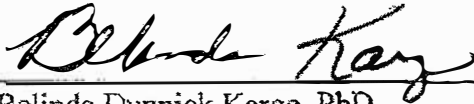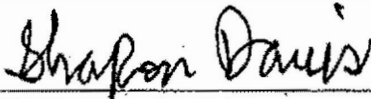ACCEPTANCE

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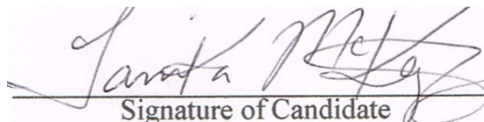
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THE IMPACT OF A GROWTH MINDSET, MINDFULNESS, AND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL
LEARNING ON TEACHER EFFICACY: THE FACTORS TEACHERS HAVE CONTROL
OVER AND WHAT THEY DO WITH THEM.

by

Tamika Andrea McKenzie

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of
Requirements for the
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ABSTRACT

Do teachers feel that they have the potential to support the needs of the students they encounter in today's society? Are they confident in their own abilities, and the impact that they may have on student outcomes and growth? To answer these questions what must be considered is the professional development opportunities teachers engage in that might support their own growth and abilities. Across many decades, research has documented the impact that a variety of teaching practices and techniques that have had a positive impact on students, and ultimately the efficacy of teachers. This mixed-methods study sought to investigate these inquiries amongst transitional kindergarten through twelfth grade teachers in the state of California. The research focused on growth mindset, mindfulness, social emotional learning, and the impact that these practices had on teacher efficacy. This study suggests that teachers do have a growth mindset and feel that all students can grow and learn, and having this mindset impacts how they teach and design lessons in the classroom. This study verifies that many teachers practice mindfulness in their classroom, and it supports their impact and effectiveness in the classroom. Social emotional learning is proven in this study to positively impact classroom environments and support teachers in their ability to support their students' needs. The participants of the study expressed the need for more professional development in the area of social emotional learning to increase teacher efficacy.

Keywords: Agency, Adult Learning Theory, A Growth Mindset, Mastery Learning and Grading, Mindfulness, Professional Development/Professional Learning, Social Emotional Learning, Self- Efficacy/Teacher Efficacy,

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I'd like to thank my dissertation chair Dr. Belinda Karge for her guidance, patience, and encouragement that she so faithfully provided me with across the years. To my dissertation committee, I appreciate your diligence, feedback, and commitment as you supported me through the dissertation process. To my precious daughter Alyssa, you are my sunshine and the reason that I strive for excellence in all that I do. I know that my mother would be so happy to see my accomplishments, but she has sent her angel Colleen as representative mother that I could depend on for anything and everything. Without you all, I would not have accomplished this goal.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Before the onset of the 2020 pandemic, most children across the world would leave their homes daily and go to places to learn to spend most of their hours away from home with someone other than their parents. Within a 24-hour period, children would spend most of their active hours with an educator (Rutter, 1979). An educator is a person who imparts knowledge (Erickson et al., 2009). A teacher, tutor, pedagogue, or instructor all desire to amplify the voice of their students (Erickson et al., 2009). A teacher is a person who displays their knowledge of a subject and helps guide their students' learning; they take the curriculum and present it to their learners in the most interesting and applicable way possible (Erickson et al., 2009). Sackstein (2016) expresses, that teaching is not a job, but that it is a calling. Teachers, particularly those in urban K -12 schools, know that they are responsible for much more than what is delineated in the resources that define a teacher (Alber, 2011). They are educated, caring, hard-working humans that oversee the education of children (Alber, 2011). The depth of knowledge that children learn from their teachers helps to mold them into multi-faceted individuals (Erickson et al., 2009). As teachers impart knowledge to students, the structure in which teachers provide the learning inevitably involves more than just imparting information. For the purpose of this dissertation, a teacher is defined as one that teaches and whose occupation is to instruct, versus an educator, who is skilled in teaching (Sackstein, 2016).

Considering the fact that children spend the majority of their day with teachers, it is important that teachers feel that they are fully equipped and prepared to support student success (Guskey, 1998). In order to provide learning opportunities that lead to prepared teachers and improved student learning, many teacher education programs provide quality field experiences

that produce teachers who are more qualified to move from university training to public school teaching positions (Erickson et al., 2009). According to Erickson et al., accountability and emphasis on student outcomes are the focus in today's educational environment. Erickson et al. stress that the success of a teacher is measured by the achievement of their students and if we want teachers to produce more powerful learning on the part of their students, then we have to offer more powerful learning opportunities that empower their teachers. Furthermore, student learning and achievement are maximized by teachers who are better prepared and are provided enhanced professional development to increase teacher efficacy (Erickson et al., 2009). Teacher efficacy can be defined as the extent to which a teacher believes they have the capacity to have a positive impact on student learning and affect student performance (Guskey, 1998).

Statement of the Problem

Gray et al. (2017) mention in their literature that in addition to the traditional tasks of teaching and assessing, teachers are also obligated to contribute to a sustainable-positive school climate that promotes student learning and development. They continue to stress that if the aim of the teaching profession is to support the learning needs and academic development of students, then understanding and addressing teacher stress/burnout is critical to developing healthy academic environments for all stakeholders. The problem explored in this study is whether teachers have access to and take advantage of the proven effective teaching practices to embrace optimal outcomes in their students; and if they are utilizing them, are these tools effective in promoting teacher effectiveness and efficacy. Lee (2019) stresses that one of the purest relationships is that of a willing student and a dedicated teacher. A strong learning environment is created when student-teacher relationships is given the space to develop. These relationships need nurturing in a safe environment that will embrace mutual respect, a positive

and patient attitude, student equality, timely feedback, and good communication. (Lee, 2019). The successful pedagogical models that teachers create for their students are structured in such a way that students can develop discipline, organization, tolerance, self-confidence, and growth. As such, teachers are imparting more than just education.

Every individual that the teacher encounters is unique, and they must differentiate instruction to meet the needs of each student (Reeves, 2008; Tomlinson, 2015b). The students that teachers encounter have prior experiences and a history that must be considered (Wong et al., 2020). Students come with learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, trauma, and/or abuse, along with unique learning modalities (Wong et al., 2020; Tomlinson, 2015b). The role of the teacher is to recognize these characteristics and setbacks and to accommodate them-making learning accessible to all students (Tomlinson, 2015a). The social emotional environment that the teacher provides for their students must be designed so that students are able to thrive, even with these characteristics and setbacks that students come with (Weinstein, 2017).

Teachers have the responsibility of maintaining structure and imparting information in environments that are not suitable for meeting the needs of each student (Wong et al., 2020). There are many factors that contribute to teacher stress, and school-related factors that predict teacher burnout across grade levels (Gray et al., 2017). A multitude of teachers across school districts have demonstrated in protests and engaged in strikes in support of their students (McCullough, 2019). The teachers felt that their students needed more and that teachers were not receiving the right support from their districts. The teachers sought things like smaller class sizes, school nurses each school day, salary increases, along with an array of other items that would improve their students' learning environments. According to Gray et al. (2017), factors like work overload and low salaries are occupational factors that increase teacher stress. Gray et

al. (2017) assert that school climate is directly affected by teacher stress, which leads to high levels of staff absenteeism, early retirement, and high turnover rates in the profession. School climate is described by Gray et al. (2017) as the quality of school life, amalgamating interpersonal relationships, teaching practices, norms, and values. There is evidence that the school climate is an integral factor that affects our students' success. Teachers expressed concern with their ability to do what the general definition of a teacher describes which is to teach and impart information. According to Infurna et al. (2018), teacher job satisfaction was associated with higher levels of teacher self-efficacy and less burnout. Developmentally appropriate classroom best practices have a positive relationship with teacher self-efficacy, which indirectly affects student achievement through high quality teacher-child interactions. Given that the retention of teachers is an important indicator of an effective school, it would be logical for schools to pay attention to factors within the school climate that might influence the likelihood of retaining teachers (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016).

California was classified as the top state for violent incidents and threats in schools in 2017, with the number of incidents nearly doubling each year; followed by Florida, New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Texas, Illinois, North Carolina and Virginia (Campisi, 2018). Teachers must modify and strategize within their lessons in order to make up for the factors that they have no control over (Gross & Opalka, 2020; Pfefferbaum & North, 2020). The incidence of student suicide ideation, depression, and social emotional disturbance has increased in recent years (California Department of Education, 2020). Table 1. 1 displays the number of students receiving special services from birth through age twenty-two in California (California Department of Education, 2020). It is the responsibility of teachers to acknowledge these needs because they affect a student's ability to learn (Wong et al., 2020). There are many other factors

that affect the outcomes teachers plan for. Some they have control over and some they do not. Aldridge and Fraser affirm that there is high teacher turnover because the support is not there; along with teacher burnout, teachers may become overly stressed, depressed, and their ability to impart knowledge declines.

Table 1. 1

Individuals from Birth to 22 Years of Age Receiving Special Services in the 2018-2019 School Year.

Disability Category	Individuals Receiving Special Educational Services
Autism	120,095
Deaf-blindness	114
Deafness	3,223
Emotional Disturbances	25,233
Hard of Hearing	10,657
Intellectual Disabilities	43,770
Multiple Disabilities	7308
Orthopedic Impairment	9,916
Other health Impairment	104,792
Specific Learning Disability	300,295
Traumatic Brain Injury	1,541
Visual impairment	3,405

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed methods causal comparative phenomenological study is to understand the factors that contribute to teacher efficacy within California public school teachers. At this stage in the research, teacher efficacy can be defined as a teacher's sentiment on their effectiveness in supporting student comprehension and optimal learning outcomes. The factors are the 1. The variable classroom pedagogical models; 2. Professional development opportunities, 4. Mindset; and 4. Mindfulness techniques that would positively impact the learning environment. There is an array of variables beyond the teacher's control that impact

their ability to effectively teach, and the goal is to see if accessing these factors enhance their efficacy/belief in their abilities. Which in turn would heighten teachers' ability to support students' needs successfully.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in the work of Carol Dweck's growth mindset theory and Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory. The idea is that together these beliefs contribute to the development of teacher efficacy and that they all together will enhance student outcomes.

Growth Mindset Theory

Carol Dweck has been researching education and behavior since 1970. Dweck's most recent book stresses that people can have two different mindsets: Fixed and Growth. Dweck proposed that mindsets can be affected by experiences and influenced by surroundings. Dweck's sentiment is that teachers can influence the mindset of their students and in turn, impact their students' performance.

People with a fixed mindset believe that a person's basic traits are constant and determined at birth. Fixed mindset individuals do not have the notion to alter who they are by completing tasks like practicing, reflecting, and acting purposefully towards reaching goals. Individuals with a growth mindset believe that they can grow or improve in any capacity. People with this mindset practice more and put more effort into reaching their goals. Dweck stresses that a growth mindset is a characteristic of many successful individuals (Dweck, 2007).

Social Cognitive Theory

Albert Bandura introduced the world to his theory of self-efficacy which is governed by the idea that you are successful, only if you believe that you can be. Bandura (1986), believed

that self-efficacy drives academic success, and one's own belief in their abilities affects the outcomes they yield. Bandura's theory is also known as the social emotional learning theory. Strong self-efficacy, associated with confidence and a willingness to take risks in learning, has been positively correlated with strong student achievement. While some element of self-efficacy is determined by the learner's psychological underpinning, self-efficacy can be developed over time through a combination of mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, and positive social persuasions (Bandura, 1993). Bandura (1993) makes a profound point as he indicates that self-reactive and self-reflective practices impact motivational levels and that we are not solely motivated by external factors. He urges that these practices serve as guides and motivators toward success. The theoretical framework for this study combines the work of Dweck and Bandura (see Figure 1.1).

Figure 1. 1

Theoretical Framework for This Study
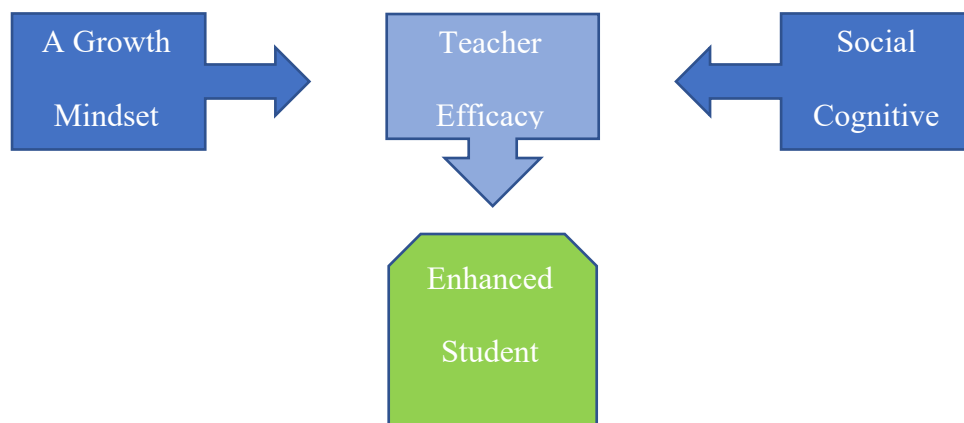
Research Questions

The question must be raised in asking what can be done to support teachers and their efforts as they deal with factors beyond their control. There are things that each teacher can control that might impact their ability to teach successfully. Given that these are variables that teachers do have control over, will these factors impact how teachers feel about their ability to impart knowledge to their students? What should be considered is:

1. Does a growth mindset impact how teachers feel about their ability to successfully support their students? 2. Do mindfulness practices and social emotional learning enhance teacher efficacy? 3.Do teachers embrace these pedagogical techniques proven to increase student proficiency (directly and indirectly), to support their impact and effectiveness? And finally, 4. Are the professional development opportunities provided to teachers supportive of the environment necessary to embrace student success?

Significance of the Study

What is Professional Development

Innovation in education and professional development (PD) can be defined as any teacher learning to improve teacher quality and student performance outcomes (Linder, 2011). Teachers aim to motivate their students to learn, and in turn must also be motivated to learn themselves. Professional development facilitators seek only to provide teachers with concepts and ideas that can be implemented in the classroom, but their efforts may not be recognizable by the teacher. This stems from many reasons: Two probable reasons are that the teacher may feel that the content is not important/relative. Additionally, that they don't possess the potential to implement the strategies learned, and fail to recognize this deficit (Van Duzor, 2010).

An organized, collaborative and supportive environment supports teacher well-being (Gray et al., 2017; Kyriacou, 2001). Administrators can positively impact teacher motivation if they create a more supportive atmosphere. Principals are the core of change and must recognize the attributes of their staff to inform their needs, and they must model work-related stress management techniques to support what they would like to see in their teachers. Gray et al. continue to mention that administrators control many variables that influence teacher stress including things like workload and professional development opportunities. The PD opportunities administrators provide for their teachers could reduce stress levels if they focused on things like stress management and stress reduction methods (Gray et al., 2017; Kyriacou, 2001). During a PD at a local middle school, a facilitator engages their participants in an inclusive activity that asks them to think back to their childhood and recall a person that played a motivational role in their lives. One of the top responses given by many of the participants was that their teacher filled that role in their lives, and even recalled the teacher's names. Teacher-

pupil interaction and relationships are an asset in creating an environment that is stress-free, trusting, and nurturing (Kyriacou, 2001).

Teacher Mental Health and Resiliency

According to Gray et al. (2017), the stress that teachers encounter typically results in impatient and frustrated interactions with their students, which detrimentally impacts the classroom environment both academically and behaviorally. Gray et al. (2017) assert in their literature that this results in teachers ineffectively providing emotionally supportive relationships that students require to flourish. There must be better support in place for teachers and that this could accurately be done by addressing important issues like teacher retention, burnout, well-being, mental health, and stress (gray et al., 2017, Kyriaou, 2001).

Not only is it important to recognize the factors that influence teacher stress, but it is also important to look at factors that will alleviate those stressors (Kyriaou, 2001). It is crucial for teachers to effectively deal with the combination of complexities that come with their profession. Coping strategies that include an even mix of work and home life, and support from a network of stakeholders and community members (Gray et al., 2017). Gray et al. (2017) stress that school support personnel like psychologists are in an ideal position to support teachers' and students' well-being. Gray et al. (2017) assert that these steps may increase teacher resilience. A positive school climate and teacher well-being are essential for student learning and success, and attention to factors related to each area will benefit teachers and students (Kyriaou, 2001). By empowering teachers and strengthening the school climate, students are in an empowered position to learn. This study is significant because it is important for teachers to continuously address the needs of their students by assuring that they are and feel fully equipped to provide for their students' needs. The pandemic of 2020 has hit the nation hard academically (Gross &

Olpaka, 2020; Wong et al., 2020). Students have missed nearly one year and a half of formal schooling (Racines, 2020; Wong, 2020). During the pandemic, many experienced traumas beyond their ability to cope with (Racines, 2020). According to Gross & Olpaka, (2020) these traumas include circumstances like homelessness, domestic violence, the death of family member, isolation (shelter in place), job loss (furlough and lay off from their parents' jobs), and food in inadequacies. As students returned to the hybrid model and in person schooling in 2021, these traumas followed them (Wong et al., 2020). Teachers encountered students that were stuck academically where they left off in 2020 (Wong, 2020). Another factor to consider is the fact that many students were already behind before the quarantine mandate forced students to learn from home (Wong, 2020). The combination of the preceding deficits with the setbacks that the pandemic of 2020 caused, yields very disadvantaged students (Racines, 2020). This study will focus on the teaching practices that may support teachers in feeling that they have the ability and necessary tools to support the variety of needs their students returned with.

Limitations

The concept of a growth mindset al.lows for learners to gain and foster intrinsic motivation (Dweck, 2006). Positive reinforcement and extrinsic motivation may influence an individual to attempt something that they may not have otherwise attempted, but having the motivation come from within seems to have more of an impact on the performance levels and outcomes. A limitation that the researcher foresees is the common misconception about the growth mindset, and that effort directly results in success (Papadopoulos, 2020). It may become frustrating to the learner if the teacher is not familiar with how to accommodate the learner's

needs and continues to unsuccessfully instruct. There are variables for learning that must be considered for the students to reach optimal levels of success. The variables are motivation, deliberate practice, time, and reinforcement/timely feedback. This is where the researcher feels that Mastery Learning and Grading practices may be a work-around for this limitation. Mastery Learning and Grading will be looked at regarding its inclusion of a growth mindset and its holistic impact on student performance.

Definition of Terms

The reoccurring words defined below seek to provide a clearer understanding of how these terms were used throughout the study.

Adult Learning Theory: Adult Learning Theory is rooted in the writings of Malcolm Knowles addressing the differences in learning that exists between children and adults and requires an understanding of how adults learn as individuals who are contributing members of a learning community (Kelly, 2017).

Agency: Having a sense of agency refers to feeling like there is control over actions and their consequences (Moore, 2016).

A Growth Mindset: Individuals who believe their talents can be developed through hard work, good strategies, and input from others have a growth mindset. These individuals tend to achieve more than those with a more fixed mindset. Fixed mindset individuals are those who believe their talents are innate gifts that cannot be built upon (Dweck, 2006.)

Mastery Learning & Grading: Is a teaching strategy that includes a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006; Guskey, 2010). The learning cycle of this practice allows for students to have multiple attempts at assessments, utilize formative assessments as feedback, removes averaging and grade scales that are arbitrary to the learning and time that students need to show proficiency at their own

pace (Reeves, 2008; Scriffny, 2008; Wormeli, 2010).

Mindfulness: Mindfulness is a meditation technique focused on being aware of what you are feeling and sensing in the moment. Practicing mindfulness can involve breathing methods, guided imagery, and other practices that relax the body and mind to help reduce stress (Mathieu, 2016). The rationale for using mindfulness practices in the classroom is that it is believed that it can help to increase the ability to regulate emotions, decrease stress, anxiety, and depression. It is also believed that it can help people focus as well as observe their thoughts and feelings without judgment (Lewis-Chiu, & Zolkoski, 2019).

Professional Development/Professional Learning (PD/PL): Professional development may be used to reference a wide variety of specialized trainings, formal education, or advanced professional learning intended to help teachers, and even administrators improve their professional knowledge, skill, competence, and effectiveness (Bolam et al., 2005). Professional learning can be described as ongoing data-driven learning opportunities that are collaborative, and classroom focused; allowing for the continued education and growth of teachers, along with the opportunity for teachers to provide feedback and reflection (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Social Emotional Learning (SEL): Social Emotional Learning is the process where individuals acquire and apply the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to help develop healthy identities, while managing their own emotions, and making responsible and caring decisions (Mathieu, 2016). The goal of Social Emotional Learning is to support the individual in their personal and collective goal with others, while allowing them to learn to show and feel empathy as they grow supportive relationships (Fay, 2011).

Self-Efficacy/Teacher-Efficacy: Human actions are influenced by each person's sense of

efficacy according to Bandura (1977). Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory details the control that humans have over their lives as a result of their actions. Self-efficacy can be best defined as how an individual judges their ability to execute behaviors that are necessary to produce specific performance outcomes (Bandura, 1977; Bandura 1986).

Summary

In summary, students have a need for educators and teachers that are fully equipped mentally and vocationally to support their varying needs. Students come with a variety of learning modalities that are impacted by learning disabilities, traumas, and the overall need for understanding. Teachers must feel that they can support their students' needs and be confident that they can impact learning outcomes positively. What can be expected in the rest of the chapters is a review of the practices that have proven to impact the efficacy of the teacher, along with the variety of teaching practices that yield positive outcomes in students. Practicing teachers in California will be asked to divulge which professional developments they felt enhanced their beliefs in self, and whether they felt they were given the support needed to create an environment that supported students' learning.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The focus and purpose of this literature review is to express through the lens of scholarly authors, the array of practices that have been proven to positively impact teacher efficacy, and ultimately support optimal outcomes in students. The practices that will be discussed include proficiency/competency-based grading, a growth mindset; along with the application of mindfulness and integrating practices that focus on the social emotional well-being of the teacher and student. And finally, the history and future of professional development. The chapter will begin by discussing the literature that supports the theoretical framework of this study which

gives the preface, along with an explanation of the need for this study. This chapter will also include information on the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic of 2020 on education and the heightened need to immediately enact teaching practices that are proven to help support student achievement and outcomes.

Theoretical Framework Background

The theoretical framework for this study was drawn on existing theories and methods which built a foundation for this research. The Growth Mindset Theory by Carol Dweck (2006) and The Social Cognitive Theory by Albert Bandura (1977) are the works that together have proven effective in boosting one's confidence in the ability to positively impact student learning outcomes. The timeliness of this topic could not have been more efficient. With the Coronavirus Pandemic of 2020, teachers have had to make the most drastic shifts in their teaching and grading practices like never before. Teachers were tasked with assuring that they accommodate students with special needs and disabilities, and with differentiating their teaching practices to assure all learning needs were addressed (Wong et al., 2020). It is important now more than ever, for the teacher to have a growth mindset instilled so that they know and believe that they can impact students positively (Brougham & Kashubeck-West, 2016). The hope is that teachers will engender a growth mindset in students, yielding optimal learning outcomes in their performance.

A Growth Mindset

Dweck (2006) emphasizes in many of her works that we are all different individuals and have all been uniquely genetically woven, and so we will all achieve at different levels. She defines the difference between a growth and fixed mindset and displays a comparative overview in her literature of the characteristics that each mindset possesses (Table 2. 1). Dweck (2006), asserts in her literature that there are two mindsets: growth and fixed; and the individual with a

growth mindset will intrinsically yield the desire and motivation to achieve because they believe that they can.

The researchers of Transforming Education (2014) discovered that it is "what a student believes about their own intelligence that affects their effort, engagement, motivation, and achievement (pg. 1)." Students that were enrolled in a growth mindset course within their study showed lower failure rates, improved scores, increased effort, and more problems solved. Transforming Education (2014) finalized their study by emphasizing that a growth mindset could be taught. Mastery learning practices like deliberate practice, applying strategies, asking questions, taking risks, and framing mistakes as part of the learning process were all shown to support students as they developed a growth mindset (Transforming Education, 2014). Tolerating risks and communicating high expectations allowed for students to understand that the brain is something that grows (Brougham & Kashubeck-West, 2016; Dweck, 2006; Tomlinson, 2015b). Transforming Education (2014) concluded their study with mentioning that cognitive neuroscience supports the idea that intelligence is not fixed, but that learning is ongoing. Learning happens because of new interactions that we each encounter (Brougham & Kashubeck-West, 2016; Dweck 1999; Dweck, 2000). These interactions spark brain connections that can be built on and developed. The mere knowledge on how the brain works has proven to be an enlightening experience for students helping them to embrace a growth mindset (Brougham & Kashubeck-West, 2016; Dweck, 2006; Tomlinson, 2015b).

When you learn new things, these tiny connections in the brain actually multiply and get

stronger. The more that you challenge your mind to learn, the more your brain cells grow.

Then, things that you once found very hard or even impossible – like speaking a foreign

language or doing algebra – seem to become easy. The result is a stronger, smarter brain

(Dweck, 2006, p. 213).

Table 2. 1

A Growth Versus a Fixed Mindset

A Growth Mindset	Relationship	A Fixed Mindset
Comes from hard work Can always improve Should be embraced	Skills	Something you are born with Fixed Something to avoid
An opportunity to grow Persistent	Challenges	Could reveal lack of skill Tend to give up easily
Essential A path to mastery	Effort	Unnecessary Something you do when you are not good enough
Useful Something to learn from Identify areas to improve	Feedback	Get defensive Take it personal
Use as a wake-up call to work harder next time	Setbacks	Blame others Get discouraged

Growth mindset attributes include taking challenges, learning from mistakes, accepting

feedback and criticism (Dweck, 2006). In order for teachers to engender a growth mindset in

their students, they must be sure to create a classroom where students feel comfortable with

taking risks and pushing themselves, this involves a clear focus on learning embracing the idea

that all students have the ability to achieve and that they are safe with taking risks as they learn (Brougham & Kashubeck-West, 2016). An individual that possesses a growth mindset is not afraid to take risks because they are comfortable with knowing that there is always an opportunity for growth (Transforming Education, 2014; Dweck, 2006). They believe intelligence can be strengthened like a muscle, and that a person's true potential is unknown; hence the reason they take on tough challenges and seek out opportunities to improve (Dweck, 2006). An important component in developing skill competency is to establish a mastery-oriented learning environment where all students are challenged and can find success (Chekpo & Doan, 2015; Tomlinson, 2015b). Students should be provided an opportunity to measure their own success in a classroom where differentiated instruction is the norm, and student choice is built into the learning environment (Tomlinson, 2015b). Tomlinson asserts that students come to our classes with a range of skills, developmental levels and interests, and our goal should be to meet them where they are. Ultimately teachers must be sure that their learning goals are student friendly and clearly communicate what is expected (Chekpo & Doan, 2015). Additionally, teachers must be sure that they support the confidence in each child that relates the sentiment that all students can reach and go beyond proficient (Brougham & Kashubeck-West, 2016; Dweck, 2006).

Attributes of an individual with a fixed mindset may include the feeling that where they are, is ultimately the end all (Dweck, 1999; Transforming Education, 2014). Students with a fixed mindset worry about looking stupid, so they do not take risks (Dweck, 2006; Weinstein, 2017). Fixed mindset individuals believe that their capabilities derive from DNA and destiny, rather than practice and perseverance (Dweck, 2006; Dweck,1999). They have little incentive to work hard and figure why bother putting forth effort to learn a difficult concept if they are

convinced that they are not going to perform well, and nothing is going to fix this problem (Dweck 2006, Dweck, 1999).

Ultimately, teachers must consider what to with students to impact their confidence in their abilities (Tomlinson, 2015b). Initially, teachers must believe in themselves (Bandura, 1993). They have got to make the shift in their own mindset towards the belief that they can impact their students if they themselves never give up (Tomlinson, 2015a). They must persevere and try a variety of techniques as they go along the way, to show the GRIT that it takes to finish successfully (Tomlinson, 2015b). Weinstein (2017) describes the ways that grades can discourage a growth mindset and suggests four simple gestures to enact in the classroom to support students' growth.

1. The practice of accepting late work

2. Allowing for retakes/reattempts on assessments and assignments

3. Not averaging scores

4. Allowing for homework to be penalty-free practice.

As Weinstein (2017) elaborates on these four practices, he provides the analogy to that of becoming an expert at a video game and the multiple penalty-free opportunities the gamer has at attempting to beat each level and master the harder levels as they approach them. If students felt that they had the same opportunities in the classroom, perhaps we would see higher levels of achievement and performance (Brougham & Kashubeck-West, 2016). The example that teachers set for their students influences how the students now begin to see themselves, and the encouragement and penalty-free opportunities will ease their thoughts of failure (Weinstein, 2017). The reinforcement and supportive environment that the teacher provides for their students positively impacts the self-esteem and performance outcomes they see in their students (Reeves,

2008). Although changing grading systems is a challenging leadership task, the benefits are so great that it's worth doing (Reeves, 2008).

Grading Practices related to A Growth Mindset

There are an array of teaching practices, techniques, and initiatives that have proven to enhance a growth mindset in students (Dweck, 2006; Mastery Collaborative, 2020; Transforming Education, 2014). In many states, educational systems, school districts, school sites, and individual teachers have begun looking at how traditional grading practices may be problematic (Weinstein, 2017; Wormeli, 2012). Teachers are making a shift towards more standards-based learning to impact student growth and outcomes. Mastery Learning and Grading is a growth-mindset approach to teaching and learning (Brougham & Kashubeck-West, 2016; Weinstein, 2017). The approach is based on the expectation that everyone can learn when provided with the right conditions and support (Dweck, 2006; Mastery Collaborative, 2020). This teaching practice offers all students and teachers an alternative to traditional instruction and grading and is an alternative way of teaching that refocuses classroom grading, assessment, instruction, and lesson planning on clear learning targets (Dweck, 2006; Mastery Collaborative, 2020; Weinstein, 2017). The implementation of research-based systems honoring individual variation in learning styles is what is experienced in a proficient Mastery Learning and Grading classroom (Chepko & Doan, 2015; Coleman, 2003). Which allows for more students to succeed academically, and ultimately to take charge of their own learning (Brougham & Kashubeck-West, 2016; Dweck, 2006). According to Taketa (2019), traditional grading has a huge impact on student perception. Taketa's (2019) study involved the review of over 60 high school syllabi and the grading policy therein. The results of the review revealed a wide variation amongst the grading scales that were subjective, inequitable, and varied in terms of what was being measured. The study purported

that traditional grading practices were unreliable and arbitrary. The study revealed that the traditional 100-point grade scale does not indicate any measure of learning and in that same light, averaging grades and giving points for extra credit can become problematic over time. This practice will create inequities among students and the scores they receive. Looking at the body of evidence that a student possesses rather than averaging grades is what should be seen within traditional grading, but that isn't so. An important point that Taketa (2019) makes is that although there are major flaws to traditional grading, it still plays an important role in very crucial life decisions and the future of each student. Students will define themselves by their grades (Durm, 1993; Taketa, 2019). As a result of this circumstance that neither the teacher nor the parent has any control over, the parents and students often feel forced to focus only on the grade rather than the learning.

The California education code section 49066 provides for teacher autonomy over grading, but not much direction on exactly how to grade (CLI, 2020). Even in particular districts that have attempted to implement more effective grading policies realize that enforcement is often inconsistent, and grading seems to just be left to the teachers' discretion (Reeves, 2008; Weinstein, 2017). There must be a mindset shift, and a belief by the practicing teacher, rather than just a district mandate to implement mastery-based learning (Dweck, 2006, Guskey, 2010). The study by Taketa (2019) revealed that teachers do not all agree on the purpose of grades. For example, grading for completion or including things like behavior in a grade do not accurately reveal what the student knows, but some teachers still include these in their characteristics/categories for the grade mark. Taketa (2019) suggests having a smaller number of grades (4 versus 100) and utilizing a standard's-based grade scale to reduce subjectivity and increase reliability. "The amount of stress and anxiety that students and teachers feel is already a

big problem in schools, and traditional grading adds to that negativity" (Taketa, 2019, p.11).

Shifting away from traditional grading practices first involves recognizing the negative impact

grades have on students, followed by intentional modifications to address the inherent need each

individual possesses (Armacost & Pet-Armacost, 2003; Scriffiny, 2008). Looking at proficiency

and competency-based grading recognizes the variables for learning that must be considered by

teachers if they plan to support student outcomes effectively and positively. Scriffiny (2008)

stresses that measuring a student's ability starts by first having learning objectives that are well-

defined. Scriffiny (2008) discusses the rationale for switching from a traditional point-based

grading system to a proficiency/standards-based grading system. As teachers are pressed to

describe the qualitative difference between each grade of the traditional grade scale, they fall

short (Armacost & Pet-Armacost; Scriffiny, 2008; Weinstein, 2017). What is the difference

between earning the 89% and attaining the B grade and the 90% and attaining the A grade? What

are the gaps in learning, and what must be done to gain the additional 1% to get the A grade?

These questions arise along with many others, as traditional grading practices are utilized year

after year. Scriffiny (2008) enforces the fact that there are many factors that teachers do not have

control over, but that should not control what they do with, and for their students. Teachers can

allow time and individualized practice that includes timely feedback for students to take a look at

their individual growth and needs (Armacost & Pet-Armacost, 2003). Not grading every practice

item-like homework was reported by Scriffiny (2008) to have reduced the time spent on grading

and meaningless work. Ultimately, Scriffiny (2008) expresses that this shift in grading has

proven to support the needs of her English Language Learners, and students that require special

services to support their learning. Current grading practices appear to be rooted in traditional

grading practices that simply exhibit routine and repetitiveness yielding unclear results

(Brogham, 2016; Dweck, 2006; Wormeli, 2012). Looking back in history, the early 1800's, differences and discrepancies can be noted on how to determine a final grade (Durm, 1993). Examining the early grading practices of the Universities Yale and Harvard, Durm notes that our current college grading systems have not changed, and that the 4-point grade scale was translated to letter grades as early as 1897 by Mount Holyoke and has stayed this way since. We have simply modernized the process of this trial-and-error grading by utilizing programs designed and equipped with algorithms and formulas that allow teachers to simply input numbers to easily tabulate what represents a grade (Durm, 1993). Considering where we are in education, one might question what progress we have made across the centuries and whether change is necessary? This is where the study can bridge the current need-during the new norm of remote learning, and the ability of teachers to consider the factors that they do in fact have control over, and how they utilize their leverage to support students' needs (Armacost & Pet-Armacost, 2003; Scriffiny, 2008). Implementing mastery learning and grading practices is a practice that the teacher must consider if they would like to stray away from the traditional grading that negatively impacts student outcomes (Reeves, 2008).

Social Cognitive Theory

Albert Bandura (1977) developed the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and defined it as a dynamic interaction between the personal factors, behaviors, and environments. The belief is that these factors are all interrelated and dependent upon each other for the development of an individual's behavior and in turn knowledge acquisition. People can influence and are also influenced by the world around them. This relationship is known as Reciprocal Determinism and illustrated in Figure 2. 2 (Studiousguy.com, 2020). SCT specifies that people can learn new behaviors by observing others and this social learning emphasizes the reciprocal relationship

between social characteristics of the environment, how everyone perceives it, and the ability of a person to reproduce the behaviors they see happening (Bandura, 1977; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). According to SCT, people learn by observing what other people do, considering the apparent consequences experienced by those people, rehearsing/trying the behavior themselves, comparing their experiences with what happened to the other people, and finally confirming what their belief was in the new behavior (Bandura, 1990 & 1993).

Social Cognitive Theory defines learners as anticipative, purposive, proactive, self-evaluating regulators of their own motivation and of their purposeful actions (Bandura & Locke, 2003). The theory is rooted in the idea that as one persists through challenging activities that are nonpunitive to build capacity, they experience successes and obstacles (Bandura, 1977; Dweck, 2000). These are the experiences that influence the motivation to continue the deliberate practice until the intended behavior is attained/proficiency is met. (Bandura, 1977). Throughout the course of most average lives many decisions must be made, along with problems, and challenges (Dweck, 1975). Some people may carry emotional or behavioral dysfunction affecting their ability to make proper decisions, but somehow, they successfully make it through situations (Dweck, 1975). As educators, we must understand that people can adapt and adjust to life's challenges (Dweck, 1975; Dweck & Leggett, 1988).

Figure 2. 1

Personal Cognitive Factors that Influence Behavior
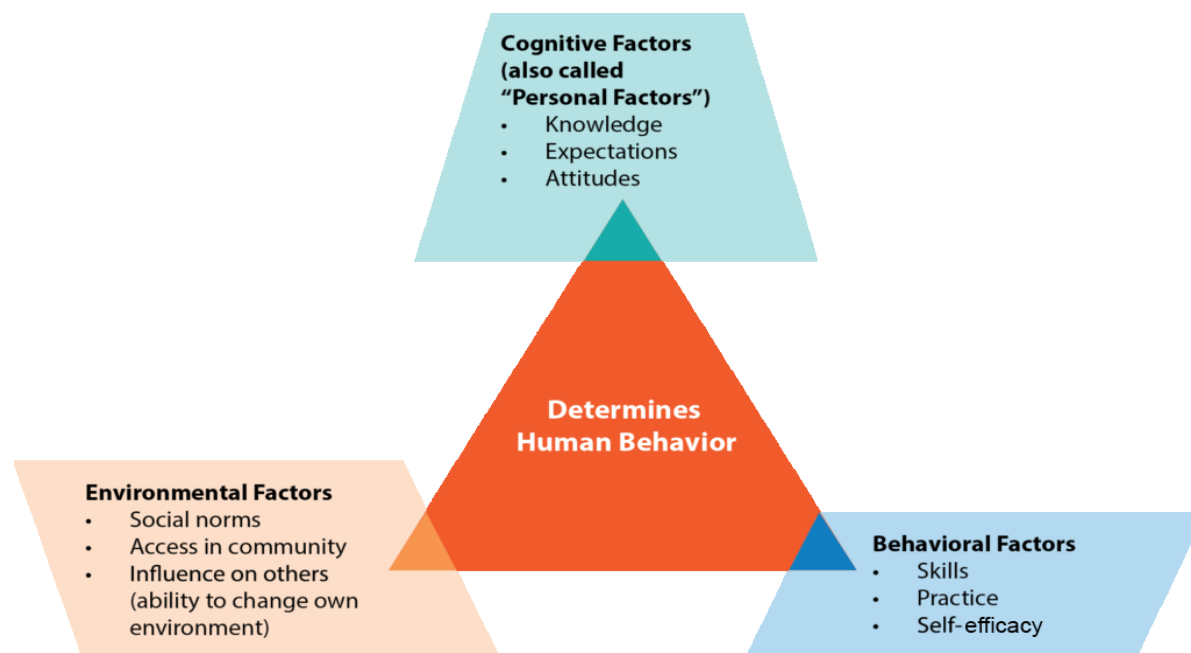
StudiousGuy.com (2020)

An individual's capacity for adaptively responding to environmental changes is referred to as competence (Bandura, 1990). This competency can be built in students with the support of their teachers. A teacher's beliefs in their personal efficacy to motivate and promote learning directly affects the types of learning environments they create for their students, and the level of academic progress their students achieve. A student belief in their efficacy to regulate their own learning and to master academic activities is what determines their aspirations, level of motivation, and academic accomplishments (Bandura, 1993). An individuals' implicit ideas will orient them towards specific goals, and these goals will set up the different patterns seen in their learning (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). The website Studiousguy.com (2020) asserts that there are three personal cognitive factors affected by the environment that influence behavior. The first is

observational learning, where individuals are more likely to perform a desired behavior if they see others modeling that same behavior and the rewards that come with it. The idea is to promote role models who practice the desired behaviors and experience benefits – seeing someone they look up to performing may enact that intrinsic motivation students need to achieve. The study mentioned that the next idea would be outcome expectations, where the promotion of the expected outcomes is focused encouraging the same behaviors from the learner. And finally, promoting self-efficacy where we can influence the learners' sentiment about themselves and their ability to excel. If the learner feels they are equipped for the task, they may take the steps towards attempting the challenge (Studiousguy.com, 2020).

A term referenced by Bandura (1977 & 1997) that is closely related to a growth mindset is that of agency. Agency can be referred to as self-efficacy which refers to the subjective judgments that we make about our own ability to organize and complete actions and to arrive at a designated goal (WKCD, 2013). As students culminate to middle school and become teenagers the expectations change (Dweck & London, 2004) Students are expected to do well in school (Reeves, 2008). To do so, they must develop time management skills, and they now have the obligation of self-monitoring, setting goals, and self-evaluation (Dweck, 2000). Along with the extra-curricular activities that their parents and colleges expect the teenager to participate in, they may also experience circumstances that they have no control over (Scriffiny 2008; Weinstein, 2017).

Dweck and Bandura had the right idea in mind all along. The facets of a growth mindset and the social cognitive theory should always be a counterpart in an educational environment. If teachers genuinely felt that they could support students and that they had all of the tools necessary, they would be prone to trying these practices with their students (Brogham, 2016;

Goddard et al., 2000). According to Bandura (1993) and Dweck (2000), as students are exposed to these engendering practices, they too will begin to see that they can accomplish difficult tasks with all their variables for learning being addressed, and will try and try again, ultimately attaining success (WKCD, 2020).

Professional Development (PD) and Teacher Efficacy

Teacher Efficacy Yields Student Efficacy

The term efficacy can be defined in many ways in relationship to many forums. Within the educational forum, efficacy is defined as the belief in oneself to achieve (Margolis & McCabe, 2003; Merher, 2007; Protheroe, 2008). According to Protheroe (2008), efficacy is comprised of two parts. First, personal teaching efficacy-which relates to the teacher's own feelings of confidence regarding their own teaching abilities. And second, known as general teaching efficacy, reflecting a general belief about the impact of teaching on difficult children (Protheroe, 2008). Additionally, Protheroe, found that these two constructs that make up efficacy are independent, and that you may encounter a teacher who may have faith in the general ability of teachers to have an impact on difficult children, but they lack confidence in their own teaching abilities. When a teacher possesses self-efficacy, it shows (Merher, 2007). The characteristics of a teacher that has confidence in their ability to yield optimal outcomes in their students are many (Merher, 2007; NWEA, 2020). These teachers tend to be more organized and have better planning skills (Merher, 2007; Protheroe, 2008). They are open to new ideas and are more willing to attempt new methodology to adjust and meet the needs of their students (Protheroe, 2008).

Merher (2007) conducted a study with a middle school math class and determined that there were varying levels of efficacy and competency in the classes. Merher (2007) noted that the

students that felt that they could complete a task would try and put forth effort, and ultimately complete the task with success. While the students that did not believe that they could complete the task, would exhibit diversionary behaviors, and create circumstances where learning could not occur. Merher (2007) stressed that middle school students are at an influenceable age where teachers can instill and engender positive beliefs and thoughts of oneself. Merher (2007) focused on ways to improve student efficacy by building/creating mastery experiences with an emphasis on effort that yield success. Merher (2007) concluded that the creation of a learning cycle that addresses all variables for learning would be the starting point to address equity and accessibility. Merher (2007) explained initially that the teacher who began a new subject with a challenge that may have been too difficult, and a tur- off to students with low self-efficacy could start the new learning with a pre-assessment to see where the students are initially, then scaffold the information allowing accessibility from where the students are at that point. Additionally, Merher (2007) allowed for students to engage in developing rubrics and guidelines, take ownership, along with self-assessing. The students were involved in designing things like "effort rubrics" allowing for them to see that learning was fun, and that a little effort goes a long way.

Teachers' beliefs play an integral role in how they interpret their own pedagogical knowledge (Thomson et al., 2017). Teachers' beliefs support how teachers conceptualize their teaching tasks and the choices they have made as they plan the lessons for students. According to Thomson et al. (2017) the personal beliefs of a teacher guide their pedagogical actions and instructional approaches. Additionally, teachers' beliefs about themselves will also impact their beliefs about student abilities, and a teacher's own ability to impact student learning. This connects to Bandura's (1977) theory on efficacy in that one's belief in their own ability to perform and meet outcome expectations will result in them attempting to achieve their goal or

complete a task. This suggests that a teacher's actions are based on a 'cognitive schema' about teaching that was developed throughout their own schooling years (Thomson et al., 2017).

Thomson et al. (2017) conducted a study with preservice elementary school teachers to see if teachers' efficacy beliefs manifested themselves during the implementation of poorly designed science lessons. The researchers saw that the teachers' low science teaching stemmed from the teachers' poor knowledge/unstable foundation in mathematics. Additionally, these teachers had not had any good science teaching experiences. DeMauro and Jennings (2016) noted that in addition to their past performance, anxiety also impacted how these teachers' felt about their abilities. DeMauro and Jennings (2016) assert that teachers' efficacy beliefs play an important role in the creation of quality learning environments. DeMauro and Jennings (2016) noted that when preservice teachers develop strong efficacy beliefs, that the teachers in turn are confident in their abilities to be successful teachers once they enter the field, and that the emotional states of the teachers impacted their efficacy. DeMauro and Jennings (2016) conducted a study that investigated how feelings of stress, anxiety, and depression, contributed to the efficacy beliefs of preservice teachers. The study included a sample of 297 American pre-service teachers. The regression analysis results from the study showed that depressive symptoms negatively predicted teacher efficacy beliefs and that positive emotional experiences like joy and satisfaction could enhance a teacher's sense of efficacy. DeMauro and Jennings 2016 research affirms Bandura's 1997 research that factors like mastery experiences, positive interactions with others, and seeing others succeed will support one's own beliefs that they too can achieve. Furthermore, reflecting back to the Thomson et al. (2017) study where it was concluded that past and current mathematics performances had served as mastery experiences for teachers to construct their beliefs about teaching science and that immersing the teacher in

mathematics methods coursework supported heightened self-efficacy; There are a variety of ways that teachers can be supported to develop heightened self-efficacy sentiments (Protheroe, 2008). Improving the self-efficacy of the teacher can be approached in many ways. Goodard, Hoy & Hoy (2000) stresses that a collective teacher efficacy on student improvement can impact the efficacy that they see in our students. Goodard, Hoy & Hoy define collective teacher efficacy as a wholistic group level attribute that considers the dynamic interaction of everyone within the group. We must consider that teachers are presented with many challenges that may impact their ability to accurately affect the efficacy of their students. These challenges include involving public accountability, shared responsibility for student outcomes, and minimal control over their work environments. Although teachers are faced with many obstacles, developing high levels of collective teacher efficacy is difficult but not impossible (Bandura 1997; Merher, 2007; Portheroe, 2008).

As expected, student performance is impacted by what students believe they can achieve and their sense of self-efficacy (WKCD, 2013). Weinstein (2017) states that students must believe that they can learn and perform academically. Students must feel welcomed in their learning environment and feel a sense of belonging (Bandura & Locke, 2003). Students must place value on schoolwork (Guskey, 2010). What Kids Can Do Inc. (2013), believe that a positive academic mindset influences behavior like persistence and conscientiousness-yielding high academic performance. A negative academic mindset leads students to doubt their own abilities creating a 'self-defeating' cycle (WKCD, 2013). Academic mindsets can be influenced with interventions that directly target students' academic behaviors, perseverance, mindsets, learning strategies, and/or social skills (WKCD, 2013). Finding ways to support positive academic mindsets and experiences can help students persevere (Dweck, 2000; Dweck &

Leggett, 1988). Helping students build effective learning strategies will help them persevere when faced with difficult tasks (Coleman, 2003; Dweck 1975).

Professional Development

Now that efficacy has been discussed and described in relationship to both the teacher and the student, it is important to consider the professional development opportunities provided to teachers whose focus is to enhance their skills and beliefs about their own abilities. Professional development (PD) can be defined as an array of designed educational experiences related to an individual's work whose goal is to provide teachers with an opportunity to learn and apply new knowledge and skills that will improve their performance on the job (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Mizell, 2010). Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) and Mizell (2010) report the fact that teaching quality and school leadership are the most important factors in raising student achievement. Developments in educational policy and practice, such as the No Child Left Behind Act and high stakes standardized testing, increase the expectations administrators have for teachers to improve student learning (Kedzior & Fifield 2004). Teacher professional learning supports teachers in preparing for the complex skills in which students need to gain knowledge to prepare for 21st century learning and experiences. There must be sophisticated forms of teaching developed to enhance student competencies. Students must be able to exhibit deep mastery of challenging content, critical thinking skills, complexity in problem-solving, self-determination, along with effective communication and collaboration abilities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Teachers need to continually expand their knowledge base and skills in order to implement the best educational practices (Mizell, 2010; Phillips, 2008). Professional learning (PL) can be executed as a conference, seminar, or workshop where collaborative learning occurs

among members of a working team, or even as an informal process like discussions among work colleagues, independent reading, and research and/or observations/learning of a colleague's work (Mizell, 2010). PD can occur in many ways depending on the type of PD being attended (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). It could occur at school, but before classes begin or after they end; after school on a teacher's own time; during days a school system sets aside solely for professional development; or during the summer and other school breaks (Mizell, 2010). The location of where the PL occurs could span from a teacher's school district office; a third-party site such as an education/PL service center; another school, school system, state, or a foreign country; or online (Mizell, 2010). Teachers can seek PD opportunities on their own and may have to pay for the experience (Phillips, 2008). At times, the school site/district will fund the PL opportunity depending on restrictions and the availability of those funds (Phillips, 2008). The types of PD that teachers may engage in could include individual reading/study/research, study groups among peers focused on a shared need or topic, observations and teachers observing other teachers is an alternative form of PD (Mizell, 2010). Furthermore, coaching- where an expert teacher is coaching one or more colleagues, mentoring of new teachers by more experienced colleagues, and team meetings to plan lessons, problem solve, improve performance, and/or learn a new strategy all count as PD (Mizell, 2010).

Effective professional development causes teachers to improve their instruction and administrators to become better school leaders (Mizell, 2010; Phillips, 2008). School systems and school leaders may mandate PL for a variety of reasons including but not limited to meeting its education goals; when the school system is implementing a new program/curriculum; or after analyzing student data and teacher needs (Hord, 2004). Additionally, if a school principal or a teacher's performance is deemed inadequate, it may be mandatory for them to participate in

professional development (Mizell, 2010). Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) conducted a review of methodologically rigorous studies that demonstrate a positive link between teacher professional development, teaching practices, and student outcomes. The features of an effective PD are delineated by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) in their literature. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) stress that effective PD is said to include:

- focused content to enhance teacher learning

- includes active learning allowing teachers to engage in designing and practicing

- collaboration is supported as teachers share ideas and plan together

- exposure to models of effective practice; expert and coaching support is available

- feedback and an opportunity to reflect are provided

- teachers are given time to resonate, practice, and execute

Teachers are primary drivers of change. Teachers must be equipped with assessment literacy and skills when implementing such change based on data analysis (Hord, 2004; NWEA, 2020). NWEA (2020) stress that ongoing professional development is key to developing teacher expertise, practical application skills, and local community support for teachers. According to Kedzior & Fifield (2004), there are many models of effective PD that have proven to enhance student outcomes. Two specific PD strategies: Content-Based Collaborative Inquiry and Cognitively Guided Instruction. During the PD teachers work together to create deeper understandings of how their students understand concepts and think about particular subjects. In Content-Based Collaborative Inquiry, questions are posed and addressed by participants about their students' understandings. The teachers collect and analyze data, share the results with their colleagues, after which collaboration will occur to create instructional solutions to these problems. The Cognitively Guided Instruction study encourages teachers to create models of

how students think and solve problems. Teachers use these models of student thinking to develop instructional materials that address students' learning needs. This provides opportunities for teachers to deepen their own understandings of subject matter, while they develop ways to teach it more effectively. Effective PD is needed to help teachers learn and define the pedagogies required to teach skills that will in turn effectively support student learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Hord, 2004).

Professional Learning Communities

An effective professional learning community (PLC) can boost and sustain the learning of all professionals in the school community along with the communal purpose of enhancing the outcomes of their students (Bolam et al., 2005; Hord, 2004; Liberman & Miller, 2016). An effective professional learning community (EPLC) will display eight key characteristics: collaboration focused on learning; shared values and vision; collective responsibility for pupils' learning; individual and collective professional learning; mutual trust, respect, and support; reflective professional inquiry; openness, networks and partnerships; and inclusive membership (Bolam et al., 2005). More developed PLC's have positive measures of effectiveness in association with pupil achievement, professional learning, and the PLC's ability to create, manage, and maintain their operational processes (Bolam et al., 2005). Bolam et al. believe that these operational processes are:

- optimizing resources and structures

- promoting individual and collective learning

- explicit promotion and sustaining of the PLC

- leadership and management

There are many factors/barriers that may impact the willingness of teachers to engage in

PD/PLC's, whether it be mandatory or self-selected (Liberman & Miller, 2016). Kedzior & Fifield (2004) discuss the fact that teachers may hesitate to commit time to a professional development that goes beyond the regular school day, or even beyond the school year. Additionally, they mention that the content of professional developments is typically focused on subject matter content and classroom practices, and many individuals may not be comfortable exhibiting personal misunderstandings and beliefs in a group setting. School and district factors influence PD and PLC development. It is challenging and time-consuming to design and implement high quality PDs when you must consider the schedules, abilities, and mindsets of all participants (Bolam et al., 2005; Kedzior & Fifield, 2004). Kedozior & Fifield (2004) also mention cost: a high-quality PD can get expensive and given the high costs, some districts and schools will select a 'a core community' of teacher leaders who are willing to attend the PD and later share their learnings with the others. This may work in some settings, but there may be some that are not able to vicariously learn. It will take purposeful design of the PD/PL to accommodate the needs that teachers may have, so that they are not discouraged from attending and participating in such opportunities.

Pandemic 2020: The Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Education

Public health measures forced educational systems across the world to close schools in March 2020. State and local mandates forced students to stay home for remote learning indefinitely (Fullan, 2020; Wong et al., 2020). The 2020 coronavirus pandemic caused the 'variables for learning' to be heightened in students and caused teachers to make major shifts to address the needs of their students. Coleman (2013) described the 'variables for learning' to include time, deliberate practice, coaching/feedback, and resources. Coleman (2013) stressed that these variables were adjustable according to the individual student's needs and were conducive

to their progress and proficiency, and even enrichment. The needs that students possess due to the pandemic of 2020 surpass any need that we have seen in the history of education (Gross & Opalka, 2020; Pfefferbaum & North, 2020). Before the pandemic students needed extra support and opportunities (Prettyman & Sass, 2020; Wong, 2020). This change occurred drastically and without consent from our students. For some students, school is their "safe-haven", their home away from home. Some students arrive at school at 7:30 am and stay until the afterschool program ends at 6pm. Meals and tutoring are provided free of charge throughout the day, while they still had access to their friends. In 2020, all educational experiences and needs had to be taken care of from home, and perhaps without any adult supervision (Prettyman & Sass, 2020; Wong, 2020). There was no access to friends that students would typically have at school, and for the only child, they may have never seen other children considering the "safer at home" protocol (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020). The dire circumstances that neither stakeholder has control over, caused teachers must accommodate, differentiate, and appeal to the needs that currently exist in their learning environment (Gross & Opalka, 2020; Prettyman & Sass, 2020).

Failure rates have increased dramatically in school districts across the country (Fullan, 2020; Prettyman & Sass, 2020; Wong, 2020). The failing grades that we see are concentrated among students with disabilities, low-income students of color, and individuals learning to speak English (Gross & Opalka, 2020; Wong, 2020). Imagine the traditional grading practice that most teachers utilized before the pandemic which allowed for a variable like attendance or participation to impact a student's overall grade (Taketa, 2019; Weinstein, 2017). There is no consideration for this variable being out of the student's control (Wong et al., 2020). Now, during remote learning, a teacher may instead dock participation points if a student does not turn on their camera during class (Prettyma & Sass, 2020). Has the teacher considered that their

camera may be off because they are embarrassed by the environment that is being portrayed in their background (Wong et al., 2020)? The student could now be homeless or attending remote learning in an environment that is not suitable for learning, and they may not have a caregiver at home. Although many school districts have provided internet and devices to students their shortcomings at home may not permit them to participate in remote learning at the rate suitable to pass the course (Ali & Herrera, 2020).

Recall that teachers have autonomy over grading and are still being asked to formulate a grade with all of these variables to consider (Gross & Opalka, 2020; Prettyman & Sass, 2020). Have teachers been provided the professional development opportunity on how to modify their grade books and grade scales to make considerations for these variables (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Fullan, 2020)? The pandemic of 2020 has brought forth the need to provide teachers with PLC's where they can discuss what is needed to support student outcomes considering the new variables that have been added to the forum, along with PD/PL that will support their efficacy in doing so (Prettyman & Sass, 2020, Wong et al., 2020).

The Heightened Need for Professional Development

During the Pandemic of 2020, all stakeholders have experienced some level of trauma (Allen, 2020; Gross & Opalka, 2020). Not only did students and teachers have to experience the tragedy of loss and death due to this virus running rampant in their environments; but in the midst of this pandemic, they also experienced extreme protests and violence in their community that stemmed from the death of George Floyd- a black Minneapolis resident killed at the hands of a white officer (Allen, 2020). The officer Derek Chauvin knelt on the resident's neck for nearly nine minutes while arresting him, killing him on-site (Allen, 2020). More distractions and feelings of resentment may have arisen, and this has impacted student learning (Allen, 2020). A

survey by Allen (2020) revealed that feelings of anxiety and fear were reported amongst teachers and students. Allen (2020) reveals that they felt worried, overwhelmed, and sad because of the killing and protests throughout their communities and stresses that an emphasis must be placed on relationships to help everyone overcome what was experienced during the pandemic of 2020. Issues that are impeding student learning must be addressed (Fullan, 2020; Gross & Opalka, 2020). Allen (2020) writes that there are many techniques that may support our efforts and suggests that teachers should consider trauma-informed instruction and team building/collaboration to allow for everyone to feel that they have a safe space to teach and learn in.

   As school leaders consider the impact of the pandemic on teacher morale and efficacy, they must understand that there is a need for teachers to have time to take a breath and relax/recalibrate, and to also have a say in their learning pathways (Allen, 2020; Fullan, 2020). Teacher learning pathways will become supportive if they are given individual choice in the type of PD/PL they feel will impact and support their learning most effectively (Lieberman & Miller, 2016). PD/PL selection/options based on their own knowledge of their capacity and deficits, and the needs of their students would suit teachers well (Allen, 2020). They will have the ability to choose from a variety of pathways for PL allowing for the design of their own learning in preparation for the continued virtual learning environment that they must create for their students (Bolam et al., 2005; Fullan, 2020).

   A study of relevance when designing PD/PL to address the needs that have arisen due to the pandemic of 2020 was conducted by Prettyman and Sass (2020). They revealed that the overall evidence on virtual learning relative to face-to-face learning is not very promising (Gross & Opalka, 2020; Prettyman & Sass, 2020). Prettyman and Sass discuss the fact that fully online

charter schools generally produce significantly smaller learning gains than do full-time "brick-and-mortar" schools. Due to the pandemic, schools may have no choice in the mode of teaching that they must disseminate (Fullan, 2020). Prettyman and Sass (2020) stress that existing research does not provide us with information on the best remote learning practices with few casual studies yielding inconsistent results. Additionally, there is lack of consistent evidence that discusses the relationship between teacher experience and effectiveness in a remote learning environment (Gross & Opalka, 2020). This information highlights the need for school leaders to address the impact that the pandemic had and will continue to have on all stakeholders, to design effective PD/PL experiences that will support the needs of everyone (Allen, 2020; Fullan, 2020, Gross & Opalka, 2020).

A study conducted by Ali & Herrera (2020) examined the digital learning plans for the seventeen states covered by the Southern Education Foundation, to see how schools and districts are meeting the needs of their most vulnerable students and families during the pandemic. This study yielded "Equity Considerations" they felt districts and schools must consider as they continue to plan and design for the continued remote learning that will occur indefinitely. In addition to providing digital learning in online formats, districts should also consider providing printed materials and partnering with libraries (where open and accessible), community organizations and local television stations to support those that still cannot access their courses virtually. Special student populations must continue to receive wrap-around services (Ali & Herrera, 2020; Gross & Opalka, 2020). Schools and districts should ensure that families have access to information on school meals and other services in both English and their home language. These considerations have proven to support the most vulnerable populations during the pandemic (Ali & Herrera, 2020). The students and teachers may deal with feelings of

isolation, increased responsibility of caring for family members, changes in family income, and even death (Allen, 2020; Fullan, 2020). School leaders must consider ways to support the social and emotional well-being of students, teachers, administrators (including themselves), and staff during these uncertain times. (Ali & Herrera, 2020; Gross & Opalka, 2020).

Social Emotional Learning and Mindfulness

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) PD must be in place for teachers so that they can enact these practices in their environment with their students. Although PD/PL on SEL was already in motion prior to the pandemic, distance learning has increased the need for SEL practices for both teachers and students (Gross & Opalka, 2020). Allen (2020) mentions that SEL must be implemented district and school-wide to be effective, and that there must be consideration given to the dynamic hybrid learning environment and distance learning; addressing the technology gap and other inequities that distance learning has created.

The pandemic of 2020 has impacted teachers psychologically and emotionally (Fullan, 2020; Racines, 2020). Some may feel lost, alone, and miss their classroom environments and students (Racines, 2020). Teachers may be stressed and embarrassed about their comfort level with technology (Allen, 2020; Gross & Opalka, 2020). To supply teachers with the emotional support that they need during the pandemic, a different kind of support is needed, and it must be delivered in a different way (Fullan, 2020; Racines, 2020). It must be considered that teachers are being asked to recreate all their lessons and make them remote learning accessible, and that they are on information/teacher overload (Gross & Opalka, 2020). After working a full day online, the evening is filled with correspondence and more planning; not to mention the full inbox status of their email accounts (Fullan, 2020; Racines, 2020). Piling on more, well-meant PD opportunities to learn a new tool, can simply be too much. If too many new things are piled

on at once, there is a risk of having some teachers tune out altogether (Racines, 2020). Due to the uncertainty of the virus teachers across the world have had to shift from distance learning to hybrid set up, then back to distance learning (Fullan, 2020). This creates anxiety and requires a lot of planning. The natural fear that exists must be addressed, respected, and thoughtfully responded to (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020; Fullan, 2020). Imagine being asked to return to work during the pandemic. This forces some to take an unpaid leave of absence or to even resign (Racines, 2020). Many teachers are being forced to choose between the career they love, their health, and their families (Racines, 2020). Some teachers may have underlying health conditions that do not permit them to return to work (Raciness, 2020). Either way, these stressors impact one's ability to focus, plan, implement, and reflect (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020). SEL practices must be set in place to support the chaos thrown at teachers (Gross & Opalka, 2020).

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Mindfulness in the Classroom

Many teachers steer away from social emotional practices and mindfulness in the classroom because they simply have not been trained and educated on what these practices are (Mathieu, 2016). There are many misconceptions that exist on what exactly SEL is (Armstrong, 2019; Mathieu, 2016). One thing that SEL is not, is psychotherapy or a replacement for the curricular/behavioral aspects of a classroom (CFC, 2019, Zolkoski & Lewis-Chiu, 2019; Mathieu, 2016). "Mindfulness, a SEL practice, stems from Buddhist traditions made secular in science by Kabat-Zinn in the early 1970's" (Armstrong, 2019, p.8). In popular culture, countries like The Unites States, The United Kingdom, and Australia have all began to implement these practices along with meditation to support many ailing with things like chronic pain, post-traumatic stress syndrome, and an array of disorders (Armstrong, 2019; Zolkoski & Lewis-Chiu, 2019). The goal of SEL practices is to support the maintenance of cooperative relationships in

any setting, and now the classroom setting (Armstrong, 2019; Mathieu, 2016). This includes

helping students make responsible decisions, while communicating clearly and concisely

(Armstrong, 2019). This will yield effective problem-solving skills allowing for students to

recognize their own emotions, while addressing the feelings of others as well (CFC, 2019;

Mathieu, 2016). Teachers must begin by understanding that SEL is a factor that they have

control over in their classrooms (Zolkoski & Lewis-Chiu, 2019). The culture and climate of a

classroom must be developed amongst the population of individuals that are intermingled within

it (Armstrong, 2019). Children can build social-emotional skills because of what they experience

and see by the adults in their lives (CFC, 2019). SEL can be taught and practiced, so that all

students can benefit and take part in the segments that support their own learning. SEL practices

have proven to impact all stakeholders positively in some way, shape, or form (Armstrong, 2019;

Zolkoski & Lewis-Chiu, 2019). The Committee for Children (2019), relay in their literature that

SEL practices help to support school performance, have an economic benefit, heighten career

and workforce achievement, and yields a positive outlook on life and well-being. The Committee

for Children (2019), discuss that students who participated in SEL practices experienced an 11

percent gain in academic achievement, a decrease in drop-out rates from between five and twelve

percent, and lowered rates of depression and anxiety.

Social Emotional Learning and Mindfulness go together with supporting student success

(Armstrong, 2019; Zolkoski & Lewis-Chiu, 2019; Mathieu, 2016). Armstrong (2019) discussed

the need for SEL practices, pre, during and post the Coronavirus pandemic of 2020. Mindfulness

practices in the classroom can be implemented consistently so that it becomes second nature for

our students (Armstrong, 2019; Zolkoski & Lewis-Chiu, 2019). Mindfulness is a practice that

essentially involves three parts (Armstrong, 2019). According to Armstrong (2019) focus is the

initial step to mindfulness: Any tangible activity that can be concentrated on like breathing, eating, or walking, etc., is what we should look toward as we begin the mindfulness activity. Next, Armstrong (2019) discusses open monitoring as the second step to mindfulness, where the realization of one's inner and outer emotions are acknowledged. Finally, Armstrong (2019) discusses attitude as the final component to mindfulness.

The mindset of the participant is quite important (Armstrong, 2019; Mathieu, 2016). It's important that participants are willing to accept all outcomes and are willing to take the approach with an open mind (Armstrong, 2019; Zolkoski & Lewis-Chiu, 2019). Many teachers realize the importance of some sort of support that embraces the SEL of students, and the impact these practices have on student achievement (Racines, 2020; Pfefferbaum & North). In today's schools, students and teachers feel unprecedented and even alarming levels of stress (Armstrong, 2019; Pfefferbaum & North, 2020). Within many Californian schools, mindfulness practices are a part of the school culture and have become a part of the daily routine in getting students to forget that they are in the middle of a tragic pandemic (Armstrong, 2019). Mindfulness practices can be formal or informal (Armstrong, 2019, Zolkoski & Lewis-Chiu, 2019). Armstrong (2019) describes formal practices as deliberate, timed, and to have a specific focus; while informal practices are incorporated within normal practices that one would execute daily- allowing for the freedom to practice anytime/anywhere. Formal practices include activities like mindful stretching, mindful eating, and mindful walking.

Summary

The presentation of literature in Chapter 2, began with the discussion of the array of teaching practices that support/impact student achievement in a positive way. Connecting these practices to the theoretical framework rooted in a Growth Mindset and Social Cognitive Theory,

allowed for the relevancy of this study and its application to the pre-existing factors along with new factors (due to COVID-19) that have impacted education negatively. The teaching practices discussed in this chapter included competency-based/proficiency-based grading and learning, along with SEL/Mindfulness practices. These factors have all proven to support teacher efficacy, along with effective PD/PL opportunities, yielding optimal outcomes in students.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The learning that occurs by preservice teachers within their teaching/induction programs does not directly apply to the experiences that they will have in the actual classroom, and do not fully prepare them to support the needs of their students (Tomlinson, 2015a). Tomlinson (2015a) asserts that learning is not something that 'just happens,' but rather when instruction meets the students at their ability levels, accessibility will yield competency. The hope is that this study will allow for teachers to gauge the availability of PD/PL opportunities, express the relevancy /effectiveness of the opportunity in heightening their beliefs in themselves, and their ability to support student outcomes/success. Ultimately, the goal is to allow teachers to see that there are many variables that they do have control over that may impact student outcomes in a positive way. Having an entire school staff agree on a common set of principles that govern teacher-student interaction develops an aura of unity and community that support all stakeholders (Fay, 2011; Bolam et al., 2005; Kedzior & Fifield, 2004). A positive school climate and culture has an incredible impact on student and teacher efficacy; yielding a community of learners with academic outcomes that reflect such support, and teachers that know and believe that they have the tools and abilities their students need and deserve (Fay, 2011; Lieberman & Miller, 2016).

Sampling Procedures

Snowball Sampling Strategy & Sampling Size

For this mixed-methods causal comparative phenomenological study, the researcher must consider the construction of a purposeful sampling approach. This approach must include exactly who the participants or sites for the study are, the sampling strategy that will be used, and finally the sample size must be pondered (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The participants for this study were preschool through grade twelve teachers in California public schools. The teachers were gathered

using a snowball sampling strategy. Participants were asked to share the survey with other potential participants. The researcher administered the survey the variable social media forums. For the quantitative portion, the goal was to have approximately 200 participants engage. Thereafter, the qualitative portion would be a constructed depending on the participants that are willing to engage in it. The goal was to have at least 25 participants willing to engage in the qualitative piece. Creswell & Poth (2018) stress the importance of gaining rapport and the trust of the participants. This relationship is integral, and impacts the replies that will be received, and the willingness of participants to participate.

The main purpose of qualitative research is to gain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon, rather than generalizing findings (Naderifar et al., 2017). Careful selection of research samples can help the researcher conduct a more thorough evaluation. Snowball sampling is a gradual process, and time influences the selection of samples. Sampling usually continues until data saturation (Naderifar et al., 2017). Snowball sampling is typically used to analyze vulnerable groups, individuals under special care, and susceptible populations (Naderifar et al., 2017). Naderifar et al. (2017) suggests the consideration of snowball sampling strategies while working with the attendees of educational programs or samples of research studies.

Snowball sampling is one of the most popular methods of sampling in qualitative research (Parker et al. 2019). Networking and referral are the two main processes that incorporate snowball sampling (Parker et al., 2019). The process involves the researchers starting with a small number of initial contacts called the "seeds". These individuals usually fit the research criteria and are invited to be the initial participants in the research. Thereafter, they are asked to recommend other individuals that fit the research criteria and might also be willing to participate. This process will continue until the target sample size/saturation is reached (Parker et

al., 2019). The researcher uses their social networks to establish initial links. Sampling

momentum develops from these initial connections, capturing an increasing chain of participants.

<div align="center">**Instrumentation**</div>

Quantitative Survey

The survey will be administered via Google form through social media outlets advertising

a raffle entry upon completion to entice participation. Participants will be asked to pass along the

survey to fellow teachers to allow for the snowball sampling process to occur. The quantitative

survey is comprised of three sections. Section one has three parts. Part 1 is the demographics

section that contains questions that will allow for the researcher to gather information on the

population of participants. Part two contains questions that focus on teacher efficacy beliefs. And

finally, part three has questions that focus on professional development and professional learning

(see appendix). This portion of the survey will be considered section 1.

Qualitative Personal Interviews

This portion of the survey will be considered section 2 of the survey. Participants will be

invited to participate in section 2 if they would like to engage in the interview portion of the

survey by providing their email addresses. The researcher will offer a second raffle for a greater

price as compared to section 1 to entice participation. Selection of participants will be based on

the availability of the individual. The researchers will select 15 participants to engage in this

portion of the survey. The personal interviews will be one-on-one interviews and will be

recorded, then later transcribed, and analyzed by the researcher. The qualitative survey is

detailed in Table 3. 1.

Table 3. 1

Qualitative Personal Interviews Sample Questions

Interview Questions

---

1. What Grade Level/Subject do you teach?
2. What California county do you teach in?
3. Do you value the Professional Development/Learning opportunities provided to you by the district/school site (are they useful)?
4. What support(s) would you expect to receive regularly from your administration/support staff to make you a highly effective teacher?
5. Do you believe that all students can learn?
6. Have you practiced mindfulness in your classroom? If so, what were those practices and how do you feel it impacted your students?
7. What do you feel needs to be done to support the emotional well-being of our students?

Data Collection

There are four key components that a qualitative study must possess to be considered a "quality" piece of research worthy of consideration by its scholarly peers (Gibbs, 2012). Qualitative research is based on subjective, interpretive, and contextual data (Thomson, 2011), grounded in reliability, validity, generalizability, and credibility (Gibbs, 2012). The methodology is so important, as it directly affects the results that are yielded. Maxwell (2013) lists things like 'validity checks' (p. 125) to support the credibility of our research. This is a strategy the researcher plans to govern the study by. There must be the awareness of 'validity threats' (Maxwell, 2013, p. 125) as well, because they may affect credibility as Gibbs (2012) discusses in his video series. Gibbs (2012) was very conscious in mentioning "threats" for all four key components of a qualitative study. It is important to consider small variances that may have a huge impact on the analysis of the results.

The survey administered to the participants for the quantitative portion of the study will be done using an electronic survey- Google form. The Google form will be delivered at through

variable social media outlets the researcher has access to. The Google form will then be exported to an excel spread sheet where analysis will occur. The personal interviews will be individual interviews that will be recorded and later transcribed before analysis will occur.

Data Analysis

Coding and the analysis of data must be practiced and fine-tuned as consideration is given to validity. Triangulation of the data will solidify validity (Dr. B. Karge, personal communication, April 6, 2020). Reducing the data into meaningful segments, broadening the categories, and comparing them within a data chart is an analysis strategy that will be utilized to support the claims being made in this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). After conducting multiple in-depth interviews, the researcher will generate themes by horizontalizing the phenomenon, followed by the bracketing categories to represent participants' sentiment. The goal is to express the invariant structure captured by the interviews. Bracketing may be difficult, as Creswell and Poth (2018) elaborate in their literature, because the researcher must be sure their own personal bias does not affect the essence being captured by the participants. The researcher will utilize open coding to triangulate commonalities, followed by axial coding to group the commonalities. Finally, the researcher will selectively code to provide a catalog of information for the themes noted.

Strategies for Validating Findings

Thomson (2011) elaborates on the validity of a study by enforcing that validity can be looked at from many perspectives as it applies to qualitative research. Thomson (2011) stresses that 'measurement concepts' (p. 2) categorized as: descriptive validity, interpretive validity, theoretical validity, generalizability, evaluative validity, and transparency validity all must be applied to the study as the researcher considers their approach and methodology. We must be

sure that reliability and validity both exist to support our study (Gibbs 2012, Maxwell 2013, and Thomson 2011). As such, the researcher considers utilizing triangulation to assure credibility. This corroboration of evidence will support the validity of the claim being made, along with clarifying researcher bias. Finally, the researcher will seek peer review of the process to assure feedback will keep the researcher honest as Creswell & Poth (2018) express in their literature.

Narrative Structure

The narrative structure for a phenomenological study must consider the textual and structural descriptors given by the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This study is a mixed methods causal comparative phenomenological study that hopes to heighten the understanding and perspectives represented within California public school teachers. To gauge the occurrence of teachers that feel supported, and those that utilize the professional opportunities to support student success, it is important to understand the instrument and approach in gathering information. The goal of the design and approach in this study is to utilize the most effective information gathering and analysis processing system that best represents the perspective of their participants.

Ethical Issues

The ethical issues that may arise during the research process can be as general as getting the institution's review board to approve the study, or as complicated as protecting the identity of a participant. Creswell & Poth (2018) stress that there are many factors that must be considered when ethics is the issue. Creswell & Poth (2018) emphasize concerns like purposefully sampling, developing rapport, and recording information as a few items that play a role when attending to the ethical considerations of the study. The social media outlet may narrow the participant perspective variance if they are just friends of the researcher, or friends of friends. They may

share the same implicit biases that yield similar results in the responses.

Summary

The researcher hopes to complete the snowball sampling process across a two-week process gathering approximately 200 survey responses. The first 15 participants interested in engaging in Section two will be contacted and scheduled. The researcher will select five back up participants in the instance that the original participants selected do not follow through. The hope is that this entire process will take no longer than four weeks. This will allow for the researcher to analyze the data and report findings in a timely fashion.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to understand the factors that embrace teacher efficacy within California TK-12 public schools. Particularly, professional development opportunities, a growth mindset, and mindfulness techniques as the factors that would positively impact teacher efficacy, and the overall learning environment. This chapter provides a synopsis of the participating teachers and the results of the data analysis. Chapter 4 is divided into three sections. The first section contains the demographic profile of the sampled participants. The second section contains the Likert scale and open-ended question results. The third and final section contains the findings of the qualitative research questions.

Section 1: Demographic Profile

The data gathered from TK-12 California teachers included the following demographic variables: number of years as a teacher, gender, and location/setting of school. Tables 1. 1 through 3. 1 illustrate the demographics. Table 1. 1 the number of years each participant has been a teacher. The largest percentage (75.4%) have been teaching for eleven years or more. Teachers that have been in the profession for six through ten years was the next largest category (13.1%). Teachers that have been teaching two through five years came next (9.8%). And finally, teachers new to the profession as first year teachers was the final category (1.6%).

Table 4. 1

How Long Have You Been a Teacher?

Years	Frequency	Percentage
11 or more Years	46	75.4
6-10 years	8	13.1
2-5 Years	6	9.8
1st Year	1	1.6
Total	61	100

Table 4. 2 illustrates the gender of the participants: 91.8% female and 8.2% male. The option was given to select non-binary, and no one selected this option.

Table 4. 2

What is Your Gender?

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	56	91.8
Male	5	8.2
Total	61	100

For the location of the participants' school in California Table 4. 3 illustrates the largest area as urban/inner-city (59%). The second largest category was suburban (31.1%). The smallest area reported was rural (9.8%).

Table 4. 3

The Area that Best Describes the Location of Your School in California.

Area	Frequency	Percentage
Urban/inner-city	36	59
Suburban	19	31.1
Rural	6	9.8
Total	61	100

Section 2: Quantitative Findings

Teacher efficacy and beliefs are the focus of this portion of the survey administered to participants. Figures 4. 1- 4. 3 illustrate teachers' sentiment on feeling equipped and capable of meeting the needs of their students in particular areas. Academics and content are represented by figure 1. Social emotional needs are the focus of Figure 2. 1.Providing students with resources they need to grow academically is represented in Figure 3. 1.
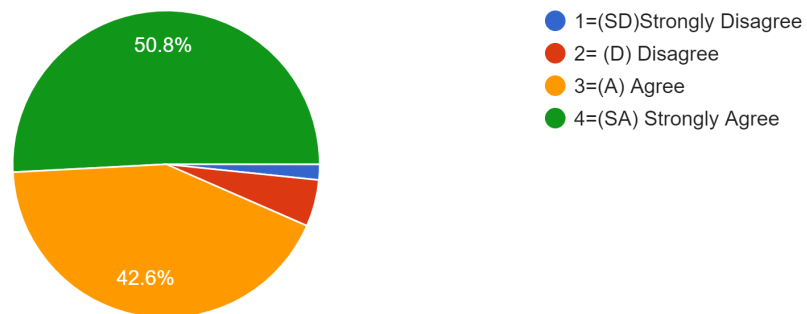
Of the participants surveyed, 50.8% strongly agreed that they were fully equipped and capable of meeting their students' academic needs. 42.6% agreed, 4.9% disagreed, and 1.6 % strongly disagreed. This is represented below in Figure 4. 1.

Figure 4. 1

Survey Results on Teachers Feeling Equipped and Capable in Supporting their Students in the

Area of Academics and Content.

I feel that I am fully equipped and capable of meeting the needs of my students in the following area: Academics/Content area(s).
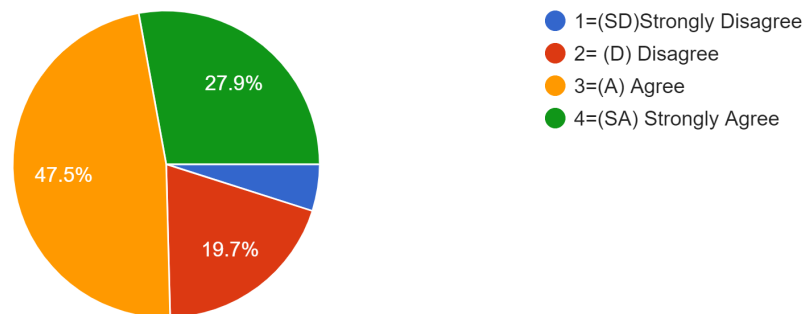
61 responses

Of the participants surveyed, 27.9 % strongly agreed that they were fully equipped and capable of meeting their students' social emotional needs. Next, 47.5% agreed, while 19.7% disagreed, and 4.9% strongly disagreed. This is represented below in Figure 4. 2.

Figure 4. 2

Survey Results on Teachers Feeling Equipped and Capable in Supporting Their Students with

Their Social Emotional Needs.

I feel that I am fully equipped and capable of meeting the needs of my students in the following area: Supporting their Social Emotional Needs
61 responses

Of the participants surveyed, 39.3% strongly agreed that they were fully equipped and

capable of providing students with the resources and support that they need to grow

academically. 52.5% agreed, 6.6% disagreed, and 1.6% strongly disagreed. This is represented

below in Figure 4. 3.

Figure 4. 3

Survey Results on Teachers Feeling Equipped and Capable in Providing Their Students with

Resources and Support Needed to Grow Academically.

I feel that I am fully equipped and capable of meeting the needs of my students in the following
area: Providing students with the resources and support they need to grow academically
61 responses
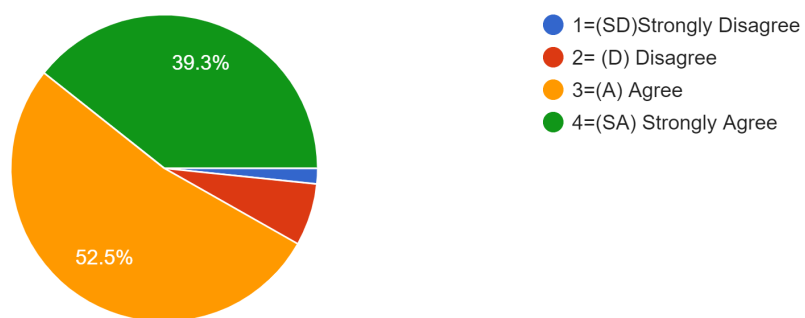

Continuing with the theme on efficacy and beliefs, Figures 4. 4 through 4. 6 represent the

results gathered from the participants on whether teachers feel that they are effective,

appreciated, and compensated fairly. Below in Figure 4. 4, 52.5% of teachers strongly agreed

that they were effective teachers, while 47.5% agreed. There were participants that disagreed or

strongly disagreed.

Figure 4. 4

Survey Results That Represent if Teachers Feel They Are Effective

I believe that I am an effective teacher.
61 responses
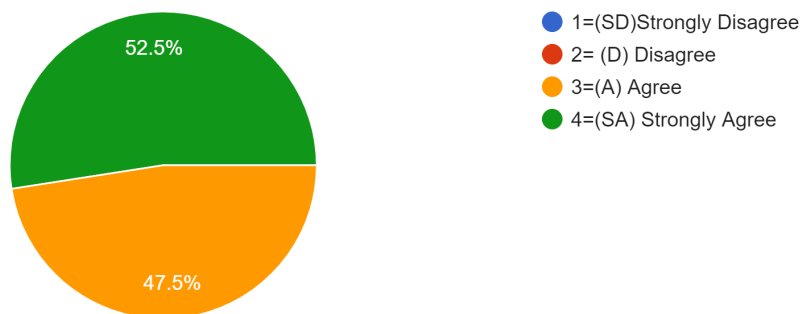
Amongst the teachers surveyed, 21.3% strongly disagreed with the statement about feeling unappreciated and that their efforts go unnoticed. 31.1% agreed with the statement. 37.7% disagreed with the statement, while 9.8% strongly disagreed. Figure 4. 5 below depicts this information.

Figure 4. 5

Survey Results on Whether Teachers Feel Appreciated.

I feel unappreciated and that my efforts go unnoticed.
61 responses
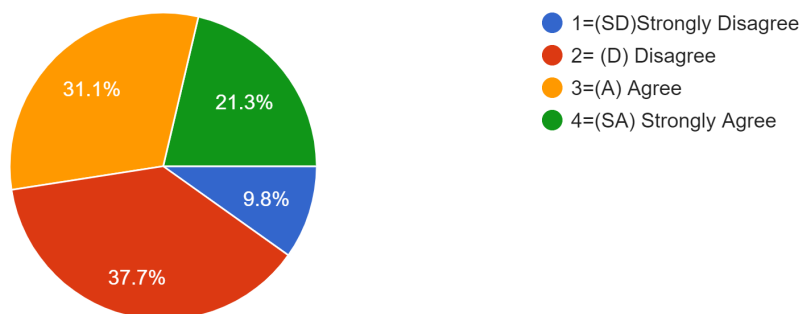
Of the participants surveyed, 6.6% strongly agree that they are compensated sufficiently for the job that they do. 21.3% of participants agree that that are compensated sufficiently for the job that they do. 29.5% disagree that they are compensated sufficiently for the job that they do. And finally, 42.6% strongly disagree that they are compensated sufficiently for the job that they do. This information is shown in Figure 4. 6

Figure 4. 6

Survey Results Showing Whether Teachers Feel They Are Compensated Sufficiently for the Job That They Do.

I feel that I am compensated (pay) sufficiently for the job that I do?
61 responses

- 1=(SD)Strongly Disagree
- 2= (D) Disagree
- 3=(A) Agree
- 4=(SA) Strongly Agree
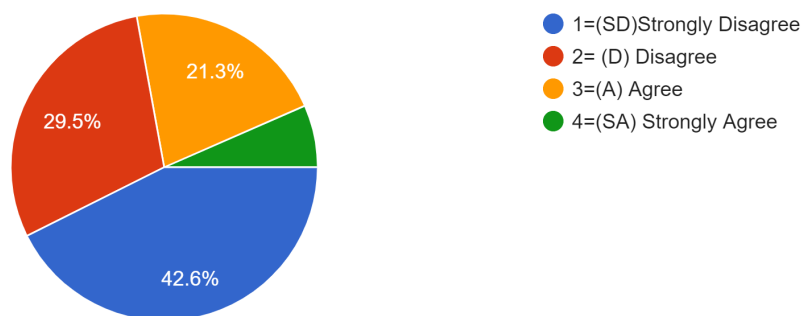
The open-ended question administered to the participants was analyzed using the Delve coding tool. Participants were asked: What are some things that you do to help with embracing your own mental health? Utilizing the delvetool.com coding tool, thematic coding occurred. Open coding of the categories occurred based on the themes in the responses provided by each participant. After which, thematic axial coding occurred allowing for general categories were formed for the survey question. Figure 4. 7 below depicts this process.

Figure 4. 7

Thematic Analysis Diagram

Thematic Analysis
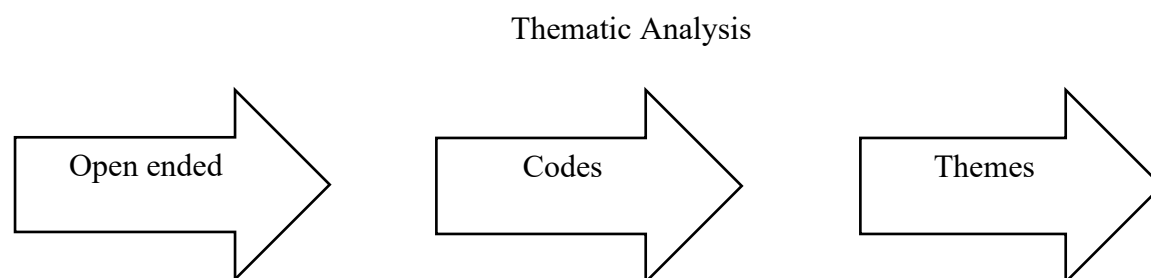
This process yielded sixteen categories that represents what teachers do to embrace their own mental health. Table 4. 4 below depicts the results of the thematic coding process utilized to analyze the open-ended question of the survey.

Table 4. 4

Thematic Coding Analysis Results
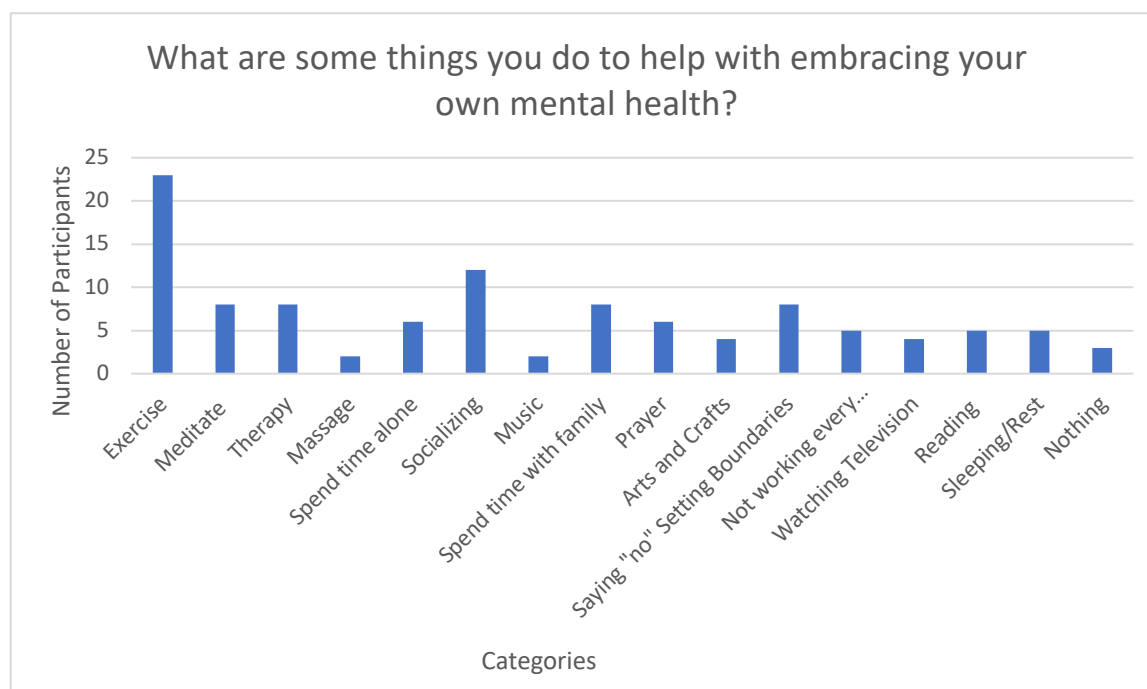
The final portion of the survey focused on professional development. Participants were asked if their school/district offers professional development/learning opportunities. 95.1% responded yes, while 4.9% responded no. This is illustrated in Figure 4. 8.

Figure 4. 8

Survey Results Showing Whether Teachers are Offered Professional Development/Learning by

Their School/District.

Does your school/district offer professional Development/Learning Opportunities?
61 responses
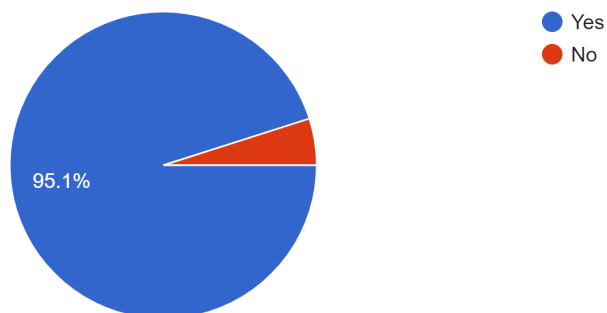
When teachers were asked if they can select professional development that they are

interested in, 63.9% responded yes and 36.1% responded no. Figure 4. 9 below shows this

information.

Figure 4. 9

Survey Results Showing Whether Teachers Can Select Professional Development They Are

Interested In.

Are you able to select the type of PD/PL opportunities that you are interested in engaging in?
61 responses
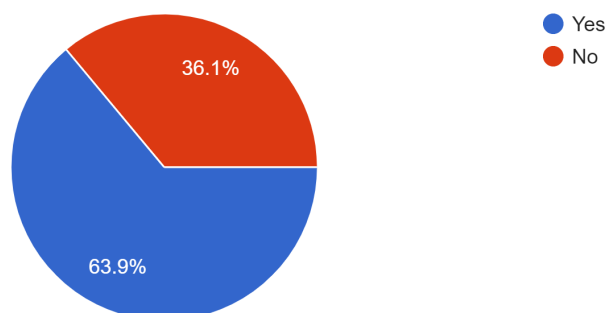
The participants were asked about payment for professional development/learning

(PD/PL), and whether the district paid for the opportunity or they themselves paid for it. 80.3%

of the professional development opportunities were paid for by the school/district. 57.4%

occurred during the school day- so there was no cost, and 18% of participants paid for the

professional development they engaged in. These results are shown in Table 4. 5.

Table 4. 5

Survey Results Showing Who Paid for the Professional Development Participants Rngaged in.

The PD/PL that I have engaged in was (select all that apply):
61 responses
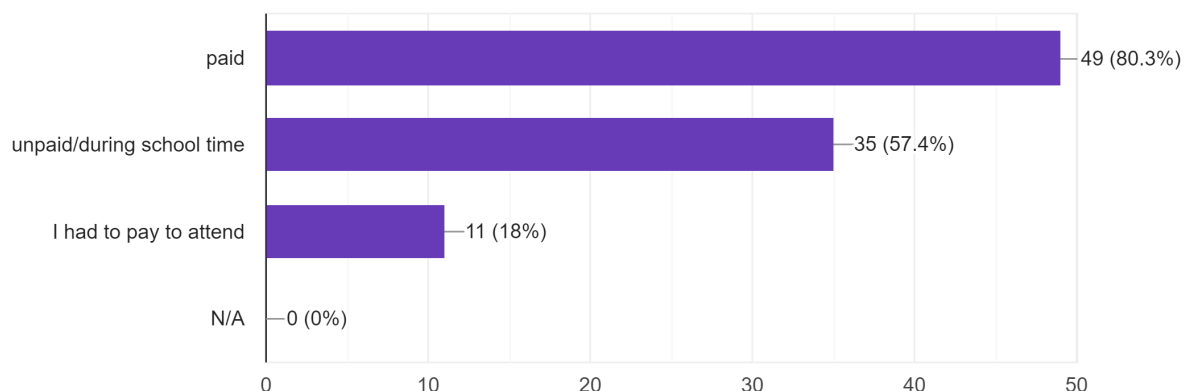
Participants were asked if they have engaged in PD/PL on a Growth Mindset. 65.6% responded yes and 34.4% responded no. Below, Figure 4. 10 depicts this information.

Figure 4. 10

Survey Results Showing if Teachers have Participated in PD/PL on A Growth Mindset

Have you engaged in PD/PL on A Growth Mindset?
61 responses
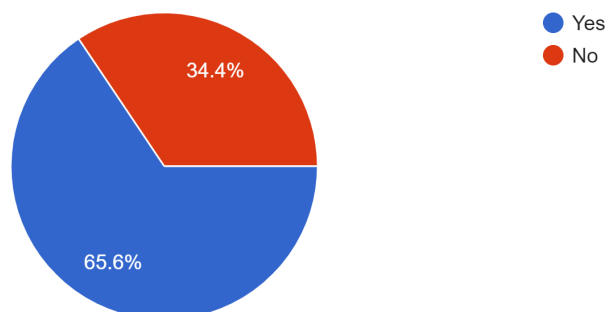
The next question applied to teachers that had engaged in PD/PL on A Growth Mindset and whether they felt this training supported their ability and effectiveness as a teacher. This question did not apply to 36.1% of the participants and hence the reply of not applicable. Of the teachers that this did apply to, 18% replied no and 45.9% replied yes. Figure 4. 11 shows this information.

Figure 4. 11

Survey Results Showing the Impact of PD/PL on Teacher Efficacy

For those that have engaged in Growth Mindset PD/PL, do you feel that the PD supported your ability and effectiveness as a teacher?
61 responses
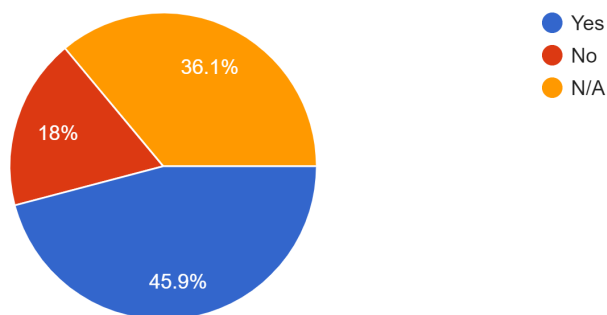
The survey continued with the focus on Mindfulness PD/PL and if teachers had the opportunity to engage in a PD/PL with that theme. Figure 4. 12 show that 65.6% of participants replied yes, and 34.4% replied no.

Figure 4. 12

Survey Results Showing Participant Engagement in PD/PL on Mindfulness

Have you engaged in PD/PL on Mindfulness?
61 responses
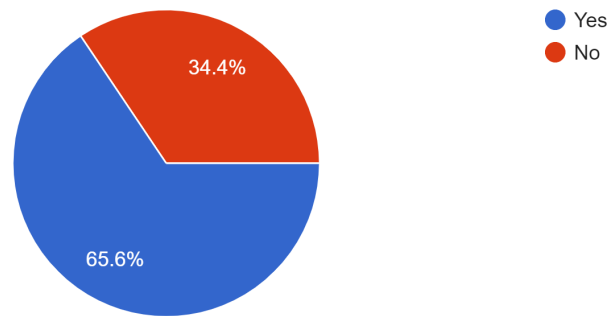
The next question applied to teachers that had engaged in PD/PL on Mindfulness and whether they felt this training has had a positive impact on classroom environment, and their ability to support student needs. This question did not apply to 39.3% of the participants and hence the reply of not applicable. Of the teachers that this did apply to, 11.5% replied no and 49.2% replied yes. This information is shown below in Figure 4. 13.

Figure 4. 13

Survey Results Showing the Impact of Mindfulness PD/PL on Teacher Efficacy

For those that have implemented Mindfulness in their classrooms, do you believe that mindfulness has had a positive impact on your classroom environment, and your ability to support student needs?
61 responses
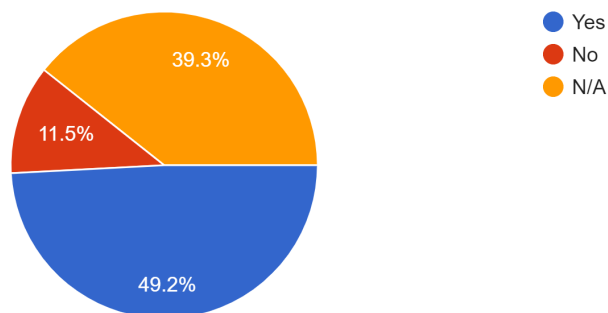
The survey concluded with the focus on Social Emotional PD/PL and if teachers had the opportunity to engage in a PD/PL with that theme. Figure 4. 14 shows that 83.6% replied yes and 16.4% replied no to this question.

Figure 4. 14

Survey Results Showing Participant Engagement in PD/PL on Social Emotional Learning

Have you engaged in PD/PL on Social Emotional Learning?
61 responses
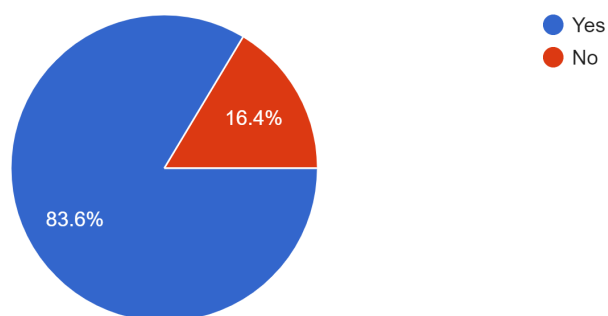
The final question applied to teachers that had engaged in PD/PL on Social Emotional Learning and whether they felt this training supported their ability and effectiveness as a teacher. This question did not apply to 19.7% of the participants and hence the reply of not applicable. Of the teachers that this did apply to, 24.6% replied no and 55.7% replied yes. This is depicted below in Figure 4. 15.

Figure 4. 15

Survey Results Showing the Impact of PD/PL on Social Emotional Learning on Teacher Efficacy

For those that have engaged in Social Emotional Learning PD/PL, do you feel that the PD supported your ability and effectiveness as a teacher?

61 responses
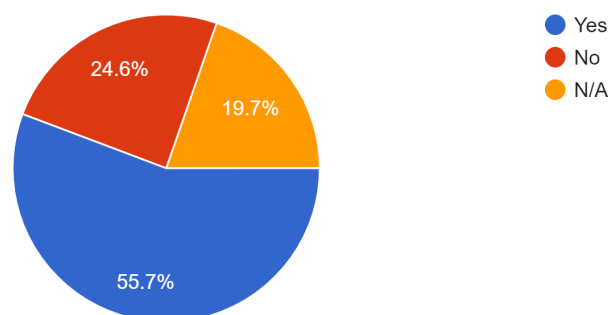
This concludes the results yielded by the quantitative section of the study. Next, the findings of the qualitative-interview section of the study will be discussed. In the next chapter, the reader can expect to encounter the connection that these findings have to the research question.

Section 3: Findings of Qualitative Research

Of the 61 participants, 36 were willing to engage in the interview portion of the study. Five participants were randomly selected and interviewed each of them via Zoom platform and recorded each session. Each interview was transcribed and is charted in the tables that follow.

Question one administered during the interview simply asks the grade level and subject taught by each interviewee. Subjects taught were both from the general education and special education population, elementary through secondary as depicted below in Table 4.6.

Table 4. 6

Question 1: What Grade Level/Subject Do You Teach?

Participant 1	I teach K-5 Special ed. I am the resource teacher at my school, so the subjects are mostly Math and ELA.
Participant 2	I teach 9th grade Math.
Participant 3	I teach multiple subjects in a 2nd grade classroom.
Participant 4	I teach 3rd grade general education.
Participant 5	I actually teach 3rd 4th and 5th grade, SDC Autism core.

This dissertation study was open to TK-grade 12 California teachers. Table 4. 7 below depicts the California county that each interviewee teaches in. The majority were from Los Angeles County. Two participants were from Northern California and three from Southern California.

Table 4. 7

Question 2: What California County Do You Teach In?

_____

Participant 1	Los Angeles County	Southern California
Participant 2	Los Angeles County	Southern California
Participant 3	Lake County	Northern California
Participant 4	Merced County	Northern California
Participant 5	Los Angeles County	Southern California

_____

The question answered in Table 4. 8 below by the interviewees focuses on Professional Development/Learning and whether teachers felt that these opportunities were useful. When the PD/PL is directly related to what is needed by the teacher and when teachers are allowed a choice in what PD/PL to engage in, they found the engagement useful.

Table 4. 8

Question 3: Do You Value the Professional Development/Learning Opportunities Provided to You by the District/School Site (Are they useful)?

Participant 1	When I can use them. Sometimes the PD that are offered really don't pertain to me and what I am doing with my students so a lot of the PDs really aren't really useful to what I am doing. Some of them can be but they don't offer as much as I would like as far as helping me to learn and grow with my students
Participant 2	Lately I've been in charge of the professional development, so the ones that I do for the teachers, of course I find them useful- and the best ever. I do often times, the ones that I have to go- that the district provides, its not as good-unless I get to pick, for example I attended a Mastery Learning and Grading PD and that was really good. The mandatory ones, I don't find them as useful.
Participant 3	I am- my husband would call me a professional development junkie. So, I love professional development. When I first graduated from college and going through BTSA- I valued everything that they offered. I went to- I can't tell you- so many professional developments. Some of them I paid for- I really do value that. Through the district I lived in Sacramento County first- that where I started teaching and moving to Lake county- professional development was different. I feel like they did not offer a lot of PD opportunities, and the one that they did offer were so broad- I'm a 2nd grade teacher in a PD with high school. If we are learning concepts that I wondered-can I use this with my students? And they would even say during the PD- okay this may not be for you in the lower grades...so why am I spending my time here. Even with the change to distance learning we asked for the district to provide opportunities for PD on things like Google docs, Cami etc. we did not get that, so we have to create our own bootleg trainings as teachers. People with expertise in different areas would spend their time over the summer of 2020- 20 hrs. during the summer teaching ourselves.
Participant 4	Yes, because they have to do with what they are asking us to teach.
Participant 5	Absolutely! I really do enjoy them. Some I could take or leave, but most of them are really helpful. And for the ones that are not helpful for me they are helpful for someone else.

The interviewees were asked next what supports they expect to receive from administration /support staff to make them a highly effective teacher. Every teacher mentioned informal observation and regular check-ins from their administrator. Just checking in to see what challenges they are experiencing and what their needs might be. Table 4. 9 below details their responses.

Table 4. 9

Question 4: What Support(s) Would You Expect to Receive Regularly from Your

Administration/Support Staff to Make You a Highly Effective Teacher?

Participant 1	More PDs also just do check ins. Most times when you're in special ed, you're just left to figure things out. Admin- as long as the students are quiet in their classroom and doing what they should were pretty much left to ourselves. Just some check-ins ya know. Are you okay, what do you need? The school district that I am working in Special ed we pretty much have to look for our let me back that up. For resource teachers we have to find what will help the students reach those IEP goals. We're not given the same curriculum/materials as Gen ed because we don't have rosters. Students get the same materials from their gen ed teacher then come to me and I guess that's what their thinking is. Just resources. I feel like I am reinventing the wheel each week-by scrounging for exciting materials so that the be bored looking for it online spending endless hours looking for materials that will get their attention, that will help them reach their goals so that would be helpful if the admin would an account for RSP teachers so that we can purchase materials. Also, dealing with difficult parents- admin expect us to put out those fires but when its out of control they step in, but should've before it even began. From that top of my head that's what I have.
Participant 2	I know a lot of teachers that disagree with me on this, but I feel like they should be observing us more...and not for- where anything's written down- for truly like where we get good feedback. Where its just between them- they are not reporting to anybody. Where they can start building relationships with teachers. Where it's trusted ya know that they are coming into the classroom literally just to help and for feedback, not as an

evaluative process. I wanna be better and I feel like I do things to be better, but I don't know all of the time.

Participant 3 Providing PD since there's certain things that are required and that they want to see from you. Like the previous district that I worked in there was no mention of the visible learning. And so here in this district they want you to do visible learning and to put your objective on the board-your standards, and the I can statements for the children. And so coming into that was different for me because they were like -have you heard of this, and I was like no. I don't know what I am doing let me go research. So I taught myself how to write objectives because the other teachers already knew how to do it and only did it when getting evaluated.

Participant 4 I would expect them to be in my classroom regularly to provide good feedback and constructive feedback as well. I want them to be in the classroom seeing.

Participant 5 We check in at least every two weeks we have big meetings. There's always an open-door policy and also sometimes during the day I can call my APEIS for anything. I always do feel that the door is always open and supported. I know what to go with them for. I have been teaching for 8 years and so I pretty much know what I am doing. So being mindful of what you go to them for help makes it easy. So you don't feel like you are bothering. You have to know how to manage your classroom and if things escalate you know that there is support. Making sure have all of the supplies needed and PD necessary like I know there is an FBA class coming and I'd like to attend it if [possible.

Participants were asked if they believe that all students can learn. The responses indicate the teachers felt that all students can learn when provided the proper learning environment and differentiated learning opportunities that support their individual needs. Table 4. 10 below depicts the results of the participant interviews.

Table 4. 10

Question 5: Do You Believe That All Students Can Learn?

Participant 1	Yes, I believe that all students can learn- in their own way. If given the material in different ways. Not all students learn the same. And yes, I do believe that student can learn- one may be able to solve double digit multiplication – with that same concept we have to just take steps differently. One student may just need to add and practice adding before going into multiplication. The skill will be built on each other and one day with more practice maybe that student may be able to reach that other part of learning- solving multi digit multiplication.
Participant 2	I do. I don't think that all students can learn in the environment that we have right now. But I think if I had like 10 students in a classroom I could adapt for every learner in the classroom. But, in the current situation uh I don't think all students have that opportunity.
Participant 3	I do. I believe that they can learn at their on pace. Sometimes we have to differentiate for each kid. We have to look at if our environment is the best environment for them to learn in. That's one thing I always have to look at. What can I do to help these kids in my classroom.
Participant 4	Oh Yes! I do believe all students can learn, but at their own pace, But I believe they can.
Participant 5	Yes, absolutely that is why I am a special education teacher.

Question 6 only applied to the participants that actually knew what mindfulness was and had an opportunity utilize the practices in their classroom. Table 4. 11 illustrates the responses from each participant. Of the teachers that correctly understood what mindfulness was, they did feel that these practices support student the needs of their students and provided them with a way to focus and be attentive in the moment.

Table 4. 11

Question 6: Have You Practiced Mindfulness in Your Classroom? If So, What Were Those

Practices and How Do You Feel it has impacted your students?

Participant 1	No, I'm not really sure what mindfulness in the classroom is as far as it being a curriculum or a practice that's implemented, I haven't done that.
Participant 2	So, I view mindfulness as they are very aware of what they are learning, why we are learning it...so I do feel that I do a good job at that because of the Mastery Learning and Grading and the equitable whatever it's called now because I am constantly asking the students- where are you with this learning target right now, are you at a 4, a 3-2-1-0? And they are constantly saying I think I am at this level...okay let's try that level. And so, with the differentiation in my classroom I feel like the mindfulness of the content is there. In terms of not content- I'm not as sure.
Participant 3	Mindfulness- I know a lot of people have different definitions for what mindfulness is. I'm not really- that's not really something that I have researched but one thing that I have practiced in my class is having the students say I can do it yet, but one day I can. Let's figure out what we can do- I always tell me students that practice doesn't make us perfect it makes us better. So, I always try to get my kids to think about what they are doing and how they can improve. Not just in their learning, but in their behavior. I feel like I've been given a lot of children that have already been defeated before they even get to my classroom, and so some of that is that I talk to them. I have had several students that have been on behavior plans- I had three at one time and so just getting them to reflect on their behavior I feel has to do with mindfulness. To be proud of themselves and their actions. I thinks it's impacted them because still I have kids have come to me and say I remember I'm going to do better and it's not worth getting in trouble and few years have gone by since they were in my class.
Participant 4	If I am thinking of mindfulness correctly...we do a class meeting every day. Within the meeting we watch a video for class building and one that goes along with different topics like empathy, being kind, what to do when stressed- different topics every day. I have used it all year and it's nice to use. It builds teamwork and helps the student reflect on how to be a better student and a person.

There are questions that go along with it that I have them do.

| Participant 5 | I actually do this quite often. I think its fantastic for my students. We always do mindful Monday. But I do not leave it there, because I think its really important especially with my students with autism. It's important for them because it helps them focus. So, we take a moment to be quiet and I also know- I have a daughter with autism – so know that the less distractions that they have the more they can focus and the more their brain starts going. So I always try to have a quiet moment where they listen for sounds in the room, we follow something that goes along the screen just with our eyes. We talk a lot about like if we do a yoga pose- even "GoNoodle" has this great called get energized- or something like that. It's a great morning one on Mondays that we do. I do that a lot with my classroom and I really think its helpful. |

The final question of the interview focused on the emotional well-being of students and what teachers felt needs to be done to support them. Participants felt that their students need to feel heard and important. Providing students with a safe environment where they feel comfortable to express themselves and that they are important. Table 4. 12 below exhibits the participants' responses.

Table 4. 12

Question 7: What Do You Feel Needs to be Done to Support the Emotional Well-Being of our

Students?

Participant 1	Just listening, being there for them. We don't know what they dealt with at home and what I have noticed since being back from COVID the students are so chatty. They want to talk about any and everything. So instead of just shooing them off and telling them to get back to work. As teachers we need to take the time and go ahead and listen to that cat story, dog story, cousin birthday party and that will support their emotional well-being. I had a student Thursday tell me several times about his hoverboard. As much as I wanted to tell him to just be quiet and focus on his work I had to listen after the 4th time. He told me I have a hover board, and it has lights, and my sister has one too. I thought okay at that time I just needed to listen to his story about his hover board. I let him have a few minutes and discussed- what does it look like, where do you go with it? where do you get this hover board is it dangerous. Etc. He was so happy- He lit up – by talking to me about his hover board. So that will support the students we work with. It's just listening-being a listener.
Participant 2	Our school implemented advisory now. I feel that I have an opportunity to step away from my content with the kids because I have this special group/class. The problem is that we only see them once a week-so it has been hard building that emotional connection with them- because we only see them once a week. At first there were all of these mandatory webinars we had to show them and so it took me a while- and I still only have a good bond with maybe 7 out of the 25. So, I feel like in order to improve that I feel that we will need more time with them and more training. I'm trying to teach my self how to bond with them- I'm a math teacher-give me content and I could teach all day long, but in terms of bonding with the kids appropriately in an educational setting- I'd like more training on activities to do with them.
Participant 3	I really think that some of these kids- especially in the area that I live in and teach in – it's a social economic disenfranchisement- I don't want to say poverty, but a lot of students are loving under the poverty line here and I think that a lot of these kids just want to be seen. Some of these kids come from homes where their parents are on drugs, or alcohol. A lot of children- there's a high

native American population. And so a lot of those kids just want to be seen and build relationships with their teachers and peers. They need help navigating the feelings that they are not liked. There's fighting amongst the different groups up here- white, Native American- Hispanic, a few blacks- a lot of racial tension Helping kids work on their social skills.

Participant 4   I think that the emotional well-being of the teachers have to be taken care of first in order for us to support our students.

Participant 5   With COVID there's a lot of different things that need to be done. I found it very difficult when we first came back into the classroom. The students were used to just sitting in a chair...like there was a whole learning curve like -you cannot just get up and go into the kitchen. There is no just- I am going to the bathroom. Making sure that everybody has their food, and in a safe position. I get upset about giving homework and some students aren't supported at home. So, I try to incorporate time for that so that feel emotional supported and academically supported. Every morning I do a morning meeting with my students, so we check in. I have a little morning leader we check in to see if anyone wants to share good news. We do our mood meter. I have one student that's always in the red in the morning, and so I check I with him later in the day and its always like yellow or green so that's good. But I always make sure to they are doing alright and everything is okay. We talk about building our community and making everyone feel okay so that there are more chances taken in class. On Friday we do a fun Friday so that everyone is laughing and feeling happy. We dance every morning to Bruno. It's important to make them feel happy when they go to school. Was it Maya Angelou that made the statement that they may not always remember what they taught you, but they'll always remember how you made them feel? I always try to make sure I do the three to one. Where I give them a compliment like whether it new shoes or a new haircut, a kids doodle. I always try to positively interact with a positive so that if I do have to redirect them it's not all I do.

Each portion of this chapter provided an analysis of the responses received from participants during both the survey and interview section of this study. This information will be discussed in the next chapter as it is connected to the research questions raised in this study.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This study was designed to determine the impact that a growth mindset, mindfulness, and social emotional learning had on teacher efficacy in TK-grade 12 teachers in California. The purpose of chapter five is to elaborate on the findings detailed in chapter four in alignment with the established research questions. This chapter will start with a summary of the study followed by a discussion of implications and limitations for this study. Chapter 5 will conclude with recommendations for future research on this topic.

Summary of the Study

This study identified that a growth mindset, mindfulness, and social emotional learning affect teacher efficacy. There are challenges that teachers encounter at every grade level and in every community. There are many factors that teachers have no control over like classroom size, varying levels of student cognition, mandatory curriculum, and testing, and most recently the pandemic of 2020. The list goes on. The factors that teachers do have control over is the classroom environment they create for their students. Teachers also have control over how they make their students feel. The tone that teachers develop in their classroom has a lot do with what they believe they can do. Teachers control the design and development of the pedagogical structure that they provide to their students. The professional development and learning opportunities provided to teachers, guide and support them in building the efficacy needed to develop the factors that they do have control over. Coaching that includes actionable feedback and guidance supports teachers in the areas that they have control over.

Teacher Efficacy and Beliefs

Reviewing the tables and charts provided in Chapter 4, reveals that teachers feel that they are effective teachers that are equipped and capable of meeting the needs of their students in the

areas of: academics and content, supporting their social emotional needs, and providing their

students with the resources and support that they need to grow academically. Over 90% of

participants agreed/strongly agreed with the prior statement. However, in area of social

emotional preparedness, 75.4% agreed/strongly agreed that they felt prepared in this area. More

than half of the teachers felt unappreciated and that their efforts go unnoticed and feel that they

are not compensated sufficiently for the job that they perform.

Teacher mental health is an important factor that plays a role in the teachers' ability to

service their students. If teachers are burned out, feel unappreciated and underpaid, these factors

will impede on their ability to perform as a highly effective teacher. The participants were asked

an open-ended question during the survey to gauge what they engage in to support their own

mental health. Thematic coding yielded exercise as the most practiced activity. The top exercises

listed included activities like walking, running, jogging, and yoga. The next few top categories

were socializing and setting boundaries-saying "no" when necessary, and meditation and

therapy. 4.9% indicated that they do nothing to focus on their mental health.

Professional Development/Professional Learning

Looking at the tables and charts provided in Chapter 4 for this portion of the survey, it is

revealed that almost all teachers are provided the opportunity to engage in professional

development and professional learning opportunities both mandated and self-selected. 95.1% of

participants indicate that they are provided the opportunity to engage in in professional

development and professional learning. 65.6% of participants engaged in PD/PL on a growth

mindset and 45.9% felt it supported their ability and effectiveness as a teacher. 65.6% of

participants engaged in PD/PL on mindfulness, 49.2% utilized those practices in their classroom,

and 49.2% of those individuals felt that it had a positive impact on their classroom. And finally,

83.6% of participants engaged in PD/PL on social emotional learning and 55.7% felt that the opportunity supported their ability and effectiveness as a teacher.

Qualitative Interview Results

Looking at the tables provided in Chapter 4 for the qualitative research section allows a deeper dive into the teachers' beliefs on how a growth mindset, mindfulness and social emotional learning impacts their efficacy. Thirty-six participants were willing to engage in this portion of the research and five were selected. The interviewees felt that the PD/PL that teachers engage in should be tailored towards what they actually need. Many PD/PL are mandated and are not readily utilized in the classroom. When teachers have a say in the actual PD/PL they engage in and are able to engage in meaningful PD/PL, they feel it makes them more of a highly effective teacher. The data reveals that teachers are always looking to make improvement and are seeking the supports necessary to do so. Teachers expect to receive nonpunitive/nonevaluative visits from their administration to support their success and efficacy. Informal visits and check ins are sought by teachers according to the results of this research. The hope of the teachers is that the administration would gain insight during these informal visits on what is being executed in the classroom so that they could gauge and support their needs.

The research revealed that teachers are in alignment with a growth mindset and believe that all students can learn. They agree that learning is not fixed, and that students' have the ability to learn at their own pace, given the right supports and engulfing them in the right learning environment. Differentiation in teaching practices must occur to meet the individual needs and learning styles of students. Students come to the classroom with varying backgrounds at must be met and accommodated at their own level.

This study shows that teachers may not have a complete understanding of Mindfulness

and what these practices are. Although the survey in the quantitative section revealed that many teachers had engaged in Mindfulness PD/PL and a portion of the participants actually engaged in Mindfulness practices in their classroom, when the interviews occurred, the responses indicated confusion on what Mindfulness is. Of the five interviewees, only one teacher was able to discuss correctly what Mindfulness is and give examples of what they did in their classroom to support their students.

The study revealed that the emotional well-being of students is of high importance. All teachers interviewed expressed concerns with the emotional status of their students, especially as a result of the pandemic. Teachers reported students having the need to feel heard and important. The study also revealed the need for more PD/PL and guidance on how to support the social emotional needs of students.

Answers to Research Questions

The overall question raised in the research study was what can be done to support teachers and their efforts as they deal with factors beyond their control.

Does a growth mindset impact how teachers feel about their ability to successfully support their students?

Within the quantitative portion of the research study, 40 of the 61 teachers confirmed having engaged in PD/PL on a Growth Mindset. Of those 40 individuals, 28 felt that it supported their effectiveness as a teacher. It must also be considered that of the 61 participants 21 had not engaged in PD/PL on a Growth Mindset, but in a previous question imposed about their feelings of being an effective teacher all 61 responded that they agreed/strongly agreed that they were. Additionally, respondents expressed feeling fully equipped and capable of meeting the needs of their students in the areas of academics and content, along with resources to support their

academic growth. It appears that teachers already believe they have the ability to be successful and highly effective and having a growth mindset enhances these feelings of efficacy.

The qualitative interviews revealed that teachers believe that students have the ability to learn and grow given the right support. This is an indicator that teachers have a growth mindset and design and develop their learning cycles so that it is accessible to all.

Do mindfulness practices and social emotional learning enhance teacher efficacy?

The quantitative survey revealed that 100% of the participants that practice mindfulness in their classrooms all feel that it positively impacts their classroom environment and their effectiveness as a teacher. The qualitative interviews show that teachers may not necessarily have the correct definition for what mindfulness is and may need to revisit/need more on what mindfulness is. Teachers were asked to describe these practices, and during the description it revealed their misconception of the strategy. The teacher that was able to correctly describe mindfulness practices did indicate it effectiveness and impact on her ability to perform as a highly effective teacher.

The quantitative results matched with the qualitative interviews and revealed that teachers feel that they need mor PD/PL on what they should do with their students, and how they may engage regularly/daily with their students to support their social emotional needs. 34 of 51 teachers expressed that social emotional learning positively impacts their ability to perform as a teacher.

Do teachers embrace these pedagogical techniques proven to increase student proficiency (directly and indirectly), to support their impact and effectiveness?

Yes, teachers embrace A Growth Mindset, Mindfulness, and Social Emotional Learning as techniques that support their impact and effectiveness as a teacher. Indirectly, as one of the

participants stressed, "we need to address our own social emotional needs before we can address our students' social emotional needs." Teachers as learners, partaking in PD/PL that supports their personal and professional growth will help to mold them into highly effective teachers and build teacher efficacy. Directly, as teachers enact these pedagogical techniques with their students the study indicates that there is a positive impact on the classroom environment and student success.

Are the professional development opportunities provided to teachers supportive of the environment necessary to embrace student success?

Noted in the findings and discussion of the study, professional development is practiced amongst almost all of the participants, both voluntarily and mandatorily. The quantitative and qualitative research results indicate that teachers appreciate professional development/professional learning (PD/PL) that is pertinent and relative. Often time, there are obligatory PD/PL that must be attended, and those opportunities may not directly apply to the current needs of their students. However, when administered PD/PL that is pertinent and relative is does support them in meeting the needs of the students.

Limitations

The challenges faced by the researcher in carrying out this study were relative to the unique situations encountered. The pandemic of 2020 has impacted education overall in drastic ways. Teachers and students have experienced an array of trauma and have had to adjust to historical norms never experienced in past years. Moving from in person teaching and learning to a virtual platform, then back to in person teaching with extreme conditions is not an easy feat. This challenge has shown to impact student behavior and student need. Which in turn requires the teacher to modify their lesson pacing/plans and teaching techniques. Teachers are

overwhelmed and placed with more responsibility to support students and may not have been as willing to engage in a survey on teacher efficacy- they are just too busy. Of the teachers surveyed, over 75% were experienced teachers with more than 11 years of experience. These experienced teachers expressed doubt in their preparedness for the effects that the pandemic had on their students' social emotional well-being/needs, including their own wellness. Additionally, limiting the survey to just California excluded those that accessed the survey and were inclined to engage, but were restricted because of their location. The 61 respondents represent a sample population that covers a large range of teachers in various areas of the state.

Recommendations for Further Research

Teacher efficacy can be addressed from many perspectives. Teachers experience an array of obstacles that impact their ability to support students' needs and this may affect their growth and development professionally. Many respondents to the study mentioned that they must take care of themselves and practice self-care if they plan on taking care of their students. An area of further research could be to investigate which self-care practices support teacher efficacy. The survey also revealed that teachers feel the need to have informal frequent visits from their administration. To that effect, an additional area of study could be on the observational tools and practices administrators utilize and how they impact teacher efficacy. Continued research into the social emotional needs of teachers and students, and how to support those needs would benefit the educational forum, considering the state that the pandemic of 2020 has left everyone in. The participants of this study felt that they needed more guidance in this area. These needs might include more specific professional learning experiences immersed in the areas of social emotional learning and mindfulness.

Another topic for future research is to explore how to provide more effective professional development and professional learning opportunities to meet the expressed needs of teachers. The professional learning and the adult learning theory would be a strong area of study to support teacher efficacy. The art and science of teaching adults is called Andragogy (Knowles, 1978). According to Kelly (2017), teachers are constantly growing, adapting, and learning. There must be a framework developed that focuses on how adults learn and that it is distinctly different than that of how children learn (Kelly, 2017). The participants in this study stressed the importance of choice when participating in professional development and learning opportunities. Professional development must be designed to meet the needs of teachers at any phase in their career (Kelly, 2017). This area of study would allow for teacher input and focus on the areas that they deem important as they are coached through the experience.

Conclusions

The purpose of this mixed methods research study was to see if there was a connection between distinct practices and teacher efficacy. Sixty-one teachers provided insight on whether there was a connection between A Growth Mindset, Mindfulness, and Social Emotional Learning and teacher efficacy. The results yielded from the study indicate that these factors do impact teacher efficacy and must be explored by districts and school sites to readily avail the teachers of the support needed in these areas so that they are equipped to support their students.

Summary

Research has shown that teachers encounter many factors in the educational forum that they have no control over. These factors include circumstances like classroom size, socio-economic status of students, inequities between demographics, varying learning styles, etc. These factors may impede with the ability to provide effectively for all and may hamper a

teacher's sense of ability and worthiness. What did arise from this research is that there are a few factors that teachers do have control over, and when enacted in the classroom they impact the effectiveness of teachers in a positive way. Overall, the need to focus on teacher wellness and support teachers in the difficult duties they perform is a topic that should remain a priority amongst all that lead in the educational community.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Quantitative Survey Questions

Part 1: Any TK-12 California Educator-Quantitative Survey Questions (10 minutes)

Consent Question:

I understand that I must be at least 18 to participate in this study and have read and understand

the consent document.

      a. Yes   b. No

Section I: Participant Demographics

    1. How long have you been an educator?

      a. 1st year   b. 1yr -5yrs.   c. 6yrs - 10 yrs.   d. 11 + years

    1. What is your gender?

      a. Female   b. Male   c. non-binary   d. decline to state

    2. Please select the area that best describes the location of your school in California.

      a. Rural   b. Suburban   c. Urban/Inner-City

Section II: Teacher Efficacy/Beliefs

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with each statement. Please select only one answer

for each statement.

Response options for each question:

1=(SD)Strongly Disagree

2= (D) Disagree

3=(A) Agree

4=(SA) Strongly Agree

Section II Questions

1. I feel that I am fully equipped and capable of meeting the needs of my students in the

following areas:

A. Academics/Content area(s)

1=(SD)Strongly Disagree   2= (D) Disagree   3=(A) Agree   4=(SA) Strongly Agree

B. Supporting their Social Emotional Needs

1=(SD)Strongly Disagree   2= (D) Disagree   3=(A) Agree   4=(SA) Strongly Agree

C. Providing students with the resources and support they need to grow academically.

1=(SD)Strongly Disagree   2= (D) Disagree   3=(A) Agree   4=(SA) Strongly Agree

2. I believe that I am an effective teacher.

1=(SD)Strongly Disagree   2= (D) Disagree   3=(A) Agree   4=(SA) Strongly Agree

3. I feel unappreciated and that my efforts go unnoticed.

1=(SD)Strongly Disagree   2= (D) Disagree   3=(A) Agree   4=(SA) Strongly Agree

4. I feel that I am compensated (pay) sufficiently for the job that I do?

1=(SD)Strongly Disagree   2= (D) Disagree   3=(A) Agree   4=(SA) Strongly Agree

Section III: Professional Development/Learning (PD/PL)

1. Does your school/district offer professional Development/Learning Opportunities?

a. Yes   b. No

2. Are you able to select the type of PD/PL opportunities that you are interested in engaging in?

a. Yes   b. No   c. N/A

3. The PD/PL that I have engaged in was (select all that apply):

a. Paid   b. Unpaid/during school time   c. I had to pay to attend   d. N/A

4. Have you engaged in PD/PL on A Growth Mindset?

a. Yes   b. No

5. For those that have engaged in Growth Mindset PD/PL, do you feel that the PD supported your ability and effectiveness as a teacher?

a. Yes   b. No   c. N/A

6. Have you engaged in PD/PL on Mindfulness?

a. Yes   b. No

7. For those that have engaged in Mindfulness PD/PL, have you had the opportunity to engage in Mindfulness practices in your classroom with your students?

a. Yes   b. No   c. N/A

8. For those that have implemented Mindfulness in their classrooms, do you believe that mindfulness has had a positive impact on your classroom environment, and your ability to

support student needs?

a. Yes   b. No   c. N/A

9. Have you engaged in PD/PL on Social Emotional Learning?

a. Yes   b. No

10. For those that have engaged in Social Emotional Learning PD/PL, do you feel that the PD

supported your ability and effectiveness as a teacher?

a. Yes   b. No   c. N/A

Appendix B: Citi Completion Certificate

CITI PROGRAM

Completion Date 14-Sep-2021
Expiration Date 13-Sep-2024
Record ID 44398658

This is to certify that:

Tamika McKenzie Porter

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
(Curriculum Group)
Social & Behavioral Research
(Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Concordia University Irvine

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w7350e0e8-1094-471c-b93b-64bbc39738cd-44398658