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STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS: IMPACT ON STUDENTS IN AN ONLINE
CREDIT RECOVERY PROGRAM

By
Cheryl Marie Wright

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Gardner-Webb University College of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University
2024

Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Cheryl Marie Wright under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University College of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

Prince Bull, PhD
Dissertation Chair

Date

Amanda Allen, PhD
Content Specialist

Date

Lane Wesson, PhD
Methodologist

Date

Prince Bull, PhD
College of Education Representative

Date

Prince Bull, PhD
Dean of the College of Education

Date

Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation first to my mother, Lottie Melba Deshazior Brown. Thank you for your continued guidance from heaven. I know this makes you smile. As your heart desires, I have joined the “Deshaziors” with doctoral degrees! To my father, William “Buster” Brown, you made a daddy’s girl. Thank you for showing your daily work ethic when you had the strength before God gave you rest, and to all my siblings Sylvia, Billy, Juanita, Donna, and Eddie, who have gone to glory and left me in this world, my angels. You all loved me so very much, so I know this makes you proud and happy for me. To my Grasshopper, my Soror, and my daughter, Cherdrena Tewonnie, thank you for growing into you and showing me how to do things right. To my rock, my husband, Daniel, thank you for holding it down, keeping it together through this process, and always making my dreams come true. Herbie, you are the best dog in the world! To my grandchildren, Eowyn, Ehren, and Emelie, be smart, happy, kind, humble, and the person God will have you to be. I love you all!

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I decided to earn a doctorate to consider post-retirement options of interest to me. When the search was narrowed to two doctoral programs, dialogue with a recruitment specialist directed me to select Gardner-Webb University. God has always guided me where I needed to be, even if I wanted to be someplace else. Five months into the COVID-19 pandemic, I enrolled in a university founded on Christian values, and the main campus was only 4 hours from my house. My experience has been positively impacted by the educators within my school district and those at the university. Listed in the order of contact, thank you, Dr. Paula Coates, for encouraging me and letting me know that some days will be rough. Dr. Amanda Allen has allowed me to take her time, respond to all my emails and phone calls, listen to me, read my rough drafts, and assist without judgment. Dr. Cherry Johnson is like no one else. Amid her father being in the emergency room and her daughter's baby girl taking her sweet time to enter the world, she read my paper, wrote a ton of feedback, sent me an example, and told me, "You got this!" Dr. Nicholas King gave me conversations, guidance, and quiet confidence. Eagle Pride!

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Abstract

STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS: IMPACT ON STUDENTS IN AN ONLINE CREDIT RECOVERY PROGRAM. Wright, Cheryl Marie, 2024: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University.

This study aimed to evaluate the impact of student-teacher relationships in an online credit recovery program to provide information that will benefit student achievement at the classroom level. The nature of online learning does not promote the engaging interaction that the traditional face-to-face classroom embraces. Online credit recovery is specialized for students who have failed one or more high school courses. Some students who fail a course may lose confidence in their learning abilities, which could cause negative emotional and social consequences. This study was significant because it showed how important teacher relationships are for online credit recovery students' academic and personal accomplishments. Volunteer participants were enrolled in the site program at different times over a five-year span. Through virtual interviews, this qualitative research case study analyzed post-high school credit recovery program participants' experiences and perspectives concerning student-teacher relationships. Data were collected from verbal accounts, and responses were transcribed, analyzed, categorized, coded, and aligned with the research questions. Individual participant responses were evaluated in regard to their perception of the online credit recovery classroom culture. The key research findings implied that it is important for teachers to be intentional when establishing relationships with individual students. Each student has specific requirements that determine an authentic relationship. The research showed that teachers cannot approach all students with the same relational strategy. Effective student-

teacher relationships require skills and tools that teachers can master through district professional development and school-site Professional Learning Communities (PLC) collaboration.

Keywords: credit recovery program, social-emotional learning competencies, student-teacher relationships, student self-efficacy, trajectory, marginalized groups, teacher perspectives, student perspectives, inclusivity, online learning

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Student-teacher relationships are crucial determinants of the academic and postsecondary citizenship of students. Kozol (2005), in his book *The Shame of a Nation*, asked the question, “What do we need to do to alter these realities?” (p. 215). Kozol addressed the issue of student perceptions when they feel they are not supported, nurtured, or motivated to learn and when they are inspired to acquire self-efficacy and determination.

There is considerable research on students who fail classes and eventually drop out of school, mainly in the ninth grade (McFarland et al., 2019). The first administration of the 1960s National Assessment of Educational Progress reported that the disparity among African American, Hispanic, and White students’ academic achievement continues to exist (Campbell et al., 2000). The academic disparity makes it more likely that more minority students will drop out. The early reforms of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and more recent President Obama (2016) Reform for the Future blueprint indicated that there are still significant racial and ethnic disparities in the achievement gap (Ladson-Billings, 2003). Multiple graduation pathways are currently in place to prevent students from dropping out, but the most effective in-school strategy is teacher relationships (Schlechty, 2002).

Tomlinson (2014) clarified the importance of teaching each child according to learning needs and style. This type of student engagement motivates students to stay in school, and they perceive learning as beneficial. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 ([NCLB], 2002) aimed to ensure equal education because the high dropout rates showed that certain ethnic groups were dropping out more than others. In hopes of closing the

gap, the Federal Communications Commission (2015) initiative stipulates the need for equal educational opportunities for every student. In their book *Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School*, Hargreaves and Fullan (1999) explained the importance of investing in students using resources, strategies, and techniques that embrace future generations. Best practices reinforce the notion of captivating student interest to keep them from dropping out. Several books and research articles that discuss how to advance student achievement have focused on the significance of establishing student and teacher relationships as a foundational factor for success and understanding the importance of the need for schools to foster values that connect students with the school by embracing and engaging them in the academic culture.

In his book *Working on the Work: An Action Plan for Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents*, Schlechty (2002) explained the importance of teachers delivering significant assignments and having authentic relationships. Teachers should create a culture of learning in which they recognize that each student is learning. Authentic learning and relationships make students feel like they belong in the school environment. When students are detached from social and academic aspects of school, it can negatively affect their self-perception, attitude within the environment, and/or confidence. These factors can be caused by external elements within the school culture that are not visibly evident, such as bias, discrimination, intimidation, or exclusion. According to Testerman (1996), some students who drop out of school have more confidence and self-esteem. This statement contradicts what many people might assume about students who drop out. Students, and people in general, are confident and proud when they feel like they are in a place where they belong and can contribute. Testerman's research found that when daily

failure and frustration become daunting for a student, dropping out becomes a consideration. A student's self-efficacy and intuition are instrumental in their decision to drop out of school. Students react emotionally when they are disliked or made to feel invisible. These emotions decrease their desire to remain in school, and destructive behaviors become an issue. What they need is to have a sense of belonging within the school. My dissertation explored student perceptions and perspectives and the relevance of productive relationships that advance learning, graduation, and citizenship.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) reported that the graduation rate increased to 87.6% with the class of 2020. The increase is up from 86.5% from the 2019 graduating class. In 2006, when the state first reported a cohort graduation rate, it was 68.3%, so this significant measure has improved by more than 19 percentage points in the past 13 years. Teachers and administrators who attended a crucial conversation book study workshop at my base school conducted by district office personnel argued that the emphasis on social-emotional learning (SEL) and the student-teacher relationship competencies are the primary factors for the graduation increase. At the workshop's close, school improvement team members from four high schools shared that their school improvement plan included creating a school culture that embraces building relationships.

I am the researcher at the school site presented in this document. My school has a minority population of 22%, and in my role as a media specialist and credit recovery supervisor, I have observed students who drop out for various reasons. I have had many informal conversations with students who have confided in me. I have learned that many Hispanic male students want to drop out to work in construction. These students work on

the weekends and want to earn more by working during the week. In addition, they share that they make more money than teachers do. Hispanic students also shared that they want to drop out to care for sick family members or create crafts and sell these products. Many students have shared that they do not feel included in the school community. They think the teachers do not embrace their culture. This lack of inclusivity makes some angry and misbehave, causing behavioral consequences. I have heard students say that the teachers like the White students but only pretend to like other ethnicities. The Black male and female students with whom I have informally spoken say they would rather be at work earning money than in school. These students have talked to me about feeling as if they were invisible in the classroom. They have said that the teachers and students do not look them in the eye or act friendly toward them. These students do not want to ask questions about assignments, become detached from the learning process, and are frustrated. Due to frustration, these students engage in inappropriate behaviors that lead to disciplinary measures. They think school is boring and do not see themselves represented in the school culture. Depending on their home environment, these students prefer to drop out of school to work or engage in illegal activities to acquire money. They do not make a connection to future earnings by securing a high school diploma. The White students shared that those who consider dropping out feel that their teachers do not like them and are better suited to work and earn money than wasting time in school. They feel excluded because they are not one of those students who strive for good grades and who are involved in school clubs and activities. Because they do not feel included, they resort to inappropriate behaviors that lead to discipline referrals. Students have shared these issues with me in face-to-face conversations.

In other conversations, students have shared that they are involved in so much activity at home that they cannot sleep at night, so they sleep at school; at times, students need to babysit siblings while their parents work. Students of all ethnicities shared that they are unmotivated and would rather stay home. The reasons for dropout vary, but the common thread is that when student-teacher relationships have mutual understanding and respect, appropriate behavior results and authentic relationships develop that encourage student achievement (Cahyadi & Ramli, 2023). Over the decades, I have read educational journals and research articles and have firsthand knowledge of these situations from various school sites involving personal friends and family members, which support the narrative that these issues, perceptions, and perspectives are not exclusive to one school site; they have been expressed and identified for decades by students throughout the country. To better understand the impact of successful teacher relationships on student behaviors, I observe that the education field needs more research that examines and analyzes factors relevant to pre- and post-COVID-19 pandemic situational and environmental circumstances.

Current research supports the need to incorporate equitable practice in online credit recovery programs (Viano & Henry, 2023). Diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in online learning programs can foster positive student-teacher relationships and student achievement when diversity is evident and students can relate to the environment. Equity enables students to have opportunities and activities that allow them to thrive (Rolstad & Rayne, 2023). This research study demonstrates equity because it is through the students' perspectives and allows their narratives to reflect their life situations. Students have variables such as homelessness and mental, physical, or drug

abuse, and allowing them the opportunity to thrive in a level academic setting gives them a sense of inclusion and belongingness. Credit recovery program students could feel academically and socially inferior because they did not pass a class. Inclusion and belonging are not about making them feel comfortable among students who have failed but that they feel seen, heard, and cared for in a trusting space with their best interest as a priority. This research study's SEL, self-determination, self-efficacy, and physiological needs theoretical framework support diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in a digital environment to accommodate the circumstances of all students.

Chapter 2 includes a review of research on the credit recovery program history; student, teacher, and societal attitudes towards the fidelity and policies governing the program; and the theoretical frameworks that propel credit recovery student success, considering the relationship between teacher inclusivity and student behavior. It examined whether teacher perspectives of students affect student perceptions of teachers. According to Korpershoek et al. (2020), honest actions and words are essential for social and academic success because they open communication to conversations that may be difficult but are necessary for character analysis. Most student-teacher miscommunication leads to disciplinary actions. Many of those disciplinary actions result in suspensions. Suspension concerns students who feel excluded or misunderstood and exhibit inappropriate behavior. Online credit recovery programs have become more popular since 2018 with the Obama administration's education initiatives to increase the high school graduation rate (Malkus, 2018). African American students are suspended more frequently than any other ethnicity. Tables 1 and 2 are comparison tables based on county and school site numbers depending on the school's racial balance. Table 1 shows the Site

County suspensions for the 2021-2022 school year.

Table 1

Site County's Short-Term Suspensions 2020-2021 School Year

| Public school | Students | Number suspended |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| County Public Schools | Females | 84 |
| County Public Schools | Males | 291 |
| County Public Schools | Hispanic Males | 51 |
| County Public Schools | Hispanic Females | 19 |
| County Public Schools | White Males | 110 |
| County Public Schools | White Females | 31 |
| County Public Schools | African American Males | 111 |
| County Public Schools | African American Females | 24 |

The data show that Black and White males had the same number of short-term suspensions. While it looks evenly divided, Table 2 shows data retrieved from the school district website. It shows the student population by ethnicity from a specific school site.

Table 2

Site County Student Population by Ethnicity, 2022-2023

| Student diversity | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------|
| White | 59.7% |
| African American | 17% |
| Hispanic | 17% |
| Multiracial | 4.8% |
| Asian | 1% |
| Native American | 0.3% |
| Pacific islander | 0.2% |
| Unknown | 0% |

When comparing Table 1 and Table 2, the data in Table 1 show that Black and White males have equal suspensions, 111 versus 110 respectively. Table 2 shows the Site County's demographic information as 48.13% White students and 17.09% African American students. There is a disparity in the number of African American students

suspended at a 3:1 ratio. The rates of suspensions of African American students in predominately-White schools suggest there may be a poor understanding of cultural and ethnic differences, which could indicate that teachers may not have strong relationships with African American students. When teachers and students have strong relationships, the dropout rates decrease because cultural and ethnic differences are better understood and tolerated. In predominantly White schools, African American males have the highest discipline referrals, are frequently suspended, and have a higher risk of dropping out (Snyder et al., 2018).

Site Setting Description

The setting of the study is in southeast North Carolina. It is a large rural school district with 37,592 students. There are 2,600 classroom teachers, 48 schools, 23 elementary schools, 12 middle schools, nine high schools, and one virtual school. The school site graduation rate is 91.1%, and the dropout rate is 1.96%. The remaining 6% were withdrawn from the school to attend schools in other locations. To help decrease the dropout rate, the school site implemented a credit recovery program. Credit recovery means students who have failed one or more courses can enroll in the program the following semester, recover, and earn credits for the failed courses. This allows them to stay on their projected graduation track. The program has state and district regulations that allow for flexibility of use at individual school sites. The credit recovery program design is specific to online software use. Students must access and advance through their recovery courses in an online, nontraditional, self-paced classroom environment. Students are not charged a fee to participate in the program. School districts in some states charge students a fee to participate, but the site district does not. It is accessible to any student

who has failed a course and if the school counselors determine it to be the best course of action. The school site in this study has an on-campus computer lab that operates during the traditional calendar days. The district requires full-time certified teachers to monitor each credit recovery class period to ensure students receive academic support if needed. The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief: Credit Recovery (ESSER, 2021) suggested that fully certified teachers monitor credit recovery programs.

The site school district personnel are responsible for researching and deciding which credit recovery program software is most beneficial. Although each site is flexible, the district curriculum specialist purchases the software and selects a district employee to oversee the implementation and address any questions or concerns teachers or school administrators may have. After 5 years of using the Connexus software, the district recently changed to Edmentum Sensei Courseware for credit recovery and first-time courses. The new software is more user-friendly for students and has efficient teacher monitoring capabilities. The software and site procedures allow students to work on any web-based device, such as a cell phone, tablet, Chromebook, laptop, or desktop. Our site students are assigned to work in the distance learning technology lab; however, they can access courses 24 hours daily, Sunday through Saturday, off-campus, anywhere they have internet wireless access to connect with the district and site portal. The course availability access gives students the latitude to progress and complete courses at their own pace. The Edmentum Courseware aligns with the district grading scale, with 60 to 100 being a passing score. Credit recovery course completion requires students to complete 100% of the course and earn a mastery grade of at least 60. Due to universal student access, many people criticize the fidelity of the program and the validity of student achievement. Our

site encourages students to apply themselves and be confident in learning the information. Credit recovery class monitors can view real-time student activity and progress through the courseware program.

According to the National Assessment for Educational Progress (2020), districts are accountable for regularly examining credit recovery programs and reporting their efforts to increase student achievement. School districts are responsible for ensuring students are learning the online material. Research conducted by the Children's Defense Fund (2020) showed an academic gap between African American males and other races. National assessment data have shown that the achievement gap persists in reading and mathematics (Camera, 2015). In mathematics, African Americans place slightly below their Native American and Hispanic counterparts and significantly below White and Asian students (Camera, 2015). The online credit recovery program is an alternative approach to academic success that could benefit low-performing students due to the abbreviated courses.

While the information on racial disparities is provided for students in a traditional classroom, it does not account for students enrolled in a credit recovery program. Credit recovery student grades are documented as failed or passed in the PowerSchool data system. Whether students pass with a 60 or 100, they complete the course, and their grade point average (GPA) is unaffected. A GPA is not increased or decreased due to the grade achieved in a credit recovery course. In this case, the academic gap data could not account for the number of minorities who completed their credit recovery courses with minimal passing or perfect scores. In the literature I have reviewed, the perspective among researchers is that the effectiveness and fidelity of online learning, including

student achievement, is under-researched (Cavanaugh et al., 2004).

The good news is that the *Projections of Education Statistics to 2028* report from the National Center for Education Statistics (2020) predicted an increase in minority 4-year high school enrollment and graduation rates. The projection that started decades ago could not have anticipated the COVID-19 pandemic or the physiological, social, and emotional trauma causing an academic delay for many students. If the prediction comes to fruition, educators will optimistically continue to work toward closing the equity gap in schools. Building strong student-teacher relationships is vital to creating a culture that perpetually increases the graduation rate. I have witnessed Hispanic, Black, and White students fail classes. There does not need to be an inequity gap; all student races and ethnicities must be on a leveled playing field. It is not my intent to trivialize the racial gap and school inequalities that cause academic disparities. These issues exist and should not be ignored, but instead, used as an avenue to progress toward a culture of closing the gap.

Many research articles report that credit recovery programs work to increase graduation rates and decrease high school dropout rates for academically vulnerable students (Powell, 2018). This dissertation research study is essential because it considers that all students fail classes. This includes White students and those from wealthy, middle-, and low-income status households. For various reasons, all races and ethnicities can fail courses and drop out of school without a culture of effective student-teacher relationships.

This research examined how teacher relationships and perceptions affect students in a credit recovery program. It is focused on students' progression in the program, not on their race or ethnicity, but on the whole child (Deci & Ryan, 1985b) and the extrinsic and

intrinsic individual challenges of each student, who, for whatever reason, needs to pass one or more courses previously failed so they can graduate with their cohort. This paper's research model is a rural high school in southeastern North Carolina with approximately 2,000 students. It focuses on the impact teacher relationships have on students who have failed a traditional classroom course and who are given the responsibility of retaking the material through a self-paced online course.

According to Goings and Shi (2018), partly due to tracking or ability grouping, inequitable academic expectations for high school students have become an established norm for educators. Still, when a teacher actively and persistently commands high expectations as a nonnegotiable, it can change the trajectory and promote self-efficacy in a student's life. It is pertinent that teachers intentionally communicate constructive expectations to make all students feel equal and inclusive. A North Carolina study on teacher expectations of students who fail classes found that teachers do not expect much from them academically (Holt & Gershenson, 2015). When the academic bar is low, students feel defeated. Students can grow within the expectational space, but when the bar is raised and relationships are nurtured. Student-teacher relationships should connect to engage and motivate students (Pellas, 2014). Established relationships based on respect are foundational to student recognition of expectational projections (Holt & Gershenson, 2015). Students who fail classes are not candidates for academic awards or accolades; for these reasons, they need to be inspired by the power of believing they can achieve high academic levels and that they have yet to accomplish that goal (Dweck & Master, 2012). To help credit recovery students realize they can and will be successful, teachers can find ways to intentionally focus on SEL competencies and listen to students to accommodate

learning styles better. When teachers acknowledge the ramifications of using solely ability grouping and how it affects the equity belief gap and begin understanding the generational digital age learning processes and best practices, they can improve student accomplishments in the credit recovery program.

Chapter 3 shows how teacher relationships affect students in a credit recovery class. It outlines how I proceeded with the qualitative research case study that details the perceptions, perspectives, and experiences of credit recovery students who have graduated from high school. The one-to-one online video interview questions, designed with a school district curriculum and instruction professional, are aligned with the three research questions. A qualitative data instrument aligning common-themed responses will better inform the site and the district on relevant program learning designs.

Statement of the Problem

The problem is that students in online credit recovery programs do not feel they have a strong relationship with their teachers. Student-teacher relationships in high school online environments are a new concept; the academic focus was on mastering the computer software with minimal human interactions. ISTE (2019a) technology student standards were adopted in North Carolina in 2020. Generally, students would work through a software module without any teacher interaction. The research examining what leads to academic success in the online classroom environment is essential; however, it is important to examine data on the students who have academic accomplishments after proceeding with difficulty through academic failure. It is critical to add to the research information about students in online credit recovery programs—a marginalized group of high school graduates who achieved academic success and became productive citizens

due to their resilient student-teacher relationship. These students could be considered marginalized due to their academic failure status. Teachers may not be not establishing relationships with the students at an online credit recovery program site in North Carolina. The site reported that several credit recovery students repeat their courses two or more times. While students work on their computers, teachers sit at their desks. Most often, communication pertains to technology or behavioral issues. Students enrolled in credit recovery programs rarely have authentic student-teacher relationships that evoke self-efficacy and productive trajectories. Research about online student courses does not account for students who have failed face-to-face instructional courses and who have repeatedly failed their online recovery courses. A students enrolled a Credit Recovery program could have various mental anguish issues about having a failing course status. Some students feel helpless and embarrassed. This makes them reluctant, and they begin to think they cannot or may not want to pass the failed courses. They secretly harbor fear and insecurity regardless of their grade level (De Castella et al., 2013). Many students, parents, and teachers feel credit recovery courses are substandard and less challenging than in the traditional classroom setting. Between 1999 and 2004, Cavanaugh et al. (2004) conducted a seminal meta-analysis statistical review of 14 K-12 online programs. The study showed that online learning and traditional classroom instruction produce the exact measures of academic achievement (Cavanaugh et al., 2004). The study revealed that online students demonstrate exceptional academic rigor and relevance, but it did not account for online credit recovery students. It considers students who have the motivation and tenacity to work online independently. Some research sources argue that credit recovery online students do not meet high-quality academic standards by not

matriculating through the traditional classroom culture. They think students who fail a class should repeat it in the conventional classroom. This research contends that the students in this study who failed their credit recovery courses did not progress due to intrinsic teacher relationship needs that were not addressed at the time and not due to the nontraditional online classroom instruction. Teachers are not taught that relationships with credit recovery students are vital to their success. A relationship with the teacher is one element in the traditional classroom that generally does not exist in the online setting. The status quo over the decades in various academic settings has been that most teachers who monitor an online environment ask students to be focused and fully engaged with web-based technology, and when students are distracted or disengaged from the lesson technology, teachers usually do not notice, or they reprimand them for being off task.

When authentic teacher relations are not established with students in online credit recovery programs, students could feel isolated and not be motivated to complete their courses. Teachers must be intentional in methods and techniques that propel marginalized groups to accomplish academic goals, acquire self-efficacy, and own an optimistic trajectory. Teachers should intentionally implement equitable approaches and learning style considerations. SEL competencies accomplished an estimated 96% increase in students who completed all courses within the determined semester, graduated with their first-year class, and are currently productive citizens; however, most teachers have low expectations for students who fail classes (Durr, 2020). Students know how teachers perceive them through the relationships they establish. It is essential for teachers to be genuinely concerned with the student's well-being. Students are transitioning to middle and high school and experiencing lower teacher expectations, which diminish their self-

esteem (Becker & Neumann, 2018).

Any student can have circumstances that may cause them to fail a course. They may be facing challenging circumstances while attempting to repeat a course. A teacher's mindset can determine how peers regard the student. According to Sabarwal et al. (2022), when teachers have a fixed mindset about the learning potential of disadvantaged students, they adjust, lowering their learning expectations. This teacher-belief gap can be detrimental to a student who is not academically challenged. In 2014, while I was having coffee at Busboys and Poets bookstore in Washington, DC, Kimberlé Crenshaw, the sentinel writer whose books launched the critical race theory movement, was in an informal conversation with a small group. They discussed how the belief gap contributes to the achievement gap (Crenshaw, personal communication, June 15, 2014). I believe that is true. In conversations with fellow educators over the years, most consider students who fail classes as lazy or unfocused. As educators, we need to change our attitudes. When students are in danger of failing, we must establish an authentic, intentional student-teacher relationship to ensure their success.

The Credit Recovery program was established to allow students who have failed one or more classes to earn credit for the class. In contrast to the respect given to students who pursue honors and academically gifted courses. Some students may be intentionally or unintentionally characterized and categorized as a low-performing academic group. Credit recovery programs expect student self-learning with little teacher and student interaction (Tromski-Klingshirn & Miura, 2017). Courses are generally self-paced. The school research site does not require all students to attend classes at the site; exceptions exist based on individual student records and are at the discretion of the counselor or

administration. Some students work solely from outside the building at their convenience. Most students attend the site credit recovery program during the school day usually have blocks of traditional face-to-face courses.

Although data can be generated, the research site's school district does not record credit recovery student data based exclusively on race, gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic family status. The data recorded are limited to the number of student enrollments. The district where this study took place is not concerned with credit recovery student pass/fail data. It has yet to collect the demographic and disparities data to help it implement a future best practices design. Roberts (2020) ascertained online credit recovery as an attractive option for students who believe they are too far behind to catch up and graduate with their freshman classmates. Multiple data collections and analyses could help schools better prepare for students who fail classes at all levels to ensure they graduate on time.

The research site's credit recovery program is self-paced. Students can complete courses independently, which accommodates their expediency and manageability. The online program software allows students to take a preassessment and score a passing grade, exempting them from mastered assignments or having to complete specific unit coursework. According to Oliver and Kellogg (2015), this strategy enables students to finish courses faster with fewer distractions. They do not have to review or relearn materials they already know. Students placed in a credit recovery course who failed classes did so with a grade of 59 or below, so they may have retained information learned in the class but were ineligible to pass the class.

The practicality of self-paced learning has become a source of controversy. Many

news and journal articles give insight from individuals and groups who believe the credit recovery program takes away from the rigorous curriculum students experience in a traditional classroom setting; however, the credit recovery classroom experience can be vital when teachers intentionally construct authentic relationships with the students. The priority concern in the research site credit recovery classroom is the student's social and emotional well-being and lessening anxiety concerning the number of classes a student is recovering and the stigma associated with course recovery. These students may have the perception of being academic failures, having to retake at least one course they failed.

Despite the good intentions of teachers, students who fail classes are expected to perform at a lower academic level than their counterparts (Irwin et al., 2021). These expectations are seen at national, state, and local levels, corresponding with substandard student achievement and exceedingly high discipline and dropout rates (Bowers & Sprott, 2012). Several data resources distinguish race and ethnicity gap issues. While those problems and supporting data are relevant and should remain a focal point of educational conversations, this site study includes and identifies all races and ethnicities and details their perceptions and perspectives on teacher relationships. Students in this study are recognized by the differentiated instructional strategies needed to help them progress depending on their social and emotional needs. There seems to be a disconnect between teacher receptiveness to examine their relational and expectational practices and their commitments to professional ethics that create learning environments conducive to student achievement (Haberman & Hancock, 2019). In a credit recovery program, students need daily assertions of relationship skills, social awareness, self-awareness, self-management, and decision-making through SEL competency strategies. Although all

students can benefit from exposure to these competencies, students who are taken out of the traditional classroom setting and placed in an isolated, self-paced, teacher-monitored, online course and struggling academically to graduate with their first-year class have critical needs for these competencies.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of student-teacher relationships in an online credit recovery program to provide relevant knowledge needed to guide success at the classroom level. It examined a school site online credit recovery program to evaluate the significance of pedagogical practices incorporating relational strategies and high expectations and the effect of those practices and expectations on high school marginalized students' achievement, self-efficacy, and trajectory. It will contribute to the research and discussion on credit recovery program fidelity, including the significance of teacher relationships. The study explored the interconnectedness between students' self-confidence in their abilities and how teachers perceive the students' abilities. The goal of this case study research approach was to present a deep, thick description of the experiences (Creswell, 2014) of former students who were enrolled in a credit recovery program during their years in high school and the commonalities of their experienced perceptions as they relate to the student-teacher relationship and impact on their self-efficacy and productive trajectory.

This study examined student-teacher relationships: a perspective not commonly acknowledged as a teaching tool for online student success. Traditionally, online credit recovery students and teachers engage in minimal dialogue; they only communicate regarding behavior or assistance with the software. The study's hypothesis was based on

limited evidence as a starting point for further investigational research determining the impact of credit recovery student-teacher relationships.

Students who experience multiple academic setbacks early on in a task or assignment develop feelings that they cannot complete it. They begin making excuses for the project being beyond their ability (Pina-Neves et al., 2013). This study is distinguished because, although his research is on the effects of traditional classroom student-teacher relationships, there are few conversations devoted to online course recovery learning environments. The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized aspects of the online environment that show the need for a transformative paradigm shift, including a relational learning culture.

Conclusively, this study addressed the question, “How do relational and expectational teaching practices in an online environment influence credit recovery students’ self-efficacy, academic achievement, and postsecondary trajectory?” This qualitative case study examined the alignment between intentionally applying relational strategies to students in a credit recovery program and their academic and self-realized outcomes. The study also examined student-teacher relationships.

Theoretical Framework

The network of perceptions, ideas, conclusions, plausibility, interpretations, and hypotheses is commonly called a conceptual framework (Ravitch & Riggan. 2016). The research in this case study examined the impact of student-teacher relationships on the self-efficacy and trajectory of students who were enrolled in credit recovery classes. My theoretical student-teacher relationship framework guided the research through interrelated concepts grounded in a relational learning conceptual framework that

considers how authentic student-teacher relationships draw the blueprint to construct the foundation for a confident student trajectory. The literature review presents the research on these concepts and aligns with SEL, sociological, psychological, and physiological learning concepts. I selected this framework as a constructivist educator because of the importance of making students know they are included, relevant, and have the qualities and abilities that make them essential. The conceptual framework (Ganguly, 2022) contains moral characteristics through which the research problem was explored. SEL, informational-age learning, student preparedness, and learning styles influence authentic student-teacher relationships.

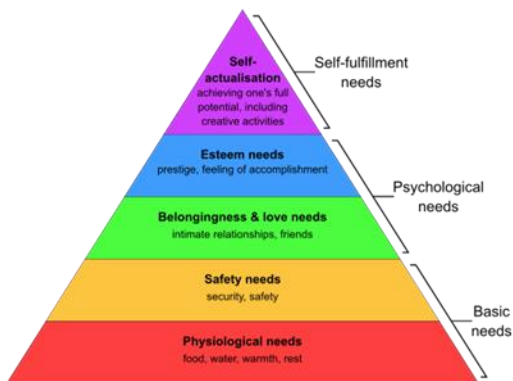
The best definition from various resources is that the relational framework allows for relationship tools, mutual concerns, professional compassion, and respect to empower teachers to propel students to be phenomenal human beings and sustain a positive self-image (Ganguly, 2022; Robinson, 2022). Building relationships should be a fundamental success element for teachers and students. School cultures that embrace and nurture relationships are a factor in student success (Steinberg & McCray, 2012). In search for the sentinel relational learning theorist, I found that the theoretical framework theory combines relational constructs from various educational theorists. I chose Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, Deci and Ryan's (1985a) self-determination theory (SDT), and Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs as the frameworks most appropriate for this qualitative study. The Maslow theoretical framework design addresses relationships relevant to student and teacher connectedness. The role of the teacher as a supporter and encourager is to motivate students to keep working toward higher achievements (Guay et al., 2013). The student-teacher relationship encompasses meeting psychological needs for

safety and acceptance, which will lead to optimal ability performance.

In comparison, Maslow's (1943) philosophy corroborates what humans know to be self-evident: Students must fulfill basic needs before moving to the more complicated cognitive ones. If they have a sense of belonging, they can advance toward self-actualization. The significance of this research brings to light the concept that in part, competence is a construct of relatedness. Maslow designed the hierarchy of needs in 1943, which was instrumental in studying motivation and wellness. Maslow's hierarchy of needs illustrates that a human's basic needs must be accommodated to inspire and propel positive experiences and sustained progress. The figure shows Maslow's hierarchy of needs pyramid. Each element is associated with relational structures that will cause success between a teacher and student matriculating within the credit recovery program.

Figure

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Pyramid Diagram



Note. The pyramid shows the need levels teachers should ensure students have as a foundation for learning. Adapted from Hierarchy of Needs Pyramid (Maslow, 1943).

For a teacher to begin to meet a student's physiological, safety, love, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization needs to help the student achieve and sustain success, they must first acknowledge the needs. When teachers work on closing the belief gap and

becoming less judgmental of student circumstances, it is easier to construct relationships that enable marginalized students to succeed in an online platform. Maslow's (1943) humanistic (social-cognitive) theory explains the primary tenant of this theory as people are "extensively motivated and regulated by the ongoing exercise of self-influence" (Bandura, 1991, p. 248). Maslow's hierarchy of needs and McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y mindset concepts are similar. The X and Y mindset theories describe belief levels of human needs that must be met to persuade others to work for or with you (Cirak & Yildirim, 2021). Theory X's mindset was that it was insignificant of people and their intrinsic and extrinsic desires. Theory Y's mindset is that it is of significance to people who want to be critical and involved (Crane & Patrick, 2007).

Relationships are didactic and dialogic. They are created and designed through authentic harmony. While students and teachers have expectations, the teacher must implement processes to structure actionable conversations. If an online teacher monitor wants to ensure students are engaged in academic learning, measures must be implemented to ensure the student is productive.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant as a resource to implement best educational practices for students who have failed a high school class and are given the opportunity to enroll in an online credit recovery program. It contributes to the examination of online learning in academic settings in hopes of closing the achievement gap. It also expands research concerning unintentional, historically established perceptions toward the educational expectations of marginalized students. It recommends measurable tools that promote student self-efficacy, academic achievement, and a positive projected trajectory. It

reconsiders the connection between SEL competencies, the credit recovery program, and the development and transformation of students. This study can benefit the school site and district as a professional learning document. Information and resources can be used in professional learning community groups throughout the district to begin the conversation of establishing marginalized student-teacher relations and addressing the belief gap attached to tracking and ability grouping. This document can inform positive social change in human conditions by promoting the worth, dignity, and development of people, community organizations, cultures, and society. The study considers a transformative paradigm shift that reduces racial and marginalized inequalities and misconceptions to develop a more specific, feasible, and measurable way of using the practical teacher to foster student accomplishments.

This study considered strategies that could be sustained and progressed to where equitable student achievement is commonplace. According to Maeroff (2003), online learning can better serve nontraditional or special needs students because it can differentiate instruction to meet the preferred learning style of all students. The key is that the student chooses online learning. Credit recovery is the most viable option for students who want to graduate with their K-12 cohort. Ultimately, the most successful model of Heppen et al. (2017) was awarded a federal grant to research online credit recovery programs, and I capitalized on this research and other studies illuminating those environmental and psychological factors most predictive of student success.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as used in this study.

Authentic Relationships

When mutual trust and respect lead to understanding and knowledge of the relationship's needs, the conscious connection between students and teachers is based on genuine care and concern about their well-being (Schlechty, 2002).

Belief Gap

A teacher's beliefs about a student are based on preconceived notions such as concepts, perspectives, presumptions, or mindsets.

Credit Recovery Program

A program implemented in the school that allows students who have failed one or more courses to pass the course through an online program purchased by the district for all credit recovery students (U.S. Department of Education [USDE], Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development Policy and Program Studies Service, 2018).

Historical Practices

Behaviors established in the past that continue today.

Intrinsic Motivation

The habit or practice of performing actions for self-satisfaction, inner peace, and overall accomplishment. This is typically the opposite of extrinsic motivation, although the two can coexist (Deci & Ryan, 1985a).

Marginalized Groups

Labeled academically inadequate in one or more classes and enrolled in a credit recovery course due to academic failure. Relegated to a marginal position within a society or group (Merriam-Webster, n.d.-b).

Online Learning

Students receive instruction in a computer environment. Instruction and lessons are delivered and received through the computer.

Social-Emotional Competencies

A framework designed to intentionally implement social and emotional relational strategies to promote a student's self-worth (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2023).

Student Self-Efficacy

A student's belief in their capacity to commit behaviors conducive to positive self-worth. It coincides with intrinsic motivation and is a person's recognized competence to accomplish tasks at a certain level (Bandura, 1998).

Student Achievement

The accomplishment of academic and personal goals. A result gained by effort. (Merriam-Webster, n.d.-a).

Student Trajectory

How a student's future is projected as a possibility from past successive actions.

Relational Learning

Occurs when students and teachers learn from each other and share ideas to create a learning/teaching culture (TAOS Institute, 2022).

Research Questions

1. What teacher relational strategies positively impact student progress in a credit recovery program?
2. How does a teacher relationship influence student academic success, efficacy,

and trajectory?

3. How do student perceptions of teacher attention impact achievement?

The research questions were designed in collaboration with the research site district curriculum and instructional personnel. It was determined that these questions would assist the district in examining and designing credit recovery teacher professional development modules and professional learning communities. As the district makes assessments and examines what works for the success of credit recovery students, these questions will be a focal point of contention. They will also add to the credit recovery program research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview

This chapter reviews the literature on the impact of intentional teacher relationships on the self-efficacy and trajectory of students in an online credit recovery program. The viewpoints and evaluations of credit recovery programs from current research-based studies were examined in relation to the impact on student personal growth and academic proficiency.

Background

History of Credit Recovery

Credit recovery is a program available to students in Grades 6-12; it allows them to retake unsuccessful classes to earn the grade to pass (Hamilton, 2021). Traditionally, when a student failed a course, it was retaken during the summer or the following semester as a semester-long face-to-face class with the same or a different teacher alongside students taking the course for the first time (Malkus, 2019).

The USDA, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development Policy and Program Studies Service (2018) issue brief said that a credit recovery is an approach to academic success that allows students to retake classes they failed to give them a chance to pass the courses and graduate on time. Credit recovery classes can be presented in face-to-face, online, and blended formats (Malkus, 2019). According to Loewenberg (2020), historically, students who failed a course were given the option to retake it to earn a passing grade; however, in the past decade, course retake delivery methods have evolved.

Current Credit Recovery Program Practices

Heinrich (2022) explained that the COVID-19 pandemic put America in a tailspin, forcing educators to be creative and design online learning experiences that will afford academic success. In response, the high school online credit recovery program was activated in almost all states. According to Loewenberg (2020), the credit recovery programs have evolved to include four possible options: students attending on-campus an online course format within the school day in a teacher-monitored classroom using a paid vendor software service; an asynchronous instructional format which allows the student to remain off-campus while enrolled in an online program; a synchronous format which is the traditional face-to-face instruction with students in the classroom with a teacher; and a blended format of online and teacher monitored interactive instruction. According to USDE, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (2018), the online delivery format that requires students to attend school daily is used most often in the majority of states, followed by the blended synchronous and asynchronous formats, and lastly, the face-to-face credit recovery delivery format.

Malkus (2019) suggested that since state and local districts are given the flexibility to design their credit recovery programs, each should make decisions beneficial for their student's academic success but should also consider the program's rigor, integrity, and equitable advantages. Simmons (2023) recommended that schools have a vetting committee to ensure instructional program fidelity.

Laws, Policies, and Reports Impacting Credit Recovery Programs

Viano and Henry (2020) proposed that the push to increase graduation rates and the rise in credit recovery programs happened simultaneously. The Federal

Communications Commission (2020) stated that broadband networking continues to progress, ensuring all schools nationwide have sufficient online services so students can access online academic materials at school, at home, or anywhere in the community. Plans and processes are continually reevaluated to ensure equitable practices.

NCLB (2002) had a significant impact on the American education system (Malkus, 2018). The law required states to be accountable for student equity, academics, and graduation rates by reporting yearly progress (Viano & Henry, 2020). Rees and Wynns (2023) concluded that the 2017 amendment to the NCLB Graduation Rate Non-Regulatory Guidance of 2008 required all states to use their ninth-grade enrollment data as an origination cohort for reporting annual graduation rates. This requirement gave all states a consistent starting point from which graduation rates could be measured. NCLB (2002) prompted schools to devise accountability measures to include an increase in graduation rates. This push influenced the popularity of online credit recovery programs (Kronk, 2019). States, school districts, and individual schools were given the flexibility to operate credit recovery programs that they considered most beneficial for their population (Malkus, 2018). According to Malkus (2019), NCLB showed teachers the federal government's position of supervision and control as it pertains to what they teach and how they teach in their classrooms. It required kindergarten through Grade 12 schools to show evidence of student academic success. According to Malkus (2018), NCLB was fundamental in establishing progress toward equity in student academic support and achievement, but classroom teachers struggled with the prescribed regulations. In an effort to relieve teacher stress, in 2010, the Obama administration collaborated with educators and community resources to devise an easier-to-understand and more

comprehensive law that focused on academic achievement, career and college readiness, and graduation rates (Malkus, 2019).

USDE, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (2018) reported that former President Barack Obama signed ESSA into law, Pub. L. 114-95, in 2015. ESSA called for an increase in graduation rates across the nation (Malkus, 2019). ESSA required all states to have a yearly report card for the states, districts, and schools in an attempt to be transparent with the public; these report cards were to include their graduation rates (USDE, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2018). The ESSA flexibility document gave state and local districts the power to design and implement programs to increase student achievement and graduation rates (USDE, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2018). According to Heinrich and Darling-Aduana (2021), NCLB and ESSA are responsible for the increase in the number of credit recovery programs in the nation that have propelled the graduation rate in a positive direction.

USDE, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development Policy and Program Studies Service (2018) cited Powell (2012), who started America's Promise Alliance in 1997 as a result of the need to increase the high school graduation rate in America in conjunction with close to 500 communities, businesses, policymakers, educators, and nonprofit organizations. In 2020, America's Promise Alliance established Grad Nation, a plan to monitor graduation rates. It began a movement to address dropout prevention and to raise the nation's high school graduation rate to 90% by the year 2020. Powell (2012) claimed that the credit recovery program is an initiative to increase graduation rates in many states. Beginning in 2003 and ending in 2023, John Hopkins

University sponsored an annual graduation rate report on America's schools. The final report shows an 86.5% increase (Atwell et al., 2023).

Atwell et al. (2021) argued that the national graduation rate for the 2018-2019 school year was 85.5 %, which slowed progress due to the unforeseen COVID-19 pandemic. Atwell et al. (2021) considered the lack of information gathered from credit recovery programs regarding what courses are being taken, who is taking them, how many courses are taken, and how they ensure rigorous learning content. Furthermore, there are questions about whether the credit recovery program advances students to graduate with a legitimate high school diploma because the goal is to graduate college and career ready students (Atwell et al., 2021).

NCDPI (2022) determined that students enrolled in the credit recovery program will earn a pass or fail grade, which does not affect their GPA or their ability to participate in sports, and there is no limit to the number of credit recovery courses a student can take. The student end-of-course retake is at the school's discretion (NCDPI, 2022). The state's governing credit recovery program document is the North Carolina State Board of Education's Board Policy CCRE001 Section 6 (see Appendix A); however, the policy allows districts to implement local policies best to serve students (NCDPI, 2019; USDE, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2018). ESSA flexibility suggested that ESSA gave school districts the authority to design programs that would advance student achievement and increase the graduation rate with the governing principle based on rigorous standards; however, the concept of rigor as it aligns with individual schools is subjective based on individual school systems.

The USDE (2012) Race to the Top Act of 2012 determined that school districts

could apply for online credit recovery program funding. Heinrich and Darling-Aduana (2021) explained that many school districts fund their credit recovery programs through Title 1, ESSER, and other federal, state, and local funding agencies.

Impact of Credit Recovery

Hart et al. (2023) considered the literature on the credit recovery program as developing as researchers seek to determine the program's definitive impacts. Program benefits, concerns, perceptions, and knowledge gaps will be closed as the research increases. According to Heppen et al. (2017) the impact of online credit recovery programs is inconclusive. Online credit recovery programs do not have adequate research or definitive data to support an established impact (Atwell et al., 2021). Malkus (2018) explained that researchers have associated the increase in graduation rates with the rise in high school credit recovery programs. Credit recovery programs can be used as a tool to encourage online learning (Hart et al., 2023). More research is essential to fully comprehend the academic and financial impact of online credit recovery programs (Malkus, 2018). Rickles et al. (2018) found that a positive impact of vendor-paid online credit recovery courses is that they could be less expensive for the school and less work for the classroom teacher, not having to design and implement an online course for students who fail a course. Atwell et al.'s (2021) report determined that the impact of credit recovery programs cannot be determined due to the lack of data and research studies and students not having any teacher or student academic interactions. Since the surge in credit recovery programs, more students are graduating from high school, but there is no positive impact on standardized test scores (Heinrich & Darling-Aduana (2021). There have been research studies to determine the impact of credit recovery

programs, but the results are mixed, and the impact is uncertain (Malkus, 2019). Heinrich and Darling-Aduana (2021) argued that the online credit recovery program has a positive impact when students placed in recovery courses are mostly low-performing students who, once placed, have frequent teacher interaction to support and encourage their academic progress. For students who prefer online learning, the credit recovery program could motivate and inspire them to complete a credit recovery course (Hart et al., 2023).

Heinrich (2022) cited Heppen et al.'s (2017) published research using the online versus face-to-face random credit recovery program participant data as the most referenced resource. From Heppen et al.'s study, it is concerning that more marginalized students graduate by taking credit recovery courses; however, they have lower end-of-course test scores and are less likely to go to college than students who recovered courses in a traditional face-to-face environment. A research study conducted by Heinrich and Cheng (2022) examined how traditional face-to-face retake courses and online credit recovery courses affected students physically, mentally, and financially in the workforce. The research used 2010-2019 school year data from graduates of a school district in the Midwest. The study participants consisted of a group of over 5,000 students who were enrolled in an online credit recovery program and over 3,000 students who recovered from courses in the traditional face-to-face classroom. Although the study was inconclusive, it strongly suggested that students in the online credit recovery program had a decrease in salary over 3 years, as opposed to those who repeated their course in the traditional teacher/classroom practice. The study found that despite the salary decrease, both groups remained employed. Harrison-Surgeon (2023) suggested that online credit recovery teachers differentiate and reconsider instructional design to benefit individual

students best.

Benefits of Credit Recovery

Hart et al. (2023) suggested that online credit recovery programs could be advantageous for academically challenged students who prefer learning in an online environment. According to Heinrich and Darling-Aduana (2021), credit recovery programs can be a resource to encourage students to remain in school when they consider dropping out. Considering that some credit recovery students may have disabilities, online learning could be instrumental in their academic success (Darling-Aduana et al., 2019). Viano and Henry (2020) explained how students who are commonly considered marginalized due to circumstances that lead to poor academic success could benefit from the credit recovery program through learning in an online environment by not being subjected to comparisons to academically successful peers because they can work independently at their own pace to finish. Rickles et al. (2018) explained that the flexibility of online credit recovery programs could benefit school districts by offering more student enrollment options to students from various schools across the district.

Heinrich (2022) noted that the convenience and access to online credit recovery courses are advantageous for students who prefer online instruction and need to have the option of convenient access. These students can accelerate the course because they can work for hours and possibly be exempt from assignments if they score high on the unit pretest. The exemptions mean students are allowed to take a pretest to complete an entire course within a day because they are not required to complete activities or assignments or to learn any unit material. According to Dynarski (2018b), online learning is novice and relevant because it is a new learning concept that aligns with 21st-century best practices.

Online learning is more beneficial for academically successful students and not for credit recovery students who are academically challenged and would benefit and be more successful in a traditional face-to-face classroom environment with a teacher's encouragement and assistance (Dynarski, 2018b).

Disadvantages of Credit Recovery Programs

Regarding student integrity, Malkus (2019) stated that the credit recovery program is at a disadvantage, considering that without daily student-teacher interaction, there is no measurable way to monitor student learning and collect significant data. Online programs allow students to access their credit recovery courses at home after school and on weekends. Students are on the honor system to complete their work, but school district students can give anyone access to their course log-in. Heinrich (2022) considers one of the most significant barriers to the credit recovery program is that student skills are not considered when placed into vendor-paid and designed online courses. Teachers who monitor credit recovery courses seldom have access to student individualized education plans or English as a Second Language accommodations, and most often, students do not have the reading or language skills to understand the online material (Heinrich, 2022). Hart et al. (2023) explained that the credit recovery program may be disadvantaged without student-teacher interaction to support and encourage academic needs. Levine et al. (2017) observed that after graduation, students who participate in high school credit recovery courses choose to enter the workforce or enroll in a 2-year college program rather than a 4-year college or university as their path to being a productive citizen.

Challenges With the Credit Recovery Program

ESSER (2021) proposed that states and local school districts are challenged with being strategic about establishing and sustaining high-quality credit recovery courses that are conducive to the needs of the students. Credit recovery program funding, fidelity, rigor, support, scheduling, and staffing should be well-designed to ensure maximum productivity and sustainability challenges (ESSER, 2021).

Concerns With the Credit Recovery Program

Heinrich and Darling-Aduana (2021) asserted that schools can design credit recovery programs according to the principal's directives. As a result, high school graduation rates are increasing; however, the accountability test score results do not have an increase to complement or support the growing graduation rate. It is concerning that the push for increased graduation rates would lead to the solution being an academically inferior credit recovery program. Due to the ambiguity of structure, processes, and implementable statuses, it is not easy to comprehend a holistic view of credit recovery programs (Malkus, 2019). It is important to have a clear understanding of program policies in an effort to determine the impact; unclear policies are a concern for those who attempt to evaluate the overall significance of a program (Brighthouse et al., 2018). Viano and Henry (2020), in a research study conducted using state and district administrative data from schools in North Carolina to examine the increase in the graduation rate due to the increase in the number of students taking credit recovery courses, found concerns about equity, enrollment practices, and the academic rigor and fidelity of the online lessons.

In considering curriculum rigor, Heinrich and Darling-Aduana (2021) were

concerned that vendor-paid online credit recovery course lessons need to be monitored and adjusted as needed for rigor and appropriate content. Dynarski (2018a) explained that there are negative consequences of graduating students through credit recovery programs at the detriment of implementing low academic standards that will have adverse consequences on students' post-graduation trajectories. Rees and Wynns (2023) explained that while the federal government has virtuous intentions in allowing state and local districts the flexibility in designing and implementing individual site credit recovery programs, there are concerns about the integrity of the implementation process. Rees and Wynns argued that the curricula needed to be challenging enough to sustain a high-quality program that enables graduates to have the 21st century best practice skills needed to empower them to be college and career ready. There should be accountability for the increase in graduation rates and the inconsistency concerning comparable standardized test scores that do not have an extensive increase as impacted by credit recovery programs (Malkus, 2018).

The Economist (2019) reported concerns about the benefits of credit recovery programs on student academic learning, which differs from student graduation. Viano and Henry (2020) argued that students who would have dropped out of school, especially Black and Hispanic students, enroll and graduate from online credit recovery programs; however, it is unclear if they are being inequitably served with a low-level, abbreviated course of study.

Brighthouse et al. (2018) explained that there is a concern with the inconsistent practices governing the credit recovery student placement process. Several researchers, including Malkus, Heppen, and Viano, have suggested online vendor-paid credit recovery

programs provide a low-quality, abbreviated curriculum, and marginalized students with behavioral and academic issues seem to be selected for the low-quality curriculum credit recovery enrollment. This type of enrollment selection is consistent with ability grouping, which is characteristic of inequitable placement practices that widen the achievement gap between upper- and lower-level students and call into question the ethics incorporated in the process and evaluation of credit recovery student placement. Rees and Wynns (2023) said that when the USDE required graduation rates to be measured by ninth-grade cohorts, there became a concern about equity in reporting. Rees and Wynns suggested that considering the migratable nature of students throughout their 4 years of high school, there cannot be a true indication of how credit recovery course participants influenced the graduation rate. It is important to consider who is in the graduating class cohort.

The fidelity of online learning situations is more than ever being researched due to the current COVID-19 pandemic (Bedenlier et al., 2021). Murray (2022) determined that the COVID-19 pandemic emphasized a greater need for an online credit recovery program; however, before the pandemic, there were concerns about the lack of academic rigor and the impact on student learning and postgraduation trajectory. Heinrich and Darling-Aduana (2021) explained that there are conflicting studies that indicate credit recovery programs elevate student learning and progress. There are those that suggest they are not beneficial and students are not learning significant lessons. Malkus (2018) pointed out the concerns about credit recovery programs being under scrutiny relating to program administration and fidelity; one issue relates to the rise in graduation rates and the considerably unchanged student performance on the International Students Assessment and the National Assessment of Educational Progress assessment data

measured within the same years. These concerns about the credit recovery program's effectiveness and student capabilities question whether the programs are doing what they are meant to do (Malkus, 2018). The suggestion that credit recovery programs are recognized for increasing the graduation rate and keeping students on course to graduate is admirable but not at the expense of mitigating or lessening student academic performance (Malkus, 2019). Murray (2022) explained that the research of Heinrich and Cheng (2022) is a cause for concern pertaining to the worth of a high school diploma. Murray suggested that if overtime online credit recovery courses negatively affect the workforce trajectory of students, a high school diploma degree could lose importance and scholarship. Malkus (2018) said there has been mistrust and uncertainty about credit recovery programs socially promoting students to decrease the number of students who drop out while increasing the number who graduate. There is a concern that the credit recovery program can be beneficial but harmful to students (Malkus, 2019).

Malkus (2019) concluded that there is a concern with the flexibility state and local school districts allow credit recovery programs. The programs can be productive and used in ways that positively impact student academic achievement, or they can be abusive and exploit students to fabricate achievement data. Continuous teacher monitoring could assist with probing student inquiry to ensure lesson mastery and improve program rigor; however, for students who can master the courses by scoring high on the pretest to be exempt from the unit, constant teacher supervision may cause frustration. Some students excel in online studies when they can work at their own pace anytime and anywhere (Malkus, 2019).

Research Recommendations for Credit Recovery Programs

Rickles et al. (2018) explained that students come to school with challenges, issues, and privileges, and the online credit recovery program should seek to target students who will best benefit from comprehensive, authentic engagement strategies that ensure the academic achievement and positive trajectory postgraduation of all students. Sparks (2022) recommended that districts select credit recovery program vendors who will adapt and align the curriculum to accommodate requested modifications that the credit recovery program supports and encourage academically challenged students to ensure success. Some credit recovery programs require teacher availability to assist and teach students specific skills. Collaboration between classroom teachers and credit recovery program monitors, along with professional development, program training, and access to students' individualized education programs, is foundational to a successful credit recovery program. Sparks also suggested that teachers give students only one class to complete and assemble small in-person credit recovery groups to actively engage students and monitor progress.

ESSER (2021), a guide for using funding for credit recovery programs, recommended targeted student and program support. The proximity of the credit recovery program should accommodate students for convenient access such as online, weekend, evening, and summer, and combination sessions that best provide for student achievement. Student learning services should include online, self-paced, teacher-supported courses focusing on specific competencies that support authentic student skills and abilities in learning. ESSER also recommended that classroom teachers be incentivized to participate in the credit recovery program by dual certification, stipends,

or other motivational techniques. School districts should explore the option of training teaching assistants, counselors, and collaborative district personnel who can support online or face-to-face credit recovery programs (ESSER, 2021).

Heinrich (2022) recommended a blended online credit recovery program design. The blended model includes an online vendor curriculum that allows for face-to-face teacher instruction to be incorporated into the modules so a teacher can assist at any progress point. The program should accommodate exceptional students' needs, requests, requirements, data monitoring, and other technology essentials beneficial to the district, school, and students. Appropriate student selection, class size, and professional development are recommended for a successful program (Heinrich, 2022).

Kim et al. (2022) conducted a project-based learning exploratory research with credit recovery program students. The study aimed to support learning information literacy and argumentation skills in a project-based learning module on air quality to determine the positive and negative results of computer-based strategic, conceptual, and metacognitive scaffolding on student literacy. Participants consisted of 29 students, 12 males and 17 females, who did not pass the course during the traditional school year and voluntarily enrolled in a summer environment science credit recovery course in a public school in the mountains in the western part of the United States. Students were placed into three to four groups as they matriculated through scaffolding. Nine students were rising juniors, and 20 were rising seniors. The study results recommended incorporating online project-based learning and virtual field trips in the credit recovery curriculum to scaffold student learning.

Attitudes Toward Credit Recovery

Student Attitudes Toward Credit Recovery

Chappell (2022) wrote that through interviews with credit recovery students throughout the years, students have shared various challenges of being enrolled in an online credit recovery program; credit recovery students want academic and emotional support to feel less inferior being in a recovery course and to succeed academically in their courses. Rickles et al. (2018) explained that most credit recovery students prefer a blended learning environment where they can work online at their own pace. Compared to traditional face-to-face credit recovery, online students find online credit recovery course material more difficult to learn and the expectations and instructions more ambiguous; online math students prefer to attend a face-to-face course. Students have significantly more positive experiences taking online credit recovery courses; they are less stressed and find more satisfaction in working on computers at their own pace than in a traditional face-to-face environment (Rickles et al., 2018). Chiu (2022) found that student behavior within the transformed environment is crucial to support academic achievement, and teacher relationships significantly promote student learning and personal accomplishments.

Impact of Credit Recovery on Student Performance

Zenk et al. (2022) argued that by definition, students become marginalized due to their failing class status. This puts them at a disadvantage regarding being on track to graduate from high school. The dynamic environment they are placed in and, at times, students have difficulty maneuvering includes ill-defined and complex situations such as grouping. Dynarski (2018b) suggested that the pass-or-fail online credit recovery grade

motivates students to complete the course; however, it also has a negative impact on successive academic learning and knowledge needed to pass tests. Creatively designed problem-based learning blended with online credit recovery programs positively supports student information literacy and argumentation skills (Kim et al., 2022). Hart et al. (2023) contended that disciplined and self-motivated students who prefer to work in a self-paced virtual environment do well academically with the online credit recovery program option. Roberts (2020) explained that online credit recovery is an attractive option for students who believe they are too far behind to catch up and graduate with their freshman classmates.

Student Efficacy

When placed with teachers in teacher-led traditional credit recovery classrooms, students have a lower sense of self-efficacy than those enrolled in online courses; diverse classroom environments allow students to be more expressive and not ashamed to make mistakes (Mitchell & Mousa, 2019). Chappell (2022) explained that students aspire to achieve self-efficacy and would like to believe they are intelligent and capable; in addition, a significant number of students with low self-esteem have more confidence and feel accomplished when they are academically successful working through online credit recovery courses. Aydin and Ok (2022) described students' reactions to believing in themselves because their teacher believes in them, as the Pygmalion Effect suggested in Rosenthal and Jacobson's (1968) work. López-Crespo et al. (2022) reported that self-efficacy considerably impacts students in online courses by promoting their desire and motivation to complete a course. Studies have shown that improved self-efficacy inspires and motivates students to accept and defeat learning challenges. According to Hsu et al.

(2019), self-efficacy emerged as an essential concept with the development of modern pedagogy and the relationship between learning engagement and authentic learning completion, and how a student behaves during and after learning should become a part of the pedagogical design to include student projection. Academic achievement is viewed as a grade or progression but does not encompass student self-efficacy (Hsu et al., 2019). According to López-Crespo et al., a student who has acquired self-efficacy can optimistically influence their academic proficiency, performance, and personal trajectory.

Credit Recovery Student-Teacher Relationships

Student's Relationships With Teachers in a Credit Recovery Program

Chappell (2022) found that students favor having authentic teacher relationships that are encouraging, trusting, and supportive. For online credit recovery students, the student-teacher relationship ensures that the lesson design engages students and renders academic success. Many credit recovery students experience difficulties establishing social relationships (Eriksen & Bru, 2022). Havik and Westergård (2019) explained that academic engagement and student achievement in online credit recovery courses are increased when teachers intentionally establish relationships that are compassionate, supportive, and focused on student success. Pallini et al. (2019) concluded that teachers are the ones who directly or indirectly fortify or weaken relationships with students, and how the teachers can regulate the relationship will determine how successful they will be in governing student behaviors and leading their learning. López-Crespo et al. (2022) argued that solid, authentic relationships with teachers will extract the best from within students to encourage them to thrive and become their best selves.

Impact of Student-Teacher Relationships in a Credit Recovery Program

Research has shown that an authentic student-teacher relationship is valuable in motivating students in all types of learning environments (Nguyen, 2021). Juvonen et al. (2019) stated that the manner in which students maneuver around the classroom is determined by the cultural tone the teacher has established with each student. Teachers have a responsibility to establish a classroom environment that is conducive to learning (2019). Chappell (2022) explained that the most successful way for teachers to acquire and sustain a positive impact on students is by committing to authentic, equitable practices that establish trust and honest dialogue.

The historical one-room schoolhouse education model can be seen in various negative aspects of how teachers are viewed and how they view themselves and their relationships with students (Glickman et al., 2018). The perspective was that teachers should teach and keep their personal lives separate from their job as teachers, which only consists of helping students learn academic subjects. Sabarwal et al. (2022) argued that when teachers have a fixed mindset about the learning potential of disadvantaged, marginalized, or academically uninspired students, they adjust, lowering their learning expectations, which negatively impacts the classroom environment and student achievement. Durr (2020) stated that research shows that most teachers have low expectations for students who fail classes.

Nguyen (2021) explained that a teacher needs specific skills and natural savviness to effectively build relationships with multiple students, and they need to give conscious attention to each student. Teachers' demands can distract from the sensitivity needed to nurture relationships. To achieve the balance necessary, teachers should develop a

systemic strategy, such as consistent reflection, to ensure they aim to make relationship efforts (Nguyen, 2021). Communication skills and ethical tact will help teachers to form better relationships. Nguyen stated that teacher vulnerability causes a barrier between student and teacher relationships. Teachers should not feel they are giving up power and authority over students by sharing everyday experiences, frustrations, and fears because these feelings present an opportunity for teachers to see students as ordinary people. Nguyen further explained that the COVID-19 pandemic put students and teachers in a position to share their fears, anxiety, worries, and frustrations and to communicate about how they were affected. This is the type of genuine vulnerability that is transparent and is a segue into positive student-teacher relationships (Nguyen, 2021).

Teacher Attitudes in a Credit Recovery Program

Malkus (2019) stated that teachers are receptive to credit recovery programs. Individual schools have structured plans and processes that allow students to graduate with their cohort. Chappell (2022) explained that teacher communication impacts the importance of students realizing the significance of the opportunity they have to succeed academically and postgraduation.

According to Malkus (2018), teachers are disconnected from online credit recovery students' academic achievement. Students take multiple courses of which the teacher has no curricular input. Teachers do not communicate with students about their lessons; they address students' technical questions and advise them to stay on task without academic intervention. Atwell et al. (2021) explained that many teachers do not believe online credit recovery students are learning or comprehending fundamental concepts and skills needed to be intellectually adept; nevertheless, they are passing and

increasing the graduating rate while weakening academic standards. Teachers question the fidelity of students passing courses that could possibly be completed by anyone when students are dishonest with an online program that has no safeguards to deter cheating. The process of student online credit recovery program placement and grouping has teachers concerned about whether student motivation and engagement are due to students being placed in the program who are not academically or socially adept for success (Viano & Henry, 2020).

Role and Impact of Technology in a Credit Recovery Program

Goldhaber et al. (2022) explained that the COVID-19 pandemic, which closed schools in March 2020, has had a significant role in the impact of technology on the credit recovery program due to the large number of students who had a learning loss for various reasons. The pandemic negatively impacted students and their families, as well as teachers and their families. Bedenlier et al. (2021) explained how many people became sick, unemployed, and homeless, and regardless of their situation, students were required to learn through online technologies. This abrupt change prompted educators to challenge and question how prepared they were to administer online learning approaches, and many students had difficulty adjusting to the daily virtual classroom online learning situations. (Bedenlier et al., 2021). Means and Neisler (2021) found that many schools reported that students lived in another state while working online, and several students were unaccounted for because they never logged into their classes. According to Goldhaber et al., while combined synchronous and asynchronous learning attempted to motivate students, under 20% were satisfied with being taught online. As a result, they did not attend class or did not understand the material as it was presented; this caused many

students to fail courses. Online credit recovery courses have had a positive impact in being instrumental in allowing students to pass the classes they failed and to remain with their graduate cohort (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021).

Atwell et al. (2021) considered the most significant attribute of online credit recovery programs is that they have effectively boosted graduation and positioned students to graduate on time with their peers. Online credit recovery programs have been instrumental in graduating students who would not have graduated through a traditional classroom credit recovery method (Viano & Henry, 2020). Hart et al. (2023) stated that technology has permitted students who prefer online learning to recover credits from previously failed courses without the embarrassment of sitting in a traditional classroom setting in the presence of other students. Online classes allow students access 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, to have time and space to accomplish their academic goals as they work at their own pace (Hart et al., 2023). Atwell et al. (2021) explained that technology accommodates students who prefer to work in isolation without a teacher or other student interaction. Technology has changed the course of education for the better in expanding differentiated instructional methods for diverse students (Malkus, 2019).

Benefits of Technology in Online Credit Recovery Programs

Rickles et al. (2018) noted that supporters of online credit recovery learning argue that many benefits are afforded to school districts, teachers, and students. Moreover, the online structure decreases the number of students on a classroom roster for face-to-face instruction, and teachers do not have to create lessons for credit recovery students because most districts use paid online vendors. Also, students welcome the flexibility and convenience they are afforded with online courses, considering other academic classes,

sports, employment, and domestic or other obligations (Rickles et al., 2018). School districts benefit from the widened access to more students, and the opportunities provide them with options to recover from a failed course and graduate with their cohort, decreasing the number of students who would drop out of school and increasing the graduation rate (Rickles et al., 2018).

Barriers to Technology in Online Credit Recovery Programs

Rickles et al. (2018) stated that although there are noted benefits of online credit recovery programs, there is no data-driven evidence substantiating evidence aligned with the effectiveness and fidelity of the program. Dynarski (2018b) explained that some literature on online credit recovery programs suggests that students who have seat time in a face-to-face class with a teacher's guided instruction perform better on academic endeavors, such as end-of-course tests, than students who recover credit in an online program. Atwell et al. (2021) argued that the expanse and widespread growth of the online credit recovery program have raised questions about the rigor and fidelity in the learning culture of students who are taught without a teacher's presence or guidance. Dynarski (2018a) explained that research findings suggest that students who graduate high school by taking online credit recovery courses have an unsuccessful academic trajectory. Student placement should require that they have the discipline and tenacity to obtain authentic academic success in the online credit recovery program (Dynarski, 2018a). Malkus (2019) stated that online credit recovery programs must be studied and evaluated to obtain definitive answers on their effectiveness and fidelity to acquire clear direction and instruction to support sustainability measures.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework provides a specific perspective through which the research topic will be investigated (Foss & Waters, 2016). A collaborative online learning theoretical framework comprises human relational aspects that connect teachers and students (Stahl, 2023). CASEL (2023) explained that SEL is a significant attribute for online program student-teacher relationships because it is important for educators to ensure students are physically and psychologically satisfied so they can sustain academic success. Bass (2022) stated that Bandura's self-efficacy theory is relevant to classroom situations where students lack the confidence and ambition to complete tasks. Martela and Ryan (2023) declared that Maslow's (1943) theory of human motivation and Deci and Ryan's (1985b) SDT are both essential when discussing key aspects of student and teacher relationships concerning a person's well-being.

Maslow's Theory of Human Motivation

Viano and Henry (2023) reported that students enrolled in credit recovery programs are at a higher risk of dropping out of school due to their academic performance and behavioral issues, mostly influenced by their socioeconomic conditions. Maslow's (1943) theoretical framework presents a checklist to assess when a student's philological, safety/security, love/belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs are met or at least acknowledged in some capacity that would allow for or encourage a positive effect on the student's sense of self-worth and purpose within the academic environment. Rojas et al. (2023) contended that Maslow's human motivation theory premise argued that people will respond positively when their basic needs are met. They suggest the following progressive order of physiology: having a place to live and meals to

eat daily; safety—feeling safe from physical or mental harm; social—being a welcomed and valued member of the environment; esteem—having confidence and being respected by others; and self-actualization—having integrity and being articulate on personal and social stances. These aspects yield the highest self-satisfaction. Kings Tutors (2021) explained that American society has changed since Maslow presented his theory in 1943; however, the structure of his theory is still essential and applicable to 21st century behaviors, and each level is identifiable with human well-being. Everyone needs sleep, love, and food to feel safe, have a sense of belonging, and feel successful and accomplished. For online credit recovery programs to be successful, schools must create supportive learning environments (Darling-Aduana et al., 2019).

SDT in Relation to Credit Recovery Literature

Tate and Warschauer (2022) suggested that equitable student-teacher relationships give credit recovery students a sense of empowerment by equipping them with the tools to fulfill Deci and Ryan's (1985a) three naturally characteristic human psychological needs. The tools to enable credit recovery students to be successful are autonomy, or the wherewithal to think through situations; competence, meaning belief in one's skills, expertise, and effectiveness; and relatedness, which is a feeling of belonging as an equal member (Malkus, 2018).

Ryan and Deci (2020) explained how their 1985 SDT of motivation, encompassing the psychologically expected need levels of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, impacts online learning pedagogy. According to Hsu et al. (2019), due to the isolated nature of online learning, it is imperative that SDT be aligned to best motivate students in online learning environments. According to Bedenlier et al. (2021), online

learning and technology applications assist in students' autonomous and competence motivation once they engage and accomplish an online digital task.

Self-Efficacy–Bandura

Heinrich and Darling-Aduana (2021) explained that to accomplish the goal of attending a college or university after graduation, high school credit recovery program students must be guided towards the fortitude that will enable them to cultivate their self-worth and embrace higher education goals. Safira and Wicaksono (2023) stated that Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory is defined as the manner in which a person considers themselves confident and effective by their thoughts, feelings, behavior, guiding attributes of wisdom, and self-asserting ambition to understand how to maneuver and conquer any situation or task proficiently. Bass (2022) pointed out that Bandura's self-efficacy theory influences classroom teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and inspiration regarding their place in the educational arena. De la Fuente et al. (2022) cited Bandura's self-efficacy theory as one of the most significant foundational thoughts on human interconnected cognitive, behavioral, and environmental regards.

Components of Student Self-Efficacy

Darling-Aduana et al. (2019) suggested that students in a credit recovery program have a commonality of failure, but constructive interactions could enable them to have a sense of self-efficacy. When students have the courage and intense belief that they can focus and accomplish a task without assistance, but by seeing other credit recovery students progressing. They are encouraged and persuaded to succeed by teachers and classmates. When these students recognize and accept their emotional and psychological actions and reactions to situations, they can help a commonality of failure transition into

a paradigm of success (Cherry, 2023).

Bandura (1997) explained that the components of student self-efficacy are a person's belief in what they can accomplish, how they internalize and apply prior learning skills and proficient experiences, how they internalize and apply verbal feedback and constructive criticism from others, and their physiological conditions and emotional circumstances taking on the task. Bandura's (1997) components gave a foundational structure to begin to examine student self-efficacy connections (Safira & Wicaksono, 2023).

SEL

ESSER (2021) suggested that federal funding be used to support SEL competencies in credit recovery programs and argued that SEL efforts will perpetuate credit recovery programs that empower students' self-worth, efficacy, and determination; these competencies will guide students in working through psychological issues. CASEL (2023) defined SEL as the following:

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is integral to education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions. SEL advances educational equity and excellence through authentic school-family-community partnerships to develop learning environments and experiences with trusting and collaborative relationships, rigorous and meaningful curriculum and instruction, and ongoing

evaluation. SEL can help address various forms of inequity and empower young people and adults to co-create thriving schools and contribute to safe, healthy, and just communities. (p. 1)

CASEL's (2023) SEL has identified five significantly relevant dimensions that are foundational in embracing student needs. They are having relationship skills, knowing how to communicate with others; self-management, having the ability to organize time and tasks; self-awareness, realizing your perceptions and attitudes in the context of situations; social awareness, acknowledging or actively addressing the issues affecting the community and the world; and showing responsible decision-making, being informed and using integrity when making decisions. SEL competencies benefit teachers and students by improving equitable practices and empowering students' mental, emotional, and academic attributes.

The Center on Reinventing Public Education (2021) reported that teen suicides have increased significantly, and one of every 400 students has suffered the loss of a parent or guardian since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic; as a result, students require more social-emotional and mental health support to stay academically focused on school.

Smith (2023) explained that teachers should be mindful of supporting SEL with every student and not assume that because students are doing well academically, they do not need SEL support. Chappell (2022) explained that it is essential for teachers to communicate with their students; a student may be suffering in silence at the directive of a parent or guardian concerning cultural and ethnic formalities. All school districts are obligated to students to implement SEL competency educator training as a requirement to ensure the conception is in every classroom experience (Moroney, 2019).

SEL and Student Performance

Posamentier et al. (2023) explained that credit recovery program students who are at risk of academic failure may or may not be socially or emotionally traumatized, and teachers who project care and concern while implementing social-emotional competencies in daily classroom environments can propel students to embrace their credit recovery status and progress through the situation. Many credit recovery students struggle with behavioral issues due to undisclosed circumstances that may be revealed or diminished through student-teacher relationships (Viano & Henry, 2023).

Smith (2023) found that student academic performance is directly linked to their social-emotional well-being. Their social-emotional trauma may cause them to excel academically and cognitively, so teachers must seek to understand students at all academic levels (Smith, 2023). Atwell et al. (2021) suggested that SEL competencies be aligned with student performance in terms of student engagement is generally associated with higher academic performance and graduation goals, and effective environments and resources that are advantageous to student achievement are ones that emphasize the importance of moral characteristics and civic duty responsibilities. Smith suggested that teachers simultaneously address students' cognitive and social-emotional objectives because they are equally important. Aspen Institute National Commission for Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning (2019) reported that students who have encountered traumatic and adversarial situations need social, emotional, and self-efficacy tools to help and support them in becoming healthy adults. SEL skills are beneficial in directing students to cultivate enlightening perspectives, establish worthy relationships, make productive choices, and be cognizant of social issues in the community (Atwell et al.,

2020).

Smith (2023) argued that students are productive when they perceive that teachers are authentically listening to them and genuinely concerned about their emotional well-being, not just their academic success. According to the Aspen Institute National Commission for Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning (2019), authentic learning occurs for students who are emotionally invested in challenging work in which they feel supported. For students to desire to become immersed in learning, teachers must be invested in understanding the interdependencies of the emotional, cognitive, social, academic, personal, and cultural perceptions of students relevant to the immediate learning environment experiences pertaining to motivation, interest, and engagement (Aspen Institute National Commission for Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning, 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic has shown schools how much students' social-emotional development and cognitive well-being have been underserved (Center on Reinventing Public Education, 2021). Student achievement should be redefined to include academic success aligned with students' mental health and social trajectory (Atwell et al., 2020). Educational stakeholders raise concerns regarding students' virtual learning and social isolation having a negative effect on their mental health, social-emotional progression, and academic achievement. Center on Reinventing Public Education explained that when schools shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was difficult for students and teachers to have the opportunity to establish relationships needed for adolescents' social and emotional growth; this significantly negatively impacted marginalized students and those with mental issues that cause suicidal attempts. Student-teacher relationships are the foundation of students' academic progression and

mental well-being (Smith, 2023). Teachers must be trained to understand social-emotional development learning and competencies before attempting to work effectively with students (Aspen Institute National Commission for Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning, 2019). During the pandemic, online learning exposed varied levels of heightened consciousness and magnitudes of stress and anxiety for a large population of students (Center on Reinventing Public Education, 2021). Atwell et al. (2020) argued that teachers suffered from a lack of mental wellness due to the pandemic, which inadvertently had a negative effect on student performance.

According to the Aspen Institute National Commission for Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning (2019), to promote positive student academic and citizenship accomplishments, teachers must endorse, embrace, and explicitly teach social-emotional doctrines that incorporate all SEL aspects and accommodate all students to set goals and achieve them. According to Moroney (2019), studies have shown that providing students with the tools to develop socially and emotionally increases self-esteem and affects how circumstances and environment are viewed. Some people have the misconception that there is no rigor in incorporating SEL into the curriculum and that it takes away from academic fidelity; however, that is not true. It does the opposite.

SEL and Online Students

According to Gavin et al. (2020), students' mental health and academics suffered significantly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and many students failed courses due to various circumstances. Students may not have failed a course because of weak skills in a subject area but because of depression or anxiety, for which SEL techniques are valuable in helping them progress to recover and complete courses to stay on track for graduation

(Moeller et al., 2020). SEL practices could include responding promptly; showing an unbiased, authentic personality; having a sense of humor; and initiating diverse conversations (Fiock, 2020). According to Higgins and Bushel (2018), it is critical for students in online learning environments to have a trusting relationship with the teachers involved in their learning process. Shafait et al. (2021) explained the value of incorporating social-emotional competency practices in online instructional settings. Shafait et al. argued that when teachers are friendly, authentic, and emotionally supportive, it gives students a sense of trust and connectedness with the school culture. Students feel secure and confident to explore new ideas, take risks, make mistakes, and fail forward; this confidence does several things, including increasing motivation, academic achievement, focus retention, and benefits gained from studies, and it promotes an inclusive cultural climate and constructive learning environment, all of which are fundamental to student learning outcomes, achievement, and mental well-being (Shafait et al., 2021).

Moroney (2019) cited the Aspen Institute National Commission for Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning (2019) report emphasizing the importance of student self-awareness. Sovde et al. (2019) and concluded that students' perspectives of their self-efficacy and purpose that are gained through SEL are essential for successful learning experiences where youth are engaged, have a sense of ownership, and find purpose in their learning. Students also have explicit opportunities to contribute to their school and the broader community and to be recognized for those efforts, which is critical to preparing for active citizenship. In these settings, children and youth are more successful in mastering complex academic content and concepts because the instructional

practices and learning environments reflect what is known about how people actually learn (Sovde et al., 2019).

Intrinsic Motivation

Mendoza et al. (2023) explained that intrinsic motivation occurs when teachers implement instruction that intensifies and applauds student autonomy through a task that motivates and encourages independence. A teacher-involved task that makes students feel self-empowered cultivates authentic student-teacher relationships. Online learning environments need creative strategies to support intrinsic motivation that incorporates challenging and engaging academic responsibilities that help students achieve self-awareness. When the efficacy to perform and execute comes from within, that is considered intrinsic motivation (Ferlazzo, 2023). Ertan and Kocadere (2022) proposed that students learning in online environments need a stimulus that allows them to be productive and feel accomplished, and since most K-12 students like to play video games, they suggested a gaming design be aligned with lessons and activities as an intrinsic motivational component. Soh et al. (2022) explained that students in online learning environments lack intrinsic motivation from internal passion and enjoyment, which gives them purpose. Emily (2023) argued that intrinsic motivation is more valuable to student achievement than extrinsic motivation, and to better serve student self-efficacy and trajectory, the high school curriculum should align and incorporate student learning with social-emotional development competencies and intrinsic motivation strategies (Rickles et al., 2018).

Summary

Malkus (2019) suggested that online credit recovery programs are challenged with

ensuring programs have rigor and fidelity coupled with devising unilateral program policies and procedures across the districts that ensure equity and integrity. For some districts, financially, the online credit recovery program is a better option than having students attend in a traditional classroom model (Rickles et al., 2018). Due to the popularity of online credit recovery programs, districts benefit by establishing committees that address programs horizontally across the district and vertically across adjacent districts (Simmons, 2023).

According to Chappell (2022), a key contributing element of online learning success is ethical, authentic, trusting relationships between students and teachers. Atwell et al. (2021) explained how parents agree with educators that for students who had an academic or traumatic setback, social-emotional development teachers should intentionally teach and present lessons that cultivate an online environment of inclusivity and concern to endorse students' self-efficacy and positive trajectory. When students know that teachers value their thoughts and concerns, they become inspired to respond to the teacher and perform the academic task energetically while respecting the learning environment (Sovde et al., 2019). De La Fuentes et al. (2022) cited Bandura (1991) and Deci and Ryan (1985b); theories of autonomy and self-efficacy are interconnected and should be instrumental in establishing effective learning environments. Students who learn online at their leisure and at their own pace are vulnerable to distractions and circumstances that cause them to fail; a positive student-teacher relationship will help them overcome intrinsic and extrinsic obstacles that could hinder their success (Hart et al., 2023).

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter includes the methodology used for collecting and analyzing data. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of teacher and student relationships in an online credit recovery program to provide the school district with the relevant knowledge needed to help improve the online credit recovery program at the classroom level. The site credit recovery students were repeating their courses two or more times. Traditionally, in online learning environments where students and teachers are in the same classroom, teachers monitor students to ensure they are focused on the computer screen, and students concentrate on what is on the computer screen, but neither gives any of their attention to the other; students and teachers in the same classroom do not communicate (Heinrich, 2022). In online credit recovery environments, students need teacher relationships to achieve success online to complete their courses and postgraduation to be productive citizens (Nguyen, 2021). The problem statement of this research is that teacher relationships are important in any online setting. This problem gives direction for the research design of the study. This study examined post-high school online credit recovery students' perceptions of teacher relationships.

Research Questions

This study investigated the experiences of post-high school students who were enrolled in the research site's online credit recovery program. It examined the impact of their student-teacher relationship, specifically on academic achievement, self-efficacy, and postgraduate trajectory. Findings and recommendations were based on the following research questions.

1. What teacher relational strategies positively impact student progress in a credit recovery program?
2. How does a teacher relationship influence student academic success, efficacy, and trajectory?
3. How do student perceptions of teacher attention impact achievement?

Research Design

The theoretical tradition used in this research was a qualitative case study. According to Creswell (2014), case studies are qualitative designs that explore an event, program, process, or activity of one or more persons. They are confined by time and action, and essential, detailed data are collected about the case. According to Stake (2003), responsive evaluations rely heavily on personal interpretations. The case study researcher must be ethical in approach, communication, and analysis. Case studies should be written in everyday language that anyone can understand, not just scholars. Yin (1992), who explained what a case study should entail, is relevant to the qualitative case study design discussion. Yin argued that the studies need to include one or more descriptive, exploratory, and explanatory conditions to be effective and give reverence to the participants.

As a collaborative effort with the research district's curriculum and instruction data personnel, we met in their office and at my school to discuss the research topic and interview questions in alignment with the research questions. Our goal was to design interview questions that would give insights to help improve the credit recovery program at the classroom level. We designed questions to prompt formal and informal dialogue that will benefit the district post-COVID as it endeavors to improve and diversify best

practices for online learning.

I considered using instruments and measures that would show the impact and possible implications that the participants' responses would have on credit recovery programs. Questions prompt probing and follow-up questions for clarification, justification, and observational clues to ensure accuracy and validity before coding the response. The interview questions are in Appendix B.

The qualitative design best accommodates the purpose of this research because each participant spent a significant amount of time immersed in the online credit recovery program classroom culture. I aligned participants' experiences with the information presented in the literature review. Participants were interviewed, and their responses were aligned with three guiding research questions.

The research design was appropriate because it helped to provide the information needed to answer the research questions. Coded thematic analysis of coded interview data can help the schools within the district to design online credit recovery programs that focus on intentional teacher and student relationships.

A qualitative case study research design was most consistent with the data sample in determining how teacher relationships significantly impact marginalized students' achievement, self-efficacy, and trajectory. The qualitative method gave an in-depth understanding of how and why student-teacher relationships are vital through collecting data from human experiences and opinions. According to Creswell (2014), the three research approaches are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods, and the researcher should choose the best approach that would substantiate or provide evidence that supports the research. A case study approach will allow a group of students in a credit recovery

program to describe their experiences and perspectives separately after leaving the program. Yadav (2021) suggested that the qualitative case study design will use inductive reasoning, which is a grounded theory approach, to make conclusions based on the data gathered from students to make specific conclusions. The data collected determined characteristics, patterns, and consistencies.

I conducted an individual in-depth interview with each participant using open-ended questions. The research question crosswalk instrument is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Research and Interview Questions Crosswalk Table

| Research questions | Interview questions |
|--|---|
| 1. What teacher relational strategies positively impact student progress in a credit recovery program? | 1. Tell me about your experience being enrolled in the credit recovery program. 2. Tell me about your relationships with your credit recovery teachers. 3. How did you receive the teacher's attention? 4. Tell me about times when your credit recovery teacher(s) discussed good or not-so-good things going on in your life. 5. Think about the times you and your credit recovery teachers (s) talked about how your day, or their day, was going at school. How did those conversations influence you then and now? |
| 2. How does a teacher relationship influence student academic success, efficacy, and trajectory? | 6. How did your teachers inspire or encourage you to focus and be diligent in your online self-paced course? 7. As a person who withdrew or graduated high school and spent a year or more in the credit recovery program, in what ways did the relationships with your credit recovery teachers help you succeed? 8. How can credit recovery teachers support students? |
| 3. How do student perceptions of teacher attention impact achievement? | 9. What do you think might cause someone to fail a credit recovery course? 10. Who was your favorite credit recovery teacher, and why? 11. How did your credit recovery teacher (s) support you? 12. How were you motivated by your teachers? 13. If you were to redesign the credit recovery program, how would you improve the program? 14. Discuss any comments, considerations, or concerns about online credit recovery student-teacher relationships that will have a positive impact on students' self-efficacy and trajectory. |

According to Tracy (2013), there is more to interviewing than simply asking good questions. Researchers are responsible for being knowledgeable, open-minded, sensitive, forgiving, probing, attentive, and interpretative. In addition, they should have skills in interpreting, listening, and clarifying information. Immediately after each interview, I wrote notes in a journal about characteristics I could detect from the online interview. Tracy explained that the technological approach to interviewing can be synchronous or asynchronous, which has the advantage of being most accommodating to participants because the interview can be conducted at one time with people at different locations or individuals can access the interview at their leisure. It is essential that the interviewer has unique skills such as intuition, creativity, and the ability to improvise and synthesize laughter, tone, voice, timing, and pauses for context meaning. Creswell (2014) suggested being intentional with the language of qualitative inquiry to ensure participant comfort and comprehension. I began the dialogue by asking what they liked best about the school, what activities they liked, and events they attended during the site's scheduled break times. During the interview, it was best to focus on a single idea; use action verbs, neutral words, and open-ended questions; and provide definitions when necessary. The goal of the interview was to encourage the participants to feel comfortable and at ease in order to extract valuable information that could be used to further the research study.

Through one Google Meets online recorded off-camera video interview and four Zoom meetings off-camera, not recorded video interviews, per participants' options, I captured detailed descriptions connecting the participants' experiences and perspectives in the credit recovery program as they relate to the teacher relationship's influence on their academics, self-efficacy, and trajectory. I remained on camera during all interviews

because I wanted the participants to see how passionate and serious I was about the interview questions and process. I used two significant data sources, an interview and journal notes, to develop themes, commonalities, patterns, and concepts. The journal notes consisted of a 200-page notebook in which, immediately after the interview, I documented behaviors, tones, emotions, and attitudes to determine as best I could if answers were honest or more scripted. The dialogue was genuine during the interview. From conversations aside from the interview questions, I wrote notes to include information on participants' shared current career and education status and aspirations. I contacted five post-high school students who experienced the credit recovery program and are progressing through society. I told them that I was conducting research as a requirement to earn my doctorate in education and relevant to my topic of student-teacher relationships in an online credit recovery program. I have identified them as potential case study participants. I sent proper documentation, scheduled and conducted interviews, and transcribed and coded information to analyze and present findings in Chapter 4. The research was designed to capture the student-teacher relational experiences through the lens of participants to present evidence that could result in a student-teacher relational transformational paradigm in which teachers are more involved in online learning. The data were derived from an interview case study research depicting specific, narrative accounts. The participants answered the open-ended questions, told their stories, and conveyed relational events and experiences. With the data collected from this case study, the district will have access to data for a grounded theory student-teacher relationship online credit recovery study. The interview process took 3 weeks longer than I anticipated. Cataloging and coding the data took 5 weeks.

Role of the Researcher

My role as the researcher was recruiting volunteer participants for the study, creating appropriate questions, interviewing participants, transcribing, analyzing data, and developing a theory from the data findings. To authenticate the study, I had to ensure that personal bias was excluded from the research process. My role as the researcher was to ensure that the data were guided by the three research questions and supported by the literature review. The research instrument was nonbiased, easy to understand, and aligned with the research questions. My role was to certify that the data collection, analysis, and coding process were adequate and significant. Following IRB approval and protocol, I was obligated to use integrity and be trustworthy when collecting, transcribing, analyzing, coding, and reporting data. I reserved and secured all notes and documentation for at least 3 years.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined trustworthiness in terms of four criteria: credibility, transferability, conformability, and dependability. Credibility is confidence in the truthfulness and accuracy of the findings. Transferability is establishing that the results are applicable in other contexts and perspectives. Dependability shows, as with any valid statistical measure, that the findings are consistent and can be repeated (Urdu, 2010). Confirmability confirms that the results of a study are informed by participant responses and not researcher perspectives, bias, interest, inclusion, or concern. Still, there is a measure of neutrality in which the findings can be considered trustworthy. As the researcher, I was obligated to be trustworthy.

Setting

The physical setting when recruiting, interviewing participants, and transcribing,

cataloging, and coding data occurred in my home office. The participant interviews were all virtual. I was on the computer in my home office. No participant was on camera. Participant A was interviewed on June 12 at 3 p.m., Participant B was interviewed on June 15 at noon, Participant C was interviewed on June 29 at 7 p.m., Participant D was interviewed on July 20 at 6 p.m., and Participant E was interviewed on August 10 at 2 p.m. I wanted to accommodate the best time when the participants would be in a comfortable environment.

Population

The site for this research is in the eastern region of the United States of America, at a high school in a largely rural pre-K-12 grade district in a southern state. The district serves 37,761 students as of 2023-2024 and consists of 23 elementary, 12 middle, and nine high schools; one kindergarten through eighth-grade school; two sixth- through 12th-grade schools; one virtual school; and one early college.

Participant Selection

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2003), it is appropriate for researchers to apply purposeful sampling if they decide that determined representation will secure the most accurate, comprehensible data. Convenience sampling is included in the data collection method because this post-high school group of students could be contacted through emails and phone numbers. Purposeful sampling is also included, considering these participants were also selected because they were enrolled in the site's online credit recovery program and, while in the program, had no contact with the researcher. The research site's district office personnel are permitted to research post-high school citizens who can be contacted through information the researcher possesses or social media.

Appendix C contains a permission letter. The participants were willing and able to provide deep knowledge and vivid details (Tracy, 2013). I interviewed five post-high school citizens who matriculated through a credit recovery program from district high schools between 2016 and 2022 to examine their lived experiences through a case study.

I searched for 15 participants who were enrolled in the high school site's credit recovery program between 2016 and 2022, of which various certified teachers were monitoring the credit recovery program within those years, and the participants had different teachers depending on the class period. I gained access to my participants by accessing the previous year's credit recovery Google Sheets information. I attempted to contact each credit recovery post-high school student by phone, United States postal mail, or email. Students who could not be contacted by phone, email, or postal mail were searched in online white page directories or social media outlets, and I introduced myself and informed them that I had identified them as prospective participants for my research because, as post-high school citizens, they took credit recovery courses while in high school. Once I exhausted those resources, I sought parent contact information from the district office. Participants were located through student records and parent contact information. I determined that 48 contacts met my criteria. I called all of the contacts. Nineteen parents gave me the cellphone numbers of possible participants. I received five of my goal of 15 participants. Participants were between the ages of 23 and 27. Three Black females, one White female, and one Black male agreed to give signed permission to conduct the interview. Participant A is a 24-year-old Black female who graduated from high school and is currently unemployed, living with her mother, and attending an online college. Participant B, a Black female high school graduate living with her mother, has an

unspecified place of employment. Participant C is a 27-year-old Black female who did not finish high school, lives with her parents, is employed at a daycare center, and plans to earn a GED in the near future. Participant D, a 23-year-old Black male, gave no personal information. He graduated in June 2020, 3 months into the COVID-19 pandemic. Participant E is a 23-year-old White female who graduated from high school, lives with her boyfriend, and works at Walmart. I established a rapport with the participants by discussing yearly school site events and activities and explaining my connection to the credit recovery program. During the one recorded interview and immediately after each transcribed interview, I wrote journal notes and observations that helped me better evaluate the participants' experiences. No one appeared on camera. The participants in the study had varied levels of enthusiasm regarding their online credit recovery program experience. I had to phone call two participants a few weeks later to get clarification before coding, and I had to call a participant after coding to make certain I did not misinterpret their response. There was no data saturation due to the varied responses. Two participants chose not to answer all the questions because they felt the question did not apply to their student-teacher relationship situation. The participants in this study had taken at least one credit recovery course while in high school. This requirement was to ensure participants had a significant experience that would enable them to address the research questions.

I called participants to ask them to volunteer for my dissertation study. Once they agreed, I sent them the information and consent form, Appendix D, letting them know in writing the purpose of the interview and the option to withdraw at any time without question. Two participants did not return their consent in a timely manner, and I had to

call and email for up to 2 weeks before I could move forward with the interview.

Potential participants who agreed and responded to the informed consent form for the interview were contacted immediately to decide on an interview platform, time, and date to be conducted within the next 2 weeks. The participants must have been willing and able to provide deep knowledge and vivid details (Tracy, 2013).

Research Design Instrument

The instrument used for data collection was a 14-question interview aligned to the three research questions. The interview was unstructured to allow for conversation and probing to encourage participants to elaborate and give additional information. Robinson and Leonard (2019) noted that it is vital to have an open-ended survey and interviews where students can express their feelings in greater detail; they also suggested constructing interview questions that use clear, accurate, and appropriate context, language, and vocabulary. When needed, I asked follow-up questions that empowered participants to represent individual experiences. Creating detailed probing questions is critical to collecting data for the study. The interview questions were written to eliminate bias and allow for articulate responses, and each question was aligned with one of the research questions. Robinson and Leonard (2019) stated that question design details directly correlate with how or if samplings will respond. Planning and pre-drafting will help ensure comprehensibility, appropriateness, and participant connectedness. Another critical aspect of question design is the alignment of the purpose and importance because research questions are the “big picture” questions that propel and focus the research efforts. To be effective, questions were straightforward and had a purpose that the participant understood. I needed to know what would be measured under what constructs

and indicators. This gave the question purpose. Fourteen interview questions were designed to learn about graduates' experiences and perspectives on their relationships with online credit recovery teachers.

The open-ended questions allowed students to elaborate on their experiences as they pertain to the three research questions. The first 12 questions informed the study on how the student-teacher relationship impacted the students, and the last two questions informed how to improve relationships for future generations. Categorized responses were measurable, and feasible information was coded and presented in a chart and code book for analytical and evaluative use.

Interview Protocol

The first step in the interview protocol was that the participant agreed to volunteer for the unpaid interview and signed a consent indicating they had read and understood the information before proceeding. The next step was to agree on a time to conduct a virtual interview on a Zoom or Google Meets platform. The next step was to ask permission to be voice-recorded. Next, before the interview, participants and anyone they described were reminded of anonymity. We used one letter instead of the participants' names. All participants could ask me any questions at the end of the interview before I thanked them for their time.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data collection process was an inductive design that extracts information from participants from which generalizations can be made (Creswell, 2014). The data collection process was meticulous and accurate to produce relevant data to align with the research questions to substantiate the findings.

I asked volunteers to schedule 30- to 45-minute interviews to collect student data. I collected and documented anonymously. According to Mwita (2022), for the data to be valid, all interview contexts must be redundant for each participant before data saturation is considered. I did not have data saturation. This approach enabled me to recognize and obtain commonalities, trends, themes, and outliers applicable to the participant group.

Using an inductive coding approach with no preexisting information from any participant, the purpose was to ask questions and interpret the data from the responses to follow wherever it led and understand what it represented in alignment with my three research questions. The inductive approach required that I read participant responses, create categories based on the responses, and align them with the research questions. The narratives in the interview and my journal notes helped me understand the events and experiences in the participants' stories. From verbatim information given by participants throughout the interview, I transcribed each interview and read them four times; however, if I was uncertain of a response, I would reread as many times as needed to help me think through where to place the data. I proceeded to generate categories, codes, and themes. The process used to generate the data was a verbal interview. I extended my anticipated interview timeline by 3 weeks due to participant availability. During the coding process, I called Participants B and C back to clarify terminology when they stated that the teacher was "back offish" and "did not intrude on their space" or "the teacher said what they needed to say and left me alone." I used the theme "non-imposing" to encompass their meanings. I felt that the follow-up phone conversations for clarity placed them all at ease about their participation because they seemed to understand how I was using their words more. I created a packet for each participant labeled A through E that contained all their

information. As I recorded their responses, these letters replaced their names to protect their identity. Each page of the packet had a research question and an interview question written on the top, allowing four pages front and back for responses to each question. Research Question 1 had five interview questions, Research Question 2 had three interview questions, and Research Question 3 had six interview questions.

Data were collected from participants through verbal interviews. Once the data were collected, I began a close examination. Creswell (2014) suggested examining and reexamining the interview data. I transcribed, examined, analyzed, and categorized information as the data analysis directed. I formulated a thematically organized chart using pencils, paper, and different color markers and created a document that organized themes showing commonalities and outliers aligned with the research questions. Charmaz and Thornberg's (2021) constructivist grounded theory qualitative research approach suggests that the data collected emerge into themes and theories. I did not have any predetermined data collection categories.

Creswell (2014) suggested that classifying interview data for analysis should be simultaneous with the data collection. For this case study, I transcribed the interviews. I examined and analyzed the information to generate as many categories as possible. I placed words, phrases, syntax, and events into meaning groups to examine broad patterns and perceptions that guided the data to form themes.

After reading through each interview four times, I started documenting analysis in the packets I created for each participant. I wrote down words and phrases aligned with the research and interview questions and placed them in categories. I began the deductive process of determining common themes. I circle-color-coded the essential words in the

research questions and wrote the participants' responses under them. To find the themes for each question, I repeated the process for each participant. Next, I cut and pasted responses for all the questions from each participant and documented common themes in a codebook. Once I coded the themes for each research question, I counted the times a theme occurred from all three research questions, and I aligned the themes with the theoretical framework. An example is in Appendix E. From the information presented in the literature review in Chapter 2, I looked at each theme. I compared it to the theoretical framework to determine if the themes aligned with the framework. Next to the theme, I wrote SEL, SDT, and self-efficacy to indicate that I established relatedness to the theme and the theoretical framework by comparing elements of the theory to the theme. I also created a code frame, Appendix F, to distinguish the positive and negative teacher impact from the positive and negative student perceptions.

This study adhered to the case study research methodology. Creswell (2014) defined a case study design as including an event, activity, or process of one or more people. A case study allows for true-life perceptions (Stake, 2003). This study's outcomes were aligned with the three research questions and Chapter 2 literature review to determine the findings.

Creswell (2014) defined coding as organizing the material into chunks of text and assigning a word or phrase to the segment to develop a basic sense of it. Tracy (2013) recommended that the researcher be engaged in the primary coding cycle, which allows for the data to be referred to in an unbiased way, and the codebook, which helps create and organize a list of codes and a representation for each. I used pencil, paper, and a color marker tool that allowed variations to coding themes, syntax, and other language

detection variables. I restated variables and created codes for various perspectives of language analysis. I created a code frame theme chart, Appendix G, from the color codebook. The marking tools kept me organized. I was able to use specific colors for the various themes. I could easily count the number of recurring themes by color. This type of coding allowed me to create categories based on the interview transcription and recognize when/if data saturation occurred. The data determined how the codes developed and how they were color-key organized. Coding the pen and pencil and color marker code book and my journal of participant character and tone allowed me to analyze the case study and detect commonalities, themes, and outliers.

Limitations

Limitations and delimitations are inherent in almost all research studies. Limitations to the research design included my inability to get all 15 post-high school citizens and participants who did not want to take time to answer questions but wanted to finish quickly. Participants in the study represented only two of the three primary demographics in the school.

Delimitations

This research focused on relational strategies that foster success for online credit recovery students from the student perspective only. This study examined one school site's data using five post-high school students who were enrolled in the credit recovery program while in school. The sampling was very small but appropriate for a case study. The data did not represent most students in the school site or district who entered and left the credit recovery program by graduation or leaving the school for various reasons. The variables that may have impacted participant perceptions of their experiences, such as

home life and personal issues, could have been a factor they neglected to discuss.

Summary

The qualitative case study research method focused on understanding the impact of teacher relationships on students enrolled in an online credit recovery program at a high school within 7 years. The goal of conducting this case study through documented interviews was to show authentic student perspectives on the impact of teacher relationships in a nontraditional classroom culture consisting of marginalized students who have failed academic requirements. My journal notes describe the participants' tone and attitude. This led me to conclude that their honest, emotional, and descriptive narratives informed the need for a paradigm transformation in how schools view online credit recovery programs. The specific evidence given individually by the lived experiences of participants in the program demonstrated the need for further research on this issue. The commonalities of themes and perspectives are a starting point for research conversations at the research site and district level. This case study is essential to education researchers who want to understand better how to accommodate authentic classroom teaching and learning for all students, including those in an online credit recovery platform, because it examines student perspectives of how they were impacted in an online learning environment.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This study aimed to evaluate the impact of student-teacher relationships in an online credit recovery program to provide relevant knowledge needed to guide success at the classroom level. I interviewed five graduates of an online credit recovery program. This research will contribute to the study and discussion on the credit recovery program fidelity and, precisely, the significance of teacher relationships. This qualitative case study explored student perceptions of teacher relationships while enrolled in an online credit recovery program.

Using a deductive method to generate themes, I developed patterns from the participants' narrative contexts to derive meaning from the data. There was a total of 19 dominant themes. The themes are considered dominant because they reoccurred at least two times. There are eight themes presented in these findings that reoccurred four or more times. To gather data, each participant was asked five interviews and two published survey questions aligned with Research Question 1. Three research questions supported the research topic inquiry of the impact of teacher relationships on students in an online credit recovery program. The research questions were the foundation for the interview questions. The research questions were as follows:

1. What teacher relational strategies positively impact student progress in a credit recovery program?
2. How does a teacher relationship influence student academic success, efficacy, and trajectory?
3. How do student perceptions of teacher attention impact achievement?

The research questions laid the foundation for the findings using aligned interview questions. The findings show detailed descriptions and analysis of dominant themes. Each research question concludes with a summary of the results. The findings of this qualitative case study relate to questions and answers about how teacher relationships impact students in an online credit recovery program. The participants included five former site credit recovery program students enrolled in at least one credit recovery course. Interpreted data were connected to the relationship conceptual framework. This research is based on the credit recovery students' perspectives, and shared responses were categorized and coded into emergent themes that were analyzed and aligned with the research question.

Although there were 19 dominant themes, this chapter examines the data generated from eight themes recurring four or more times. The eight themes are communication, trust, support, non-imposing, encouragement, engagement, relationship, and check-in. The research questions' findings aligned with the conceptual framework and literature review. The student-teacher relationship theoretical framework guided the research through interrelated concepts grounded in a relational learning conceptual framework that considered how authentic student-teacher relationships impact student progress.

Findings: Research Question 1

The first research question, “What teacher relational strategies positively impact student progress in a credit recovery program,” helped participants describe how they felt about what teachers as relational strategies did to establish authentic relationships and impact their progress personally and academically. These questions allowed participants

to describe and explain their stories about relational strategies that positively impacted their personal and academic progress in the program. Participant responses were used for data analysis.

I deconstructed the research question responses into categories of relational strategies, positive impact, and student progress. These themes emerged from the participants' narratives and were placed in categories for the research question. The recurring themes from most to least aligned with Research Question 1 were communication, trust, support, non-imposing, encouragement, and engagement. To collect data aligned with student perceptions of the strategies their credit recovery teachers used to impact their progress, participants were asked to tell about their experience being enrolled in the credit recovery program. Although most responses were positive, some negative comments were related to themes. The reactions were aligned with the research literature review and conceptual framework of relational strategies. The most dominant themes are explained.

Theme 1: Communication

Communication emerged as a dominant theme aligned with student perceptions of relational strategies credit recovery teachers used to impact their progress when participants were asked to discuss their student-teacher relationship. Participants perceived teacher communication through personal and academic discussions and for those who did not want to engage in conversations, by teachers acknowledging students' presence. Bandura (1977) explained how student self-efficacy or confidence that they can complete a task is strengthened by the teacher's direct verbal communication or by the students recognizing how others benefit from teacher communication. Participants

described verbal and nonverbal communication as a teacher's relational strategy impacting their progress. Participants shared that their credit recovery teachers had frequent conversations with them regarding their personal and academic success. An example of Bandura's (1977) direct verbal communication is that Participant A stated, "She would say, Okay, there's something that you could really double down on or focus more on because we're trying to get to the finish line." This narrative data proves that the teacher used intrinsic motivation by giving Participant A autonomy over how they approached the task and allowing the participant to decide how to move forward. Participant B did not want any help or communication from the teacher. However, they observed how the classroom teacher would interact with and assist the English as a Second Language students. The daily observations of the teacher's actions toward other students influenced Participant B. An example of Bandura's (1998) vicarious technique to self-efficacy was when Participant B stated,

I liked working with no one bothering me. I knew the teacher was in the room. I heard her helping students. The Spanish students needed the help, and they were helping each other. She let me help my Spanish friend to pass when I finished.

Participant B is an example of how teacher communication was implemented vicariously to encourage them to believe they could finish the credit recovery course and help others. The teacher actively used intrinsic motivation with Participant B and their friend. They shared that the teacher kept them engaged by showing knowledge of their personal and academic situations. Soh et al. (2022) noted that students in online learning environments often lack intrinsic motivation, and teacher relationships are essential to their well-being. The finding for the communication theme aligns with Soh et al.'s idea

that many students in online learning environments lack intrinsic motivation. Communication is an essential tool for student academic self-efficacy.

The communication theme aligned with Research Question 1 by showing teachers how they used engagement, communication, and relational strategies at the online credit recovery program site to promote student progress. The communication theme demonstrates positive online classroom learning best practices and aligns with Atwell et al.'s (2020) assessment of the significance of student-teacher relationships in online credit recovery environments. Participant C indicated they liked teachers who “Did not initiate unsolicited conversations.” Participant C stated, “I don’t come to school to be friends with teachers.” Participant C gave a narrative that presented a negative case analysis as to how they felt about communicating with the teacher. Participant A welcomed teacher communications, and Participant C did not. Chiu (2022) agreed that teacher strategies that develop self-efficacy are vital to student progress when communicating with online credit recovery students.

Theme 2: Trust

Trust was the second most recurring theme. Trust happens when students and teachers believe the aim is toward an achievement goal. It occurred as the teachers trusted the participants to complete tasks and make daily progress in the course; the participants trusted that the teacher believed they would succeed in passing the credit recovery course, and the teacher was trusted to advocate in the student’s best interest. The theme describes what participants perceived as a positive impact. Students who did not communicate with the teacher described the noncommunication as a sign of trust. Participant B, who liked working independently, said, “The teacher did not bother me. She trusted me to do what I

needed to do, and I did.” This is an example of mutual trust. Chappell (2022) expressed the need for online credit recovery students to have an environment supporting a trusting culture. When responding to the interview questions about receiving teacher attention or having personal and academic discussions, participants who did not desire attention or conversations were positively impacted by the teacher's trust in them and their trust in the teacher's authentic intentions.

Theme 3: Support

The support theme emerged from participants responding to their experiences of having a credit recovery teacher who helped them progress personally and academically. The Glossary of Education Reform (2023) summarized that support means giving individuals directions and tangible evidence to improve their situation. Concrete evidence could include assisting the students to think through connections to solve problems or offering printed materials or visual artifacts to stimulate learning. Support is when students have the foundation and continuous assistance to progress. As the theme emerged, it showed that some help was academic, and some was about personal issues.

Some participants perceived teachers as being concerned and showing support for them. Support occurs when teachers acknowledge student challenges and implement strategies to accommodate emotional and academic needs. Participant A, who looked forward to the teacher giving support daily, said, “I feel like all the checking in and making sure that I was on top of my game really helped.” When asked to clarify the term “checking-in,” Participant A replied, “Check-in means do you need anything. Are you having problems in your personal life, or do you need help with classwork?” The online classroom teacher used intrinsic motivation by listening and showing compassion for the

participant's concerns. The teacher showed relatedness in considering the participant's viewpoint. This example supports Chappell's (2022) idea that online credit recovery teacher relationships are needed to promote student academic and emotional support; however, not all participants felt optimistic about teacher support.

Participants A, B, and C's quotes are most impactful in describing participant perspectives of teacher support. Participant C, who did not like being recognized as a credit recovery student, stated, "I didn't have a problem with the teacher. He didn't really support me. I didn't want to be bothered by the teacher anyway. I don't even know if he liked me. I really don't even remember his name." Participant C, who did not have anything positive to say, is an example of a negative case analysis being in opposition to any positive aspects. Participant A referred to the teacher supporting them, but Participant C indicated they did not want or receive teacher support. This oppositional perspective aligns with Darling-Aduana et al. (2019) and Harrison-Surgeon (2023), suggesting that credit recovery students have unique situations and circumstances to which they come into the program, which could determine how they welcome support. This insight indicates that student support aspects of the site's online credit recovery program curriculum design must be addressed to strengthen and benefit student diversity. Aspen Institute National Commission for Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning (2019) agreed that credit recovery students need teachers' emotional and academic strategies to be successful. Participants A and C show that not all students require or desire a student-teacher relationship to be successful. The findings show that credit recovery programs should meet student needs by recognizing that student-teacher relationships are not for everyone.

Theme 4: Non-Imposing

Participants perceived teachers who did not constantly approach them as non-imposing. Non-imposing means teachers were polite and respectful of student's mental and physical space, being careful not to intrude. The non-imposing theme that emerged from the data generated shows that credit recovery program students differ in how they like to be approached by the teacher. For example, the responses of Participants A and C show that they appreciated the teacher's relational strategies involving constant conversations about computer lesson activities or personal concerns. In contrast, others preferred the teachers to observe and acknowledge their progress with little to no unsolicited verbal communication. Harrison-Surgeon (2023) advocated for an instructional design for credit recovery programs to accommodate student differences. Participants felt that non-imposing teachers allowed them to accomplish tasks independently without a student-teacher relationship. The non-imposing theme was dominant in participant narratives relating to their experience in the credit recovery program and their perception of teacher relational strategies that support student progress. Participant B, who indicated that they knew how to do the work, said,

Credit recovery was easy; I liked that the teacher did not always try to talk to me.

It made me feel like the teacher trusted me to work and finish my work. I remember doing most of it at home and finishing fast.

Non-imposing teachers enable students to progress successfully on their own.

Participant B's data showed that the teacher was actively present in the online classroom, demonstrating the intrinsic motivation strategy, allowing Participant B the autonomy and control to feel competent and motivated to approach the course confidently. As Viano

and Henry (2020) suggested, some students are comfortable working without perimeters. Some participants like online credit recovery courses because they can complete the course with or without the help of a teacher in a shorter or more extended period.

Theme 5: Encouragement

Encouragement emerged as a dominant response from participants as their narratives described how the online credit recovery teacher impacted their personal and academic success—aligned with Research Question 1, indicating the teacher relational strategies that supported their progress. Encouragement is defined as verbal support to promote intrinsic motivations resulting in self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) and self-determination Deci and Ryan (1985b). The theme describes student perceptions of how they were encouraged while in the online credit recovery program. Participant E, who passionately describes how the teacher impacted them academically and personally, said, “Every day, my teacher told me that I was smart and could do the work. She did not judge me; she gave me a book of inspirational sayings.” Participant E's data showed that the online classroom teacher used intrinsic motivation by encouraging the participant's efforts and motivating them to aim high, understand their experiences, and do the unexpected of promoting literature. The participant narrative data that yielded the encouragement theme gives evidence of teacher impact. Participant D completed the credit recovery course a few weeks after the mandatory remote learning. The teacher motivated them to pass because they did not want to be “embarrassed” being with credit recovery students. The teacher let the class know that 60 was a passing grade. Moreover, Participant D said, “ Everyone knows they could pay someone else to complete the course for you.” When I asked Participant D how the teacher encouraged them, they said,

Me and the teacher didn't talk. I felt like I was in one of those special ed classes. I was encouraged because I could do the work at home, and anyone could help me pass with a 60. I was really motivated when Covid came, and I did not have to go back to school.

The intrinsic motivation encompassing Bandura (1997) and Deci and Ryan (1985b) is evident in Participant E's statement. The concerns of Dynarski (2018a), Heinrich and Darling-Aduana (2021) and Malkus (2019) affect credit recovery program fidelity and rigor are evident from Participant D's statement. For a student to be encouraged about minimal program standards and requirements is an issue that needs to be addressed. This statement shows evidence of a negative impact on the student when the teacher monitoring the online credit recovery program does not encourage the students to value academic and personal challenges and allows the student to be inspired by misguided values.

Theme 6: Engagement

Engagement is a dominant theme that emerged that aligned with Research Question 1. It is how the participants perceived the teacher's one-to-one or environmental interactions. The Glossary of Education Reform (2023) recognized credit recovery as a newcomer to the education system, and standard measures of online engagement are a recent occurrence. The North Carolina adoption of the ISTE (2019b) digital standards for students and teachers is a guide that enables educators to understand better the "why" and "how" to engage students in online programs. Malkus (2018) saw the problem with online teachers monitoring students and troubleshooting their technology with little to no engagement as an issue that needed to be addressed if the teacher was to have a positive

impact on students. Engagement is a strategy some researchers, such as Chappell (2022), find instrumental in student success. Participant E, who was very enthusiastic about the impact the credit recovery had on her academically and personally, said,

I loved her attention. We got each other. We knew when we were having good and bad days, and we knew how to treat each other. She would go around to everyone else and come to me last. She sat next to me every day, and I learned.

This participant described physical engagement as sitting next to them while working on the computer and mental engagement as attaching to emotional and academic aspects and environmental factors by sharing the teacher's proximal movement within the room. The data show the impact that the teacher had on the participant. Darling-Aduana et al. (2019) mentioned how engaging learning environments are essential for student success. Participant E's response indicates that asking students about things happening in life without specific personal or academic reference allows students to share their immediate concerns. It shows that the online teacher is strategically using intrinsic motivation by listening and establishing relatedness efforts that would enable Participant E to engage in personal wellness discussions as a motivation tool. This is relevant to my research findings, as Malkus (2018) revealed that students need tools to help them progress. Engagement is a teacher strategy that students perceive as instrumental in their success.

Summary

When examining the analysis of Research Question 1, "What teacher relational strategies positively impact student progress in a credit recovery program," the interview data focused on how students enrolled in the online credit recovery program perceived

the relationship with their teachers. The data focused on themes from Research Question 1, categories of teacher relational strategies and student impact. The dominant themes were communication, trust, support, non-imposing, encouragement, and engagement. The conclusion drawn from the themes related to teacher relationships is that they represent teacher strategies students perceive as ways teachers attempt to build relationships. Students receive teacher attention considering the best way to benefit their personal and academic growth. Participants shared data about what they perceived as teacher relational strategies that support their progress while in the site's online credit recovery program. Dynarski (2018a) related these themes as being essential for best practices with online learning. The themes emerged that from the student's perspective, the site online credit recovery teachers were implementing relational strategies that positively impacted students and their personal and academic progress. Emily (2023) explained that intrinsic motivation developed through authentic teacher relationships is valuable to student achievement, self-efficacy, and trajectory.

Participant data aligned with the research relational conceptual framework. Student perceptions of their progress and dominant themes aligned with Research Question 1, showing that the communication, support, non-imposing teachers, encouragement, and engagement with participants impacted them academically and personally. Data generated from the narratives of Participants A and E show positive aspects of the themes. Participant D's narratives show a pessimistic analysis of the themes, and Participant C's and B's narratives give data that relate to themes both positively and negatively. Teacher relational intrinsic motivational strategies were evident in participant narratives that told how the classroom teacher's actions and

reactions helped participants overcome obstacles and be receptive to learning support that impacted their progress. Participants made personal and academic progress because the online classroom teacher respected and understood participants' perspectives and allowed them to have choices. Clements et al. (2021) agreed that with encouragement from their teachers, online credit recovery student progress is a reaction to their acquired self-determination. This is aligned with the relational learning conceptual framework. Smith (2023) explained students progress when accommodated by authentic teacher strategy tools that embrace engagement, support, and respect for personal space. The literature review aligns in support that intentional teacher relational strategies impact the progress of students in an online credit recovery program.

The emergent themes from the question of positive teacher impact were that students perceived the impact of the teacher relational strategies as communicative, trusting, supporting, non-imposing, encouraging, and engaging, which are essential student achievement strategies. This research conceptual framework aligns with the CASEL (2023) assessment that online program student-teacher relationships are essential for educators to ensure students feel the impact so they can sustain academic success. The research of Tate and Warschauer (2022) explained the importance of having a positive impact perception within student-teacher relationships to give authenticity to the relationship and a sense of empowerment to credit recovery students by equipping them with the intrinsic motivation needed to achieve self-efficacy and feel accomplished. Due to the importance of SEL, Hsu et al. (2019) advised that online learning can be integral to effectively motivating students in online learning environments. Safira and Wicaksono (2023) explained a correlation between a student's self-efficacy and positive teacher

impacts within the learning environment. My findings for Research Question 1 conclude that participant responses support the positive and negative sides of intentional teacher relational strategies, suggesting that the online credit recovery program teacher can best impact participants by listening to and respecting their perspectives on the impact of teacher relationships.

Findings: Research Question 2

The second research question, “How does a teacher relationship influence student academic success, efficacy, and trajectory,” allowed participants to describe their feelings about their online credit recovery teacher relationship and its influence on them post-high school. These questions allowed participants to describe and explain, through their stories, how the student-teacher relationships in the online classroom have influenced their current personal or academic situation. Participant responses were categorized, coded, and used for data analysis.

I analyzed and placed the research question responses into categories of relationship influence while enrolled in the site’s online credit recovery program. The themes emerged from participant narratives and were placed in categories based on the research question. The dominant theme that reoccurred four or more times with considerable significance was “relationship.” To collect data aligned with student perceptions of the strategies their credit recovery teachers used to influence their academic progress and post-high school citizenship, participants were asked to tell about their experience in the credit recovery program. To ensure the data did not appear skewed and to maintain my credibility as the researcher, I included participant narratives that gave a positive and negative theme analysis. The reactions were aligned with the research

literature review and conceptual framework. Teacher-classroom relational strategies show they were not just monitoring the classroom, which is evident through participant quotations. The theme is defined and explained.

Theme 6: Relationship

The relationship theme emerged as a dominant theme aligned with student perceptions of relational strategies that contributed to teacher influence. From the information they shared or knew about the teacher, participants perceived student-teacher relationships as accommodating their preferences. A student-teacher classroom relationship means the interactions about the academic content area, personal well-being, and current world events cannot be ignored; they must be acknowledged to some extent. Participants described verbal and nonverbal relationships as an accepted teacher relational strategy influencing their academic progress and post-high school citizenship. Participants shared that their online credit recovery teacher would foster relationships with students who were receptive to having one and would not attempt to have one with students who did not embrace the concept of a student-teacher relationship. CASEL (2023) shared that establishing a relationship is a good teacher strategy, and knowing how and when to approach reluctant students is also crucial for credit recovery. The participant responses varied in their perceptions of how the teacher relationship influenced them, making it evident that the data would not be skewed on a bell curve. Participant A said their relationship with the teacher was “straightforward, very honest, and enjoyable,” and now, because of the teacher relationship,

Honestly, it helped me with perseverance because currently, I am in college right now. I’m in college. I go online as well. So, I feel like I can always hear those

encouraging words and phrases they would give to me for motivation to continue to persevere in my academics.

Participants A and E had very positive responses about their relationship with their online credit recovery teacher. Participant E said,

I loved my teacher; she was a good friend.... I work at Walmart selling cellphones, know all about cellphones, and can do math. In my job, I have to think and listen when I sell cell phones. That is what she taught me, too. To listen. She listened to me, and that is what I really liked about her.

The data from Participants A and E show that the online classroom teacher used intentional skills that influenced their academic performance and post-high school citizenship. Nguyen (2021) considered mastering the craft of relationship building. This is a difficult challenge in an online credit recovery program. Some participants who failed a course feel embarrassed or ashamed and prefer to remain under the radar and not establish relationships in the credit recovery environment. Participant D, whose data showed negative for all the themes, including relationships, said,

No, we didn't talk about anything. I remember I had to wait for my class to open, and he told me to get off my phone and do my work.... The teacher never said anything to me. The counselor emailed me and told me I was doing good. I passed because my mom made sure I was keeping on top of my work.... I didn't have a relationship with the teacher. I never went back after COVID.

Participants D and C shared that they did not have an influential relationship with their online credit recovery teachers. Participants D and C may have a loner-type personality, they may have a hard time believing that the teacher is authentic (Chappell,

2022), or they may not trust that the teacher has their best interest at heart. Sabarwal et al., 2022) talked about how a teacher's mindset influences how they relate to the students.

The relationship theme aligned with Research Question 2 by showing the influence student-teacher relationships can have on the online credit recovery program participants to have a positive influence on those who were receptive to it, and for those who are not, it presents a challenge to teachers to work toward the skills needed to build influential relationships with those who are not receptive.

Summary

Data from the participant narratives prove that teachers of online credit recovery classroom sites were building relationships that influenced participants academically and post-high school. Participant responses gave evidence of the positive and negative issues relating to the theme. The evidence aligned with the research question's conceptual framework and influential relationship aspect. Although not all participants were receptive to establishing a student-teacher relationship, it was up to the teacher to make every effort to create an environment that allows them to practice the skills needed to be able to embrace those challenging students who are not receptive to the concept of student-teacher relationships. The data for Research Question 2 show that research site teachers were building quality relationships with students.

Findings: Research Question 3

Theme 7: Check-in

Research Question 3, “How do student perceptions of teacher attention impact achievement,” and the aligned interview questions are significant to the research regarding credit recovery program outgrowth and design because they address elements

of the program that directly influence the impact of teacher relationships for future considerations. The interview questions were designed to approach a student perspective of strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat analysis to understand better how to progress student-teacher relationships at the site online credit recovery programs because it addresses reasons students fail and how the program could be improved.

Check-in emerged as a dominant theme aligned with Research Question 3 concerns how participants perceived their teacher's attention, how it impacted their achievements, what caused the impact, and what could improve the student-teacher relational impact for upcoming years. Federal laws and policies, including those of the Federal Communications Commission, recommend implementing strategies that continually improve the online credit recovery program. Themes 1-6 from the participant narrative data gave examples of how participants perceived teacher attention positively and negatively. Participants who did not want to communicate or receive support from the teacher and those excited to welcome teacher engagement and encouragement took responsibility for their positive or negative actions toward the teacher's attention.

Teacher check-in means that the teacher will verbally greet, nod, and make eye contact with the student in close range or from a distance across the room to acknowledge their presence and let them know they are close by if a student needs assistance. It allows for one-on-one time with the student and teacher at the student's request. Teacher check-ins empower students by enabling them to choose how they will receive teacher attention and let them know that the teacher will respond to them. Chappell's (2022) research explained the need for credit recovery students to be handled gingerly due to unknown circumstances and situations that may have caused them to fail their classes. The teacher

must be mindful of how attention is perceived and work on making it optimal for student success. Participant E, who stated that their credit recovery teacher was their “favorite teacher,” said,

I loved her attention. We got each other. We knew when we were having good and bad days, and we knew how to treat each other. If I did not want to be bothered with anyone, she would just check in on me and leave me alone.

The teacher check-in theme data generated by Participant E showed that even though the credit recovery teacher was considered their favorite, there were times when they did not want to accept support or engage in a conversation; however, they were receptive to the teacher check-in. The check-in theme was shown to be a strength of the program site and would be an asset to the program if redesigned. Havik and Westergård (2019), Pallini et al. (2019), and Nguyen (2021) agreed that a type of check-in teacher relational strategy positively affects how students perceive teacher attention. Online credit recovery teachers must be perceived as genuine and authentic. Check-ins let students know teachers will listen and react in their best interest. Participant A’s response was most impactful in describing the data. Participant A gave a check-in response to the questions about how to improve the online credit recovery program if allowed to redesign it and any other suggestions that could improve it. Participant A said,

I’m always going to say just checking in and continue to make sure that the student is trying to persevere. That shows they have a good supportive team behind them as well as going to make them feel great. So, I feel that will be—I was always checked on.

Participant A’s response showed how teachers have the opportunity to advance student

learning without teaching a subject. It also showed the possible threat that not acknowledging students or offering them help could pose to their attitude toward teacher attention. When asked how the relationship with the credit recovery teacher influenced their current situation in life, Participant A said,

Honestly, it helped me to persevere because currently I am in college right now, and I feel like the things that they taught me that I learned is being applied now that I am in college. I go online as well, so I feel like I can always hear those encouraging words and phrases they would give to me for motivation and to continue to persevere in my academics. I really liked the daily check-ins.

The participant narratives gave examples of how the teacher check-in theme influenced how they perceived the teacher's attention, reacted to it, and impacted their current life situation. The theme emphasizes how the participants felt knowing the teacher was available for assistance when they accepted their attention. Not being receptive to attention from the teacher did not signal to the participant that they would fail but instead that teachers believed the participants could accomplish their credit recovery goal knowing help was available to them. As Aydin and Ok (2022) suggested, when teachers believe in their students, it gives them the confidence to achieve. Not having that confidence would detect a weakness in the program design that would deter student progress. Participants described the check-in as a respect of time and space that can be used with those who express that they want or need attention.

Summary

Participants expressed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats considering the site's online credit recovery program, which is important information

needed to improve the program. Teacher check-in is vital to the program's success and student achievement. How the participants receive teacher attention is critical to the student-teacher relationship, depending on the participants and the challenges they faced by being in an online credit recovery class for students who have failed academically. From Research Questions 1 and 2, it is evident that Participants B, C, and D have teacher attention issues that go beyond having a bad day or being tired and not wanting any conversation or communication. Their issues require teacher relationship skills building. The check-in theme is an effective relationship-building strategy because students like Participants B, C, and D would be given a daily choice to be receptive or not. Participant A data show that, at times, even the most enthusiastic student needs to be acknowledged and given the understanding that the teacher is available when required without an explanation or conversation about why they are not receptive to the teacher's attention. Chappell (2022) shared how important it is to meet online credit recovery students where they are. Aydin and Ok (2022) recognized that online teachers should continue building relationship skills to better student perceptions of teacher attention.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Overview

In hindsight, due to the ages of the participants, I would have thought to suggest multiple ways to receive the interview questions, such as telephone conversation, submitting the questions for participants to respond in writing via email, and in-person at a convenient public location. Getting participants to comply with adapting to the virtual-only environment was very challenging. Accommodating their schedules put me behind on my interview timeline.

This qualitative case study examined how student perceptions of their online credit recovery program teacher relationship impacted personal and academic achievements. Without the traditional face-to-face help of a classroom teacher, students in online credit recovery courses are expected to pass a class they failed by working through software modules. It is difficult for students challenged with learning the material and being disciplined enough to focus on a self-paced course after the possible emotional anxiety of having an academic failure. Traditionally, online credit recovery program teachers did not consider establishing relationships with students they did not have to teach. Teachers were required to monitor student progress and assist with technology issues. When students perceive teachers as concerned and supportive, it can determine how the student responds (Sabarwal et al., 2022).

This study explored the impact of student-teacher relationships in an online high school credit recovery program in North Carolina. In 2017, I was asked to monitor the progress of high school students matriculating through the online credit recovery program at the school where I worked as a media specialist. I witnessed students repeating 3- to 4-

credit recovery courses year after year. As I began to form relationships with the students, I noticed they began to complete their courses. I became interested in studying the online credit recovery program through the lens of a student's perspective. This study aligned with my lifelong passion for student-teacher relationships, ethics in cultural diversity, and inclusion for academically challenged students placed in situations or programs requiring them to complete lesson modules in isolation without the traditional classroom face-to-face teacher interaction. It has been my experience that student-teacher relationships assist in the academic progress and the personal character of both students and teachers. This study's theoretical framework incorporates the CASEL (2023) framework's SEL competencies, Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy social learning theory, and Deci and Ryan's (1985b) and Ryan and Deci's (2020) self-determination motivational theory of personal development. The conceptual framework was founded on relational strategies that improve students' sense of self-assurance. I was interested in learning how student-teacher relationships impacted online course recovery students at my school site, aligned with the literature review in Chapter 2.

The participants in this study were 3 to 5 years post-high school. The flow of the conversations let me know that they clearly remembered the time they spent in the credit recovery program. As post-high school citizens, their narratives told of how the program affected their sociological, psychological, and physiological well-being while in the program. The student-teacher interaction preference varied from direct frequent communications to general infrequent conversations, which the students perceived as a positive teacher relationship and support strategy.

The research examined the impact of teacher relationships on students in an

online credit recovery program. The three research questions supported the conceptual and theoretical framework, suggesting that teacher relations have a positive academic and social-emotional impact on post-high school online credit recovery students. The three research questions helped structure a deductive process in which the findings confirmed the theory. The questions to examine how teacher relations impact students in an online credit recovery program were

1. What teacher relational strategies positively impact student progress in a credit recovery program?
2. How does a teacher relationship influence student academic success, efficacy, and trajectory?
3. How do student perceptions of teacher attention impact achievement?

The research questions resulted in several recurring themes that produced data to conclude that post-high school online credit recovery program students determined that what they perceived as teacher trust, communication, and relationships had the most relevant impact on them.

Discussion of Findings

To determine the impact of teacher relationships on students in an online credit recovery program, I first conducted an inductive analysis of participant narratives stemming from questions allowing participants to narrate their experiences during an interview to generate categories and then conducted a deductive process to determine themes from the categories. Once the recurring themes were presented and analyzed from the data, I was surprised to learn that the participants had been impacted by the positive concerns and relationships their credit recovery teachers showed in the program that

reflected their academic success to progress and pass the courses and on their post-high school experiences. I had to rethink the possible reasons why the credit recovery students were repeating recovery courses multiple times.

To show a comparison balance, my data theme code frame included students' positive and negative perceptions and teachers' positive and negative impacts. The themes of being lazy, detached, embarrassed, and unmotivated were negative perceptions the participants observed about themselves and other credit recovery program students. Students being unmotivated was the only negative teacher impact theme. Participants suggested that when teachers concluded students were unmotivated, it had a negative impact on how the teacher engaged the students. The negative, probably unintentional, impact on one participant was that they thought the teacher disliked them.

The five participants were asked 14 interview questions that gave information on their perspective of teacher relational strategies, teacher relationships, influence post-high school, and the program outgrowth and design. Eighty-four themes were derived from the questions. Fifty-one themes were aligned with student perception, and 33 were identified as teacher impact. The data show that 33 themes aligned with teacher impact and 51 themes aligned with student perception, which determined that 64.7% of participant perceptions were directly related to the teachers' impact on them. This indicates that teacher relationships did impact students in the site's online credit recovery program. Nineteen of the 84 themes were repeated at least twice. The themes of communication recurred seven times, addressing all three research questions. The theme of trust was repeated six times overall. These themes were coded for each research question, producing the highest-coded repeated themes. I evaluated the 21 repeated themes to

identify the SEL, SDT, and self-efficacy tenets. All coded themes aligned with the tenets encompassing this study's conceptual framework. I was confident that my data coding and analysis results were valid.

Conclusions Based on Results

I hypothesized that students who have failed a class and are placed in an online credit recovery program are mostly positively impacted by teacher relationships. Based on the results of this study, online credit recovery participants perceive teachers as being more than classroom monitors. Of the five participants in the study, only two expressed how they genuinely liked their online credit recovery teacher because of the relationship they had established. The remaining three participants conveyed respect for teachers they felt were authentic in dealing with the students but did not feel they had a student-teacher relationship.

Throughout the interviews and as dictated in my journal, the participants' narratives told of their authentic experiences. Based on the results, I concluded that students in the online credit recovery program recognize and benefit from positive student-teacher relationships. Online students think differently about what constitutes a good student-teacher relationship. Some students require much attention, and others prefer to work in solitude at their own pace without whole group involvement in an environment that affirms the teacher is there if academic or emotional assistance is needed. The data support and substantiate Chappell's (2022) study and other findings in the Chapter 2 literature review aligned with the significance and positive impact of student-teacher relationships for online students enrolled in a credit recovery program.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations are the aspects associated with the study that I could not control. One of the limitations was that I used a sampling of participants who were post-high school citizens from one site. Another limitation was the small sampling size of those who volunteered to participate in the case study. My participants took at least one credit recovery course and passed. I am familiar with students at the site who took three to four courses and had to repeat the same courses for up to three semesters. A delimitation to the study is that participants were those with whom I did not have any encounter. I did not want to be included in the narrative about their credit recovery program experiences. I am employed at the research site, and my job duties include monitoring students enrolled in the site's credit recovery program. Based on my observations of the online credit recovery classroom environment, I did not include my opinion in the study.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this research study imply that online credit recovery program students perceive teachers as part of their academic, personal, and emotional success in school and as post-high school citizens. Based on the study's findings, schools could benefit from programs and processes put in place to help teachers better assist students in recovering classes in an online format. The literature review indicates that more research needs to be done on the online credit recovery program's effectiveness, credibility, and fidelity.

Chapter 1 discussed the need for students to believe they are significant to the environment. Current research articles and books on equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging (EDIB) conversations address high school online credit recovery programs.

The research reveals the importance of evaluating online learning situations. My research determined that student-teacher conversation and mutual trust are leading factors in positive relationships that benefit student achievement; this could be the basis of a conversational starting point for program improvement. In dealing with unique situations regarding online student inequities, Herman and Gill (2023) and Rolstad and Rayne (2023) sought to implement a flexible program design approach to address EDIB issues. If the need is determined, my research site district can assess this case study and suggest an appropriate credit recovery program design or enhancement to benefit the district's EDIB and online learning initiatives.

From my perspective, the implication of this study is to promote the significance of student-teacher relationships. The most effective ways to address the topic are through meaningful avenues, including professional development seminars and professional learning communities. In our post-pandemic, ever-changing technology world, attention to student well-being is optimal for their academic and personal success. Most online program teachers monitor student progress and assist with technology issues (Malkus, 2019). The expectation is to move the student through the online modules with little or no communication that pertains to the student's social-emotional needs. The COVID-19 pandemic taught the American public school system that student-teacher relationships extend outside the traditional classroom and are significant to student success. The more outstanding issue for credit recovery students is that most teachers have low expectations for students who fail classes (Sabarwal et al., 2022). Teacher professional development training should include building relationships with credit recovery students. As noted by Soh et al. (2022) and Cahyadi and Ramli (2023), online students need intrinsic

motivation to learn and succeed, and the common thread of student-teacher relationships is trust.

The implication of this study showed that communication is the Number 1 student perception of teachers with the most significant impact. Professional development from outside resources who have proven research strategies would be effective in creating a paradigm shift to building relationships in online courses. Professional learning communities that focus on credit recovery program students would include student-teacher relationships to guide SEL, self-determination, and self-efficacy that will serve them well in the program and as post-high school citizens. Online credit recovery program educators should have the essential preparation and expectations needed to establish authentic relationships with students that propel student success.

Recommendations for Further Research

As Atwell et al. (2023) suggested, minimal research is available on online credit recovery programs pre- or post-COVID-19. This study is relevant to diversity and ethics for students who have failed courses and must recover them online. It is not enough to monitor their progress and assist with technology issues. Credit recovery programs must be researched to acquire data and analysis to improve and sustain quality programs.

As a starting point, my research study adds to the literature and could be expanded by including more sites and the number of participants in the district. This would present more data for the district. It could determine strengths and weaknesses to improve credit recovery programs. The study could be restructured to include teachers, current students, and perspectives on relationships through interviews, focus groups, and surveys to triangulate the data. To ensure diversity, the samplings should include all races

and ethnicities. As data are collected from state districts, more research resources will support knowing and learning about online credit recovery programs.

I want to continue the research by curating 10 credit recovery program topics by the most current dates and writing an article about my findings and the implications for further studies. I have been researching educational consulting agencies whose values, mission, and programming I agree with and to which I could attach myself and grow as a researcher. I can sit on panels, conduct workshops, and provide information at conferences with my distinguished educator group. As educational and technological challenges continue, I hope to continue as a researcher and write articles on educational best practices.

Conclusion

This study adds to the academic research about the online credit recovery program. It examined student perspectives on the impact of teacher relationships. It affirmed that from the perspectives of the students who are post-high school citizens, teacher relationships positively influenced them. Participants identified communication and trust as the highest virtues in their relationship with the online credit recovery teacher. The research questions and conceptual framework were foundational in progressing the study. The participant narratives were precise, and conclusions based on deductive coding validated the study. The conclusions contribute to the current research on the impact of student-teacher relationships in online credit recovery programs.

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Appendix A

Policy CCRE-001 Course for Credit Section 6

Policy
CCRE-
001:
Course
for
Credit

Status: ADOPTED



Original Adopted Date: 09/07/2017 | **Last Revised Date:** 05/13/2021 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 05/13/2021

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more

NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Policy Manual

| Item | Description |
|------------------------------|--|
| Policy Title | Course for Credit |
| Policy Category | Course for Credit (CCRE) |
| Policy ID | CCRE-001 |
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| Statutory Reference | GS 115C-8 |

Section 6 – Credit Recovery

6. Credit recovery shall be governed by the following definitions and parameters:

Credit Recovery

6.1 The term “credit recovery” will be used to refer to a block of instruction that is less than the entirety of the Standard Course of Study for that course. Credit recovery delivers a subset of the Standard Course of Study or blueprint of the original course in order to specifically address deficiencies in a student’s mastery of the course and target specific components of a course necessary for completion.

6.2 The length of credit recovery courses shall be dictated by the skills and knowledge the student needs to recover and not be a fixed length of seat time. When credit recovery is exercised, the original record of the course being completed and failed will remain on the transcript.

6.3 The LEA shall allow a grade pass or a fail for each credit recovery course. The mark will not affect the student’s GPA.

6.4 A student wishing to modify his or her GPA shall repeat a course for credit and not seek a credit recovery solution.

6.5 A local school board may not limit the number of credit recovery courses taken by a student prior to graduation.

6.6 The End-of-Course (EOC) exam associated with the credit recovery course may be administered no later than 30 days upon the completion of the credit recovery course.

6.7 By the beginning of 2019-20 school year, the LEA shall develop local policy and procedures addressing the implementation of credit recovery opportunities across the school district to support student achievement. At a minimum, credit recovery policies and procedures shall address factors for student participation, content alignment to original course, instructional delivery methods and a process to ensure consistency in implementation across the district.

Appendix B
Interview Questions

RQ1: What teacher relational strategies positively impact student progress in a credit recovery program?

1. Tell me about your experience being enrolled in the credit recovery program.
2. Tell me about your relationship with your credit recovery teacher.
3. How did you receive teacher attention?
4. Tell me about times when your credit recovery teacher discussed good or not-so-good things going on in your life?
5. Think about the times you and your Credit Recovery teacher talked about how your day, or their day, was going at school? How did those conversations influence you then and now?

RQ2: How does a teacher relationship influence student academic success, efficacy, and trajectory?

6. How did your teachers inspire or encourage you to focus and be diligent in your online self-paced course?
7. As a post-high school citizen who spent a year or more in the credit recovery program, in what ways did the relationships with your Credit Recovery teachers help you succeed?
8. How can credit recovery teachers support students

RQ3: How do student perceptions of teacher attention impact achievement?

9. What do you think might cause someone to fail a credit recovery course?
10. Who was your favorite credit recovery teacher and why?
11. How did your credit recovery teacher support you?
12. How were you motivated by your teachers?
13. If you were to redesign the credit recovery program, how would you improve the program?
14. Discuss any comments, considerations, or concerns about online credit recovery student-teacher relationships that will have a positive impact on students' post-high school citizenship.

Appendix C

Permission Letter From the District

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Institutional Review Board, and Dissertation Committee:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] completing her doctoral research, she will be interviewing former students who are adults and no longer [REDACTED] students. Her research application was received, reviewed, and approved by the school district. Further, Chief [REDACTED] granted permission for [REDACTED] use email addresses and telephone numbers to contact individuals who left school (either graduated or dropped out) between 2016 and 2022 whose personal contact information she acquired when they were recovering one or more classes through [REDACTED]

Should you need any additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Best regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Appendix D

Information for Potential Research Study Candidates

Title of the study: You have been asked to participate in a research study on Teacher Relationships: Impact on Students in an Online Credit Recovery Program. My goal is to explore the experiences of students who withdrew or graduated high school through the Credit Recovery program. This research aims to understand better the experiences and needs of the Credit Recovery program offered through a school's district as perceived by students who completed the course requirements of credit recovery programs. Your participation will be valuable for helping education researchers design program development and advance the knowledge of local school district administrators and program coordinators. You were selected as a possible participant because you have participated in the Credit Recovery program and have withdrawn or graduated from high school. While your participation in this research study is valued, it is entirely voluntary and separate from any other Credit Recovery program evaluation efforts. You may decline to participate at any time. You may refuse to participate without penalty, and the researcher has the right to withdraw you from the study at any time.

Researcher:

Purpose: If you decide to participate, you will have the opportunity to participate in a one-on-one interview asking about your experiences with teacher relationships at the same time you were enrolled in the program. The types of support and resources you received from your credit recovery teachers that were provided during your program participation.

Procedure: Each participant will be sent a standard online survey/interview informed consent form. An online, recorded video conferencing tool such as Zoom or Google Meets will be used to conduct the interview.

Time requirements: 30 minutes to 1 hour

Voluntary Participation: Participation is voluntary, and you may opt-out at any time before or during the interview.

Confidentiality: Your name will not be used when data from this study are analyzed and published. Every effort will be made to keep your information confidential. Data will be stored in a locked, password-protected safe, only accessible by key, for three years after the study is complete. For the study, all names and identification of the candidates will be deleted from the recording and removed from all transcripts. The information will be extracted and kept solely for the researcher's use. A shredder will destroy data after three years.

Risk There are no known or anticipated risks associated with participation in this study. Your participation, responses, and student data will not affect you in any way. Your complete privacy will be maintained in all published and written data relating to or resulting from this study.

Benefits: Your participation will be valuable for helping education researchers, guiding program development, and advancing the knowledge of local school district administrators and program providers for Credit Recovery programs.

Payment: No compensation is provided.

Right to withdraw: You have the right to withdraw at any time. No questions asked.

Questions: **If you have questions about the study, contact:**

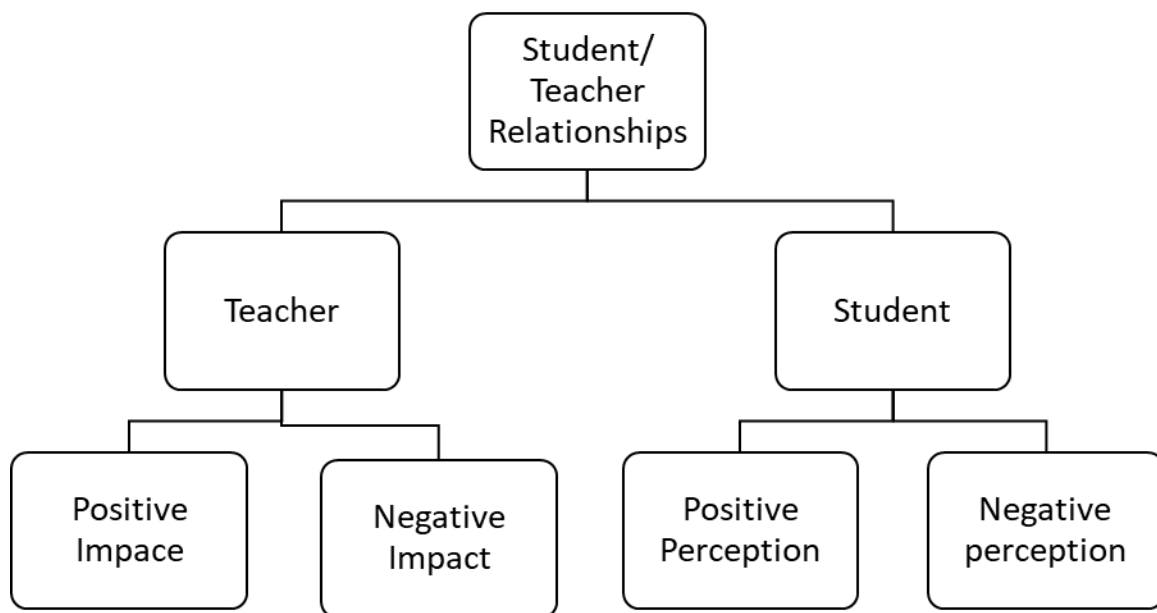
Appendix E

Example of Circle Category Color-Coding and Connected Theoretical Framework

| Color | | Times repeated | Aligned with theoretical framework |
|--------------|-----------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Purple | Confidence | 2 | SEL, SDT, Self-efficacy |
| Green | Encouragement | 5 | SEL, SDT, Self-efficacy |
| Rust | Compassion | 3 | SEL, SDT, Self-efficacy |
| Lilac | Attention | 5 | SEL, SDT, Self-efficacy |
| Turquoise | Check-in | 4 | SEL, SDT, Self-efficacy |
| Yellow | Trust | 6 | SEL, SDT, Self-efficacy |
| Dark Purple | Supportive | 5 | SEL, SDT, Self-efficacy |
| Gray | Non-Intrusive | 5 | SEL, SDT, Self-efficacy |
| Orange | Communication | 7 | SEL, SDT, Self-efficacy |
| Lime | Impactful | 2 | SEL, SDT, Self-efficacy |
| Red | Embarrassed | 2 | SEL, SDT, Self-efficacy |
| Pink | Detached/Unmotivated | 2 | SEL, SDT, Self-efficacy |
| Brown | Independent | 2 | SEL, SDT, Self-efficacy |
| Light Gray | Relationships | 4 | SEL, SDT, Self-efficacy |
| Mustard | Positive Affirmations | 2 | SEL, SDT, Self-efficacy |
| Blue | Important | 2 | SEL, SDT, Self-efficacy |
| Light Purple | Understand | 2 | SEL, SDT, Self-efficacy |
| Tangerine | Engaging | 4 | SEL, SDT, Self-efficacy |
| Light Blue | Visible | 2 | SEL, SDT, Self-efficacy |

Appendix F

Code Frame



Appendix G
Code Frame Themes

Bold – Teacher Impact

Not Bold– Student Perception

| RQ1 Themes | RQ2 Themes | RQ3 Themes |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Engaging</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Conversations (Personal/Academic)</p> <p>Supportive</p> <p>Trust</p> <p>Noncommunication</p> <p>Friendly</p> <p>Encouraging</p> <p>Visible</p> <p>Important</p> <p>Progress</p> <p>Supportive</p> <p>Impactful</p> <p>Non-imposing</p> <p>Guidance</p> <p>Independent</p> <p>Supportive</p> <p>Check-in</p> <p>Guidance</p> <p>Embarrassed</p> <p>Independent</p> <p>Supportive</p> <p>Engaging</p> | <p>Impactful</p> <p>Encouraging</p> <p>Supportive</p> <p>Engaging</p> <p>Non-imposing</p> <p>Conversations</p> <p>Trust</p> <p>Focus</p> <p>Empathy</p> <p>Listening</p> <p>Perseverance</p> <p>Check-in</p> <p>Listen</p> <p>Communicate</p> <p>Understand</p> <p>Useful</p> <p>Engaging</p> <p>Applicable (to real life)</p> | <p>Confidence</p> <p>Encouragement</p> <p>Compassion</p> <p>Attention</p> <p>Check-in</p> <p>Trust</p> <p>Nonjudgmental</p> <p>Uplifting</p> <p>Positive Affirmations</p> <p>Trust</p> <p>Compassion</p> <p>Conversations</p> <p>Compassion</p> <p>Encouragement</p> <p>Important</p> <p>Attention</p> <p>Relationship</p> <p>Trust</p> <p>Confidence</p> <p>Understand</p> <p>Human</p> <p>Heard</p> <p>Loved</p> <p>Successful</p> <p>Attentive</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | <p>Non-Imposing Communication Non-Imposing Relationships Accommodating Trusting Visible Attentive Non-Imposing Lazy Detached Embarrassed Unmotivated Check-in Communicate Relationship Inspire Encouraging Affirm Relationships</p> |
|--|--|--|