Beyond Social Emotional Learning: Toward a Humanizing and Transformative Teacher SEL

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BEYOND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING: TOWARD A HUMANIZING AND TRANSFORMATIVE TEACHER SEL

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Educational Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Education

by

ash ray busby

May 2023
The Designated Thesis Committee Approves the Dissertation Titled

BEYOND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING: TOWARD A HUMANIZING AND TRANSFORMATIVE TEACHER SEL

by

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APPROVED FOR THE EDUCATIONAL DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2023

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ABSTRACT

BEYOND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING: TOWARD A HUMANIZING AND TRANSFORMATIVE TEACHER SEL

by ash ray busby

The purpose of this study was to bring to life the experiences of how the development of a Social, Emotional and Cultural lens prepares teachers to meet their own social and emotional needs in the classroom and consequently be better prepared to meet their students’ social and emotional needs in ways that are culturally sustaining. This qualitative research study explored these phenomena through a series of three in-depth interviews and a classroom observation with four in-service teachers in a Northern California school district that prioritizes social emotional learning (SEL) for students and teachers. The insights from this research may inform school districts, teacher preparation programs, and political officials who influence policy around teacher education regarding how they might begin the work of centering the relational aspects in the classroom while simultaneously disrupting traditionally harmful dynamics of power and privilege. Underpinning this work is the assumption that cultivating teachers’ critical and compassionate understanding of themselves in relation to the larger sociopolitical dynamics in society supports them in bringing awareness to their actions and the fullness of their implications on themselves and their students. Further argued is that knowledge of those implications alongside skill development in social, emotional and cultural competence will transform teacher behaviors in the classroom.
DEDICATION

This one’s for you, JJ. You are the motivation and inspiration for this work. It might have taken a decade, but we made it. Thank you for changing my life and being my teacher in so many important and wonderful ways. I am humbled by your resilience and determination to live the life you dream for yourself.

May all students present and future know a deep sense of belonging in their learning communities.
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Community care and wellness is at the heart of this work, and this dissertation would not have been possible without the support, guidance and wisdom of my community. In particular I would like to acknowledge the contributions of my committee; your collective brilliance pushed my thinking in ways that strengthened this study and supported my development as a researcher. To Dr. Luis Poza, thank you for your thoughtful, reflective and caring guidance. You brought a humanizing approach to this work, and I am incredibly grateful for your thought partnership. Your brilliance inspired me to always bring my best self. Dr. Wanda Watson, your laser focus and insightful observations challenged me to go deeper into this work. Dr. Pam Cheng, thank you for your unwavering encouragement and critical reflection.

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To Tiauna, our walks sustained me during this process. Thank you for always believing in me and for your cheerleading; it was much needed nourishment. mel, you kept me sharp! Thank you for the early morning debriefs and your insightful reflections on my process. Joe, thank you for all the laps! To my other chosen family, Sean, Anise, Daniel, El,
Elisa and Wendy thank you for bearing witness to this journey and your continued enthusiasm for my musings.

To Joel, thank you for always having my back; I will always have yours.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CASEL - Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
CRTWC - Center or Reaching and Teaching the Whole Child
CSP - culturally sustaining pedagogy
SEC - social, emotional and cultural
SEDTL - social and emotional dimensions of teaching a learning
SEL - social emotional learning
TPE - Teacher Performance Expectations
TASEL - transformative, abolitionist social emotional learning
TSEL - transformative social emotional learning
Chapter I: Introduction

Overview

This chapter introduces the lack of preparation in teacher pre-service education regarding teacher social, emotional, and cultural competence. The chapter begins with the history of social emotional learning (SEL), telling the story of how the field was formed and its role in K-12 education in the United States. Following the historical perspective of social emotional learning is an outline of the role social emotional learning plays in teacher preparation and inherent issues. The chapter then presents an important unresolved issue surrounding social emotional learning in education, including a critique of traditional SEL. Next, I address the purpose and significance of the study, along with research questions, and definitions of key terms. Finally, I proceed to describe the study site and participants as well as an exploration of my own positionality as a researcher in this context.

The Unresolved Issue in Education

Preparing K-12 teachers to be equipped in culturally sustaining (Paris & Alim, 2017) ways to address children’s social and emotional needs is an enormous task but is a central demand of the teaching profession. Currently, pre-service teacher education in the United States has not prepared teachers to meet the social and emotional needs of students (Barnes & McCallops, 2019; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017). For example, in a U.S.-wide teacher preparation program scan Schonert-Reichl et al. (2017) found that only 13% of teacher preparation programs in the United States include at least one course that mentions relationship building, which reflects the lack of prioritization of the social emotional dimension of teaching and learning in teacher preparation programs. This study attempts to
resolve this issue by exploring how the development of the teachers’ social, emotional and cultural lens influences the learning environment by shifting teacher beliefs, perceptions and actions.

**Brief History of SEL**

Social emotional learning was first coined as a term in the field of education in the 1990s and arose out of Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer’s work on emotional intelligence (D'Emidio-Caston, 2019). According to Salovey and Mayer (1990) emotional intelligence is a series of skills that support individuals in accurately perceiving and expressing their and others’ emotions, in addition to being able to regulate and leverage those emotions to make plans, maintain motivation and achieve one’s goals. SEL came about in an era in which there was a high volume of programs aimed at promoting positive behavior and character development in youth such as The Character Education Curriculum, An Ethics Curriculum for Children, The Giraffe Program, and DARE, among others (Leming, 1997). Since SEL encompassed a wide breadth of the content offered in those programs, it became a popular model for adoption (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], n.d.-a). The CASEL (n.d.-b) defines social emotional learning\(^1\) as,

> 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

\(^1\) See Appendix A for additional information.
maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions (“Fundamentals of SEL” section).

While the intention behind the development of SEL was to create a framework to address multiple developmental goals and act as a foundation for classroom teaching, that context set SEL up to be yet another add-on program typically seen in schools as classroom curricula (Osher et al., 2016). Positioning SEL as a stand-alone curriculum insinuates a one-directional dynamic where teachers are expected to teach SEL without necessarily having to embody the practices themselves. Despite the widespread popularity of SEL in recent decades, programs such as Second Step and RULER that are associated with building social and emotion-management skills have maintained this one-directional dynamic and are therefore limited in their application.

**SEL and Teacher Education**

While the State of California expects that teachers will promote students’ social and emotional well-being inside their classrooms (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing [CTSP], 2009, 2016), SEL is not yet taught comprehensively at the teacher preparation level (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017). California frames its expectations regarding SEL in the Teacher Performance Expectations (TPE) and the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP) in TPE and CSTP 2: Creating and Maintaining Effective Environments for Student Learning. According to TPE 2 teachers are expected to create culturally responsive learning environments that promote students’ social and emotional growth (CTSP, 2016). Adding to the complexity, social and emotional learning needs are referenced in TPE 1: Engaging and Supporting All Students in Learning. Noteworthy is the difference in language, with learning needs being directly tied into knowledge of students’
prior experiences and cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds and mentioned as necessary to support students in engaging in learning.

In the narrative description of TPE 2, the mention of social and emotional comes up in two places. First, SEL is alluded to at the beginning in a reference to "promoting positive relationships and behaviors" and "fostering independent and collaborative learning" and then is later more explicitly tied to social and emotional health, suggesting that teachers foster this by creating classroom environments where students feel a sense of belonging and safety in communicating. This is followed by a connection to recognizing that students may come to school with "adverse or traumatic childhood experiences, mental health issues, and social-emotional and physical health needs" (CTSP, 2016, p. 7). Referring to both social and emotional needs and growth points to what Simmons (2021) identifies as the two contrasting goals of SEL; it is both simultaneously a tool for ensuring obedience and compliance from students of color, while also serving to develop the college readiness skills for white students, for instance by institutionalizing professional class white models of interaction and conflict resolution or by reinforcing the teacher’s authority within a classroom as a mediator of social interaction (Camangian & Cariaga, 2021). Of additional importance is the focus on student-centered SEL rather than teacher-centered development because this reinforces the notion that SEL is unidirectional and leaves teacher preparation programs unaccountable for teacher focused SEL.

Interestingly, in a review of state-level teacher certification requirements in the U.S., the two least frequent competencies addressed in regard to student-centered SEL were self-awareness and social awareness (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017), which holds an important set
of consequences for students. By placing an emphasis on self-management, responsible
decision making and relationship skills, teacher pre-service programs in the 36-49 states
where these are incorporated are prioritizing the use of SEL strategies for the interpersonal
skills involved in classroom management, rather than for the intrapersonal skill development
that has the potential to build student capacity to understand their own feelings and those of
others (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017). Noteworthy here is the deficit mindset of SEL that aims
to “fix” and control the behavior of youth (Duchesneau, 2020; The Aspen Institute, 2018).
The strategies also fail to acknowledge the sociopolitical conditions that may be causing
emotional, psychological or other forms of distress (Camangian & Cariaga, 2021). It is
precisely the capacity to know oneself that will serve as the building block to understanding
others and our interconnectedness, implicating the collective responsibility to addressing
greater social inequities (Communities for Just Schools Fund [CJSF], 2020; Soodjinda,
2021). The framing of SEL as a programmatic add-on that teachers implement in their
classrooms, rather than a dynamic exchange that exists between student and teacher and
teacher and student further perpetuates this deficit orientation of SEL. When SEL is relegated
to a subject or programmatic add-on it denies the reality that these skills are a necessary part
of developing a critical interdependent community (CJSF, 2020).

A recent national scan of teacher preparation programs highlights the gap between what
states require teachers to know in regard to social emotional learning and what teacher
preparation programs are presently offering (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017). Three of the five
core SEL competencies, as defined by CASEL, were found to be widespread in teacher
education programs: (1) responsible decision making, (2) social awareness and (3)
relationship skills (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017). However, noticeably absent are the competencies of self-awareness and self-management, which, again, reflects teacher educators’ implicit prioritization of interpersonal relationships over the intrapersonal.

Teachers need to build their own capacity in social and emotional practices in order to embody them and model these for students (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Self-management would provide teachers the tools to self-regulate when faced with distressing situations. Teachers must be able to decenter their emotions when engaging with student disruption or emotional dysregulation (D'Emidio-Caston, 2019; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017); this calls for teachers to bring awareness to their own emotional landscape inside the classroom and respond in ways that do not project their internal experience onto students. Furthermore, the self-reflection that comes from self-awareness is necessary for teachers to be aware of the biases, ideologies, and defenses they bring to school with them. Specifically, teacher self-awareness is critical because teachers are in a position to negatively impact students from historically marginalized groups (D'Emidio-Caston, 2019; Legette et al., 2022). Educators’ social identity development and perceptions of identities different than their own shape the culture of the schools and classrooms where they operate (Aveling, 2007) and how they relate to the students in their classrooms. If educators do not reflect upon
how their socially mediated identities impact the power they have over minoritized\(^2\) students, they may be complicit in perpetuating childhood trauma in their classrooms.

Swanson et al. (2019) suggests incorporating the sociopolitical context and culture into SEL work in order to address the limitations of traditional SEL. Moreover, Swanson et al. (2019) propose social, emotional, cultural learning (SEC) as a lens through which to move SEL forward beyond its historical roots in color-evasiveness, the refusal to explicitly acknowledge race (Annamma et al., 2017). This SEC lens was developed in relationship with the Center for Reaching and Teaching the Whole Child [CRWTC] (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020) and will be further discussed as the conceptual framework for this study. Given that culturally responsive teaching supports both socioemotional well-being and academic achievement in students across the spectrum of intersecting social identities (Hammond, 2014) it therefore offers the necessary framing to move traditional socioemotional teaching practices towards a more transformative approach; transformative SEL centers equity in the social and emotional dimensions of teaching and learning by attending to issues of, “power, privilege, discrimination, social justice, empowerment, and self-determination” (Jagers et al.,

\(^2\) The past participle tense is utilized to reflect the ways societal structures are acted upon students. Minoritized places an emphasis on students’ marginalization by social and political forces and structures; it is not used to describe a numerical presence, rather refers to any student whose socially mediated identities fall outside of those that have proximity to power and privilege in U.S. society (i.e., race, gender, language, socioeconomic status, sexuality, ability, citizenship, etc.). In this context, minoritized considers proximity to power through an intersectional and situated lens.
Teacher culturally responsive social and emotional development should be, therefore, a critical component of teacher preparation.

**Transformative SEL**

Criticism of traditional SEL points to it being rooted in a deficit mindset and perpetuating the dominant consciousness of whiteness (Camangian & Cariaga, 2021; DeMartino et al., 2022; Duchesneau, 2020; Simmons, 2021; The Aspen Institute, 2018). In contrast, transformative SEL (TSEL) adopts an actively antiracist stance and explicitly integrates adult SEL (Jagers et al., 2019). Further, a central tenet of TSEL is a critique of existing systems, which positions SEL as disrupting relational dynamics, institutional policy, and individual orientations towards teaching and learning that perpetuate oppression (Jagers et al., 2019). Jagers et al. (2019) explore the potential that TSEL may hold in ameliorating societal inequities that stem from the legacy of colonialism, positing that transformative SEL is a civic enterprise. As such, political agency and self-efficacy are viewed as essential components; this moves traditional SEL, where there is a heightened focus on the individual and interpersonal relationships, towards a sense of collective responsibility.

**Possibility of a Paradigmatic Shift**

As noted in the CSTPs and TPEs, the SEL field is largely focused on student-centered SEL, which leaves teachers primarily as implementers rather than active participants in being aware of, managing, and regulating their own emotions in relationship to self and others. Until SEL is further embedded in the vast majority of teacher education programs across the United States, it will continue to be seen and implemented as an additive program, rather than a guiding framework for effective classroom teaching. Furthermore, the reframing of
SEL as a dynamic enterprise between students and teachers requires that these practices be taught as embodied practices for teachers as well as students. The absence of SEL for teachers is problematic for several reasons. SEL as bidirectional converts the learning environment to a healing space (Ginwright, 2018; Soodjinda, 2021), rather than a perpetuation of a hierarchical model that subjugates students and empowers teachers to control. Second, due to the high levels of societal and job-related stress and collective trauma, it is essential for teachers to have their own methods for being attuned to their own emotions. Additionally, as teachers manage a return to school in which all students have experienced some form of trauma during the COVID-19 pandemic, teacher SEL is essential to reduce or prevent vicarious trauma and support teachers in managing their own trauma from COVID-19. It would be remiss not to say that it should not take an experience of collective trauma such as the COVID-19 pandemic to create the support for teachers to build healthy relationships and on-going self-reflection.

**Problem Statement**

Teachers with well-developed social and emotional competence are able to decenter their emotional experience from that of the students (D'Emidio-Caston, 2019), have a greater capacity to self-manage, self-regulate, and are more culturally and socially aware (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Despite this evidence, research has only recently begun to look at how teacher preparation programs are incorporating SEL for the benefit of teacher social and emotional development and competence (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). This, coupled with the absence of culturally relevant practices in SEL curriculum (Camangian & Cariaga, 2021; Kennedy, 2019; Swanson et al., 2019), leaves teachers greatly underprepared in managing
the social, emotional and behavior challenges that can arise inside and outside of K-12 schools (Barnes & McCallops, 2019). Due to the essential role a teacher plays in the relationships within the classroom and the shaping of the culture of the learning environment, understanding what teacher preparation can contribute to teachers’ social and emotional development and competence (Schonert-Reichl, 2017) in ways that are culturally responsive is critical. Therefore, research focused on the teachers’ own social, emotional, and cultural competence is a necessary and emergent field.

One significant consequence of teachers entering their classrooms underprepared to meet their students’ socioemotional needs is high attrition rates. Teacher satisfaction and self-efficacy is tied to teacher preparation programs and how well teachers feel prepared to do their job (Carver-Thomas et al., 2020). Attrition rate, referring to teachers leaving the profession, in the United States is approximately 8% per year, and estimates show that almost 16% of teachers leave their individual school sites annually, with an estimated cost of annual teacher replacement being $8 billion (Sutcher et al., 2016). California has an attrition rate close to 11%, though this number is higher in school districts serving low-income families (Sutcher et al., 2016). This statistic has real time implications for student outcomes.

Teacher attrition rates influence the supply and demand for teachers, leaving many school districts to hire teachers without full credentialing. This impacts teacher quality and ultimately student opportunities and outcomes (Carver-Thomas et al., 2020). The likelihood of a student having an underprepared or novice teacher is proportional to the percentage of low-income students at that school; 25% of teachers are under qualified at schools serving 85% low-income students in comparison to less than 5% of teachers at schools where below
10% of the population is low income (Darling-Hammond, 2004). Given that schools with the highest need students often have the highest staff attrition and turnover rates and the highest percentage of novice or underprepared teachers, addressing the preparedness and satisfaction of teachers is an equity issue. Implementing a comprehensive culturally responsive SEL framework for beginning teachers has the potential to simultaneously ameliorate teacher attrition rates and improve quality of teaching and learning environments.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to explore the intersection between educator beliefs and action as it relates to culturally responsive social emotional learning. The study examined how the development of a Social, Emotional and Cultural (SEC) lens informs teacher identity and shifts teachers’ beliefs, perceptions and practices. Specifically, the study explored the impact the development of an SEC lens has on teacher beliefs, perceptions and classroom practice. This research contributes to the larger body of works that aim to reframe socioemotional learning as transformative (Jagers et al., 2019) and culturally responsive (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020).

**Significance**

By bringing voice to the experience of teachers who have participated in training to develop an SEC lens, this study makes available insights into a resource of support for other teachers and may indeed shift the focus of teacher education programs. Intended audiences of this study include pre-service educators seeking a theoretical framework to guide their orientation to the relational dynamics of their classrooms and teacher education programs seeking an embedded approach to supporting teachers with the social, emotional and cultural
dimensions of teaching. School districts are an additional necessary audience as they can offer professional development training to bridge the gap while teacher preparation programs make this change to their programming. Additionally, this study is an important reference point for policy makers and professionals who influence the California Standards for the Teaching Profession and other guiding documents that orient teacher education programs across the state.

This study is charting new territory in the field of culturally responsive social emotional learning for teachers. While each sub-element of the focus of this study has been explored through prior research, the research at the intersection of these fields is nascent. Guiding this study is the CRTWC Anchor Competencies Framework (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020) and the fields of critical and transformative SEL (Camangian & Cariaga, 2021; CJSF, 2020; Jagers et al., 2019; Kennedy, 2019; Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020; Simmons, 2019, 2021; Swanson et al., 2019). The results of this study contribute to the expansion of social emotional learning to include cultural responsiveness and frame it as a necessary part of teacher preparation. The four guiding principles of the CRWTC Anchor Competencies Framework are central to this study: 1) the capacity to implement the framework depends on teachers’ SEC competencies, 2) SEC competencies are interconnected to the sociopolitical, cultural, community and individual contexts, 3) SEC competencies are rooted in culturally responsive pedagogy, trauma-informed practices and restorative practices, and 4) SEC competencies are critical to creating equitable learning environments that foster academic achievement and student and teacher resilience (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020). The hope is to normalize teachers’ own social and emotional experiences within a classroom so that
teachers are then able to critically examine those experiences and the impact they have on their students. To know oneself is a precursor to being able to decenter oneself. Teachers’ capacity to decenter themselves provides the possibility of being able to fully center students in the learning environment, a central tenet of culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2002; Simmons, 2019).

**Study Design**

This qualitative phenomenological case study explored how CRTWC professional development training informs teacher identity and shapes teachers’ beliefs, perceptions and practices through the use of individual interviews and classroom observations. The participants were generated through a purposeful sample and reflect a group of teachers who have completed training with CRTWC and opted into the study. Though participants have completed a training on the development of a SEC lens, the study explored the extent of that development through interviews and classroom observations. The group of four participants participated in a series of three interviews per participant. Classroom observations were approximately 30 minutes a piece and each participant was observed once. A phenomenological interview protocol (Seidman, 2006) was employed to understand the lived experience of teachers as it relates to the development and enactment of a SEC lens. The phenomenological approach places value on the importance of the individual while not negating the role of community and context (Seidman, 2006); the case study framing highlights contextual importance (Creswell et al., 2007). Data analysis used descriptive coding to make meaning from the teachers’ individual stories (Saldaña, 2015) within the context of the school district. Inductive first and second round coding was conducted by the
researcher, after which peer examination was implemented to support inter-rater reliability (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Codes were primarily inductive, though the seven Anchor Competencies (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020) and the CASEL (2017) Core Competencies of SEL supported data analysis. Member checks were utilized at the start of each interview to ensure accurate interpretation of participants’ beliefs, perceptions and actions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). There is further elaboration of the study design in Chapter III.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study in exploring teacher social, emotional and cultural competence:

1. How does the SEC lens inform the professional identity of the focal elementary school teachers?
2. How does the development of a SEC lens influence the focal teachers’ beliefs and perceptions in relation to developing trusting relationships with students?
3. How do teachers’ responses to minoritized students reflect, or counter, an SEC lens?
4. How, if at all, does the focal teachers’ practice align with beliefs after developing an SEC lens?

Site and Participants

Description of the Organization

The CRWTC is a non-profit organization based in Silicon Valley that was founded in 2008. Originally founded at San José State University, the organization currently operates under the fiscal sponsorship of Community Initiatives. CRTWC and the Anchor Competencies Framework (Figure 1) aim to address the gap left by teacher education
programs of failing to adequately build teachers’ social, emotional, and cultural competencies. The mission of CRTWC is, “to enhance our schools’ capacities to meet the needs of children and those educators who work with them by offering a process and framework for integrating social, emotional and cultural competencies into K-12 preservice teacher preparation.” CRTWC stresses a systematic approach rather than a programmatic add-on. The organization frames its work as developing a lens, which occurs in the Center’s professional development training, the Educator Institute.

While the inaugural cohort of the Educator Institute included twelve participating fellows in 2017-2018, it is currently in its fifth year with 137 participants. The professional development involves an in-depth study of the CRTWC Anchor Competencies Framework that incorporates seven anchor competencies to guide the development of an SEC lens (CRWTC, 2021).

Description of the District

Lakeview is a small school district that serves approximately 6,000 students in Northern California. Nearly 22.6% of the student body qualifies for free and reduced lunch and the multilingual learner population represents 25.7% of the student body. Of the 10 schools in the district, two are middle schools and eight are elementary schools. Lakeview’s mission statement is offered, “Our mission is to provide every student with a strong foundation of academic, behavioral, and social-emotional skills to prepare them for success in a diverse, challenging, and changing world” (“About Us” section, n.d.).
In 2021 Lakeview continued a multi-year relationship with CRTWC to educate teachers, teacher coaches and administrators in the development of SEC competencies through the Educator Institute and other semester-long professional development training. In 2021 nine teacher-coaches and one administrator participated in the Educator Institute with one
semester focusing on the development of the SEC lens and the second semester focusing on coaching. Over the course of five years, over 100 Lakeview teachers, coaches and administrators have trained with CRTWC.

**Scope and Limitations**

The methodology for this study includes in-depth, phenomenological interviews and classroom observations to explore the research questions regarding teacher social, emotional and cultural competence. The study design draws upon teacher descriptions of their beliefs, experiences and practices as teachers. Therefore, this study is not generalizable and should not be interpreted as findings that are representative of all teachers. Findings are limited to the scope of this particular study and this particular moment in time.

An additional limitation of the study is the limited number of teacher preparation programs and school districts engaging in the development of a SEC lens. This challenge narrowed the scope of the study and made it essential to utilize a conceptual framework rooted in critical social emotional learning that also accounts for the cultural dimensions of teaching. The CRTWC Anchor Competencies Framework serves as the conceptual framework for this study. This novel framework bridges the pedagogical approaches of social emotional learning and culturally responsive teaching and encompasses restorative practices and trauma-informed practices (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020).

**The Researcher**

Over the course of my career in education, I have become acutely aware of the ways in which schools and teachers cause harm when they do not see the full humanity of the students they serve. In 2013, four years into my first teaching position at an urban elementary
school, I was a staunch advocate for two 5th grade boys of color who were in the foster care system, one of whom was my foster son, and brought their trauma to school with them each day. After bearing witness to how the predominately white staff at my school site was quick to out-of-school suspend them, I petitioned my principal to attend a restorative practices training with the Restorative Justice Training Institute (personal communication, March 6, 2014). After two week-long training sessions, I advocated for bringing restorative practices to my school site. I have brought those training sessions with me to each position I have held since. Around the same time, my school site engaged in mindfulness training with the organization Mindful Schools (personal communication, September 5, 2013). Since that time, I have internalized both Mindfulness Meditation and Restorative Practices as my guiding orientations towards education. I view mindfulness as the development of one’s relationship to self, while restorative practices involve the development of one’s relationship to community.

In the proposed study, I explored this intersection under the larger pedagogical approaches of social emotional learning and culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) (Paris, 2012). My positionality to this research is based on the intersection of my experience as a foster parent and educator, which opened my eyes to see how, in many cases, teachers’ own lack of social emotional and cultural competence gets in the way of their ability to support students who are experiencing trauma at home as well as support students who act out due to grappling with oppressive conditions at home. This experience motivates my work and research interests.
**Researcher Assumptions**

Borrowing from the wisdom of restorative practices and the work of Boyes-Watson and Pranis (2015), I share the following assumptions that guide my research:

- The world is profoundly interconnected
- All human beings have a deep desire to be in a good relationship
- We need practices to build habits of living from the core self

Interconnectedness speaks to the importance of honoring the impact we have on those around us and in regard to the proposed study, it speaks to the nature of the student-teacher relationship. Recognizing the bidirectional nature of this relationship is the precursor to mutual responsibility where both individuals are responsible for their impact on one another. In schools, students are often sent to the office or even home when they fail to meet their teacher’s expectations (Milner, 2020; Nogueira, 2003), yet rarely are teachers asked to participate in the conversation with students to learn more about what is happening for the student. The teacher may perhaps even learn how their own actions or institutional practices impacted the student.

Acceptance and love are fundamental human desires that drive us as social beings. These desires motivate us to form and sustain relationships with others. Regardless of behavior that may seem to demonstrate otherwise, I argue that all teachers and students have a fundamental desire to be in good relationship with each other. However, the United States is not a society where conflict is viewed as generative and it is often feared or avoided (Jones & Okun, 2001). Therefore, there is a societal need to develop practices that support us in speaking our truth, listening from our hearts, and operating from a place of open authenticity.
The CRTWC Anchor Competencies Framework was designed to develop teachers’ Social, Emotional and Cultural lenses (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020) and holds the potential to support teachers in internalizing the interconnectedness between themselves and their students. The Framework is designed to develop the skills and habits that contribute to relationships based on mutual responsibility, where teachers are accountable to themselves and their students, and students are accountable to themselves, their peers and their teachers. In particular, the Context ring emphasizes the importance of the individual, family, community, cultural, and sociopolitical context and the way larger systems impact experience. The Context ring calls on educators to locate themselves and their students contextually and to be aware of the dynamics at play in regard to positionality; this being a further reflection of the interconnectedness of all beings. Additionally, the Developing the Lens ring articulates the habits required for teachers to live from their core selves: practicing, modeling, reflecting and exploring assumptions and beliefs. These practices simultaneously draw educators inward and into connection with one another. Especially significant is the symbolism behind the circular nature of the rings, indicating that these are iterative practices that are continually developed over time.

This study explored the relational dimension in classrooms through the lens of teacher social, emotional and cultural competence. I proposed that the development of a teachers’ own SEC lens holds the potential to transform the learning environment to one that reflects our true interconnectedness and the innate human desire to be in good relationship with one another. It was my assumption that developing teachers’ social, emotional and cultural
competence would support translating the conceptual framework into action and support teachers in enacting the practices of living from their core selves.
Chapter II: Literature Review

Overview

This chapter examines the extant literature that unpacks teacher identity development as it relates to the social and emotional dimensions of teaching, the role social emotional learning plays in teacher preparation, and the implicit and important nature of culturally responsive teacher social and emotional development. To begin, the chapter examines the CRTWC Anchor Competencies Framework (Figure 1) as the conceptual framework that guides this research study. Following, it explores relevant literature on teacher emotions and identity formation (Freedman & Appleman, 2008; Hsieh, 2015; O’Connor, 2008; Shapiro, 2010) and the role that bias plays in teacher-student interactions to understand the importance of and need for teacher social emotional learning and the role social emotional learning through mindfulness may play in teacher-student relationships (Lueke & Gibson, 2014; Picower, 2009). Next, the chapter examines the relevant literature regarding the implicit nature of social emotional learning in culturally relevant and responsive classrooms (Irizarry, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2017; San Pedro, 2017; Valenzuela, 1999) and recent explorations of culturally responsive and sustaining SEL (Castro-Olivo, 2014; Graves et al., 2017). The chapter will then explore how teacher burnout and stress influences the learning environment in K-12 classrooms, including the relationship between educators and students (Corbin et al., 2019; Garner et al., 2018; Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2016) and teacher social and emotional competence (Warren et al., 2020). Then I focus my attention on SEL practices in teacher education and professional development, as a means for orienting to the current work and the potential it holds for fully preparing teachers to meet their students’ social and
emotional needs (D’Emidio-Caston, 2019; Jennings et al., 2017; Taylor et al., 2015) in culturally sustaining ways (Barnes & McCalllops, 2019; Nenonene et al., 2019; Swanson et al., 2019).

**Conceptual Framework**

The CRWTC’s Anchor Competencies Framework guides this research as a conceptual framework. The Framework grounds SEL in culturally responsive pedagogy, trauma-informed practices, and restorative practices. It was developed over a ten-year period in response to an unmet need identified in the San José State University teacher preparation program; students and faculty agreed on the importance of SEL, yet did not have the means to support students in bringing the concepts into action (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020). Additionally, the Framework addresses the critique of traditional SEL as color-evasive and failing to take social inequities into account (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020).

The CRTWC Anchor Competencies Framework provides the field a systematic approach to bridging SEL and culturally responsive teaching and offers a common language for how to approach this work (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020). The Framework is an overarching guide for developing a culturally responsive social and emotional lens in the classroom (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020). SEL provides teachers a set of tools for operating in a pluralistic society; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making are necessary skills for being able to fully understand oneself and engage in relationships across differences in a way that supports collective well-being. Culturally sustaining pedagogy offers a set of values, attitudes and perspectives to underpin the purpose of SEL. The four operating principles that guide the framework:
1. Teachers’ SEC competencies are instrumental in implementing the framework
2. SEC competencies are interconnected to the sociopolitical, cultural, community and individual context
3. SEC competencies are rooted in culturally responsive pedagogy, trauma-informed practices and restorative practices
4. SEC competencies are critical to creating equitable learning environments that foster academic achievement and student and teacher resilience (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020).

As referenced in Figure 1, the inner circle of the framework states the goals that frame the desired outcomes for teachers and students. Goals are enveloped by the Context ring which highlights the importance of attending to the unique circumstances of each setting while acknowledging the larger structures and systems they operate within. Developing the Lens is the next ring, which signals the iterative process teachers must undergo to develop and maintain a SEC lens. There are seven Anchor Competencies that reflect the “skills, knowledge, and habits” (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020, p. 33) necessary for developing teachers’ SEC competencies. The outer ring, Examples of Teacher Moves, provides concrete examples of what the Anchor Competencies look like in practice.

Teaching is an inherently relational profession; the quality of the relationship between students and teachers shapes the learning environment, student experience, and student outcomes (Hammond, 2014; McDermott, 1977; Rodgers & Raider-Roth, 2006). Therefore, the success of the teacher, in large part, relies on their relational efficacy. We know that students who feel the caring support of a teacher are likely to have better social, emotional
and academic outcomes than those who do not (Hammond, 2014). Consequently, the quality of the relationship built between students and teachers is of utmost importance. This implies the necessity of building teachers’ own competencies to engage meaningfully with this work.

Given that schools continue to perpetuate the dominant culture and class agenda through what and how they teach (Anyon, 1980), a key way to disrupt that system is to reevaluate how individuals within that system relate to themselves and one another (Apple, 1979). The development of a social, emotional, and cultural lens is a reorientation to the classroom space as one that takes into account the convergence of community, historical context, intra- and interpersonal dynamics. Without an understanding of ourselves in relation to the larger sociopolitical landscape in which we live and operate, we are bound to miss the implications that history has on present day context. In other words, our understanding of the historical impact on the space and time we are alive affects our capacity to critically analyze the larger societal structures that perpetuate social inequity (G. Bargainer, personal communication, November 21, 2020) and consequently any chance we might have to change them.

Inherent in the Framework is a bidirectional orientation towards SEL. The Framework centers context as imperative to account for and translates what can often be left to theory to practice. The outer ring, Teacher Moves, provide concrete examples of how to embody and enact culturally responsive social and emotional teaching and learning. Each ring requires teachers to engage in an iterative cycle of development and implies that the true nature of this work is ever continuous and on-going. It demonstrates that transformative and culturally responsive social and emotional teaching and learning involves a continued presence (Paris, 2012) and unfolds with each student-teacher relationship and interaction.
A Social, Emotional and Cultural Lens refers to an orientation or mindset that teachers develop over time and continuously refine. One may reach a place of automaticity; however, this is not due to accumulating a series of activities to enact in the classroom, rather out of habituating to centering and prioritizing the relational dynamics in the classroom. The goals in the inner circle of the Framework acknowledges as central to this work is developing a sense of community that fosters mutual responsibility and social justice. The intersection of social emotional learning and culturally sustaining pedagogy speaks to the dilemmas of how to attend to collective well-being in learning environments.

A potential limitation of the Framework is that while it tends to the relational dynamics in the classroom it may fail to address what Jagers et al. (2019) suggest as the political agency responsibility of TSEL. Political agency and civic engagement are not explicitly addressed in the Anchor Competencies. However, the Framework may, in fact, impact teachers’ and students’ sense of political efficacy. The question remains how the Anchor Competencies Framework will influence teachers’ and students’ capacity to actualize social change beyond the classroom walls and contribute to distributive justice. This calls for further research to study on the impacts of the Anchor Competencies Framework outside of the classroom space.

It is worth mentioning that there are several recent frameworks that attempt to move the field of traditional SEL forward (DeMartino et al., 2022; Higheagle Strong & McMain 2020; Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020). Higheagle Strong and McMain (2020) offer the decolonized “resilience” framework of Social Emotional Learning for Social Emotional Justice (p. 3). DeMartino et al. (2022) suggest aligning TSEL with an abolitionist framework to further
support decoupling Eurocentric norms of appropriate expression of emotions and which emotions are deemed valid from traditional SEL. Given that one of the functional goals of the Framework is to provide a common language, this suggestion holds relevance. Within this recent critique of TSEL is an argument that the conceptual framework of TSEL, and by extension potentially the Anchor Competencies Framework, is limited by its highly theoretical nature, limiting its applicability to practice (DeMartino et al., 2022). One of the essential elements of this study is to examine the bridge between theory and practice to further explore this critique.

**Literature Overview**

While research on social emotional learning related to academic outcomes for students is prolific (Durlak et al., 2011; see also Domitrovich et al., 2017, Mahoney et al., 2018, Payton et al., 2008), there is still a lack of studies investigating the impact of teachers’ social and emotional competence on students and the learning environment (Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2016). Historically, research has focused on SEL for students, and when looking at teachers the research has been concentrated on understanding teachers’ efficacy in teaching SEL and how that impacts student social and academic outcomes (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). This approach frames SEL as something to be taught to students so that they can be their most productive selves. Framing the benefits of SEL from this perspective is dangerously akin to a deficit mindset (Camangian & Cariaga, 2021; Swanson et al., 2019), that purports students are problems that need to be fixed. Further, this mindset has led SEL research to narrowly focus on how SEL can improve student academic outcomes. Shifting to look at SEL as a dynamic enterprise that exists within the classroom space and between student and teacher
and teacher and student, is a necessary reframing in order to account for the ahistorical color-
evasive critique of traditional SEL and its perpetuation of, “...culturally ingrained
dehumanizing schooling conditions” (Legette et al., 2022, p. 279).

A significant tension in the research on SEL lies in the question, SEL for whom and for what? While SEL teaching practices have been shown to enhance students’ abilities to effectively engage in social and academic settings, they are limited in their present form to address larger social issues (Jagers et al., 2019) given their historically color-evasive nature (Camangian & Cariaga, 2021; Swanson et al., 2019). Organizing frameworks for conversations regarding SEL generally agree upon the inclusion of the following three dimensions: (a) learning context, (b) student SEL, and (c) teachers’ SEL (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). While this framework begins to acknowledge that the nature of student-teacher relationships can change student learning outcomes in both directions, either for the positive or negative (Schonert-Reichl, 2017), it does not address the larger sociopolitical context that informs these elements.

Teacher Emotion, Identity and Bias

Emotion and Identity

Teaching is both an emotionally and cognitively demanding profession; while teacher preparation attends to the cognitive demands required of teachers, it is often assumed that teachers enter the field with the social and emotional capacity to manage the multifaceted demands of their classrooms (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Further complicating this issue is a societal disposition to avoid conflict that perpetuates schools as work environments that expect emotional neutrality (Shapiro, 2010). Alongside exists a “model-teacher myth”
(Shapiro, 2010) that paints teachers as emotionally unflappable and pedagogically flawless. This myth contributes to the dehumanization of teachers, yet is often upheld and perpetuated amongst teachers themselves. However, it is also reinforced by lawmakers, administrators and a political climate that continues to expand the expectations and demands of teachers. In many ways, the model-teacher myth is rooted in hegemony and hierarchy, assuming that the teacher must maintain a neutral authority over their students to remain effective. Yet, “Without the honest sharing of emotion within the school community, bonds of solidarity are difficult to sustain” (Shapiro, 2010, p. 619). Furthermore, the tension produced by being in a profession that is inherently relational and upholds professional norms dictating emotional apathy creates cognitive dissonance (Hargreaves, 2001, as cited in Shapiro, 2010). It is precisely this dissonance that I suggest culturally responsive social emotional learning addresses, through a reorientation to the inter- and intrapersonal relational dynamics in the classroom. While traditional SEL tends to these dynamics for students, teachers’ own SEL has only recently surfaced as an area of focus.

Emotions and identity are mutually reinforcing entities that drive actions and behaviors. In a qualitative interpretive study, O’Connor (2008) suggested there is continuum of caring that is influenced by personal beliefs and professional demands and pointed to the intricate and interwoven nature of personal and professional identities for teachers in particular. O’Connor (2008) defines caring as, “those emotions, actions and reflections that result from a teacher’s desire to motivate, help or inspire their students” (p. 117), while identity refers to, “the means by which individuals reflexively and emotionally negotiate their own subjectivity” (p. 118). Not all teachers care equally for their students. Interestingly, the study
differentiated between the professional duty to care for students and the more personal relational caring about students. O’Connor (2008) offered three different types of teacher caring: performative, professional, and philosophical/humanistic, which highlights the tension between the personal and professional selves. For some, the choice to care stems from a humanistic orientation to education (O’Connor, 2008), while for others it is seen as a professional obligation or as a motivational technique to support academic achievement. This highlights the cognitive dissonance articulated by Hargreaves (2001, as cited in Shapiro, 2010) and supports the notion that teachers’ care is a reflection of their ideological orientations towards education.

Furthering this work, Freedman and Appleman (2008) and Hsieh (2015) support the idea that a professional identity based on ideological orientation may support teacher self-efficacy and retention. The researchers presented a comparative case study and an ethnographic case study and portraiture that explored the role of identity in classroom practice and professional retention. Freedman and Appleman (2008) presented findings from case studies of five novice teachers in an urban teacher preparation program to investigate what program features in teacher preparation programs support teachers in staying in urban schools. The program challenged teachers to interrogate their social identities and with that interrogation shift the way they interact with students. The study found that identity both shapes and impacts career trajectory. While some of this identity was developed prior to entering the program the study implies it can also be fortified during preservice training. Particularly relevant, they found that identity ties that strengthened teacher commitments to the profession involved realizing where they shared common humanity with their students, or seeing the ways in which the
school system was not seeing their students’ full humanity. Fostering a sense of self-efficacy was also found to be critical in supporting teachers in staying in the profession and in urban schools.

In a grounded theory analysis of semi-structured interviews and observation data gathered with three beginning teachers at an ethnically diverse urban high school in the San Francisco Bay Area, Hsieh (2015) investigated identity construction as “iterative, negotiated, and socially situated” and articulated three teacher identity orientations: self, classroom and dialogic (p. 179). The self-oriented identity is described as a teacher’s own educational experience and subsequent image of teaching. This identity proves limited by its fixed nature which led the teacher to validate ineffective classroom practices because it maintained their image of good teaching. The classroom-oriented identity is formed through classroom practice and is described as a fluid identity, in a constant state of flux based on each lesson or experience. This fluidity contributed to significant struggle for the teacher, who was continuously adopting new strategies. Of particular relevance to this study is the dialogically oriented teacher, whose identity is based on theory and informed practice. This teacher articulated beliefs and commitments that guided their classroom interactions in what is described as a consistent identity. Ultimately this consistency is posited as a grounding mechanism for new teachers to understand the why behind their actions, which may support retention in the profession.

O'Connor (2008) reminds us that there is individual interpretation and variance within disparate ideological viewpoints and these varying orientations contribute to a diverse range of teacher identities. It is often recognized that teachers must tend to the social and emotional
needs of their students if they are to expect their students to access content, yet the same is not considered for teachers. The O’Connor (2008) study offered integrating and normalizing teacher emotion as a counternarrative to patriarchal hegemony. Of note, O’Connor (2008) indicated that one logical consequence is that teacher professional development then must also tend to personal development. This harkens bell hooks’ (1994) notion of self-actualization, where she posits that teachers, “must be actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being if they are to teach in a manner that empowers students” (p. 15).

**Identity and Bias**

In a qualitative study of preservice teachers, Picower (2009) investigated white teachers’ racial ideologies through the use of interviews using a grounded theory method of analysis. According to the findings, some teachers entered their classrooms with problematic ideologies that contribute to their deficit perception of students of color. Often, teachers remain in settings that reinforce these biases rather than disrupt them, pointing to the need for criticality of teacher preparation programs in disrupting these deficit ideologies. Teacher education programs have an obligation to interrupt these ideologies and challenge white students’ hegemonic beliefs by integrating critical curriculum across teacher training, not solely in isolated multicultural classes.

Lueke and Gibson (2014) evaluated the impact of mindfulness, a core tenet of social emotional learning, on reducing the automatic activation of negative responses in a quantitative study. While the study participants were young adults ranging in age from 18-23, the findings have implications for new and beginning teachers. Results demonstrated that a
mere ten-minute mindfulness meditation reduced participant’s automatic activation on the Harvard Implicit Association Test measuring racial and age prejudice, causing them to show less implicit bias. Of importance is the idea that cultivating mindfulness, or a focused attention in the present moment, can free us from judgmental reactions based on past associations that may be based on bias. Implications of the study would suggest that mindfulness meditation over prolonged periods may lead to behavior changes toward the out-group, though this transference is not yet known. Given that mindfulness meditation outcomes have traditionally been more focused on intrapersonal implications, this study is significant in that it offers hope for the implication that mindfulness meditation can have on interpersonal relationships, ultimately of relevance for teachers entering classrooms where their students are from diverse cultural, racial, linguistic, gender, sexual orientation, religious or class backgrounds.

**The Social and Emotional Nature of Culturally Sustaining Teaching**

The history of education in the United States is one of forced systemic assimilation and acculturation, used to advance a white supremacist culture (Paris & Alim, 2017). Consequently, social identities and systemic oppression influence student-teacher interactions. As California’s diversity expands, teachers and students are increasingly from different ethnic, cultural, linguistic and social class groups (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020). The teaching force in public schools in California is predominately white at approximately 66% (Freedberg, 2018). Roughly paralleling the state’s population, California has an ever-diversifying student body; the student body in California’s public schools is 75% students of color (Freedberg, 2018). This racial mismatch has varied and complex consequences on
learning environments, in particular on student-teacher relationships and student outcomes. Teachers of color who have navigated and unearthed their own internalized oppression play an essential role in serving as both role models and understanding the lived experience of students of color, which can translate to the development of trusting student-teacher relationships (Partelow et al., 2017). Thus, furthering the case for developing teachers’ social, emotional, and cultural competencies as an equity issue in California.

The works of Ladson-Billings (1995), Valenzuela (1999) and Nieto (2017) explored the impact of the cultural mismatch that student and teacher demographics in California frequently dictates. In a three-year ethnographic study of immigrant Mexican and Mexican American student orientation to school and academic achievement Valenzuela (1999) articulates the impact of schooling experiences where students’ cultural, linguistic, and ethnic identities are not valued as assets and rather seen as barriers to assimilation. This ethnographic study revealed a dilemma of teachers believing students did not sufficiently care about school, while the students felt teachers did not sufficiently care about them. Valenzuela examined the divide between students’ view of caring and that of their teachers, where caring for students implied being fully seen for the complex individuals that they are, as opposed to a superficial judgment of their outward expression that is often rooted in implicit bias. Meanwhile, teachers’ definitions included a perception of how prepared they perceive the student to be as related to a reflection of the students’ orientation to school, or rather how much the student cares. These competing views can directly influence student outcomes and point to a fundamental difference in orientation towards relationships. This is similar to a tension articulated by Ladson-Billings (1995), underlying the student definition
of caring is an orientation to relationships as reciprocal, where the teacher orientation is a reflection of an assimilationist mindset that expects students to conform.

Ladson-Billings (1995) explored African American student achievement in a study of eight teachers in a small, predominantly African-American, low-income elementary school in Northern California. The study included teacher ethnographic interviews, classroom observations, videotaping teachers’ practice, and teacher interpretation and analysis of their own and colleagues’ practice. Teachers in the study supported student achievement at higher levels than their counterparts. Of particular interest is the notion of caring elevated beyond the individual student-teacher relationship to include a broader sense of caring for the wellbeing of the larger community and social justice, highlighting not only the importance of tending to the student-teacher relationship, but also the larger sociopolitical context in which that dynamic exists. In agreement with the importance of the sociopolitical context of schools, Nieto (2017) offers a vision for reconceptualizing multicultural education. Nieto deepens the lens by bringing a focus to power dynamics. Too often culturally relevant pedagogy manifests as what Hammond (2014) labels, “surface culture”, which fails to disrupt traditional power relations that impact student-teacher relationships (p. 22). As Valenzuela (1999) suggested regarding definitions of caring, in a hierarchical model the definition of those who hold power wins out. Nieto also integrated the notion of care, suggesting that a more relational orientation to education involves a revisioning of the goals of education. Overall, their work demonstrates that SEL is implicit in culturally relevant and responsive practices that prioritize the relational dimensions of teaching.
More recently Irizarry (2017) and San Pedro (2017) addressed the necessity of moving from culturally relevant and responsive to culturally sustaining practice and reiterated its inherently social and emotional nature. In a two-year ethnographic participatory action research study with Latinx high school students Irizarry explored students’ approaches to teaching as a grounded theory of culturally sustaining pedagogy in which students determined their own course content. Similarly, San Pedro conducted a three-year longitudinal classroom ethnographic study of an ethnic studies course and its impacts on multitribal and multicultural students’ motivation and engagement in school. Both studies explored the ways in which curricular content and pedagogy shape the learning environment and the role students play in that construction; simultaneously both studies suggested that centering students’ lived experiences is one way to counteract the negative impacts of Eurocentric content and norms.

Interestingly, Irizarry (2017) found that when in control of content students develop an advocacy stance that aims to leverage their learnings for larger communal goals as opposed to individual gain or benefit. Another key takeaway from Irizarry and San Pedro (2017) is that when students’ experiences are centered, their wisdom and assets are centered; this shift in power dynamics makes visible the often hidden nature of oppressive structures at play within the education system and that visibility transforms student experience from one of isolated individualism that can lead to internalized oppression to the learning environment as a liberatory space that actively affirms all aspects of self. Importantly, San Pedro demonstrated the power of reciprocal vulnerability as a trust building act that opened the door for students to bring their full selves into the content. Of equal importance is that both
these studies are reflective of the highly contextualized nature of this approach and that both attend to problematic power dynamics; both studies value students’ lived experiences through actively recentering them in the learning environment. These participatory spaces are precisely what Jagers et al. (2019) describe as transformative SEL; the learning environment as a space to heal the legacy of racial colonialism and simultaneously develop the individual and collective tools to build an alternative future.

**Culturally Sustaining SEL**

Several models have been developed to address the critique of traditional SEL as color-evasive and rooted in white, middle-class norms, and move the field to a more expansive version of SEL (Table 2). Recently Ramirez et al. (2021) offered a number of categories that encompass many of the major critiques of traditional SEL: culturally sustaining SEL, social justice oriented SEL, transformative SEL, trauma-sensitive SEL, and equitable SEL. Jagers et al. (2019) argued that TSEL shifts the aim from skill development, and its hyper focus on the individual, towards a participatory stance. TASEL, or Transformative Abolitionist SEL, suggested further aligning SEL with an abolitionist framework to decenter Eurocentric norms (DeMartino et al., 2022). Social Emotional Learning for Social Emotional Justice is an additional framework (Higheagle Strong & McMain, 2020) that centers social justice values as well as the reciprocal and relational dynamics of education. Themes present amongst these frameworks are a call to center the collective, call attention to and confront systemic oppression, and center the lived experience of minoritized students as the guiding orientation of SEL. Embedded in all of these approaches is a desire to build awareness of societal inequity and the inter- and intra-personal skills to navigate current reality while
simultaneously creating the conditions for a different, more equitable future. Additionally implied, both implicitly and explicitly, in all of these models is the role of the teacher implementing these practices and the necessity of their development in regard to skills, ideological orientation, and personal social, emotional and cultural competence. However, what is found in the literature is cultural adaptations of SEL programs for students that decenter the role of the teacher and place undue emphasis on the curriculum.

Table 1

*Frameworks Critiquing Traditional SEL as described by DeMartino et al. (2022), Higheagle Strong & McMain (2020), and Jagers et al., (2019)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framework with Authors</th>
<th>Critique of traditional SEL</th>
<th>Key Distinguishing Features</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TSEL (Jagers et al., 2019)</td>
<td>Center the collective Call attention to and confront systemic oppression Center lived experience of minoritized students Inclusion of teacher development</td>
<td>Participatory stance rather than skill development focus Call to civic action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TASEL (DeMartino et al., 2022)</td>
<td>Center the collective Call attention to and confront systemic oppression Center lived experience of minoritized students Inclusion of teacher development Decenter Eurocentric norms</td>
<td>Alignment with abolitionist framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Emotional Learning for Social Emotional Justice (Higheagle Strong &amp; McMain, 2020)</td>
<td>Center the collective Call attention to and confront systemic oppression Center lived experience of minoritized students Inclusion of teacher development</td>
<td>Centers social justice values Reciprocal and relational dynamics of education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A quasi-experimental design (Castro-Olivo, 2014) and randomized delayed treatment control design (Graves et al., 2017) explored the efficacy of culturally responsive SEL programs with middle and high school Latino Multilingual Learner male students and PreK-5th grade African American male students. Both studies were located in urban cities in the United States and are adaptations of the Strong Start SEL curriculum. Of principal interest to both these studies were the effects of the program intervention on student skill development. Strikingly, neither study required significant training on the part of the intervention implementers.

In the case of Castro-Olivo (2014) the implementers were intentionally selected; two certified bilingual Latina teachers with master’s degrees were provided a four-hour training on the SEL needs of multilingual learners and the theory behind the SEL program and the cultural adaptations that had been made to the curriculum, in addition to an overview of the Jovenes Fuertes program. Teachers in this study were observed and provided weekly feedback and consultation. Noteworthy is the limited initial training, the intentional selection of teacher implementers and the researcher’s choice to describe the ethnic background and training of the teachers. This indicates an understanding of the importance of who the practitioners are, but implies that the social, emotional or cultural competence required to effectively implement the intervention was either inherent or could be acquired in four hours. Granted, the on-going weekly feedback sessions may have been impactful in developing the teachers’ capacities over time for further implementation. Interestingly, Graves et al. (2017) did not state the racial, ethnic, or gender of the intervention implementers; the study simply stated that two doctoral students provided the intervention and the description of training
provided was very limited. This furthers the implication that for SEL to be effective the content is what matters rather than the relational dynamics in the classroom or the social, emotional and cultural competence of those implementing SEL.

**Teacher Social Emotional Learning**

A Gallup (2013) poll ranked teaching as among the highest stress professions surveyed and found that it has comparable levels of stress to that of nurses and physicians. Nearly half of all teachers report experiencing high levels of stress on a daily basis (Gallup, 2013) and that number has only grown since the pandemic. A recent survey of teachers by the National Education Association [NEA] (2022) revealed that 91% of those surveyed consider pandemic-related stress a serious problem and 90% report that feeling burned out is a serious problem. Many of those who remain in the profession report feeling overwhelmed due to student demands (McCallum & Price, 2010; Schonert-Reichl, 2017), in part indicating the need for higher levels of social and emotional preparation prior to entering the classroom. This also indicates the need for increased student mental health support, lower student to counselor ratios, and other social welfare programs that mitigate the effects of poverty, violence and trauma. In fact, 94% of teacher respondents in the NEA survey also indicated that increasing mental health support for students would ameliorate teacher burnout.

Oberle and Schonert-Reichl (2016), Corbin et al. (2019), and Garner et al. (2018) provided quantitative data that demonstrates both the impacts of stress in the classroom and the need for SEL for teachers. All three were randomized experimental control studies. Oberle and Schonert-Reichl (2016) used the stress contagion theory, which suggests that stress can pass from one person to another in a shared social setting to explore student
cortisol levels in relationship to teacher stress and burnout factors. It was the first study of its kind, and it addressed teacher stress and student physiological stress regulation; the experiment took place in 17 classrooms at 13 different school sites with 406 4th through 7th graders from a large urban public school district in Canada. While causality could not be inferred, there was a positive correlation between teacher stress levels and student morning cortisol levels. The question that remains is what direction does the stress flow, from teacher to student or student to teacher? Hence, further research on the impact of teachers’ social and emotional competence is essential. Garner et al. (2018) investigated whether an SEL and mindfulness intervention would increase teacher mindfulness and social and emotional competence and improve their perception of student misbehavior. The study looked at how mindfulness-based practices (MBP) and SEL intervention impacted 87 pre-service early childhood teachers. The findings from the intervention group showed an increase in mindfulness and a positive impact on teachers’ competence in perceiving, understanding and regulating emotions.

Similar to the Oberle and Schonert-Reichl (2016) study, Garner et al. (2018) did not include measures of teachers' interactions with students, which is where Corbin et al. (2019) moves the field forward. In a study involving 2047 students, 145 teachers and 27 urban high-needs schools Corbin et al. analyzed how teachers’ perceptions of relationships with students determined levels of efficacy and/or emotional exhaustion. Teachers who reported more conflictual relationships had higher levels of emotional exhaustion while those with closer relationships reported higher levels of personal accomplishment. This extends the Oberle and Schonert-Reichl study to look at the impact of student-teacher relationships.
Historically, similar research has explored how relationship quality impacts student outcomes, rather than teacher efficacy and burnout. These findings implore us to further investigate how preparing teachers to manage the social and emotional demands of their classrooms might improve efficacy and ameliorate attrition rates. Of additional consequence is the question of bidirectional associations that Oberle and Schonert-Reichl (2016) raised as related to student-teacher relationship quality and teacher burnout and stress. This invites future studies that explore this directionality. These studies unequivocally indicate that teacher preparation programs need to adapt their practices to reflect the research about the importance and effectiveness of SEL for teachers. However, as previously noted, SEL without cultural relevance and responsiveness can perpetuate hegemonic ideologies (Camangian & Cariaga, 2021).

In an important contribution to the field Warren et al. (2020) conducted a critical race analysis of three urban high school teachers’ classroom behavior and professional decision making to explore their social and emotional competencies with black boys. The study took place over 16 weeks and involved analysis of 1500 minutes of classroom recordings and teacher individual interviews. Of interest to the researchers were teachers’ thoughts and feelings about their work with diverse youth, how their own understanding of context influences their professional decision making and the teachers’ physical behavior during interpersonal exchanges with students. In particular, the researchers investigated teacher dispositions and behavior interactions. One significant finding was that teacher identity, defined as “self-concept, understanding of their own race-gender identity, and why they teach - in the social context where they were teaching” deeply influenced how teachers navigated
interactions with their students (p. 268). Although the generalizability was limited due to the sample size, the study is an important contribution to the field in examining teacher social and emotional competence and its influence on classroom practices. Educator racial/ethnic identity development was identified as a critical component of TSEL.

**SEL and Teacher Education**

California articulates its orientation towards and intended goals for SEL in the Teacher Performance Expectations [TPE] and the California Standards for the Teaching Profession [CSTP] in TPE and CSTP 2: Creating and Maintaining Effective Environments for Student Learning. In TPE 2 it is clear that teachers are expected to create culturally responsive learning environments that promote students’ social and emotional growth (CTSP, 2016). Of note is that the CSTPs are not as explicit in their call for cultural responsiveness. The CSTPs state that teachers are expected to create learning environments where students are treated fairly and with respect, creating an environment where they feel emotionally safe. There is a notable emphasis on minimizing problematic behaviors to optimize student learning (CTSP, 2009). While the CSTPs mention creating equitable environments and ensuring students develop an appreciation for diversity (CTSP, 2009), the language contained in the standard leaves room for individual interpretation and prioritization than the TPEs. Of significance is how this can be interpreted as framing teachers as merely implementing the objectives outlined in the standards. A necessary reframing of SEL would convert the profession from one where emotional neutrality is expected to one where emotion, both students’ and teachers’, is embraced and supported.
While SEL may not yet be widely incorporated into pre-service teacher training, there are
an increasing number of professional development opportunities offered to teachers from
which we can draw insight. Taylor et al. (2015) and Jennings et al. (2017) explored two
training programs in urban school districts. The Taylor et al. study involved 59 elementary
and secondary Canadian teachers in a mixed method, pre/post/follow-up randomized control
study where teachers participated in a 9-week mindfulness training program that involved 36
contact hours of training and utilized multiple surveys and interviews to analyze the impact.
Jennings et al. studied Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE for
teachers), a professional development program aimed at improving teachers’ social and
emotional competencies through mindfulness that involved 33 elementary schools in high
poverty neighborhoods in New York. Noteworthy is that it had the largest sample size of its
kind to date, with 224 participating teachers. According to the results, 30 hours of in-person
training and inter-session phone consultation resulted in modestly higher levels of emotional
support in classrooms, which parallels the findings from Taylor et al. that the mindfulness
teacher training improved teacher efficacy in dealing with the social and emotional needs of
their classrooms, confirming that teacher social and emotional competencies do impact the
learning environment. Both studies also demonstrate reductions in job related stress and
suggest that emotional regulation was a key factor in reducing job stress, which is of
potential significance to teacher attrition rates. Of particular interest, the Taylor et al. study
found significant differences in teachers’ situational compassion for their most challenging
students, suggesting that teachers’ social and emotional competencies are of consequence to
student-teacher interactions and relationships.
A narrative inquiry case study of a teacher preparation program at a small private university on California’s central coast examined the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are necessary for teachers to effectively establish SEL learning environments (D’Emidio-Caston, 2019). Noteworthy in the study is the shift from centering teaching SEL as a means to academic outcomes to supporting students’ sense of belonging. The study focused on the importance of self-reflection and meta-processing as essential skills for teachers, though they continue to frame SEL as the teacher’s response to students with behavioral issues or toxic stress levels. SEL was positioned as an antidote to student trauma rather than a supportive tool for teachers themselves. The preparation program did take an embedded practice approach where teachers are asked to embody the practices they will then ask of students, similar to recommendations by Swanson et al. (2019), but was limited as are findings by Taylor et al. (2015) and Jennings et al. (2017) in that they did not address incorporating culturally responsive pedagogy.

**SEL and Culturally Relevant, Responsive and Sustaining Education**

*A Critique of an “Acultural” SEL*

The origin of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) has its roots in a reorientation towards teaching that challenges the programmatic reform paradigm. Culturally relevant pedagogy points to a more reciprocal or dynamic enterprise that exists in student-teacher relationships, asserting that rather than perpetuate an assimilationist approach to education that schools and teachers are called upon to affirm students’ identities and cultures (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Just as culturally relevant pedagogy, Culturally Responsive Teaching also emphasizes the role and responsibility of the teacher to extend their worldview
and understand the foundational aspects and contributions of diverse ethnic groups (Gay, 2002). Included in both these pedagogical approaches is the necessity to understand the dynamics of and challenge the larger societal and structural inequities. These pedagogical approaches then suggest that teacher preparation and training support teachers in understanding the role culture plays, both their own and those of their students, in the dynamic enterprise of teaching and learning. In 2012, Paris moved these concepts further with Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy which refers to explicitly centering cultural dexterity and plurality as a necessary component of teaching and describes a continued presence as the differentiating factor from relevance or responsiveness. One of the core tenets of culturally relevant, responsive, and sustaining pedagogies is that students are situated as subjects rather than objects (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

SEL in its most pervasive iteration doubles down on hierarchical classroom management approaches that require student obedience and compliance (CJSF, 2020; Simmons, 2021) and positions students as objects to be managed or controlled. Simmons (2021) posits there are two opposing orientations to SEL in our current climate; one that proposes SEL as strategies for white students to attain college and career readiness skills, while the other is a management tool used to support students of color in navigating school as a source of trauma. Within this dichotomy SEL is treated as a curriculum that serves to achieve a particular outcome rather than orienting to it as inherently valuable in its own right for students and teacher wellbeing (Soodjinda, 2021). When used in this way, SEL nullifies the importance of the individual context and becomes a tool of oppression for students of color (Soodjinda, 2021).
Further, many SEL programs have secular mindfulness-based practices as their foundation, which pull from the teachings of a handful of white mindfulness practitioners who traveled to India and other parts of Asia in the 1970s and brought those practices to the West. Inevitably those practices have been translated through the worldview of those practitioners, which is the transference of practices from a collectivist-oriented culture to an individual oriented culture (Yang, 2017). In contrast, “a culturally-affirming social-emotional learning relates students back to their ancestry while recognizing and addressing trauma,” (CJSF, 2020). While contemporary SEL is wider in scope than its programmatic predecessors, in its current iteration SEL is still limited in regard to being culturally responsive to students, particularly for those from cultures that have a collectivist orientation (Jagers et al., 2019) or historically marginalized communities (Camangian & Cariaga, 2021).

**In Practice**

Barnes and McCallops (2019) investigated the lack of research on if and how teachers weave culturally responsive pedagogy into SEL in a case study that involved focus groups with seven participants at a private school in the Northeastern United States that serves a linguistically and racially diverse student body of PreK-5th grade. Interestingly, yet not surprisingly, the study participants were all white females, so the school and teaching demographics are representative of the larger cultural mismatch between students and teachers in the U.S. Similar to D’Emidio-Caston (2019) and Swanson et al. (2019), training was determined as essential to provide the necessary skill set to implement SEL. Teacher self-efficacy in teaching SEL was critical and that utilizing the program in their personal and professional life helped them become better teachers and implement SEL with more ease.
This supports the shift in moving beyond SEL solely for academics into improving both the teacher and students’ social and emotional competence for the benefit of self and the student-teacher, teacher-student relationship.

Swanson et al. (2019) presented a narrative inquiry case study and Nenonene et al. (2019) shared a reflective exploration of a two-year Professional Learning Community (PLC) process of embedding the Social and Emotional Dimensions of Teaching and Learning (SEDTL) into their curriculum for pre-service teachers through Social, Emotional and Cultural (SEC) competences in their respective teacher preparation programs. The narrative inquiry explored a three-semester combined MA and teacher credential program that is located at a large, urban university in Northern California, while the reflective exploration was located in the Midwest of the United States, at a mid-sized, private university. Like Barnes and McCallops (2019), D’Emidio-Caston (2019), Swanson et al. (2019) and Nenonene et al. (2019) did not orient to SEL being a stand-alone concept, they saw it as integral to all aspects of teaching and learning. In fact, during their PLC process the faculty in the Nenonene et al. program came to regard the SEDTL and culturally responsive teaching as interconnected and critical elements of effective practice. Similar to the study by Barnes and McCallops, teachers in the Swanson et al. program expressed their struggle with enacting the values of SEL without sufficient training for themselves. Though limited to project-generated artifacts, the two questionnaires that were implemented in the Nenonene et al. program highlighted that faculty reported exploring assumptions and modeling these practices in their courses to a greater extent than including opportunities for teacher candidates to practice and reflect. This orientation was further reflected in the description of
the faculty’s perception of their role as shifting from a focus on supporting K-12 students’ SEL to believing there to be a benefit for college students’ “academic learning and personal growth” (Nenonene et al., 2019, p. 111). In contrast, the Swanson et al. program uses SEC to address the gap in previous SEL practices and support teachers in holding their values at the forefront of student interactions and conflict in the classroom, allowing teachers to respond with intention rather than react from emotional dysregulation. Both studies identify important next steps to further explore teacher candidate beliefs and implementation of the SEDTL through a culturally responsive lens.

**Summary**

These studies, not to mention the many more works examining student academic outcomes related to SEL interventions (Domitrovich et al., 2017, Durlak et al., 2011; Mahoney et al., 2018, Payton et al., 2008), demonstrate that while there is a plethora of research on SEL, the focus on SEL for teacher competence is nascent. Moreover, further exploration is needed on the intersection of how teacher identity and social and emotional competency development in pre-service and in-service training impacts teacher beliefs, perceptions, and practices and consequently student-teacher relationships. Historical context and current sociopolitical conditions call for deep intentionality when preparing teachers to enter diverse classroom settings. Further, the integration of culturally responsive pedagogy into SEL is identified as both critical and largely unaddressed, which is quite frankly unacceptable. These findings invite a further exploration of the experience of teachers in preservice and in-service training programs that embed SEC and the impact of their
preparation on their own social and emotional competence, self-efficacy in teaching SEL through a culturally responsive lens, and consequent student experience in their classrooms.
Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction

This qualitative phenomenological case study explored the bridge between identity, beliefs, perceptions and actions at the intersection of culturally responsive social emotional learning. In particular, the study revealed how the development of a Social, Emotional and Cultural (SEC) lens shifts teachers’ beliefs and how those beliefs translate into classroom practices. The study explored this issue with in-service elementary school teachers who participated in training on the development of a SEC lens in an urban K-8 school district in Northern California. The research was conducted with a series of three in-depth interviews and a classroom observation. Ultimately, this research may contribute to the on-going reframing of socioemotional learning as transformative (Jagers et al., 2019) and culturally responsive (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020).

Research Questions

This study explored the following research questions connected to the development of a teacher Social, Emotional and Cultural lens:

1. How does the SEC lens inform the professional identity of the focal elementary school teachers?

2. How does the development of a SEC lens influence the focal teachers’ beliefs and perceptions in relation to developing trusting relationships with students?

3. How do teachers’ responses to minoritized students reflect, or counter, an SEC lens?

4. How, if at all, does the focal teachers’ practice align with beliefs after developing an SEC lens?
The CRTWC Anchor Competencies Framework (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020) was the conceptual framework for this study. Of particular significance is the bidirectional nature of the Framework, which emphasizes the necessity of tending to both teacher social, emotional and cultural development and the relational dynamics of classrooms. Equally important is the implication of what Paris (2012) refers to as continued presence; the rings of the Framework invite an iterative process that implies development is cyclical rather than linear. The study design reflected this cyclical nature through the use of the third interview; the essence of the third interview was to return to the content of the previous two interviews from a different vantage point to make and confirm meaning (Seidman, 2006). The study design built upon the concept of relational trust developing through both a continued and cyclical presence; the interviews and classroom observation uncovered the beliefs and perceptions that undergirded teacher actions with the exploration centered on how the SEC mindset permeated teacher identity and then influenced the learning environment.

Of principal interest to this study was the development of trusting relationships between teachers and students; it was the guiding Anchor Competency in the Framework because the implications of Building trusting relationships affects all the other competencies (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020). Relational trust is determined by relationships between students and teachers and parents and the larger school community (Robinson & Gray, 2019); given the centrality of their role in the classroom, teachers are called upon to create a context in which trusting relationships are fostered and can unfold. However, when the history of public schooling in the United States centers around assimilation and acculturation for students and
families of color (Paris & Alim, 2017) distrust is a logical orientation to the classroom. In high poverty schools as many as 60% of students enter school mistrusting their teachers and classmates (Bergin & Bergin, 2009 as cited in Watson et al., 2019). We know that trust is a significant factor that contributes to minoritized students’ experience of school (Khalifa, 2018); building trust happens over time, through each interaction (Robinson, 2011) and is therefore in a constant state of flux. This returns us to the importance of continuity (Paris, 2012), which implies there is a conscious intention behind each individual teacher action or move. The study design explored this dynamic interplay between the teacher as an individual, their capacity for self-awareness and by extension intentional action and the consequences that were implied for their students (Lueke & Gibson, 2014), in the second interview.

This study proposed centering the relational dimension in classrooms as an important strategy in disrupting the perpetuation of a white middle class dominant consciousness in public K-12 education in the U.S. (Anyon, 1980; Picower, 2009). The Anchor Competencies Framework provides a theoretical and practical roadmap towards this reorientation. Both the Teacher Moves and the Developing the Lens rings of the Framework provide the “how” teachers may move the theory into practice, while the Framework’s seven Anchor Competencies offer the “what” aspect (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020). The Framework is grounded in SEL, culturally responsive pedagogy, restorative practices and trauma-informed practices and consequently offers the language that the researcher used to evaluate teacher responses regarding their perceptions and actions during the interviews. In particular, the interviews illuminated how the concepts of care embedded in culturally responsive teaching
(Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2017; Valenzuela, 1999) inform teacher action. Implicit in the in-depth interview methodology was a focus on language as a process of meaning making (Seidman, 2006).

This qualitative research design employed a phenomenological case study approach to explore teacher social, emotional and cultural development and the implications the SEC lens has on classroom practice. It positioned teacher social, emotional and cultural capacity as a prerequisite to building relational trust and responding constructively across differences (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020) and inquired about the role the SEC lens played on teacher identity. Thick and rich descriptions of teacher experience and practice were gathered through a series of three in-depth interviews and a classroom observation. Subsequent data analysis was aimed at unpacking the interaction and interplay between teacher identity and teacher practice as they related to the teachers’ SEC lens.

The research questions guiding this study were directed at illuminating how the Framework informs teachers’ beliefs and perceptions of the relational dynamics in the classroom and then how, if at all, those beliefs and perceptions were reflected in their practice. The following are the four guiding principles of the Framework:

1. Teachers’ SEC competencies are instrumental in implementing the framework

2. SEC competencies are interconnected to the sociopolitical, cultural, community and individual context

3. SEC competencies are rooted in culturally responsive pedagogy, trauma-informed practices and restorative practices
4. SEC competencies are critical to creating equitable learning environments that foster academic achievement and student and teacher resilience (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020).

**Methods of Data Collection**

The study design investigated the intersection of teachers’ “skills, knowledge, and habits” (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020, p. 33) regarding the SEC lens. Interview questions (See Appendix C) used over the span of three interviews were developed to intentionally elicit responses that reflect teacher social, emotional and cultural capacity, the first principle of the Framework. The first interview explored the role that emotion and identity play (O’Connor, 2008; Shapiro, 2010) in the adoption of the SEC lens. The classroom observation provided the context to evaluate how those capacities manifested in action through culturally responsive pedagogy, trauma-informed practices and restorative practices. Classroom observations were conducted with the use of an adaptation of the CRTWC Observation Protocol (N. Kwan, personal communication, January 14, 2022) (See Appendix D). While the CRTWC Observation Protocol is focused on scripting evidence of the Anchor Competencies, the adapted version categorizes both evidence and areas where practice is in contradiction to the Anchor Competencies. Following the classroom observation with a second interview provided a space to dissect how the teachers’ awareness of context influenced and guided their actions. Questions in this interview focused on illuminating the interplay between the internalized SEC lens and teacher bias, awareness and action (Picower, 2009) (See Appendix C). The utilization of a case study design reflected the study’s internal prioritization of context as critical (Creswell et al., 2007). A noteworthy strength of the
Framework is that it also centers context as imperative to this work and requires teachers to reflect on, be aware of, and tend to their positionality and the intersection of the individual in the collective. The opportunity to observe teacher practice via classroom observations was instrumental in illuminating how the internalization of a culturally responsive SEL (Barnes & McCalllops, 2019; Jagers et al., 2019; Nenonene et al., 2019; Swanson et al., 2019) was integrated into teacher practice.

**Role of Researcher**

My current work offers me a lens into teacher education from a number of different vantage points. Primarily, I work as Adjunct Faculty at three universities where I teach courses in teacher education. As Adjunct Faculty I am responsible for the creation of course content, adjusting assignments to ensure they operate under the guidelines of Universal Design for Learning, providing feedback and evaluating student work. This work often happens in collaboration with a larger instructional team, as an orienting goal of one of the institutions is to embed culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices across course content. I also work as a Teacher Supervisor at San José State University where I support teacher credential candidates during their student teaching experience. The aim of this work is to engage in multiple cycles of critical reflection to improve practice. By observing instruction and providing evaluative feedback, the student teachers and I engage in critical conversations to promote equity and belonging in their learning environments. In these positions I aim to support teachers in developing their own social, emotional and cultural competency; I model the practices that I believe will be best supportive of them and
their students. I am committed to supporting teachers in creating classroom communities that reflect the values of social justice and equity.

My professional roles as Adjunct Faculty and Teacher Supervisor did not pose any significant challenges for me in my role as practitioner in this study. I do not directly work with any teachers in the district where the study took place. In the recruitment stage of the study, I sent an email to potential participants in which I disclosed my professional positions and described my orientation to the work as a fellow educator that aimed to validate their experiences as classroom teachers in a way that may support others in the profession. I ensured that participants were aware at each phase of the study that they were able to opt out of the study at any time and reiterated the measures implemented to provide confidentiality. Noteworthy is that my roles in teacher education are secondary to my role as a researcher in this study, and as such I, to as great an extent as possible, set aside my personal beliefs, experiences and opinions in order to be an effective and trustworthy researcher.

It would be remiss not to state that I first began a relationship with CRTWC in the spring of 2021 when I reached out to Dr. Nancy Markowitz and inquired about their work. That initial series of email exchanges led to a meeting and subsequent on-going mentorship that has lasted the duration of this study. Dr. Markowitz and the CRTWC staff invited me to observe their Educator Institute professional development training in the spring of 2022 and I have met with Dr. Markowitz several times since then to gain further insight into their work and engage in critical dialogue around the SEC lens. I am not, however, an employee of CRTWC and the intention behind the connection is to more accurately understand and consequently observe the SEC lens in participants’ narratives and observations.
**Researcher Positionality**

Acknowledging that research practices have historically positioned participants as objects, I drew upon literature that seeks to decolonize research practices (Kinloch & San Pedro, 2014; Paris & Winn, 2013) with the intention of humanizing participants and creating a mutually beneficial experience in this study. According to traditional Indigenous communities, knowledge is gained through observation and experience and involves a manner of patient waiting for truth to unfold (Kimmerer, 2003). One must learn to identify patterns and their associated meaning, recognizing that a multiplicity of truths exist (Kimmerer, 2003); this implies a necessity to create a space in which the participants tell their story as they see it.

I entered this research as a white-bodied\(^3\) (Menakem, 2017), nonbinary foster parent and educator. My lived experience at the intersection of these identities and roles has deeply shaped my worldviews and ways of being. While my knowledge of and experience with culturally responsive social emotional learning brought me to this research, it was critical for me, as much as possible, to set this aside for the duration of this study in order to more fully hear the voice and story of the participants. I leveraged my positionality as a former elementary school teacher and current teacher educator to engage in the study from a place of

\(^3\) The use of this term is intended to state my racial identity and simultaneously acknowledge that whiteness is a social construct often used to reinforce white supremacy and therefore is both limited and problematic.
love, or rather, “the material and conceptual pursuit of our own or someone else’s humanity” 
(Laura, 2016, p. 215). While my current role is as a teacher educator, my orientation to this
study was that of working with the participants as a fellow educator for the benefit of the
larger teaching community. It is my sincerest hope that this dissertation sheds insight into a
path towards humanizing the teaching profession so that all members of the learning
community may thrive.

Research Setting

The research setting was in a public school district in the Bay Area of Northern California that has prioritized social emotional learning as a district-wide value. A purposeful sample of participants was drawn from a series of professional developments of 98 participating teachers that took place over two academic school years from 2017-2019 in a small urban K-8 school district in Northern California. Lakeview was selected due to their long-standing relationship with CRTWC and the district’s prioritization of social-emotional learning. The district has worked with CRTWC since 2017, a reflection of their commitment to this work over time. Lakeview values social emotional learning to such an extent that SEL is named as a focal point of the district’s mission: “Our mission is to provide every student with a strong foundation of academic, behavioral, and social-emotional skills to prepare them for success in a diverse, challenging, and changing world (“About Us” section, n.d.).

Additionally, the district has a designated SEL Instructional Coach who has worked with CRTWC for the last eight years. This prioritization of SEL is further reflected by the district’s offering CRTWC professional development to more than 100 teachers, coaches and administrators over the past five years.
Participants

The study included a purposive sample of four participants who are all currently employed by the Lakeview; three of the participants are elementary school general education classroom teachers and one is a TOSA Coach, who provides small group instruction for students alongside her responsibility of coaching teachers. Two of the participants are first grade teachers and one is a kindergarten teacher. All of the participants have been teaching for more than ten years, and two of the participants have been teaching for more than 20 years. Two of the participants identify as women of color, specifically Asian American and Pacific Islander, and the remaining two identify as white. One of the women of color participants identifies as a first-generation Chinese American.

All participants participated in a professional development training with CRTWC sometime between 2017-2019 and agreed to participate in the professional development, implying at least an initial interest or buy-in to this work. There was some difference in the level of training the participants received, though all participated in at least one semester-long training with CRTWC. While there were nine teacher-coaches and administrators in the Educator Institute in 2021, the sample for this study was drawn from the classroom teacher and TOSA population who participated in training in previous years to see how the lens impacts beliefs, perceptions and practices over time. The invitation to participate was sent to 26 schoolteachers serving K-5th grades students across 8 school sites on August 26, 2022. Table 2. provides a description of participant demographics.
Table 2

Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant background information</th>
<th>Grade level taught</th>
<th>Years teaching</th>
<th>Years teaching SEC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>1st Grade</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>1st Grade</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carla</td>
<td>TOSA</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All participants were assigned a pseudonym to protect their privacy. District and school site names have also been assigned pseudonyms to add an additional layer of anonymity. After the initial email was sent, Jessica and Lucy wrote back indicating interest within a week. When there was no further interest, the researcher requested that the HR contact from the district resend the email on September 13, 2022. When there was still no additional interest, the researcher requested another contact within the district share the information either via email, text or in-person. This resulted in Sharon and Carla joining the study. Individual follow-up emails were also sent by the researcher to the remaining TOSAs, but the emails were either not responded to during the data collection window or the potential participants replied with declines.

Research Design

This study’s design was a qualitative phenomenological case study. It reflected the three-interview series approach developed by Seidman (2006). It also included classroom observations to triangulate the data and offer in-depth and contextualized insight (Creswell et
al., 2007) of teachers’ perceptions of relational dynamics in the classroom and subsequent action. The phenomenological approach honors the importance of the individual teacher and their lived experience (Seidman, 2006). The case study framing reflects the contextual importance of the school district and larger community (Creswell et al., 2007). This study was situated in a unique and specific context; Lakeview has a multi-year investment in culturally responsive social emotional learning for teachers.

Seidman’s (2006) phenomenological interview approach was utilized to bring voice to the story of individual teachers as it relates to the development and enactment of a SEC lens. Classroom observations offered insight into how the teachers’ beliefs and perceptions translate into practice as well as offering a concrete experience to explore their beliefs and perceptions in-depth in the second interview. What may hold meaning for the researcher may not hold the same meaning for the teachers; contextualizing the second interview through classroom observation grounded both the researcher and participant in a mutually shared experience. A classroom observation where both the researcher and teacher were present provided a concrete set of practices to explore in the second interview, the focus of which was teacher practice. The study was considered a single instrument case study as it explored a single issue within the single bounded system of Lakeview School District (Creswell et al., 2007). Figure 2 illustrates how the study was conducted.
Figure 2

Research Design Flowchart

Instruments and Sources of Information

*Individual Interviews*

In identifying the methods most appropriate to conduct this study, the researcher considered the potential of interviewing to be exploitative in nature (Seidman, 2006). Interviewing as a method is not neutral, as there is an inherent power dynamic between the researcher and the participant (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). To account for this potentially harmful dynamic, the researcher built in measures to ensure that the participants’ story and perspectives were illuminated as they intended for them to be. This is where member checks (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018) at the start of the second and third interview became essential; participants were provided the opportunity to review the transcripts from their previous interview at the start of the subsequent interview. The researcher also provided an overview of their first-round coding at the start of the second and third interviews to confirm accurate interpretation of the participants’ answers and foster additional dialogue and trust around the
analytic process. After the final interview participants were emailed a copy of the third transcript for their review.

The study employed a third interview, which allowed the participant to make meaning of the content from the previous two interviews (Seidman, 2006). This also called upon the researcher, as much as possible, to set personal knowledge and experience aside in order to more accurately perceive the participants’ experiences. Additionally, a semi-structured approach allowed for a focused and adaptive exploration of the topic based on what arose in the interviews (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018), rather than enforcing an agenda that only addressed the topics of interest to the researcher. Looking at the individual interview from a relational perspective, the individual interview created an opportunity to engage in a generative exchange through in-depth discussion (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018).

Each of the three individual interviews were designed to last approximately 45-60 minutes each. The first interview gathered background information about the teacher and the formation of their identity as an educator. This interview served to build rapport with the participants prior to the classroom observation. It was also the ground upon which the researcher-participant relationship was built and tended to constructing a sense of “being togetherness,” otherwise described as an encounter that leaves one feeling understood (Van Manen & Van Manen, 2021). Questions focused on the participants’ identity development as they entered the teaching profession and explored how that identity interacts with the SEC lens. Topics covered entering the profession, formative identity development experiences, and what led them to participation in the CRTWC training (See Appendix C). Personal
narrative was intentionally utilized to elicit a self-description by the participant (Seidman, 2006).

Placing the observation after the first interview provided a concrete experience as the foundation of the second interview. Therefore, the second interview focused on the concrete details of the observation that reflected the participants’ SEC lens. Questions for the second interview were designed to examine the teacher moves during the observation as well as to understand the beliefs and perceptions that guided those actions (See Appendix C). Given the breadth and dimension of a Social, Emotional and Cultural lens, grounding the second interview in the context of the classroom observation intentionally narrowed the focus of the interview to a manageable scope.

As per Seidman’s (2006) design, the third interview focused on constructing meaning of the participants’ experience. While this meaning-making is not exclusive to the third interview, it was a central focus of this interview. The third interview served as a bridge between the intellectual and emotional aspects of the participants’ identity, beliefs and actions as they related to the SEC lens. Questions elicited the participants’ understanding of their development of the SEC lens and the role that plays in their teaching (See Appendix C).

Classroom Observations

Classroom observations were based on an adapted version of the CRTWC Classroom Observation Protocol (N. Kwan, personal communication, January 14, 2022) (See Appendix D) and took place in-person. To protect the privacy of the minor students in the classroom, observations were not recorded, and notes were taken by hand. Participants chose when they wanted to be observed and were asked to select a time period when they anticipated there
would be ample demonstration of their embodied implementation of the SEC lens. Since this study was not an evaluation of teacher enactment, rather an investigation of implementation to understand the potential of the SEC lens, the researcher opted not to have randomly assigned observations.

**Data Collection**

Data collection occurred between the months of September and November 2022 (See Table 3.) and took place both in person at Lakeview across the three school sites and over Zoom. A purposive sampling method was used to recruit four participants to take part in three in-depth, individual interviews and one classroom observation. The invitation to participate and relevant information about the study was disseminated via email and was sent to 26 schoolteachers and six Teachers on Special Assignment. Typically, the interviews were scheduled one week apart and the second interview was scheduled as close to the classroom observation as possible; in Jessica’s case the second interview occurred immediately after the classroom observation. Both Carla and Sharon’s second interviews took place within two days of the classroom observation. Due to a religious holiday, Lucy’s second interview occurred within one week of the classroom observation.

**Table 3.**

*Study Timeline and Sequence*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>September-October 2022</th>
<th>Individual Interviews Round I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September-November 2022</td>
<td>Classroom Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual Interviews Round II</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Individual Interviews Round III</td>
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</table>
Data Analysis

An inductive approach was employed through the use of observation to find “evidence” of the teacher SEC lens within the data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018; Saldaña, 2011). Participant interviews were coded with NVivo using an inductive approach that guided first and second round coding. Field notes from the classroom observations were coded manually. The Anchor Competencies Framework (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020) and the CASEL (2017) Core Competencies of SEL supported data analysis. As a case study the interview and classroom observation data were used to produce themes and categories from which the phenomenological approach was implemented to identify the “essence” and generate “meaning units” (Moustakas, 1994 as cited in Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Beginning with categorizing allowed for an organization of the data from which categories’ individual features and the interrelationships within categories were illuminated (Saldaña, 2015). Themes also supported in grouping the data to interpret it through short and distinct phrases that brought attention to both the apparent and underlying meaning (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, as cited in Saldaña, 2011). The researcher also made use of writing analytic memos throughout the data analysis process to make note of initial impressions and what warranted further exploration in subsequent interviews or the classroom observation. Analytic memos also provided an opportunity to form preliminary connections between cases.

Data from the study was then analyzed using descriptive, values and in-vivo coding to make meaning from the teachers’ individual stories (Saldaña, 2011, 2015) within the context of Lakeview to provide both a textural and structural account of the phenomena (Creswell et al., 2007). Descriptive coding supported the analysis of multiple sources of data in the case
study. The in-vivo coding used the participants’ own words as a source of meaning making, reflecting the importance of participants’ beliefs, values, and attitudes (Saldaña, 2011). As Saldaña (2011) states value coding, “...infers the ‘heart and mind’ of an individual or group’s worldview as to what is important, perceived as true, maintained as opinion and felt strongly” (p. 105). A significant benefit of value coding is the richness of depth that can be achieved though it can prove challenging to accurately perceive what is a value, attitude or belief. However, the ultimate goal was to explore teachers’ ethos, the intra- and inter- personal as well as cultural constructs (Saldaña, 2011) within their experience of developing and implementing an SEC lens. All coding was guided by NVivo software and was shaped by the literature review. NVivo was selected to support the analysis of cross-participant themes and the construction of a coding matrix to merge, refine and categorize first round codes into broader themes.

**Issues of Trustworthiness**

To accurately represent participants’ perspectives and thoughts, this study attended to issues of internal validity with an interview model that afforded participants the opportunity to construct meaning of their experiences in the third interview as a form of member check (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Additionally, classroom observations triangulated the interview data. Furthermore, the prolonged field engagement over a period of three months added to internal validity (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Observational measures were used to triangulate the interview data to reduce participant reactivity and social desirability bias from teacher self-reporting. Regarding issues of external validity, the three-interview method allowed the researcher to provide detailed information and thick descriptions of the teachers’
experience; external validity was further addressed with the use of purposeful sampling (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Reliability was ensured by data triangulation and providing an audit trail of each step in the research process. The researcher also engaged in peer examination to assure inter-rater reliability (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018).

An additional measure taken to ensure internal validity involved a 90-minute calibration session with the Executive Director of the CRWTC, Dr. Nancy Markowitz. CRTWC provided a video clip frequently used in the Educator Institute to highlight various dimensions of the Anchor Competencies Framework for the researcher to take notes on as if it were a classroom observation. The researcher viewed the clip and took notes using the CRTWC Classroom Observation Protocol in preparation for the meeting and then engaged in dialogue regarding what elements of the Anchor Competencies Framework were present. Overall, there was predominantly unanimous agreement; however, in all the instances where there was misalignment, it was a case of the researcher asserting that there were additional examples present. After dialogue, any instances of disagreement resulted in an expanded view of the Teacher Moves highlighted in the video clip.

**Ethical Considerations**

The intersection of teacher social and emotional development and critical or transformative SEL is a research area of significance for the current climate in U.S. schools. There is an abundance of research on social emotional learning for student outcomes, and recently an increased exploration of the effects of social emotional learning for teacher outcomes (i.e. self-efficacy, retention, well-being). Simultaneously, the field of social emotional learning for students has received significant criticism of perpetuating harm for
students of color. The literature review highlights the importance of social and emotional
development for teachers, the culturally sustaining nature of social emotional learning, and
the field’s initial inquiries into how the field of teacher education is navigating incorporating
this work into their programs.

This work reflects the researcher’s commitment to ethical research practices. The study
design was constructed with intention and thoughtful consideration for how to protect
participants from any harm during the course of the study, including physical or
psychological harm. All of the qualitative data gathered via the three-interview series and
classroom observations was anonymized and secured to protect participant confidentiality.
There was not any deception or deceptive tactics used in the course of the study. Prior to
beginning the study, the researcher met with the Superintendent and a Human Relations
representative of Lakeview to discuss the study purpose and potential benefits to participants
and any concerns they anticipated. The San José State University Institutional Review Board
approved this study prior to beginning research.

The study invitation was sent with the permission of the Lakeview district office, and was
sent from the researcher’s institutional email account, which is only accessible to the
researcher. The invitation to participate detailed the scope and significance of the study as
well as the rights and protections of the participants. Interested teachers were instructed to
respond via email; those who indicated interest in participating were provided a consent letter
via DocuSign. Forms were returned via DocuSign and stored in a password protected secured
file. Participants were given the option to have interviews take place over Zoom or in-person.
This accommodation was made in light of the COVID-19 health pandemic in order to ensure
maximum comfort for participants. At the start of each interview, participants were reminded that they were able to end the session at any time and were under no obligation to continue should they have wished to exit the study at any time. Classroom observations took place in-person and notes were recorded by hand during those observations. Classroom observations were not recorded to protect the privacy of the minor students in those classrooms. The anticipated risks associated with this study were minimal and ethical procedures for academic research were followed throughout each step of the study.

In order to maintain confidentiality, the names of participants were changed, in addition to the name of the school district. Each participant was assigned a code at the beginning of the study, which will serve as their identifier for the duration of the study in order to ensure anonymity. The list that identifies individual participants' names and their codes was handwritten and kept locked in a filing cabinet in my office where the researcher was the only one who had access to it. Participants had the option to have interviews take place via Zoom or in person. If the interviews took place over Zoom, Zoom will be used to record the interviews (only the audio file will be saved). The recordings were transcribed by Otter.ai and later used for data analysis. The recordings were not shared, though the participants had access to a copy of their own transcripts should they wish to review them. All recordings will be deleted 6 months after the end of the study. The transcription does not contain identifying information about the participants, as pseudonyms will be used. Digital transcript files and audio files will be stored on the researcher’s institutional google drive. Both the personal computer and the google drive have password protection and are only accessible by the researcher. The notes from classroom observations employed the use of pseudonyms and
were stored in the researcher’s home in a locked file that only the researcher has access to. When not in use the computer will be located at the researcher’s home locked in an office to which only the researcher has access. Any potentially identifying information such as name, school site, age, racial and ethnicity identity, number of years teaching and grade level taught was not attached to any of the transcript or recordings.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

This study was conducted at a specific socio-historical moment and the results were influenced by the role of the pandemic and the additional demands placed upon the teaching profession in this context. Given this context, teachers were provided the opportunity to conduct their interviews over Zoom. The study is not generalizable due to the sample size of the participants. An additional limitation is that the CRTWC Observation Protocol is more of a checklist than a developmental rubric. It is suggested that future research use an analytic rubric to offer more in-depth language and a developmental trajectory on the internalization of the SEC lens.

Delimitations

One delimitation of the study was that the participants were not beginning teachers. The limited inclusion of SEL in teacher preparation and the further issue of a lack of culturally responsive SEL in teacher preparation left the researcher with limited populations to work with for the purpose of this study. Nonetheless, this study offers insight into the importance of culturally responsive social emotional learning for those teachers who have been in the field and alludes to the significance of this work in teacher preparation.
It is noteworthy that while the intention of the research was to understand SEL as a dynamic enterprise this study does not elevate student voice. The researcher views the reframing of SEL as an on-going conversation that needs to be entered and discussed from a variety of vantage points. An initial inquiry into the topic warranted the focus of this study remain on teachers’ perspectives. Logical and necessary follow-up studies ought to look at this problem through the lens of the student and student experience in the learning environment. This was a significant limitation of the study and one that is suggested for future research.

Summary

A qualitative phenomenological case study was used to collect and analyze three-interviews and a classroom observation of classroom teachers regarding the development of an SEC lens and its implications on classroom practice. Classroom observations were used to triangulate the data obtained through the in-depth interviews to provide the contextualized insight of the case study. The data was analyzed using an inductive approach to produce themes and categories and then coded using descriptive, values, and in-vivo coding. Analytic memos were utilized throughout the data analysis process to gather first impressions, connections between cases and identify topics for further exploration in subsequent interviews.

This exploratory research study attempted to expand the field of existing literature and begin to answer the question of how teachers internalize social emotional learning in ways that are culturally sustaining and the implications that has for improved student-teacher relationships and the learning environment. The implications of the study point towards a
path forward to address the social, emotional, and cultural dynamics in the classroom from an equity lens.
Chapter IV: Key Findings

Introduction

This chapter revisits the research questions set forth in this study and captures emergent themes found across the participant narratives and shares additional findings that emerged during data analysis. The study purpose was threefold: (1) to investigate how teachers’ professional identities are informed by the SEC lens, (2) to explore educator beliefs as informed by an SEC lens, and (3) to uncover how those beliefs translate to action as it relates to culturally responsive social emotional teaching and learning. Four research questions guided this inquiry, from which a series of emergent themes surfaced across participants in regards to how the development of a SEC lens informs teacher identity and shapes teachers’ beliefs, perceptions and practices, in addition to two additional findings.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided an exploration of the development and enactment of an SEC lens of focal elementary teachers in the Lakeview school district.

RQ1: How does the SEC lens inform the professional identity of the focal elementary school teachers?

This research question mapped connections between personal experiences, professional preparation, training and experiences, and the SEC lens in relationship to the focal teachers’ professional identity. Although the participants’ experiences were varied and unique to each individual, predominant themes emerged across participant narratives through the use of comparative eclectic coding (Saldaña, 2021) between transcripts.
RQ2: How does the development of a SEC lens influence the focal teachers’ beliefs and perceptions in relation to developing trusting relationships with students?

This research question sought to understand how the development of the SEC lens informed the focal teachers’ beliefs and perceptions, with a specific focus on the core Anchor Competency of Building trusting relationships, since Building trusting relationships is the antecedent to the other Anchor Competencies. Without establishing trusting relationships, teachers will not be able to enact the other components of the Anchor Competencies authentically; this enactment would become performative. Participants’ beliefs and perceptions varied widely, though the superordinate theme internalization revealed commonalities amongst participants. Beliefs and perceptions were further dissected through the use of descriptors within the theme of internalization.

RQ3: How do teachers’ responses to minoritized students reflect, or counter, an SEC lens?

This research question aimed at unearthing how the focal teachers’ responses to minoritized students demonstrated their understanding and internalization of the intersection of culturally responsive teaching and social emotional learning. Descriptors within the theme of internalization served to categorize teacher responses across the narratives and classroom observations.

RQ4: How, if at all, does the focal teachers’ practice align with beliefs after developing an SEC lens?

This overarching research question aimed at synthesizing the information from the previous three research questions to highlight the relationship between the development of an
SEC lens and classroom practices. A process of comparative eclectic coding, involving the participant interview narratives and the classroom observation data, and analytic memo writing resulted in the saturation of analysis of the data generated in this study and the generation of a superordinate theme that went across participants and research questions. Internalization was then broken down into descriptors, to define the stage of internalization for each participant.

Internalization as a superordinate theme offers insight into both how the SEC lens informs the participants’ professional identities and demonstrates how their actions relate to, or in alignment with, their beliefs and perceptions. A four-tiered continuum was reflected by the data and appeared across the participants across RQ1, RQ2, RQ3 and RQ4: deeply internalized, strongly internalized, moderately internalized and weakly internalized. The levels of internalization are a reflection of the extent to which the participants’ narratives in the interviews and actions in the classroom observation are in alignment with the SEC lens and Anchor Competencies Framework. Additionally, the internalization level takes into account whether or not there is deficit mindset present in either the interview narratives or in the classroom observation.

Overall Emergent Themes

The analysis of in-depth interviews and classroom observations resulted in overall themes across participant narratives. Themes for RQ1 include: (1) teaching as relational, (2) joy, (3) equity as a guiding orientation, (4) disrupting traditional norms and (5) internalization. Shared themes between RQ1 and RQ2 include joy and internalization. Internalization was shared across RQ1, RQ2, RQ3 and RQ4. Table 4 depicts the shared themes that emerged
within and across the research questions. The following section will explain the emergent themes and offer examples from participant data.

**Table 4**

*Overall Emergent Themes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ1: How does the SEC lens inform the professional identity of the focal elementary school teachers?</th>
<th>RQ2: How does the development of a SEC lens influence the focal teachers’ beliefs and perceptions in relation to developing trusting relationships with students?</th>
<th>RQ3: How do teachers’ responses to minoritized students reflect, or counter, an SEC lens?</th>
<th>RQ4: How, if at all, does the focal teachers’ practice align with beliefs after developing an SEC lens?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching as Relational</td>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>Internalization</td>
<td>Internalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity as a Guiding Orientation</td>
<td>Internalization</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Disrupting Traditional Norms</td>
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<td>Joy</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Internalization</td>
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</table>

**SEC Lens and Professional Identity**

**Teaching as Relational & Joy.** A primary theme in the identity interviews was teaching as relational, a reference to the importance that relationships played both in the participants’ decisions to become teachers and in their description of their professional identities. Teaching as lineage emerged as a code within teaching as relational when three of the participants specifically referenced having family members that were educators influenced their decision to become teachers. Connected to the theme of teaching as relational is the theme of joy; all of the participants expressed the role that play, enjoyment, or love of teaching played in either their relationship development, their connection to the profession, or their decision to join the profession.
Jessica. Jessica originally went to school to become a doctor, out of a desire to make the world a better place. However, during her undergraduate degree she found teaching was her true calling and realized that she wanted to make a positive impact in the lives of children, “I kept just going back (to teaching) and seeing, like the difference I made in kids’ lives.” Due to cultural pressure from her parents, she finished her biology degree, but minored in education. She then went on to pursue her passion in education with a master’s degree and in the process changed her parents’ minds about the respectability of the profession. Making a difference in her students’ lives is important to Jessica, and part of that involves prioritizing her relationships with her students, which brings her joy, “I love hanging out with these kids, getting inspired by them and seeing them grow and meeting their potential and all that.” When asked what originally drew her to the SEC work, Jessica shared her relational orientation to the classroom, “I’ve always thought that like, I always saw my classes like a family. I’ve always wanted to make sure that students were comfortable.”

Lucy. Lucy knew early on that she wanted to become a teacher. Both having a mother who was a preschool teacher and a strong relationship with her third-grade teacher were influential in Lucy’s decision to become a teacher. In particular, Lucy connected the joy her mother experienced in the profession as a motivating factor, which relates to the theme of joy.

Yeah, no, I definitely think having a parent who was a teacher and modeling that and just seeing her work and the things that she did and that enjoyment. And then part of it was the, I think the relationship that [third grade] teacher had that really, like it was a tough year for me, I remember at home, and the teacher was a very solid piece in my life. And it was very much, you know, embracing it. Like he knew I kind of wanted to be a teacher, so he would leave me like, his extra worksheets. Then I would go home and play school with them.
Carla. Carla knew she wanted to become a teacher when she was in kindergarten. This decision was largely informed by having a parent who was a teacher and the positive relationships she developed with her teachers in elementary school. Noteworthy is the connection to play, or a source of joy, as an important factor in the relationship development.

…my kindergarten teacher came to my house. And she did that with all of our students. So, she came over and she played games with me, and she asked me to read, she asked me to bring me my favorite story. So, she read it to me. But I think that like having somebody that I had such a strong connection with, like immediately in school, was really motivating. My mom in fairness is also a teacher. So, I think that it's kind of like a family thing as well.

Sharon. Sharon described knowing that she wanted to be a teacher from an early age, but that it was not considered an option in her family, “But like I said, somewhere along the lines, I knew. I played a lot of teacher-students, my mom babysat kids. And so, we played a lot of school. We played around with it.” Again, the theme of joy appeared in Sharon’s description of her early relationship to the profession. Once she received permission from her parents to pursue the career, Sharon switched gears from her pre-med degree and began taking classes in education. She shared that she originally went into pre-med because she wanted to make a difference, which held true for her in the teaching profession, “Working with people, I always wanted to do something where I can help someone, ” which points to Sharon’s relational orientation to teaching. Sharon also had family members in education, though not in her immediate family. She describes how having family members as teachers provided a framework for her parents to accept her entering the profession:

Yeah, it's just kind of, kind of natural. It kind of runs in the family too like that. So, it's funny, my dad said, it was my dad that said, we see a teacher [in you]. There was also a majority of the administrators and the professors because everybody had to be
college level, they were on my dad's side. So, it's like he saw, he knew[s] what it looks like, I guess. And that allowed him to open up that possibility. And he may have had conversations with his brothers that said, this is not a bad thing. And I think part of that, so yeah, there's one, two, three. I know two, two of my uncles are administrators. One aunt is a professor of English, and she married someone that also works in the schools. So yeah, there's just a lot that laced in there now.

**Analysis.** Relationships were explicitly named as important and influential in the participants’ decisions to come to the profession. Half of the participants referenced important relationships with elementary school teachers, one from kindergarten and one from third grade, as influential in their decision to become teachers. A majority of participants named the relationship they formed with these teachers or the relationships they form with current students in their classrooms as significant factors in their enjoyment of school and teaching and one they attribute to informing their career trajectory. All participants expressed having relationships that contributed to their joining the profession. The overlap between *joy* and *teaching as relational* provides insight into the value of relationships and the values of the participants; all of the participants were drawn to a profession that brought them joy in some way through relationships.

Noteworthy is that Building trusting relationships is considered the foundational Anchor Competency upon which all other competencies depend. Without this competency the remaining six core Anchor Competencies are not attainable, and their enactment would be performative. Given that a majority of the relationships mentioned occurred prior to entering the profession, this indicates an alignment with the SEC lens, rather than being informed by the SEC lens.

**Equity as a Guiding Orientation.** *Teaching as relational* tied in with the emergent theme *equity as a guiding orientation*. All participants referenced an awareness of either
general or specific aspects of inequity in education as an issue that informed their identity and purpose for entering teaching.

**Jessica.** Once Jessica discovered that teaching was her passion, she wanted to better understand the education system, so she sought out education courses during her undergraduate degree. That is where she learned about systemic barriers in education and the role she might play in disrupting them:

> I should understand why I'm doing preschool and like what this whole system is. And so, I started taking equity classes at University on education. And then my eyes were just open to like, oh, my gosh, all these barriers that our students have. And I was like, oh, my gosh, I can totally make a difference.

Jessica then articulated her understanding that systematic racism is responsible for the structural inequities that students face, a counternarrative to the deficit framing of students’ facing educational barriers due to their backgrounds and abilities. She affirmed this position when asked about what kept bringing her back to teaching despite the family and cultural pressure to pursue medicine:

> But when I realized how, how many barriers were in place in education, health system, like there’s systematic racism, there's like the pipeline to prison and all that stuff. And I was just like, oh my gosh, if only parents and kids knew, like how this system worked and how they can get out of it or how we can fix it so that everyone can have an equal opportunity to, like better themselves. I was like, maybe that's the way and I kept just going back and seeing, like the difference I made in kids' lives, like some of them.

Again, Jessica’s agency and interest in not only impacting students’ lives, but the larger systemic inequities are present in her narrative. This excerpt also further corroborates Jessica’s orientation to *teaching as relational*, as we see her mention the relationship to parents and students and working together to build awareness and create change.
**Lucy.** Although Lucy shared that she is not someone who considers herself, “...the biggest social justice maker,” she expressed an interest in creating an equitable classroom environment through a shift in the traditionally hierarchical dynamic between teacher and students, which demonstrates her commitment to equity as well as her disposition to disrupting traditional norms in the profession. When asked about her professional identity, Lucy articulated her orientation to the teacher-student dynamic, further highlighting an orientation to teaching as relational:

I would say somebody who, whose goal is not just to teach reading, writing, math, but to teach to the child as a future citizen as a person of the world, as someone who deserves the same level of respect, as I, like the dynamic of child student-teacher, to me is more equitable. I feel that I want that piece to be imparted. As me, as a teacher, I'm not just your teacher, but I'm your thought partner, I’m your learning partner. I'm your guide, not just here to tell you how to learn. I guess that's kind of my identity as a teacher, someone who enjoys seeing the students challenge themselves and have those moments of AHA and feel rewarded when you see those little moments of just, just progress and growth.

Lucy’s view of the teacher as a thought partner and facilitator provide insight into her constructivist pedagogical orientations and her perspective that teaching is a relational profession.

**Carla.** Originally, when asked to describe her professional identity, Carla shared her social identity markers: white, upper middle class, highly educated, which indicated an awareness of her positionality in relationship to her students and the school community. When asked to share how she has developed her Social, Emotional and Cultural competence as an educator, Carla recalled a pivotal moment in her teacher credentialing program that points to her concern for creating equitable classroom environments:

And in the very first class that we attended, they talked a lot about the inequities and the uneven racial distribution of students that qualify for special education. And that
definitely sparked a lot of questions for me. So when, when we got deeper into the course, they were talking about that. So many of the different cultural aspects of students weren't recognized in the process. And you know, as a very white person, I thought that that was important for me to learn more about, so I started taking classes in African American Studies, and I actually went on to get a minor in African American Studies, because I was really actually concerned about that piece. And making sure that like, my lack of experience wasn't going to cloud my, my presence as a teacher.

**Sharon.** Sharon grew up unaware of the disparate socioeconomic status across the region where she lived. Her awareness of this disparity came once she started her first teaching position and saw that she was expected to teach a class of twenty-nine first graders. Sharon now operates from a place of understanding that different school sites have different needs and access to resources depending on their location, the community they serve and the economic resources of that community. She sees her role and identity as a teacher as someone who can support equity within the system and ultimately create change:

So yeah, I try to identify myself as someone that can make a difference. You know that also has a cultural background that is not typical of what we see, but I mean, to my benefit, I did grow up around here and went to schools around here. So, I've seen what is possible on the other side, and then I see this side. So, so I try my best to I guess navigate that and need the kids to that they'll go through me through that and realize what the world the possibilities and the differences…There are definitely two sides where I'm at….And then you've got this side of town here where day to day, they're taking care of younger kids. And they're a kid themselves. So, it kind of really just opened up my eyes to wow, okay, same town, definitely different sides…So right now, definitely, just making sure things are equitable, in a sense, okay. Yeah, whatever's offered to one the other gets as well. And if they do get, we do have to do some tailoring. So, we make sure translators are in place.

**Analysis.** All participants demonstrated an awareness of inequity and described the influence it played on their identity formation. An awareness of societal inequity, or within the education system, was a driving motivator for being in the profession for all of the participants. Participants made reference to systemic racism, the disproportionate
representation of African American students in Special Education, ensuring language is not a barrier to access, and shifting the teacher-student relationship to being more equitable. Further, all participants shared being drawn to the profession because they knew they would be making a difference in students’ lives and the world; in other words, the impact of their relationship with students was a motivating factor to joining the profession.

Both teaching as relational and equity as a guiding orientation are deeply tied to the Anchor Competencies Framework (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020). Primarily, being driven to provide Equity in teaching and learning illustrates that these participants are in alignment with the core goals of the Anchor Competencies Framework. Further, their commitment to reducing inequity highlights their sense of Responsibility for the greater good, another goal of the Anchor Competencies Framework. Additionally, this orientation reflects the Context ring of the Framework, specifically the taking into account the sociopolitical context in regard to their classrooms and family/individual student context. It also highlights the participants’ capacities for reflection, which is part of the Developing the Lens ring. Equity as a guiding orientation informs and intersects with a subsequent theme, disrupting traditional norms.

Disrupting Traditional Norms. Disrupting traditional norms appeared across the interviews both explicitly and implicitly and refers to the participants’ willingness to go against the norms of the teaching profession. In multiple ways, the SEC lens requires teachers to question the status quo and prioritize their students even when the norms of the profession and the larger culture impose contradictory pressures. The following examples
shed light on the extent to which challenging the status quo forms a part of the participants’ professional identities.

**Jessica.** Disrupting traditional norms is an orientation that Jessica brought with her into the profession from her personal life. Choosing to study education instead of medicine was a disruption of the norms within her family and involved both self-trust and a willingness to question the status quo.

So, I started shifting [to teaching], but then I got, I got a lot of bad feedback from my family. They were like, no, do not waste your bio major. And don't go to University to become a teacher out of all things like you're not going to make money, no one's gonna really respect your job. So, I, I tried to push through and do a minor in education, but still did my bio major. And then I graduated with my bio major, took a few like, pre-med courses to like, learn how to apply. And then I realized, like, that is not the lifestyle I wanted. And I just kept teaching.

In this quote from the interview, Jessica provided insight into the internal monologue that accompanied and supported the decision to choose teaching over a medical career, further demonstrating her self-trust and giving herself permission to not do what was expected of her:

So that's kind of how I fell into teaching. But it's always been something I knew I liked and enjoyed but kept telling myself like, no, that's not your path, you're not going to be doing what your family wants.

This orientation, along with supportive administration throughout her early years teaching, allowed Jessica to be one of the early adopters of SEL at her school site, where many of her colleagues considered SEL to be a waste of time. When asked how the training with CRTWC changed her classroom practice, Jessica shared how the CRTWC training supported her adoption of SEL because it provided an excuse to go against the societal view of SEL, “I think it was good to have that as a reason to make space for SEL initially.”
This is where the personal orientation towards *disrupting traditional norms* becomes apparent as a part of her professional identity. Jessica further explains her role as an early adopter at her school site and the perception of her practices amongst her colleagues:

Like I would just start putting stuff like we had, I started having like a chillax corner. And I was like, really crazy to start it. And they're like, why are you letting the kids just sit there and do nothing? I'm like, well, they're not doing nothing. They're really just taking a moment for themselves and reflecting and writing. And there's things there to help them kind of, you know, calm down. And then eventually some of those teachers are saying, hey, that student looks like he's never having any more, like outbursts. What is he doing? I'm like, oh, well, he's at the chillax corner, you know, and he just joins us whenever he's ready. And they're like, oh, I'm gonna try that for my other student. And so it just started trickling out.

Jessica’s willingness to disrupt traditional norms was further visible when asked about what experiences hindered her development of the SEC lens. She shared that there was initially internal tension around whether or not to include a social justice focus in the Anchor Competencies Framework and that she spoke out about the importance of including such topics:

They were starting to go into, like, microaggressions, and like racist, racism and like social justice things. And they were like, we're not sure if we want to include this in the anchor competencies. And I was like, well, it's very important. And I, but I was like, the only woman of color in the group. Everyone else kind of just didn't understand, like, how important it was. Like, oh, no, this is a lot. There's already a lot of things here. And then we were having conversations, and then a lot of people didn't really understand what microaggressions were, or like, what even culturally relevant, like, topics were. And so I was like, This is why we need to have this in here. Because this is something that people don't feel comfortable talking about. But it should be something that we should be aware of and work towards.

This disposition to disrupt traditional norms further translated into Jessica’s integration of SEL into her classroom around how to ensure SEL is culturally responsive. When asked how she came to the awareness that SEL can be whitewashed, Jessica explained:
I'm just like, a lot of readings I've done and also in class, sometimes I would see some students of color just not really connect, when I would, like, try to use words like, hey, let's calm down, and let's like, let's really talk about this. Like, if they're like, I don't want to talk, I'm just gonna yell and tell you exactly how I feel. And then after they would yell, then they would feel a lot better. Sometimes, like just being able to let it out, or having like, that kind of type of conversation is what some cultures need.

Noteworthy here is how Jessica normalized the full range of emotions her students experience and disrupts the traditionally acceptable ways of behaving in a classroom space. By challenging the status quo way of teaching SEL, Jessica centered her students, their lived experiences and ensured that she was teaching in service of their well being and not just another tool to maintain order in her classroom.

**Lucy.** Although Lucy did not consider herself someone who disrupts social norms (“I was never somebody who wanted to disrupt status quo”), many of her classroom practices go against the traditional norms of the profession. Her disruption focused on changing the balance of power in the classroom and centering students’ agency and autonomy. When describing her position on decision making in the classroom, Lucy said, “And they [students] have that choice until they make a decision that shows me that they can't handle that choice, right. So the dynamic of what they're in control of is much greater than when I first started teaching.” Of interest is that Lucy was also particularly interested in disrupting traditional ways of teaching children to respond to conflict. Her orientation highlights an emphasis on normalizing conflict and validating her students’ strong feelings. When facilitating students’ as they navigate conflict, Lucy said,

I also really encourage students not to just say it's okay. A standard response. Well you know, you took my ball. Oh, I'm sorry. Oh, that's okay. Like, well, no, it really wasn't okay. So I've tried to change that verbiage from instead of it's okay, because it wasn't okay. You know, what could you say, thank you for your apology? Or next time can you try something different, so that it's not just, you know, so they really
understand the power of their words and understanding that that's okay means thank you, but to try to teach them from a young age to have ownership, ownership of, you know, their feelings.

This desire to teach students how to truthfully navigate their emotional responses is a disruption of the traditional norm of politeness that pervades many classrooms. There is often an emphasis on coming to quick resolutions or ensuring that students have performed the required steps to resolve the conflict (apologize and forgive) rather than honoring the entirety of the emotional experience that both students are experiencing. This type of teaching goes against the norms of the profession because it prioritizes the emotional over the productive; a performative apology is quick and returns the classroom back to order faster than engaging in the work of unpacking and digesting strong emotions.

**Carla.** In the first interview, when asked about what practices Carla had to reflect on and explore her identity, Carla shared that she was actively working on shifting the power dynamic in her relationships with students, parents and colleagues, “Um, I think, well, I think one of the pieces that I'm working on right now is like, exploring my position of power, whether it's working with students, adults, co workers, like the community as a whole.” Of importance is how this orientation intersects with *teaching as relational,* that Carla’s disruption of traditional norms involves challenging conventional patterns of relationship and interaction in the classroom. Carla further articulates how she is working to disrupt traditional power dynamics in classrooms through her role as a coach. She acknowledges the traditional norms in the profession are for teachers not to be challenged and how that does not always match students’ cultural backgrounds:

And I think that like, some of the work that I'm trying to do with one of, of my teachers is recognizing that, like, when a student asks why they're not being
disrespectful or disobedient, like it's a genuine ask, like, Why do I have to sit down? And when I, when I'm working, like, can't I stand up? Because why can't they? So I think just being aware of, of some of the areas where like, my limited experiences don't match the students that I'm serving, and then learning about it, like, what does dinner look like at your house? Because a lot of it's very different.

When asked to further clarify how this awareness of power and positionality was impacting her classroom practice, Carla shared more about her professional identity and how it was characterized by challenging the status quo in the profession:

I think like, you know, I think traditionally, teachers were like, information deliverers, like what the teacher says goes, and, and I think that, you know, that's not necessarily the way that it should be...So I think like, a lot of those pieces, like giving the kids some power, giving the parents some power, like, what is important to you? ...So I think, I think that there's a lot, like understanding how to give kids power in a classroom because it's their classroom too, it is not mine. So giving them roles, giving them chances to learn together, learning with them, right?

There were later contradictions to this orientation, which overlaps with a subsequent theme of internalization, which in part may be due to the fact that this was a part of her identity that Carla named she was actively working on at the moment. The contradictions appeared when the conversation shifted to talking about SEL. Carla was not initially interested in the CRTWC training and in fact shared, “I'm like, in fairness, I think that I was voluntold. Um, I'm pretty sure that I didn't actively seek it out or choose to participate.”

When inquiring as to Carla’s orientation towards SEL, Carla shared that she originally held a position that is similar to the larger societal orientation towards SEL, where SEL is seen as unimportant or additive:

So I think that like, some of those, like “softer” practices, were harder for me to like, wrap my brain around or like, understand how to use them effectively, maybe, or how to regulate providing access for students that do truly need it, while not allowing students that are looking for like an escape option to abuse the situation.
Noteworthy in Carla’s narrative is an underlying controlling orientation towards SEL, which is in opposition to her current work around disruption of power dynamics. However, Carla held a similar position to that of Lucy’s in regards to disrupting the traditional approach to teaching students how to approach conflict. Carla advocated for students being honest and authentic in their approach to making amends rather than apologizing for performative reasons:

…we just had this conversation with a student who's like, he did something. And then he's like, well, I told her, I was sorry. And it was like, yeah, but like, are you? Hmm, like, if you're not sorry, like, don't say it, right? Like, I said, what I said, and I stand by it, um, because like, maybe it was intentional, and that's okay, too. But like, being honest about where you are in your emotions with things.

Much like Lucy, Carla chose to disrupt the traditional norm of politeness by encouraging her student to speak from their heart and honor the fullness of their emotional experience. Similar to Jessica, this decision centers the student, an indication that Carla is willing to go against the norms of the profession when doing so is in her students’ best interests.

**Sharon.** Analogous to Jessica, Sharon did not feel she could enter the teaching profession due to family pressure. She described the cultural pressures that played a part in her internal struggle when deciding what career to pursue:

But I was, I grew up in the Asian, specifically Chinese household, I am considered first generation. So my parents are a little old-fashioned in their thinking. And when they think of a teacher, they think of professors. They think the universities, elementary school teachers, is not something on their radar, that that would make a lot of money. So it was kind of not an option to say I wanted to be a teacher, I had to choose something that was fitting of their ideals.

Sharon’s later decision to become a teacher represents an initial willingness to disrupt the status quo, although it is noteworthy that her decision came after her father consented. In later conversation Sharon shared about the ways in which she has disrupted traditional norms
of the profession in her classroom practice. First, she talked about changing the layout of her classroom:

I remember, my first classroom was just rows, I mean rows of desks, it wasn't this. Okay, kind of, I don't know what I have, like triangles right now, know what I have in my room. But, but yeah, it wasn't the, I guess, the linear style things a straight and narrow is not there anymore. So you know, the room changes and everything that kind of aligns with the way I've started to see things as well, you know…

Like Lucy and Carla, Sharon references a shift in power dynamics between her and her students as she developed her SEC lens. Sharon explicitly named that she went against what she thought was expected of her within the profession:

But yeah, so seeing myself I guess I've given myself a lot of allowances and do, we, the opposite of what initially, what I thought I should be doing. Because we always talk about behavior management, we're always talking about, and you want to maintain a quiet room, you want to maintain that, but I've let a lot of things go as, yes, since, yeah, since that whole child training, I've just opened up a lot of possibility…

Important here is Sharon’s reference to her rejection of a term that is prolific in the field, behavior management. The concept of behavior management, in itself, reinforces the traditional power dynamics in the classroom, so taking an explicit stance in opposition to this norm is noteworthy.

**Analysis.** Disrupting traditional norms indicates a disposition amongst all the participants to challenge the status quo to varying degrees. Of interest is that the three classroom teacher participants referenced disruptive orientations either in order to enter the field, or prior to entering the classroom. This indicates an orientation that is consistent, part of an identity that existed prior to entering the profession and has further developed over time. What was originally for Sharon and Jessica a disruption related to their personal lives later became an orientation that they brought into the classroom in their professional lives. The third
classroom teacher, Lucy, described a disruptive orientation that came into the field with her as well, though it was more professionally oriented. She named wanting to be a guide or facilitator and explicitly expressed viewing herself and her students as equals as an orientation she entered the classroom with when she began the profession. These were informed, as she described, by having a parental preschool teacher role model in combination with the theory presented in her teacher preparation. Carla’s disruption referred to a practice she is currently evaluating. There was mention of other practices that are disruptive, for example, having a culture of shout-outs rather than hand raising, that also occurred later in her teaching career. This indicates the development of a disruptive identity in relationship to the profession after having been in it for an extended period of time.

It first appeared for Sharon and Jessica, when they shared that their families did not at first approve of them pursuing degrees in education. They both shared that there were cultural pressures that initially sent them towards pursuing degrees and professions in medicine. However, both teachers knew from early on that they wanted to become teachers and eventually their families accepted their decisions, though those decisions, to some extent, indicated a disruption of what was expected of them. For Lucy and Carla, disrupting traditional norms was first expressed regarding traditional power dynamics. Both teachers expressed an awareness of traditionally harmful power dynamics in classrooms and stated their intention to disrupt that dynamic with their practice.

The theme further surfaced when talking about SEL, when all three classroom teachers mentioned the societal perception that SEL was a waste of time and not something they felt they had permission (self or societal) to focus on in their classrooms. Therefore, the act of
centering SEL despite societal perceptions and pressures, is in itself an act of disrupting traditional norms. Carla did not hold this same view regarding SEL, as she stated that she was “voluntold” into the CRTWC training and previously viewed SEL practices as “soft.” Carla, therefore represents that external societal viewpoint that the classroom teachers were disrupting by centering SEL.

This brings up the development of teacher criticality, which is not explicitly named in the Anchor Competencies Framework. In order to disrupt traditional norms there should be a level of critical consciousness present; critical consciousness referring to the participants’ awareness of the larger sociopolitical context and the ways that structure influences their and their students' experience with an implied level of analysis and disposition to act in ways that subvert that influence. Disrupting traditional norms without criticality would lead to a form of chaos by creating a classroom environment where the actions were not grounded in a coherent theoretical underpinning, rather a series of practices or tools all potentially tied to different ideological orientations. That the disruptions indicated by the classroom teachers, and the TOSA, were reflective of a level of reflection and intentionality indicates critical consciousness to varying degrees. While Jessica’s disruptions indicated an awareness of the larger sociopolitical context and a disposition to challenge the ways that context negatively impacted her students, Lucy’s disruptions were more internally focused on her individual classroom context with less concern for the larger sociopolitical context. Similar to Lucy, Sharon demonstrated a mostly internally focused level of critique. Although parts of Carla’s narrative also indicated an awareness of and concern regarding the larger sociopolitical
context, her initially conformist orientation led to a consequently contradictory orientation towards SEL.

**SEC Lens and Developing Trusting Relationships**

Participant beliefs and perceptions of developing trusting relationships with students were reflective of the level of depth, or internalization, of the SEC lens; those with a stronger, more internalized lens viewed relationship development as between teacher-students and amongst students. They also had clear intentions and consequent explanations of how building trusting relationships was present in their observations. These participants’ narratives also connected the theme of building trusting relationships to *joy*. Those with a weaker, less internalized lens expressed building trusting relationships as primarily being between teacher-students, did not mention student-student relationships, and drew upon fewer examples of building trusting relationships from their observations. There was overall less intentionality present in their narrative responses regarding building trusting relationships. The following vignettes and data excerpts from the second interview illustrate the participants’ beliefs, perceptions and actions regarding building trusting relationships.

**Internalization & Joy.**

*Deeply Internalized.* A deeply internalized lens was defined as the majority to all of the participants’ narratives across the interviews and actions during the observation being reflective of the SEC lens and the Anchor Competencies. There were few to no references of deficit mindset or contradictions present across their interviews and the classroom observation. Additionally, a deeply internalized lens included a level of awareness of how the
larger sociopolitical, community, individual student and/or family context impacts the learning environment.

Jessica. Jessica’s observation took place just after recess, in her Kindergarten classroom. The students entered the classroom and sat together in a circle on the rug nearest the door where they came in. Jessica facilitated a mindfulness breathing activity and then a social emotional learning lesson, during which time there were several instances of rapport development, a key Teacher Move for Building trusting relationships. The following vignette rendered from field notes of the classroom observation presents one such case.

Vignette from Jessica’s observation:

As Jessica shares an update about the class caterpillar puppet, one of the students shouts out about seeing a school staff member outside of school:

Student: I saw Mr. T on my way home!
Jessica: Did you say hello to him?

Noteworthy in this exchange is that Jessica took the time to engage the student, rather than ignore the comment or even silence the student by reinforcing the idea that shoutouts are not an appropriate response during a lesson. It was a spontaneous decision that reflected Jessica’s prioritization of rapport development over rigid rule enforcement; both her words and actions in the interaction signaled the importance of relationship development. There were several other instances where Jessica’s classroom practices were reflective of the Teacher Moves associated with Building trusting relationships. In a second incident, Jessica employed trauma informed practices to support a student that was struggling with the academic task at hand. She inquired as to what the student might need and then provided affirmative feedback that clearly defines what the student did well:
Jessica: What do you need Samar? That’s a great pattern. You did AABB.

In a third incident, when another student was having a difficult time waiting for their turn, Jessica again employed trauma informed practices by affirming the student, narrating what was going to happen next and providing them with a tool to support them during the wait time:

Jessica: It’s ok Alicia, I’m getting to you, take a deep breath.

This exchange occurred within half an hour of the mindful moment Jessica led just after recess, so Jessica’s words came across as offering the student a resource rather than an attempt to enforce calm and order. Jessica’s beliefs about relationship development are present within these incidents. Her intuitive response is to build connection with her students rather than control their behaviors. In the first incident we see Jessica take what many teachers would have ignored or even responded to by telling the student to not shout-out and turn it into a moment of connection. The following two incidents are also situations in which other teachers might have diminished the student’s emotional reaction by suggesting they simply get over it or move on. Jessica’s affirmations normalize the range of emotions present in her students, which is both validating and deeply humanizing.

When reflecting on how building trusting relationships showed up in the lesson, Jessica shared her take on what occurred in the second interview. Notice how the theme of joy appears again in regards to supporting students through vulnerable learning moments:

Um, well, just being able to come up and show your answer to the class is really vulnerable. So they have to trust that the class won't like, make fun of them or judge them, they also have to trust that I'm not gonna put them in that kind of situation. But that's also why I like to make it more fun and interactive. I like to have multiple kids come up. So it's not like everyone's just staring at you. Volunteers, I usually take up first, if it's like something they don't all feel very comfortable with. This is just kind
of midway in the lessons, I still want to ask other people to volunteer their answers
instead of just calling kids.

Trust is named as multilayered here; Jessica acknowledges that in order for students to
participate safely they need to trust that both Jessica and their classmates will keep them
emotionally safe. She explained how joy, or having a fun and interactive lesson, can support
students in moving through the vulnerability required of them in the learning task. Then, we
explored what building trusting relationships looks like more broadly. Jessica shed insight on
her process and approach for building relationships with students:

I usually just like to talk to them for six weeks. My team loves to do these family
meetings. On top of the assessments, it's not required of us. But we started this
during, during COVID. And we were teaching virtually, and we really wanted the
parents to feel comfortable with us, because they weren't letting us into their home,
basically. So we want them to see us as people, and we see them as people. So we
asked them like, like, just this isn't academic, just tell us like, what do you think your
child's good at? What do they love to do? And that really gives me like, the
background and like, even just knowing that, like, one of my students has like a baby
brother at home, or, you know, they have older siblings are in high school, and they're
going through different things, just knowing like small things like that can bring it up
and say, Hey, like, did your little brother give you a hard time this morning? Is that
when you're upset? Or like, I know that your sister has a hard time going to class? Is
that why you're feeling kind of sad, you know, so those kinds of things helps me like
start conversations with the kids. And then asking parents what they love is also a
nice way for me to be like, oh, I heard that you love like, Cinnamon Toast Crunch. I
love that too. And then in the morning, we always start with like a question of the day
when we take attendance. It's just like, if you can be any animal [what] animal would
you be and then we just go around and share. So it's kind of like another thing that we
can talk about as a class and have something and they're allowed to pass too. So I was
trying to give them the freedom of like, passing if they don't feel comfortable sharing.
Because I didn't realize that until later on in teaching. Yeah, I should not be forcing
kids to give an answer even though that's what I learned while I was in education like
you have to participate and some kids are just not ready. And that's fine. So I will say,
like, are you ready? Just like use one of our strategies to get you ready to free not to
say I'm not ready, and then we'll, we'll try again.

Jessica and her grade level team developed a structure that went beyond the requirements
of their professional roles for building relationships. Visible in this excerpt is the value
Jessica places on building relationships, as measured by the time she dedicates to their development. There is also evidence of the larger intentionality behind Jessica’s interactions in the classroom and her awareness that understanding students’ individual and family context support her in both building those relationships and supporting students in the classroom, a reflection of how Jessica humanizes her students and their learning experiences in her classroom. Further, Jessica named connecting with her students based on things they love, a way of leveraging joy to build bonds. Noteworthy is how she does this by connecting with parents about what their children enjoy and also by directly asking students in the form of a daily question.

**Strongly Internalized.** A strongly internalized lens was determined by the majority of the participants’ narratives across the interviews and actions during the observation being reflective of the SEC lens and the Anchor Competencies. There were few references of deficit mindset or contradictions present across their interviews and the classroom observation.

**Lucy.** Lucy’s observation occurred at the start of the day, in her first grade classroom. The students started the day with a period of play time, called Magic Morning after which they transitioned to the rug to engage in Morning Meeting. Lucy went over the schedule, a trauma-informed practice that helps establish routine and predictability, and then facilitated a game. The game is a place of play that centers joy and connection. Over the course of the observation there were several instances of rapport development, a key Teacher Move for Building trusting relationships. Additional Teacher Moves, such as Practicing reciprocal vulnerability, Employing trauma-informed practices and Engaging families were also visible
throughout the observation, which are visible in the following vignette that was rendered from field notes.

Vignette from Lucy’s observation:

During the Morning Meeting, after going over the schedule and talking about changes to their regular schedule, Lucy makes space for students to ask questions. Prior to engaging in the game she asks students if they are still working on learning each other’s names and then provides them with name tags to support their recall. She lets students know there will be several visitors in the classroom that day and then moves into talking about their Seesaw accounts. Lucy encourages students to invite their grownups to share their Seesaw accounts with students so they can talk about what the students are working on and share progress together. As Lucy transitions the class to the game, which is focused on sharing about your favorite weather, Lucy shares first.

Lucy demonstrated Employing trauma-informed practices as she shares the changes to the schedule with students and walks them through how their day will look different because of the various observers that were scheduled to visit their classroom. Lucy used the inclusive language of “grownups” when inviting students to connect with their grownups around their Seesaw accounts, which makes sure not to isolate any students living with adults other than their biological parents, an enactment of Engaging families. In an act of Practicing reciprocal vulnerability, Lucy shared first in the game, offering herself as a model for students. During the second interview, Lucy shared the intention behind her morning and how it supports building trusting relationships:

So there's many levels of that. Having the opportunity for a one on one conversation, if necessary, in that space is, is kind of foundational to that relationship. Because when you want to be vulnerable, it's hard to do that in front of a group. Having that space, if they need to talk to me, during the Magic Morning time, it's built in because there's so much going on, and I'm freed up from having to be responsible for everybody at the same time. So that is the number one space for building that relationship, as well as then me being able to observe and ask questions as I see them making choices that I'm curious about. And so they have, there's that, what's the like, the barriers might be lowered. Because, you know, the affective filter lasts, what I
was, is lowered because they're playing and for a child, this is a natural space versus something more isolated and uncomfortable. So having a space where they're already more at ease, I think also allows them to answer questions as well as be part of being vulnerable. And so the play kind of sets that up. During our Morning Meeting time there's the sense of trust of not just trust with the teacher, but trust with my peers and by sharing commonalities and differences and normalizing that builds that foundation for when I'm working with the partner during my math lesson. I can remember they shared something that I could connect to earlier in the day, or maybe when I don't know someone right or I don't know something that I want to know about one of my peers, and I'm uncomfortable because I don't know it. I hope it lowers the barrier of, oh, well, why don't I just talk to them during more Magic Morning time or later in the day. Something happened during Magic Morning and I, I wanted to ask more questions about it. So I've had opportunities to connect on more than one occasion because I think repeated opportunities to build relationships builds the trust that you need, that this person cares about you and what you have to say. Then in the group dynamic, it might just be the question. And then we, we do play another game. It's not necessarily always a game that builds relationships, but just having fun is a commonality. And you know, when you experience something with someone that automatically builds that background in like, an inadvertent way. So I think the game serves that purpose to communal respect, because Magic Morning is much more interest gauged, and they're not all doing the same thing. Our activity during Morning Meeting, we've all experienced the same thing.

Lucy, like Jessica, describes trust as multilayered, both between Lucy and the students and the students and their classmates. Lucy also connects to the power that joy, or having fun playing together, has to support students in moving through the vulnerability of both learning and building trusting relationships. Of interest is the idea that Lucy presents around shared experiences building trusting relationships and the intentionality behind her planning to create shared experiences for her students.

**Moderately Internalized.** A moderately internalized lens was determined by the presence of frequent contradictions and tensions in the participants’ narratives across the interviews and in their actions during the observation being reflective of the SEC lens and the Anchor Competencies. There were multiple references of deficit mindset present across their interviews and the classroom observation.
Carla. Carla’s observation took place during the period after lunch with a group of eight students who are all in either fourth or fifth grade and are presently classified as English Language Learners. The intention behind Carla’s small group instruction was to prepare these students to reclassify this academic year, prior to entering middle school. During the lesson, the students were learning about Ecuador, one piece of an on-going unit related to Latin American Heritage Month. When asked how Building trusting relationships was visible in the lesson, Carla pointed to the academic tasks the students were able to do as evidence of trust:

I think I'm like creating a space where, where students can share, especially the questions at the end. Like what they're interested in, what they're curious about, especially as you move into fourth and fifth grade, I think that students get definitely, like, more cautious about what they share of themselves or what their interests may be. Um, so when we first started the idea of like, why don't you ask questions about what you're curious about? We definitely brainstorm like, what could those questions be? And I've definitely noticed, like, as the lessons go on, you can see the students' personalities through their questions, right? Like, I forget which student but one of my boys was asking, like, “What's the capital of this country?” And that's something he's actually become very interested in through this. Whereas one of our girls is really into the dances of all of the different countries. So seeing their interests, sort of, in a place where they feel comfortable asking those questions that answer what they are genuinely interested in. So I would say that that's probably in this lesson, the biggest place and then also asking them to read unfamiliar words or unfamiliar texts. Some of our students are bigger risk takers. And also, some of them are stronger readers, you know, like, no two students are exactly at the same place. So I think the combination of like, creating a space where students feel safe enough to ask questions, or like, take those risks is important. And then recognizing them when they do so it's seen as like a positive, even when they don't do it right. But like, great job taking a risk, like, “Does anyone else want to take a stab at it?” And I think being consistent, like even if it was pronounced correctly, like getting other people's input, or having students agree or disagree that, that, that is what it should be, I think, lets more people participate in the lesson.

Carla shared the student actions that reflect her perspective that she has trusting relationships with her students, but failed to share what practices she employed to create that
environment. She shared that she positively reinforces when students take academic risks, but did not mention how she supports them in taking those risks in the first place, besides making direct requests for participation. While there are affordances for relationships evident in the excerpt, the sole focus on relationship development being related to academic productivity or engagement is limited and has a less humanistic quality than Jessica and Lucy.

During the classroom observation there were multiple examples of developing rapport; Carla made jokes with her students on the walk back to the classroom and offered students cold water in their own water bottles that Carla had requested a parent donate. Given the heat of the day and that the observation was after lunch, it was clear the students appreciated the gesture. Carla also made several playful comments with her students throughout the lesson, one being related to a play on words that arose during conversation and the other being a reference to youth culture when she provided students with a definition of a new term. There was one contradiction that arose in regards to building trusting relationships, which occurred when a student from the next section entered the classroom space several minutes early. Carla responded by saying, “I know this is probably hard for you to understand, babe, but I have another group.” It is unclear if the reference to not understanding was directed at the student’s intellectual capacity or their language skills, but either way the comment was not uplifting or aimed at maintaining the dignity of that student.

When asked how she develops rapport more generally, Carla started her response by describing the support structures the school has to provide families in need with food. She mentioned that she participates in food distribution to families and that one of her students joins her in this activity. Carla also shared that it is important to attend events when students
or families invite you to join. Similar to Lucy, Carla pointed to the idea that shared experiences build relationships. She also articulated that learning about each other outside of the context of school builds relationships and supported her in having topics to connect about once in the classroom again.

**Weakly Internalized.** A weakly internalized lens was determined by the substantial presence of contradictions and tensions in the participants’ narratives across the interviews and in their actions during the observation being reflective of the SEC lens and the Anchor Competencies. There were frequent references of deficit mindset or contradictions present across their interviews and the classroom observation.

**Sharon.** Sharon’s observation took place just after lunch, a time which Sharon described as challenging on an on-going basis, “And after lunch is hardcore mess all the time. It's a rough time. I've talked, thought about adjusting math slots to accommodate better but then it'll be the same, it'll be after some sort of recess.” After an initial warm-up on the rug, students went back to their desks where the plan was for them to play a math game. While students were on the rug and for the initial instructions while they were at their seats there were several examples of rapport development. This mostly took the form of Sharon providing positive praise for students making responsible decisions. However, there were also contradictory moments where Sharon responded to students with sarcasm, “Waiting for my two ladies to join us, we are thirsty for some odd reason,” or “We obviously have to keep moving.” While these comments are subtle, their consistent presence erodes the relational quality of other interactions. Although sarcasm can sometimes be used to build rapport when it is reciprocal and within the context of a robust relational history of trust and caring, the fact
that the sarcasm was one-directional from teacher to student indicates the contradictory nature of these interactions and implies a sense of impatience rather than humor. Once the students went back to their seats, Sharon quickly abandoned her lesson plan for the hour. Instead, she decided to allow students to engage in free play with the materials that were intended to be used for the math lesson. Her rationale was as follows:

...yesterday was chaotic. So it's been chaotic every day, every single day this week. And yeah, and they want to play more, they want to do it. I said, “Fine. Just, just go with it. Just go explore, go build, go, you know, whatever,” I said. I let it go.

Upon further exploration, Sharon shared that she struggles with teaching math games and that the district does not provide the materials she deems necessary in order to teach the lessons properly. Sharon abandoned the lesson as she was passing out materials and realized they were not the ones she would choose to teach that particular lesson with when she saw that the students were beginning to play with them while they waited for them to all be passed out. The result was that students were provided with free play for the remainder of the observation. Of interest is how Sharon points to the students being chaotic and wanting to play as her reason for abandoning the lesson, when in a later narrative she confessed that she has resistance and low self-efficacy regarding teaching math games, “You know, they say, oh, yeah, teach this game. Do this, do that. And by golly, I can't teach a game, right.”

Another contradictory moment occurred when a student asked to use the bathroom when they were in free play. Sharon responded to the student with, “It hasn’t been half an hour, you are supposed to wait half an hour.” The whole child approach would be to allow the student to use the restroom and then to remind them of the rule for next time, but to deny a
first grader use of the restroom during free play after lunch, a time when students notoriously
need to use the restroom, is inconsistent and not in alignment with an SEC lens.

When asked how Sharon builds trusting relationships with students, there was a notable
focus on what the students were doing and responsible for rather than her intentionality, “I'm
just trying to think because a lot of these kids have built in trust, which is really interesting.
They build trust with me. And I got ones that greet me with a hug every morning.”

Sharon then proceeded to describe her approach to building trusting relationships,
with an emphasis on physical touch and making students feel comfortable in the classroom:

I guess, talking to their level in the beginning. So, in the beginning here, I started
with, I didn't touch them a lot. I just, you know, talk to them, greet them at their level,
made them feel comfortable, that things are allowed. Meaning if they just ask, usually
I let it go. That's been the culture of this room. If they ask, I let it go. That goes for
bathroom, for everything. And then I start two to three weeks in, I start to lay down
the rule a little bit, say okay, we're not the bathroom is not a destination to be in. So
one at a time. You know, so I start weaning that away, start doing other things. And
the touching you know, does instigate a little oxytocin a lot of TLC for some of these
kids. So they need, they need the hug or they need the high five or they need, they
need that. Just so they feel a little bit energized and happy….Yeah, the kids that feel
really comfortable over time, they do the hugs. Otherwise I don't hug them right
away. I don't touch them right away. I ask a lot of permissions in the beginning of the
year. “Can I, Are you okay with me giving you a high five doing this, doing that?”
You know, I think that just builds trust.

Sharon’s narrative indicates that her focus on building trusting relationships is between her
and her students, there is no mention of relationships between students. There is also an
emphasis on student comfort and meeting students' emotional needs.

**Analysis.** While all participants expressed that they view developing trusting
relationships as important and have a clear approach for how to develop trusting relationships
with their students, the extent of their focus and orientation to the purpose of those
relationships varied depending on the level of depth of the lens. There was a continuum
between developing relationships for the humanizing nature of relationship development, or for the sake of connection, and developing relationships as a transactional approach to achieve an outcome, related to academic production or achievement. A noteworthy distinction of Jessica and the deeply internalized lens includes her intentional incorporation of the students’ larger individual, family and community context into the relationship building in addition to normalizing the full range of student emotions, of which Lucy only did the latter. There were also explicit structures present in Jessica and Lucy’s narratives that spanned extended periods of time and which were in congruence with their classroom observations. Building trusting relationships was also connected to joy in both Jessica and Lucy’s narratives. Both Jessica and Lucy prioritized relationship development as between teacher-students and amongst students, while Carla and Sharon’s narratives reflected a more narrow definition of teacher-student relationships. Overall Carla and Sharon’s narratives demonstrated fewer structures and less intentionality regarding building trusting relationships.

**SEC Lens and Responding to Minoritized Students**

Participant responses to minoritized students were a reflection of the level of depth of the SEC lens; those with a stronger, more internalized lens responded more constructively to minoritized students, while those with a weaker, less internalized lens responded less constructively and had higher levels of deficit mindset language and contradictions or tensions in their narrative responses and observed behaviors. There are two essential components to this question: the first involves participants' orientation to conflict in general and the second is particular to responding to minoritized students. There is one participant
example where this overlaps, but in the cases of the other three participants we draw upon both observation data and data from the interviews to weave together a picture of their responses to minoritized students. An additional factor is the participants’ awareness of and attention to the larger sociopolitical context and the relationship they navigate between that context and their classrooms, either seeing it as influencing and important to integrate or seeing the classroom as a reflection of the larger context, but not believing it is necessary to build a bridge between the two. Practicing restorative justice, Building capacity to make amends, and Identify and interrupt microaggressions are examples of Teacher Moves for Responding constructively across differences Anchor Competency (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020). The following vignettes and data excerpts from the second interview illustrate the participants’ beliefs, perceptions and actions in responding to minoritized students and highlights the Teacher Moves each participant employed.

Deeply Internalized

Jessica. Jessica’s observation took place just after recess, in her Kindergarten classroom. The students started on the rug nearest the door where they engaged in a few moments of mindfulness and had a brief social emotional learning lesson. Students then transitioned to another rug, closest to the whiteboard, where Jessica facilitated an interactive math lesson on patterns. Afterwards, students returned to their tables and engaged in pattern construction independently. The following vignette, rendered from field notes produced in the classroom observation, offers a window into how Jessica navigates student behaviors that fall outside the anticipated and how she creates an equitable environment by ensuring that each students’ needs are met.
Vignette from Observation:

During the math lesson one of the students (a male identifying student of color) is wandering around the room and at some point enters the calm down corner. It appears to the other students that the student is playing in the calm down corner at which point they ask, “Shawn went into the play area to play. Why is he in there?” To which the teacher responds, “Remember if he’s in the calm corner it’s because he needs to calm down. I think he’s very excited so maybe he needs to calm down.”

This response demonstrates Jessica’s level of tolerance and approach for what is often perceived by other teachers to be willful defiance. Jessica maintains a calm demeanor, exhibits the belief the students’ behavior is communication, which presumably informs her perception, and she does not take the behavior personally. The response also highlights her values and identity as a teacher, as she demonstrates the Teacher Move, Tending to status issues, in order to maintain that students’ dignity when asked directly about it by another student. Further, Jessica later shares how her awareness of the students’ context shaped her response:

I know that he's one very young. Yeah, I know that his family hasn't been in school consistently, his older brother’s actually going to be tested to see if he should be in a special ed. And they're just having a hard time with just the relationship with school. So I know that for him, this is very challenging...And then I also just let him gradually feel more comfortable coming to join us, because by recess, he usually is yelling, like, can I go home, I'm bored. And today, he didn't do that. So I was really glad that he was really engaged. And so I'm just like, taking the little wins...So the fact that he actually chose to sit with us, and like, was still participating, even though he was kind of wandering around. I think that that was a win. And then the kids also know that he has a hard time sitting. So I tell them, I remind them all the time, like, you know, like, he hasn't been in a school setting. A lot of you have been to preschool before, and you got to practice that for a year. So we're gonna help him, we're going to help him as a class, learn how to be in school, and sometimes he might need to get up and that's okay. He's not hurting anyone. If you see something that's not okay, then let me know. But yeah, and I think he just needs to be physically doing something to stay engaged. He's just the kind of person that needs to like have like, a fidget or like, just needs to move...But yeah, I definitely let him choose. And he knows that he's got options. So that's like he said, I'm going to choose a chair, which I'm glad I started doing.
Jessica, like other teachers, relied on knowing about students' holistic contexts to inform the building of trusting relationships and that these relationships were foundational to addressing conflict when it arose. A distinguishing factor in Jessica’s responses to minoritized students is her level of comfort explicitly naming and discussing social identity markers and reflecting on the implications of navigating conflict across lines of difference. The following narrative exemplifies Jessica’s awareness and acceptance of a range of communication styles that might be perceived by other teachers as aggressive or otherwise unacceptable for the classroom or school environment:

There was also an incident when I was teaching fifth grade, where there was a black, a black girl. She was basically called to the principal's office for confronting another like, she was Hispanic, but she appeared white. And they were just like, she was yelling at her and like having all this attitude, blah, blah, blah. And I was like, these girls, both are in my class, they know how to talk to each other respectfully. So I was a little bit thrown off. It was when I had a sub. And then, so I talked to the black girl, and she was just like, “No, that's just how me and my mom talk. Like, we move our head, we, we do our hand thing, I just wanted to ask her a question. And everyone thought I was trying to fight with her.” And I was like, okay, so this is like a different way of communicating. Then, like, when you do our SEL lessons, it's always like, you know, look me in the eye, look, you know, like, make sure you're using a soft voice. But it's like, that's not always everyone's way of communicating. And like being able to have that open conversation and telling someone like, you know, I'm just trying to ask a question, and it's okay to be acting that way. Because that's how your family talks.

This further exemplifies the deeply internalized lens that was ever present with Jessica; the lens informed what she believed about her students, how she perceived their behaviors and consequently acted in alignment with those beliefs and perceptions in a way that not only supported minoritized students in navigating conflict, but challenged a colleague’s punitive response towards her students. Noteworthy in this interaction is the overlap in Jessica’s
response to the *disrupting traditional norms* theme, that allowed her to go against how another teacher had addressed a conflict between her students.

**Strongly Internalized**

*Lucy.* Lucy’s observation took place at the start of the school day, which in her first grade classroom is Magic Morning followed by Morning Meeting. On this particular day there was a literacy lesson that followed, which was not observed in its entirety. Magic Morning is play time for the students, and is one of the structures Lucy has in place to build her students’ independence and self-reflection. It also serves as a space for developing relationships and learning to navigate conflict, which is observed in the following vignette, rendered from field notes.

Vignette from observation:

During Morning Magic time, two students have a conflict over a toy. Lucy supports the students in engaging in a conversation to solve the disagreement, at the end of which the two students share the toy in question and engage in play together.

When debriefing the event in the subsequent interview Lucy shared the values, beliefs and perceptions that guided her interaction with those students:

If I remember correctly, that one student was playing with a piece and the other one took it, not realizing that the other one was playing with it. So you know, which is very, like kind of the standard quo, when it comes to first graders and toys. And I wanted, first of all, to make sure that the child would know how to handle the situation if I wasn't there, so I didn't want to solve it for him or them. I wanted to make sure they had this, they had the reminder that I have skills that I can solve this problem with, but I'm going to facilitate that….I want to make sure to hear both sides of the story. Or see what happened, you know, see the remnants of what happened before I start asking one to make an apology or, you know, vice versa. So, figure out the full story, we went over to the Legos and tried to get the student to use their words first to explain what the problem was and how that feelings, how that how that felt. And then the other child, I didn't think I even had to say anything to the other child, the other child, like instinctively realized what the problem was, they shared their perception of what had happened. And then I and then I kind of backed off and said,
okay, like, I think they can handle this. They've got some they have an adult there who validates their feeling and their frustration, but they were able to solve it. And then we also shared about it, was it, I can't remember we shared about it in Morning Meeting or AAA circle, but I do remember bringing it back up later in the day. As a, as like a celebration of we have a problem and we solved it in a way that both parties felt heard. Also magnified to the whole class because it was a problem I knew that would occur again. And it has happened to a lot of them. So I wanted it to be kind of celebrated for solving this problem in a way that was appropriate.

Lucy centers her students’ autonomy and agency, by providing them opportunities and scaffolds to resolve their own conflicts, which is something she explicitly mentioned in the interviews as one of her values in the classroom. Lucy also confirms her identity as a facilitator in the classroom space, which she also explicitly mentioned in the first interview. Further, Lucy demonstrates her orientation to conflict in this narrative. It is clear that she believes that conflict is a normal part of the human experience, and more specifically that this type of conflict is developmentally appropriate. This helps normalize conflict for the students, thereby opening the door to successfully navigating it. By celebrating solving the conflict Lucy is modeling for students that conflict can be generative.

In the subsequent interview Lucy shared her thoughts on Responding constructively across differences:

I think a lot is just built around open conversation between either the whole class, if that's necessary, or with the child or children involved, as well as always setting a foundation for embracing others’ opinions and others’ differences so that when you have a moment that is uncomfortable because of, because of those reasons, you can have like a, you have a background for realizing, oh, remember, when we discussed it, you know that that food tastes really good to you, but it didn't taste very good to her. And that's because it was a new culture, or food not from your culture, you know, whatever it is, because at first grade, that could just be something as simple as that. So I think response really comes from how it's all set up ahead of time to what foundational mutual respects you are building in the classroom on a daily basis. And asking questions too. I really encourage that if it's something that you're uncomfortable with that you should learn about it. And know maybe you're, maybe it's that you didn't like something because you really at this age, a lot of times they
don't know much about it, to be able to feel comfortable asking questions, and then sharing feelings with a lot of our social emotional work that we do, and understanding empathy towards each other. We spend a lot of time talking about how that makes other people feel and using I-Messages. So that if there is a moment where it's um, you know, something needs to be shared that you're not blaming, you're sharing your feelings.

Again, Lucy’s identity as a facilitator makes an appearance in this narrative. She frames her response, which was hypothetically described as being towards an individual student, as a way to model navigating conflict for her students. Lucy also explicitly refers to the importance of relationship building, which was coded as relationship as the foundation for addressing conflict. There are several additional values present in Lucy’s narrative. Principally, Lucy refers to engaging in conversation, asking questions, and remaining curious; this was coded as dialogue as bridge building and is related to the code dialogue for managing conflict that came up in Lucy’s first interview. Noteworthy in Lucy’s response is her belief that something new equates to discomfort and likewise that moments of conflict across lines of difference can be “uncomfortable.” There also appears to be a slight avoidance of using the terms of social identity markers.

There was no example in the classroom observation of Lucy responding to a minoritized student in a moment of conflict, hence the probe that arose in the second interview around responding constructively across differences. Of interest is that Lucy externalized the question, and rather than offering how she responds across lines of difference she spoke about how she supports students in responding constructively. This externalization, in conjunction with the aforementioned avoidance of social identity markers, is indicative of a more limited capacity to respond constructively to minoritized students than the deeply
internalized lens, where there was an active and intentional leaning into considering how social identity markers play a role in constructively navigating conflict.

**Moderately Internalized**

*Carla.* Responding constructively across differences was not visible in Carla’s observation. However, the following vignette that was originally categorized under the Anchor Competency Creating community can offer insight into how Carla responds constructively across differences. Carla’s observation took place after lunch in a shared classroom space, though there were no other groups of students in the space at that time. It was a small group of eight students who Carla supports with pull-out English Language Development instruction. There were two tables, and at each table there were four students. The students were divided by gender, which Carla noted was requested by the students the day prior and that she had agreed to the request. This was the students’ first time sitting in this gender-based arrangement. In the following vignette, rendered from field notes from the classroom observation, Carla navigated a dynamic between more verbally participative students and others who remained silent during instruction:

**Vignette from Observation:**

Carla allowed for shout-outs from the small group, which she named as a common practice with her small group of eight. This resulted in an overrepresentation of two student voices and underrepresentation of the remaining six students. Twenty minutes into the observation only half of the students had spoken, three of the male identifying students and one of the female identifying students, with two students speaking the majority of that time (one male identifying and one female identifying, the researcher noting that they were the
students with the lightest skin color). At this time Carla cold-calls a female identifying student, which is followed by silence. When the first student does not answer, Carla cold-calls another female identifying student and provides a story to help the student answer.

Carla: “Kaitlyn, did you record a question? Ok, record one for me.”

Carla: “Amanda, what's your question? You are very quiet today.”

While there was no verbal conflict present in this interaction, there was an underlying relational dynamic that invited Carla’s attention in order to ensure that all students had an opportunity to participate. This might have resulted in conflict, had Carla intervened early on, or if Carla had asked the two students who were participating most to make space for others to add their thoughts. Instead, Carla used an approach that is often referred to as cold-calling, where the teacher asks a student directly to answer a question without warning. It is interesting that rather than address the students who were taking up too much space Carla chose to put the labor on the students who were not initially inclined to interject by cold-calling them. It was evident that the students who were cold-called were more on the introverted side and so there was a series of follow-up questions in the second interview aimed at unpacking Carla’s perceptions and beliefs about the interaction.

AB: So just curious around that, your reflection on the seating, how it changed the dynamics, having some students who are clearly very extroverted and [others who] are clearly very introverted. If you could talk a little bit more around you, how you create classroom community of like, across those lines of difference and how you saw that playing out in this in this lesson for students to be able to express or participate according to their orientation.

Carla: I mean, I think, um, like I said, like, I think there, there were definitely some places that we should have had a turn and talk opportunity, because I do think that for a couple of my ladies especially, they're way more comfortable turning and talking to a partner than sharing out in even in a group of eight. I also think that in past lessons, I've had an opportunity for them to, like, stop and write something
down. And we didn't necessarily do that until the very end of this lesson. So I think that, like, those were definitely missed opportunities. And I do think that when in the past when they've been in, like, a more mixed grouping, um, they're very, like aware of each other. So if one student sees somebody else writing something down, it's very common for them to like, oh, I should probably be writing that down too, versus, like, and I think like, that's the student leadership part, right versus me being like, you should probably write that down, which I try to, like, avoid, unless I'm like, this kid hasn't written down anything. And then it's like, okay, like, I'm gonna nudge you a little bit, I'm gonna call you in on this one, and then see if you get the next one on your own. And just recognizing that, like, some days, I do more of the lifting. And some days, the kids do more of the lifting. And, and that's okay, too, right. Like, I also think that the Thursday group is our morning session, where the other ones are the afternoon session. Um, so depending what happened at lunch, can have an effect on how students show up that day. When we first started doing this, they would come in after lunch. And, you know, we did have that crazy heatwave, where they were like dying. So I had a parent volunteer, for a parent that I've taught both of her kids, she works at Amazon, she donated water bottles for the kids. So now they each have their own water bottle. So every day when they come in, they just get their water bottle, like, meet your need, I know you're thirsty, and that now it's work, right? Like don't ask me 18 times to get a drink of water. We have work to do today, but I will give you water and they do get rewarded with cold water when they've worked very hard than before. It's amazing what like, cold water can do for a child or human. Right? Like, that's a big thing.

We see Carla name several practices she could have employed to engage the students who were not participating, demonstrating her awareness of how to meet their needs and the moments where she failed to do so in the lesson. At the end of the narrative we see Carla’s orientation to productivity and the orientation to meeting students’ needs as a means to an end. Of interest is that all of Carla’s reflections involve changing the instructional strategy rather than tending to the underlying relational dynamic that was present, which demonstrates a slight avoidance of conflict. If the class is to engage in discussion as a community, there will need to be attention paid to shifting the dynamic to make space for additional participants to share. This was further addressed with a follow-up question aimed
at understanding how Carla views a classroom culture that encourages students to shout-out rather than raise hands:

AB: Yeah, and then and then thinking about structures. A noticing I had was sort of the, like, shout out culture of, right, response. And so how do you or what's, what's your intentionality behind that in that group of eight?

Carla: In a group of eight, raising your hand, to me, feels real silly. I think the part that I need to do a little bit more tweaking on is talking with some of our boys that are really interactive, and just giving them that lens of like, it's okay to take space, but I'd also like you to make space. Um, so like, um, and I usually try to talk with them about like, my experiences, too, to kind of keep that connection going. So like, you know, as a teacher leader in like, staff meetings, or trainings like, I never volunteer first, even if I have something to say, because I want to make space for people that maybe don't always take the space. So if I come back and talk with Evan or Eliezer about, like, if you want to share something that's awesome. And then like, could you pause and encourage, like, could one of them be like, “Hey, Janette, do you have thoughts?” Like, how do you call somebody else in? Because I would like to see them doing a little bit more of like, that discussion facilitation. If you're teaching a lesson, where you're doing more like checking for understanding, it may be a time when you're going to start the lesson and say, like, today, I'm gonna call on hands, or today, I'm going to call on non-volunteers. But I think that that's important, too. And I think that for a lot of our students, it's important for them to know, like, I may call on you, even if you're not raising your hand. So like, if you're not ready, it's time to be ready, because nobody likes being caught off guard, even adults, right? Like, I don't like being in a meeting and not paying attention and having somebody call on me because it doesn't feel good. And I also know that we all have those moments when you drift off. If I let a student know in advance, I may call on them, I'm at least circling them in that this could potentially happen and like preserving our relationship of trust in the classroom.

Carla demonstrates her awareness of the relational dynamic between the students whereby some students were much more confident than others in speaking up in class, and names two approaches for directly addressing the dynamic. One involves expressly telling vocal students to make space for others and the other is a shift in power, pushing students to take more ownership of the discussion facilitation. Interestingly, she equates the students’
silence with not paying attention, rather than a personal demeanor or personality trait, which insinuates a lack of trust in students.

**Weakly Internalized Lens**

*Sharon.* Sharon’s observation took place after lunch in her first grade classroom. Students started at the rug where they engaged in a warm-up activity that was a series of problems aimed at getting them to share their mathematical thinking. Afterwards, students transitioned to their desks, where the intention was to have them play a math game. Shortly after returning to their seats, Sharon decided to abort the lesson. During the 30 minute observation there were several instances where conflict arose. The following vignettes, rendered from field notes of the classroom observation, shed light on Sharon’s approach to dealing with conflict between students in the classroom:

Vignettes from observation:

Several students reported incidents to the teacher throughout the lesson or Sharon inquired about a conflict she observed occurring between students.

Incident 1)
Student: Emily is laying down
Sharon: Get up, honey

Incident 2)
Sharon: (noticing a conflict) Axel and Lisandro, what’s going on?
Student: He is in my space
Sharon: I’m looking to see which row is ready to be dismissed (ignores comment)

Incident 3)
Student: Someone was reading your book and they put it there
Sharon: Ok (ignores and goes to next question)

Incident 4)
Student: Lea is crying
Sharon: Ok what is going on?
Student: Explains there is an issue over stickers and not sharing
Sharon: Ok, we need to drop the sticker thing. Honey, you’re gonna be ok, you are a big girl, you’re ok. Are you ok?

Incident 5)
Student: Stoooop
Sharon: Ignores as she works on revamping the lesson

Sharon’s avoidance of conflict is visible in these incidents. Not only does Sharon not address the conflicts students bring to her, she does not address the conflict that she herself inquires about. She simply tells the students to “drop the sticker thing,” without offering them a way to resolve the issue. The implied messaging here is that conflict is not something that is manageable or worth devoting attention to and that the emotions the students are feeling about the situation are not valid. While teachers do sometimes intentionally ignore disruptions to keep a lesson moving or to not devote unnecessary attention to behavior they want a student to stop exhibiting, there was no lesson happening at this time and therefore it appears to be more a reflection of conflict avoidance than a strategic or intentional teacher move. Further, there is no language offered to the students to support them in navigating the situation independently. This highlights that Sharon does not appear to be teaching her students how to navigate conflicts independently, nor is she teaching them how to make amends.

In regards to responding to minoritized students, there was an interaction that was indicative of a larger pattern of deficit mindset present throughout Sharon’s interviews. During the warm-up at the beginning of the math lesson, a newcomer student responded orally to one of the questions posed to the whole class. Sharon’s response was, “You got this. For someone not speaking English, that’s great.” While some might interpret this as a
supportive statement, and indeed, I believe that Sharon’s intentions were to be encouraging to her student. However, the underlying message is that the student’s response was not strong when compared to that of a fluent English speaker. Further, drawing attention to the student’s lack of English skills when they have undoubtedly made a brave move by speaking in front of the class, is unnecessary and may in fact prevent that student from making such an attempt in the future. The deficit mindset behind Sharon’s words is further expressed when she explains how her expectations for students have shifted in her twenty years of teaching:

Sharon: But the thing is, I've noticed that kids have changed, these kids can't handle it [a homework packet like what she administered when she first began teaching]. To be honest, it's kind of sad.

AB: …I'm curious when you say they can't handle it, like the kids have changed, and they can't handle the homework packet. Now, what is that? What does that mean? Tell me more about that.

Sharon: Our population has changed, our community has changed, less English speakers. And I think more parents are working, they're not sitting at home with their kids doing the homework packet. And in the past, we used to have the parents sign every page of the packet or sign the front of the packet. Took that piece away. These are kids that are doing homework at care, you know kids learning after school program, at the daycare, they're doing it random places. That has drastically changed. I think, more working parents equal more kids not in their homes. So the expectation to read 20 minutes in bed and go to sleep is no longer there. Yeah, just, I mean, the world has changed, the area to community now, based on cost of living, both parents need to work to make ends meet and therefore the kids are less, less tended to and you know, and with that said, we ask for less, because they can't get to it. Their responsibilities are so big, so trying to be empathetic of their situations.

There is a tension alive in Sharon’s words; her first sentence expresses a belief that she does not think her students can perform to the standards she set for students in years prior because of their English language skills and then she says that the parents “tend” less to their children because of their heightened workloads, another example of deficit mindset.
However, Sharon is not aware that it is a deficit mindset, as she clearly states at the end of the excerpt that she believes these statements are a reflection of her empathy.

**Analysis.** In conversation with the participants it became clear that restorative justice was a relatively new concept, or entirely new concept, for all of the participants. However, half of the participants had restorative practices and structures that were observed during their observations and/or that were mentioned in their interviews. In regards to Identifying and interrupting microaggressions, three of the participants had clear answers for how they would address this in the classroom; one participants’ response made it apparent that the term microaggression was new to them.

Participants’ responses to minoritized students were consistent with their level of depth of internalization of their SEC lens; the participants who had a deeply or strongly internalized lens responses to minoritized students were constructive, supportive and involved modeling and moving through conflict. Both Jessica and Lucy normalized the range of emotions their students experience in the day and work with those emotions rather than trying to move past them, ignore them, or resolve them for the sake of productivity. Their responses validated students and humanized their experience in the classroom, while also fostering understanding in the greater classroom community.

Carla and Sharon, who exhibited moderately and weakly internalized lenses, responded less constructively to minoritized students. Their responses demonstrated an aversion to conflict and did not provide students with the skills or tools to navigate conflict themselves. Further, their responses did not humanize their students’ experiences or range of emotions,
rather the emotions became obstacles to their primary goals of either academic production or the maintenance of calm and order.

**SEC Lens Alignment Between Practice and Beliefs**

**Internalization.** Internalization refers to the level of depth the participants’ have internalized the SEC lens; how consistently visible is it across their narratives and classroom practices? There are four levels of internalization: deeply internalized, strongly internalized, moderately internalized and weakly internalized. Participants were spread across the continuum from demonstrating a deeply internalized lens to a weakly internalized lens.

**Deeply Internalized**

**Jessica.** Jessica demonstrates a deeply internalized lens; the lens is consistently present, she sees her student behavior as communication, understands the bidirectional nature of the student-teacher relationship and views SEL as the antecedent to learning. Noteworthy is Jessica’s awareness of and resistance to the idea that SEL is a series of individual lessons; this is one characteristic that differentiates the deeply internalized lens. Additionally, Jessica’s attention to her students’ cultural contexts is unique to the deeply internalized lens.

When asked how the SEC informs her professional identity, Jessica provides insight into what a deeply internalized lens looks and sounds like:

> It's basically something in the back of my mind all the time, when I'm teaching. My student’s not engaged. The first thing I'm thinking about is, what is the social emotional need they have right now? Is it because they're hungry? Because they had a fight with their friend? Is it because I said something offensive? [What] did I do? You know, so it's always that, and that's why I always have like, a check in with them. I don't assume that they're trying to be disrespectful, I always try to assume like, there's some, there's something there. It's like, they're communicating something to me. I think it's, that's why we always talk about it being a lens, and not just a series of lessons, because it's like, you can't just have a lesson and say, “Okay, we're done with SEL,” like, your whole mindset has to be like, why isn't this lesson clicking with
them? There has to be something in their experience that's causing them to stop being interested or something that I did, that's making them not want to be part of this lesson. And then always being flexible and adjusting, like, I realized that teaching is something that you have to kind of go with the flow. And SEL really is like, if you're really addressing SEL needs, you kind of just have to do that. Because there's always something happening in one of your students’ homes or on the playground or something. And so just being able to address that and talk to them about it and hopefully solve their problem. And if not just help them cope. And we'll help them at least bring their, their feelings down to a point where they can at least focus a little bit is like, it's basically the goal with the teacher.

Jessica articulated the essence of the lens as something that is always with her and shared her awareness of how her students’ individual, family and community contexts impact how they show up in the classroom. She further demonstrated deep internalization with multiple references to understanding that her actions directly impact students and therefore how consistent self-reflection and self-awareness are a critical part of the lens. Of particular importance is how Jessica maintains an asset based mindset when her own teaching fails to engage her students; rather than blaming the students she looks to her own teaching to see how she can better meet their needs. When talking about the CRTWC training, Jessica shares that the process was supportive in putting words to many classroom practices she was already doing. The training brought a common language to how she oriented to the classroom and affirmed that orientation with theoretical underpinnings:

So we put the terms to what we were doing. But it was so internalized that it was really hard for us to say that we were SEL teachers. So we had to kind of break it down into like, well, why am I doing this? Oh, this is because I want to make sure this child feels like they have a role in the class or belong. I'm sort of trying to start building rapport. So I always felt like my students should always feel welcome to the classroom and have a place and like, so that's why a lot of the things I do is a lot of making them feel as comfortable as possible. Alright, so basically taking care of their basic needs. So I always let them like, I ask if they're hungry, Ask how their morning was, um, things like that. I didn't realize it was SEL until I started working with them [CRTWC].
Part of the internalization of the lens is an understanding that SEL is not additive or curricular, it is an orientation rather than a program or series of individual lessons, which intersects with the *disrupting traditional norms* theme. Jessica shares her understanding of the professional orientation to SEL as additive and how she relates to that concept:

Yeah, cuz I know, a lot of teachers are like, give me like a lesson book and tell me what lessons to teach. And I'm like, well, that's not really how SEL works. I mean, you can teach us order of like coping skills, but it's really about getting to know your students and responding to them. And then like what their needs are at that time.

Jessica shares her own experience disrupting the traditional norm of having SEL as additive and how that experience was influenced by her understanding that traditional SEL was not meeting the needs of her students of color. Jessica’s capacity for reflection and awareness of her students’ needs is what allows her to continue to disrupt traditional norms related to power dynamics in the classroom. As she releases control over how the students participate, she is better able to meet their needs:

I just started kind of going off the books, and trying my own stuff. Um, some things that are like, when even before this was like, published, I was just like, I noticed that some of my students didn't want to close their eyes. And at first, I was like, you need to close your eyes. Like, that's the only way you can stay focused. And then I realized, like, okay, maybe I should just be more flexible, and just, you know, just let them open their eyes and see what happens, doesn't mean that they're, you know, like, they're gonna talk. Then I can tell them, you know, that's not what we're doing right now, or something. So just a really small tweaks to what we were already doing, but just kind of adjusting it to what made that student feel a little more comfortable. Like, you know, maybe some of the students didn't want to face each other and they wanted to look down, I'm like, okay, well, why did, why do you want to look down there? So my Asian students would be like, well, because my parents told me like, if you speak to someone with authority, or respect, you look down. Now I was like, oh, okay, that makes more sense then. Yeah, don't look at me, if you feel like that's, like, kind of confrontational or something. Let's, let's look down then. So and then all these things, I would just kind of keep in the back of my mind. Next time, I had a student that was kind of similar to that background, I would just be like, Okay, so do you feel comfortable looking at me? Or do you want to just look like, at your hands, or, you know, you can do either one, whichever one. I just want to make sure that you're
Jessica’s narrative illustrates the intersection of social emotional learning and culturally responsive teaching; her approach provides an example of what teaching at this intersection looks like in the classroom. She is aware of her students’ cultural backgrounds, attuned to how her instruction interacts with their cultural norms and adapts her instruction to meet their needs in a way that is culturally responsive. Her deep internalization of the SEC lens and her disposition of disrupting traditional norms converge so that when facing challenges in implementing SEL, Jessica relied on the lens to guide her actions; she questioned how the instruction might not be meeting students’ needs rather than reinforcing traditional power dynamics and exerting control to make students engage in the lesson as she had planned it.

**Strongly Internalized**

Lucy. Lucy demonstrates a strongly internalized lens; it is always present with her, she sees her students’ behavior as communication, she understands the student-teacher relationship as bidirectional, and articulates that SEL is the antecedent to learning. However, Lucy reveals that her orientation to SEL is more in alignment with an additive approach in several of her narratives. Of interest is that while Lucy does disrupt the traditional norms of the profession in some ways, she is hesitant to align herself with this orientation and considers herself someone who generally follows the rules. In conversation about her professional identity, Lucy named that being a teacher is part of her identity and referred to
her equitable orientation towards students and to several classroom practices as the pieces that made up her professional identity. Probing further as to what Lucy was drawing upon when referencing her orientation and practices, Lucy shares the theoretical underpinning behind her professional identity. Of importance is Lucy’s reference to her professional identity being a mindset, or rather something that guides all of her decisions, and pointing to the role praxis, or the intersection between theory and practice, played in her identity development. Lucy also references a relational role model, her mother, again weaving in the importance of relationships:

I think it was a combination, certain things, and it was maybe more philosophical, like how I value my space in working with children. So I think it's partially come as I've had my experience, but it's also a mindset that I think I went into, you know, when I first started my first classroom. I knew what things I wanted to make stronghold in my classroom. But I also have learned them as I've gone along, and like, oh, well, maybe this is important to include in my, in my classroom, and in my, in my studies, and how we learn. So I think it's probably been a combination of time, as well as what, you know what I've already come in with, through my own studies that I did prior to becoming a teacher. And probably from my parents, too, and how they parented us. And you know, my mom being a preschool teacher influenced our family dynamic and what she valued.

The SEC lens appears again when Lucy spoke to how the SEC informs her classroom practice, and she affirms that it is indeed a mindset. We see Lucy’s values of building student autonomy and agency appear as well. Lucy also points to her understanding of SEL as an antecedent to learning and the theme joy also intersects here, as Lucy names how she prioritizes play in her classroom.

It’s with me every piece of the day, I mean, from how we begin the day, I, especially with the pandemic, in mind and post pandemic, even though we're still embedded, but back in person learning and understanding that like, we spent so much I'm thinking about this big trauma but there's so much little, not really trauma, but little pieces that to kids are big deals. And how so I start the day to the placement of my classroom dynamics of choice, really big piece for me, it always has been prior to the pandemic,
even more so now. Feeling ownership and, and independence in, I am in charge of my learning to how much time we spend at the carpet to what kind of things I choose to stop and have, you know, a lesson about versus what things I'm gonna let slide. So it's really in all aspects of my day, we do a lot of time to just play this last actually, at this age, we start the day with play, which is something like oh, well, preschoolers do, but has always been important and was more of a reward in my mind when I first started teaching, but now it actually is, like, it's a necessary piece to begin the day. To me, like that's child's work. And so it kind of informs so much of how I set up my classroom structure, how I set up the learning space too they choose where they sit…And I think that's just through, you know, through my own understandings, and also as a parent, you know, I think has, has shown me the importance of how it's just really, the groundwork for so much of what happens when you come into a space where you want to be open to learning and you want to be open to connecting with new people who then argue and spend, you're gonna spend so much time with and who you're going to need to solve problems with both from problems on paper to problems in real life. It really just is embedded in so much of the classroom experience.

Where Lucy diverges from the deeply internalized lens is in her orientation to SEL for herself, and the importance of having a self practice of the skills she is modeling for her students. Lucy shared that she believes she can model something for students even if it is not a part of her own personal practice. This contradictory stance is demonstrated when the conversation turned to what reflective practices she incorporates in her daily life outside of the classroom.

I try to practice mindfulness, because I do spend some time like, I model it with the students. And we do spend time, twice a day, to just have those mindful moments, as we call them. And in that space, I wouldn't say it's my identity, but it's like, how am I right now? And what do I need and to try to impart that into like, you know, there's so much in life we can't control. So what can I do right now to make that and then just to take that space for myself throughout the day. But I wouldn't say I have any reflective identity practices that I think I really utilize on a regular basis.

This points to an orientation towards SEL as one-directional, something that a teacher imparts to their students, rather than an on-going reciprocal exchange. When directly asked about how she navigates the tension of modeling a practice and asking students to participate...
in a practice that she does not herself hold as a core value, Lucy explained her position relating it to teaching about social justice:

I think that I, you know, other things, too, I might not be the biggest social justice maker, right. Like, I'll do things that I can, and I try, and I wish I could do more of. But it doesn't mean I don't bring it up and highlight people who do make those choices for their lives. So, you know, making it an option on a menu. Just because it's not your favorite food doesn't mean someone else might choose it, because they might enjoy it.

There is an assumption present in Lucy’s narrative that one can teach what one does not themselves internalize. However, if Lucy does not herself embody what she teaches, the teaching becomes performative. The contradiction between Lucy’s beliefs and actions are reflected in a narrative where Lucy shared what having her own SEL practices would change about her teaching:

Um, I would probably, because I model it a few times a day. So I don't know if it would change in the modeling, it might change. I'm trying to think of like, that particular piece it would, it might change my reaction to certain things. And it would also change potentially where I choose to focus my energies. I think sometimes there's more clarity, if you're more mindful. And you have more, you know, kind of, I don't know, I don't know, in total because like, I haven't gotten to that point where I think I practice it enough that I, it impacts me that way.

A more deeply internalized lens, one where Lucy herself embodies the practices she asks her students to engage with, would change Lucy’s teaching; it would subsequently change her students’ experience in the classroom. Furthermore, what teachers do in their classrooms portrays what they value, and sends messages to students about what to value. Offering students a practice that Lucy does not adopt in her own life sends an implicit message to students about Lucy’s value of that practice. Her positional authority then influences how that practice is perceived and likely whether it is then adopted by her students.

*Moderately Internalized*
Carla. Carla demonstrates a moderately internalized lens; it is not always present with her. While she does see her students’ behavior as communication and articulates that SEL is the antecedent to learning, she orients towards SEL as something to fix that behavior. Her overall orientation to SEL is more in alignment with an additive approach, and she does not demonstrate an understanding of the student-teacher relationship as bidirectional. In sharing experiences that supported or hindered her development of an SEC lens, Carla shared her view on SEL. Noteworthy is the underlying desire to control access to and the orientation towards them as something to implement when needed based on student behavior, rather than an on-going relational practice:

…as an educator, I'm, like, pretty heavy on the warm demander side. Um, like, I hold very high expectations for my students and myself. And I think that when we first started talking about social emotional learning and practices, I definitely had a lot of like, resistance and questions about, like, the calm down corner, for example, which is really prevalent these days. Um, because I think like, as an educator, I'm more of a like, “You're fine, get it together, we're gonna keep working.” But also recognizing that like, my fine isn't necessarily someone else's fine. So I think that like, some of those, like “softer” practices, were harder for me to like, wrap my brain around or like, understand how to use them effectively, maybe, or how to regulate providing access for students that do truly need it, while not allowing students that are looking for like an escape option to abuse the situation.

When asked how the SEC lens informs her classroom practice, Carla indicates that she sees her students’ behavior as communication and again reiterates the orientation to SEL as being implemented to resolve problematic behaviors. We further see the orientation to SEL as additive and one-directional when Carla describes specific practices she integrates as a result of the training. This transactional approach to relationship development is further articulated in Carla’s orientation towards SEL not only as an antecedent to learning, but for the purpose of productivity.
Um, I think that I'm more like, aware of like, students’ needs in the classroom. It's definitely, it definitely was never on my mind before, like, if a student needed a break, right? It would be like, yeah, well, this is school, you can take your break at recess. And now I think, um, and I do think that our behaviors have also increased quite a bit. So sometimes I do think that, like, their needs are more obvious than they ever were in the past, or at least, recognizably obvious. So I think just being more responsive to like, what body language is telling, you know, what behaviors are telling you, because sometimes our students don't know how to actually like, verbalize what they need when they need it. And then, some of the practices that have been really good for me are like greeting students at the door, you know, like having that initial connection with students before the academic piece kicks in. Spending time with them outside of the classroom as well, to like, help develop some of those relationships so that when you are putting the academic pressure on, it's met with, like the lens of love and care.

Carla shared her belief that school is a place where work and output are centered and personal or emotional needs are to be set aside. This only changed to accommodate SEL when student behaviors increased to a level of needing to be addressed, however, Carla’s response was to use SEL as a tool to reinforce behavior expectations. Positioned in this way, Carla utilized SEL to maintain control in her classroom, rather than for the holistic well being of students. This limited perspective fails to humanize the entirety of the student experience.

**Weakly Internalized**

**Sharon.** Sharon demonstrates a weakly internalized lens; it infrequently presents in her narratives and classroom practice or presents alongside a deficit mindset that undermines the lens. While she does see her students’ behavior as communication, she orients towards SEL as something to maintain control in the classroom. Her overall orientation to SEL is more in alignment with an additive approach, and while she demonstrates an understanding of the student-teacher relationship as bidirectional she does not take responsibility for managing her emotional reactions and sees the students in part responsible for lowering her stress. When asked how she developed her own social emotional and cultural competence as a teacher,
Sharon made reference to developing her awareness, which she credits in part to her training with CRTWC:

I'm trying to be aware of what's going on and trying to be aware that what goes on in your house is very different than what goes on, like what I've seen, and what I thought I knew. And I can't make assumptions. So I make no assumptions now.

When asked what experiences supported or hindered her development of the SEC lens, Sharon shared her experience with the CRTWC training. Similarly to Carla, Sharon describes being told to participate in the training and points to a perception of her class being “crazy” as the motivator for requiring her to attend. Although she references the utility of the training and the initial impact, she shares that once the resources were no longer available her connection to the training waned. Sharon also reiterates her orientation to SEL as additive when she mentions referring to particular lesson plans to implement in her classroom.

That program, we didn't know what we got ourselves into, really. And our principal did not do the greatest job of telling us anything, just like we were chosen to, you know, she almost made it sound like it's required...And then I said, okay, I don't know what I'm in for. And then of course, they offer compensation stuff. And I was like, okay, you know, this could be handy. And then to get started with that. And then over the years, I kind of thought about looking at kids more because that forced me to do, we had to do like an online survey. If I remember correctly, it was answering seven questions about each kid, I believe, at that time. And then, so already, I thought I was asked because I had what looked like a crazy class. So I thought maybe that's the reason why, is it like you know, so it forces you to look at kids obviously. And then, so after that you don't leave an experience like that not looking at kids again, not reflecting on. Okay, let's look at because you have the background now, you know, somewhere, yeah, you kind of have a background goal. And then I remember I do recall a year or two later that, oh, I still, I wish I was still linked to that website. So I could grab that lesson, because I remember doing a lesson. And it's like, I don't have the link anymore. My login expired, whatever the case is...And then over the years, it got forgotten.

In reference to the impact the CRTWC training had on her classroom practice, Sharon shares about a student she had the same year that she participated in the training. We see
there is an awareness of the student’s behavior as communication and an understanding of the contextual factors contributing to that behavior, yet the resulting response is to ignore the student with the goal of maintaining a quiet and orderly classroom.

The year that I was in this Reaching and Teaching the Whole Child, I had a kid that was, he was a drug baby. And he was very small in size. And the behavior was out of control. We wanted to do things our way. And we are rolling chairs in the room if you wanted to make a choo choo train with the chairs, okay, yeah. So there's only so much behavior I can and finally talk myself into. If no one notices, I'm going to let it slide. I'm just gonna let it slide. He can hang out in the back and do whatever, if he's quiet.

The student in Jessica’s observation was exhibiting similar behavior, and to an outside observer the teachers’ responses may not seem too different. Both teachers were aware of the context of the student that was contributing to the behavior. Both teachers were reading the behavior as communication, and both teachers were content with the student behaving in ways that fall outside what is traditionally expected in a classroom environment. However, what was present in Jessica’s response was an intentionality behind her response that was indicated by having a predetermined structure, the calm down corner, to support the student in meeting their needs. Additionally, Sharon’s response indicates a focus on reducing the disruption to the rest of the class, so the intentionality is focused on control rather than creating an environment where students’ needs are met in and by the collective.

**Analysis.** Several factors contributed to the level of internalization of the focal teachers’ SEC lens: most noticeable was the amount of initial interest in participating in the CRTWC training. Interestingly, the two participants with the strongest levels of internalization are also the teachers who took the training closer to when they started teaching and they are also the teachers who have fewer years teaching in the group. Those same two participants opted into this research study after the first email; they also happen to be early adopters in the CRTWC
training and volunteered themselves to participate when invited to attend. In contrast, Sharon and Carla both explicitly mentioned being “voluntold” into the CRTWC training and did not express independent initial buy-in. Also noteworthy is that both Carla and Sharon joined this study after several invitations, and accepted only after a contact in the district reached out personally to invite them to participate.

The level of internalization then corresponded to how consistently visible the SEC lens was across their narratives and classroom practices. Those who had initial interest in the training demonstrated more consistently the Teacher Moves within the Anchor Competencies Framework and their narratives largely reflected those Teacher Moves; in essence, their practices align with their stated beliefs. These participants’ narratives expressed beliefs, perceptions and described actions that were in strong alignment with the SEC lens. Their classroom observations confirmed what was shared in the interviews; there was ample evidence of the SEC lens present in their interactions with students and there was very little to no tension between their beliefs, perceptions, and actions. These participants also expressed professional identities that corresponded to the Anchor Competencies Framework prior to attending the training.

For the participants who had less interest or were required to attend the CRTWC training there were fewer demonstrations of Teacher Moves within the Anchor Competencies and their narratives had higher rates of contradiction and deficit language. These participants either did not or only partially expressed professional identities that corresponded to the Anchor Competencies Framework. Subsequently, their beliefs were in less alignment with their actions and did not fully correspond to the Anchor Competencies Framework.
Additional Findings

During data analysis two additional superordinate themes emerged that fell outside of the scope of the research questions. Those themes were Reflection-Awareness-Empathy-Action and structure supports reflection and are discussed in the following sections. Here I present specific noticings from interviews and observations that led to these superordinate codes and I return to these themes in the Discussion section of Chapter V.

Reflection-Awareness-Empathy-Action

The superordinate code of Reflection-Awareness-Empathy-Action surfaced as a process to describe how awareness and reflection can challenge existing beliefs and ultimately shift behavior or practice. Participants repeatedly shared experiences where reflection led to a sudden shift in their awareness. While these first two segments were sometimes reversed, their presence then led to increased empathy for students. Once the empathy was present, this drove a change in behavior or practice. Initially, this appeared unique to Jessica since she demonstrated a deeply internalized SEC lens. However, a similar pattern was expressed by Carla, which led to a rereading of the transcripts of the interviews with other participants to see if this was a superordinate code across the data. While the empathy and sometimes action are explicitly named in Jessica’s responses, they are implied in the other participants’ responses.

Jessica. There was a noticeable pattern within Jessica’s responses. Throughout her interviews it became clear that there was a formula, or repeated pattern, in what drove Jessica’s behavior change. She repeatedly shared stories that referenced a new learning, or awareness, that sparked reflection. In the following excerpt Jessica explains how a reflective
experience in a restorative justice training led to reevaluating how she engages with students around the right to pass:

I know that in trainings in the past few years, we kind of think, like, about putting ourselves in students' shoes, and like, what did you feel comfortable doing? And then I was doing some training with like, some kind of circle, I forget, restorative justice circle, I do like two training sessions in the summer. And they're like, we pass something along. And like the, the talking piece, I was like, as a student, I always loved having a talking piece, because I knew that it was my time, I wasn't interrupting anyone. And I was like, okay, well, then when I go around in a circle, and I tell my kids, they have to say an answer. And how would I feel as a student? So I was like, well, I would probably freak out and just like, not answer. And so like, okay, so if I was that student, I probably want to pass. Yeah, if I could pass. So just putting myself in their shoes, and having those trainings that kind of remind you like, wow, what kind of student were you? And what makes you uncomfortable? So I'm trying to reflect that with my others, my students and see like, if they don't want to participate, we probably ask them later, like, “Oh, is it because there's too many people looking at you or did you not understand the question?” Sometimes I'll give them options. Like Alex, he has a really hard time forming his words and building connections. So I'll usually give him two answers to choose from, would you rather be a dog or a cat. You can answer [and] participate. So just knowing the kids and like, what makes them comfortable really helps.

Jessica’s narrative points to the capacity of professional development training to shift beliefs and action. Specifically professional development opportunities that provide an opportunity for reflection as it relates to student experience. When Jessica was challenged to put herself in her students’ place she confronted parts of her practice that were not in alignment with her beliefs and consequently took action to change. An additional example ties in to the disrupting traditional norms theme, where we see Jessica questioning a commonly held practice of requiring students, particularly kindergartners, to sit with their legs criss crossed.

I would wear dresses to school, and I would sit mermaid style. And a lot of the kids would be like, “Well, why do you get to sit mermaid style? Why don't you say criss cross applesauce.” And I'm like, “Well, I'm wearing a dress, and I'm an adult, okay, so I have to sit this way. But you have to sit crisscross applesauce.” And then every
year, I'm always like, why do I say that? Why can't they sit mermaid? Is it going to bother me? Is it going to interrupt my lesson? Like I'm asking all these questions like, why would I not want them to sit a certain way? So, this year is why I introduced different choices. And that it's more about like, if they're being respectful and what that looks like when someone's presenting, you know, like how you change your body, depending on what the activity is. So just thinking about that.

The act of reflection led Jessica to unpack the traditional power dynamic that was at play regarding what teachers are allowed to do with their bodies versus what is considered acceptable for students. Reflection supported Jessica in challenging this traditional norm and resulted in her offering students more autonomy over their bodies.

Lucy. A pivotal moment for Lucy occurred during the CRTWC training in regards to the Teacher Move, Attend to status issues, which is part of the Creating community Anchor Competency. The following narrative illuminates a shift in Lucy’s understanding of Building trusting relationships, where she develops clarity that it is her responsibility to foster relationships among students, in addition to individual relationships with students.

I think one of the biggest pieces I remember from that was the teacher moves involved in elevating students, amongst their peers, and how much a teacher's role is and playing to that state, like, you know, like, as a teacher, you have such an impact on that student, but you also have an impact on how that student is viewed by everyone else. And that was a big aha for me that I really remember seeing, like watching some of their videos, and they were talking about and we had to kind of find what particular teacher moves where along this wheel, this teacher was, what they were hitting upon. And that, that piece was big for me, because you often lose sight of the fact that yes, you're, you know, one on one with this child, you're helping that child, but you're also helping that child develop a relationship and, and reputation amongst their peers. And the teacher can make or break that I think, something that I just didn't wasn't as thoughtful of I think before. And, you know, it's just one facet of what social emotional learning is. It's not just them, it's how they are viewed and how they interact and how they view themselves and building that confidence within that social community.

Noteworthy here is Lucy’s acknowledgement of her positional authority and the sense of responsibility to her students that authority evokes. Although Lucy does not explicitly name
the behavior change that accompanied her reflective process in this excerpt, she implies that she manages the status issues of students in her classroom as a consequence of this new awareness. A further example came when Lucy discussed what practices she adopted in her classroom as a result of the CRTWC training. In the following excerpt Lucy shared how observing her students led to a moment of reflection and awareness about the importance of SEL:

I mean, even from, like my first year teaching, seeing the students, as first graders, learning how to get along, like we had lots of moments in our day where I'm like, we need to learn how we talk to each other, how we solve problems. So even that first year, is when you know, just being with the students and seeing the issues that came up and seeing what success, what led to success made me realize what the importance of modeling and explicitly teaching those social and emotional pieces were and how much it impacted them as a person that impacted the person who came into my classroom and you know, what they were going to learn or not learn that day.

Empathy for the student experience is explicit and the subsequent action regarding implementing SEL in the classroom is implied. Of interest is the expressed belief that SEL is an antecedent to learning and that these practices may be employed as a means to access learning or a more productivity-oriented goal.

**Carla.** Despite mentioning that she does not have a regular reflective practice, Carla described experiencing moments of spontaneous awareness that cause her to reflect on her practice. In a reflective moment, Carla shared how her awareness of the differences between her own experiences and those of her students drives her behavior:

I think just being aware of, of some of the areas where like, my limited experiences don't match the students that I'm serving, and then learning about it, like, what does dinner look like at your house? Because a lot of it's very different. I mean, even like, you know, I think like, if I was growing up in this day and age, like, we probably wouldn't all eat dinner together. Because those times have really changed. My kids don't even eat dinner together, right? So understanding the changes in the times, the changes in the demographics of our students, understanding that like when two
parents are both at work, and some of them work two jobs, like, there isn't family dinner, like that's not a thing. So recognizing that it's important to learn about the experiences of our students so that we can match them a little bit better at school, and match our classrooms to fit their communities, not matching their communities to what our expectation of school is.

Noticeably absent from Carla’s narrative is explicit empathy for her students, though it certainly is implied by her final statement suggesting that schools need to adjust to reflect students’ lived experiences, which is in alignment with her orientation to creating equitable learning environments for her students.

**Sharon.** Both Carla and Sharon reference reflecting on their own children’s experiences as points of expanding their own awareness as it relates to their students. Sharon’s relationship to students arriving tardy in her class shifted when she witnessed the impact that arriving tardy had on her own children.

I mean, my kids, from watching my own kids, if they're tardy, the tendency to shy away, not want to walk in, not want to participate, and make it a big deal to participate. So those things from my own kids. Now I have to wonder how these kids are reacting when they're tardy, and how they're feeling when they're tardy. So I make it a point to say thank you for coming in regardless of what time you come in, and just thank you for coming in. And just making them feel like it's okay. And life happens. And so, then definitely, yeah, the last couple of years, I catch myself doing that a lot is, you know, thank you for coming in. It's great you're here. Thanks for being here. And yeah, just trying to react to what might have happened in the morning. Because, you know, I, myself have been the parent. I've been there. And a lot happens. Just to get out of the house. A lot happens. And if you got kids, you just got another thing to juggle.

Empathy is present in Sharon’s narrative, both for the students and the parents of her students. This empathy, derived from her reflection and awareness of her children’s experiences in school, shifted her behavior in the classroom to more explicitly welcome children who arrive late to class.
*Structure Supports Reflection*

*Structure supports reflection* is a superordinate theme that was present across the second and third interviews, which provided participants an opportunity to reflect on their practice after having been observed and an opportunity to reflect on their experience of the study process and their takeaways. Three types of reflective structures were present in the participant narratives: (a) on-going dialogue (participating in the study), (b) observer gaze (self-reflection induced by being observed or having a student teacher), and (c) classroom routines to foster student self-reflection. The first two speak to ways to support teacher self-reflection and the latter focuses on student self-reflection. This theme offered a window into both the present lack of structure for reflection within schools and the potential that providing structures for reflection would offer for teacher professional development. It presented across the four participants and offered insight into one potential area of focus for creating structural change in the profession to foster reflection, potentially leading to the additional steps in the Reflection-Awareness-Empathy-Action process and ultimately support a shift in classroom practices.

**Jessica.** At the start of the third interview Jessica reflected on what she learned about herself over the course of the study. Using the structure of on-going dialogue, her sharing illuminates the lack of structured reflection time in the profession:

...it's really nice to get familiar again, with the terms that we're using and to actively reflect and think about why I'm doing certain things, which is why I love having a student teacher too, because they asked me these questions.

Of importance is that Jessica has created the structure, observer gaze, for herself by regularly having student teachers in her classroom. Not all classroom teachers take on
students teachers though, so the reflective nature of this experience is not mutually shared
across the profession. Even though Jessica had the most deeply internalized lens she shared
in the first interview that she was still developing an understanding of the intersection
between social emotional learning and culturally responsive teaching. However, during the
course of the study, Jessica’s awareness grew out of the reflective process inherent in the
study:

And then like, when you were asking me in the first interview about like, how being
culturally responsive and SEL overlapping, it's like, well, that's what I'm kind of
doing being flexible and reflecting and, you know, deciding based on what my class
is made of, and what issues they're going through, or things they are interested in.
That's being responsive, culturally, so, you know, just bringing those awarenesses to
me, I'm like, oh, I didn't know what my actual answer was the first interview and now
I'm like, oh, yeah, this is how it's working together.

A designated time and structured container of on-going dialogue for reflection supported
Jessica in advancing her understanding of the intersection of this work and how she enacts
culturally responsive social emotional learning in her classroom. It was both an affirming
experience and one that indicates the importance of embedding similar structures into the
profession.

Lucy. When asked about prioritizing SEL despite outside pressure indicating it was a
waste of time, Lucy shared that the pandemic served as a catalyst for her to reflect on her
classroom practices and shift to incorporate more SEL. This external social event functioned
as an impromptu reflective moment, but the fact that it took such a momentous disruption to
create space for Lucy to reflect on and shift practices indicates the overall lack of reflective
structures in the profession. It was the third type of reflective structure, classroom routines to
foster student self-reflection, that was present in Lucy’s narrative:
And then reflection when they're writing in their writings about a little intro to our writing unit about things you know, about things you care about, things you're curious about. And we make a list and so they share a lot of those ideas too. So you know, knowing that there's lots of different ways to share your feelings and what you care about too.

Building classroom routines to foster self-reflection is a growing practice with the proliferation of SEL in the field. However, there is a significant tension between the lack of structured reflection in the teaching profession and the expectation for self-reflection from students. When teachers require students to perform a task that they themselves do not practice, it lacks reciprocal vulnerability and risks being a performative, shallow endeavor.

**Carla.** Although Carla’s position as a TOSA does not allow her to have a student teacher in her classroom, she affirmed Jessica’s position that doing so creates a reflective space.

There are some benefits for the teacher too, um, because the second that someone else is always in your room, you are questioning things that you say or do or the way that you ask things. And I think a lot of people don't see that aspect of having a student teacher, like how beneficial it is for the cooperating teacher as well.

Carla mentioned the second reflective structure, the observer gaze, several times over the course of the study. In one example, Carla mentioned how my presence during the observation allowed her to catch her own emotional reaction to a student in the moment:

I think it's funny, like you do things, and then the second you do them, you're like, huh. Like, when Alicia picked up the thing and started fanning herself. I'm like, dude, every day, every day we talk about like, it's just gonna make you hotter. And I like, I said it to her. And then I was like, oh, now this is going in the notes. Um, that was pure my reaction, right?

As the participant who spoke most frequently about accountability, it was interesting that this structure was mentioned most frequently in her narratives. It indicates the power of observation to increase one’s level of awareness and intentionality.
Sharon. Similar to Jessica, Sharon articulated the benefit of participating in the study due to the structured opportunity to reflect:

But so have I, and I think this process is good, because it allowed me to reflect to double check myself and make sure, okay, is this you know, is this accurate? Am I doing this? Somewhat right, and stepping back and reflecting…

In the third interview, Sharon mentioned the nonstop pressures placed on teachers and the lack of time for pause or tending to oneself is prolific in the profession. She offered appreciation for participating in the study because she saw it as something she was doing for herself. Her comments point to the absence of prioritizing structured reflection in the profession:

No, seriously, it's one thing after another, you know, field trip, report cards, and we were trying to do a dine-in experience or like a restaurant fundraiser. Oh, my God, when am I gonna leave this classroom, this school and just do something external? So you, I treat you as kind of my external piece right now. You know, yeah, I'm one to look for external things a little bit. I think that's another way I deal with, besides, I mean, you brought back the whole taking a deep breath and all that.

Though not explicitly stated, Sharon’s comments imply the significance of engaging in on-going dialogue as a reflective practice. While Jessica’s appreciation for the time was centered around the individual growth that accompanied the experience, Sharon’s narrative points to a pressure release or stress reducing effect. Like Lucy, Sharon also mentioned a classroom structure she has implemented to support student self-reflection. She has her students select their emotions on a mood board when they enter the classroom. Interestingly, Sharon expressed some impatience with the practice because of students’ ever-changing emotions:

I started a social, you saw my social emotional thing, and then watching it change as time goes. Because some were like, they just wanted to hit up every color. They weren't reading the words, they weren't really looking at faces. One would say sad,
sad, and I would say, “Why are you sad?” “Oh, I meant.” And I said, “Okay.” And, again, expanding vocabulary, because everybody wants to say happy. I'm glad you're happy. But there are other words up there that, you know, mean happy, like joyful and content. I'm trying to spread them out a little bit. So it's interesting to see these kids and what they do. And then there was one day, they just felt the need to change it every single hour. And I'm like, why do we change every single hour today. I never said anything. I just let it go. So it's just so funny to watch him go up there and say, “Okay, so your mood has changed?” So even that, and we're talking within the day.

The excerpt again highlights the tension between a field that does not require teacher self-reflection and requiring students to engage in self-reflection practices. It is typical human experience, and certainly for first graders, to experience a range of emotions throughout the day. Sharon’s reaction to the students’ desire to change their mood board to reflect those changes illuminates the disconnect that occurs when teachers do not embody the practices they are implementing in their classrooms.

Summary

In summary, individual interview and classroom observation analysis resulted in superordinate themes across participants and research questions. Disrupting traditional norms, joy, equity as a guiding orientation, teaching as relational and internalization were the emergent themes for RQ1. Joy appeared across RQ1 and RQ2, while the emergent theme internalization was an emergent theme across all four research questions. Additional findings included Reflection-Awareness-Empathy-Action and structure supports reflection. The following chapter will provide a discussion of the implications of this data, along with recommendations for future research.
Chapter V: Conclusion, Discussion, Implications and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore the phenomenon of developing a SEC lens through examining the relationship between participants’ professional identity formation, their beliefs and perceptions in connection to subsequent actions, and their intersection with the SEC lens. The questions guiding the inquiry were,

RQ1: How does the SEC lens inform the professional identity of the focal elementary school teachers?

RQ2: How does the development of a SEC lens influence the focal teachers’ beliefs and perceptions in relation to developing trusting relationships with students?

RQ3: How do teachers’ responses to minoritized students reflect, or counter, an SEC lens?

RQ4: How, if at all, does the focal teachers’ practice align with beliefs after developing an SEC lens?

The CRTWC Anchor Competencies Framework (Figure 3) served as the conceptual framework for the inquiry and will be referred to throughout the discussion.
This chapter delves into a discussion of key findings. The themes identified in response to RQ1 were: (a) teaching as relational, (b) joy, (c) equity as a guiding orientation, (d) disrupting traditional norms and (e) internalization. The themes that developed in response to RQ2 were joy and internalization. The principal theme that developed in response to RQ3 & 4 was internalization. The following section will explore each of these
emergent themes individually and in relation to one another. The discussion then addresses the superordinate codes *structure supports reflection* and *Reflection-Awareness-Empathy-Action* that emerged from synthesis across findings for individual questions. The discussion is followed by a section on implications of the findings for teacher preparation and training. Lastly, the chapter concludes with recommendations for next steps in further research and shares final thoughts.

The superordinate codes *structure supports reflection* and *Reflection-Awareness-Empathy-Action* offer synthesis across the codes that were identified in Chapter IV. *Reflection-Awareness-Empathy-Action* sheds light on the process participants underwent that led to changes in their beliefs and behaviors; this finding holds important implications for how to support the development of the SEC and suggests the role embodied practice might play in that development. Similarly, *structure supports reflection* offers insight around next steps and what types of practices need to be embedded in teacher preparation and school districts in order to foster teachers’ embodied practice of the SEC lens.

**Discussion of Key Findings**

*The Emergence of Teaching as Relational and Equity as a Guiding Orientation*

*Teaching as relational* was an expected yet important theme to arise in the data. All of the participants acknowledged either the importance of a relationship they had with a teacher or the recognition of the impact they have relationally as teachers. Given that Building trusting relationships is the foundational Anchor Competency, this theme emerging is one indication that student-teacher relationships are viewed as impactful and therefore prioritized in the classroom. Three of the four participants made a reference to the impact one of their
teachers had on them or the impact their students had on them in the positive. This points towards a bidirectional understanding of relationships (Ladson-Billings, 1995), which may inform their orientation towards social emotional learning. The question that this finding invites is whether this prioritization reflects a level of humanistic caring (O’Connor, 2008) that is implied through the acknowledgment of relationships as important or if it is in fact a more professional or performative caring (O’Connor, 2008). Another lens for viewing teaching as relational is through Ginwright’s (2022) transactional versus transformational relationships, where transformative relationships are defined as “based on the performance of roles and the execution of tasks,” and there is an emphasis on accomplishing tasks with speed and efficiency, which consequently erodes the quality of connection and limits our capacity for caring (p. 115). Transformative relationships, however, are based on care, curiosity and connection and are rooted in recognizing and honoring our humanity through a reciprocal exchange (Ginwright, 2022). Although all of the participants viewed relationships as important and were guided by equity, the constraints and pressures within the profession were at times at odds with developing trusting relationships. Carla and Sharon’s orientation to relationships were more transactional, as demonstrated by Carla’s emphasis on academic productivity and Sharon’s avoidance of conflict in order to maintain a sense of calm, while Lucy and Jessica’s were more transformative, such as when Jessica maintained her students’ dignity when they were exhibiting behaviors that drew their classmates’ attention or when Lucy publicly celebrated two students successfully navigating conflict. A significant difference was connected to the participants’ orientation towards SEL; when the participant viewed SEL as a one-directional tool, the relationships were also more transactional in nature
and when the participant viewed SEL as a reciprocal exchange that supports collective well-being the relationships were more transformative.

*Equity as a guiding orientation* further intersected with *teaching as relational* through the teachers’ awareness of inequity and the influence it played on their identity formation. For all of the participants, an awareness of societal inequity, or within the education system, was a driving motivator for joining the profession, which also points to a sense of humanistic caring (O’Connor, 2008) and to that sense of caring being related to a larger sociopolitical context (Ladson-Billings, 1995). *Teaching as relational* and *equity as a guiding orientation* are deeply tied to the Anchor Competencies Framework (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020). Primarily, being driven to provide Equity in teaching and learning illustrates that these participants are in alignment with the core goals of the Anchor Competencies Framework. This indicates initial alignment with the dialogic identity that argues that when beliefs and commitments that are informed by theory guide practice, this leads to a consistent identity that supports retention in the field (Hsieh, 2015). Further, their commitment to reducing inequity highlights their sense of Responsibility for the greater good, another goal of the Anchor Competencies Framework. Additionally, this orientation reflects the Context ring of the Framework, specifically the taking into account the sociopolitical context in regards to their classrooms and family/individual student context. It also highlights the participants’ capacities for reflection, which is part of the Developing the Lens ring.

**The Emergence of Joy**

*Joy* arose as a theme across the interviews with participants and first presented when three of the participants spoke about why they chose the profession and/or how they came to
become teachers. Joy emerged in numerous forms, such as joy in teaching itself or coming to love the profession, as well as cultivating or centering joy to build bridges, move through discomfort, or as a core principle of one's teaching. This section further discusses these many facets of joy from the findings.

In relation to coming to the profession, the theme of joy presents as a motivator for becoming a teacher. There is a clear connection between enjoying teaching and wanting to pursue it. Alongside the joy there was a distinct awareness of teaching feeling like a “calling” for all the participants. Joy emerging as a theme highlights the fact that humans pursue that which brings them joy, and since teaching sparked joy in the participants that is part of why the profession felt like a natural fit professionally.

Seeing the theme return in the conversations about classroom practice was illuminating. There was noticeable similarity between Lucy and Jessica’s orientation to joy in the classroom. Likewise, there was a strikingly different similarity between Carla and Sharon. Lucy and Jessica both talked about joy as something that supports classroom learning and therefore center it as part of their classroom as a way of encouraging the productive struggle. They either explicitly used the word “joy” or talked about having fun, loving or enjoying an activity. There was an intentionality and awareness of the vulnerability of learning and that having fun or experiencing joy supported students in moving through that vulnerability and taking academic risks. They further referred to the power of joy as something that builds bridges of connection between students and therefore also connected joy to the theme of building trusting relationships. Noteworthy here is that three of the participants referred to
learning as a vulnerable process, the main difference being their subsequent responses to that awareness.

In the interviews with Sharon and Carla, joy was never explicitly mentioned, but play was brought up. Play aligns with joy in the sense that play is inherently joyful, or serves as a way to access joy. Interestingly, play was also present in their responses to when they knew they wanted to become teachers. Carla mentioned playing with a Kindergarten teacher who came to her house for a home visit and Sharon shared that she engaged in imaginative play where she was the teacher. Sharon later brought in the topic independently in regards to students, and her framing suggests that she sees play as something that children want to do naturally, but implied that it is in contradiction to the work of school. In contrast, Lucy referred to play as “children’s work.” Of particular interest was that during the classroom observation, Sharon “let go” of her lesson plan when she saw that the students wanted to play, further bolstering her position that play is incompatible with schoolwork. Ironically, her lesson plan was a math game. Carla also demonstrated an orientation to play as either a reward or something to be engaged in after the academic work has been accomplished. Her references to play being a part of recess, lunch, or physical education demonstrated this, as well as a comment she made that math games should come after teaching a lesson to introduce a concept. With this reference she was suggesting that play is a space from which you can manipulate and engage with the material in a different way after you have a basic grasp of the underlying concept. This resonates with a critique Muhammad (2020) offers that when teachers are narrowly focused on test scores or engage in rote or prescriptive teaching they can lose sight of joy as an integral part of learning.
Much of contemporary schooling prioritizes practices and outcomes that undermine joy and wellness for minoritized youth. This invites an exploration of the relationship between themes of *joy* and *equity as a guiding orientation* which illuminates how joy itself can serve as an act of defiance or self-assertion in a society that perpetuates systemic oppression. Therefore, *joy* further connects to the concept of criticality that is inherent in transformative SEL. Muhammad (2020) provides a useful historical example of this relationship as she writes, “Readers in Black literary societies had aims of cultivating their intellect and scholarship so they could be better equipped to experience joy and to critique the problems of the world” (p. 101). These findings invite further exploration of how centering joy in the classroom supports developing political agency and positioning culturally responsive social emotional learning as a tool for bridging the gap between the classroom and greater social structures.

**The Emergence of Disrupting Traditional Norms and Internalization**

*Disrupting traditional norms* also brings to mind Transformative SEL (Jagers et al., 2019) and its implication of critiquing existing systems. Only one of the four participants explicitly stated that they were tending to the disruption of a traditional norm, which was Carla, in regard to power dynamics. Additional disruptions mentioned appear to be a consequence of the *Reflection-Awareness-Empathy-Action* process (a superordinate code that will be discussed later in the chapter) that consequently drives behavior change, rather than an explicit working against traditional norms. In other words, the disruption of traditional norms is a reflection of an awareness at the individual level that is then translated to the classroom context, but not one that is necessarily connected to the larger sociopolitical
context. The exception in the findings was Jessica and her deeply internalized lens, who was the only participant who explicitly connected the external sociopolitical context to her classroom in an intentional manner.

The theme internalization arose when reviewing the classroom observation protocol data. While there was ample evidence of participants demonstrating the SEC lens in practice there were also moments where their statements or behaviors were not in alignment with either the SEC lens or what they had stated in the identity interview, or both. Of particular focus was the presence of a deficit mindset, which is in direct contradiction to the Anchor Competencies and SEC lens. Underlying deficit perspectives undermine any possibilities of the kind of authentic caring relationship the competencies are calling for and therefore warranted further unpacking.

There were points of tension or contradiction between what Carla said regarding power dynamics and then her subsequent actions in the classroom observation. This implies a tending to what Hammond (2014) defines as, “surface culture,” which refers to an observable or appearance level rather than “shallow culture” which refers to unspoken rules and agreements (p. 22). In one example, Carla spoke about tending to the physical realm and being aware of not standing over students or exerting power through body positioning. However, this failed to significantly disrupt traditional power relations that impact student-teacher relationships, which was reflected by the tension between her answers regarding the restorative justice principle, the right to pass, and her classroom actions. Unspoken assumptions around participation, that participation is verbal and externalized, manifested in her practice. When asked if Carla saw the right to pass as a valuable practice, she responded
that she finds the right to pass “incredibly valuable,” but then went on to state that she always returns back to the student rather than allowing the pass entirely. This response demonstrated that Carla maintained positional authority, or power, in the dynamic, and that while philosophically agreeing with the idea behind the right to pass, her own ideological orientation as manifested in practice was different. As a result, the student is not actually granted the right to pass, but instead merely given more time to think about their response before being compelled to answer later. The contradiction present in Carla’s narrative illustrates a moderately internalized lens, where Carla espouses she believes many of the underlying principles of the lens but holds contradictory beliefs that ultimately override the lens. This brings to mind Valenzuela (1999), who shares that in a hierarchical model the definition of those who hold power wins out and is where disrupting traditional norms and internalization intersect with accountability culture, another emergent code.

Accountability culture presented in two of the four participants, with Carla having noticeably more references than the other participant. This may have been a reflection of Carla’s role as a TOSA, and her proximity to power within the school and the increased pressure or emphasis on accountability that position holds. Accountability culture refers largely to the pressure to perform imposed on teachers and students that is then felt or transferred to the classroom space; accountability culture is a reflection of the value placed on work, productivity, and outcomes and the need for things to be measured, with data, in order to prove teachers’ worth or value in the classroom (Bushnell, 2003). This can also be applied to the profession as a whole, where new teachers may feel pressure to perform, in terms of numbers/data, in order to keep their position (Bushnell, 2003; Webb et al., 2009);
this orientation is then mirrored in the classroom. It is simultaneously a reflection of the larger US societal tendency to value objective scientific measurement over intuition (Bushnell, 2003), felt sense, or what are often referred to as “soft skills.” When teachers’ internalize this orientation, there is a lack of focus on the relational or humanistic side of the classroom, which is seen as either a distraction, unnecessary, or “soft.” In this case, SEL is posited as a remedy for addressing the emotional “issues” that arise in order to get students back on track to productivity. In other words, SEL is a tool used to maintain the status quo or impose conformity and compliance (Simmons, 2019). In summary, accountability culture intercedes and creates a dissonance in the level of internalization.

In Carla, there seems to be both an awareness of the pressures of the profession and a lack of awareness of how those pressures have been internalized. While she refers to the importance of building trusting relationships, she does so in the context of saying it is for the benefit of making sure the students keep working or the classroom keeps functioning, which then makes the relationships transactional (Ginwright, 2022) in nature. She also repeatedly uses the term effective to refer to social emotional practices and makes reference to their use in relationship to challenging or escalated behaviors, indicating that their purpose is for behavior management and to help students be their most productive selves. This represents a tension imposed by the larger societal norms and accountability culture and how that interferes with the internalization of the SEC lens.

Disrupting traditional norms further points to the question of whether the development of a SEC lens will lead to social change outside of the classroom context, which in part appears connected to the level of internalization of the SEC lens. A guiding assumption of this work
is that when we change the way we orient to ourselves and others, we are fundamentally disrupting the culture of accountability that drives much of US public education. One interesting finding is that accountability culture interacts with *internalization* as a potentially mediating factor, calling for the teacher preparation to ensure that future educators are well versed in managing the pressures of the profession while still foregrounding students’ well being. In other words, the US societal norms and the accountability culture present in teaching are in direct contradiction to the SEC lens, and therefore influence how the SEC lens is internalized (Figure 4).

**Figure 4**

*Tension in the Profession*

In the outer ring, US Societal Norms refers to neoliberal policies based on free market ideology, such as the concept that education is a private good and school choice will create higher quality schools through competition, that have gained widespread popularity in the education sector (Webb et al., 2009). Further reflected in this outer ring is the reality that we
live in a racialized society where access to power and privilege depends disproportionately upon one’s racial identity; this reality is mirrored in the education system, which has long contributed to social stratification (Anyon, 1980; Love, 2019). The Accountability Culture ring refers to test-based reforms that have proliferated in public education in parallel to neoliberalism, particularly since No Child Left Behind, and have created a culture of high stakes testing in public education (Webb et al., 2009). Inside these two outer circles lies the SEC lens, that is in direct contradiction to the outer rings, yet inevitably influenced by them; teachers’ actions, therefore, are either a perpetuation of US Societal Norms and Accountability Culture, or a subversion. The process of Reflection-Awareness- Empathy-Action, which I explain further in the subsequent section, occurs inside the SEC lens, and the depth of the impact of this process is undoubtedly tied to the level of internalization of the SEC lens.

With Jessica, who demonstrated that she is comfortable disrupting the status quo and regularly goes against norms of the teaching profession, the SEC lens is deeper and there are few to no contradictions present in her narratives or observed classroom practices. With the other three participants the tension was clearer, noticeably more so with Carla and Sharon. Another potentially mediating factor of the internalization of the lens was the initial interest in the CRTWC training. Both Carla and Sharon were voluntold into the CRTWC training rather than opting into participation themselves. This initial lack of investment appears to have transferred to a lower level of internalization of the SEC lens, which explains the higher frequency of tension in their comments and observations.
Reflection-Awareness-Emptiyh-Action

Reflection-Awareness-Emptiyh-Action emerged as a superordinate theme across the participants as a result of synthesis across insights from observations and analysis; it describes the process behind behavior change or shifts in classroom practices and highlights the potential of awareness and reflection to serve as the catalyst to challenge existing beliefs. Several ideas related to the literature review connect to the Reflection-Awareness-Emptiyh-Action theme: teacher self-efficacy and self-actualization, the notion of caring, and teacher professional identity. bell hooks (1994) postulates that in order to teach from a place of empowering students, teachers need to be committed to and involved in the cultivation of their own self-actualization. The iterative process demonstrated by the Reflection-Awareness-Emptiyh-Action code suggests that the participants were engaged with, or at least were oriented towards, a process of continual growth, and illustrates one process for how to support teachers in moving from the theoretical to concrete shifts in behavior. All participants mentioned across the interviews that continual learning was important to them, which further ties in with two of the rings on the Anchor Competencies Framework (Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020), Developing the Lens and Anchor Competencies. The Reflection-Awareness-Emptiyh-Action process demonstrates the participants’ capacity for reflection (Developing the Lens) and exploring their assumptions and beliefs (Developing the Lens), and reflects the embodiment of growth mindset (Anchor Competencies).

When considering what distinguishes the action portion of Reflection-Awareness-Emptiyh-Action, the empathy stage offers some insight. Empathy “fuels connection” (RSA, 2013) and in the case of the participants served as a bridge to compassion, or a drive to act to
relieve the suffering being witnessed. Of particular interest is that Jessica directly positioned herself in her students’ experience; it is in large part that imagining the students’ experience that motivates a change in her behavior. In comparison, the other participants' empathy emerged from either thinking about their professional role and responsibility or their own family’s experiences. Jessica and Sharon’s responses also clearly articulate their change in behavior as it relates to the new learning, while this process was not as explicit in the case of the other participants, because they either did not explicitly reference consideration for their students’ experience or name the consequent change in behavior, so the empathy, and at times the action, is inferred or implied. What differentiates Jessica’s process from Sharon’s is the structural nature of Jessica’s response; her changes in practice resulted in all students gaining access to more autonomy in the classroom, while Sharon’s response was limited to the specific circumstance of students arriving late to school. The lack of explicit consideration or action on behalf of the other participants begs the question if it is in fact empathy that fueled the other participants’ changes in behavior, and if, in some cases, the learning stayed at the cognitive level and failed to translate into action. This line of questioning ties into the notion of caring and whether the teachers’ caring is coming from a philosophical/humanistic orientation, a professional obligation, or a motivational technique used to further student productivity and output (O’Connor, 2008).

O’Connor (2008) suggests that care is a continuum and is influenced by both personal beliefs and professional demands; this continuum is apparent in the participants’ narratives. Across the interviews, Jessica refers to her classroom community as a family, one indication that her orientation is humanistic/philosophical and geared towards developing a sense of
belonging. Carla’s responses across the interviews were more goal oriented in nature, perhaps indicating care, at least in part as a motivational technique to further student productivity. In particular, her emphasis consistently returns to the academic or productive goal rather than for the sake of connection. Sharon demonstrates aspects across the continuum; one choice she made to allow a student experiencing challenges in their home life to stand at the back of the classroom both indicates a humanistic orientation and motivational technique to keep the rest of her classroom functioning. Further, Sharon’s response to how the SEC lens has impacted her practice alludes to a professional obligation; her choices are based on navigating student needs and classroom productivity. However, when talking about her own children and seeing how arriving late to class impacted them, her response to her students appears to be guided by a humanistic orientation. Lucy’s responses also cross the continuum, with a strong emphasis on a humanistic orientation, though there are elements of the motivational technique present. Specifically, the reference to implementing social emotional learning to support student learning indicates a motivational orientation. In contrast, Lucy’s attention to the status issues present in her classroom suggest a humanistic/philosophical orientation.

The humanistic/philosophical orientation (O’Connor, 2008) is in alignment with Valenzuela’s (1999) definition of the student view of caring, or a teachers’ awareness of their students as complex individuals. The teachers’ definition of caring, or the perception of how prepared for school they perceive the student to be (Valenzuela, 1999), resonates with the professional obligation or motivational technique orientation (O’Connor, 2008). Of importance is that these distinct student and teacher orientations are contradictory and the
embodiment of more than one sends inconsistent messaging to students about the values and priorities in the classroom. Ladson-Billings (1995) articulates a similar tension, that one can hold an orientation to relationships either as reciprocal or more transactional, where students are expected to conform. In the relationships as reciprocal model there is awareness of and attention to caring for the collective wellbeing and tending to the larger sociopolitical context in which the student-teacher relational dynamic exists. This awareness and caring is present in Jessica’s other narratives, and ties into the Anchor Competencies Framework. Specifically it connects Goals, the center circle of the Framework, where Responsibility for the greater good, is named as a guiding goal of this work. It also relates to the Context ring, which is proximal to the Goals circle, where there is an emphasis on bringing awareness to the sociopolitical, cultural, community and individual/family context.

This theme warrants an interpretation as it relates to Hseih’s (2015) study and the concept of the dialogically oriented teacher, whose identity is based on theory and informed practice. In alignment with that identity, the participants articulated beliefs and commitments that consistently guided their actions in the classroom, whether those were in agreement with or contradiction to the SEC lens. Noteworthy is the longevity of the participants, with all having taught for more than ten years and how that connects to Hsieh’s argument that ideological consistency serves as a grounding mechanism and supports retention in the profession. Additionally, Freedman and Appleman (2008) discuss how teacher identity ties were strengthened when teachers realized their shared humanity with their students, or saw the ways in which the school was not seeing their full humanity, which is reflected in the
participants' narratives. Both of these professional identity orientations tie into the equity as a guiding orientation theme as well.

The Reflection-Awareness-Empathy-Action theme illuminates the need for teacher professional development to activate and explore participants' values, beliefs, and experiences in order to solidify changes in practice. It further invites the question of whether changes in practice can also shift teacher beliefs and values or if the latter is a prerequisite. In connection to the internalization theme, there appeared to be a relationship between the participants’ initial orientation or interest in the training, one reflection of their values and beliefs, and the subsequent level of internalization. Carla and Sharon described being “voluntold” into the CRTWC training and then later used language that indicated an initial resistance, whether that be towards participation or the content, or both. This corresponded with a weaker level of internalization than Jessica and Lucy who both opted into the training based on their interest in the content and its alignment with their beliefs about learning and practices they were already employing in their classrooms.

**Structure Supports Reflection**

Structure supports reflection represents one way that the culture of teaching is then connected to the culture of the classroom. Much like the idea of reciprocal vulnerability, how can teachers expect students to engage in active, on-going reflection if that is not a practice teachers are supported in doing for themselves? This is further related to the concept of SEL as a one-directional tool. Self-reflection is one of the 5 Core Competencies of social emotional learning (CASEL, 2017), and yet, if we do not practice self-reflection as teachers in ways that reflect valuing it for the sake of self-actualization, then self-reflection becomes
performative, or worse runs the risk of being used as a tool to maintain control and compliance in the classroom. For example, Sharon’s implementation of a mood board with her students became performative when she devalidated the changes in their emotional state throughout the day.

Structure supports reflection brings to mind bell hooks’ quote, “Our struggle is also a struggle of memory against forgetting” (1999/1989, p. 4). Critical self-reflection and critical self-awareness in relationship to the larger sociopolitical structure is required to disrupt the harmful oppressive practices that remain stagnant in schools (Love, 2019). Therefore, a lack of structure for reflection perpetuates the maintenance of the status quo; it allows us to forget how historical forces have shaped the education system and therefore require our active resistance to be dismantled. The power of reflection is evident in the participants’ narratives; structures for reflection support challenging beliefs and behaviors, and reflection, in turn, then opens up the possibility of behavior change. Ultimately, the structure supports reflection code highlights the significance of embedding reflective practices into teacher preparation and professional practice.

Implications

These findings indicate there is a relationship between the ideological orientations of teachers and their subsequent classroom actions, therefore highlighting the significance of teacher preparation programs' and school districts’ attention to this development. Beliefs are one indicator of dispositions, which are then predictive of action (Villegas, 2007). Therefore, specific attention is needed regarding the development of teacher professional identities that center equity as a guiding orientation and cultivate beginning teachers’ criticality and
capacity for navigating contradictory tensions within the profession. Pulling from Brown’s (2004) transformative leadership framework this calls for creating awareness or unveiling the contradictions existent in social reality, then engaging in rational dialogue around those realities as a catalyst to take action against existing social inequities. This calls on teacher educators and school site leadership to ensure that the university or school culture is a safe place for teachers to surface their biases and assumptions (Brown, 2004; Villegas, 2007), engage in critical analysis of existing structures, policies and practices and one where they can learn to embody the social, emotional and cultural competencies demanded of the profession.

The potential of developing teachers’ social, emotional and cultural competencies is extensive; it offers the possibility of converting the experience of schooling from one where many students survive (Love, 2019) to one that fosters collective thriving (Ginwright, 2018), including teachers. Teachers’ perceptions of their relationships with students informs their sense of efficacy and/or emotional exhaustion (Corbin et al., 2019), and the findings from this study illustrate the capacity of the SEC lens to bring attention to and foster trusting relationships. The Garner et al. (2018) findings that teacher training increased mindfulness and had a positive impact on teachers’ competence in perceiving, understanding and regulating their emotions was mirrored by Jessica and the deeply internalized lens and demonstrates the importance of teacher embodiment. Furthermore, Jessica exhibited compassion for students who might otherwise be described as challenging, which mimics the Taylor et al. (2015) study that found significant differences in teachers’ situational compassion for their most challenging students after completing mindfulness training. When
placed in conversation with the prior literature on teacher burnout, these findings speak to the potential implications of teacher social, emotional and cultural competence on teacher wellbeing.

In teacher preparation, social, emotional and cultural competency development needs to be embedded throughout coursework; ideally evaluation would take place via course embedded performance assessments (Villegas, 2007) to evaluate to what extent preservice teachers have developed embodiment of these competencies. Markowitz and Bouffard (2020) provide a roadmap for how the Anchor Competencies Framework aligns with the California Teacher Performance Expectations, which provides teacher preparation programs a path forward for integrating this work. University coursework overlaps with the student teaching phase of teacher preparation and requires mentor teachers with deeply internalized SEC lenses. Jessica provides an illustrative way forward for what dispositions to identify in cooperating teachers to ensure a deeply internalized lens. At the school site level, assessment would shift from being driven by student performance to a process-oriented approach (Villegas, 2007), where criteria such as reflection, self and social awareness are used to assess teachers’ classroom competency. This would center the iterative cycle of reflection as central to the teachers’ role. True measure of successful implementation of these practices would be reflected by the deep internalization of the SEC lens as an embodied ideology as opposed to an additive model or programmatic afterthought, similar to Gorski’s (2019) equity ideology principle. It would be remiss not to mention that this work is antithetical to the standardized accountability measures currently in place in schools because the path to self knowledge is not linear (Cariaga, 2019).
In order for our educational institutions to fully center students, all of the adults in the learning community need to develop the skills to be able to decenter themselves. For implementation to be systemic and embodied, faculty and administrative leaders at both the teacher preparation and school site level need to model the continual process of self-reflection that is necessary for teachers to effectively teach through a SEC lens. Additionally, reflective practices need to be normalized and institutionalized, without them serving as a means to further perpetuate accountability culture. In other words, SEC needs to be implemented for the benefit of the larger learning community, not solely to produce academic outcomes. Further called for is an emphasis on the relational dynamics in the classroom and fostering an understanding of the bidirectional nature of these relationships and the importance of humanizing the classroom space as a manifestation of creating equitable learning environments. Central to this goal is the understanding that in the U.S. we hold racialized trauma in our bodies, that unless addressed are acted out in our interactions (Menakem, 2017), which is why embodiment is a critical component of this work. Embodied pedagogies invite us to reconsider the body as a source of power, a notion that is counter to accountability culture and the hyper focus on intellectualism that pervades U.S. education (Cariaga, 2019). The body’s physiological responses are rooted in the sociopolitical historical context and cannot be decoupled from that context (Menakem, 2017), but must be accounted for in the relational dynamics present in schools. Ultimately, the implications of this study indicate a necessary reframing of social emotional learning as a bidirectional exchange between students and teachers that incorporates culturally responsive teaching and is
implemented across teacher preparation for the cultivation of teachers’ own social, emotional and cultural competence.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The role of a teacher carries enormous responsibility and competing pressures. Within a given day, a teacher makes a myriad of decisions that impact their relationships with students and students’ relationships among themselves and consequently the relational quality of the learning environment. All of the participants in this study were driven by an internal force to create change in society through the education system and operated with equity as a guiding orientation. In order to fulfill this goal in a way that supports collective well being, teacher preparation must tend to the development of teachers’ social, emotional and cultural competencies while simultaneously preparing teachers to navigate the complex demands of the role and at times contradictory pressures and demands. Recommendations for future research include:

- All of the participants in this study have been in the profession for over 10 years; therefore another important area for future research is teachers who have developed the SEC lens at the start of their career

- In many ways this study aimed to understand the conditions and teacher capacities that would improve the student experience; it is essential to conduct further research that explores the student perspective in classrooms where the teacher has a deeply internalized lens

- Participatory action research with teachers developing an SEC lens at the time of entering the profession would provide further insight into how teachers internalize the
lens and what might be done to combat mediating factors such as accountability culture that dilute the potency of the lens

Concluding Thoughts

My passion for this work is guided by my belief that robust teacher professional development can prepare teachers for the enormity of the task they face upon entering their classrooms, in a way that sets them and their students up to thrive. May this study serve as an impetus to reorient to the classroom space as a collective community rather than a series of individuals and one-to-one relationships. When we focus on the individual in isolation from the community we allow oppressive systems to remain intact (Ginwright, 2018). There is deep liberation in the recognition and acceptance of the fact that the weight of the world does not fall to any one individual alone. It is in fact quite an interesting dichotomy to think that while any one person may not be able to change the world themselves, changing the world is in fact deeply dependent on each individual’s contribution. Without a critical analysis of our relationship to larger societal structures, cultural hegemony leads to an oversimplification of this dichotomy. Too often this leads individuals to fall to either-or thinking, or to disavow individual responsibility to the collective. Our collective call to action is to see the larger landscape in which we are operating and create social realities that reflect an understanding of our interdependence.

Developing pre-service teachers’ social, emotional and cultural competencies is a critical step in acknowledging and centering our interdependence, and one that will humanize the profession and holds the potential to ameliorate attrition. Principally, the focus on teacher SEC development provides a framework from which to reorient the larger institution of
schooling towards humanizing efforts. Humanizing teachers’ and students’ social and emotional needs in culturally sustaining ways and reorienting the education system to center relational dynamics holds the potential to create healing centered learning environments (Ginwright, 2018). Simultaneously preparing teachers for the SEC demands of the profession and humanizing the institution of education may tend to the moral injuries that contribute to attrition in the profession (Albright, 2023; Glazer, 2022) by creating a professional environment that centers collective wellbeing. Were school districts to adopt a critical humanizing orientation to education, teachers would likely be less impacted by accountability culture and the contradictory pressures that dehumanize the profession.

Abolitionist teaching calls for this humanization through dismantling the systems and structures that create educational injustice and by centering joy, justice, love and healing (Love, 2019). Similar to the SEC lens, abolitionist teaching is a way of seeing and being in the world, and one that requires teacher criticality. Truly reorienting the institution of education requires that every teacher actively confront the structures that perpetuate injustice; accountability culture being one such structure. B.-L. Love (personal communication, June 23, 2020) frames this work as an abolitionist mindset, or the idea that we each need to take ownership over the small part of the larger landscape that we might be able to impact. We must simultaneously acknowledge the limitations of both time and space to make the kind of changes that we would perhaps wish for, but not allow those constraints to dissuade us from attempting to dismantle the pieces that we might manage in this lifetime.
References


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Simmons, D. (2019). You can’t be emotionally intelligent without being culturally responsive: Why FCS must employ both to meet the needs of our nation. *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences, 111*(2), 7-16. https://doi.org/10.14307/JFCS111.2.7


Appendix A:

Core Competencies of Historical Versus Transformative SEL

Table 1-A

*Five Core Competencies as described by CASEL (2017), Osher et al. (2016), and Jagers et al. (2019)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Competency</th>
<th>Traditional SEL</th>
<th>Transformative SEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>The abilities to recognize one's own emotions and values and how they influence behavior, accurately assess weaknesses and strengths, and to possess a well-grounded sense of self-efficacy, optimism and a growth mindset</td>
<td>The ability to recognize one’s own biases and understand the connection between one’s individual identity and history and that of the collective as well as the ability to recognize how thoughts, feelings and actions are interconnected in and across diverse contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Management</td>
<td>The ability to regulate emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in diverse situations, including the ability to manage stress, control impulses, and set and achieve goals</td>
<td>Being agentic in addressing personal and group-level challenges to achieve individual and collectively identified goals and objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Awareness</td>
<td>The ability to adopt the perspective of and empathize with those from different backgrounds and cultures, understanding social, cultural and ethical norms for behavior, and recognizing available resources and supports</td>
<td>Understanding social norms for constructive behavior in diverse interpersonal and institutional settings in addition to identifying family, school and community resources for individual and collective well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Skills</td>
<td>The ability to establish positive relationships with diverse individuals and groups of people, communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate peer pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed</td>
<td>Working collaboratively whenever possible and offering leadership when it is needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible Decision Making</td>
<td>The capacity to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on realistic evaluations of consequences, well-being, ethics, safety, and social norms that consider the well being of self and others</td>
<td>Centering the collective health and well-being in decision making and critically examining ethical standards, safety concerns, and behavioral norms for risky behavior and making realistic evaluations of benefits and consequences of various interpersonal and institutional relationships and actions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Email Message for Potential Participants

Greetings Teachers,

My name is Ashley Busby. I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership program at San José State University. As part of the requirements of my degree, I am conducting research on the CRWTC’s Anchor Competencies Framework. The purpose of my research is to highlight the beliefs and practices of teachers who have trained in this work. The research aims to explore how the development of the Social, Emotional and Cultural Lens shifts teacher identity, beliefs and classroom practices. I am writing to invite you to participate in a 3-part interview series and classroom observation experience. The District Office has agreed to allow me to conduct this research. Requirements for participation include:

• You have participated in a training with the Center for Reaching and Teaching the Whole Child
• You currently serve as a classroom teacher

The study includes a 3-part interview series (approximately 45-60 minutes per interview) and one classroom observation (time to be determined by participants). Interviews will be spaced approximately 1 week apart; the classroom observation will take place between the 1st and 2nd interviews. If you are interested in participating in the study, I ask that you please reply to this email at ashley.busby@sjsu.edu and write “Study Interest” in the subject heading. Then I will coordinate with you individually to find a time that is mutually convenient. At that time I will also share the consent form for you to read, sign, and keep for your reference.
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Interviews will be recorded via Zoom or using the Voice Memo application. The recordings will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study. Classroom observations will not be recorded to maintain the privacy of your students. Any notes taken during the observations will also be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. I look forward to working with you and learning about your experience.

In gratitude,

Ashley Busby
Doctoral Student
Ed.D. Educational Leadership
San José State University
Appendix C

Interview Questions

RQ1: How does the SEC lens inform the professional identity of the focal elementary school teachers?

Interview I Questions:

How long have you been teaching?

When did you decide to become a teacher?

What brought you to the profession?

Tell me about your identity as a teacher.

How have you developed your own social, emotional and cultural competence as an educator?

Please describe some memorable experiences that supported or hindered your development of these skills.

How do you understand the relationship between socioemotional learning and culturally responsive practices?

How did you come to be interested in this work? What led you to this practice?

How does a Social, Emotional, and Cultural lens influence/inform your teaching?

How did the training with the CRTWC change your classroom practice?

RQ2: How does the development of a SEC lens influence the focal teachers’ beliefs and perceptions in relation to developing trusting relationships with students?

RQ3: How do teachers’ responses to minoritized students reflect, or counter, an SEC lens?

RQ4: How, if at all, does the focal teachers’ practice align with beliefs after developing an SEC lens?
Interview II Questions:

What strategies do you use to examine your biases?

How do you build rapport with students?

How do you practice reciprocal vulnerability in the classroom?

How do you recognize and manage your emotional reactions in the classroom?

What practices do you have to explore and reflect on your identity?

How do you practice restorative justice in your classroom?

How do you build students’ capacities to make amends?

How do you identify and interrupt microaggressions in your classroom?

How did your self-reflection play a role in this lesson?

What role did student self-reflection play in this lesson?

How did you respond constructively across differences in this lesson?

What does building trusting relationships with students look like in this lesson?

Further questions to be determined after classroom observation.

RQ4: How, if at all, does the focal teachers’ practice align with beliefs after developing an SEC lens?

Interview III Questions:

How has the SEC lens changed your classroom practice?

What does that change look like in practice?

This research will hopefully be used by teacher preparation programs and school districts to embed these practices. What would you like them to know about this work?
Hopefully this work will also reach new teachers in the field. What would you like new teachers or those who are considering the profession to know about this work?

Further questions to be determined after classroom observation and first and second interviews.
Appendix D

Classroom Observation Protocol

Social, Emotional, and Cultural Anchor Competencies
Observation Protocol (Teacher Candidate v.1)

Implementation Guidelines

1. Teacher decides focus for observation and establishes “context” for the observer.

2. Fill in evidence for the anchor competencies that apply. It is not expected that there will be evidence for all anchor competencies during any one lesson.

3. Consider the amount of classroom experience of the teacher candidate when observing.

4. The Observation Protocol is intended to serve as a tool for discussion and reflection on development of a teacher’s social, emotional, and cultural lens.

5. Observers should note that shifts away from the planned lesson may be desirable, demonstrating flexibility and the ability to respond in alternative, more productive ways than planned.

6. Consider that use of the anchor competencies is, in part, an academic intervention, and observe for their integration into content/curriculum where possible or needed.

7. Teachers are not expected to prepare an “SEC lesson,” but to demonstrate places in their practice where anchor competencies are integrated to facilitate student success and ability to thrive.
Date:  
Start time:  
End time:  
School:  

Teacher:  
Researcher:  
Grade level(s):  
Total # of students:  

Subject observed:  
# EL students:  
# Students with learning disabilities:  

Teacher completes prior to lesson:
1. Focus issue for observation:
Directions: Take notes in the right column regarding evidence of anchor competencies. Remember it is not expected that there will be evidence of all the anchor competencies or teacher moves in any one lesson.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anchor Competencies and Teacher Moves</th>
<th>Notes/Evidence/Scripting</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Build trusting relationships</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Develop rapport</td>
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<td>b. Engage families</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Practice reciprocal vulnerability</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Employ trauma informed practices</td>
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<td><strong>2. Foster self reflection</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Recognize and manage emotional</td>
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<tr>
<td>reactions</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Examine biases</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Explore identity</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3. Foster growth mindset</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Articulates affirming counter-narratives</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Shift to positive self-talk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Connect learning to the brain</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4. Cultivate perseverance</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Provide asset-based formative feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Set and monitor goals</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Embrace productive struggles</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5. Create community</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Attend to status issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Foster individual voice</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Create a culture of engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Affirm each other’s assets</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>6. Promote collaborative learning</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Practice building consensus</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Engage in structured academic and social conversations</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Practice reflective listening</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Respond constructively across differences</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Practice restorative justice</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Builds capacity to make amends</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Identify and interrupt micro-aggressions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

Interview Protocol

1st Interview Protocol: Teacher Identity Development

Thank you for your participation in this research study. The information gathered in our time together will be useful for new teachers, teacher preparation programs and policy makers and professionals who influence the California Standards for the Teaching Profession and other guiding documents that orient teacher education programs across the state. The contribution of this study to the intersection of teacher social and emotional development and critical or transformative SEL is significant for the current climate in U.S. schools.

This interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes and will be recorded on Zoom; only the audio portion of the recording will be saved. Today we will focus on your identity as a teacher. You can choose to not answer any specific questions at any time. You are also able to exit the study at any time. Do you have any questions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Potential Follow-up/Probe?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>When did you decide to become a teacher?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>What brought you to the profession?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tell me about your identity as a teacher.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>How have you developed your own social, emotional and cultural competence as an educator?</td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Please describe some memorable experiences that supported or hindered your development of these skills</td>
<td>Which experience stands out to you as most memorable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>How do you understand the relationship between socioemotional learning and culturally responsive practices?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>How did you come to be interested in this work? What led you to this practice?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>How does a Social, Emotional, and Cultural lens influence/inform your teaching?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>How did the training with the CRTWC change your classroom practice?</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>What practices do you have to explore and reflect on your identity?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**2nd Interview Protocol: Teacher Practice: Deconstructing the Observation**

Last time we met we discussed (i, ii, iii, etc.) which revealed (a, b, c). Here is a copy of your transcript. Does that look accurate to you? Are there any subjects or particular points you would like to expand upon?
This 2nd interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes and will be recorded on Zoom without the use of cameras. Today we will focus on your practice and the classroom observation. As a reminder, you can choose to not answer any specific questions at any time. You are also able to exit the study at any time. Do you have any questions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Potential Follow-up/Probe?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>How did self-reflection play a role in this lesson?</td>
<td>What role did your or student self-reflection play in this lesson?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>How did you respond constructively across differences in this lesson?</td>
<td>How do you practice reciprocal vulnerability in the classroom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How do you build students’ capacities to make amends?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>What does building trusting relationships with students look like in this lesson?</td>
<td>How do you generally build rapport with students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>What strategies do you use to examine your biases?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>How do you recognize and manage your emotional reactions in the classroom?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How do you practice restorative justice in your classroom?

How do you identify and interrupt microaggressions in your classroom?

Further questions to be developed after classroom observations.

### 3rd Interview Protocol: Personal Meaning

Last time we met we discussed (i, ii, iii, etc.) which revealed (a, b, c). Here is a copy of your transcript. Does that look accurate to you? Are there any subjects or particular points you would like to expand upon?

This 2nd interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes and will be recorded on Zoom without the use of cameras. Today we will focus on your practice and the classroom observation. As a reminder, you can choose to not answer any specific questions at any time. You are also able to exit the study at any time. Do you have any questions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Potential Follow-up/Probe?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>How has the SEC lens changed your classroom practice?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>What does that change look like in practice?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>This research will hopefully be used</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
by teacher preparation programs and school districts to embed these practices. What would you like them to know about this work?

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<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>Hopefully this work will also reach new teachers in the field. What would you like new teachers or those who are considering the profession to know about this work?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Further questions to be determined after classroom observation and first and second interviews.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>