, the aims of this tool are as follows:

- To enable teachers to reflect and self-assess on SEL as an integral part of high-quality teaching and learning
- To provide a broad measure of the teacher's ability to promote student SEL through instructional practices
- To provide a mechanism for teachers to reflect on their own SEL competencies and to consider what impact their capabilities have on the implementation of practices that support SEL
- To provide teachers with self-reflective feedback that can be used as part of their professional development plans or educator evaluations

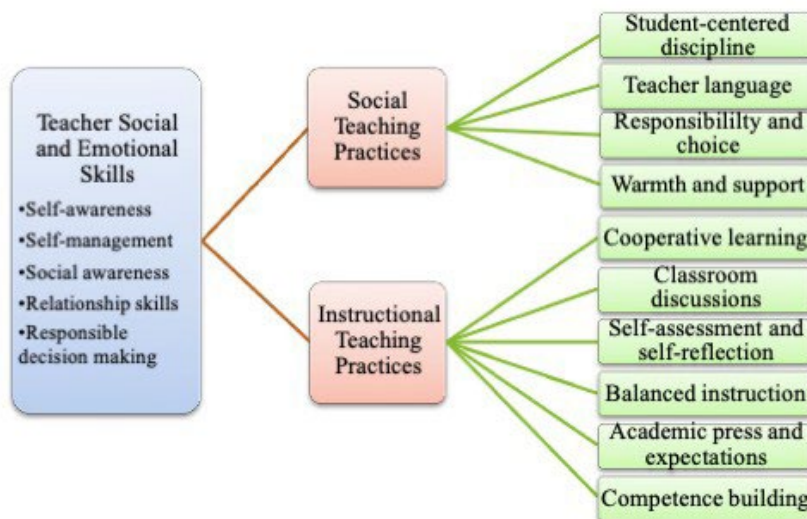
Development of Self-Assessing Social and Emotional Instruction and Competencies: A Tool for Teachers began in 2011 with the goal of characterizing and operationalizing teacher social and emotional competencies (SECs). Staff at American Institutes for Research (AIR) conducted an extensive literature review of teacher SEC and developed a broad definition of the five teacher social and emotional competencies (see Appendix B for the definitions). In addition, AIR staff interviewed leading experts in the field to obtain their thoughts regarding the definition and operationalization of teacher SEC. In the context of interviews with teachers in the Chicago and Washington, D.C. public schools, AIR staff also used the Critical Incident Technique to identify elements of teacher SEC that help teachers do their work. This work led to the development of the current tool, which has been reviewed by teacher SEC experts and state department of education staff whose focus is on social and emotional learning.

It should be noted that the tool's current version was developed to help teachers and school staff self-reflect on their social and emotional competencies and to identify professional learning experiences. The tool has not been empirically tested within a teacher evaluation system. If you would like to use this tool for evaluative purposes, we highly recommend that you pilot-test it within your state or district.

Overview

In a recent brief produced by the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL Center), titled [*Teaching the Whole Child: Instructional Practices That Support Social and Emotional Learning in Three Teacher Evaluation Frameworks*](#), the author identified 10 teaching practices that promote social, emotional, and academic skills. These 10 practices can further be divided into two types of teaching approaches: those that focus on *social* teaching practices and those that focus on *instructional* teaching practices (see Figure 1). The GTL Center brief describes how all 10 of these practices can facilitate the development of student social, emotional, and academic skills. In addition, the brief demonstrates how these practices align with professional teaching frameworks used in many educator evaluation systems. Definitions and examples of the 10 teaching practices are detailed in Appendix A and should be applied as baselines when using this tool.

Figure 1. Relationship Between Teacher SEL Skills and the SEL Teaching Practices



To implement these practices successfully, teachers must strengthen their own social and emotional skills. In order to model and encourage positive student interactions, teachers themselves need the social and emotional skills required to communicate effectively with students and to handle stressful situations that can occur in classrooms (Brackett et al., 2009). Teachers who are socially and emotionally competent develop supportive relationships with students, create activities that build on the strengths of students, and help students develop the basic social and emotional skills necessary to participate in classrooms (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). This tool focuses on five teacher social and emotional competencies, including self-awareness, self-management/emotion regulation, social awareness, relationship/social skills, and responsible decision making (see Appendix B for definitions of the teacher SECs).

How to Use This Tool

This tool is divided into the following three sections, with Section 1 and Section 2 each divided into two parts:

Section 1. Social Interaction Assessment

Part A. Self-assess implementation of teaching practices

Part B. Self-assess teachers' own SEL competencies

Section 2. Instructional Interaction Assessment

Part A. Self-assess implementation of teaching practices

Part B. Self-assess teachers' own SEL competencies

Section 3. Culminating Activities and Action Planning

Sections 1 and 2, Part A—Educators have the opportunity to self-assess on the teaching practices outlined in Figure 1 above. Section 1 focuses on social interactions, and Section 2 focuses on instructional interactions.

Ratings are based on *how often and how well* educators implement each practice on a scale of **1 to 5**, from “I do not implement this practice” to “I implement this practice extremely well.”

1—I do not implement this practice: I am not implementing these practices.

2—I struggle to implement this practice: I sometimes attempt to implement these practices, and when I do, I have a difficult time implementing them.

3—I implement this practice reasonably well: I attempt to implement these practices and do a reasonable job. I think with more practice and/or some support, I could implement these practices well.

4—I generally implement this practice well: I implement these practices well on a regular basis. These practices are not implemented perfectly, but my students benefit when I implement them.

5—I implement this practice extremely well: I consider these practices to be among my regular practices. I use these practices all of the time, and they are highly successful with my students.

Sections 1 and 2, Part B—Educators consider their own SECs and how their SECs influence their ability to implement (1) social teaching practices, and (2) instructional teaching practices. Teachers will rate their SECs on a four-point scale, from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 4 = “strongly agree”.

Section 3—Total scores are computed, and educators can reflect on their self-ratings with guidance from questions and points provided for further consideration.¹

¹ For additional resources and next steps, please see the professional learning module (PLM) on social and emotional learning on the GTL Center's website (<http://www.gtlcenter.org/>). This PLM is forthcoming.

Section 1: Social Interactions

Part A. Teaching Practices. Think about how often you implement a variety of practices that influence students' social, emotional, and academic skills. Think about how often you implement teaching practices that focus on positive social interactions. Using a scale of 1 to 5, rate how often and how well you use these practices.

- 1—I do not implement this practice 4—I generally implement this practice well
 2—I struggle to implement this practice 5—I implement this practice extremely well
 3—I implement this practice reasonably well

1. Student-Centered Discipline		
SEL Practices	Self-Rating	Comments
a. I have discussions with my students about how and why classroom procedures are implemented.		
b. I implement consequences that are logical to the rule that is broken.		
c. I am consistent in implementing classroom rules and consequences.		
d. I respond to misbehavior by considering pupil-specific social, affective, cognitive, and/or environmental factors that is associated with occurrence of the behavior.		
e. I hold class discussions with my students so we can solve class problems.		
f. I ask my students to reflect and redirect their behavior when they misbehave.		
g. I teach students strategies to handle the emotions that affect their learning (e.g., stress, frustration).		
h. I model strategies that will help students to monitor and regulate their behavior.		

2. Teacher Language		
SEL Instructional Practices	Self-Rating	Comments
a. I promote positive behaviors by encouraging my students when they display good social skills (e.g., acknowledge positive actions or steps to improve).		
b. I promote positive behaviors by encouraging my students when they display good work habits (e.g., acknowledge positive actions or steps to improve).		
c. I let my students know how their effort leads to positive results with specific affirmation.		

3. Responsibility and Choice		
SEL Instructional Practices	Self-Rating	Comments
a. I let my students help plan how they are going to learn in developmentally appropriate ways.		
b. I ask for student input when making decisions about how the classroom will operate in developmentally appropriate ways.		
c. I give students meaningful choices (with parameters) on what they can work on.		
d. I make sure students make the connection between their choices and potential consequences.		
e. I arrange experiences that allow my students to become responsible (e.g., classroom aids or jobs, peer tutoring, specific roles in group work) in developmentally appropriate ways.		

4. Warmth and Support		
SEL Instructional Practices	Self-Rating	Comments
a. I demonstrate to each student that I appreciate him or her as an individual (e.g., appropriate eye-contact, greeting each child by name).		
b. I use the interests and experiences of my students when teaching.		
c. I display to my students that I care about how and what they learn.		
d. I let my students know that it is okay to get answers wrong or think outside of the box (e.g., modeling, praising attempts with "good thinking").		
e. I check in with my students about academic and nonacademic concerns they might have.		
f. I follow up with my students when they have a problem or concern.		
g. I create structures in the classroom where my students feel included and appreciated (e.g., morning meetings, small moments, whole-class share outs).		

Part B. Teacher Social and Emotional Competencies. Now think about your own social and emotional competencies and how those competencies influence your ability to implement the *social interaction teaching practices*. Please use the scoring guide below to rate yourself on how your SEL skills influence your *social interaction teaching practices* with your students. Consider each statement and score yourself according to where each statement holds true for you.

1 = Strongly disagree. I have a difficult time with this practice. I know I do some of the things mentioned, but I do not necessarily find them relevant to my teaching.

2 = Disagree. I demonstrate some of these skills with my students. I think with more practice and/or more support, I could demonstrate these skills more to improve implementation of this practice.

3 = Agree. I am strong in this area. I know I do a good job modeling these skills for my students. I use these skills most of the time when I implement the instructional practices.

4 = Strongly agree. I am very strong in this area. I am able to use these skills when I am implementing the instructional practices.

Self-Awareness

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am aware of social teaching practices that I need to improve upon and grow professionally.	1	2	3	4
I can effectively implement social teaching practices with my students.	1	2	3	4
I am usually aware of how my emotions, culturally grounded beliefs, and background are precursors to my emotional reactions, and I understand how they impact my social teaching practices with my students.	1	2	3	4
I understand how student responses (positive and negative) affect my emotions and my behaviors during social teaching practices .	1	2	3	4
I am aware of how my cultural beliefs and background affect my social teaching practices with my students.	1	2	3	4

Self-Management/Emotion Regulation

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I continuously refine my personal goals about how I will best implement social teaching practices with my students.	1	2	3	4
I effectively use multiple strategies (e.g., breathing techniques and mindfulness) when I have a strong emotional reaction in the classroom (e.g., stress, anger) when implementing social teaching practices .	1	2	3	4
Through the effective management of my emotions (e.g., use of stress reduction techniques), I am better able to implement social teaching practices , use positive approaches to discipline, and develop a positive learning environment that is free from bias and prejudice.	1	2	3	4
I model behaviors (e.g., form guidelines, set boundaries) to help students learn to regulate emotions during social teaching practices .	1	2	3	4

Social Awareness

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
To effectively implement positive social teaching practices , I usually understand the perspectives of my students and can pay attention to their emotional cues during classroom interactions.	1	2	3	4
I try to understand why my students are or are not actively participating, and I am usually successful at providing my students the necessary skills to participate in the social teaching practices .	1	2	3	4
I successfully support positive emotions and respond to negative emotions during social teaching practices .	1	2	3	4
I address the commonalities and differences (e.g., racial, ethnic, cultural) that exist among students when I implement the social teaching practices .	1	2	3	4

Relationship/Social Skills

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I clearly communicate behavioral and academic expectations in a manner that addresses students' individual needs and strengths when implementing social teaching practices .	1	2	3	4
I am comfortable helping my students resolve interpersonal conflicts that come up during social teaching practices , and I have experienced success with this.	1	2	3	4
I use the social teaching practices to help form meaningful relationships with my students and cultivate their SEL skills, and I am usually successful at building meaningful relationships.	1	2	3	4
I use the social teaching practices to help cultivate my students' SEL skills, and I am usually successful at building their SEL skills.	1	2	3	4

Responsible Decision Making

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am effective at considering multiple forms of evidence, such as balancing the needs and the behaviors of my entire class, while implementing the social teaching practices .	1	2	3	4
I regularly include my students and/or collaborate with colleagues to solve problems that arise in the classroom related to the social teaching practices .	1	2	3	4
I stay focused and consistent when I implement social teaching practices .	1	2	3	4
When I implement the social teaching practices , I balance students' emotional needs and academic needs.	1	2	3	4

Section 2: Instructional Interactions

Part A. Teaching Practices. Think about how often you implement a variety of practices that influence students' social, emotional, and academic skills. Think about how often you implement teaching practices that focus on positive instructional interactions. Using a scale of 1 to 5, rate how often and how well you use these practices.

- 1—I do not implement this practice 4—I generally implement this practice well
 2—I struggle to implement this practice 5—I implement this practice extremely well
 3—I implement this practice reasonably well

5. Cooperative Learning/Group Learning		
SEL Instructional Practices	Self-Rating	Comments
a. I encourage my students to work with other students when they have trouble with an assignment.		
b. I create learning experiences in which my students depend on each other.		
c. I create learning experiences in which my students must apply positive social skills to be successful.		
d. I hold individuals and the group accountable for learning during small-group work.		
e. I provide opportunities for my students to share their work and receive feedback from each other.		
f. I provide space to allow my students to collaboratively process how they work together and monitor their progress toward their goal.		
g. I give students feedback on how they interact with and learn from others during cooperative learning experiences.		

6. Classroom Discussions		
SEL Instructional Practices	Self-Rating	Comments
a. I help my students identify how to listen (e.g., tracking the speaker, making mental connections).		
b. I help students learn how to respond to and learn from their peers' contributions during a discussion.		
c. I help my students learn how to effectively communicate their points of view (e.g., elaborate on their thinking).		
d. I hold in-depth discussions about content with my students.		
e. I ask my students to listen to and think about their peers' opinions and whether they agree with them.		

7. Self-Assessment and Self-Reflection		
SEL Instructional Practices	Self-Rating	Comments
a. I tell my students the learning goals for each lesson.		
b. I have my students reflect on their personal academic goals (e.g., make connections to the lesson goals).		
c. I provide my students strategies to analyze their work (e.g., using performance rubrics, peer reviews).		
d. I create opportunities for my students to monitor and reflect on their progress toward their learning goals.		
e. I create opportunities for my students to monitor and reflect on their social learning.		
f. I help my students develop strategies to make sure they meet their learning goals.		
g. I provide my students opportunities to reflect on their thinking and learning processes (e.g., using graphic organizers or journals).		
h. I ask my students to think together to provide feedback on the effectiveness of learning activities (e.g., debriefing tool, feedback form, simple survey).		

8. Balanced Instruction		
SEL Instructional Practices	Self-Rating	Comments
a. I use an appropriate balance between providing students opportunities to directly learn new information, as well as actively engage in the material.		
b. I have my students work on some extended projects that require at least one week to complete.		
c. I require my students to extend their thinking when they provide basic answers (e.g., ask multiple follow-up questions).		
d. I use multiple instructional strategies to keep my students engaged in learning.		
e. I make sure that my activities are not just fun, but represent one of the best ways for students to learn the content.		
f. I ask students to work on products (e.g., Web pages, skits, or posters) that are meant to be shared with multiple audiences (e.g., parents, community members).		

9. Academic Press and Expectations		
SEL Instructional Practices	Self-Rating	Comments
a. I give my students more challenging problems when they have mastered easier material.		
b. I ensure that my students feel responsible for accomplishing or failing to accomplish their academic work.		
c. I teach my students the connection between effort and results, and I expect my students to put in full effort.		
d. I give my students work that has more than one right answer and ask them to defend their answers		
e. I support my students socially and emotionally while challenging them with new or higher levels of learning.		

10. Competence Building—Modeling, Practicing, Feedback, and Coaching		
SEL Instructional Practices	Self-Rating	Comments
a. I model and practice new learning with my students before asking them to perform independently.		
b. I demonstrate a concept using a variety of tools (e.g., modeling, demonstrations, mini-lessons, or texts).		
c. I conference with my students on ways to make their work better.		
d. I use multiple strategies with my students until they have figured out how to solve the problem (i.e., graphic organizers, leveled text, checklist, verbal cues).		
e. I give my students frequent specific feedback to let them know how they are doing in my class (academically and socially).		
f. I have my students correct their mistakes (academic or social) based on feedback from me or their peers.		
g. I provide specific feedback that is focused on the academic task at hand.		
h. I use student misconceptions to guide my instruction without singling the student out.		

Part B. Teacher Social and Emotional Competency. Now think about your own social and emotional competencies and how those competencies influence your ability to implement the *instructional interaction teaching practices*. Please use the scoring guide below to rate how your SEL skills influence your *instructional interaction teaching practices* with your students. Consider each statement and score yourself according to where each statement holds true for you.

1 = Strongly disagree. I have a difficult time with this practice. I know I do some of the things mentioned, but I do not necessarily find them relevant to my teaching.

2 = Disagree. I demonstrate some of these skills with my students. I think with more practice and/or more support, I could demonstrate these skills more to improve implementation of this practice.

3 = Agree. I am strong in this area. I know I do a good job modeling these skills for my students. I use these skills most of the time when I implement the instructional practices.

4 = Strongly agree. I am very strong in this area. I am able to use these skills when I am implementing the instructional practices.

Self-Awareness

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am aware of instructional teaching practices that I need to improve in order to grow professionally.	1	2	3	4
I can effectively implement instructional teaching practices with my students.	1	2	3	4
I am usually aware of how my emotions, culturally grounded beliefs, and background are precursors to my emotional reactions, and I understand how they impact my instructional teaching practices with my students.	1	2	3	4
I understand how student responses (positive and negative) affect my emotions and my behaviors during instructional teaching practices .	1	2	3	4
I am aware of how my cultural beliefs and background affect my instructional teaching practices with my students.	1	2	3	4

Self-Management/Emotion Regulation

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I continuously refine my personal goals about how I will best implement instructional teaching practices with my students.	1	2	3	4
I effectively use multiple strategies (e.g., breathing techniques and mindfulness) when I have a strong emotional reaction in the classroom (e.g., stress, anger) when implementing instructional practices .	1	2	3	4
Through the effective management of my emotions (e.g., use of stress reduction techniques), I am better able to implement instructional teaching practices and to develop a positive learning environment that is free from bias and prejudice.	1	2	3	4
I model behaviors (e.g., form guidelines, set boundaries) to help students learn to regulate emotions during instructional practices .	1	2	3	4

Social Awareness

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
To effectively implement positive instructional teaching practices , I usually understand the perspectives of my students and can pay attention to their emotional cues during classroom interactions.	1	2	3	4
I try to understand why my students are or are not actively participating, and I am usually successful at providing my students the necessary skills to participate in the instructional teaching practices .	1	2	3	4
I successfully support positive emotions and respond to negative emotions during instructional teaching practices .	1	2	3	4
I address the commonalities and differences (e.g., racial, ethnic, cultural) that exist among students when I implement the instructional teaching practices .	1	2	3	4

Relationship/Social Skills

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I clearly communicate behavioral and academic expectations in a manner that addresses students' individual needs and strengths when implementing instructional teaching practices .	1	2	3	4
I am comfortable helping my students resolve interpersonal conflicts that come up during instructional teaching practices , and I have experienced success with this.	1	2	3	4
I use the instructional teaching practices to help form meaningful relationships with my students and cultivate their SEL skills, and I am usually successful at building meaningful relationships.	1	2	3	4
I use the instructional teaching practices to help cultivate my students' SEL skills, and I am usually successful at building their SEL skills.	1	2	3	4

Responsible Decision Making

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am effective at considering multiple forms of evidence, such as balancing the needs and the behaviors of my entire class, while implementing the instructional teaching practices .	1	2	3	4
I regularly include my students and/or collaborate with colleagues to solve problems that arise in the classroom related to the instructional teaching practices .	1	2	3	4
I stay focused and consistent when I implement instructional teaching practices .	1	2	3	4
When I implement the instructional teaching practices , I balance awareness of students' emotional needs and academic needs.	1	2	3	4

Section 3. Scoring, Reflection, and Action Planning

1. In the box below, indicate the score you received for each of the 10 instructional practices. In order to create a final score for each practice, take the average of the scores under each practice.

Instructional Practice	Your Score/Total Possible Points	Average Score
1. Student-Centered Discipline	_____/35	
2. Teacher Language	_____/15	
3. Responsibility and Choice	_____/25	
4. Warmth and Support	_____/35	
5. Cooperative Learning	_____/35	
6. Classroom Discussions	_____/25	
7. Self-Reflection and Self-Assessment	_____/40	
8. Balanced Instruction	_____/30	
9. Academic Press and Expectations	_____/25	
10. Competence Building	_____/40	

2. Reflect on your scores.

1. On which SEL practices did you score the highest? Why?	
2. On which SEL practice did you score the lowest? Why?	
3. What evidence do you have to support the self-rating you selected for your highest SEL practice? Your lowest SEL practice?	
4. How do these behaviors and practices look in your classroom?	
5. How do you think your students would rate you?	
6. How does your school culture affect your self-rating?	
7. What professional learning experiences could facilitate improvement in your lowest SEL practices?	
8. What can you do to ensure that you are implementing these practices fully?	

3. In the box below, indicate the score you received for each of the teacher social and emotional competencies. To create a final score, take the average of each competency for each set of teaching practices.

Social and Emotional Competency	Your Score/Total Possible Points	Average Score
1. Self-Awareness	____/40	
2. Self-Management/Emotion Regulation	____/32	
3. Social Awareness	____/32	
4. Relationship Skills	____/32	
5. Responsible Decision Making	____/32	

4. Reflect on your scores.

1. On which social and emotional competency did you score the highest?	
2. On which social and emotional competency did you score the lowest?	
3. What evidence do you have to support the self-rating you selected? What skills do you possess that support the self-rating you received?	
4. What professional learning experiences could facilitate improvement in areas in which you scored lowest?	

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Appendix A. Ten Teaching Practices That Promote SEL

Social Teaching Practices

1. Student-Centered Discipline

Student-centered discipline refers to the types of classroom management strategies teachers use in their classrooms. In order to be effective at student-centered discipline, teachers need to use disciplinary strategies that are developmentally appropriate for their students and that motivate students to want to behave in the classroom. Such discipline occurs when students have opportunities to be self-directive and have some say in what happens in the classroom. Teachers should not attempt to overmanage their students, nor should they use punitive measures to get students to behave. Furthermore, students and teachers should develop shared norms and values in the classroom. This strategy allows students to connect the rules to the overarching vision of how the classroom is run and increases student buy-in.

Similarly, teachers should enact proactive classroom management strategies (compared with reactive strategies). This approach is evident when teachers use management strategies consistently, and those strategies are related to the norms and visions of the classroom. If a student happens to break a rule, the consequences should be logical in relation to the rule that was broken. For example, if a student pushes another student in line, that student should have to line up last for the rest of the week rather than lose gym or recess for the week, a consequence that is not related to the incident. Through the development of these consistent and logical rules and consequences, students begin to learn how to regulate their own behavior and problem-solve difficult situations that arise in the classroom. Programs and scholars that discuss student-centered discipline include Caring School Communities; Raising Healthy Children; Responsive Classroom; Christenson and Havsy (2004); Hawkins, Smith, and Catalano (2004); Johnson and Johnson (2004); and McCombs (2004).

2. Teacher Language

Teacher language refers to how the teachers talk to students. Teachers should encourage student effort and work, restating what the student did and what that student needs to do in order to improve. For example, teacher language should not be simply praise (e.g., “You did a great job”) but should encourage students (e.g., “I see you worked hard on your math paper. When you really think about your work, and when you explain your thinking, you get more correct answers”). In addition, teacher language should encourage students how to monitor and regulate their own behavior, not just tell students how to behave (e.g., “What strategies have we learned when we come across a problem that we are not sure how to do?”). Programs and scholars that discuss teacher language include Responsive Classroom and Elias (2004).

3. Responsibility and Choice

Responsibility and choice refer to the degree to which teachers allow students to make responsible decisions about their work in their classroom. The teacher creates a classroom environment where democratic norms are put into place and where students provide meaningful input into the development of the norms and procedures of the classroom as well as the academic

content or how the academic content is learned. Democratic norms do not mean that everything the students say gets done, but the teacher provides structures so that the students have a voice in the classroom. Teachers give students controlled and meaningful choices. In other words, teachers should not give students a “free for all” but provide specific choices students can select from during lessons and activities, in which students are held accountable for their decisions.

Other ways to get students to feel responsible in the classroom are peer tutoring, cross-age tutoring, or participating in a service-learning or community service program. When students extend their learning to help others, they often feel more responsible in the classroom. Programs and scholars that discuss responsibility and choice include Caring School Communities, Responsive Classroom, Tribes Learning Community, and Hawkins et al. (2004).

4. Warmth and Support (Teacher and Peer)

Warmth and support refers to the academic and social support that students receive from their teacher and from their peers. The teacher creates a classroom where the students know that teachers care about them. Teachers can demonstrate that they care about their students by asking students questions (academic and nonacademic), following up with students when they have a problem or concern, providing the teacher’s own anecdotes or stories, and acting in ways in which students know that taking risks and asking questions are safe in the classroom. In addition, teachers need to create structures in the classroom where students feel included and appreciated by peers and teachers. Teachers can do this through morning meetings, small moments throughout the day or class, or projects in which students get a chance to share what they learn. Programs and scholars that discuss warmth and support include Caring School Communities, Responsive Classrooms, Tribes Learning Community, Christenson and Haysy (2004), Hawkins et al. (2004), and McCombs (2004).

Instructional Teaching Practices

5. Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning refers to a specific instructional task in which teachers have students work together toward a collective goal. Teachers ask students to do more than group work; students are actively working with their peers around content in a meaningful way. To implement cooperative learning effectively, teachers include five basic elements: (1) positive interdependence, (2) individual accountability, (3) promoting one another’s successes, (4) applying interpersonal and social skills, and (5) group processing (the group discusses progress toward achieving a goal). When implementing cooperative learning, teachers should have an element that requires collective accountability as well as individual accountability to ensure that everyone participates in the learning task. In order for this to have an impact on student learning, as well as social and emotional skills, students need to collaboratively process how they work together and monitor their progress toward their goal. Programs and scholars that discuss cooperative learning include Caring School Communities; Raising Healthy Children; Steps to Respect; Tribes Learning Community; Elias et al. (1997); Hawkins et al. (2004); Johnson and Johnson (2004); and Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, and Walberg (2004).

6. Classroom Discussions

Classroom discussions refer to conversations students and teachers have around content. During classroom discussions, teachers ask more open-ended questions and ask students to elaborate on their own thinking and on the thinking of their peers. When classroom discussions are done well, students and teachers are constantly building upon each other's thoughts, and most of the dialogue is student driven. In order to have effective classroom discussions, teachers should develop students' communication skills. More specifically, teachers ensure that students learn how to extend their own thinking and expand on the thinking of their classmates. Students need to be able to listen attentively and pick out the main ideas of what classmates are saying. Teachers also must make sure that students have enough content knowledge in order to do this, in addition to having the skills necessary to hold a substantive discussion. Programs and scholars that discuss classroom discussions include Caring School Communities, Raising Healthy Children, Tribes Learning Community, Elias (2004), and Elias et al. (1997).

7. Self-Reflection and Self-Assessment

Self-reflection and self-assessment are instructional tasks whereby teachers ask students to actively think about their own work. In order for students to self-reflect on their work, teachers should ask them to assess their own work. This does not mean that teachers simply provide the answers and students look to see if they got the answer right or wrong. Students need to learn how to assess more rigorous work against performance standards that have either been provided by the teacher or co-created in the classroom. The process should not stop there, however; students also need to think about how to improve their work on the basis of their self-assessment. In order to assist students with this process, teachers need to develop goals and priorities with students. If students do not know what they are working toward, how to accomplish those goals, or when those goals have been accomplished, students will be less invested in the classroom. Along with goal setting, students need to learn how to monitor the progress toward meeting their goals. In addition, when students self-reflect, they also need to learn when and how to seek help and where to search for resources. Programs and scholars that discuss self-reflection and self-assessment include Caring School Communities, Steps to Respect, Tribes Learning Community, Elias (2004), and Elias et al. (1997).

8. Balanced Instruction

Balanced instruction refers to teachers using an appropriate balance between active instruction and direct instruction, as well as the appropriate balance between individual and collaborative learning. Through balanced instruction, teachers provide students opportunities to directly learn about the material as well as engage with the material. Balance, however, does not mean an equal split between the types of instruction. Most programs and SEL scholars promote active forms of instruction in which students interact with the content in multiple ways, including games, play, projects, and other types. Although active forms of instruction are typically engaging for students, these activities should not just be for fun; teachers should use strategies that represent one of the best ways for students to learn and engage with the content.

An example of an active form of instruction is project-based learning. In project-based learning, students are actively involved in solving a problem, which could be completed collaboratively or

independently. Even during independent projects, students typically have to rely on others to find information. During the project, students should plan, monitor, and reflect on their progress toward completion. Programs and scholars that discuss balanced instruction include Caring School Communities; Christenson and Havsy (2004); Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger (2011); Elias (2004); Elias et al. (1997); Hawkins et al. (2004); and Zins et al. (2004).

9. Academic Press and Expectations

Academic press refers to a teacher's implementation of meaningful and challenging work, and academic expectations focus on the teacher's belief that all students can and will succeed. Students should sense that academics are extremely important, that the teacher wants them to succeed, and that they have to exert effort in challenging work in order to succeed. However, this academic rigor should not cause teachers to be too strict with their students. Teachers should ensure that students feel pressure to succeed, as well as feel responsible for accomplishing or failing to accomplish their academic work. In order to be successful with this practice, teachers must know what their students are capable of doing academically and how they will emotionally respond to challenging work. Programs and scholars that discuss academic press and expectations include Caring School Communities, Tribes Learning Community, Christenson and Havsy (2004), McCombs (2004), and Zins et al. (2004).

10. Competence Building—Modeling, Practicing, Feedback, Coaching

Competence building occurs when teachers help develop social and emotional competencies systematically through the typical instructional cycle: goals/objectives of the lesson, introduction to new material/modeling, group and individual practice, and conclusion/reflection. Each part of the instructional cycle helps reinforce particular social and emotional competencies, as long as the teacher integrates them into the lesson. Throughout the lesson, the teacher should model prosocial behavior (i.e., positive relationship skills) to the students. When students are participating in group work, the teacher is encouraging positive social behaviors and coaching students on how to use positive social behavior when they practice their prosocial skills in a group setting. The teacher also provides feedback to students on how they are interacting with their peers and how they are learning content. If problems arise between students in guided practice or if problems arise with content, the teacher guides the students through problem-solving and conflict-resolution strategies. Programs and scholars that discuss competence building include Responsive Classroom, Raising Healthy Children, Steps to Respect, Christenson and Havsy (2004), Elias (2004), Elias et al. (1997), McCombs (2004), and Zins et al. (2004).

Appendix B. Teacher Social and Emotional Competencies

1. Self-Awareness

Self-awareness refers to the ability to assess one's feelings, interests, values, and strengths accurately, and to maintain a well-grounded sense of self-efficacy (Payton et al., 2008). In the classroom context, teachers are not only required to understand one's own attitudes and opinions, but also are expected to recognize the limitations of self and how different self-aspects influence their teaching. Socially and emotionally competent teachers understand that their behaviors are influenced by multiple personal factors, such as their background experiences, personality, emotions, knowledge base, opinions, and attitudes. They also are aware that their students' behaviors are influenced by equally distinct personal factors and that teachers must bridge differences with their students to build strong interpersonal relations and engage students in learning.

2. Self-Management/Emotion Regulation

Emotion regulation is often defined as the ability to manage emotional arousal successfully and possessing the skill to change emotions, including the valence, intensity, or time course of the emotions (Gross, 1998). Although the expressions of positive and negative emotion are both regulated, the need for managing emotion is the greatest when negatively valenced emotions occur (Barrett, Gross, Christensen, & Benvenuto, 2001). Teachers, like other adults, do not experience the same emotion under the same social situation and vary in their ability to regulate such emotion. For example, one teacher may be furious and show anger when a child does not do the work, while another teacher may feel sad but does not display it. They also may use different strategies when regulating their emotions. Because teachers are expected to regulate their own emotions and emotional displays as well as the emotions of their students constantly, teachers with higher emotional regulation capacity may be better equipped to handle the emotion-provoking demands of teaching than teachers with a lower capacity for doing so.

Socially and emotionally competent teachers can identify their own positive and negative emotions in interactions with students, parents, and colleagues, and manage their emotions as necessary to promote classroom differences. In particular, socially and emotionally competent teachers recognize that perspectives differ according to age, gender, and social, ethnic, educational, and economic backgrounds. They recognize and appreciate the commonalities and uniqueness that exist among their students and colleagues. They manage students' prosocial behaviors and focus on learning. They model behaviors to help students regulate their own emotions, establishing guidelines and setting boundaries for students to enable them to do this.

3. Social-Awareness

Social awareness refers to the awareness of others, including social perspective taking (see also Zins & Elias, 2006). This construct involves viewing the world from another's perspective (Selman, 1971) and making inferences about other people, including their capacities, attitudes, expectations, feelings, and potential reactions. Social awareness refers to one's ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others and to recognize and appreciate individual and group similarities and differences. In particular, socially and emotionally competent teachers recognize

that perspectives differ according to age, gender, and social/ethnic/educational/economic backgrounds. They recognize and appreciate the commonalities and uniqueness that exist among their students and colleagues.

4. Relationship/Social Skills

Interpersonal skills are another important dimension of SEL. Positive social interactions flow from strong interpersonal skills. Social skills are a specific class of behaviors that an individual exhibits to complete a social task successfully (Gresham & Elliott, 2008). They are often manifested in prosocial behaviors, cooperation, empathic responses, social engagement, respect for others, as well as the absence of problematic interactions (Cooper & Farran, 1991; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998). Socially and emotionally competent teachers establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with students, parents, and colleagues. They are able to prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflict between themselves and students, parents, and colleagues, and deal with conflict among students, through exhibiting prosocial, cooperative behaviors and respecting and being empathic to others.

5. Responsible Decision Making

Decision making is a process in which an individual scans an array of options and tries to decide which option is the best way to produce some desired outcome. Teachers must often make split-second, in-the-moment decisions that govern their interactions with students and reactions to other factors inside and outside of the classroom. Decision making is a multistep process, which in classrooms is often enacted in the moment as teachers consider and process clues, draw information from long-term memory, and make a “decision” that is “enacted” through words and behavior. One influence of teachers’ decision-making process is their ability to “attend to the needs and behaviors of an entire classroom while also trying to remember and implement a lesson plan” (Feldon, 2007, p.123). Feldon’s analysis of several studies of veteran and novice teachers suggests that veteran teachers retain the capacity to filter out extraneous stimuli and focus on pertinent social cues (Swanson, O’Connor, & Cooney, 1990). Socially and emotionally competent teachers use multiple forms of evidence to make decisions about instruction, classroom management, and interactions with students, students’ parents, and colleagues. They objectively consider the well-being, needs, and academic goals of individual students and of their class(es) as a whole, and they balance awareness of students’ emotional and academic needs when making both long-term plans and in-the-moment decisions.

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1058_02/14

Appendix E Research Participant Consent Form

Research Participant Consent Form

Informed Consent Form



Sacred Heart
UNIVERSITY

The Isabelle Farrington College of Education

Title of Research Study: Supporting Early Career Teachers in their Development of Culturally Inclusive Social Emotional Teaching Practices: An Improvement Science Dissertation in Practice

Researcher:	Kelly Falvey	
	Phone: (203) 687-0017	Email: falveyk5@sacredheart.edu
Faculty Sponsor:	T. Lee Morgan, Ph.D.	
	Phone: 203.365.4774	E-mail: morgant2@sacredheart.edu

Study Site: School names withheld for confidentiality

Purpose

You are being asked to participate in a research study. By doing this research we hope to learn about how to effectively support Early Career Teachers in their development of culturally inclusive Social Emotional instructional practices.

Procedures

If you consent to be part of this research study, you will be asked to engage in the following activities:

- Initial Interview:
 - Participants will engage in an initial interview that investigates the educators' awareness and application of culturally inclusive social emotional teaching practices along with their insights into supportive structures that facilitate the development of these practices. At this initial meeting, the primary researcher will also outline the intervention process. Responses will be analyzed through first and second level coding for themes in data.
- Social Emotional Practices:
 - Participants will select one of the three structured practices provided in the list of options. Participants will implement their selected practice weekly over a time period of four weeks.
 - Following each implementation, the participant will self-report on their perceptions using the reflection guide. The reflection guide will be shared with the researcher and reviewed weekly. Participants are able to discuss their experience with the intervention process weekly by contacting the researcher.
 - Participants may change or try the other intervention options during the 4-week time period, but the researcher encourages participants to remain consistent in their application. The researcher will analyze and code the participants' recorded reflections for themes.
- Exit Interview:
 - Participants will participate in an exit interview that evaluates the extent to which the selected strategies and reflective tool supported their ability to support students' growth in cultural inclusivity. (30-45 minutes)

Voluntary Participation

Participating in this research study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You may choose not to participate in interviews for any reason without penalty. If you choose to participate in the study, you do not have to answer any question during the interview if you do not want to answer. You will be audio recorded during the interview process. If you do not want to be audio recorded, please inform the researcher, and only hand-written notes will be taken during the interview.

Risks or Discomforts

The researcher has taken steps to minimize the risks of this study. Even so, as a participant, you may still experience some risks related to feelings that may be evoked from questions being asked in the interview. The study may include other risks that are unknown at this time. If, however, you feel embarrassed or uncomfortable at any time to answer a question, you may decline to answer the question or end the interview. You may also choose to withdraw from the study. There will be no penalty, no negative consequences, and no removal of other benefits to which you are entitled if you decline to answer any question, end the interview, or withdraw from the study.

Confidentiality

The researcher will securely store all identifiable data collected (participant names and contact information) to keep your information safe throughout this study. Your individual identity will be kept confidential when information is presented or published about this study. Audio recordings of interviews will have identifiable data removed before storage and will be destroyed three years after completion of the study.

The research records are held by researchers at an academic institution; therefore, the records may be subject to disclosure if required by law. The research information may be shared with federal agencies or local committees who are responsible for protecting research participants, including individuals on behalf the Sacred Heart University.

Summary

Data from the interviews and reflections will be analyzed to identify themes related to the development and support of culturally inclusive Social Emotional Learning teaching practices. These findings will be presented at Sacred Heart University in a dissertation defense and possibly be published or shared at future conferences. All data will be presented in a way to ensure the confidentiality of all participants and no names will be attached to any specific data. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research.

If you have any questions about this research study, you may contact me, Kelly Falvey, at falveyk5@sacredheart.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research study, you can contact the Sacred Heart University Institutional Review Board at alpfl@sacredheart.edu or 203-396-8241.

Options for Participation

Please initial your choice for the options below:

_____ The researchers may audio record me during the interview process of this study.

_____ The researchers may NOT audio record me during the interview process of this study.

Please take all the time you need to read through this document and decide whether you would like to participate in this research study.

If you agree to participate in this research study, please sign below. You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

Participant Signature

Date

Participant Printed Name

Kelly Falvey

Researcher Signature

2/17/22

Date

Appendix F Inquiry Session Question Protocol

Inquiry Session Question Protocol

Culturally Inclusive Definition:

For the purpose of this study, the following definition published by the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia will guide discussions about cultural inclusive environments:

A culturally inclusive environment requires mutual respect, effective relationships, clear communication, explicit understandings about expectations and critical self-reflection. In an inclusive environment, people of all cultural orientations can:

- freely express who they are, their own opinions and points of view
- fully participate in teaching, learning, work and social activities
- feel safe from abuse, harassment or unfair criticism

A. Early Career Teaching Context

- a. Please tell me about the beginning of your teaching career.
 - i.Probe- How long have you been teaching?
 - ii.Probe- Describe your Educator Preparation Program or pathway to certification.
 - iii.Probe- How has teaching matched or differed from your preconceptions?

B. Early Career Teacher Support

- a. How are you supported as a developing educator in Year ____?
 - i.Probe- Describe supportive structures that you find helpful to your development as a teacher
 - ii.Probe- In what areas of teaching could you use greater support?

C. Specific SEL Instructional Practice

- a. For this purpose of this study's intervention, student discourse is one way of promoting responsibility and choice in the classroom. How do you promote dialogue in the classroom that is inclusive of all students' voices?
 - i.Probe- Provide recent attempts to incorporate "experiences that allow...students to become responsible (e.g., classroom aids or jobs, peer tutoring, specific roles in group work) in developmentally appropriate ways" (Yoder, 2014)
 - ii.Probe- What would your students say about opportunities for responsibility and choice in your classroom?

D. Culturally Inclusive Social Emotional Practices

- a. How do you integrate Social Emotional Learning into your classroom?
 - i.Probe- What do you intentionally incorporate to foster a culturally inclusive classroom?
 - ii.Probe- Describe the professional learning and/or supports that you've received related to culturally responsive practices and inclusivity.
- b. How would you describe the cultural inclusivity of your current classes?

E. Closure

- a. Is there anything else you think is important to share about supporting teachers at the start of their careers that we have not talked about?
 - i.Summarize
 - ii.Thank the participant
 - iii.Questions about research procedures

Appendix G Framework for Culturally Inclusive Classroom Discourse

Framework for Culturally Inclusive Classroom Discourse

Contact: [REDACTED]

Self-Assessment & Reflection Guide

The purpose of the guiding questions below is to uncover how Early Career Teachers and students experience the integration of culturally inclusive social-emotional teaching practices in the classroom.

- Step 1- After implementing the selected practice, use the rubric to self-score your experience facilitating culturally inclusive discourse in the classroom. The reflection guide must be completed once per week for a total of four submitted reflections.
- Step 2- After implementing the selected practice, use the prompts to explore your perceptions and the experiences of the learners in your classroom. Please be as detailed as possible.

SELF-SCORED RUBRIC

Date of Reflection 1:

	Effective (5)	Approaching (3-4)	Emerging (1-2)
Teacher Questioning Score ____	Universal questions (level three) are open-ended questions that are raised by ideas in the text or topic. They are intended to provoke a discussion of an abstract idea or issue	Inferential questions (level two) can be answered through analysis and interpretation of specific parts of the text or topic	Factual questions (level one) can be answered explicitly by facts contained in the text or topic
Teacher Delivery Score ____	Establishes clear expectations for communication and/or collaboration among students with protocols and tools, holding most students accountable for participation and the content of their conversations	Establishes clear expectations for communication and/or collaboration among students, but only some students are held accountable	Does not establish clear expectations for communication and/or collaboration among students
Student Interaction Score ____	Students interact appropriately in diverse groups (e.g., one-on-one, small-group or whole class settings) and attempt to understand others' perspectives by describing new insight(s) from the group's discourse	Some students interact appropriately in diverse groups and attempt to understand others' perspectives by describing new insight(s) from the group's discourse	Few students interact appropriately in diverse groups and attempt to understand others' perspectives by describing new insight(s) from the group's discourse
Student Communication Score ____	Students effectively communicate for the intended purpose/audience in the target language and ask peers questions, expand on other's thinking and support claims with evidence	Some students effectively communicate for the intended purpose/audience in the target language and ask peers questions, expand on other's thinking and support claims with evidence	Few students effectively communicate for the intended purpose/audience in the target language and ask peers questions, expand on other's thinking and support claims with evidence

This rubric is adapted from the following sources:

Facing History and Ourselves (2021). Levels of questions.
<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/levels-questions>

Denver Public Schools. (n.d.) Framework for effective teaching.
http://thecommons.dpsk12.org/cms/lib/CO01900837/Centricity/Domain/103/LEAPFramework_2021.pdf

Contact: [REDACTED]

REFLECTION 1 of 4 / Date:

1. Please check the practice that you implemented this week.
_____ Practice A _____ Practice B _____ Practice C
2. How many points did you self-score on the rubric this week? ____/20 points
3. What did you think, feel, and observe about the planning and implementation of this practice?
4. What did the students say or do as they engaged in the practice?
5. What would you change about the implementation of the practice or rubric and why?
6. Referring to the rubric categories, where did you witness the most growth this week and why?

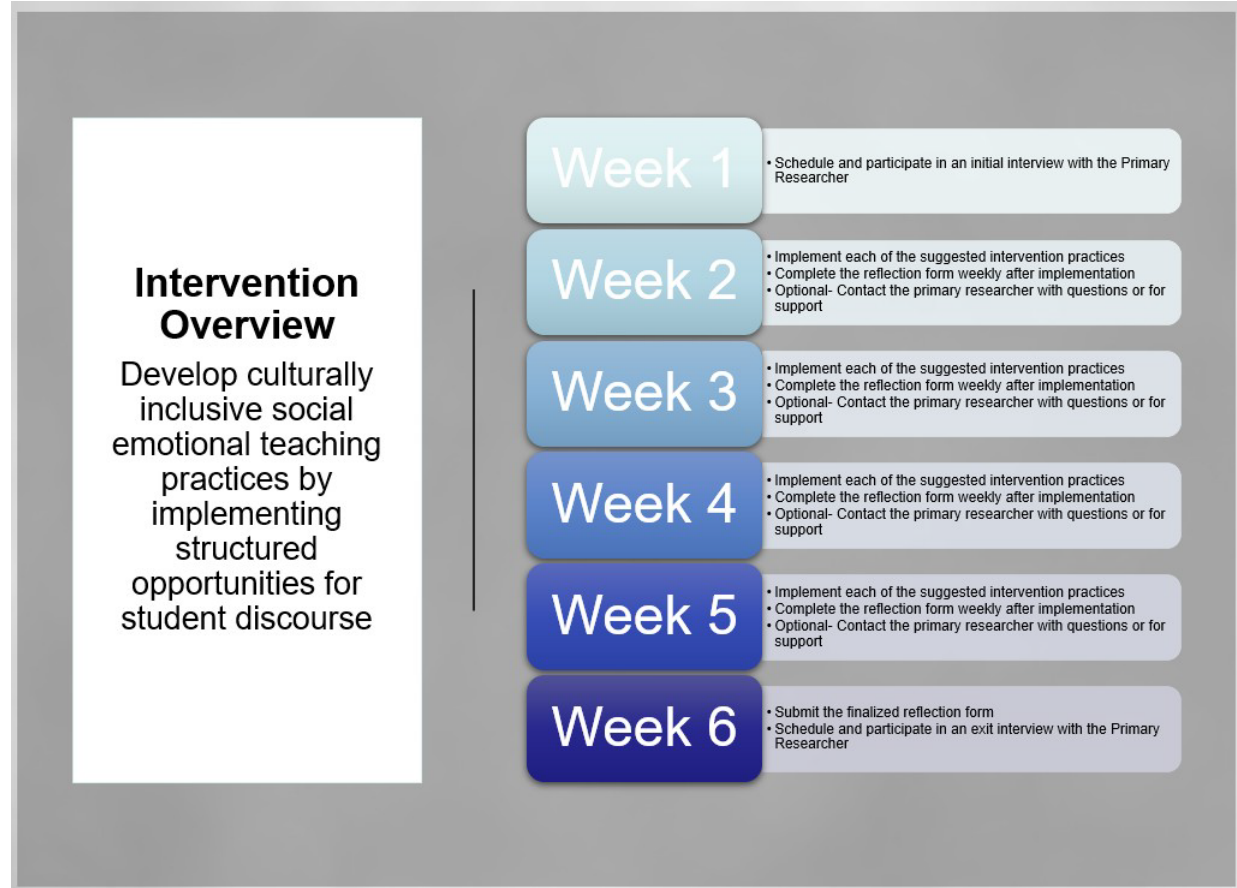
Appendix H Research Participant Guidelines

Research Participant Guidelines

INTERVENTION CONTEXT

Yoder's (2014) social teaching practice of "Responsibility and Choice" is the focus for this study on the development of culturally inclusive Social Emotional teaching practices amongst Early career teachers. More specifically, the Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubric (2021) indicator of "students have opportunities to engage in discourse" is an authentic way for the teacher to promote responsibility and choice in the classroom while fostering student voice equitably. Early career teachers in Connecticut will note that student discourse, responsibility, and choice connect to The Connecticut Common Core of Teaching (CCT) Rubric for Effective Teaching (2017). Specifically, Domain 1: Classroom Environment, Student Engagement and Commitment to Learning through "High expectations for student learning" and the attributes of independence and differentiation in Domain 3: Instruction for Active Learning.

PARTICIPANT PROCESS



Appendix I Culturally Inclusive Classroom Discourse Instructional Strategies

Culturally Inclusive Classroom Discourse Instructional Strategies

Intervention Practices*		
*Implement ONE practice per week for 4 weeks. The researcher suggests starting with Practice A and building toward Practices B and C. Discuss with the researcher if you prefer to change the selection during the 4 weeks.		
Practice A: Structuring Discussion Overview: This practice aims to support students in cooperatively solving problems or examining a situation.	Practice B: Structuring Responses Overview: This practice aims to assist students in the types of questions and phrases they can use to respond to their peers in ways that build discourse.	Practice C: Eliciting Diverse Perspectives Overview: This practice aims to provide a structure for all students to share their interpretations and listen to the interpretations of their peers
Time: ~12 minutes	Time: ~12 minutes	Time: ~12 minutes
Culturally Inclusive SEL Focus: Relationship Skills through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Communicating effectively” “Practicing teamwork and collaborative problem-solving” “Resolving conflicts constructively” (CASEL, 2022) 	Culturally Inclusive SEL Focus: Self-Awareness through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Demonstrating honesty and integrity” “Linking feelings, values, and thoughts” “Examining prejudices and biases” (CASEL, 2022) 	Culturally Inclusive SEL Focus: Social Awareness through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Demonstrating empathy and compassion” “Showing concern for the feelings of others” “Recognizing situational demands” (CASEL, 2022)
INSTRUCTIONS: Adapted from Kagan Cooperative Learning “Numbered Heads Together” <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Team members number off. Pose a problem or question with an amount of time to think. Students write their answers. Students stand up when finished writing. Teams share their ideas in numerical order. Teams discuss their ideas with the goal of finding a commonality or consensus. Tour the room and note responses, pausing the structure if the class needs further instruction. The team sits when a consensus is reached, and all team members understand the answer. (Alternative- the group does not stand but raises hand when a consensus is reached) The teacher calls on the same number to share every team’s response. 	INSTRUCTIONS: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> After a class discussion takes place, organize students in pairs or teams of 3 or 4. Randomly assign each student at least one of the following responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have another way of looking at this topic... I understand the point about -----, but I view this differently because... The evidence that I have suggests... about this topic. I would like to better understand... about this topic. A pattern that I noticed in the discussion is... Before this discussion, I had not thought about... Explain that each team will debrief about the class discussion using their prompt to begin their response. (Alternative- Students could exchange response starters or questions as the discourse continues) Provide a specific amount of time for each student to respond using their prompt. Direct students when the time is up and direct the following students when to begin and end. Tour the room to note the responses of students. 	INSTRUCTIONS: Adapted from Facing History’s Save the Last Word for Me <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Select a source (audio, written, visual, etc.) that students will analyze during the lesson. Ask students to select a word, phrase, or sentence that they personally connected with from the source. (Suggestion- provide an example from one of a preferred source) Provide students with time to pre-write explanations for their selections. In small groups, each student numbers off. The teacher identifies which number will begin sharing their response for a specified time (1 minute). When the time limit is reached, the students discuss in order by building on previous ideas and connecting to their original ideas. It is important that each student use the allotted time and no other group members speak until it is their turn. The student who started the round gets to “have the last word” and respond to the previous perspectives. Repeat this process until everyone has had the chance to start the round and end the round. Debrief with the by having students complete an exit ticket describing one new way of looking at the source based on their group’s discourse.
Educator Support and Reflection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Video of practice Contact researcher, if needed Please type responses on Reflection Guide after implementation 	Educator Support and Reflection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource for extended learning on civil discourse Contact researcher, if needed Please type responses on Reflection Guide after implementation 	Educator Support and Reflection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource for extended learning on civil discourse Contact researcher, if needed Please type responses on Reflection Guide after implementation

Appendix J Follow-Up Inquiry Question Protocol

Follow-Up Inquiry Question Protocol

- A. Early Career Teaching Context
 - a. How have you and your students been doing since the initial interview?
 - i.Probe- Have any major events in or out of school impacted you or your teaching?
 - ii.Probe- Describe any teaching successes and setbacks
 - iii.Probe- What are you hopeful about for the end of this school year?
- B. Early Career Teacher Support
 - b. What did you find effective about your participation in this intervention?
 - i.Probe- Please explain your new learning acquired from this intervention.
 - ii.Probe- Please explain the new learning of your students.
 - iii.Probe- What types of support or resources could further support your development?
- C. Specific SEL Instructional Practice
 - a. What does “responsibility and choice” mean to you as an educator?
 - i.Probe- Has your instruction or planning changed as a result of focusing on this social teaching practice?
 - ii.Probe- What did you observe related to how students experienced the opportunities for discourse during this study?
- D. Culturally Inclusive Social Emotional Practices
 - c. What do you observe about students’ cultural inclusivity in your classroom?
 - i.Probe- What changes or growth did you observe growth in the students’ cultural inclusivity as a result of the structures you implemented?
 - ii.Probe- Please provide evidence from student work, interactions, or discussions.
 - iii.Probe- Describe the successes and challenges of implementing social emotional teaching practices to support the cultural inclusivity of the classroom or school environment.
- E. Closure
 - d. Are there any other insights you would like to share about how early career teachers can be supported to understand and apply culturally inclusive Social-Emotional Learning?
 - i.Summarize
 - ii.Thank the participant

Appendix K CITI Training Certificate

CITI Training Certificate

		Completion Date 02-Sep-2019 Expiration Date 01-Sep-2022 Record ID 32889474
This is to certify that:		
Kelly Falvey		
Has completed the following CITI Program course:		
Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher (Curriculum Group) Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher (Course Learner Group) 1 - Basic Course (Stage)		
Under requirements set by:		
Sacred Heart University, Inc.		
 Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative		
Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?wa1b3575a-a188-4301-91f8-9e55191470cc-32889474		

Appendix L Educator Preparation Statutory Requirements

Educator Preparation Statutory Requirements

All Candidates	Public Act 15-243 Section 1	Educator Prep Data Reporting by CSDE	On and after July 1, 2015, the Department of Education shall annually submit a report on the quality of teacher preparation programs leading to professional certification offered at institutions of higher education in the state to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education and higher education, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes. Such report shall include, but not be limited to, (1) information and data relating to the extent to which graduates of such teacher preparation programs help their students learn, including, but not limited to, data relating to the academic achievement and progress of the students of such graduates, (2) measures for assessing the classroom teaching performance of such graduates, (3) retention rates in the teaching profession of such graduates, (4) survey results from such graduates and the employers of such graduates regarding such teacher preparation programs, (5) data relating to the employment of such graduates in a teaching position, (6) certification issuance rates, including first-time pass rates for such graduates, and (7) recommendations regarding the recruitment of minority teachers and administrators pursuant to section 10-155l of the general statutes.
All Candidates	10-145f as amended by Public Act 16-41	Essential Skills Test (Praxis Core)	See CSDE policy information
Remedial Reading/Remedial Lang Arts (#102) and Reading Consultant (#097) Candidates	10-145d(i) as amended by Public Act 16-92	Dyslexia Training	(1) On and after July 1, 2017, any [(1)] (A) certified employee applying for a remedial reading, remedial language arts or reading consultant endorsement, or [(2)] (B) applicant for an initial, provisional or professional educator certificate and a remedial reading, remedial language arts or reading consultant endorsement shall [(A)] (i) achieve a satisfactory score on the reading instruction examination approved by the State Board of Education on April 1, 2009, or a comparable reading instruction examination with minimum standards that are equivalent to the examination approved by the State Board of Education on April 1, 2009, and [(B)] (ii) have completed a program of study in the diagnosis and remediation of reading and language arts that includes supervised practicum hours and instruction in the detection and recognition of, and evidence-based structured literacy interventions for, students with dyslexia, as defined in section 10-3d.
Special Education and ECE N-3 (#113 or #112)	10-145d(i) as amended by Public Act 17-3		(2) On and after July 1, 2018, any (A) certified employee applying for a comprehensive special education or integrated early childhood and special education endorsement, or (B) applicant for an initial, provisional or professional educator certificate and a comprehensive special education or integrated early childhood and special education endorsement shall have completed a program of study in the diagnosis and remediation of reading and language arts that includes supervised practicum hours and instruction in the detection and recognition of, and evidence-based structured literacy interventions for, students with dyslexia, as defined in section 10-3d.

All Candidates	Public Act No. 14-39, Sec. 2 (Amending Subsection (f) of section 10-145a) Amended by Public Act 15-97	Concerning Dyslexia And Special Education	<p>(f) On and after July 1, 2006, any program of teacher preparation leading to professional certification shall include, as part of the curriculum, instruction in literacy skills and processes that reflects current research and best practices in the field of literacy training. Such instruction shall</p> <p>(1) be incorporated into requirements of student major and concentration, and</p> <p>(2) on and after July 1, 2015, include not fewer than twelve clock hours of instruction in the detection and recognition of, and evidence-based structured literacy interventions for, students with dyslexia, as defined in section 1 of this act.</p> <p>For purposes of this section, "dyslexia" has the same meaning as provided in the Department of Education IEP Manual and Forms, rev Jan 2015, as amended.</p>
All Candidates	Statutory Public Act 15-108 Section 9	Cultural Competency	<p>(i) On and after July 1, 2012, any candidate entering a program of teacher preparation leading to professional certification shall be required to complete training in competency areas contained in the professional teaching standards established by the State Board of Education, including, but not limited to, development and characteristics of learners, evidence-based and standards-based instruction, evidence-based classroom and behavior management, assessment and professional behaviors and responsibilities and the awareness and identification of the unique learning style of gifted and talented children, [and] social and emotional development and learning of children, and cultural competency. The training in social and emotional development and learning of children shall include instruction concerning a comprehensive, coordinated social and emotional assessment and early intervention for children displaying behaviors associated with social or emotional problems, the availability of treatment services for such children and referring such children for assessment, intervention or treatment services. The training in cultural competency shall include instruction concerning the awareness of students' background and experience that lead to the development of skills, knowledge and behaviors that enable educators and students to build positive relationships and work effectively in cross-cultural situations.</p>
All Candidates	Statutory C.G.S. Sec. 10-145a (j) Amended by Public Act 15-243 Section 2	<p>Clinical Experiences & Student Teaching during 4 semesters</p> <p>Placement of candidates in clinical experiences by DRG and with cooperating teachers with certain performance evaluation designations</p>	<p>On and after July 1, 2015, any program of teacher preparation leading to professional certification shall require, as part of the curriculum, clinical experience, field experience or student teaching experience in a classroom during four semesters of such program of teacher preparation.</p> <p>Such clinical experience, field experience or student teaching experience shall occur:</p> <p>(1) In a school district that has been categorized by the Department of Education as District Reference Group A, B, C, D or E, and (2) in a school district that has been categorized by the department as District Reference Group F, G, H or I. Such clinical experience, field experience or student teaching experience may include a cooperating teacher serving as a mentor to student teachers, provided such cooperating teacher has received a performance evaluation designation of exemplary or proficient, pursuant to section 10-151b, for the prior school year.</p> <p>NOTE: C.G.S. 10-220a (d) states that "student teachers shall be placed with trained cooperating teachers."</p>

All Candidates	Statutory C.G.S. Sec. 10-145a (g)	ELL and Second Language Acquisition	On and after July 1, 2006, any program of teacher preparation leading to professional certification shall include as part of the curriculum, instruction in the concepts of second language learning and second language acquisition and processes that reflects current research and best practices in the field of second language learning and second language acquisition. Such instruction shall be incorporated into requirements of student major and concentration.
All Candidates	Statutory C.G.S. Sec. 10-145a (i)	Training in Pre-Service Competencies, Gifted and Talented and Social and Emotional Development Text in Bold added in 2013 per P.A. 13-133 and P.A. 13-261 and is effective July 1, 2013	<p>On and after July 1, 2012, any candidate entering a program of teacher preparation leading to professional certification shall be required to complete training in competency areas contained in the professional teaching standards established by the State Board of Education, including, but not limited to, development and characteristics of learners, evidence-based and standards-based instruction, evidence-based classroom and behavior management, [and] assessment and professional behaviors and responsibilities,</p> <p>- and the awareness and identification of the unique learning style of gifted and talented children and - and social and emotional development and learning of children. The training in social and emotional development and learning of children shall include instruction concerning a comprehensive, coordinated social and emotional assessment and early intervention for children displaying behaviors associated with social or emotional problems, the availability of treatment services for such children and referring such children for assessment, intervention or treatment services.</p>
All Candidates	Statutory C.G.S. Sec. 10-145a (k)	IEP Implementation	On and after July 1, 2012, any program of teacher preparation leading to professional certification shall include, as part of the curriculum, instruction in the implementation of student individualized education programs as it relates to the provision of special education and related services.
All Candidates	Statutory C.G.S. Sec. 10-145a (h)	Student teaching experience in non-public school	On and after July 1, 2011, any program of teacher preparation leading to professional certification may permit teaching experience in a nonpublic school, approved by the State Board of Education, and offered through a public or private institution of higher education to count towards the preparation and eligibility requirements for an initial educator certificate, provided such teaching experience is completed as part of a cooperating teacher program, in accordance with the provisions of subsection (d) of section 10-220a.
All Candidates (initial educator certificate, not advanced programs or advanced certificates)	Statutory C.G.S. Sec. 10-145b(d) Amended by Public Act 15-5, Section 276	Special Education	(d) (1) On and after July 1, 2016, in order to be eligible to obtain an initial educator certificate, each person shall be required to complete (A) a course of study in special education comprised of not fewer than thirty-six hours, which shall include an understanding of the growth and development of exceptional children, including handicapped and gifted and talented children and children who may require special education, and methods for identifying, planning for and working effectively with special needs children in a regular classroom, and (B) a course or courses of study in special education relating to instruction on classroom techniques in reading, differentiated instruction, social-emotional learning, cultural competencies and assistive technology. The provisions of this subdivision shall not apply to any person who has been issued an initial educator certificate prior to July 1, 2016.
Elementary Only* *candidates in all other areas are required to complete a survey course in US history under current regulations.	Statutory C.G.S. Sec. 10-145d(a)(8) Amended by Public Act 15-108, Section 4	U.S. History	On and after July 1, 1993...each person be required to complete (A) a survey course in U.S. History of no less than three semester hours of credit, or (B) achieve a satisfactory evaluation on the appropriate State Board of Education approved subject area assessment;...

Educator Preparation Statutory Requirements

[Overview \(/SDE/Certification/Teacher-Preparation-Statutory-Requirements\)](#)

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Provided by:

[Department of Education \(/SDE\)](#)

Overview

Applicable to:	Statutory Citation	Brief Reference	Description of Requirement
Elementary and Early Childhood	Statutory C.G.S. Sec. 10-145d(a)(9)	Reading	On and after July 1, 2004 ... each person be required to complete a comprehensive reading instruction course comprised of not less than six semester hours of credit.
All Candidates	Statutory C.G.S. Sec. 10-145a (b)	Intergroup Relations	Any candidate in a program of teacher preparation leading to professional certification shall be encouraged to complete an intergroup relations component which shall be developed with the participation of both sexes, and persons of various ethnic, cultural and economic backgrounds. Such intergroup relations program shall have the following objectives: (1) the imparting of an appreciation of the contributions to American civilization of various ethnic, cultural and economic groups comprising American society and an understanding of the lifestyles of such groups; (2) the counteracting of biases, discrimination and prejudices; and (3) the assurance of respect for human diversity and personal rights.
All Candidates	Statutory C.G.S. Sec. 10-145a(c)	Health and Mental Health	Any candidate in a program of teacher preparation leading to professional certification shall be encouraged to complete a (1) health component of such a program, which includes, but need not be limited to, human growth and development, nutrition, first aid, disease prevention and community and consumer health; and (2) mental health component of such a program which includes, but need not be limited to, youth suicide, child abuse and alcohol and drug abuse.
All Candidates	Statutory C.G.S. Sec. 10-145a (d) (amended 2012)	Bullying, School Violence, Suicide Prevention and Conflict Resolution	(d) Any candidate in a program of teacher preparation leading to professional certification shall complete a school violence, bullying, as defined in section 10-222d, and suicide prevention and conflict resolution component of such a program.
All Candidates	Statutory C.G.S. Sec. 10-145a (e)	Instructional Technology	On and after July 1, 1998, any candidate in a program of teacher preparation leading to professional certification shall complete a computer and other information technology skills component of such program, as applied to student learning and classroom instruction, communications and data management.
All Candidates	Statutory C.G.S. Sec. 10-145a (f)	Literacy Training	On and after July 1, 2006, any program of teacher preparation leading to professional certification shall include as part of the curriculum, instruction in literacy skills and processes that reflects current research and best practices in the field of literacy training. Such instruction shall be incorporated into requirements of student major and concentration.