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# Developing collective teacher efficacy in one urban low-income elementary school: A case study

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DEVELOPING COLLECTIVE TEACHER EFFICACY IN ONE URBAN LOW-INCOME
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: A CASE STUDY


by


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By

Lori A. Morgan

DEDICATION

To my mom, who would have been prouder than anyone to call me Dr. Morgan.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Developing Collective Teacher Efficacy In One Urban Low-Income Elementary School:
A Case Study


Abstract


By Lori A. Morgan

University of the Pacific
2019

Over the past two decades, research has shown links between collective teacher efficacy and student achievement. While the benefits of high levels of collective teacher efficacy have been documented, research focused on how it is developed in school serving socio-economically disadvantaged students and the role of principal leadership in that development is lacking, specifically from a qualitative case-study approach  This qualitative case-study explored how collective teacher efficacy was developed in an urban neighborhood elementary school serving socio-economically disadvantaged students and how the principal's leadership influenced that development. This was accomplished through in-depth individual interviews with teachers, support staff, and the principal. This research revealed the principal's leadership positively influenced the development of collective teacher efficacy through effective communication, support, and the empowerment of teachers. Teacher dispositions were also found as influencing collective teacher efficacy. Implications of this research and suggestions for future research are also discussed.

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**Chapter 1: Introduction**

Socio-economic status can have considerable impact on a child's life and their educational attainment. These challenges include the increased likelihood of housing insecurity or homelessness, food insecurity, exposure to violence and incarceration (State of America's Children, 2017). For students who live in poverty, these challenges can include entering formal schooling at an academic deficit, with half beginning unprepared, compared to more affluent children (State of America's Children, 2017). Additionally, these deficits can carry throughout the educational experience and include lower standardized test scores, failure to graduate high school on time or at all, and lower rates of college attendance. This is especially concerning as many students attending public schools in the United States qualify as low-income (Hair, Hanson, Wolfe, & Pollack, 2015) and nearly one in four American children live below the poverty line (Darling-Hammond, 2015).

In an age of increasing pressure placed on schools to improve equitable academic outcomes for all students regardless of background or circumstance, many schools are searching for ways to mitigate the impact of low socio-economic status in the face of additional challenges, like underfunding. Schools do not have control over the socio-economic status of the students they serve, nor do they generally have control over the resources they are given. Despite these hurdles, schools can have influence over their collective thoughts and beliefs, and this can be incredibly powerful. Collective teacher efficacy is the belief a school holds at the organizational level about their collective ability to set and attain goals (Goddard & Skrla, 2006). The construct of collective teacher efficacy has been shown to be a powerful tool for overcoming the challenges associated with low socio-economic status (e.g., Bandura, 1993; Goddard, Hoy, &

Woolfolk Hoy, 2000, 2004a, 2004b, Goddard, LoGerfo, & Hoy, 2004; Goddard, Goddard, Sook Kim, & Miller, 2015; Goddard, Skrla, & Salloum, 2017; Hattie, 2015). Despite a growing body of research on the effects of collective teacher efficacy and its ability to mitigate the influences of socio-economic status and reduce the achievement gap, qualitative research on how it is developed in schools serving marginalized students is missing in the literature (e.g., Bandura, 1993; Goddard et al., 2000, 2004a, 2004b, 2015, 2017; Hattie, 2015). Also missing from the literature is research on how school-based factors, such as principal leadership, influence the development and maintenance of collective teacher efficacy (Goddard et al. 2017; Goddard et al., 2015). This study provides insight into how collective teacher efficacy was developed in an urban neighborhood elementary school serving predominantly socio-economically disadvantaged students and the role the school principal played in that process.

**Description of Research Problem**

Over the past two decades, research has shown links between collective teacher efficacy and student achievement (e.g., Bandura, 1993, 1997; Goddard, 2001; Goddard et al., 2015; Hattie, 2015; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Seashore-Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010). While the benefits of high levels of collective teacher efficacy have been documented, research focused on how it is developed in schools serving minority and socio-economically disadvantaged students is lacking, specifically from a qualitative case-study approach. Also missing is research on the role principal leadership plays in its development and maintenance (Anderman, 1991; Ball, 2010; Blasé & Blasé, 2000; Derrington & Angelle, 2013; Goddard et. al, 2004 a, 2004b; Goddard & Skrla, 2006; Potter, 2011; Ross & Gray, 2006; Wahlstrom & Seashore Louis, 2008). This research addresses these gaps.

Principal leadership has been shown to exert considerable influence over the working conditions of teachers, such as the professional learning teachers receive, teacher influence in school-wide decision making, and levels of trust between teachers and leadership. How teachers experience this influence and how that translates into feelings of collective teacher efficacy has just begun to be researched (Blasé & Blasé, 2000; Goddard et al., 2017). To better understand how collective efficacy is built in an urban neighborhood elementary school serving socio-economically disadvantaged students and the role leadership plays in that process, this study explored the lived experiences of teachers, support staff, and the principal working in an urban neighborhood elementary school fitting the definition of collective teacher efficacy as described in Bandura's social cognitive theory (1993, 1997) and Donohoo's (2017) enabling factors for collective teacher efficacy and how these teachers and support staff perceive the leadership at their site. Additionally, this study looked at how the principal approached building collective teacher efficacy and how teachers and support staff were involved. This was accomplished through semi-structured interviews with teachers, support staff, and the school principal. Since collective teacher efficacy can be a significant variable in student learning, and it has been shown to be influenced by leadership, more study was needed to understand how the teachers, support staff, and principal worked together to build collective teacher efficacy. It was also necessary to gain insight into how the principal worked to positively influence that process (Goddard et al., 2004; Goddard et al., 2015; Hoy, Sweetland, & Smith, 2002).

**Purpose of Study**

Many underperforming schools share something in common, they serve students from minority and socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Payne, 2008). Despite the considerable challenges these schools face, there are examples of schools that have been able to

overcome these challenges to best serve their students. This begs the question – how did they do it? What role did the principal play? How were the staff able to come together to build a collective sense of purpose and efficacy? The purpose of this qualitative case-study was to understand how an urban neighborhood elementary school that served predominantly socio-economically disadvantaged students was able to build a strong sense of collective teacher efficacy and the role the principal played in that process.

**Primary Research Questions**

- How is collective teacher efficacy developed in an urban neighborhood elementary school serving socio-economically disadvantaged students?

- What role did the principal play in the development of collective teacher efficacy?

**Significance of Study**

The Children's Defense Fund suggests that education should level the playing field for all students (State of America's, 2017). Unfortunately, schools that serve economically disadvantaged students often lack resources, experienced teachers, and hold students to lower expectations than schools serving more affluent peers (State of America's, 2017). These deficits can reinforce the cycle of poverty instead of lifting the barriers associated with race and socio-economic status. Hattie's (2015) most recent report of factors influencing student achievement identified collective teacher efficacy as the most influential, with an effect size of 1.57. This means that collective teacher efficacy is three times more powerful than socioeconomic status, home environment, parental involvement, and prior achievement at predicting student academic outcomes, and three times more influential on student academic achievement than student motivation, concentration, persistence, and engagement (Donohoo, 2017). Given what is known about collective efficacy belief and its influence on academic outcomes for student learning, the

next logical step is to better understand how these feelings can be developed, strengthened, and maintained especially in schools serving students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

This study is significant in that it explores exactly this and provides detailed insight into the feelings and lived experiences of those who work with the collective belief that they can overcome the challenges they face and work to successfully educate the students they serve regardless of socio-economic status. This research specifically sought to explore how collective teacher efficacy was developed in an urban neighborhood elementary school and the role the principal played in that process. This information can be useful to similar schools and districts seeking an understanding of how to mitigate the effects of poverty in education and inform the leadership practice at these types of schools.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study was Bandura's social cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory is concerned with human agency and the ability to exercise control over thoughts, motivation, and action (Bandura, 1993, 1997). At the core of social cognitive theory is the concept of self-efficacy and its counterpart collective efficacy. Collective teacher efficacy is a teaching faculty's collective belief in its ability to positively impact students (e.g., Bandura, 1993, 1997; Derrington & Angelle, 2013; Goddard et al., 2004; Goddard & Skrla, 2006). To understand collective teacher efficacy and how it develops, it is necessary to consider Bandura's social cognitive theory and its four sources of efficacy development: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and affective states (Bandura, 1997). These four sources of efficacy development can be used to guide efforts to exercise control over circumstances and build collective efficacy in schools (Bandura, 1997; Goddard & Skrla, 2008). Principals and school administrators wishing to support the development of collective efficacy

can use the knowledge of social cognitive theory and efficacy building approaches to inform leadership practice, such as how to plan for, organize, and design staff learning opportunities, as well as how to handle decision making and interaction with staff.

**Mastery and vicarious experiences**. Of all the factors shown to influence the development of collective teacher efficacy, experience and observation are the most influential (Goddard et. al, 2000). Mastery expectations are built from past experiences, belief in ability, and the assessment of the difficulty of the task at hand (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). Successful experiences raise mastery expectations, or the expectation that future efforts will also culminate in success, while the experience of failure after failure leads to the expectation future effort will also end in failure (Bandura, 1977). Vicarious learning involves learning through the observation of others. Bandura (1999) suggests that, "much human learning occurs deliberately or inadvertently by observing the actual behavior of others and the consequences for them" (p. 25). This could take the form of learning through observation of others or through discussing the experiences of others. These experiences can be either formal or informal, happening in formal professional development or the teachers' lounge, and is most relevant when the observer and observed share similar characteristics (Goddard et al., 2000).

**Social persuasion and affective states**. Social persuasion is a commonly used efficacy building approach because it is quick and easy (Bandura, 1997). This form of persuasion can be either formal or informal. Informal methods might include verbal praise, notes of encouragement, or soliciting advice from staff members. More formal approaches might include promoting shared decision-making, staff appreciation activities, and promoting continued education opportunities (Blasé & Blasé, 2000). Social persuasion is directly related to how reliable, honest, and capable the persuader is perceived to be (Goddard et al., 2004).

Just like individuals, schools develop emotional states that influence the likelihood of success, these feelings are referred to as affective states and are another source of efficacy information (Bandura, 1977). Principals can play a key role in insulating and shielding their teaching staff from unnecessary stress, so they can focus on meeting the needs of students. While these four sources of efficacy beliefs are essential for the creation of collective efficacy, the "cognitive processing and interpretation" of these sources must also be considered (Goddard et al., 2000, p. 485).

Mastery experience, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and positive affective states don't just happen; they require leadership (Ebmeier, 2003). A strong leader with an understanding of how collective teacher efficacy is built can utilize this knowledge to directly meet the needs of faculty and indirectly meet the needs of students. More about social cognitive theory and efficacy informing behaviors are shared in Chapter Two.

**Description of the Study**

This study explored how collective teacher efficacy was developed in an urban neighborhood elementary school serving socio-economically disadvantaged students and how the principal's leadership influenced that development. This was accomplished through a qualitative case-study approach. This research design was appropriate as a case-study seeks to understand a concept or event well (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). With the approval of the research department of the target school district, and the input of the district directors and district principals, a school was identified that embodied the six enabling conditions for collective teacher efficacy outlined by Donohoo (2017). These six enabling factors were generated from Bandura's social cognitive theory and its four sources of efficacy development (1993, 1997). These include a school with advanced teacher influence, goal consensus, teachers' knowledge of

one another's work, a cohesive staff, responsive leadership, and effective systems of intervention.

The school with the most suggestions from district directors and school principals was selected for study. Once the school agreed to participate in the study, the teachers, support staff, and principal were interviewed individually. Interviews ranged in length from 30 minutes to 90 minutes, with most averaging 60 minutes in length and were held at locations chosen by the participants at a time and date agreed upon between me and the participant. Semi-structured questions were used to elicit stories of how the school's collective teacher efficacy was developed and how the principal influenced that development. These interviews were recorded using the app Rev Recorder and were uploaded to their service for professional transcription. Questions were developed using Bandura's four sources of efficacy information outlined in his social cognitive theory (1993, 1997) as well as Donohoo's (2017) six enabling conditions for collective teacher efficacy discussed above. Both Bandura's efficacy informing experiences and Donohoo's enabling conditions are discussed in Chapter Two.

Data was collected during the last two weeks of January 2019. Data was coded and analyzed using the framework of Bandura's efficacy informing experiences and Donohoo's enabling conditions. Chapter Three provides more detailed description about the methodological approach.

Summary

Schools serving socio-economically disadvantaged students face significant challenges in providing academic equality for their students. This coupled with demands placed on schools by accountability measures and standardized testing make decreasing the achievement gap difficult. A construct that has shown considerable promise throughout the literature was collective teacher

efficacy.  Collective teacher efficacy was highlighted as a construct capable of overcoming the challenges associated with low socio-economic status.

Missing from the literature was  qualitative research on collective teacher efficacy and factors that influence it (e.g. Blasé & Blasé, 2000; Derrington & Angelle, 2013; Goddard et al., 2004; Goddard & Skrla, 2006; Goddard et al., 2017; Potter, 2011; Ross & Gray, 2006; Wahlstrom & Seashore Louis, 2008).  Blasé and Blasé (2000), Derrington and Angelle (2013), and Goddard et al. (2017) suggested studying leadership practices from the perspective of those who must follow, namely teachers.  Blasé and Blasé (2000) specifically suggested the use of case-studies to analyze the factors of effective leaders and principals' personal characteristics much the way Goddard and Skrla (2006) looked at the demographic characteristics of teachers and the influence those characteristics might have on collective teacher efficacy.  Derrington and Angelle (2013) suggested the need for research on teachers' perceptions of involvement in specific leadership activities, such as planning professional development and Ross and Gray (2006) and Wahlstrom and Seashore Louis (2008) recommended the search for a link between transformational leadership behaviors and efficacy beliefs.  Potter (2011) stated a need for research on how leadership impacts collaboration in professional learning communities and Goddard et al. (2017) noted a need for more research on school factors, such as leadership and how it contributes to collective efficacy, and how collective teacher efficacy can work to minimize achievement gaps.  Taken together, the need is well established for qualitative case-study research focused on the perceptions of teachers and how their collective teacher efficacy was built and the role of leadership in that process.

In the next chapter, the following topics are addressed at greater length. The impact of socio-economic status on student achievement, the connection between collective teacher

efficacy and student achievement, and how trust, shared power and professional learning can

contribute to increased group capacity and collective teacher efficacy.

**Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Education has been referred to as society's great equalizer, however the education that students from low socio-economic backgrounds receive is often less than equitable. Mitigating the impact of poverty on students requires a change in action on the part of those working in education, but our actions are tied to our beliefs. This shift requires a shift in the beliefs about students from poverty and a shift in the belief of the power of the collective to meet the needs of these students. Reform efforts over the past several decades have looked at funding and accountability measures, but the achievement gap has remained a constant. Of additional concern is the fact that the number of students living in poverty continues to grow (State of America's Children, 2017). A promising construct for providing more equitable educational opportunities and outcomes for students is collective teacher efficacy. As such, this research sought to provide insight into how collective teacher efficacy was developed by studying the lived experiences of the teachers, support staff and the school principal of one urban neighborhood elementary school that was able to build a sense of collective teacher efficacy despite serving students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

This review of literature is organized in the following manner. First, the impact of poverty on children and its educational outcomes are discussed, including the current state of poverty in the United States, and specifically, in the California's San Joaquin Valley. This is followed by a review of educational reforms, specifically those intended to provide for educational equity and a decreased achievement gap. Next collective teacher efficacy is discussed as a potentially dynamic reform effort to mitigate the impact of poverty and increase educational outcomes for students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Included in the discussion on collective teacher efficacy is background on the construct and its

impact on student achievement. This is followed by a review of research on the impact of leadership on teachers and students, specifically its relationship to what is known of how collective teacher efficacy is developed. The chapter concludes with summary and leads into the methodology chapter.

**Poverty and Educational Inequity**

According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, 41% of children in the United States under the age of 18 were considered low-income in 2016. Another 19% of these children would be deemed poor (Basic Facts About, 2018). These children account for 23% of the national population but represent 32 % of all those living in poverty. To put these numbers in perspective, in 2016 the poverty threshold for a family of four (two adults and two children) was $24,339. Ironically, this was half the income needed to provide for a family of this size at a most basic level (Cauthen & Fass, 2008). Factors such as poverty can impact what happens to students within the classroom. Children from a low socio-economic background can come to school with fewer skills than their more affluent peers. These deficits can be in the areas of cognitive development, language skills, memory, and socioemotional development (Education and Socioeconomic, n.d.). Making matters worse, the schools these students often attend are underfunded and staffed by less experienced teachers, which compounds the challenges they start with. These challenges can lead to increased dropouts and continued poverty (Education and Socioeconomic, n.d.). In fact, in 2014 the high school dropout rate was the largest for children from low-income families (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.). According to the Children's Defense Fund, "public education has been a critical pathway out of poverty for families for generations, offering children opportunities to gain the social, economic, cultural and political capital necessary to realize their full potential, support their future families and give

back to society" (State of America's, n.d., p. 28). While this is a critical goal of education, it is unlikely to happen while the quality of the educational opportunities afforded students is often tied to their neighborhood and socio-economic status. Without an effective approach to reforming schools that serve these students, the achievement gap will continue to grow between students with financial means and those without.

**Reform Efforts to Address the Impact of Poverty**

Currently, schools are held responsible for student outcomes regardless of the challenges they bring with them to school, but this has not always been the case. Over the past 50 years, American policy with regards to socio-economic status has shifted based on political point of view. Following the publishing of the Coleman Report (1966), it was suggested that student achievement was directly tied to their socio-economic background and that students who came from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds were fated for failure. During this time, the political focus was on civil rights and poverty. In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) became law with Title I of the act intended to address the needs of socio-economically disadvantaged students (Murphy, 1973). The idea was that increased funding would lead to increased student achievement and the reduction of the achievement gap. Over the years Congress has continually reauthorized this act.

The current reform movement began in 1983 with the publication of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform.* This report made recommendations to increase the quality of public education, focusing on content standards, time in school, and financial assistance. With the passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, states became responsible for testing, accountability, and school improvement (Behind, N.C.L., 2002). Some of the demands placed on schools by NCLB required schools to report publicly test scores and

the breakdown of scores by student subgroups, such as socioeconomic status, student disability,

English learner status, and race (Behind, N.C.L., 2002).  It also emphasized that all students must

be grade-level proficient in reading and math by 2014, which required meeting annual growth

goals toward the 2014 proficiency or face sanctions.  Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015

replaced NCLB (ACT, E.S.S., 2015).  This law provided opportunities for states to develop and

implement accountability measures that include multiple measures.  These could include

measures of suspension and expulsion rates, school climate, attendance, access to college and

career coursework, and graduation rates (ACT, E.S.S., 2015).

Despite the numerous incarnations of reform efforts intended to improve the state of

socio-economically disadvantaged students, the gap remains.  Perhaps the solution to this

challenge lies within the control of the teachers and principals themselves.  John Hattie studies

factors that impact student achievement.  His first publication of effect sizes for factors

influencing student achievement was published in 1999.  His most recent update was in 2016 and

showed collective teacher efficacy to be the most influential factor for increasing student

achievement.  The effect size for collective teacher efficacy was 1.57.  This is over three times

more powerful and predictive than socio-economic status, which had an effect size of .52

(Donohoo, 2017).  Simplified, poverty has an impact on student outcomes, but collective teacher

efficacy can have a much larger impact.

**Collective Teacher Efficacy and Social Cognitive Theory**

The construct of teacher efficacy developed from two theories of social learning.  The

first came from Rotter's (1966) social learning theory.  This conception of teacher efficacy

focused on teacher beliefs of whether they had control over the reinforcement of their actions.

More specifically, it questioned whether "control of reinforcement lay within themselves or in

the environment" (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998, p. 202). These two types of control were referred to as internal and external. Internal control suggested that a given event was controlled by the individual and how the individual behaved. External control was just the opposite. With external control, outcomes of an event were the result of forces beyond the individual's control.

The second theory was Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory. This theory developed from his study of self-efficacy. Bandura defined self-efficacy as the belief an individual hold about his or her ability to produce desired effects for a given task (Bandura, 1977). Social cognitive theory highlights the importance cognition and self-beliefs play in human functioning. Bandura and Walters expanded the boundaries of social learning theory with the principles of observational learning and vicarious reinforcement (Pajares, 2002).

In 1986, Bandura published *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory*. This book refined Bandura's view of social learning theory to include the importance of cognition in the creation of self-beliefs. According to Pajares (2002), Bandura (1986) indicates that the beliefs that people have about themselves are critical elements in the exercise of control. Beliefs influence the choices individuals make, how they approach those choices, and the effort they exert. It is also important to note that belief and ability are not always perfectly aligned, so behavior is more likely to be predicted by belief than ability or skill (Bandura, 1997). To best understand how self-efficacy and collective efficacy develop, it is helpful to consider what Bandura referred to as sources of efficacy development: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and affective states. As seen below in figure 2.1, these four sources of efficacy development can be used to influence the exercise of control over circumstances and build efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

Sources of Self-efficacy Information
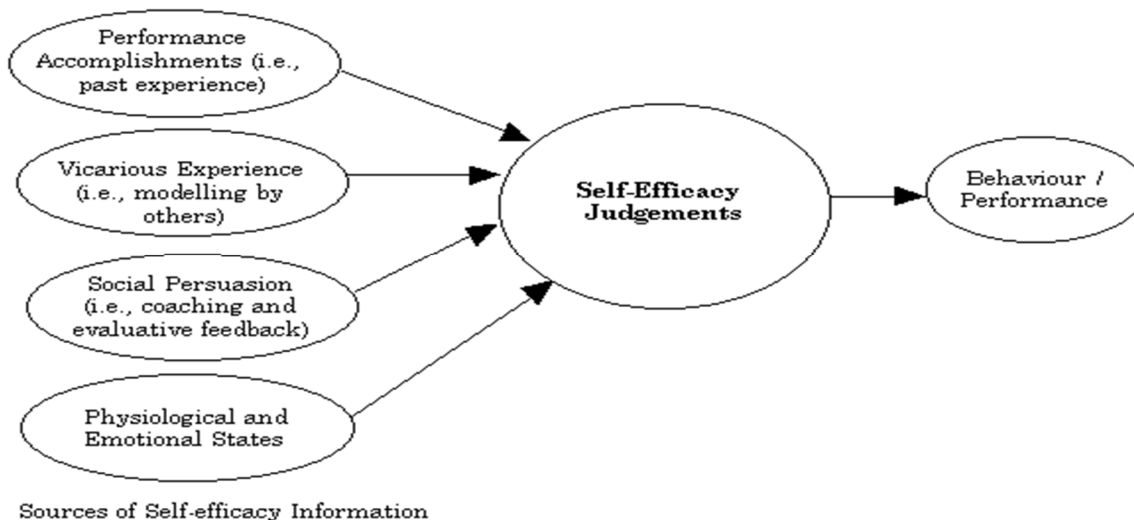
Figure 2.1: Sources of Efficacy Information (n.d.)

**Enactive or mastery experience**. Of the factors that impact the development of collective efficacy, experience is the most influential (Goddard et al., 2000). Mastery expectations are built from past experiences, belief in ability, and the assessment of the difficulty of the task at hand (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). Successful experiences raise mastery expectations and the expectation that future efforts will also culminate in success, while the experience of failure after failure leads to the expectation future effort will also end in failure (Bandura, 1977). Some research points to the importance of support during beginning teaching as these early experiences of success or failure can shape a new teacher's sense of both individual and collective efficacy (Goddard et al., 2000; Protheroe, 2008). Since success breeds success, it is important for teaching faculties to have the necessary support, direction, opportunities, and expectations to be successful in their efforts.

**Vicarious experiences**. Vicarious learning involves learning through the actions of others. Bandura (1999) suggested that "much human learning occurs deliberately or

inadvertently by observing the actual behavior of others and the consequences for them" (p. 25). This could take the form of learning through observation of other teachers or through discussing the experiences of others either formally or informally. Examples of vicarious learning in education include teachers observing one another teaching, watching videos showing desired tasks being successfully completed, or talking with others about experiences and sharing ideas. The better the performance of the skill being modeled and the more related to the observer's reality, the greater the impact on the observer. These experiences can be either formal or informal, happening in formal professional development or the teachers' lounge, and is most relevant when the observer and observed share similar characteristics (Goddard et al., 2000). For example, a struggling inner-city school that serves a high English learner population and has a high enrollment of low socioeconomic students would not benefit as much from observing a school in an affluent neighborhood that serves wealthy English proficient students. The general idea is that vicarious learning is most effective when comparing similar people in similar situations

**Social persuasion**. Social persuasion is a commonly used efficacy building approach because it is quick and easy (Bandura, 1997). Like vicarious learning, social persuasion can take several forms and be either formal or informal. Informal ways school leaders might use social persuasion include verbal praise, notes of encouragement, or soliciting advice from staff members. More formal approaches might include promoting shared decision-making, staff appreciation activities, and promoting continued education opportunities (Blasé & Blasé, 2000). When social persuasion is used exclusively, and without the other methods of efficacy building information, it is not as effective. Additionally, it is important to consider that the degree of

influence is directly related to how reliable, honest, and capable the persuader is perceived to be (Goddard et al., 2004a).

  **Affective states**. Just like individuals, schools develop emotional states that influence the likelihood of success.  These feelings are referred to as affective states and are another source of efficacy information (Bandura, 1977).  Leadership plays an important role in monitoring the emotional states of individuals as well as the emotional state of the staff. Goddard (2004a) suggested "The level of arousal, either anxiety or excitement" can influence feelings of competency (p. 6).  School principals can play a key role in insulating and shielding their teaching staff from unnecessary stress, so they can focus on meeting the needs of students.  Some examples of situations that can negatively impact the affective states of a school staff include implementing reform without enough time to understand or prepare for implementation, disregarding concerns brought forward by faculty, and not providing adequate support to meet the needs of students.  In summary, meeting the need for mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, and social persuasion can lead to positive affective states among faculty, and the lack of attention to these areas can undermine possible success.  While these four sources of efficacy beliefs are essential for the creation of collective efficacy, the "cognitive processing and interpretation" of these sources must also be considered (Goddard et al., 2000, p. 485).

  **Cognition and interpretation**. Cognitive processing and interpretation of experiences shape efficacy beliefs.  These include the assessment of the teaching task and teaching competence (Goddard et al., 2000).  The analysis of the teaching task includes assessing what will be required to successfully accomplish a given task and can happen at a teacher or school level (Goddard et al., 2000).  The analysis of the teaching task might include assessing how motivated students are to learn or how capable they are of being successful at the task. Also

considered are what resources are available to help students and teachers, such as access to teaching assistance in the form of aids or student teacher assistants, adequate space and materials for teaching, necessary technology, parent support, and flexibility to meet student's individual needs.  Simply put, teachers assess the task by asking if they have what they need to do the job, in contrast to what is required to be considered successful (Goddard et al., 2000).

In addition to analyzing the teaching task, teachers and organizations assess themselves when determining their level of efficacy.  This involves consideration of what is being asked and if the competency exists to meet the challenge.  Again, it is important to remember that although groups are made up of individuals, collective efficacy emerges from the beliefs in the collective power of the organization.  For a strong sense of collective efficacy to emerge, the belief that the staff has the ability and desire to meet the challenge must exist.  If negative assessments of competence are made, efficacy will be low.  It is important to note that beliefs about teaching competency and the teaching task are unlikely to change unless "compelling evidence intrudes and causes them to be reevaluated" (Bandura, 1997, p. 486).

**Enabling Conditions for Collective Efficacy**

Through an analysis of current literature on collective teacher efficacy**,** Jenni Donohoo (2017) identified six enabling conditions that increase the likelihood of collective efficacy developing.  These include advancing teacher influence, goal consensus, teacher's knowledge of one another's work, cohesive staff, responsiveness of leadership, and effective systems of intervention.  Advancing teacher influence has shown a "clear and strong relationship" with collective teacher efficacy (Donohoo, 2017, p. 28).  This involves teachers assuming leadership roles within the school and having the power to influence school wide decisions.  Goal consensus relates to ownership of outcomes and commitment to reaching the goals the school sets

collaboratively. Teachers' knowledge about one another's work ties to how professional learning is approached and carried out. When the collective works together to plan, asses, and teach, there is a familiarity with one another's work and the opportunity to learn from each other. A cohesive staff is interdependent, and members are more likely to give in to the social persuasion outlined in Bandura's social cognitive theory. Responsive leadership ties to the affective states from Bandura's efficacy informing information. A responsive leader knows their staff, consistently shows concern and consideration for staff and meets the affective needs of the staff. Finally, effective systems of intervention create the conditions for meeting individual student needs. Teachers are not left on their own to do it all. This supports the belief that all students will succeed because the systems are in place to support that success. Donohoo (2017) went beyond outlining enabling conditions to increase the likelihood for developing collective teacher efficacy, she proposed a theory of action for leaders to foster collective teacher efficacy. This theory suggests that collective teacher efficacy is built when those in leadership "create opportunities for meaningful collaboration, empowering teachers, establishing goals and high expectations, and helping educators interpret results and provide feedback (Donohoo, 2017, p.35). Understanding how collective teacher efficacy is fostered is the first step toward helping increase student achievement and mitigating the negative impacts of socio-economic disadvantage.

**The Impact of Collective Teacher Efficacy on Student Achievement**

Collective teacher efficacy research grew from the study of teacher efficacy and shares the same basic properties (Goddard & Goddard, 2001; Goddard, et al. 2004a, 2004b). In education, collective teacher efficacy refers to teachers' perceptions that the entire faculty can organize and execute a plan of action necessary to have a positive effect on student outcomes

(Goddard et al., 2004; Goddard & Goddard, 2001).  Schools characterized as successful often

have higher levels of collective efficacy, and a faculty with high collective efficacy exhibits

numerous desirable traits, such as increased desire to conquer challenges with tenacity and

shortcomings with persistence (e.g., Bandura, 1993, 1997; Derrington & Angelle, 2013; Gist &

Mitchell, 1992; Goddard et al., 2000, 2004a; 2004b; Goddard & Skrla, 2006).  Approaching

challenges with such positivity allows for increased innovation in teaching and increases student

achievement (Ball, 2010; Goddard et al., 2004a; 2004b).  Ball (2010) found faculties with strong

collective efficacy believed no student was unreachable, and that regardless of how great a

challenge may be, together they could overcome any obstacle and achieve success. Although

collective teacher efficacy suggests a group imbued with efficacious feelings, it is important to

note "perceived collective efficacy is not simply the sum of the efficacy beliefs of individual

members.  Rather, it is an emergent group-level property" (Bandura, 1999, p. 34).  While initial

research focused on individual efficacy, more current studies have considered the effects of

collective teacher efficacy on student academic achievement (Potter, 2011).  Each of these

studies found collective teacher efficacy positively influenced student outcomes, but each found

unique factors that contributed or detracted from those feelings.  These key studies follow and

are described in chronological order.

In 1993, Bandura conducted the first research study on a school's collective efficacy

beliefs and found a positive correlation between staff's collective efficacy and student

achievement.  He also found "student body characteristics influence school-level achievement

more strongly by altering faculties' beliefs in their collective efficacy than through direct effects

on school achievement" (Bandura, 1993, p. 117).  This initial research was followed in 2000 with

a study by Goddard, Hoy and Woolfolk Hoy who concluded the culture of a school influences

the expectations of groups and their sense of collective teacher efficacy. This study supported

Bandura's initial finding that collective efficacy is positively correlated with school and student

achievement. In 2004, Goddard, LoGerfo, and Hoy examined how collective efficacy affected

students' achievement in high schools where considerable importance was placed on high stakes

state tests. While the overall findings supported prior research conclusion that collective teacher

efficacy impacts student achievement, their study found collective efficacy was "positively

influenced by past mastery experience and negatively related to school socioeconomic

disadvantage" (p. 403). Building upon these findings, Goddard and Skrla (2006) considered

teacher demographics and teaching experience impact on collective teacher efficacy. These

demographics included the teacher's gender and race. They also looked at the demographics of

the student body and the impact they had on collective teacher efficacy beliefs. They found

"teachers of color" and those with ten or more years of experience reported slightly higher

feelings of collective efficacy beliefs than "nonminority" and newer teachers (Goddard & Skrla,

2006, p. 28). Additionally, collective teacher efficacy beliefs were influenced by the number of

students enrolled in gifted and talented programs. Despite these findings, their overall

conclusions supported prior research that collective teacher efficacy can have a significant

positive impact on student achievement. In 2015, Goddard, Goddard, Sook Kim, and Miller

concluded leadership has a significant direct effect on teacher collaboration which is predictive

of collective teacher efficacy beliefs. This school level factor was found to influence student

learning. In 2017, Goddard, Skrla, and Salloum conducted a mixed-methods study to see if

collective teacher efficacy works to reduce inequity in academic achievement. Their findings

indicated collective efficacy accounted for a 50% decrease in the academic disadvantage

experienced by black students and Hattie (2015) identified collective teacher efficacy to be the

most influential factor affecting student achievement. From a database of over 1200 meta-analyses, collective teacher efficacy was found to have the greatest impact of any factor in the study with an effect size of 1.57. This is important as collective teacher efficacy is a school-based influence and not one from the student or the home (Donohoo, 2017). The results of these key research studies on collective teacher efficacy have shown how important collective teacher efficacy can be when trying to improve school success especially those serving socio-economically disadvantaged students. When teachers believe they not only have the capacity to influence student learning but the shared obligation to do so, student academic achievement is positively impacted.

Since collective teacher efficacy extends beyond the individual, it must be understood and nurtured at the group level. Attempting to build collective teacher efficacy by simply hiring individually efficacious teachers does not replace group level beliefs. Starting with faculty members imbued with a strong sense of individual teacher efficacy may make building collective teacher efficacy easier, but individuals must develop an efficacious sense of themselves as a group to successfully work together toward a collective goal (Bandura, 1999). Simply put, collective teacher efficacy goes beyond the development of individual efficacy and then adding it together. The sum is in fact greater than its parts.

Bandura proposes that behavior, cognition and the environment interact to influence each other through the process of reciprocal determinism. As such, it is logical to examine the reinforcing relationships that exist within the school context. One relationship that needs further study is the influence of principals on teachers in the development of collective teacher efficacy. Teachers have the most direct impact on student achievement and school leaders have influence

over teachers, so understanding how leaders influence perceived collective teacher efficacy

should be a priority for improving student academic performance.

**Leadership and Collective Teacher Efficacy**

"Teachers do not operate in a vacuum"—they are impacted by leadership practices and

the culture of their schools (Wahlstrom & Seashore Louis, 2008, p. 459). Leadership, at its best,

can inspire, motivate, and lift faculty's moral; at its worst, it can debilitate, discourage, depress,

and dismantle a staff (Blasé & Blasé, 1999; Kass, 2013). Anyone who has worked in a school

environment understands the influence school administration has on setting the tone of the

school and developing operational norms (Wahlstrom & Seashore Louis, 2008). The tone of a

school also impacts the ability to implement reform efforts. Goddard and Skrla (2006) suggest

that sustainable productive change is possible if a strong leader is willing to do the work

necessary to support the development and maintenance of the collective efficacy of their faculty.

While collective teacher efficacy can support a school in making sure all students are able to

learn at high levels, it can be a complex and time-consuming process. Although research on how

principal leadership contributes to collective teacher efficacy is limited, studies do exist that

suggest how collective teacher efficacy might be improved.

Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2008) claim school leaders who practice distributed

leadership rather than hierarchical leadership improves student academic outcomes. DuFour

(2004) posits school leadership that provides opportunities to build communities focused on

student learning through shared teacher learning, risk taking, and collaborative reflection on

practice can have considerable impact on collective teacher efficacy. Most recently, Goddard et

al. (2017) found schools with robust feelings of collective teacher efficacy identified that their

feelings of collective teacher efficacy were influenced by school leaders who prioritized teacher

collaboration and professional learning opportunities in the form of direct in class observation of other teachers. These leaders also promoted open and ongoing dialog about improving instruction and the need for risk taking to do so. A final finding was that "a sustained press for instructional improvement" created a culture of excellence that caused teachers not willing to work to meet the group expectations to leave the school (Goddard et al., 2017, p. 14). Donohoo (2016) also suggests that advanced teacher influence, goal consensus, and responsive leadership improve the likelihood of developing collective teacher efficacy in schools. This willingness, combined with both knowledge and examples of success may help guide educational leaders as they work toward building a school with a bright future (Ebmeier, 2003).

Principals must actively motivate faculty to "perform above expectations" (Thomas, 1997, p. 5), and they must also work to shape the "thoughts, behaviors, and feelings" of their faculty if they are to work toward a common set of goals (Thomas, 1997, p. 2). Just as teachers utilize theory to improve their practice and performance, principals too can utilize theory to inform theirs (McCay, 2001). By challenging their thinking and utilizing knowledge of social cognitive theory and efficacy enabling factors, principals can adjust how they support teachers toward building collective efficacy (Donohoo, 2016; Ebmeier, 2003). Previous studies aligned with efficacy informing practice and enabling conditions have focused on professional learning, trust, and the socially persuasive nature of shared or distributed leadership. Each of these factors are within the influence of leadership and are discussed next.

**Professional Learning Communities**

Teaching staff with strong professional learning communities have greater collective efficacy (DuFour, 2004; Mawhinney, Hass, & Wood, 2005; Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace & Thomas, 2006). Professional learning communities have been described as groups of people

who share and critique their practices, are reflective, collaborative, and have a focus on learning rather than teaching (DuFour, 2004; Stoll et al., 2006). These professional learning communities, or PLCs as they are often referred to, afford opportunities for teachers to work together and to learn from one another to improve classroom instruction (Goddard et al., 2014). For a professional learning community to develop and thrive, school leaders need to provide the appropriate supports and conditions. Among these, leaders help develop a collective vision, encourage and acknowledge staff participation, and create and protect time for groups to work and learn from one another (Bryk, 2010). This type of participative learning provides the mastery experiences and vicarious learning opportunities associated with the development of collective efficacy and supports an understanding and belief in the collective abilities of the group (Stoll et al., 2006). Unless teachers are given the opportunity to collaborate, plan, discuss, and assess together, there is no collective, merely a group of individuals loosely associated under one roof (DuFour, 2004). For a faculty who lack the skills to effectively collaborate or communicate with their colleagues, professional development and support needs to be available to learn these skills (Wahlstrom & Seashore Louis, 2008). Through the interdependent nature of the professional learning community model, another key factor in the process can emerge necessary for collective efficacy–the need for trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

**Trust**. Trust is a concept that has been described as something people hardly notice until it is no longer there, yet it is the key to all successful relationships, particularly the leader-follower relationship (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy & Woolfolk Hoy, 1998). High achieving schools have been shown to recognize the benefit of positive relationship between teachers and administration as well as teachers and teachers (Bryk & Schneirder, 2003). These schools build trusting relationships through collaborative decision making and shared responsibility, which are

inherent in successful professional learning communities (DuFour, 2004). When trust is strong between the principal and teachers, teachers and teachers, and school and clients, it is more likely reform initiatives will be implemented effectively, teaching staff will take greater risks, and a stronger, more efficacious sense of community will arise (Wahlstrom & Seashore Louis, 2008).

The definition of trust, and what constitutes a trusting relationship in any given context, has evolved over time; however, within the context of education, trust has been described by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (1998) as "a general confidence and overall optimism in occurring events; it is believing in others in the absence of compelling reasons to disbelieve" (p. 342). They suggest that trust in the school setting can be categorized in two ways – trust in the principal and trust in colleagues. Trust in the principal specifically relates to the confidence the staff has in the principal and whether they believe the principal will keep their word and make decisions with the best interest of both teaching staff and students in mind. Additionally, it is suggested trust can be harder to repair than to earn in the first place, which is an important for principals to keep in mind when making decisions that impact teachers (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). Donohoo (2017) suggests that a responsive leader is a leader more likely to gain trust from teaching staff. When principals act in ways to protect teachers from undo stress, trust is built. When leaders consistently carry out their responsibilities and keep their word, trust is built. When leaders take time to know and show appreciation for their teachers, trust is built. Trust between leadership and teaching staff is a necessary component to building collective teacher efficacy (Goddard et al., 2014; Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 1998).

When trust exists within a school, teachers are willing to take greater risks to ensure student achievement. It is important to point out that trust only develops through action. Principals wanting to increase trusting relationships with their staff must be mindful of their

actions and demonstrate and model mindfulness in their practices (Ebmeier, 2003). They look at

mistakes as learning opportunities, embody a commitment to resilience, and behave in

deferential ways to those with expertise regardless of their title or position (Hoy, Gage, & Tarter,

2006). Principals are central to building and maintaining positive and trusting school

relationships where collective efficacy can grow. Only through respectful behavior, personal

regard, competency in their role, behaving with integrity, and commitment to open dialogue can

collective teacher efficacy be nurtured (Bryk, 2003).

**Shared power**. Schools that empower teachers to work closely with administration in

decision making are more likely to build collegiality and greater participation, which have been

associated with more trusting relationships and higher levels of collective teacher efficacy

(Demir, 2015; Derrington & Angelle, 2013, Donohoo, 2016; Kass, 2013; Wahlstrom & Louis,

2008). When administration emphasizes a school culture of shared leadership and deemphasizes

"restrictive and intimidating approaches toward teachers", collective teacher efficacy increases

(Blasé & Blasé, 2000, p. 137). Donohoo (2017) showed advancing teacher influence through

shared or distributed leadership is key to teams building mastery and provides for greater social

persuasion through colleague feedback. A move from the traditionally vertical to horizontal

power structures provides greater autonomy for teachers and opportunities for capacity building

among staff members (Donohoo, 2017; Hallinger & Heck, 2011; Leithwood et al., 2008). When

the power differentiation is lessened, teachers are better able to effectively instruct students.

Teachers are both willing and capable of sharing the responsibilities of leadership by taking on

additional school tasks, participating in data evaluation, and planning and implementing

professional development (Leithwood & Beatty, 2007).

Shared power and decision making helps to take what Sun and Leithwood (2015) referred to as the "ego" out of the school system, which can increase feelings of trust between principals and teachers. For shared power to work, principals must first be willing to share power and allow teachers to choose who fills the teacher leader roles (Leithwood & Beatty, 2007). When teachers are afforded more say and opportunities to lead, school culture improves, which is also associated with higher collective teacher efficacy (Lyons, Green, Raiford, Tsemunhu, Pate, & Baldy, 2013).

**Summary**

Students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds face numerous challenges that can negatively impact their academic achievement. Research on how to decrease the achievement gap between the privileged and underprivileged has taken many forms over the past 50 years. Unfortunately, the gap remains and is at risk of growing as the number of students living in poverty grows. While the realities students bring to school are usually not within the sphere of teacher and school influence, school staff can influence and change how those realities are interpreted. This is where the study of collective teacher efficacy and the influence leadership plays in its development becomes essential.

While research on collective teacher efficacy over the past 20 years has been very compelling, much more and different types are needed (e.g. Bandura, 1993; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000, 2004; Goddard, LoGerfo, & Hoy, 2004; Goddard, Sook Kim, & Miller, 2015; Goddard, Skrla, & Salloum, 2017; Hattie, 2016). In fact, Roger Goddard (2001), a leading efficacy researcher, described collective teacher efficacy as a "neglected construct" (p. 467). Calls have been made for more research connecting the construct to student outcomes and for research focused on school level factors such as leadership to be done. Qualitative research in

the form of case-studies and longitudinal studies are also needed, as research in this area is predominantly quantitative (Bandura, 1993; Goddard, 2001; Klassen, Tze, & Betts, 2011; Tcshannen-Moran et al., 1998). Despite these calls for more research, the consensus in the educational field is high levels of collective teacher efficacy do positively influence student academic achievement.

The significance of this study is that it addressed the need for more qualitative case-study research on how collective teacher efficacy is developed in a school serving socio-economically disadvantaged students.  It also filled a need for more research on the influence of leadership on the development of collective teacher efficacy.  This information will be useful for similar schools looking for effective reform approaches to helping reduce the achievement gap and specifically give principals insight into how they can positively work with staff to develop collective teacher efficacy.

The following chapter details the study's approach, the methodology used, the study context, the methods and instrumentation used, the subjects of the study, and the analysis method used.

**Chapter 3: Methodology**

The previous chapters detailed the impact poverty has on student achievement, previous reform efforts, research on social cognitive theory and efficacy informing factors and conditions, and the influence leadership can have on the development of collective teacher efficacy. The need for and importance of collective teacher efficacy has been well documented, but more research has been called for to better understand how it is developed and how leadership influences that process. This is of importance in schools serving the most at-risk youth. As qualitative research is most effective for understanding questions seeking to understand how events occur, this study employed a qualitative single case-study approach.

This research adds to the body of literature by qualitatively studying how collective teacher efficacy was developed in an urban neighborhood elementary school and the role principal leadership had in that process. This approach provided an in-depth look at the lived experiences of one school staff who believed that collectively they could work to overcome the challenges inherent with educating students from low socio-economic status.

Collective teacher efficacy is a faculty's collective belief in its ability to positively impact students (e.g., Bandura, 1993, 1997; Derrington & Angelle, 2013; Goddard et al., 2004; Goddard & Skrla, 2006). This belief is built from what Bandura (1997) described as mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion and affective states. Donohoo (2017) suggested that enabling factors such as advancing teacher influence, goal consensus, teacher's knowledge of one another's work, cohesive staff, responsiveness of leadership, and effective systems of intervention are ways to help develop collective teacher efficacy. Although much is known about the impact of collective teacher efficacy on student outcomes, less is known about the

factors that influence its development, especially in schools serving marginalized student populations.

Research has shown that factors within the control of leadership can have a positive impact on collective teacher efficacy. These include the implementation of professional learning communities (or the PLC process), the development of trusting relations, and the use of a distributed approach to leadership. More research was called for to help better understand the impact of leadership on collective teacher efficacy. This study addressed that need. This chapter details how this was accomplished.

According to Donohoo (2017), "amazing things happen when a school staff shares the belief, they are able to achieve collective goals and overcome challenges to impact student achievement" (p. 1). To better understand how this construct developed, this case-study focused on an urban neighborhood elementary school in the San Joaquin Valley of California. The research phase of the study began when both IRB and district approval were obtained. The school selection and interview process took three months to complete. The guiding research questions for this study were:

- How is collective teacher efficacy developed in an urban neighborhood elementary school serving socio-economically disadvantaged students?

- What role did the principal play in the development of collective teacher efficacy?

This chapter is organized in the following manner. First, the research approach is explained followed by a detailed description of the methodology. This includes research context, a description of the study design, and an explanation the why the design is appropriate and how it helps answer the research questions. Next, the methods of data collection are detailed. This includes a description of the study participants and how they were selected. I also discuss the

instrumentation used for data collection. Finally, data analysis is covered as well as issues of trustworthiness. The chapter concludes with a review of study limitations.

**Research Approach**

In education, collective teacher efficacy refers to teachers' perceptions that the entire faculty can organize and execute a plan of action necessary to have a positive effect on student outcomes (Goddard et al., 2004; Goddard & Goddard, 2001). To research this construct and how it develops, I chose a qualitative single case-study approach. Qualitative research was appropriate as the study was "interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed; that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.15). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) outline six common qualitative research designs. Among these are basic qualitative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, narrative analysis, and qualitative case-study. Table 3.1 describes each type of qualitative research by research focus, sampling method, data collection, data analysis, and types of findings.

Table 3.1: Types of Qualitative Research

| Type of Qualitative Research | Defining Features Research Focus | Sampling Method | Data Collection Method | Data Analysis | Findings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Basic Qualitative Study | Focus on meaning, understanding process | Purposeful | Interviews Observation documents | Inductive and comparative | Richly descriptive and presented as themes and categories |
| Phenomenology | Provide essence of experience | Epoche/ bracketing | Interviews Observation documents | Reduction | Imaginative variation |
| Grounded Theory | Theory generating | theoretical | Interviews Observation document | Constant comparative | Core categories |

| Ethnography | Study of culture of a group – a process and a product | | Fieldwork | Themes generated | Thick description |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Narrative Analysis | People's stories | | Analysis of text | Biographical Psychological linguistic | Understand experience |
| Qualitative Case Study | In-depth analysis of a bounded system | varies | Interviews Observation Documents | Constant comparative | Thick description of a bounded system |

Adapted from Merriam & Tisdell (2016)


For this study a qualitative case-study was most appropriate as the inquiry was focused on a bounded system in which the context and the variables were inextricably connected (Yin, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Yin (2014) defined a case-study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context many not be clear (p.16). Creswell (2007) described a case study as "a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information" (p.73). This case-study took place within an urban neighborhood elementary school in the San Joaquin Valley that serves predominantly socio-economically disadvantaged students. The study took place during the Fall of 2018 and Spring of 2019.

## Context

Context is meaningful in qualitative research. According to Holloway and Wheeler (2002), context includes the "environment and conditions in which the study takes place as well as the culture of the participants and location" (p. 34). This holistic approach considers both the

ordinary and the extraordinary, with the main focus being on the particular (Stake, 2005). The

specific context of this study was an urban neighborhood elementary school in the San Joaquin

Valley of California. The school selected was part of a large school district serving more than

35,000 students. According to the California Department of Education dashboard (2019), the

following statistics were current in the fall of 2017 (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Study Site School and District Characteristics

|  | Study Site | Study District |
|---|---|---|
| Student enrollment | >600 | ~35,000 |
| Socioeconomically disadvantaged | ~95% | ~ 80% |
| Suspension rate | ~2% | ~5% |
| Graduation rate | NA | ~80% |
| English learners (% of enrollment) | ~50% | ~30% |
| English Language Arts Proficiency | classified as low proficiency or orange on the state dashboard | classified as low proficiency or yellow on state dashboard |
| Math Proficiency | classified as low proficiency or orange on the state dashboard | classified as low proficiency or orange on state dashboard |

Data from California Department of Education (CDE) website https://www.cde.ca.gov/

Data prior to the 2017 school year show the district as persistently low achieving as indicated by

standardized testing, which include California State Testing (CST), Smarter Balance test (SBAC)

and Measurement of Academic Proficiency test (MAP). Table 3.2 shows the most recent

proficiency data in English Language Arts and Math available for the district in terms of CST

test and the SBAC test.  The CST was last given in 2013 and was replaced by the SBAC test.

Table 3.3: District and State Proficiency Levels

| Standardized Test and Year | Study Site District Proficiency Level | California Proficiency Level |
|---|---|---|
| CST ELA 2013 | >40% | 56.4% |
| CST Math 2013 | >30% | 51.2% |
| SBAC ELA 2016 | >30% | 49% |
| SBAC Math 2016 | >25% | 37% |

Data from California Department of Education (CDE) website https://www.cde.ca.gov/

Also, contextually relevant was the ethnic and financial makeup of the state and the city in which
the study was conducted.

Table 3.4: Ethnic Makeup of Study Site District and State

| Ethnicity | State of California | District |
|---|---|---|
| Population | 39,536,653 | ~35,000 |
| Hispanic | 38.9% | ~60% |
| Black/African American | 6.5% | ~10% |
| Asian | 14.8% | ~10% |
| White | 72.7% | ~5% |
| Other | 6.1% | ~6% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Free and Reduced Meals | 19.1% | ~80% |

Data from United States Census Bureau https://www.census.gov/

This district was chosen for three reasons. First, the goal of this research was to understand how a school serving socio-economically disadvantaged students within an underperforming district was successfully able to develop collective teacher efficacy regardless of serving predominantly socio-economically disadvantaged students, so a district fitting this description was chosen purposefully. Secondly, as this case-study required considerable time for interviews, the district was chosen out of proximity convenience. Finally, as an aspiring administrator in a district that also serves socio-economically disadvantaged students, I have a vested interest in learning more about how to best serve schools serving these sorts of populations. Collective teacher efficacy is rooted in an idea that when there is similarity between a model and the observer, there is a greater chance for transferability of learning. It is my hope that a study of an urban neighborhood elementary school within an underperforming socio-economically disadvantaged district like the one chosen for this study will offer insight and hope for similar schools and districts in their quest to provide equitable educational opportunities for all students.

**Site Selection**

Once Institutional Review Board and School District approval were obtained, data collection began. District leaders being emailed, requesting suggestions of schools meeting the descriptors of collective teacher efficacy. These descriptors were sourced from Jenni Donohoo's enabling factors for collective teacher efficacy (2017). A total of eight schools were

recommended for study.  From these suggestions, the school with the greatest number of recommendations was chosen for study.  Once suggestions were received, the school suggested the most was chosen and I emailed the principal introducing myself, how their school was selected and requesting participation in the study.  The school selected was an urban neighborhood elementary school serving fewer than 600 students with a staff consisting of fewer than 20 teachers, 3 support staff (counselors, program specialist, and instructional coach), and a full-time principal and half-time assistant principal.  The site was described by staff as having a high transiency rate and serving one of the poorest populations in the city.

**Participants**

Once site interest was secured with the principal via email, a meeting was arranged to discuss the study in greater depth.  At the meeting with the principal, remaining questions were answered, and a time was scheduled for me to present the study to the staff.  This took place during a staff meeting.  The day of the meeting, a short PowerPoint presentation was given providing my background, the study goal, primary research questions, methods, participant selection process, privacy and confidentiality, and a question and answer opportunity.  Following the presentation, a participation interest form was passed around that allowed staff to agree to participate, decline participation, or to request more information before decision.  There was an area for name, grade taught, years at school site, email and phone contact information.  These were passed out by a teacher once I left the room, and once they were completed the teacher brought them to me in the hall.

All the staff who indicated interest in the study were invited to participate.  Of the 14 invited to participate, two support staff, seven teachers and the school principal participated in the study.  Those who did not participate who indicated interest did not participate due to

scheduling challenges. The teachers who responded were evenly split between teachers who had worked at the school since its opening and those who had come to work at the school since its opening. With participants selected, interviews were scheduled, and data collection began.

Data collection occurred during the final two weeks of January 2019 and consisted of in-depth interviews with teachers, support staff, and the site principal.

**Interviews**

In-depth semi-structured interviews provided insight into how collective teacher efficacy was developed in the targeted site. Each participant was interviewed once, and interviews ranged in length from 30 minutes to 90 minutes with the average interview being 60 minutes. Interviews were held at a location chosen by the participant at a time and day agreed upon by researcher and participant. Interviews were audio-recorded using the Rev Recorder app and were uploaded to their professional transcription service. Following each interview, notes were taken about which questions worked, which questions needed clarification, and other potential questions to ask. Interview transcripts and notes were maintained in a locked file cabinet and all digital copies were password protected. Confidentiality was given top priority by referring to participants only as newer teacher or teachers or teachers who opened the school. Support staff were referred to as support staff along with gender nonspecific pronouns. Only the principal was referred to by her gender as the entire staff of the school knew she would be interviewed. This was done to help make participants less identifiable to fellow participants.

All teachers were asked the same questions, support staff were asked questions similar to those of teachers and the principals were asked similar questions, but from the perspective of administrators (see appendices A-C). Common questions were asked regardless of position within the school to allow for comparison, but the interview questions were simply used as a

guide and were adapted and elaborated upon based on the nature and direction of the conversation with the interviewee.

Questions were organized by sources of efficacy information; mastery experiences; vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and affective states as well as enabling conditions for efficacy outlined by Donohoo (2017).  Interviews began with discussions about the development of collective teacher efficacy at the site and then progressed into the role leadership played in that development.  All participants, teachers, support staff, and administration were initially asked if they believed their school fit the description of collective teacher efficacy as described by Donohoo's enabling conditions of collective teacher efficacy (2016).  These include advanced teacher influence, goal consensus, teacher's knowledge of one another's work, cohesive staff, responsive leadership and effective systems of intervention.  Every participant responded that they did believe their school fit the description of collective teacher efficacy.  For the teachers and the support staff, this was followed by the question of what, in the most general sense, was the cause for the strong sense of collective teacher efficacy.  Table 3.5 shows the order of question topics for each group on participants.

3.5: Interview Question Topic by Participant Group

| Teacher Findings | Support Staff | Principal |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Teacher Support of Students<br>2. Teacher Influence<br>3. Staff Relationship<br>4. School Goals<br>5. Leadership | 1. Collective Teacher Efficacy<br>2. Teachers working together<br>3. Teacher Leadership<br>4. School goals<br>5. Leadership<br>6. Relationships Between Administration and Teachers | 1. Collective teacher efficacy<br>2. Teachers Working Relationships<br>3. Teacher Leadership<br>4. School goals<br>5. Administrative<br>6. Leadership |

The results of this study are intended to inform teachers, school principals, district leaders, and those in administrative leadership preparation programs about how collective teacher efficacy and the role leadership plays in that process. This case-study was conducted in two phases. The first phase involved data collection and the second phase consisted of theoretical thematic data analysis.

**Data Analysis**

The second phase of the study included the theoretical thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data sets (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Maguire and Delahunt (2017) "The goal of thematic analysis is to identify themes, i.e. patterns in the data that are important or interesting and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue" (p. 3353). The analysis followed the six-step framework for thematic analysis set forth by Braun and Clarke (2006). This framework includes familiarity with data, generation of codes, a search for themes, a review of themes, defining these themes, and finally the write-up. The following 6-phases analysis was followed.

Table 3.6: Phases of Thematic Analysis

| Phase | Description of the Process |
|---|---|
| 1. Familiarizing yourself with your data | Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and rereading data, noting down initial ideas |
| 2. Generating Initial codes | Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code |

| 3. Searching for themes | Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme |
|---|---|
| 4. Reviewing themes | Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set, generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis |
| 5. Defining and naming themes | Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme. |
| 6. Producing the report | The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis |

(Information taken from Braun & Clarke, 2006)

**Phase 1: Familiarize yourself with your data**. This phase began with repeated readings of the interview transcripts.  As stated in the previous chapter, all interviews were professionally transcribed, and transcriptions were reviewed for accuracy during the data collection phase and this process constituted the initial read.  During the follow-up read, notes were taken in the margins of the transcript referencing interesting data points and repeated ideas.  Data were then compressed into single sheet snapshot.  This was done both inductively and deductively. The deductive analysis generated small units of meaning related to collective teacher efficacy development and leadership influence.  These units were then organized into data sets, which included principal, support staff, newer teachers to the site, and teachers who have been at the

site since it was opened. The data were then further compressed within these data sets to create a snapshot sheet for each set of data.

**Phase 2: Generating initial codes**. During this phase, each interview snapshot was reviewed, and the data helped to generate initial lists of codes. These lists of codes can be found in Appendix G and emerged from the data. A code is a piece of data the analyst finds of interest. According to Boyatzis (1998) codes are "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon" (p. 63).

**Phase 3**: **Searching for themes**. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this phase focuses on "the analysis at the broader level of themes, rather than codes, involving sorting the different codes into potential themes, and collating all the relevant coded datum extracts within the identified themes" (p.19). These initial codes were reviewed for meaningful relationships or patterns first within each data set and then across data sets. This was done by writing each code on an individual card and then organizing and reorganizing them to find coherent themes. These groupings were then represented in a mind map. Some codes were retained, and others were discarded.

**Phase 4: Reviewing themes**. With an initial set of themes identified, interview extracts were reviewed to ensure adequate data existed in support of each theme. Themes with adequate support were retained, some subthemes were reorganized to create a new theme, and some subthemes were reordered and put as sub themes for other themes. A final thematic map was created at this point. This provided a clear idea of how the different themes relate to one another, and the overarching story the data told (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

**Phase 5: Defining and naming themes**. Phase 5 dealt with the refinement and naming of the themes for final analysis. This is where the 'essence' of each theme was brought forth and

what the theme 'captures' was organized into a narrative form.  This provided understanding of what was interesting about the data and why.  During this phase, the thematic map was organized into an outline with headings and subheadings where appropriate. Theme titles were streamlined as much as possible to provide clarity of theme meaning.
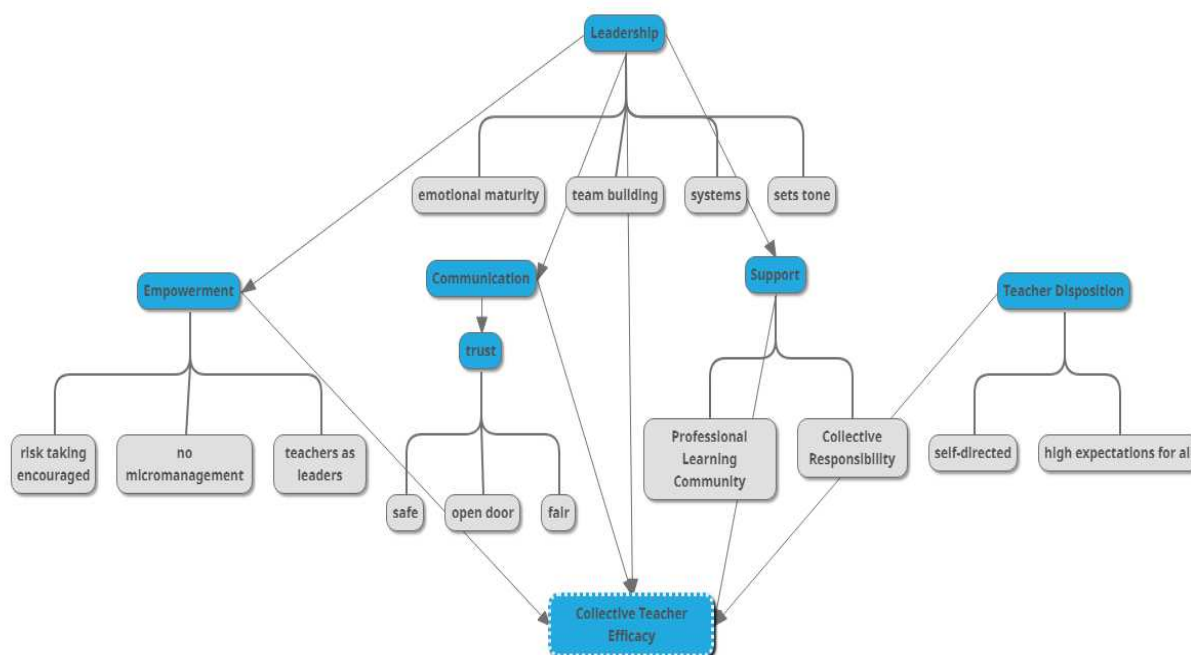


Figure 3.9: Thematic Map

**Phase 6: Producing the report**. This phase is where the transition from analysis to discussion of findings happens. The goal of the write-up was to, "tell the complicated story of your data in a way which convinces the reader of the merit and validity of your analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.23).  Additionally, Braun & Clarke (2006) explain the goal of thematic analysis is to provide, "concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and interesting account of the story that the data tell – within and across themes" (p. 23).

**Trustworthiness**

Qualitative researchers employ various strategies to ensure trustworthiness. Lincoln and Guba (1986) refer to the following as ways to ensure trustworthiness in naturalistic study. Prolonged engagement provides for extended time in the field to access "possible sources of distortion and to identify saliencies in the situation" (p. 77). Peer debriefing allows for objective feedback throughout the study from professional peers.  Member checks allow for ongoing feedback from participants on accuracy in analysis and reporting.  Thick descriptive data allow for judgments to be made by those reading findings and considering the degree of similarity in other situations of cases exists.  Triangulation is a way of cross-checking data using multiple measures and sources of data.

To ensure trustworthiness, this study utilized the following strategies.  Member checks were used following interviews for clarity in transcription and to provide participants an opportunity to review their transcript and the opportunity to add to or amend their input. Merriam & Tisdell (2016) suggest that member checks are often casual and involve sharing data to elicit feedback and to provide clarification.  Feedback was also gained through peer review, which allowed for committee members trained in qualitative methods to provide input and possible direction for the research.

Finally, to enhance trustworthiness and the possibility of results being transferable, thick description was employed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).  Thick description is "highly descriptive, detailed presentation of the setting and, the findings of the study" (Merrium & Tisdell, 2016, p. 257).  Lincoln and Guba (1986) suggest thick description allows others reading the research to understand the context of the research and assess if any similarities exist between themselves and the case being described.

**Limitations**

Limitations of this study include the school size and how it was staffed and that it only included K-8 students. The school enrollment at the study site was less than 600 students. In the district studied, this is a smaller school. It is unclear if the same findings would have been obtained in a school with a much larger population. Additionally, the school studied was opened by the principal interviewed and she was able to interview and select her initial staff. Even she mentioned how impactful this was in starting things off right, and she believed that its impact on the functioning of the school cannot be overlooked. It is also important to recognize that many of the teachers who initially applied and were hired at the school's opening had worked with the principal at her previous school, so they knew the kind of principal she was, and she knew which types of teacher they were. This made initial hiring easier and influenced what the initial staffing looked like.

**Summary**

The purpose of this qualitative case-study was to obtain an understanding of how an urban neighborhood elementary school serving socio-economically disadvantaged students built collective teacher efficacy and the role the school principal played in that development. It was the goal of this research to provide schools and school leadership serving socio-economically disadvantaged students with insight into how to build collective teacher efficacy and specifically ways principals can positively influence feelings of collective teacher efficacy in their staff. To accomplish this goal, the following primary research question were established:

- How is collective teacher efficacy developed in an urban neighborhood elementary school serving socio-economically disadvantaged students?

- What role did the principal play in the development of collective teacher efficacy?

With the input of district directors and principals, a list of neighborhood elementary schools fitting Donohoo's (2017) descriptors of collective teacher efficacy as compiled. These collective teacher efficacy descriptors included advanced teacher influence, goal consensus, teacher knowledge of one another's work (a strong PLC), cohesive staff, responsive leadership, effective systems of intervention.  Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic theoretical perspective (Braun and Clarke, 2006).  Trustworthiness was ensured through member checking, peer review, and thick description.  The following chapter will detail the findings of the study.

**Chapter 4: Presentation of Data**

This qualitative case-study examined how collective teacher efficacy was developed in an urban neighborhood elementary school serving predominantly socio-economically disadvantaged students and the role leadership played in that development. This research was guided by two research questions:  How is collective teacher efficacy developed in an urban neighborhood elementary school serving socio-economically disadvantaged students?  What role did the principal play in the development of collective teacher efficacy?

To accomplish this, an urban school district within the San Joaquin Valley serving students from predominantly low socio-economic families was chosen based on convenience. With the input of the district's directors and site principals, a list of neighborhood elementary schools fitting the description of collective teacher efficacy set forth by Donohoo (2017) was generated.  From this list, the school suggested most often was chosen for study.  The site selected was a neighborhood school serving less than 600 students with a teaching staff of fewer than 20, a support staff of 3 (program specialist, instructional coach, library assist), and a full-time principal and half-time assistant principal.  The site was described by staff as having a high transiency rate and serving one of the poorest populations in the city.  Once the principal and staff agreed to participate in the study, interviews began.  Interviews with teachers, support staff, and the site principal generated data presented in this chapter.

This chapter is organized around the themes identified in the data.  Each of the themes and sub themes discussed provide insight that help answer research question one: How was collective teacher efficacy developed in an urban neighborhood elementary school serving predominantly socio-economically disadvantaged students?  The theme of leadership speaks

directly to the actions and dispositions of the school principal and helps answer research question

two: What role did the principal play in the development of that collective teacher efficacy.

**Communication**

At the study site everyone interviewed described a trusting community where

communication was open, safe, and foundational to the functioning of the school. Each teacher

interviewed expressed that they felt safe to approach the principal and support staff for anything

they needed, and that the principal's door was "always open." They did not feel that their need

to speak with her was a burden or inconvenience. They knew that if there was anything negative

that needed to be discussed it would be done with kindness, professionalism, and with the goal of

providing reflection and growth. One teacher offered:

> They listen even if you have gripes, because as long as you're going for the good, like
> we've got in arguments and stuff, but we're going to get over it, and I think all of these
> different courses and everything made us realize that we're all gonna see things
> differently, but as long as we all have the common goal and we're all working hard to
> improve our students, that's what we want collectively at least.

Another teacher described the principal as "a direct communicator" and said "you always know

where you stand with her. She presents things in a way that there's no confusion. There is no

fear of being belittled or treated as if your concerns as a teacher are of little consequence." One

support staff member explained that at some schools you are treated "like a child, a naughty

child." She further shared the principal at the study site does not approach the staff that way, but

rather she affords them dignity and respect. Across all interviews, the descriptions of

communication among all school staff exemplified respectful, professional, and trusting

exchanges, which helped further enhance feelings of collective teacher efficacy.

Positive communication among the site teachers as well as between teachers and

principal has evolved over time to create an environment where staff feel safe to share ideas, ask

for help, and have critical conversations. This positive communication has facilitated a feeling

of trust where staff are comfortable taking risks and making their voices heard. Learning to

compromise and negotiate was an area one teacher said took some time to evolve. She described

what it was like when the school was thinking of adopting a minimum day:

> The first year, nobody said anything. They just voted and some of us were surprised like gosh, a lot of people are against it, but nobody wanted to discuss it...I thought that was weird. How come you don't want to discuss it? You just want to vote. You know what I mean? Before you vote, let's talk about it. So, then the next year a couple of the teachers who tended to not be for it, they did speak up. I thought that was growth of the staff like come on, just say how you feel because I try to say how I feel.

Through experiences like this, trust was built. A few of the newer teachers expressed

they felt when entering a staff with such extensive history it was important for them to earn the

trust of the staff and to prove they had what it took to work there. Trust also had to be built

between the newer teachers and the principal. This was accomplished through the structure she

created for the school where everyone's voice was sought out and appreciated. One of the newer

teachers explained that on top of listening to everyone's input, the principal also takes the time to

get to know all the staff. This teacher described how the principal would just sit down with them

and have a casual informal conversation to get to know more about them and how they were

adjusting to being at the site. They felt that this was "helpful even for reluctant people who are 'I

don't know if I want to go talk to her'. Her door is always open." Joining a group of teachers

who had such extensive history could have presented challenges, but through collaboration and

shared experiences trust was built.

The collaborative aspect of trust building was facilitated through an open-door approach

between teachers and the willingness to observe and learn from each other. They work

collaboratively to meet the behavioral and academic needs of the students. One support staff

member shared, "I think we are not so close door here. We do the 32-foot field trip. I'll cover your class, you wanna go and watch another teacher do her magic. People are in and out, and we recognize people that way." A 32-foot field trip is when a teacher leaves their class to visit another teacher's class to observe. Being able to communicate and trust is critical in doing the work of educating students. If principals hope to motivate staff to "perform above expectations" (Thomas, 1997, p. 5), and to shape the "thoughts, behaviors, and feelings" of their faculty to work toward a common set of goals, there needs to be open communication and trust that all staff are valued and all voices are heard (Thomas, 1997, p. 2). Feeling safe to communicate openly requires trust, and trust takes time. It developed at the case-study site by allowing time for staff to communicate and work together, by the principal being accessible to staff, and by the principal respecting the professionalism of the teaching staff and not micro-managing the work they do.

**Empowerment**

Teachers expressed feeling empowered by being treated as professionals and having the autonomy to make decisions for their classes while still recognizing the importance and power of the collective. The cohesion among teaching staff came from the understanding that each participant was a valued team member who had something to contribute and the collegial respect that came from that. The staff are treated as the school's leadership. The principal was described by staff as "very collaborative" and several shared that she regularly comes to teachers in an informal manner to ask for their input on ideas or issues. She treats the teachers as part of the school's leadership. When the topic of empowerment was discussed with the principal, she shared:

> I think it's extremely important because, ultimately, it's your teachers that are doing the work. It's your teachers that are the leaders. They are the ones that are in the classrooms guiding your kids, and they need to be empowered to make decisions that are best for our kids. I always say, and I truly mean it, the school's performing not because of me, it's performing because of my team. Because they work so well together and there are so many systems in place for them to do the work that they need to do and rely on each other.

Key to teachers feeling empowered included the lack of micro-management by the school principal and support staff. Teachers felt empowered to take risks and to bring ideas to the principal. Finally, teachers felt they all had a role in helping to lead the school and that their voices and opinions, and expertise were valued.

**Teachers as Leaders**

During the interview with the principal, she expressed her feeling of responsibility for building the capacity of the staff and enabling and encouraging them to help lead the school. She accomplished this in many ways. First, she worked collaboratively with all staff and formally and informally sought input on school issues. She shared that very few decisions in the school were "made in isolation." She also shared that there is a formal leadership group, although this has not been consistent over the years. A teacher member of the leadership team explained, "The leadership group does not make decisions for the school, but rather provides feedback on initiatives prior to bringing them to the staff for discussion." In line with what research suggests is essential for collective teacher efficacy development, the opportunity to serve on the leadership committee is open to all (Leithwood et al., 2008). It is not a committee hand-selected by the principal, but rather a group put forth by the teachers. Ultimately, due to the school size, decisions come to the entire staff for discussion.

The principal was credited with knowing how to motivate her staff and encourage their leadership. This spoke to the relationships that were built between the principal and the staff and the trust that developed. The staff are willing to work for her because they believe she genuinely cares for them, the school, and the students. One teacher credited the principal with knowing how to "finesse" her and pushing her beyond her comfort zone. The principal encourages teacher leadership by regularly encouraging staff to participate in the professional learning with colleagues and then coming back to the staff and sharing what they have learned. Each participant acknowledged the principal as facilitating their professional growth and encouraging them to step up in different ways as school leaders. Leadership opportunities are available to all teachers both formally and informally. Those wanting to participate informally can lead after school groups, coach district events, or participate on other committees like fundraising. Teacher voice is valued, and this influence was apparent as they were involved in all things related to the functioning of the school.

One teacher shared that the staff were encouraged to try new things and pilot programs that might be of help to the students. She explained "When you said that, it made me think about how often we say 'let's just pilot it. Let's just try it." Another teacher explained, "We have tried many things, and we've succeeded many times, and we've tried many things, and we haven't succeeded. But we haven't been...it never felt ugly, like even when it didn't succeed, it was like, okay." Some efforts would be successful, and some would not and that was expected and embraced as part of working toward progress.

Whenever someone at the school helped pilot a program or an idea, they brought their findings back to the group for shared learning. The principal expressed that not everyone was comfortable stepping forward to present, but she gently encouraged them as shared knowledge

was in the best interest of the school and students.  She explained, "It sometimes takes a few times asking, but ultimately everyone does their part and step up to lead."

Part of the culture of risk taking came from the principal reassuring the staff that any ideas the school chooses to try would only be continued if the teaching staff agreed it was working.  Other teachers shared going to the principal with ideas for their classes and all the principal would ask was for some rationale for the idea and if reasonable she would support it. The principal specifically credited the school's success with the fact that "we are always trying new things."

**Micromanagement**. Teachers all appreciated the room and flexibility they are afforded to do their job and the fact that their professionalism was not questioned or usurp.  One teacher shared that there was "not that sort of micromanagement system" at the school.  The staff came together because "we're gonna do what's right for our school climate, and our families, and our students, and I just...seriously, that respect piece is good."  The principal provided the staff the respect and space to do their jobs and in turn the staff took control of their classrooms and students.  In addition to the room to do the work, the teachers shared that they were given a say in what goals they were working toward, which gave a complete feeling of ownership for their work.  One teacher related the role of the principal to the role of the teacher.  They suggested:

> You know how the saying that teachers should be facilitators of learning in the classroom, and we shouldn't be doing all the talking, we shouldn't be doing all the work? We should be facilitator of the children learning and let them do the work?  I think that this administrator applies a very similar thought to her administration, which is I'm the facilitator of you teachers and making sure that you are doing your job, but I'm not going to tell you everything you must do, and I'm not going to micromanage you.  We get to lead, if you will, our own little fiefdom if we are in the boundaries that she has set.  She doesn't micro-manage.

**Risk-taking encouraged**. This case-study illustrated the importance of risk-taking.
Teachers at the study site benefitted from opportunities to take risks and being given the discretion
to try new ideas. They did this collaboratively as well as independently. These opportunities were
presented as an opportunity to learn and came without the pressure of absolutely expected success,
but rather in the spirit of action research and growth. This allowed the staff to innovate without a
fear of failure or a fear of punitive measures or judgement if an initiative was not successful.
Findings from interview data suggested that the school developed a culture of risk-taking because
leadership took this approach and the teachers were trusted to make decisions about student
learning. When that happened, collective teacher efficacy was enhanced, and student performance
was positively impacted.

One support staff member shared that it was the collective attitude toward risk-taking that
made this approach successful. The school was always looking for effective approaches to
learning and innovative ways to use staffing to effectively meet the needs of students. This
required thinking beyond job titles to meet the needs of students. When asked what contributed
most to the school's collective teacher efficacy, one teacher shared they believed that because the
school was always evolving and trying new things, teachers felt confident in their ability to meet
student needs and that regardless of what challenges they faced they would come together
collectively and "help students no matter what."

This culture of problem solving, innovation, and willingness to push beyond what was
traditional or comfortable to meet student need was evident in all interviews. When asked what
facilitated the comfort with risk, several participants referenced the amount of support provided
by the administration, support staff, and teachers. One teacher explained it this way, "The

internal working of the school has a strong focus and belief that kids will succeed if staff work hard and think outside the box to make it happen."

**Support**

Across interviews, teachers voiced strong feelings of support available from administration, support staff, and other teachers. This support came in the allocation of resources, coaching, as well as emotional support. Often the support was provided without request and came from all staff regardless of grade level or position. A culture of "checking in" existed between the administration and teachers, support staff and teachers, as well as teachers and teachers. And, support was given freely to all staff regardless of seniority. In some schools, only the new teachers are given the support of instructional coaches and more experienced teachers are left on their own.

Resources in the form of supplies were also noted by teaching staff and support staff. One support staff member shared, "you just feel like...I have enough. You never feel like...Well, you never feel like it's the *Hunger Games*, where you're trying to grab whatever you can. That's how you end up with hoarders, right?" The opposite existed at the study site. Supplies were given freely, and the teaching and support staff were even given a modest amount of money out of the school budget to order items for use in their classrooms.

Another tangible resource that teachers said were readily available to them was remediation support for students. The student support process was clear and easy to navigate, and it made teachers confident that students would receive timely intervention beyond what they could provide in the classroom if needed. Some of the student support included push in support from the program specialist. Another form of support included paraprofessionals. Other

resources provided to help meet student need included counseling services and behavioral supports.

Emotional support for teachers was also noted as critical to feelings of collective teacher efficacy.  This support included help with student behavior, opportunities to build personal relationships with fellow staff during school hours, support for being able to put family first, and a general sense of belonging.  One teacher shared how touched they were and the "very human response" the principal showed while they were away from work when one of their parents passed.  They also shared that when they returned to work the principal checked in to make sure they were transitioning back alright and to offer emotional support.  The staff also came together to create a thoughtful gift the teacher found very heartfelt and touching.  Several teachers expressed the significance of the emotional support they receive where they work.  A few even shared examples of the lack of support they had felt at other schools, which caused them to leave.  The support structures at the school took two main forms; the collective support for teachers and students provided at the school level by the support staff and the administration and the support experienced by teachers within their professional learning community.

**Collective responsibility**. Teachers indicated the support they received addressed student emotional, behavior, and academic needs and was important to developing their feelings of collective teacher efficacy.  Teachers shared the feeling that they "were not on our own" and they were not singularly responsible for student success.  The school embraced an "all hands-on deck" approach and the belief that all staff must "share the burdens, share the successes, but share the burdens, too."

Teachers felt that if they needed help, they would not be "deemed inadequate in their abilities or an inconvenience to the administration and support staff."  One teacher described the

attitude towards responsibility for student achievement as a "collective approach" where no one

regardless of title was above helping and that no one person's time was deemed more valuable.

Administration and support staff alike regularly covered classes if no substitute was available or

if a teacher needed to be covered to attend an activity for their children. Splitting classes was

deemed a last resort and plans were in place where administrative and support staff could take

blocks of time covering an uncovered class. This was planned for in advance.

Another innovative way support staff were used to allow for effective shared

responsibility for students was in the use of instructional assistants as well as bilingual aides.

Instead of the instructional assistant coming in and working with the student or students needing

assistance, they would take over the class and allow the teacher do the one on one with the

student. Intervention at all levels was a collective responsibility. One of the support staff shared

> When it's the tier one, tier two, tier three. Teachers are definitely involved in all of that, in which kids need it. The coaching support and the aid support so they can deliver tier two. We revamped that a few years ago. The aid goes in, so the teacher can do tier two with the smaller group, while the aid watches the group. The best person with your lowest kids, not the aid working with your lowest kids.

This is an uncommon practice but served the goal of providing students with the assistance of the

most experienced person available. The administration and support staff saw working closely

with teachers and students as a "priority" and this attitude increased feelings of collective teacher

efficacy. Bilingual aides were also used in a way that provided more effective use of their

services. Rather than spending 20 minutes in this class and 20 minutes in that class, their time

was organized to allow for longer blocks of time in each classroom they served were useful to

the students and teachers.

**Professional learning communities**. Adding to teachers' feelings of collective teacher efficacy was the close working relationships established within their professional learning communities (PLC). Teachers shared that they worked collectively in service of student success. This work was done at both grade level and across grade levels. The teachers regularly helped one another with student behavior by taking students from other classrooms into their rooms, but they also share students based on individual academic need. A support staff member explained, "If a student needs additional challenge, they might sit in on a higher grade. If a student needs remedial support, they might be pulled for small groups or sit in on a class covering the remedial skills they need."

Another way teachers supported students was by constantly working to improve their instruction through professional development. While the school only adopted the formal approach to professional learning communities outlined by DuFour after attending a district sponsored conference five years ago, the principal contends the school has been operating in a professional learning community model since the school opened. A professional learning community is a group of people who work collaboratively, reflect on their work, share critiques of practice, and have a clear focus on learning as opposed to teaching (DuFour, 2004). Collaboration is described as central to the school culture and collaborative time is prioritized by both administration and teachers. The principal explains, "As time evolved people wanted to meet more with each other. That really came from them." The teachers meet in their collaborative groups weekly to evaluate student progress, refine practice, build shared knowledge and plan for action and assessments.

Working in this fashion allowed the group to learn from and with one another to improve instructional practices for all students. A teacher reflected on attending the PLC conference and

shared "we came back so ready to work together at an even deeper level. We have always learned from each other, but this training gave us a more formal approach to effectively working together to improve what we do for our students." The literature has shown that a strong professional learning community increases collective teacher efficacy, and that has been shown to be true at the study school (DuFour, 2004; Mawhinney, Hass, & Wood, 2005; Stoll et al., 2006).

**Teacher Disposition**

Most of the teachers who have been at the school site since its opening followed the principal from her previous school site. Each of these teachers had to go through an interview and select process. In the years following the schools opening, most of the teachers who have joined were recruited to interview and selected by school staff, although a few have been placed at the site by the district. Regardless of how the teachers joined the school, interview data indicated the disposition of the teaching staff was positive, committed to student achievement, hard-working, and collaborative.

During interviews with the principal and a support staff member, they shared that over time they have developed a rigorous interview and performance aspects of how they choose teachers. This developed from recognizing job candidates can express abilities during just an interview that they may not actually possess in real life. The questions asked revolved around collaboration, openness to observation by fellow teachers, and how they approach their jobs. Also shared was the active recruitment and courting process used when a position is opening. This is done to ensure any new team member understands the school culture and the expectations of teachers at the school. Regardless of teacher experience, a collaborative growth mindset is

expected of all staff members and is foundational to building a positive and efficacious working

environment.

**High expectations for all**. Findings from this study suggest that collective teacher

efficacy is the product of teachers holding both themselves and one another to high expectations.

One teacher shared an example of a teacher who was hired who had experience and skill but did

not care for the level of collaboration or the fact that people were regularly in and out of

classrooms.  This teacher explained, "They wanted more isolation and so they lasted one year.

They didn't want to adhere to our positive cultish ways."  Another teacher expressed how

different the expectation is at the study site, "It's different. It's almost like you must qualify to be

here in the first place. I mean that you have to come in and be willing for change and willing to

work within the system."  One of the newer teachers explained, "it's still a little odd.  Every

school has their quirks, and so yeah. I think that that's what helps…I think I've earned the rest of

the staff, their respect."  The expectations are teachers will have the disposition to work within

the school.  Several teachers recognized that not all are up to or desiring that level of expectation.

One teacher suggested:

> Some of them do just want to go to a school with a principal who leaves
> them alone and lets them do whatever so they can just get their years until
> they retire and that's never been about what any of us do.  If we sort of
> smell that, you sort of smell that somebody is just looking for a place
> to…cruise.  Yeah, those people don't last very long [here].

Self-directed. Part of the freedom teachers enjoy at the study site is because they are self-

directed and work collectively toward a common goal.  Each member of the team has their

"thing" they do to contribute to the functioning of the school.  These contributions are both

formal and informal and include activities like tutoring, leading after school activities and clubs,

coaching events students participate in at the district level, and participating in committees like

fundraising or leadership.  In comparison to previous experiences at other schools, teachers

expressed an appreciation that no one at the school is "lazy"' and that "everyone seems to be

taking care of their business and are in there grinding."  One participant attributed this self-

directed behavior to the high moral at the school.  They reflected on previous work experience

where people did not conduct themselves in this manner.  One shared "I'm really spoiled. I think

back to previous experiences, so you have these teachers that hurt morale, at least my morale

because they were lazy, which really is bad for morale when you have that lazy teacher.  I don't

see that here.  I really don't."

  **Positive outlook**. While several participants had less than positive stories to share about

experiences at previous school sites, every participant expressed satisfaction with their current

school, their principal, as well as a strong belief in themselves, their team, their students, and the

fact that together they can overcome the challenges they face to get students "where they need to

be."  This collective belief is the definition of collective teacher efficacy.  This feeling builds on

itself and attracts people to the school.  One teacher summarized this positivity this way, "the

teachers that work here, I think that when it comes down to the bottom line is that they care.

They really do care about the students.  I think that's one of the most important things."  Another

staff member expressed a similar sentiment when speaking about the school and staff.  She

explained, "The people there are smart, they're open, they're…they love what they do, and they

love their students."  When asked what makes this school so different from other schools one

teacher responded in this way:

> I feel like we all get along well, and we respect each other, and we're all professionals,
> and not trying to talk bad about other schools, but I have left two schools for this reason.
> I think we just…I don't know.  I can't really…I don't know how to answer that.  I guess
> because we just believe in each other, maybe, and we all understand each other, and
> …well, and when we do talk about families and kids, it's more proactive than it is

complaining. And I'm not gonna say we don't ever complain, that's not…That wouldn't be true, but it might, at times, come out as complaining like, "oh my gosh, again? He's always late, or whatever. And then we…Sometimes somebody will bring up, "Well, why is he always late? What can we do to", you know? It's very powerful. It can be, and that even happens during lunch time."

The positivity of the staff helped create the feeling of collective teacher efficacy the school enjoys, but at the same time the feelings of collective teacher efficacy contribute to the positivity. All the themes discussed so far in this chapter have been attributed to answering the first research question: How is collective teacher efficacy developed in an urban neighborhood elementary school serving socio-economically disadvantaged students? Each of these themes was is either directly or indirectly influenced by the school principal and her leadership. The following theme responds to the second research question: What role did the principal play in the development of collective teacher efficacy [at the study site]?

**Leadership**

Although collective teacher efficacy can have a powerful influence on student achievement, it can be difficult to develop as it deals with individual and group beliefs. Regardless, it is not beyond the scope of possibility with the right support and leadership (Goddard et al., 2000). The school principal was identified as a key factor in the success of the school and the development of its collective teacher efficacy. Two teachers specifically referred to her as "the driving force" for what was happening at the school. She was described as "approachable", "fair", "organized" and "capable", and her leadership allows for staff to come together and work cohesively in service of their students.

The principal accomplished this solidarity through the development of clear systems and supports for teachers and allowing teachers to exercise leadership at the school. She also supported a collaborative environment where all teachers felt supported emotionally and

materially. The belief the staff have in her leadership was apparent in several participant interviews. Half the teachers interviewed followed the principal to the site from the previous school she led. Of the staff who opened the school, two-thirds of that staff credit her leadership as the reason for applying. When asked how the school would fair if the principal was to leave, all shared doubt if the school would function as well without her leadership. One teacher even shared the belief:

> Many of us would dread going to another school. If this principal was to go to another school, regardless of the size of that school, location of that school, I would go with her instead of trusting who the district will send to lead our ship. Regardless of the size. Regardless of the circumstance. It could be a prison school.

When speaking about her leadership, the principal described herself as collaborative, supportive of her team, transparent, protective of her staff, a "yes" person, mindful, and not driven by ego. She describes relationships as "huge" and recognizes that how she carries and presents herself sets the tone for the school. She suggested, "I try to be the duck on the top of the water just moving right along, but underneath that I'm just paddling like crazy. I try to stay positive."

**Setting the tone**. Anyone who has worked in a school environment understands the influence school administration has on setting the tone of the school and developing operational norms (Wahlstrom & Seashore Louis, 2008). Findings related to setting the tone of the school overlapped with several other themes and subthemes including communication and emotional intelligence. Key in setting the tone was communication and how that shaped relationships and feelings of trust. The principal worked intentionally to create a safe environment where all teachers felt capable, valued, empowered, and trusted. She accomplished this through intentional

behavior and decision making. Through interviewing the principal, it became clear she

understood the influence her energy and behavior had on her staff. She shared:

> I think setting the tone myself and modeling being positive, having a growth mindset, me not having an ego. I don't have a big ego. If I make a mistake, my teachers will tell you I'm the first one to be like, "I'm sorry I screwed up on that. I'm going to fix it. They know that I'm willing to take risks and fail and be open about it. I really try to model that

She took ownership for her role and acknowledged that if she was not calm and intentional in

how she presented herself, it could have a negative impact on the staff. One support staff

member explained it in this way, "if the leader is frantic, that permeates the school. If the leader

is always looking over his/her shoulder, then everybody is gonna be looking over their shoulders.

You know?" Several teachers expressed that they had left schools for just such a reason and

considered the principals demeanor as one of the most valued assets to the school and a

contributor to their feeling of collective teacher efficacy. Within this calm, staff have developed

feelings of trust, comfort, and respect for the principal. The principal herself also discussed the

importance of how she handled her own emotions and how that influenced how she presented

and conducted herself and how that influenced the tone of the school.

**Emotional intelligence**. The principal believed her school had collective teacher efficacy

and key to that has been a cycle of constant reflection and adjustment along the way. She

recognized that how she made decisions, conducted herself, and how she interacted with and

handled the staff impact the school's collective teacher efficacy. In fact, when most teachers

spoke about what they felt made the principal effective and made them want to work with her,

they answer was always related to how she made them feel. In the case of this principal, this did

not happen by accident, but rather because of her self-awareness, reflection practice, and

intentionality.  When discussing how she thinks of how her own persona impacts the staff she

explained:

> If you're mad and off your rocker, it's going to affect everyone else.  I really try to make
> sure that I have a right positive frame of mind and be a cheerleader for them.  But it's just
> getting to know people on a personal level, 'How was your weekend?'  Getting to know
> little things about people, people want to know that you care because if people know that
> you care and are invested in them, they're going to work like crazy for you.  There's so
> much to be said about that emotional piece, that relationship piece and being sincere
> about it.  You can't be insincere."

Blasé and Blasé (2004) suggest "an awareness and understanding of emotions, the ability

to manage one's emotions, and the ability to express emotions in appropriate ways, given the

context, are regarded as critical to effective school leadership" (p. 258). This principal's

understanding of how her emotional state impacted her staff helped guide the work to foster an

environment where communication was easy and productive, collaboration was unhindered, and

teachers felt provided for, both emotionally and in more tangible ways.

Numerous examples of the principal having recognized the emotions of staff were shared.

A few teachers discussed how she approaches staff when "difficult" conversations need to be

had.  One teacher shared a time when a parent misunderstood something that had happened in

their class and had gone to the principal with their concern.  The teacher explained, "She came to

talk to me about it.  It was like she'd only gotten a student version of something that had

happened, and I was able to give her a more well-rounded picture, but she's fair. As it turned out,

it wasn't anything."  The principal is described as "upfront yet respectful, and she was always

kind."  It is her goal to hear all sides of a story and to not jump to conclusions or take sides.  She

was repeatedly described as "fair".

Another telling story of the principal's emotional intelligence was mentioned earlier by

the teacher who had to be out of school to care for a parent who later passed.  She showed

compassion and respect for the teacher and made the teacher feel genuinely cared for. She walks

the line between boss and friend with grace and consistently shows care for her staff without

compromising her professionalism.

**Systems**. Principal leadership has been shown to exert considerable influence over the

working conditions of teachers (Blasé & Blasé, 2000; Goddard et al., 2017). The principal

recognized the importance of meeting the emotional needs of staff, but she also understood the

management part of the job must be addressed to ensure teachers have everything they needed to

succeed. Systems needed to be in place to address student academic needs and behavioral needs

and they had to be very clear so staff could function and stay focused on the needs of the

students. She explained:

> Ultimately, it's your teachers that are doing the work it's your teachers that are the leaders
> they're the ones that are in the classrooms guiding your kids and they need the power to
> make decisions that are best for the kids. I always say and I truly mean it the school is
> performing not because of me it is performing because of my team because they work so
> well together and there are so many systems in place for them to do the work that they
> need to do."

Interview participants expressed that their work was made easier thanks to clearly defined

systems, many of which were designed collectively with staff, which ties back to

communication. Among these systems were systems of support for both students and teachers,

the collaborative systems established through the professional learning community model, and

the system utilized for implementing change. As the school's culture was built on trying new

things to help support student's growth, how change was carried out was very important. One

teacher explained, "When ideas are brought to the staff, we are given time to discuss the

initiative, the research behind the idea is shared, and then adequate time and support is given to

implement change. Things aren't just dumped on us." Because of this system, change is not just

thrust upon teachers and teachers are given a voice in if and how change will take place. The system acts like an engine and supports the sense of well-being of the collective.

**Team building**. According to the study participants, the principal "unites the school and provides a sense of belonging and connectedness among staff members." This was done in many ways and included the help of the program specialist. Initial hiring provided the foundational staff that still shapes the staff today. The principal expressed, "the process of staring at the beginning when we first opened, I think a key piece was I was lucky to be able to pick my staff, everybody. Yeah, so that was huge. You can't not credit that piece of it." Additionally, providing team building opportunities where the staff can come together on both personal and profession topics facilitates the collective teacher efficacy necessary to meet the challenges the school faces. The principal and program specialist have worked diligently to develop approaches to team building that do just that. The power of this approach was evident in every interview as each participant shared with great excitement the beginning of year team building activities the school does and how influential it has been for setting the tone for the school year. These two key areas of team building are detailed below.

Hiring has always played a crucial role in creating and maintaining the collective teacher efficacy enjoyed by the case-study site. As stated earlier, the principal was able to select her staff at the opening of the school, but over time due to retirement and natural attrition she has had to hire new staff. An interesting aspect of this case-study was the fact that almost all staff who have left the school since its opening have done so due to a move of residence, retirement, or to advance in their career. It was shared that one teacher left due to the fact they did not want to collaborate at the level expected at the site. Currently, most of the staff at the site helped open the school. To ensure teachers being hired were compatible with the culture of the school,

interview techniques have evolved.  The principal shared that the school seeks, "a very particular type of teacher." She further explained:

> Our questions are still now geared towards collaboration, Do you have a growth mindset?  What are some experiences with working with other people?  Are you willing to have other people come into your classroom?  Are you willing to go into other people's classrooms?  Share an experience that's been successful working with somebody.  Share an experience that hasn't been successful in working with somebody.

The choices made by the principal and the program specialist regarding hiring practices and the development of a team mentality through team building activities have helped shape the type of teachers and the belief system of the school.

Interviewing within the study district allows each school administrator to design an interview protocol for their site, but it is required that all interviewees receive the same set of questions and interview expectations.  The interview panel is not allowed to deviate from the preset list of questions, which made it even more important to have a strong set of predetermined questions in line with the expectations of the school.  The school also uses a performance component during interviewing.  Teachers are given sample content that they are asked to model instruction for.  This allowed for a better understanding of a potential candidate's skills and limitations.  Another aspect of team building utilized at the case study site which brought the staff together on both professional and personal levels was the beginning of year retreat.  This yearly event supported the emotional bond between staff and anchored the year in a shared experience that is referred to throughout the year.  One teacher described this off-campus event as the "perfect way to ease into the year."  Another teacher explained, "That bonding I think helped a lot.  That made you feel like part of the team. I think everybody here is kind of the nature there's no I in team."  One of the newer teachers to the site shared:

At the beginning of the year, the thing that I like that this principal...I think, it's the most bizarre thing. I've never heard of...We do a day where she truly does team building the first workday, back. We went out, and this is the second time, so I'm not sure what they've done in the past, but one year we [went to a lake] and we did a scavenger hunt. It had everything to do with teaching and solving common core math questions before we could move onto the next piece. You were tied together, so you had to go with and move as a group and solve these questions. It was an all-day event. At the end, we had some kind of a race, but you couldn't touch the grass because it was water. You wanted to stay out of the water. It was really interesting, and so just a lot of team building to get your year started.

Following a day of team building, the staff come together to review the previous year's data and collectively decide upon reasonable goals to work toward. The smaller professional learning communities also evaluate test data and come together to plan, implement, and evaluate instruction. The school also collectively work to set goals for parent involvement, attendance, and behavior.

The location and activities for the daylong event change yearly, but the retreat is always off campus, involves collaborative challenges that require staff to come together is varying teams and work together to overcome challenges, and above all gets the staff connected, excited, and ready to work together. Throughout the year, the staff also have other events to bond or grow professionally. Among these are the Christmas party, which is held at different staff members homes each year, an annual fundraiser for extracurricular activities for students, happy hours, and the end of year debrief. The need for emotional connection and positive affective states is understood by the school leadership and planned for.

This chapter was organized around the themes generated by thematic data analysis. These themes included communication, support, empowerment, teacher disposition, and leadership. Each of these themes contributed to the collective teacher efficacy at the study school and help answer the first research question: How was collective teacher efficacy

developed in an urban neighborhood elementary school serving predominantly socio-

economically disadvantaged students? The leadership theme looked more deeply at how

leadership influenced communication, support, empowerment and indirectly the benefit of

teacher disposition through the role leadership played in the hiring process and helped address

the second research question:  What role did the principal play in the development of that

collective teacher efficacy?  The sub themes associated with leadership were setting the tone,

emotional maturity, systems, and team building.  In the following chapter these themes will be

related back to social cognitive theory and efficacy informing information to explain the

development of collective teacher efficacy at the case-study site.  This will be followed by a

discussion of how the different participant groups perceived and valued the efficacy enabling

conditions and then specifically how the leadership of the principal impacted the development of

that collective teacher efficacy.  This will be followed by implications for practice and

suggestions for future research.

**Chapter 5: Findings**

The goal of education is to provide equitable learning opportunities for all students. While the goal is clear, the path can be obscured by challenges such as those associated with socio-economic disadvantage. Research on factors capable of mitigating the impact of socio-economic status has identified collective teacher efficacy as a promising construct for increasing equitable outcomes for all students. Collective teacher efficacy is a faculty's collective belief in its ability to positively impact students (e.g., Bandura, 1993, 1997; Derrington & Angelle, 2013; Goddard et al., 2004a; Goddard & Skrla, 2006). Although the power of collective teacher efficacy is well-documented, research studies shedding light on how collective teacher efficacy can be developed in schools serving socio-economically disadvantaged students is lacking. Additionally, lacking from current literature is research seeking to understand the role principal leadership plays in its development and maintenance (e.g., Bandura, 1993; Goddard et al., 2000, 2004a, 2004b, 2015, 2017; Hattie, 2015).

The purpose of this study was to gain insight and understanding of how an urban neighborhood elementary school serving predominantly socio-economically disadvantaged students was able to build a strong sense of collective teacher efficacy and the role the principal played in that process. Guiding this study were the research questions: How is collective teacher efficacy developed in urban neighborhood elementary schools serving socio-economically disadvantaged students? What role did the principal play in the development of collective teacher efficacy? Bandura's (1986, 1997) social cognitive theory and sources of efficacy belief shaping information guided this qualitative case-study design, which utilized semi-structured interviews to obtained insights into the feelings and lived experiences of teachers, support staff, and the school principal. This chapter analyzes the data obtained through

those interviews and discusses them in relation to the theoretical framework's efficacy informing

information and the extant literature.

This research revealed several themes that were central to the development of collective

teacher efficacy in the case-study site.  These included the principal's leadership beliefs and her

subsequent actions as well as the influence on communication, support, and the empowerment of

teachers for developing collective teacher efficacy. Teacher dispositions were also found as

influencing collective teacher efficacy, and although interviewees did not directly attribute this to

leadership, it is noteworthy that most of the staff were sought out and hired by the principal

because of their dispositions.



Figure 5.1: Influences on the Development of Collective Teacher Efficacy

This analysis is addressed in two main sections and reflect the two primary research

questions for this study.  The first section helps answer the first research question by discussing

the themes generated in the interviews relate to social cognitive theory and more specifically

efficacy informing factors and information. The second helps answer the second research question and addresses how teachers perceived and valued efficacy informing factors, and how those relate to principal leadership.

**Themes and Relationship to Efficacy Development**

As the theoretical framework for this research was Bandura's social cognitive theory, it is appropriate to situate and discuss the study findings in relationship to the sources of efficacy development. According to Green and Peil (2009), individuals learn both behaviors and cognitive strategies through the observation and behavior of others, and this learning can be learned without direct reinforcement. Efficacy beliefs are developed and enforced through four efficacy informing experiences. Mastery experiences are built from experience and lead to the expectations of future consequences and responses; vicarious experiences are based on observations of others and other's consequences; social persuasion is related to coaching and feedback; and affective states are based on decisions about behavior and experience. Additionally, the lack of anticipated consequences has consequence as well (Pajares, 2002). One or more sources of efficacy development validated the findings of this study and supported a theoretical explanation for the development of collective teacher efficacy.

**Teacher disposition**. Teacher disposition presented as a theme. This theme was present in how the teachers spoke of one another, the support staff, the principal, and the students. Teacher disposition was also referenced by the principal when she spoke of the type of teacher she looked for when hiring. While this theme is not directly relatable to efficacy informing factors the way communication, empowerment, and support are (see figure 5.1), it did contribute to the collective teacher efficacy in the case-study site. In this case, teacher disposition could be directly related to principal leadership as the principal was the one who chose the teachers and

that selection was in part based on their disposition toward collaboration, hard-work, and positivity. While the research states that collective teacher efficacy is a group level belief, it is easier to develop in a group of people who share similar attitudes toward the work at hand as was the case the study site (Bandura, 1993, 1997; Derrington & Angelle, 2013; Goddard et al., 2004; Goddard & Skrla, 2006). Just as the administration sought out teachers who shared a belief in a collaborative approach to student learning, those who chose to come to the school were searching for a place where there was a collaborative spirit and teachers would work in a positive spirit.

**Communication.** Communication was an important theme that led to the development of collective teacher efficacy and was key to the development of relationships and trust at the study site. The literature has shown that when trust exists within a school, teachers are willing to take greater risks to ensure student achievement. This was the case at the study site. All teachers, regardless of how long they had worked at the site, trusted that each member of the team would do their part to help students achieve, and they trusted that the principal and support staff would provide them with everything needed to meet that goal. This positive effective communication acted as a form of social persuasion as all teachers knew what was expected of them from leadership as well as from each other. The positive nature of communication also contributed to positive affective states where the teachers felt safe speaking frankly and directly with the principal and each other and trusted that any "difficult conversations" would be worked out. Research stated that trust only develops through action (Hoy et al., 2006) and it was through the action of consistent and effective communication practice where teachers were able to safety express their feelings and have their voices heard that trust among staff and between teachers and the principals was developed.

**Support**. Teacher support led to feelings of collective teacher efficacy and were second only to principal leadership. Interestingly, most forms of support teachers mentioned could be directly connected back to the school's principal, either directly or indirectly. Collective teacher efficacy is an assessment of task, ability, and resource. This is a point that cannot be overstated. Some participants reflected on experiences at previous sites where the task may have been similar, their ability similar, but the resources available to meet the task were missing. These resources can take the form of supplies, instructional support for students, adequate training to meet student need, or emotional support. All these types of support are related to the four sources of efficacy informing information and are key to the development of collective teacher efficacy and were available to teachers at the study site.

Some of the key types of support that tie to the literature and efficacy informing factors include vicarious learning through observation of fellow teachers in their classrooms (Goddard et al., 2017) and shared responsibility for the students (Donohoo, 2017). No teacher felt they were solely responsible for student success or that they were on their own when it came to student achievement. Students received adequate and timely support through the professional learning community or through pull out or push in from support staff. There was a collective expectation for student success. Several teachers also discussed the impact of attending professional training as a staff and how that was a powerful bonding activity. This refers again to the power of social persuasion and how powerful meeting the needs for connection can be on teacher beliefs in themselves, their collective community, and ultimately students.

Possibly, the type of support most discussed by teachers was the emotional support that they attributed to feelings of well-being. This crosses over to the principal's having set the tone of the school. When teachers spoke about their feelings or well-being and how the school

contributed to those feelings, a story about the principal often followed.  Teachers spoke of her manner, the way she approached them in different circumstances, how she checked in on them, her tone of voice, her calm nature, her accessibility, to name just a few.  Also, some teachers offered counter examples of feelings they had related to the tone set by previous principals whose behavior was very different to this principal.  Half the staff followed this principal to the current school site, and most of those interviewed who came after the school's opening sought a position based on what they had heard about the school and the type of support available.

**Empowerment.** Part of teachers' feelings of being able to meet the needs of students connected to their feelings of empowerment to meet student needs.  This relates to efficacy informing opportunities for mastery experience and social persuasion.  When teachers are not limited in how they meet student needs, the possibility for success increases.  Since mastery experience relates to previous success predicting future success, the need to be creative in finding ways to move students forward become more necessary in schools with low achievement where past success may be limited.  When teachers were micro-managed or they were not given a say in how they run their classrooms or organize student learning, then students suffered, and collective teacher efficacy beliefs were lowered. The study school embraced an attitude of risk taking and openness to learning by doing.  Failure was seen as a natural part of moving toward success, and this atmosphere empowered teachers to take responsibility for student learning and feeling the need to be constantly reflecting on instructional effectiveness, they made alterations when performance data indicated it necessary.  This directly contributed to their collective teacher efficacy.

Teachers acting as leaders was also part of the empowerment at the school.  While formal teacher leadership at the school came and went over the years due to the school's size, leadership

was open to all.  The research is clear that hierarchical approaches to leadership undermine

feelings of collective teacher efficacy likely because that

model does not honor the collective (Hallinger & Heck, 2011; Leithwood & Beatty, 2007).  The

research also states that when principals select teachers for leadership it undermines trust and

promotes feelings of favoritism that are counterproductive to collective teacher efficacy

(Leithwood et al., 2008).  Feelings of empowerment add to emotional well-being in teachers and

as empowerment comes from the principal it adds another layer to meeting the emotional needs

of teachers.

**Leadership**. Teachers all attributed principal leadership as the main factor influencing

feelings of collective teacher efficacy.  They credited the principal with setting a positive tone for

the school and for the development of systems that allowed the school to run effectively. The

systems put in place allowed for effective communication, support and empowerment referenced

above.  The second research question addressed the role leadership played in the development of

collective teacher efficacy and is discussed in detail in the following section.

Principal Leadership and the Development of Collective Teacher Efficacy

Consistent with the literature, leadership was found to have direct influence on teachers

and indirect influence on students (Bryk, 2010; Ross, 2006; Velasco, 2012).  Two themes

emerged from analysis in relation to the influence leadership had on collective teacher efficacy at

the study site.  First, the principal was directly credited by the teachers for setting the tone of the

school and the development of systems that enable teachers to meet the needs of students.

Teacher comments support efficacy informing factors for the development of collective teacher

efficacy.

**Setting the tone**. Analysis of interviews showed teachers attributed the principal with setting the tone of the school. They attribute the principal's manner of communication, empowerment of and support for teachers, and consistent focus on what Goddard et al. (2017) referred to as "sustained press for instructional improvement" for shaping the tone of the school. Teachers reference how the principal communicated both verbally and nonverbally. They attributed her consistently calm nature and lack of ego to their trust of her. Further, they attributed her emotional maturity for her warm yet professional approach to caring for staff and understanding the psychology of individuals and the group. Trust was furthered by the fact that she shared power with teachers and each of their viewpoints were afforded the same consideration. Finally, a consistent push to improve student outcomes through trying new approaches and being innovative set high expectations for teachers they all strove to achieve.

The study showed that because the principal understood that her decisions and manner influenced collective teacher efficacy, she used this knowledge to guide her decision making. In the interview with the principal, she expressed an understanding of the importance of distributed leadership and teacher empowerment for supporting student learning. Teachers need the opportunities for onsite collective learning. Micromanagement by administration is to be avoided, as it has negative. effects on collective teacher efficacy as it undermines feelings of trust. Additionally, teachers require opportunities for teachers to build meaningful relationships create the conditions for collective teacher efficacy to grow. Team building was found to be central to that process, especially the beginning of year teambuilding as it sets the tone for the year. And finally, all staff need to take an active, hands on approach to supporting students. Teachers cannot be left to carry this responsibility alone. Collective teacher efficacy is a

collective construct and if there is not collective responsibility there can be no collective teacher efficacy.

In this qualitative case-study, I was able to gain insight into how collective teacher efficacy was developed at the focus site and the role leadership played in the process. Through this study I learned that teacher disposition, teacher support, teacher empowerment, communication, and effective leadership are key components to the development of collective teacher efficacy in urban neighborhood elementary schools serving socio-economically disadvantaged students. I also found that leadership plays a central role in the development of collective teacher efficacy as the principal decides which supports teachers receive, how much teachers are empowered, and are central to setting the tone of the school through decision making and how they approach communication and relationships with staff. Additionally, as principals often have a hand in teacher selection through the hiring process, they can influence what types of teachers work at the school. Understanding how collective teacher efficacy was developed and the role the principal played in the process allows for recommendations to be made for both practice and future research.

**Implication for Policy and Practice**

The findings from this study suggest leadership plays a central role in the development of collective teacher efficacy through a focus on communication, the development of support systems, teacher empowerment, and the selection of teachers based on disposition. As these leadership priorities helped develop collective teacher efficacy in the study site, these findings can serve as recommendations for effective leadership practice in the service of collective teacher efficacy development. These recommendations can also help guide instruction to those

developing and implementing principal training and credentialing programs.  Major implications for each of these findings are discussed next.

A key finding that has implications for leadership practice was the importance of communication.  Essential to the development of effective communication which led to trust in this study was the use of a distributed approach to leadership.  This is also related to the empowerment of teachers.  When everyone's voice was valued regardless of their place in the traditional hierarchy in a school, it communicated respect, appreciation, and the value of the teaching staff and supported the development of collective teacher efficacy.  Leadership also communicated support for teacher risk-taking in the name of student growth, which supported the development of trust.  The implications of these findings are leadership should be aware that communication takes many forms It is both spoken and unspoken, and both are necessary for the development of trust which is needed for innovation and the development of collective teacher efficacy.  These findings also support a move away from a hierarchical approach to leadership where all decision-making power is in the hands of a few at the top as it undermines feelings of collective teacher efficacy and ultimately student achievement,

The support and empowerment of teachers was central to the development of collective teacher efficacy and in direct influence of the school principal was the support and empowerment of teachers.  Teacher support in the form of all school staff actively taking a direct hand in providing for student learning was critical in the development of collective teacher efficacy at the site and serves as an example for leadership practice.  This "all hands on deck" approach to leadership in education also counters the hierarchal approach often seen in education. This approach positively influenced the openness to risk-taking in the study site staff, which was central to their innovation, growth, and collective teacher efficacy.

Another important finding was that teacher disposition played a role in the development of collective teacher efficacy.  The teachers hired at the study site were chosen because of their collaborative nature, openness to observation of and by fellow teachers, and their skill set.  The school developed an interview and select process that focused on the development of a set of questions to target these dispositions.  They also included a performance component in the interview process to ensure applicants possessed the skill set they claimed.  Recruitment also helped ensure quality applicants. Although not all schools are afforded the opportunity to select their staff, this knowledge can offer a list of characteristics of those individuals more likely to be predisposed to working in ways consistent to collective teacher efficacy.  It can also provide a protocol for interviewing practice.

Throughout interviews with the teachers, support staff, and the principal, the school size was referenced as playing a role in the ability of the school to perform as effectively as it did.  Although questions about school size were not part of the original set of questions, I did ask each participant who credited the school size with its success what they thought would happen if the school was to double in size.  Additionally, I asked the principal and one of the support staff who works closely with the principal in running the school what they felt would be necessary at a larger school size to enact the approaches that have proven successful at the study site.  Their answers were very interesting and could help guide school planning and policy.  First, the principal and the support staff member suggested if a school was larger, a divide and conquer approach would be necessary.  Lower grades would be run by one person and the higher grades by another.  Many of the teachers voiced doubt that the school would run as well as it does if it was significantly larger.  All believed that the quality of relationships is lost the larger a school gets and that relationships are at the key to success.

While this case-study provided concrete examples of the actions and behaviors of a principal who successfully nurtured a feeling of collective efficacy amongst her staff and provided insight into how teachers experienced and interpreted those actions, behaviors, and beliefs, there are some factors that need to be acknowledged that played a part in that development and are very case specific and can provide directions for future research. These are discussed next.

**Directions for Future Research**

This study provides several areas in need of further research. First, the study school had a student population of less than 600 students. While the principal and staff expressed that the smaller school size made the work 'easier' it certainly was a factor that influenced the school's success in developing collective teacher efficacy. Future research is needed on schools with larger student populations. Another unique consideration in this study was the fact that the principal opened the school and was able to choose her initial staff. She openly shared that she was looking for a specific type of teacher with a certain disposition. As the research revealed, teacher disposition plays a part in the development of collective teacher efficacy as it influences belief. Although collective teacher efficacy is not simply the sum of taking efficacious people and putting them together, it is clearly easier to start with a staff who have a growth mindset and value collaboration than it is to develop these attitudes in individuals with fixed mindsets who prefers to work in isolation. This leads to the next recommendation; it would be useful to conduct a similar study at a site where the principal came into an established staff and was able to develop collective teacher efficacy in the staff. This is especially important in schools and states with collective bargaining agreements that limit hiring practices of principals.

Another area of needed study is what happens when a school develops collective teacher efficacy under principal leadership like that described in this study and then the principal of that school leaves the school. What happens to that collective teacher efficacy? Does it continue? Does it dissolve? The teachers in this study voiced concern over what might happen to their feelings of collective teacher efficacy if the principal was to change. Another potential study could be to look at how a principal who successfully innovates and implements initiatives that develop collective teacher efficacy within a district with staunch guidelines and controls. How do they navigate that process?

Some potential research questions for future research, based on the findings in this study are as follows: How does a principal build collective teacher efficacy in a school lacking collective teacher efficacy? What role does school size play in developing collective teacher efficacy? How influential is a principal's emotional maturity in the development of collective teacher efficacy?

**Summary**

The link between collective teacher efficacy and increasing achievement in students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds is very well documented (e.g., Bandura, 1993, 1997; Goddard, 2001; Goddard et al., 2015; Hattie, 2015; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Seashore-Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010). And yet the achievement gap between these students and their more affluent counterparts remains. This begs the question, if we know collective teacher efficacy can mitigate the effects of socio-economic disadvantage for students, what is keeping collective teacher efficacy from developing and what can we do about it?

Using a qualitative case-study approach, I sought to gain an understanding of how collective teacher efficacy was developed in an urban neighborhood elementary school in the

San Joaquin Valley of California. Through interviews with teachers, support staff, and the

principal, I gained insight into the dynamics of the principal's leadership, the structures and

supports in place for teachers and students, and I came to understand the collaborative and

communicative nature of the school and what types of beliefs, behaviors, and practices facilitated

it.

As shown in this case study, the principal had considerable influence over the

development of collective teacher efficacy in the staff through her beliefs, behaviors and

practices. Through this sense of collective teacher efficacy, the staff worked cohesively to move

students forward and ensure successful outcomes for all students.

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APPENDIX A: TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1.	Tell me about how you came to be part of this teaching staff.

2.	What were your impressions of this school when you joined the staff? How have those feelings changed over time?

3.	Tell me about how teachers here work together to support students.

4.	Tell me about how teachers and administration work together to support students.

5.	Can you describe how professional development is planned and implemented at your school?

6.	Can you describe how decisions about goals and curriculum are made?

7.	How would you describe your school culture?

8.	How does leadership influence culture?

9.	What do you feel has had the greatest influence on the school as a whole?

APPENDIX B: ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. What is your school mission?

2. What is your school vision?

3. How have you as a school worked to achieve your mission and vision?

4. How is decision making approached at your school? What role do teachers play in that process (follow up if necessary)?

5. How would you describe the culture of your school?

6. In what ways do you as a leader work to influence that culture?

7. Can you tell me how you approach leadership?

8. How do you feel your leadership has influenced student learning?

9. What structures have you put in place to support student learning

APPENDIX C: SCHOOL STAFF INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1.      Tell me about how you came to work at this school.

2.      What were your impressions of this school when you joined the staff?

3.      Tell me about how this school work together to support student learning.

4.      How is professional learning handled at this school?

5.      Tell me about administration supports teachers to increase student learning

6.      Can you describe the school culture?

7.      How does administration influence school culture?

APPENDIX D: EMAIL FOR STUDY SITE SUGGESTIONS

Hello,

My name is Lori Morgan. I am a doctoral candidate at University of the Pacific. I am conducting a case-study on a single elementary school [in your school district] that exemplifies collective teacher efficacy. I am writing to ask for your input in selecting that case-study school.

Collective teacher efficacy is the shared belief that a teaching staff can work together to overcome obstacles to successfully serve their students. The qualifying factors of collective teacher efficacy for this study include the following:

**advanced teacher influence**: teachers assume specific leadership roles and along with that, the power to make decisions on school-wide issues

**goal consensus**: staff work collectively and reach consensus on which goals to set

**teacher knowledge of one another's' work**: teaching staff have intimate knowledge of what goes on in other classrooms

**cohesive staff:** staff who agree with each other on fundamental and organizational issues

**responsive leadership**: leadership where the leaders act consistently with the principle that it is their responsibility to help others carry out their duties effectively, are responsive and show concern and respect for staff.

**effective systems of intervention**: All school staff are instrumental in creating the conditions for success and realize their collective efforts make a difference and help all students achieve

Donohoo, J. (2017). *Collective efficacy: How educators' beliefs impact student learning*. Corwin.

I am requesting the names of district non-charter elementary schools you believe fit the above description. I ask you list recommendations in order, with 1 being best fitting the description and progressing from there. You may recommend as many schools you like. Your input will be kept completely confidential, and your identity will not be shared with anyone. Please feel free to share your input with me via email, text message, letter, or by phone. My contact information is listed below.

Please submit your reply by November 23rd, 2018.

Thank you in advance for your time,
Lori Morgan, M.Ed.

APPENDIX F: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate in a case-study about your school site and how your school worked together to develop collective teacher efficacy or the collective belief that together you can overcome any obstacle to successfully serve your students. Your school was selected as representative of a school with the enabling factors of collective teacher efficacy, specifically advanced teacher influence, goal consensus, teacher knowledge of one another's' work, cohesive staff, responsive leadership, and effective leadership. I will be selecting 10 to 15 participants for in this study; 6-10 will be teaching staff, 1-2 support staff, and 1-2 administrators. If more than the required number of participants agree to participate, purposeful sampling will be used to select participants.  Candidates will ideally have worked at the site for a minimum of three years. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in up to two interviews—an initial 60-minute audio recorded in person interview and a possible 30 minute follow up phone interview. Both interviews will be at a mutually agreed upon time outside of the contractual day and the in-person interview will be at a private location of your choosing. The interviews will occur between January and February August and December of 2019. All participation is completely voluntary, and participants can choose to withdraw at any time. All participation will be completely confidential and all identifiable information will be replaced with pseudonyms including participant names, school name, and district name.

If you are interested in participating, please complete the information on the following page. You can contact me at lmorgan@yahoo.com with any questions. Selected participants will be contacted by phone to arrange interviews.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,
Lori Morgan, M.Ed.


Yes, I'd like to participate in the case study _____

No, I am not interested in participation in the case-study _____

I'd like to receive more information on the study before deciding to participate in the case-study

_____



My contact information is as follows:

Name_____

Years of teaching experience _____ Years at this school site _____

Grade currently taught _____

Phone number _____

Email _____

APPENDIX G: INITIAL CODES

| Principal | Support Staff |
|---|---|
| <ul><li>Reflective practice</li><li>Flexibility in leadership</li><li>Importance of team selection</li><li>Shared decision making</li><li>Team building</li><li>Trust</li><li>Collaboration</li><li>Setting priorities</li><li>Supporting staff</li><li>Collaborative data analysis</li><li>Use of common language</li><li>Systems for everything</li><li>Vetting all decisions</li><li>Change is well planned for</li><li>Respect staff to earn respect</li><li>Emotional support for staff</li><li>Fairness</li><li>Impartiality</li><li>Support staff to support students</li><li>Teacher leadership open to all</li><li>Building shared knowledge</li><li>Build capacity</li><li>Goal setting in all areas (behavior, academic, parent involvement)</li><li>Collective commitments</li><li>Be a cheerleader</li><li>Don't micromanage</li><li>Protect staff</li><li>Consistency</li><li>Say yes more than no</li><li>Promote risk-taking</li><li>Model what you expect</li><li>Project calmness</li><li>Be mindful</li><li>Build strong support systems</li><li>Be proactive</li><li>Be mindful of school culture and climate</li><li>Encourage teachers to get out of comfort zone</li></ul> | <ul><li>Intentional leadership</li><li>School size</li><li>Staff selection</li><li>Support systems</li><li>All hands-on deck</li><li>Team building</li><li>Prioritize time</li><li>Tiered intervention</li><li>Focus on problem solving</li><li>Thinking outside of box</li><li>Research based decisions</li><li>Shared knowledge</li><li>Collective responsibility across all staff</li><li>Strong PLC</li><li>Attitude of new staff chosen over experience</li><li>Protect school climate</li><li>Celebrate staff</li><li>Process of implementing change</li><li>Teacher leadership organic</li><li>Empowered staff</li><li>Deep love of students</li><li>Fun staff</li><li>Data driven decisions</li><li>Focused staff</li><li>Mutual respect</li><li>Safe environment for risk taking</li><li>Shared information – no surprises</li><li>Change planned for</li><li>Support of families</li><li>Trust is built not just expected</li><li>Learn from one another</li><li>Safe place for dissent</li><li>Personality profiles to help staff learn about each other</li><li>Strong sense of belonging</li><li>Fundraising for balanced education</li><li>Clear expectations for staff and students</li></ul> |

| | |
|---|---|
| ● Your energy sets the tone | ● Admin listens and negotiate |
| **Newer Teachers** | **Teachers Who Opened School** |
| ● Administration the key to success<br>● Hire right people<br>● Hard work expected<br>● Administration is fair – negotiates<br>● Psychological profiles<br>● Program specialist helps run show<br>● Trusting environment – developed through showing ability<br>● Staff collaborative by nature<br>● Staff invested in success<br>● School's physical design influences collaboration<br>● Compartmentalized by subject<br>● Teambuilding<br>● School is cultish<br>● Work hard, play hard<br>● Consistency in all things<br>● Solution oriented staff<br>● Staff all go above and beyond – not just a few<br>● Mutual trust among all staff<br>● Safe to dissent<br>● Principal and program specialist balance each other well<br>● Positive peer pressure<br>● Support with student behavior<br>● No micromanaging<br>● Collaboration across grade levels<br>● Staff believe they can solve own problems<br>● Admin support risk taking<br>● Staff encouraged to push beyond comfort zone<br>● Staff share knowledge – take turns leading professional development<br>● Teachers are reflective<br>● Genuine caring relationships<br>● Data driven decisions<br>● Administrator well loved<br>● Input sought by all staff | ● Cohesive staff – shared responsibility<br>● Admin support for instruction<br>● Open door policy<br>● Staff loyalty to principal<br>● Data based decision making<br>● Collaborative decision making<br>● Collective responsibility<br>● Proactive approach to problem solving<br>● High expectations – positive peer pressure<br>● Clear expectations – tights and loose<br>● Psychological approach to coaching<br>● Mutual respect<br>● Teachers focused on student learning<br>● Admin very organized<br>● New school and staff key to success<br>● No drama<br>● Admin sets positive tone<br>● Culture of problem solving<br>● Shared leadership<br>● Staff vested in school success<br>● Fundraising for extra curricular<br>● Teacher leadership informal and organic<br>● Teachers self-directed<br>● Collaboration time prioritized<br>● Meetings goal oriented<br>● Small school makes work easier<br>● Staff share all work<br>● Staff are positive and have positive outlook |

| | |
|---|---|
| ● Staff are professional – no gossip or talking behind backs | |