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Grounded in Teachers' Reality: A Collective Case Study on Middle School Teachers' Self-Efficacy for Equity-Centered Trauma-Informed Educational Practices

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Grounded in Teachers' Reality: A Collective Case Study on Middle School Teachers' Self-Efficacy for Equity-Centered Trauma-Informed Educational Practices

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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This project ultimately stemmed from my personal grief from the loss of my father. Recently, a sixth stage of grief has been added to the traditional five (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance)– and that is, meaning (Kessler, 2019). It is through this work that I have found meaning in my grief and choose to honor the loss of my loved ones, especially my dad.

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Abstract

Grounded in Teachers' Reality: A Collective Case Study on Middle School Teachers' Self-Efficacy for Equity-Centered Trauma-Informed Educational Practices

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The current body of literature clearly demonstrates the high prevalence of student trauma and the significant impact of trauma on adolescents' well-being and academic outcomes. Middle school teachers are uniquely positioned to support adolescents experiencing trauma using trauma-informed educational practices (TIEP), however, more work is needed to understand their self-efficacy beliefs for using TIEP. Thus, the purpose of this qualitative collective case study is to explore middle-school teachers' self-efficacy (TSE) beliefs for trauma-informed educational practices particularly as they relate to centering equity, and what factors impact those beliefs. Specifically, my study asks the following research questions, (1) How do middle school teachers describe their self-efficacy beliefs towards trauma-informed educational practices? (2) How do middle school teachers describe their self-efficacy beliefs as they relate to centering equity in trauma-informed educational practices? (3) How do middle school teachers describe factors that impact their self-efficacy beliefs towards trauma-informed educational practices? (3a) How do middle school teachers describe COVID-19 and its consequences impacting their self-efficacy towards trauma-informed educational practices? And (3b) How do middle school teachers describe the continued displays of racial and social injustice and responses to them as

impacting their self-efficacy as they relate to centering equity in trauma-informed educational practices?

Four middle school teachers from an urban faith-based independent school were included as cases in this study. Multiple sources of evidence (demographic questionnaire, semi-structured individual interview, follow-up in-depth member checking interview, teacher beliefs questionnaire) were collected to provide a comprehensive understanding of each case. Within– and cross-case analyses were conducted to identify similarities and differences across cases.

Findings indicate that these teachers hold high self-efficacy beliefs for TIEP, specifically in terms of empowering and connecting with students. Participants also reported high levels of TSE for equity-centered TIEP, particularly on an individual level. Further, teachers were mixed in their level of self-efficacy towards preventing trauma. Teachers largely pointed to their prior knowledge and experience as well as the broader school, community, and state level context as impacting their self-efficacy beliefs. Teachers shared the impact of COVID-19 and public displays of continued social and racial injustices on their students and their self-efficacy, including increased perceived importance of TIEP and higher TSE for facilitating conversations around race and equity.

Implications for theory include using the proposed conceptual framework to further examine TSE for TIEP, particularly as those beliefs relate to equity in TIEP. Pre-service and in-service training for educators should work to better prepare teachers to respond to and prevent trauma as aspects of TIEP. Further, teachers should be supported in their understanding of trauma as situated within broader systems that perpetuate trauma (Goldin et al., 2023) and promote responding to student behavior with TIEP rather than discipline. School leadership

should promote collaborative school environments and implement policies and practices that support consistent teacher implementation of TIEP.

Keywords: trauma, trauma-informed educational practices, equity, middle school

Chapter I: Introduction

Approximately two-thirds of United States (U.S.) students experience *trauma* (Perfect et al., 2016; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2020) or a disturbing experience, real or perceived, that results in significant negative emotion and impacts an individual's overall functioning (American Psychological Association, [APA], 2022). Additionally, recent events including COVID-19 and its consequences, the public displays of continued racial and social injustices, and government unrest have increased and intensified trauma for many youth, particularly those of marginalized identities (Absher et al., 2021). Student responses to trauma in the classroom can interfere considerably with their learning and well-being (National Child Traumatic Stress Network [NCTSN], 2017) and without adequate support, may have lasting impacts on student mental, physical, and emotional health and social well-being (SAMHSA, 2022). During adolescence many students, in addition to experiencing trauma, are undergoing rapid developmental changes that may be stressful (Feldman, 2019). Thus, middle School teachers play a critical role in helping adolescents thrive – including and perhaps, especially those who have experienced trauma. Specifically, teachers have the ability to respond to the impacts of trauma using an equity and social justice lens to prevent further trauma from occurring using *equity-centered trauma-informed educational practices* (TIEP; NCTSN, 2017; Venet, 2021).

High *teacher self-efficacy* (TSE), or teachers' judgment of their capabilities to produce desired student outcomes (Soodak & Podell, 1996; Wheatley, 2005), is related to many positive outcomes for teachers and students, such as job satisfaction, higher teacher effectiveness when faced with challenges, and increased student motivation (Zee & Koomen, 2016) and plays a role in how effectively a teacher can implement practices (Tschannen-Moran, & McMaster, 2009).

Thus, it is likely that high TSE related to TIEP may be particularly important for providing effective support to adolescents who have experienced trauma. Despite the important role of teachers in supporting students, educators are under examined in the trauma literature (Thomas, et al., 2019). Therefore, the overarching goal of my study is to examine middle-school teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for trauma-informed educational practices.

In this chapter I will highlight the need for this work and connect it to the larger empirical and theoretical literature. Specifically, I will discuss the significance of: (a) supporting adolescents experiencing trauma and the role of their teachers; (b) TIEP; and (c) TSE for TIEP, including equity-centered TIEP. I will conclude this chapter with my purpose statement, research questions, and my own researcher positionality.

The Role of Middle School Teachers

Middle school teachers play an important role in supporting students during adolescence. *Adolescence* is the developmental period between childhood and adulthood, beginning just before the teenage years and ending just after them. This is a critical time for development and is known for rapid growth and change, which many students find to be particularly stressful (Feldman, 2019). Many students experience difficulty during the rapid changes that occur during adolescence such as pubertal, social role, and cognitive development, school transitions, and the emergence of sexuality (Feldman, 2019). Thus, scholars have identified adolescence as a critical time for children to be allotted a supportive and developmentally appropriate environment (Eccles et al., 1993). In schools, this responsibility falls on middle school teachers. Specifically, teachers are tasked with responding to students' changing needs, providing students the optimal level of support, while also providing enough challenge for them to learn (Eccles et al., 1993).

In addition to students' changing needs during adolescence, it is estimated that two-thirds of students in the U.S. will experience a traumatic event before the age of sixteen (SAMHSA, 2020), making middle school teachers key agents in addressing student trauma. Furthermore, trauma disproportionately impacts students of marginalized identities. For example, 61% of Black children and 51% of Latiné children had experienced at least one adverse childhood experience (ACE) compared with 40% of white[1] children (Sacks et al., 2014). However, popularized approaches to trauma-informed practices often taught to educators through teacher preparation programs and professional development often omit the role of race in trauma (Alvarez, 2020) and focus on trauma at an individual level, failing to situate trauma within the broader systemic inequities within and outside of schools (Goldin et al., 2023; Khasnabis & Goldin, 2020; Venet 2021) that cause these disproportionate levels of trauma. By failing to implicate the larger systems that cause and perpetuate trauma, teachers may fall into the trap of white saviorism or the weaponization of trauma-informed practices (Goldin et al., 2021; Khasnabis & Goldin 2020). Thus, in order to support *all* students, it is critical that middle school teachers are confident in their abilities to prevent trauma in schools through the recognition and disruption of inequities that perpetuate trauma.

Taken together, given the changing needs of students during adolescence, the high prevalence of trauma in adolescence– particularly for marginalized youth due to structural inequities, the need for middle school teachers to provide a responsive trauma-informed environment using equity-centered TIEP may be especially important to support student well-being. Therefore, in this study, I will focus on middle school teachers and students.

[1] Following the practice of Dumas (2016) and other scholars (Agger et al., 2022; Blaisdell, 2020) in this proposal I do not capitalize white as the white racial category was developed through the absence of other racial identities (MacMullan, 2009) and does not carry the same sense of identity and community among many Black and Brown communities (Dumas, 2016).

Significance of Trauma Informed Educational Practices

Given the majority of youth in the U.S. attend school for upwards of seven hours a day, schools are uniquely positioned to be of support to students and families (Beehler et al., 2012). Specifically, school-based trauma-informed practices can provide significant care for students experiencing trauma (Thomas et al., 2019). *Trauma-informed educational practices* (TIEP) can be defined as practices that recognize, respond and prevent trauma while centering equity and social justice (NCTSN, 2017; Venet, 2021). In my work I draw upon Venet's (2021) definition of *educational equity* which she describes as a process of ensuring all students have access to high-quality education that is meaningful and challenging. That is, when teachers implement trauma-informed practices that center equity, they address and prevent student trauma and thereby ensure all students are able to fully engage in meaningful educational experiences.

In recent years school-based trauma-informed practices, particularly individual and group-based interventions, have been adopted and shown to have positive impacts on students (for a review, see Herrenkohl et al., 2019). TIEP has also been shown to have positive impacts on educators. For example, one study found that trauma-informed practices increased teacher satisfaction (Crosby, 2016). Recent findings also suggest integrating trauma-informed practices in pre-service training lower rates of secondary traumatic stress (Castro Schepers & Young, 2022). While these impacts of trauma-informed practices are promising, to quote Goldin and Khasnabis they are also "incomplete", as they fail to implicate the role of systemic injustice and racism in trauma (2020, p. 2). Therefore, given the high prevalence of trauma in school-aged children (Perfect et al., 2016), the unique positioning of schools, and the positive impacts of TIEP on both students and teachers, it is important to ensure teachers are confident in their

ability to implement TIEP at both the individual and systemic level in order to equitably support students experiencing trauma.

Significance of Teacher Self-Efficacy for TIEP

As previously mentioned, schools are well-positioned to support students experiencing trauma. In particular, well-prepared teachers can respond to the impacts of trauma and prevent future trauma from occurring using TIEP (Venet, 2021). For example, a consistent presence of a caring adult (e.g., social worker, teacher, support staff) can serve as a protective factor for students experiencing trauma (Saxe et al., 2016). This may be especially true if they have high levels of self-efficacy for TIEP, as self-efficacy plays an important role in successful implementation of practices (Tschannen-Moran, & McMaster, 2009). Studies that have examined TSE towards TIEP focus on teachers' beliefs in their ability to meet the demands of traumatized students (Kim et al., 2021), how effective and confident they felt in responding to students (Blitz et al., 2016; Blitz & Mulcahy, 2017), and overall instructional practices after receiving trauma-informed training (Shooks, 2020). However, more work is needed to examine classroom-based practices, in particular the role of teachers in implementing trauma-informed practices (Herrenkohl et al., 2019; Thomas et al., 2019) particularly as it relates to TSE towards centering equity in TIEP (Wallace, 2023).

Recent events in the U.S. such as the COVID-19 pandemic, continuous public displays of racial and social injustices, and government unrest have increased and intensified trauma among many students, particularly Black and Brown youth, LGBTQ+ youth, students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, those with prior mental health concerns, or previous exposure to trauma, and student’s with other marginalized identities (Absher et al., 2021; Osofsky et al.,

2020). Thus, in order to support *all* students and address inequities that perpetuate trauma, teachers should be highly efficacious towards centering equity in TIEP.

In a recent systematic review, Alvarez (2020) revealed that much of the dominant discourse on youth trauma in educational contexts relies on white-dominant norms and assumptions and often neglects the role of race in trauma and/or engages in deficit-based solutions. Thus, I use Venet's (2021) definition of TIEP which asserts that these practices recognize and disrupt the oppressive systems within and outside of schools that are perpetuating trauma for students. TIEP is human-centered, asset-based, centers social justice and examines how oppression impacts students (Venet, 2021). Additionally, I draw upon Systemically Trauma-Informed Practice (SysTIP) – a theoretical framework that views trauma and approaches to trauma from a systemic lens and emphasizes the centrality of race and racism within society (Khasnabis & Goldin; 2020) to explore teachers' understandings of the role of oppressive systems in trauma and how those systems may influence TSE towards equity-centered approaches to TIEP.

Understanding what experiences support or thwart TSE for TIEP may have powerful implications for education practice and policy. Bandura (1986) suggests individuals develop their self-efficacy beliefs through cognitive analysis of *sources of self-efficacy* information. This can include experiences of success within a specific domain, observing others being successful, or throughout social persuasion from colleagues (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Therefore, identifying sources for TSE towards TIEP is important for promoting teachers' successful use of TIEP. Researchers have identified several experiences that impact TSE for TIEP generally. For example, teachers' knowledge about trauma and trauma-informed practices (Loomis & Panlilio, 2022) and participating in trauma-informed interventions or professional development trainings

have been shown to increase TSE for trauma-informed or related practices (Arnold et al., 2021; Berger et al., 2016; Kim, 2021; Law, 2019; MacLochlainn et al., 2022; Stegall, 2020; Stipp 2019; Waggoner 2018). This increase in TSE for TIEP likely develops after engaging in an intervention or training because of opportunities to develop TSE using information sources or *sources of self-efficacy* (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). For example, opportunities for *vicarious experiences* or to observe others implementing trauma-informed practices in a trauma-informed training may contribute to a teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for TIEP. However, few studies have examined what factors impact TSE for equity-centered practices in particular (Wallace, 2023). Moreover, Delale-O'Connor and colleagues (2017) emphasized the importance of questioning the sources of self-efficacy teachers receive from the broader context in which they are trained and to promote opportunities to enhance their self-efficacy for classroom management particularly as it relates to responding to student trauma. Therefore, my study seeks to understand from middle school teachers, what experiences, including within the broader context, support or thwart their TSE for TIEP particularly as they relate to TIEP and centering equity within those practices.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to qualitatively examine teachers' self-efficacy beliefs towards trauma-informed educational practices (TIEP), particularly as they relate to centering equity in TIEP, and what factors impact those beliefs. Specifically, I am exploring teacher perceptions of COVID-19 and its consequences as well as the continued displays of racial and social injustices and responses to them as impacting their self-efficacy towards TIEP.

Research Questions

To better understand teachers' self-efficacy beliefs towards trauma-informed educational practices and the factors that impact those beliefs, I ask the following research questions:

1. How do middle school teachers describe their self-efficacy beliefs towards trauma-informed educational practices?
2. How do middle school teachers describe their self-efficacy beliefs as they relate to centering equity in trauma-informed educational practices?
3. How do middle school teachers describe factors that impact their self-efficacy beliefs towards trauma-informed educational practices?
    a. How do middle school teachers describe COVID-19 and its consequences impacting their self-efficacy towards trauma-informed educational practices?
    b. How do middle school teachers describe the continued displays of racial and social injustice and responses to them as impacting their self-efficacy as they relate to centering equity in trauma-informed educational practices?

I answered the aforementioned research questions using a *collective case study*, or by examining multiple cases simultaneously with the goal of generating a broader understanding of middle school teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for TIEP and the factors that impact those beliefs (Crowe et al., 2011; Stake, 1995). Taking a case study approach has allowed me to consider the broader context and how participants perceive their context impacts their beliefs (Yin, 2003). I used purposeful selection to recruit a sample of middle school teachers with perceived experience using TIEP with students (Robinson, 2014; Trost, 1986). Four sources of data were collected to develop each case: a demographic questionnaire, semi-structured individual interview, a follow-up in-depth member checking interview, and a brief teacher beliefs

questionnaire. I conducted within– and cross-case analysis to identify similarities and differences across cases to better understand TSE for TIEP and support future research and practice.

Rationale for the Study of the Problem

The proposed study will contribute to the literature on teachers' lived experiences in the classroom working with students exposed to trauma, including the impact of COVID-19 and public response to continued racial and social injustices. The findings may provide a better understanding of TSE beliefs towards TIEP, including centering equity in TIEPs and the factors that impact those beliefs. Lastly, findings could support instrument development to examine TSE towards TIEP quantitatively.

Understanding TSE for TIEP may provide my school partners with an understanding of how capable their teachers feel to support students using TIEP. Additionally, identifying the factors that influence TSE towards TIEP could inform school leadership or policymakers on experiences that support or thwart TSE towards TIEP. This information may be transferable to other similar school contexts. The findings could highlight the need for trauma-informed interventions or policy changes.

Researcher Positionality

I bring to this research my own personal and professional experiences that led me to this line of inquiry. My personal experiences with loss, difficult transitions, and the impacts on myself and my family have led to a desire for the community to process and understand trauma. Particularly, I wanted to use my experiences to support youth in navigating life experiences and difficult challenges. While I was never a teacher, I come to this work with experiences in several different childcare roles. For example, as a camp counselor, I had many experiences where I did not feel equipped with the knowledge or resources to support campers experiencing or sharing

traumatic experiences. While at the time I had never heard of the term self-efficacy, I feel these experiences brought me to focus on self-efficacy as a critical construct. I also come to my work with a psychology background that primes me to consider how human experiences within a particular context, impact psychological processes and development.

Upon graduation I worked at a substance abuse program for mothers and their children. Many of these families experienced disproportionate levels of trauma due to systemic inequities and circumstances beyond their control. Hearing from the mothers and children I worked with, there seemed to be a misalignment in their schools on how to support these families. This experience highlighted the importance of supporting educators and other professionals who work with youth for whom traditional classroom practices have not considered. This experience solidified my desire to go to graduate school. I knew I wanted to continue to use psychological principles, but I wanted to understand how they function in education spaces and particularly for students experiencing trauma. In graduate school I have been exposed to the work of several scholars that highlighted the whiteness that exists in trauma-informed literature (See Alvarez, 2020; Blitz, 2016, 2017; Golden, 2020; Goldin et al., 2023, Venet, 2021). It became clear that in order to support *all* students who experience trauma, this work requires a critical and equity lens. This led to my focus on teachers' self-efficacy beliefs towards equity-centered TIEP.

During my graduate training I have also been involved with several community-engaged research projects and a research-practice partnership. These experiences have highlighted the importance and value of centering practitioner voice in education research. Thus, it is my hope with this project and my career to learn from the educators doing this work and identify ways education research can further support them.

My experiences and what I bring to my research lends insight from both the perspective of a student who has experienced trauma and a childcare professional who has worked with students and families experiencing trauma. In addition to providing insight these experiences may also serve as a liability to my research. My experiences impact my judgment, design, framing, and interpretation of my findings. I have engaged in several activities to address this possible liability. For example, I continuously reflected on my positionality through memos, I regularly engaged in critical conversations with colleagues, and worked with a second coder to bring in a new perspective. Though these practices do not eliminate potential liabilities to my study, I am committed to being a lifelong learner. Qualitative findings in particular can be interpreted in several ways through several different framings. I am eager to engage with colleagues and take a different approach to this work and make new connections.

Terms

- *Adolescence:* the developmental period between childhood and adulthood, beginning just before the teenage years and ending just after them (Feldman, 2019).
- *Trauma:* Trauma can be defined as "any disturbing experience that results in significant fear, helplessness, dissociation, confusion, or other disruptive feelings intense enough to have a long-lasting negative effect on a person's attitudes, behavior, and other aspects of functioning" (para 1., APA, 2022).
- *Trauma-informed educational practices:* "Trauma-informed Educational practices respond to the impacts of trauma on the entire school community and prevent future trauma from occurring. Equity and social justice are key concerns of trauma-informed educators as we make changes in our individual practice, in classrooms, in schools, and in district-wide and state-wide systems." (Venet, 2021, A New Definition, para. 2).

- *Educational equity*: “The process of ensuring all students can access high-quality education, that they are able to engage in meaningful and challenging academic work, and that they can do all of this in an environment that values them as people” (Venet, 2021, p. 22).
- *Self-efficacy:* Self-efficacy can be defined as one’s judgment of their perceived capabilities to plan and implement actions to reach personal goals (Bandura 1986, 1997; DiBenedetto & Schunk, 2018).
- *Teacher self-efficacy:* Teacher self-efficacy is a teacher’s judgment of their capabilities to bring about desired student outcomes (Armor et al., 1976; Bandura, 1977). In this current study, it is a teacher’s judgment of their ability to use trauma-informed educational practices.

Chapter II: Literature Review

A large body of literature exists that describes trauma and its impacts on individuals functioning. However, more research is needed to support teachers in their use of trauma-informed educational practices (TIEP), particularly equity-centered aspects of TIEP in order to support the well-being of adolescents who have experienced trauma. Given the high prevalence of adolescents experiencing trauma and the positive outcomes associated with high teacher self-efficacy (TSE) for both teachers and students, there is a clear need to understand TSE beliefs for TIEP. Additionally, equity-centered TIEP components of TIEP are critical in order to support *all* students exposed to trauma, however, in a recent systematic literature review I identified no research has been conducted to understand TSE beliefs towards equity-centered or related TIEP (Wallace, 2023). Thus, my study examines middle school TSE beliefs towards TIEP, including centering equity within TIEP and the factors that impact those beliefs. In this chapter I will first summarize the theoretical frameworks guiding this study. Then, I will describe my conceptual framework that connects these theoretical frameworks. Next, I will define the key constructs in my study and how they have been examined in prior research. Throughout this chapter I highlight the need for this work based on existing gaps in the literature.

Theoretical Frameworks

The following sections will introduce and describe the key theoretical frameworks that have guided my study and conceptual framework development.

Social Cognitive Theory

My study is situated within *social cognitive theory* (SCT) proposed by Bandura (1986), which provides a psychological perspective on human functioning that emphasizes the role of the social environment on motivation and learning (Schunk & Usher, 2019). SCT suggests that

individuals strive for a sense of *agency* or a belief that one can exert considerable influence or control over their thoughts, feelings and actions (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020; Schunk & Usher, 2019). Central to this agentic perspective is *self-efficacy*, or the motivational belief in one's perceived capabilities to plan and act to reach one's goals (Bandura 1986, 1997). Prominent scholars in the field who helped to develop, test and expand social cognitive theory include Zimmerman, Schunk, Pajares, and Usher (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020).

Reciprocal Interactions. A central component of Bandura's SCT is the assertion that human behavior functions within a framework of reciprocal interactions between three groups of influences: personal, behavioral, and environmental (Bandura, 1986; Schunk & Usher 2019). In this framework, *motivation*, or the processes that initiate and sustain goal-directed activities (Schunk et al., 2014) are personal influences that are affected by and affect an individual's behaviors and environment (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Self-efficacy is also a key personal influence in Bandura's (1997) model of reciprocal interactions that can affect motivational outcomes (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020), and is a central component of my study. Bandura (1997) asserted that individuals, including teachers, assess their self-efficacy beliefs based on mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological or affective states – known as the four *sources of self-efficacy*. These sources may impact an individuals' self-efficacy and thus, play a significant role in the triadic reciprocal relationship.

Empirical research has demonstrated the important role of self-efficacy on students' academic outcomes and behaviors (for a review see Schunk, 1985). However, more work is needed that examines how individuals use multiple sources over changing contexts using the reciprocal interactions framework (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Building upon SCT and self-

efficacy literature, scholars expanded the theory to include teacher self-efficacy (Armor et al., 1976). This will be discussed in the following section.

Teacher Self-Efficacy. Following Bandura's influential work on self-efficacy (1977) and the innovative work of the Rand Organization, who identified a relationship between TSE and student achievement variables (Armor et al., 1976), research on TSE has steadily increased (Klassen et al., 2011). Empirical evidence suggests that *teacher self-efficacy* or a teacher's belief in their ability to influence desired student outcomes (Soodak & Podell, 1996; Wheatley, 2005) is an important motivational influence for teachers (Zee & Koomen, 2016) and positively influences teacher beliefs, practices, and outcomes, such as collective teacher efficacy and teacher burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik 2007) and student learning (Midgley et al., 1989).

Systemically Trauma-Informed Practice

This work has also been guided by *Systemically Trauma-Informed Practice* (SysTIP), a theoretical framework that is anchored in the awareness of trauma as a systemic problem and argues that trauma must be addressed at the systemic and individual level (Goldin et al., 2023; Khasnabis & Goldin, 2020). SysTIP uses Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) to emphasize the centrality of race and racism in society and to understand the nested and dynamic relationships between individuals within a community and the broader context (Khasnabis & Goldin, 2020). Specifically, SysTIP focuses on the educational context at the student, classroom, school, community, and societal level, and emphasizes how each level is both influenced by and influences the other surrounding levels (Goldin et al., 2023; Khasnabis & Goldin, 2020). It was imperative to view my study from this lens as much of the trauma-informed education literature is founded on white-dominant norms and often neglects the role of race in trauma and/or engages in deficit-based solutions (Alvarez, 2020). Specifically,

many approaches to trauma emphasize the importance of teachers increasing their own awareness of trauma and its impacts on individuals (NCTSN, 2017) however, this can often lead to teachers viewing entire communities, particularly communities of Color only by trauma they have experienced (Goldin & Khasnabis, 2020). This deficit lens can also often lead to a *White Saviorism* mentality or the belief that people of Color are incapable of helping themselves and white teachers can and should save them (Cammarota, 2011; Sondel et al., 2022). By taking this approach, teachers and schools may weaponize trauma-informed practices (see Goldin et al., 2022) and fail to recognize and disrupt inequities within and outside of schools that perpetuate trauma (Khasnabis and Goldin, 2020).

Conceptual Framework

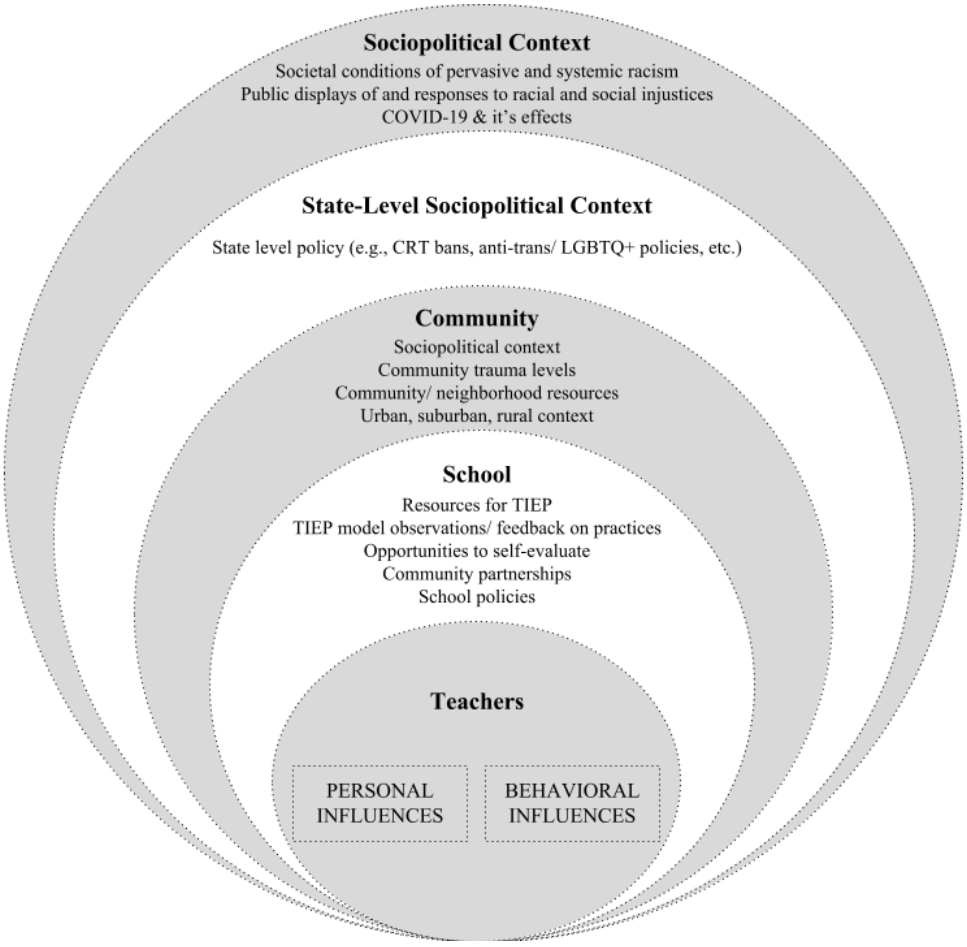
In my study, I integrate SCT and SysTIP to examine the personal, behavioral, and environmental influences nested within the broader context to better understand TSE beliefs towards TIEP (see Figures 1 and 2). Similar to SysTIP, I use Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which emphasizes the nested relationship between an individual and their immediate environment and larger social contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Using this perspective for my study helps to connect SCT and teachers' self-efficacy to SysTIP in a way that recognizes the role of context in developing an individuals' beliefs. Specifically, including SysTIP allows me to consider the role of systemic racism and its influence on TSE for TIEP, particularly as they relate to centering equity. Historically, motivation research using a Bronfenbrennian perspective primarily recognizes the role of culture, race, and ethnicity at the microlevel and issues of power, inequity, and racism are not always included (Kumar et al., 2018). SysTIP however, recognizes the sociopolitical and historical context, specifically the

pervasiveness of systemic racism and how it permeates each environmental sphere (Goldin et al., 2023).

These environments are represented in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory as individual spheres that impact one's development and are referred to as the macrosystem, exosystem, mesosystem, and the microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Both Ecological Systems Theory and SysTIP assert that the individual spheres affect and are affected by the surrounding spheres. This is demonstrated in the SysTIP conceptual model and in my conceptual framework by the dashed lines. In line with the model of Reciprocal Interactions, the personal and behavioral influences also have dashed lines to represent the environment's impact of those influences and vice versa (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Drawing heavily from SysTIP, my conceptual framework is also focused on the educational context but has teachers as the individual rather than students. The following sections describe each individual sphere of my conceptual framework.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Sociopolitical Context

The macrosystem in my conceptual framework is the Sociopolitical Context. Specifically, this sphere focuses on the sociopolitical and historical context of the United States. Because of the focus of my study, this sphere is limited to the United States and focuses on three major aspects of the sociopolitical context that have significant impacts on education, trauma, and teacher self-efficacy beliefs: (a) the societal conditions of pervasive and systemic racism; (b) public displays of and responses to continued racial and social injustices; and (c) the COVID-19

pandemic and its consequences. Each aspect of the sociopolitical context will be discussed below.

Societal Conditions of Pervasive and Systemic Racism. Represented in Khasnabis and Goldin's (2020) nested model of SysTIP, racism permeates all aspects of society, including communities, schools, and classrooms. SysTIP draws upon Critical Race Theory (CRT; Crenshaw et al., 1995) to highlight the centrality of race and racism in the U.S. and its intersection with other forms of oppression (Crenshaw 1989). *Racism* is endemic to the U.S. (Solorzano, 1997) and can be defined as a system of exclusion and privilege based on race; that is to say, it is not just individual prejudice, but a system of racial hierarchy (Tatum, 2001; Wellman, 1993). Therefore, when researching trauma in education, it is imperative to consider the ways in which the societal conditions of pervasive and systemic racism cause trauma and influence approaches to supporting students experiencing trauma. In U.S. education for example, traditional classroom practices, pedagogy, and instructional materials are grounded in Eurocentric views and white supremacy ideologies that silence other perspectives (Swartz, 1992). This systemic nature of race and trauma often leads to interpersonal or structural *racial trauma* or dangerous events related to perceived experiences of racial discrimination for students of Color (Comas-Díaz et al., 2019). For example, *Anti-black linguistic racism*, or the linguistic violence and marginalization of Black Language or African-American Vernacular English speakers in schools (Baker-Bell, 2020), and discriminatory dress code policies that predominantly target Black hairstyles and work to enforce whiteness in schools (Rogers, 2022) are both examples of systemic discriminatory practices that may cause racial trauma. These examples highlight the permanence of racism in our society that seeps into our schools to uphold white supremacy. It is essential to recognize and address this in trauma education research.

Therefore, I included societal conditions of pervasive and systemic racism within the sociopolitical context in the outermost layer of my conceptual framework to critically examine the ways in which this context may have influenced student experiences with trauma and TSE beliefs for TIEP and equity-centered TIEP.

Public displays of Racial and Social Injustices. Public displays of racial and social injustices and the responses to them in the U.S. follow a historic pattern that impacts schools and the students they serve. For example, perceived progress for Black and other marginalized groups is often followed by backlash or *white rage* (Anderson, 2016). Specifically, white people have systemic access to entitlements known as *psychological wages of Whiteness* (Du Bois, 1935) such as sole access to spaces, places and opportunities. When white Americans perceive marginalized groups as a threat to those entitlements (wages of Whiteness) they often respond with *white rage* to protect whiteness and its affordances (Anderson, 2016; Gomez et al., 2022). Most recently, in 2020 following the senseless killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and countless other Black people that represented long-standing structural racism present within the U.S.– protests ensued fighting for change and racial and social justice. In the same year mostly right-leaning political groups were protesting COVID-19 stay at home orders (Andone, 2020), for a pandemic disproportionately impacting and killing communities of Color due to structural racism present in the U.S. (Tai et al., 2022). Additionally, Gomez and colleagues describe the domestic terrorist attack flamed by Donald Trump's "stop the steal" rhetoric and the January 6, 2021 "Save America" rally at President Biden's inauguration as an act of *psychological rages of Whiteness* in direct response to Black and Brown voting and perceived upward mobility (see Gomez et al., 2022). These countless public displays of racial injustices and responses to them may impact student experiences of trauma, teachers' beliefs towards

TIEP, and in particular how teachers view equity-centered TIEP. To ensure these potential impacts are captured in my study, I included public displays of continued racial and social injustice in the outermost layer of my conceptual framework.

The COVID-19 Pandemic and its Consequences. The COVID-19 pandemic was declared a public health emergency in the U.S. in the early months of 2020, quickly leading to school closures and significant disruptions in students, teachers and families' everyday lives. For example, a recent review of the emerging literature described several studies that demonstrate increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depression in PK-12 students (Naff et al., 2022). COVID-19 and the subsequent lock-downs exacerbated adversities to students and their families such as the increased risk for violence and abuse in the home, isolation, economic hardship, unmet basic needs, grief, and loss (Halladay et al., 2020). This may be especially true for families experiencing structural inequities (Absher et al., 2021).

Importantly, the pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated systemic inequities and disparities. For example, Black, Native American, Latiné, and Asian communities may experience compounded traumatic experiences of racism and discrimination on top of trauma as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Absher et al., 2021). Additionally, Black and Latiné communities experienced the highest rates of COVID-19 due in large part to long-standing structural racism in healthcare, housing and employment (see Tai et al., 2021). Black and Brown individuals are more likely to live in lower-resourced neighborhoods due to redlining policies and more likely to hold essential employee jobs during the pandemic due to lower access to managerial positions (Perry, 2020).

Given the global impact of COVID-19 and its consequences one may assume that all students experienced some type of trauma and call for a universal trauma-informed approach. A

core principle of equity-centered TIEP are practices that are universal and proactive (Venet, 2021). Meaning, we don't need to know whether a student has experienced trauma or not to use TIEP. Additionally, labeling any or all students as "traumatized" may risk pathologizing students or relying on deficit lenses that focus on what students are lacking (Venet, 2021). Moreover, only using TIEP with students who are known to have been exposed to trauma risks harming students who do not share their experiences with trauma. Moreover, a universal approach is not a one-size fits all approach. Students may still need differential support and thus, the aim is to provide flexible instruction for all and minimize barriers to access to care (Venet, 2021). Given the disruption in K-12 education and impact of COVID-19 on educator views of trauma, student experiences with trauma – and the compounded impact on students of marginalized groups – I've explicitly included the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences within the sociopolitical context of my conceptual framework to examine how this may impact teacher beliefs.

State-Level Sociopolitical Context

Next in my conceptual framework is the state-level sociopolitical context, which includes state-level climate and policies. In recent years, several elected representatives in south eastern states (e.g., North Carolina, Virginia, Florida, Tennessee) have proposed and passed bills and policies that target issues of equity and thus may impact students and teachers' experiences and beliefs around trauma and equity-centered TIEP. For example, Virginia's governor Youngkin passed an executive order ending the use of Critical Race Theory and other "divisive concepts" in K-12 public education (Exec. Order No. 1, 2022). Governor Youngkin also introduced a hotline for parents to report "divisive practices" being taught in schools (Simon & Paviour, 2022). Similar bans were also enacted in Georgia and Florida and are currently being proposed in North Carolina (Education Week, 2023) to ban conversations of racism, sexism and issues of

systemic inequities. These policies may have impacted the ways teachers approach TIEP particularly, as it relates to centering equity in TIEP, that may be falsely interpreted as divisive practices. Additionally, along with several other state legislatures, Governor Youngkin proposed anti-trans policies that restricted students' ability to change their names and pronouns without legal documentation, and required students to use the bathroom aligned with their sex assigned at birth (Diaz, 2022). Similar bathroom banning policies have been proposed in Florida (Politico, 2023). These policies introduced within the state-level sociopolitical context very likely have real and potentially traumatic impacts on students. Including the state-level sociopolitical context in my conceptual framework allows this work to capture teachers' perceptions of these policies and how they may or may not impact their beliefs.

Community

Drawing from SysTIP, the community level of my conceptual framework includes one's family, school district, religious organizations, and community organizations. Expanding upon SysTIP, this level also includes community elements that may impact one's beliefs around trauma and TIEP, such as community trauma levels, community/ neighborhood resources, and neighborhood context (e.g., rural, urban, suburban). Trauma occurs in urban, suburban and rural contexts, but often the trauma-informed supports that are needed vary across these contexts (Manian et al., 2021).

School

Aligned with SysTIP, the next level within my conceptual framework is school, which is nested within the community. Schools vary in the types of resources available for engaging in TIEP and opportunities for professional development. In line with SCT, the school environment may or may not pose opportunities for model observations (vicarious experiences), feedback on

TIEP practices (social persuasion), or self-evaluation of TIEP practices. Additionally, schools may or may not engage in partnerships with community stakeholders who could support TIEP professional development. Finally, school policies may impact student experiences of trauma and/or teachers' experiences and beliefs about TIEP. For example, in schools enforcing discriminating policies such as dress codes that target accessories associated with a student's culture, religion, or sexuality, or English as the "official language," students may experience increased or intensified trauma that teachers need to respond to. Taken together, policies enforced at the school level may impact the ways in which teachers use or feel about TIEP, and opportunities for learning and access to resources will likely influence TSE beliefs for TIEP.

Teachers

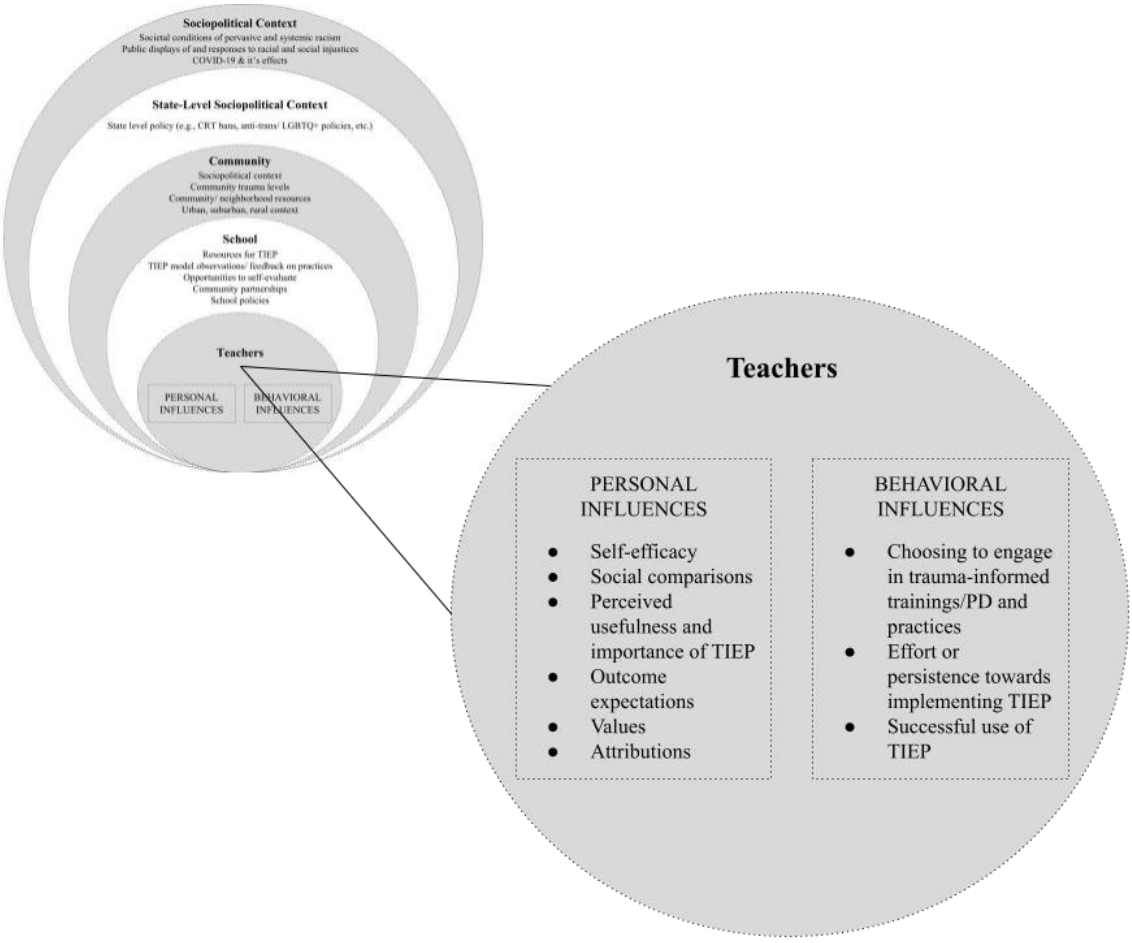
The individuals of focus in my conceptual framework and study are teachers. In this study I explore the lived experiences of teachers and how their immediate environments and the broader context impact their self-efficacy beliefs. Drawing from the Triadic Reciprocality conceptual framework or the reciprocal interactions of behavioral, environmental and personal influences (Bandura, 1977; 1986), I include in this sphere the personal influences, including self-efficacy and behavioral influences that relate to TIEP (see Figure 2). Similar to the previously discussed spheres, these influences are conceptualized in my conceptual framework in dashed boxes to represent the permeability (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). That is, in line with Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), an individual's personal, behavioral, and environmental influences affect and are affected by each other. Personal influences include teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, social comparisons, beliefs about the perceived usefulness and importance of TIEP, outcome expectancies, values, and attributions. Behavioral influences include teachers' engagement in trauma-informed training, professional development, and/or practices, as well as

their effort or persistence towards implementing TIEP and their successful use of TIEP. For example, a teacher's level of self-efficacy for TIEP may be influenced by their previous experiences of successful use of TIEP, or their perceived usefulness of TIEP. A teacher's successful use of TIEP or perceived usefulness of TIEP may have developed through environmental influence of the broader context or the level of support for TIEP present in their school level environment.

This conceptual framework has guided my approach and allowed me to consider how the broader context may influence teachers' personal and behavioral influences and highlight potential ways in which teachers develop their self-efficacy beliefs. This conceptual framework guides my research in the review of related literature, design, methods, and analysis of the data. The following sections will introduce key constructs in my study. Namely, trauma, trauma-informed educational practices, and self-efficacy.

Figure 2

Conceptual Framework Zoomed in on Teachers



Constructs of Interest

In this section I will clearly define several constructs that are included in my study and summarize relevant literature related to my study. Specifically, the following sections describe trauma, trauma-informed educational practices, and self-efficacy.

Trauma

Defining Trauma. *Trauma* can be defined as "any disturbing experience that results in significant fear, helplessness, dissociation, confusion, or other disruptive feelings intense enough to have a long-lasting negative effect on a person's attitudes, behavior, and other aspects of

functioning" (para 1., APA, 2022). These experiences, real or perceived, can be both acute, short term events or ongoing events that cause trauma (APA, 2022). Trauma can be caused by both *interpersonal trauma* or events such as domestic violence, child abuse or maltreatment, and *structural or institutional violence* such as racism, enslavement, or discrimination (Alvarez & Tulino, 2022 Harrell, 2000; Saleem et al., 2020). Trauma-informed education has been critiqued for privileging biomedical and individualistic views of trauma, and have often positioned schools and teachers as a source of healing for students and by doing so have made the assumption that trauma is something that occurs only outside of schools (Petrone & Rogers Stanton, 2021). However, in order to best support students it is imperative to recognize how these structural acts of violence (racism, classism, homophobia) are embedded in school curriculum and policy and produce trauma within schools (Petrone & Rogers Stanton, 2021). Structural violence can often lead to collective and historical trauma for specific groups. For example, *collective trauma* occurs when an entire community undergoes a shared trauma such as the Jewish community enduring the Holocaust, leading to *historical trauma* or the collective impact of trauma throughout generations (SAMHSA, 2014; Venet, 2021). As another example, the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences may also be considered a collective trauma, though as discussed above, it had disproportionate impacts on several groups. Taken together, trauma impacts the majority of our students and families, but in order to support *all* students' experiences of structural violence must be considered as trauma and approaches to addressing trauma must recognize and disrupt structural inequities that cause and perpetuate trauma within and outside of schools.

The Impact of Trauma. As previously mentioned, there is a high prevalence of trauma in adolescence (SAMHSA, 2020). Trauma can considerably impact individuals emotional,

mental, physical health as well as individuals social and spiritual well-being (SAMHSA, 2022). Specifically, responses to *complex trauma* (trauma that causes severe disruption in development) in childhood or adolescence in the classroom can present as violence, aggression, impulse control, anxiety, and depression (Ford, et al., 2012). Additionally, for children who experience multiple forms of violence or victimization across contexts, or *polyvictimization*, there is increased risk for lasting impacts on their physical, mental, or emotional health (Finkelhor et al., 2011; Turner et al., 2016). Experiences of trauma are very subjective and personal. Thus, the impact of trauma can vary significantly. For example, trauma responses may have less severe impacts for someone with a strong support system and little to no history with trauma (SAMHSA, 2022).

A review of the literature identified the ways in which trauma impacts school-related functioning across cognitive, academic, and social-emotional-behavioral domains (Perfect, 2016). Further, one study of a nationally representative sample demonstrated a relationship between childhood trauma and high school dropout (Porche et al., 2011). Porche and colleagues (2011) found the dropout rates were highest among Latiné, African American and Afro-Caribbean students in comparison to white and Asian students. These dropout rates were further exacerbated by a history of trauma particularly for Black students. This work highlights the intersection of race/racism and trauma and its influence on academic outcomes. There is a clear need to intervene in early adolescence with equity-centered TIEP that works to prevent and address structural inequities and disproportionate levels of trauma that may lead to school dropout for students of Color in particular.

Taken together, coupled with the high prevalence of trauma during adolescence, it is critical that middle school teachers are confident in their ability to support their students.

However, as the above-mentioned study begins to indicate, the likelihood of experiencing trauma is not equal across students and students may experience different or compounded traumatic experiences due to structural inequities – reinforcing the importance of ensuring educators feel highly efficacious as it relates to centering equity within TIEP. The following section will discuss TIEP as a way to support students experiencing trauma.

Trauma-Informed Educational Practices

Schools play an important role in supporting children and their families who have experienced trauma (Absher et al., 2021). In the last two decades trauma-informed work has begun to develop in educational contexts and is commonly referred to as trauma-informed, trauma-sensitive, or trauma-responsive practices (Goldin et al., 2022). A trauma-informed school can support teachers by providing them with the tools and resources to support students experiencing trauma. Researchers have demonstrated the positive impact of trauma-informed educational practices (TIEP) for students. For example, increased student engagement, fewer disciplinary referrals (Dorado et al., 2016), decreased trauma responses, and general positive student experiences (Crosby, 2016). However, a recent review of the literature identified no dominant framework for trauma-informed practices (Thomas et al., 2019).

As mentioned above, a recent systematic review of the literature (Alvarez, 2020) found that much of the approaches to trauma is founded on white-dominant norms and often neglects the role of race in trauma and/or engages in deficit-based solutions. Additionally, traditional trauma-informed approaches have been critiqued for relying on biomedical and individual views of trauma that fail to situate trauma within the broader context (Petrone & Rogers Stanton, 2021). Responding to student trauma from a *deficit lens*, or views that center on what the individual student is lacking and ways they need to be helped (Gorski, 2016; Venet, 2021) rather

than implicating the broader systems that cause and perpetuate trauma may lead to pathologizing children or blaming their families for their trauma (Goldin & Khasnabis, 2020). Therefore, in order to situate trauma-informed care into an educational setting and to center equity and social justice, in my work I use the recent definition of trauma-informed educational practices (TIEP), put forth by Venet (2021). She asserts teachers who use TIEP respond to the impacts of trauma and prevent future trauma from occurring. The trauma-informed education literature often focuses on individual student trauma and the resulting behavioral challenges (Venet, 2021) often obscuring the cause of trauma (Khasnabis & Goldin, 2020). As previously mentioned, this is critical as schools can often be a source of trauma for students. To address this, TIEP takes an individual and system-wide approach in order to address both interpersonal trauma, and trauma caused by institutional structures such as racism, poverty, and discrimination. This definition also centers equity and social justice through its six core principles. Venet (2021) also asserts that trauma-informed education must be: (a) antiracist and against all forms of oppression; (b) asset based; (c) systems oriented; (d) human centered; (e) universal and proactive; and (f) social justice focused. Furthermore, Venet (2021) provides four priorities of trauma-informed practices to support teacher's decision making and classroom management. The four principles are (1) predictability; (2) flexibility; (3) empowerment; and (4) connection. These practices promote not only a trauma-informed classroom but also an equitable classroom. The following section will introduce self-efficacy as a key construct in my study.

Self-Efficacy

Motivation, including self-efficacy, is a personal factor that plays an important role in empowering learners and teachers to feel they have control over outcomes by their actions or goal-directed behavior (Schunk et al., 2012). Self-efficacy is a key component of agency and is

defined as “one’s perceived capabilities to plan and implement actions to reach personal goals” (Bandura 1986, 1997; DiBenedetto & Schunk, 2018).

Teacher Self-efficacy. *Teacher self-efficacy*, or a teacher’s judgment of their capabilities to bring about desired student outcomes such as engagement and learning (Armor et al., 1976; Bandura, 1977), is vital in education and can support teachers in overcoming challenges in the classroom (Dibapile, 2012). An increase in teacher self-efficacy often results in positive student outcomes such as, engagement, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, academic expectations, self-efficacy, goal orientations, school investment and overall academic performance and achievement (Zee & Koomen, 2016). For teachers, perceived self-efficacy is related to higher effectiveness when faced with challenges, and higher job satisfaction, job persistence, personal accomplishment, psychological well-being, in addition to serving as a safeguard against teacher burnout and attrition (Zee & Koomen, 2016). This safeguard seems especially important for teachers working with students experiencing trauma as this work can be challenging, lead to secondary trauma or teacher burnout (NCTSN, 2017). Moreover, research has also shown COVID-19-related stressors were related to poorer teacher mental health and mental health was significantly related to a greater sense of self-efficacy towards addressing student social-emotional needs during the pandemic (Davis et al., 2022). Considering the unique challenges that students experiencing trauma face in and outside of school, particularly in the wake of COVID-19, it seems especially important for teachers to have high levels of self-efficacy to support students who may be experiencing trauma.

As previously mentioned, there are four sources of self-efficacy beliefs. *Mastery experiences* or direct experiences with a given task have been described as the most influential source of self-efficacy (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). *Vicarious experiences* are events in

which an individual can observe another attempt a given task and *social persuasion* occurs when individuals receive feedback or encouragement regarding a given task (Bandura, 1977). Lastly, *physiological and affective states* such as heart rate, stress, fatigue can inform an individual's self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & McMaster, 2009). These sources have significant impacts on TSE (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020) and should be considered when examining TSE for TIEP. For example, teachers may experience higher levels of TSE for TIEP if they have had successful experiences of using TIEP (i.e. mastery experiences). On the contrary, teachers may have lower levels of TSE for TIEP if they have had fewer opportunities to observe other teachers using TIEP.

Teacher Self-Efficacy for Trauma-Informed Educational Practices

Few articles have been published that examine teacher self-efficacy towards trauma-informed practices (Arnold et al., 2021; Alber, 2021; Berger et al., 2016; Blitz & Mulcahy, 2017; Boylston, 2021; Davis, 2022; Killian, 2022; Kim et al., 2021; Law, 2019; Loomis & Panlilio, 2022; Lombardi, 2020; MacLochlainn, 2022; Rodger et al., 2020; Stipp, 2019; Shooks, 2020; Stegall, 2020; Waggoner, 2019). Suggesting TSE for TIEP is a novel understudied problem of focus and more research is needed. Furthermore, in a recent review of the literature (Wallace, 2023) no research examining teacher self-efficacy beliefs for equity-centered or related teaching practices were identified. Much of this research was published after 2020, suggesting that following the onset of COVID-19 researchers may have been more concerned with teachers' motivations for using trauma-informed practices (Wallace, 2023). Furthermore, the majority of this research has examined TSE as one construct among many. Few researchers focused centrally on TSE for TIEP or related practices in their study (see Davis et al., 2022, Shooks, 2019). These studies and how they relate to the current research will be discussed below.

Much of the research examining TSE for TIEP does not draw from theoretical frameworks for their conceptualization of self-efficacy (Wallace, 2023). More work is needed that connects Social Cognitive Theory with SysTIP to examine how teachers develop their self-efficacy beliefs situated within the broader context. Specifically, drawing from SCT and reciprocal interactions, allows me to investigate the personal, behavioral, and environmental influences that impact TSE for TIEP. Moreover, examining TSE and TIEP using SysTIP and SCT allows for consideration of the nested systems that impact student trauma and TSE, including the impacts of structural racism.

Examining literature related to my study with my conceptual framework as a lens have allowed me to closely examine how researchers are discussing personal, behavioral, and environmental influences on TSE for TIEP. For example, several studies have found participation in a trauma-informed, or related intervention/professional development (behavioral influences) to be related to self-efficacy towards trauma-informed practices (Arnold et al., 2021; Berger et al., 2016; Boylston, 2021; Kim et al., 2021; Law, 2019; MacLochlainn et al., 2022; Stegall, 2020; Stipp 2019; Waggoner 2018). All of which showed increases in self-efficacy following the interventions/PD's, except Boylston (2021). This opposite effect is likely due to the *implementation dip* (Woolfolk Hoy & Burke-Spero, 2005) a phenomenon in which individuals overestimate their self-efficacy beliefs prior to a professional development. Researchers have also found teachers' pre-service training (Lombardi, 2020; Rodger et al., 2020) and prior teaching experience (Alber, 2021; Shooks, 2020) relating to higher TSE for trauma-informed practices. Several studies have identified personal characteristics as impacting TSE for TIEP. For example, Davis and colleagues found teachers' mental health to be positively related to TSE (Davis et al., 2022). Waggoner (2018) reported that in comparison to participants who did not

report a personal history of trauma, those who did had higher TSE to meet the demands of working with students impacted by trauma. Knowledge about trauma and trauma-informed practices has been shown to be positively related to general teacher self-efficacy (Shooks, 2020) and trauma-informed TSE (Loomis & Panlilio, 2022). Negative relationships have been identified between TSE for TIEP and fear of accountability (e.g., concern that the teacher will be held accountable for the child's behavior) and stress (Blitz & Mulcahy 2017; Loomis & Panlilio, 2022). Two studies have pointed to environmental factors that are related to TSE. For example, Loomis & Panlilio (2022) found higher knowledge of trauma was related to lower reports of classroom disruptions and higher TSE towards trauma-informed practices was related to fewer classroom disruptions. Davis and colleagues (2022) found that a greater confidence in system level support from their schools/divisions for addressing teachers' own trauma was the strongest predictor of TSE to address student needs and COVID-19 related stressors were negatively related with TSE.

The Role of Student and Teacher Racial Identity. TSE for TIEP is largely understudied and few researchers have examined the role of teacher or student racial identity in this relationship (Wallace, 2023). For example, findings from a recent study with primary and secondary level learners, suggest that Black teachers may have greater levels of self-efficacy for supporting students exposed to trauma compared to white teachers (Davis et al., 2022). In their discussion of these findings, Davis and colleagues (2022) suggested that white teachers may be challenged by their lack of culturally shared knowledge with their Black students, whereas Black teachers may have higher levels of self-efficacy due to their increased understanding of the cultural context of Black students' lives. Davis and colleagues also go on to suggest that the increased awareness of stressors their students face at home, highlighted by the pandemic, may

have differential impacts on the self-efficacy of Black and white teachers. In another study, Loomis & Panlilio (2022) found higher trauma-informed attitudes (including TSE) provided a buffer against expulsion decision risk, however, the same was not true for students of Color. For Black, Latiné, and American Indian students in this study, TSE did not predict lower expulsion decision risk, but higher teacher stress predicted a higher expulsion decision risk. Thus, when examining TSE for TIEP careful attention should be paid to student and teacher racial identities and how those identities impact teacher beliefs.

TSE for Equity-Centered or related TIEP. In education, *equity* is ensuring all students have access to and are able to engage in meaningful and challenging academic work and high-quality education in an environment that values them as individuals (Venet, 2021). When inequities are present in schools, this can cause or perpetuate trauma for students (Venet, 2021). For example, the U.S. educational system is deeply permeated by whiteness and as a result, students who are racially or ethnically marginalized whose cultural context does not match with the white-dominant culture of schools are often punished (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Knox et al., 2023). Specifically, students of Color often experience racial trauma in school contexts such as racial microaggressions (Allen et al., 2013) or bias-based bullying (Mulvey et al., 2018). Furthermore, as I previously mentioned, approaches to trauma are also founded on white-dominant norms (Alvarez, 2020) and biomedical views of trauma (Petrone & Rogers Stanton, 2021), and thus, traditional approaches to trauma may result in negative consequences for students, particularly students of ethnically or racially marginalized groups. For example, students' responses to trauma stemming from their own cultural context may be misinterpreted (Knox et al., 2023) and met with pathologizing students trying to figure out “what is wrong with them” or exclusionary disciplinary practices potentially contributing to the cradle-to-prison

pipeline for Black and Brown Students (see Delale-O'Connor et al., 2017). Additionally, a dominant deficit narrative exists in the U.S. for individuals experiencing poverty (Gorski, 2016). Especially given that the majority of educators in the United States are white women (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021) and previous educational training likely has not prepared them to implement culturally responsive or related practices (Milner & Howard, 2013), it is critical to examine teacher beliefs in their capabilities to recognize and disrupt inequities in schools that perpetuate trauma through equity-centered TIEP.

One of the most significant findings of my systematic literature review was that no study included in the review examined TSE for equity-centered or related trauma-informed practices (Wallace, 2023). This is evidenced in the ways in which researchers frame their study and define trauma and trauma-informed practices. For example, limited research exists that examines TSE towards TIEP in a way that implicates these larger systems at play. For example, Arnold and colleagues (2021) discussed the barriers students of Color and students in poverty face to accessing mental health services. Two articles discussed the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on students of Color (Davis et al., 2022; Killian, 2022). Others acknowledge systems of oppression, structural violence (Killian, 2022; Rodger et al., 2020) and disparities in expulsion practices across racial groups (Loomis & Panlilio, 2022). However, the majority of researchers who have examined TSE towards TIEP fail to acknowledge the systems of inequity that cause and perpetuate trauma and instead frame marginalized students' identities as "risk factors" for trauma (Wallace, 2023). Furthermore, few scholars examine TSE for TIEP in a way that considers experiences of cultural and or racial trauma in their definition of trauma (see Loomis & Panlilio, 2022). Few scholars examine TSE for TIEP and discuss cultural responsiveness as part of their definitions of TIEP (see Blitz & Mulcahy, 2017; Killian, 2022; Rodger et al., 2020;

Waggoner, 2018). For example, Blitz and Mulcahy, (2017) argued culturally responsive schools develop flexible climates that recognize the importance of students' racial and cultural experiences, while Killian (2022) focused on diminishing stereotypes and biases. Waggoner (2018) described cultural responsiveness as a principle of TIEP. Only one study explicitly recognized structural racism within their definition of TIEP (Rodger et al, 2020). The majority of studies use definitions of trauma and TIEP that focus on responding to trauma that has already occurred (Wallace, 2023). This framing of trauma positions educators to be reactive rather than proactive. Additionally, this framing prevents educators from seeing schools as a place of trauma (Venet, 2021). Therefore, there is a need to assess TSE towards TIEP using Venet's (2021) definition of TIEP, which goes beyond responding to trauma in the classroom, and emphasizes the need to prevent trauma from occurring using equity-focused TIEP. Understanding how efficacious teachers feel towards recognizing structural challenges that cause trauma in and outside of school and the ability to prevent trauma may inform policies and practices to better support teachers and students.

Methods used to examine TSE for TIEP. Majority of articles examining TSE towards TIEP used domain-specific measures and quantitative methods (Wallace, 2023). Few researchers have examined this relationship using qualitative research methods (Arnold et al., 2021; Lombardi, 2020; Stegall, 2020). Several researchers have used a variation of the Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care scale to examine TSE towards TIEP (Boylston, 2021; Killian et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2021; Loomis & Panlilio, 2022; MacLochlainn et al., 2022; Rodger et al., 2020; Waggoner, 2018). In addition to several other subscales assessing teacher attitudes towards TIEP, this measure includes a "self-efficacy at work" subscale that "endorses feeling unable to meet the demands of working with a traumatized population versus feeling able to meet the

demands" (Baker et al., 2016, p. 67). While this subscale is domain specific to TIEP it does not assess TSE for equity-centered or related TIEP.

Other researchers have used unique newly developed measures that examined TSE towards supporting students exposed to trauma broadly (Alber, 2021; Davis et al., 2022; Law, 2019). Blitz and Mulcahy (2017) used a scale they developed that examined TSE towards responding to students' emotional needs, withdrawn or sad students and, managing one's own emotional responses to student issues or behaviors. Berger and colleagues (2016) used the adapted Disaster-Helper Self-Efficacy Scale that is specific to trauma caused by natural disasters. Qualitative studies examined self-efficacy by asking about support for self-efficacy to address stress and trauma of students (Davis et al., 2022), preparation experiences (Lombardi, 2020), and effectiveness and preparedness for teaching students experiencing trauma (Stegall, 2020). Others have used more global TSE measures. Shooks (2020) used Teachers' Sense of Self-Efficacy Survey (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Similarly, Stipp (2019) used the Teacher Sense of Self Efficacy for Classroom Management (TSSE-CM; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy 2001) and qualitative interviews exploring experiences supporting confidence to manage classrooms and preparedness for handling student stress. Importantly, in my recent review of the literature (Wallace, 2023), findings indicate that no research includes measures of TSE for TIEP that include items focusing on culturally responsive or equity focused components of TIEP. This highlights a clear need to explore teacher perceptions of equity-centered TIEP.

While no studies have examined TSE for equity-centered aspects of TIEP, one study has examined the relationships between culturally responsive teaching, instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management (Siwatu, 2007), measured by two scales combined: Culturally Responsive Teaching Techniques (CRTT; Oyerinde, 2008) Scale and the

Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES; Woolfolk Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2001). This study found that cultural teaching is a dimension of teacher efficacy. Further, the authors found significant relationships between teacher self-efficacy and culturally responsive teaching, instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management. Their findings support the notion that teachers who have high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to use higher levels of culturally responsive pedagogy, which has a positive impact on student achievement and engagement (Callaway, 2016). Self-efficacy, including teacher self-efficacy, is domain-specific and can differ from one domain to the other (Bandura, 2006; Schunk & DiBennedetto, 2020). Therefore, while there is some research regarding teacher self-efficacy for culturally relevant teaching in general, there is a gap in the literature exploring teacher self-efficacy for equity-centered TIEP.

Taken together, given the majority of studies on TSE for TIEP are quantitative, more qualitative research on middle school TSE for TIEP is needed. Furthermore, while most researchers are using domain specific measures to assess TSE for TIEP, their definitions of TIEP limit their assessment. For example, no studies assessed teachers' perceptions of their ability to recognize structural violence that causes trauma or their belief in their ability to prevent trauma from occurring. Exploring middle school teachers' beliefs using a conceptual framework that integrates SCT and SysTIP, will allow us to explore how teachers perceive their nested contexts impact their beliefs towards TIEP, particularly, equity-centered TIEP. Exploring these lived experiences that impact those beliefs could highlight areas where more research is needed and how educational researchers can support teachers and students.

Conclusion

Though there is a growing interest in studying teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for trauma-informed educational practices, there is a need to qualitatively examine these beliefs using an equity-centered and systems-oriented trauma-informed approach. Therefore, my study draws upon Social Cognitive Theory and SysTIP to better understand the lived experiences of middle school teachers using equity-centered TIEP, their self-efficacy beliefs, and the factors that influence those beliefs.

Chapter III: Method

Due to the high prevalence of trauma in classrooms and unique positioning of teachers to support students exposed to trauma, several studies have examined teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards trauma-informed educational practices (TIEP), including teacher self-efficacy (TSE). However, few studies have focused on the lived experiences of middle school teachers after the onset of COVID-19, and how their broader context impacts their self-efficacy beliefs. In particular, there is little research regarding TSE beliefs towards equity-centered TIEP. Thus, the purpose of this multiple case study was to better understand middle school teachers' self-efficacy beliefs towards trauma-informed educational practices, particularly as they relate to centering equity and the factors that impact those beliefs–specifically, COVID-19 and its consequences and the continued public displays of racial and social injustices and responses to them. The current chapter outlines my methodological approach, study design, data sources in alignment with my research questions, and analysis, as well as addresses ethical considerations and trustworthiness.

Methodology

In this work I applied a constructivist worldview by focusing on multiple participant meanings. From this lens, truth and knowledge are considered to be inherently social and co-constructed and use participant views to build, broaden, and generate theory by interconnecting themes (Paul et al., 2005). A constructivist lens aligns well with my conceptual framework and research design as constructivism focuses on co-construction of knowledge and lived experiences of the participants. Furthermore, given this topic of research is fairly understudied, conducting an exploratory qualitative study to better understand the lived experiences of middle school teachers can inform theory and highlight areas where more research is needed.

Study Design

The aforementioned research questions were answered using a qualitative collective case study research design (Stake, 1995). *Case studies* may be used to explain, describe, or explore events or phenomena within a particular context (Yin, 2009). A case study approach is appropriate when the researcher feels the context is relevant to the phenomenon (Yin, 2003). As described in chapter two, I feel the broader context in which teachers use TIEP may be relevant to understanding how they develop their self-efficacy beliefs and the factors that potentially impact those beliefs. A *collective case study* can be defined as a study examining multiple cases simultaneously with the goal of generating a broader understanding of a particular research question or problem (Crowe et al., 2011; Stake, 1995). Therefore, I chose a collective case study design to explore the uniqueness and commonalities between four teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for TIEP and the factors that may impact those beliefs to build a better understanding of what supports or thwarts TSE for TIEP (Stake, 1995). This approach can highlight how teachers develop their self-efficacy beliefs, which may support theory development or refinement (Crowe et al., 2011).

Setting and Participants

The following sections will describe the sites and participants included in this study, including recruitment strategies, site and participant selection.

Site Selection. I conducted this study in an urban city in a southeastern state of the U.S. The goal of this study was to explore middle school TSE towards TIEP and how the broader context influences their experiences. Thus, school selection criteria included: a willingness to participate and a middle school with teachers who have perceived use of TIEP. I set out with the intention of comparing cases across school contexts to explore how various contexts influence

TSE for TIEP. I received interest and approval from leadership to work with two middle schools with contrasting contexts. However, I only received participant interest from one school, Walkerville School (pseudonym). While I am unable to compare across different school contexts, a collective case study design allows for a rich exploration of how teachers from the same school interpret the broader context and its influence on their students and their beliefs.

Walkerville School is an independent faith-based school in an urban city of a southeastern state and prioritizes creating a welcoming environment for all. The school is a small school serving roughly 200 students in K-8th grade with a teacher to student ratio of about 1:14. Walkerville serves students from the local community, which is an urban environment with a predominantly Black population. Students are admitted based on financial need, and all students receive full-tuition scholarships and breakfast, lunch, and snacks. This community experiences some of the highest rates of poverty in the city; several of the city's public housing communities are in this area. This community has faced the consequences of discriminatory lending practices (redlining), and is currently facing gentrification and increased housing costs with many families paying more than a third of their income to housing. Thus, Walkerville School serves predominantly students from the local urban community, many of whom experience poverty. This community is also resilient, and many of their community members lead organizing efforts to provide youth programs, locally grown produce and urban farming, equal access to public transportation, as well as several Black-owned businesses that are centered on supporting the local community and youth.

While I am unable to compare teacher experiences across school contexts, gaining a rich understanding of teacher perspectives at Walkerville School through the lens of my conceptual framework may have powerful implications. Specifically, given the dominant deficit narrative of

individuals experiencing poverty (Gorski, 2016) and systematic challenges often faced by urban schools, such as budget cuts and achievement gaps (Turner & Spain, 2021), examining teacher beliefs at Walkerville School using SysTIP and SCT will allow for a rich understanding of how teachers may view the community and broader context as impacting their students and self-efficacy beliefs towards TIEP.

Sampling Method and Selection. Upon approval to conduct research with Walkerville School, potential participants were contacted via email. The email invitation (see Appendix A) included a description of the study, participant eligibility criteria, and a linked interest form (see Appendix B) and participant information sheet (Appendix C).

Participants were selected using purposeful selection to include participants who are considered able to answer the research questions (Maxwell, 2013). Middle school teachers were purposefully selected to have shared experiences of teaching students who have experienced trauma and perceived use of trauma-informed educational practices. As part of the interest form, participants responded to questions assessing their eligibility including perceived experience with working with students who had experienced trauma and perceived use of TIEP. Purposeful selection allowed me to create an opportunity for an intensive study with variety in cases (Stake, 2006). I sought out to recruit 4-8 participants to maintain feasibility of the project and to maintain the richness of multicase study research. Four eligible teacher participants from Walkerville School, each representing a case, participated in the study. A key contributor to case study research in education, Robert Stake (2006) suggests a study with fewer than four cases or more than ten cases risks losing the benefits of multicase study research. Specifically, he argues that fewer than four limits a researcher's ability to view the interaction between cases, whereas more than ten participants can make it difficult to see the uniqueness in each case.

Sample. Four middle school teachers from Walkerville School participated in this study. Each participant served as a single case. All participants were purposefully selected to meet the following criteria: middle school teacher, perceived experience working with students exposed to trauma, and perceived use of trauma-informed educational practices. Upon IRB approval, participant interest forms were sent to all middle school teachers at Walkerville School. Only four teachers responded to the interest form. All four were eligible and participated throughout the entirety of the study. This limited interest unfortunately limited diversity across participant demographics. Self-reported demographic information for the participants can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Name (pseudonym)	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Teaching experience (years)	Experience with TIEP training /education
Emily	Female	White	16-20	Annual professional development
Jacob	Male	White	1-3	Preservice and several professional developments
Cindy	Female	White	16-20	Professional development and in-class experience
Scott	Male	White	16-20	Professional development

Data Sources

In order to capture middle school teachers' lived experiences of using trauma-informed educational practices and their self-efficacy beliefs, I used a collective case study design. I chose

a collective case study approach to reveal a detailed description of themes across participants' lived experiences related to self-efficacy towards TIEP. Multiple sources of evidence are a fundamental element of case study research (Harrison et al., 2017). Thus, there were four data sources in this study: (1) demographic questionnaire; (2) individual semi-structured interviews; (3) in-depth member checking interviews; and (4) teacher attitudes towards TIEP questionnaire.

Demographic Questionnaire. Participants responded to a demographic questionnaire to build a better understanding of the findings and how they differ across groups. I collected the following information: (a) gender identity; (b) racial identity; (c) years of experience teaching; (d) experience with trauma-informed professional development or pre-service training.

Semi-Structured Interviews. Next, I conducted individual semi-structured interviews with each participant via Zoom, which served as the recorder for the interviews. Interviews lasted from 79 to 120 minutes with an average length of an hour and 35 minutes. I captured a total of six hours and 18 minutes of interview data. The interview questions were directly derived from the research questions (see Table 2) and are aligned with Social Cognitive Theory, specifically the triadic reciprocality, or reciprocal interactions (Bandura, 1977; 1986), and SysTIP (Khasnabis & Goldin, 2020). Additionally, teachers were asked about their experiences with and beliefs about trauma-informed practices that align with Alex Venet's (2021) four principles of equity-centered trauma-informed educational practices (e.g., predictability, flexibility, connection and empowerment). In line with Maxwell (2013), I designed the protocol to be neutral and thought-provoking; interview questions were thoughtfully developed so as to not include my own bias or any language that might influence participant response. All questions were open-ended, probing rich qualitative data (see Appendix D). The protocol served as a guide to the interviews, in that not every question was asked to each participant. For example, if a

participant spoke to the question about personal influences, I did not ask that question. Related, follow-up questions and probes were asked that were not listed in the protocol to keep the interview conversation natural and to facilitate rich data.

Table 2

Interview Questions Aligned with Research Questions

Research Questions	Interview Questions
RQ1. How do middle school teachers describe their self-efficacy beliefs towards trauma-informed educational practices within the school context?	In your own words, how do you define trauma? In your own words, how do you define equity? You've defined trauma and equity, I'm curious to hear from you what equity-centered trauma-informed practices means to you? *Probes:* How do you relate your definition of equity to trauma-informed practices? Equity-centered trauma-informed practices can also include predictability, empowerment, flexibility, and connection. Can you tell me about a time when you've felt confident building connections and relationships in your classroom? *Probe*: What about being predictable in your instruction or responses? *Probe*: What about being flexible in your instruction? *Probe:* What about empowering student voice and agency? Can you tell me about a time when you felt less confident in using any of the practices you just discussed? *Probe:* building connections and relationships?

	Probe: being predictable in your instruction or responses? *Probe*: being flexible in your instruction? Probe: empowering student voice and agency?
RQ2. How do middle school teachers describe their self-efficacy beliefs as they relate to centering equity in trauma-informed educational practices?	Can you share with me about a time you felt confident or capable centering equity in your classroom? [Reactive responses] *Probe*: How do you center equity in your responses/or interactions with students? How do you do this on a day to day basis? *Probe*: How do you center equity in your responses/or interactions with student responses to trauma in the classroom? [Proactive structures] *Probe*: Can you tell me about how you structure your classroom so that equity is centered? Can you describe your confidence level for preventing trauma in schools? *Probe:* What contributes to that level of confidence? *Probe:* What would make you feel more confident in preventing trauma? Can you tell me about a time when you felt less confident in using any of the practices you just discussed? *Probe:* building connections and relationships *Probe*: being predictable in your instruction or responses? *Probe*: being flexible in your instruction? *Probe:* empowering student voice and agency?
RQ3. How do middle school teachers describe factors that impact their self-efficacy beliefs	What do you feel impacts your confidence in using trauma-informed educational practices?

towards trauma-informed educational practices?	How useful or important do you feel it is to use trauma-informed practices? When using trauma-informed practices what impact do you expect to have on students? *[Physiological/Emotional Affect]* What feelings come up for you when using or implementing trauma-informed practices? *Probe:* How does this impact your confidence/ use of trauma-informed practices? *[Mastery Experiences]* Are there times where you have felt successful in your use of trauma-informed practices? How did this experience impact you? *Probe:* How did this experience impact your confidence for using trauma-informed practices? How does your school's available resources impact your use of trauma-informed practices? *Probe:* How does it impact your confidence for using trauma-informed practices? *Probe*: How could they better support your confidence/ use of trauma-informed practices? How does your school/division's policies or practices impact your use of trauma-informed practices? *Probe:* How does it impact your confidence for using trauma-informed practices? *Probe*: How could they better support your confidence/ use of trauma-informed practices? *[Vicarious Experiences]* How have experiences of observing colleagues using trauma-informed practices, if

	any, impacted your use of trauma-informed practices? *Probe:* If you have not had these experiences, how do you think observing others would impact your use of trauma-informed practices? *Probe:* How did this/would this experience impact your confidence when using trauma-informed practices? *[Verbal Persuasion]* Can you describe an experience, if any, where a colleague or supervisor provided feedback on your use of trauma-informed practices? *Probe*: If you have not had this experience, how do you think gaining feedback from a colleague could support your confidence in using trauma-informed practices? *Probe*: How did this impact your use of trauma-informed practices? *Probe*: How did this impact your confidence in using trauma-informed practices? How does the broader context, such as state policies impact your use of trauma-informed practices? *Probe:* For example, policy conversations around equity? *Probe:* How has the broader context impacted your confidence in your use of trauma-informed practices?
RQ3a. How do middle school teachers describe COVID-19 and its consequences impacting their self-efficacy towards trauma-informed educational practices?	In what ways do you feel the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted student trauma? How has COVID-19 impacted your use of trauma-informed practices? *Probe*: What about the consequences of COVID-19 (e.g., financial crisis, COVID-19 related illness/death, disruption of in-person learning etc.)? *Probe:* How has this impacted your

	confidence when using trauma-informed practices?
RQ3b. How do middle school teachers describe the continued displays of racial and social injustice and responses to them as impacting their self-efficacy as they relate to centering equity in trauma-informed educational practices?	In what ways do you feel the public displays of social injustices and protests in response to them in recent years have impacted student trauma? How have recent protests and other conversations around social justice informed your use of trauma-informed practices? *Probe:* How has this impacted your confidence as it relates to centering equity in trauma-informed practices?

In-depth Member Checking. Following the individual interviews, I conducted a follow-up interview with each of the participants as another source of data and served as a robust form of member checking (see Appendix E). The goal of the follow-up interviews was to gain a more comprehensive understanding of participant perspectives on TIEP and ensure I had accurately captured their perspective. In these follow-up interviews I shared with the participants three brief summaries of what they shared in the first interview aligned with the research questions based on our first interview together and asked if they would like to make any clarifications or expand upon any topic. I also asked any clarifying questions to get a clear sense of their perspectives. Due to time constraints, member checking for participants often occurred within a couple of days following the first interview. Member checking interviews lasted from 12 to 94 minutes with an average length of 46 minutes. I captured a total of three hours and 4 minutes of member checking interview data. This second interview allowed me to ensure I was able to answer my research questions by providing an opportunity to follow up on any gaps in my understanding. I sent a copy of both transcripts via email with the participants to make changes or clarifications and served as a second form of member checking (Guba, 1981). Each participant was informed that

they could reply to the email with changes or request another follow-up interview within seven days.

Teacher Beliefs Questionnaire. Finally, following both interviews participants were sent a brief questionnaire via Google Forms about their beliefs towards trauma-informed practices (Appendix F), using an adapted version of the Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) scale (Baker et al., 2016). The ARTIC scale is a validated scale that measures the attitudes related to trauma-informed care of the staff working in schools and other settings serving individuals with exposure to trauma. Researchers have reported acceptable reliability for the scale ARTIC-45 ($\alpha = .93$). For the purpose of the current study, I included adapted versions of the following sub-scales in order to triangulate findings from the qualitative interviews: (a) self-efficacy at work; (b) responses to student behavior; (c) underlying causes of student behavior; (d) personal support of trauma-informed care; and (e) system support for trauma-informed care. Items were adapted to align more closely with the terminology used in my study (e.g., equity-centered trauma-informed practices). I scored each question on a 1 to 7 Likert scale, with the two anchors each being an unfavorable or favorable attitude related to trauma-informed care, whereas a low number indicates a less favorable attitude.

Data Analysis

The goal of data analysis in case study research is to make sense of the data by consolidating, reducing, and interpreting the data to make meaning (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Thus, the process of case study analysis aligns well with a constructivist approach (Yazen, 2015). Following the individual interviews and follow-up member checking interviews, audio recordings were transcribed using Rev. Following transcription, I read through and listened to the transcripts and made any necessary corrections and de-identified the data. Prominent scholars

in case study research suggest that data collection and analysis should occur simultaneously. Therefore, I engaged in open coding (e.g., annotation of transcripts) throughout the interviews, and transcription process to develop tentative ideas for codes and themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Yazan, 2015). Following the completion of all data collection, I first conducted a more in-depth analysis within cases and then across cases to revise earlier tentative themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I coded and analyzed transcripts using ATLAS.ti Web.

Category Development. *Categories* can be defined as "conceptual elements that 'cover' or span many individual examples" and are developed through coding (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 207). I developed the codebook (see Appendix G) for my study through an iterative process using deductive and inductive coding. I employed deductive coding ('a priori') based on my conceptual framework. For example, I included environmental, personal and behavioral influences conceptualized in the reciprocal interactions framework (Bandura, 1977), as a priori themes or categories in my codebook (i.e., quotes or data that fit into those general categories were categorized as such). I developed the rest of the codebook through an iterative process during both my within-case analysis and cross-case-analysis. Transcripts from both interviews were coded using ATLAS.ti, a qualitative data analysis software. Inductive coding was based on emergent codes from the transcripts; I developed and assigned codes to data to and grouped codes together to construct new categories (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). New categories and subcategories were developed through inductive coding and through analysis of my memos and observation notes that led to several new codes and subcodes. Throughout my analysis, categories were refined to retain the categories that apply across data sources (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Following codebook development, a second coder with expertise in motivation and equity research coded two transcripts to calibrate the codebook. We then met to debrief and

adjusted the codebook (Guba, 1981). As a result, I added 11 new codes. Next, using ATLAS.ti I recorded the frequency of codes at both the individual and group level to identify significant themes. I used thematic labels to represent common clusters of codes. To prevent confirmation bias, I coded for counterexamples, consulted with a second coder, and used memos.

Within-case Analysis. Prior to analyzing variations and similarities across cases, I conducted within-case analysis for each individual case (Crowe et al., 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). As discussed above, I coded transcripts from both interviews using deductive and inductive coding to create broad categories. I used participant responses to the demographic and teacher beliefs questionnaires to further contextualize and triangulate the cases. I compiled all data sources to make sense of the data and identify categories and themes that answer my research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Cross-case Analysis. Upon completion of the within-case analysis, I conducted cross-case analysis to identify common categories and themes across the cases to answer the research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Trustworthiness

There are two main potential validity threats to my findings: (a) participant reactivity; and (b) researcher bias. I engaged in several practices to increase trustworthiness and address validity threats throughout the design, study, and analysis. For example, throughout each step of the study I engaged in meaningful reflection through memos addressing both validity threats (Maxwell, 2013). Moreover, the credibility of my study was increased by conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews, follow-up intensive member checking, note-taking during interviews, and transcript member checking (Maxwell, 2013). Additionally, to elicit authentic stories about teachers' experiences, I took the time to develop trust through conversation and provided clear

explanations on what the purpose of my study was (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). I also carefully developed the interview protocols to be asset-based and treat the teacher as the expert to further develop this trust. Further, calibration with the codebook and transcript was conducted with a second coder to prevent reactivity, misunderstanding and to assess intercoder reliability. Additionally, by explicitly looking for counterstories and consulting with a second coder, I was able to minimize researcher bias in data interpretation (Maxwell, 2013). As a final step, triangulation of data sources (demographic questionnaire, semi-structured interview, follow-up member checking interview) allowed me to explore each case from multiple perspectives, enhancing data quality (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Although these practices do not eliminate the aforementioned validity threats, they led to continuous revision of the design and likely minimized the impact on my conclusions.

Institutional Review Board Considerations

Upon approval of my dissertation from my committee, this study was also approved by Virginia Commonwealth University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) as an exempt research study. All guidelines provided by the IRB and IRB-approved protocols for this study were followed. Participants were provided a study information sheet to outline the goals of the study and emphasize that their participation is voluntary. With permission from the IRB and school districts, participants were each compensated at a $25 value following the completion of each interview ($50 total). Participants' transcripts were stored in a password protected Google Drive and only accessible to researchers listed on the approved IRB.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to a small sample of middle school teachers within an independent faith-based, urban school context and with a limited set of experiences that

influenced their understanding of trauma-informed educational practices. Focusing on middle school teachers allowed a rich understanding of supporting students experiencing trauma in a critical time in development, but excludes teachers working with students in other age groups.

Chapter IV: Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine middle school teachers' self-efficacy (TSE) beliefs towards trauma-informed educational practices (TIEP) and what factors impact those beliefs, particularly as those beliefs relate to centering equity within TIEP. The following research questions guided this research:

1. How do middle school teachers describe their self-efficacy beliefs towards trauma-informed educational practices?
2. How do middle school teachers describe their self-efficacy beliefs as they relate to centering equity in trauma-informed educational practices?
3. How do middle school teachers describe factors that impact their self-efficacy beliefs towards trauma-informed educational practices?
    a. How do middle school teachers describe COVID-19 and its consequences impacting their self-efficacy towards trauma-informed educational practices?
    b. How do middle school teachers describe the continued displays of racial and social injustice and responses to them as impacting their self-efficacy as they relate to centering equity in trauma-informed educational practices?

The current chapter first presents a summary of findings for within-case analysis including a rich description of each case (teacher) and cross-case analysis. Themes and sub-themes that answer my research questions are outlined in Table 3.

Within-Case Findings

I conducted within-case analysis by compiling all data sources for each case (i.e., the demographic questionnaire, two individual interviews, and the teacher beliefs questionnaire). Results from the teacher beliefs questionnaire (ARTIC; Baker et al., 2016) will be reported to

triangulate the qualitative findings. Each item was scored on a 1 to 7 Likert scale where a low number indicates a less favorable attitude towards TIEP and a high number indicates endorsing a more favorable attitude towards TIEP.

Case 1 - Emily

Emily is a white woman who earned her degree in middle school education and mathematics. She has been teaching middle school for over 16 years and has been at Walkerville School for five years. She has taught both seventh and eighth grade mathematics. Emily shared in our conversations that she loves teaching middle school students. She especially enjoys teaching them how they can use skills and knowledge gained in math class in real life. Emily has participated in several annual professional development sessions through Walkerville School. Through these trainings, she learned how trauma can impact students and the challenges the students at Walkerville School often face. She said they worked with their school counselors and outside resources to "make sure we have a grasp of what trauma can look like in students."

Emily described her understanding of trauma as:

> an experience a person goes through that impacts them emotionally, physically, or mentally, that– and it could be in a variety of different ways, something they've seen, something they've been through. And then trauma is almost the after effect of how they're trying to process all of that.

RQ1: Self-Efficacy Towards TIEP. Overall, Emily seemed to have high self-efficacy beliefs in terms of her ability to recognize when a student is experiencing trauma but lower self-efficacy beliefs towards responding to student trauma in certain contexts. For example, she mentioned several times where she felt confident recognizing and being responsive when students may be having an off day and offering breaks or other resources. Emily's high levels of

self-efficacy for empowering students, a key principle of TIEP (Venet, 2021), was a prominent theme in her case. This was particularly true for the empowering students to feel confident in their math abilities. She also shared how she empowered students experiencing trauma by providing them options for care.

> I would normally give them an option like, let's say a student came in and said 'so-and-so died this past weekend.' I would say first, like, 'Well, do you want to talk to someone about that?' And if they said 'yes,' I would normally give them an option of 'Well, I could do it, or I can get our counselor, or I can get our principal, which one would you like?' and so [I] do. So, then they feel comfortable.

Emily also described feeling very capable in her abilities to establish connections with the majority of her students, another core principle of TIEP (Venet, 2021). She also emphasized throughout our conversations, that when she was not able to establish a strong connection with a student, she ensured they had someone else to go to within the school.

> But I think then that is where I, as much as I wanted to be able to connect with *all* my students, realizing sometimes that's not possible. [But] like is that student, though connecting with another teacher? Do they [have] someone else too, that they can kind of [go to] just so we're not forgetting any of our students. And so, I work at a school that's small enough, and we have a community that we can kind of make sure of that.

Emily also reported generally high self-efficacy for creating a predictable classroom environment, a third principle of TIEP (Venet, 2021). She shared she felt particularly confident creating routine and clear expectations for her classroom. Overall, Emily described feeling confident in being flexible in her instruction, the fourth and final principle of TIEP (Venet, 2021), but that she sometimes struggled with this again, in the larger group context. For example,

Emily described an activity that is frequently done throughout the school called “highs and lows” where the students share their highs and lows of the day as a way of being flexible in the classroom. However, she mentioned that sometimes she does not feel capable of responding to what students share in a trauma-informed way and attributed this to a fear of conflict.

> And well, I think I'm always fearful of conflict. I like harmony. So, to me It was easier to not talk about some of those conflicting moments, because I didn't know where it was gonna go. And I didn't feel like I was equipped to bring peace into it.

These findings are further supported by Emily’s responses to the teacher beliefs questionnaire. She reported moderate levels of self-efficacy (4.67). She also reported moderate to high levels of positive responses to student behavior (5). That is, she responded favorably to centering student safety and flexibility in the classroom. Lastly, Emily responded with moderate to high levels on the underlying causes subscale (5.5), indicating she sees her students behavior as malleable and focuses on their strengths.

RQ 2: Self-Efficacy Towards Equity-Centered TIEP. In terms of research question two, Emily described her understanding of equity as “trying to get everyone to the same goal, but realizing that people are gonna be needing different things and providing each person with what they need in order to attain that goal.” She shared that in terms of centering equity within TIEP she feels it is important to recognize students may have unique responses to trauma and the importance of meeting all students’ needs.

> We as teachers or humans in general, just need to make sure that we are helping each student where they need it, and realizing that student A is not going to have the same responses to trauma as student B, but making sure that they're both their needs are

being met but then realizing that student A might need more help than Student B at certain times.

Emily described multiple scenarios where she felt confident centering equity in her classroom by providing differential support on course content activities so that students could fully engage in the material. She also described feeling confident in preventing trauma from occurring within her classroom by relying on TIEP principles such as predictability and connection.

> So, I guess so, being kind of proactive and thinking about some things like … trying to catch a student at the door. If I know they're having an off day, and just 'do you need a break?' or 'give me that hand signal if something's off', and then so yeah, I think that was kind of I tried to catch it before it became a bigger thing.

However, Emily also described having low confidence when it comes to deciding whether or not a student's behavior warranted a disciplinary action or a trauma-informed response.

> I think sometimes it was hard to know, was the student acting out [because] of trauma? Were they acting out.. and I know so this is all kind of it's a fine line, and that's where it's kinda hard where they [were] acting out of. Was it just the math? Was it the work? Were they acting out? Was I a trigger, you know, like, is there something, I said that was just triggering? And again I know it's all related to trauma, but then I think it was just hard to then … sometimes to know of is this call for disciplinary action. Does this call for disciplinary action? Does this call for– this student needs a break? Or does this call...do I just ignore it, or work through it with? I don't know. So, I do feel like sometimes It was just so hard as a teacher to make a judgment call on that.

RQ3: Factors that Impact Self-Efficacy Towards TIEP. Emily most frequently reported the school and the classroom context as impacting her self-efficacy towards TIEP. As

previously mentioned, Emily had a particularly hard time responding to student trauma in a way that centers equity in front of the whole class. For example, she shared:

> You understand they're going through more than you can even understand. But other students are still watching, too. And so, they're like, why does this one student get away with it while I can't? so that's where it is kinda hard. So, I struggled.

Emily described feeling more confident in responding to trauma in one on one or small group contexts. She shared she would often accomplish this by asking if a student would like to step out in the hallway to try and provide support to the student. Emily went on to say that sometimes this was difficult because some students would assume they were in trouble.

> But I have one student in particular who anytime I did that would immediately shut down immediately we get into the hallway, and already, like it, was pointless because there was no gonna be no understanding from both parties of what to do. …. The reason being was, I think, the student automatically thought they were in trouble. And although I've had the conversation multiple times, 'No, you're not. No, you're not. But we need to figure out what's going on, so that this can be a successful class.' And so that just got really hard. And so, I think my consistency wasn't really clear. And so, they automatically would just shut down anytime. They thought they were in trouble. So yeah.

In terms of the broader school context, Emily reported that the smaller school context and access to resources helped to build her self-efficacy for implementing TIEP. She also mentioned the school leadership and her colleagues often supported her self-efficacy beliefs for TIEP. For example, "I just felt like I had so many different people that although they were in my classroom, I just felt like I could go to them for advice." She also described opportunities for vicarious

experiences and collaboration with other teachers at Walkerville School as contributing to her confidence.

> But I also think it just came from being able to observe and watch even some of my coworkers the past few years have– just their interactions with the kids, and then, yeah, and then just talk to them [and see] how do they handle different things?

Emily shared examples of mastery experiences where she was able to try new strategies for her students that were successful and how that encouraged her to continue to use TIEP.

> Yeah, I think it definitely kind of encouraged me to do it more. I think I even would want to go and celebrate with other people too, or the people that have helped me through [and] figure out different solutions or share what they did. And then, yeah, I mean, it definitely, it's just encouraging when you feel like you're doing something. You're doing something out of your norm and it's working.

Emily also shared throughout her interviews some affective states or emotions that come up for her such as fear and frustration when she is using TIEP and how they impact her self-efficacy beliefs. She mentioned that feelings of frustration can often come up for her when implementing TIEP in the whole classroom context particularly as it relates to deciding how to respond to student trauma. She described feeling fearful of potential conflict, class disruption and potential retraumatization to the student. This is evidenced in the following quote:

> I would say, in the moment there's probably some frustration because again, for me, it was always hard to know 'Is this a disciplinary problem or not?' And so, it's really hard in the moment to not get frustrated by how it's changing your lesson or changing your day, or how do I respond to this? Is this a disciplinary problem or is this, should I be doing more trauma-informed care practices? So, in some sense, yeah, it was frustrating

> and difficult because if it was just me and the student one-on-one, I think it would be like, all right, well, we can fix this. We can come to a solution. But it's when you have a whole class of 13 other students, it makes it kind of difficult to have to pause whatever you're doing, you're thinking, [and] try to think of a solution or a way to fix this problem or shouldn't say problem, but fix whatever incidents happening. Yeah, that's also not going to be traumatic to the student or not going to ruin the student day or the class.

Emily shared that these affective states lead to self-doubt and "greatly" impact her use of TIEP.

These findings regarding the factors that impact Emily's TSE are further contextualized by Emily's response to the teacher beliefs questionnaire. Emily reported moderate to high levels of personal (5.8) and moderate levels of system support (4.3). Meaning, she feels TIEP is effective for her students and shows somewhat favorable attitudes towards feeling she has the support from her school to implement these practices successfully.

Case 2 - Jacob

Jacob is a white male who grew up in the same city that Walkerville is in and used to volunteer at Walkerville before moving to gain his master's degree in education. Jacob has been a middle school teacher for three years and at the time this study was conducted, just finished his first year with Walkerville School. Jacob shared his experiences in both pre-service and in-service trauma-informed training and education. He shared that as part of his master's program he had two years of teaching experience in a different state. He said his classes and teaching experiences while in graduate school helped to inform him about teaching students who have experienced trauma. He has also engaged in several professional development sessions offered at Walkerville School. Lastly, Jacob said these professional development sessions were particularly helpful because they provided opportunity for vicarious experiences. Specifically, he shared he

was able to learn “about different practices by talking with colleagues about their experiences and techniques.” Jacob shared his understanding of trauma as

> Experiences, usually in home life that seem to happen in various developmental stages that either is a lack of attention or a specific series of experiences that could either be violence, neglect, exposure to maybe not directly experiencing it, but just exposure to it in general. Like living in the two communities that I've worked in, it feels just kind of like a constant pressure cooker. Always just the energy is just raised to the nth degree and there's constant stuff going on all around.

RQ1: Self-Efficacy Towards TIEP. Overall, Jacob described that he maintains high self-efficacy for implementing TIEP. Specifically, he described feeling pretty confident towards recognizing when students may be experiencing trauma and how that student may require more support. He talked about feeling very confident in developing connections with students through different avenues such as poetry as well as feeling confident in creating a sense of community within the classroom. Jacob also mentioned feeling confident with engaging with families and that this supported his ability to develop deeper connections with his students.

> Something that also has been very helpful with just helping support kids who experienced trauma is the relationship with the parents and kind of earning some of their trust too. I just thought about a few moments where we had parent teacher student conferences and with the parents being able to kind of open up as well, because a lot of times they're receivers of trauma in their own way. Then that led to way better of a connection and then student performance as well. So yeah, I found the parent connection is another pretty big piece.

He also described feeling confident in remaining consistent with his expectations of students and providing flexible instruction by "meeting students where they are at." He also shared several stories where he was able to empower his students by providing them options on assignments and activities, and being intentional in making students feel respected and valued.

> So, in sixth grade I'll have a kid who is above and beyond the national standards and is always over-performing and then someone who struggles with some of the even most basic tasks of reading and writing. And I think going back to the verbal affirmations [for] those kids who struggle, they feel it and they are a little bit self-conscious or they don't want to step out of their shell. And so, promoting student work. [There was] a kid this year struggling kind of all year long and just came up with a very, very impressive piece of writing. And when I got it back, I like, 'Okay, next class I'm starting with showing their work as the model text' and then that not [only] just makes that kid feel good, but it also I think shows everyone else in the class, even though you may think student X struggles all the time, it's actually pretty impressive thing that he did [and] they're just the same as you sort of thing.

Jacob's high level of self-efficacy for TIEP was further evidenced by his survey responses on the ARTIC scale. Jacob reported the highest level of self-efficacy towards meeting the demands of students exposed to trauma (7). He also reported moderate to high levels of favorable attitudes towards responses to student behavior (5.75), or addressing student behavior with strong relationships, flexibility, and safety. He also responded positively to underlying causes of student behavior (6), recognizing that student behavior as malleable.

RQ2: Teacher Self-Efficacy Towards Equity-Centered TIEP. In general, Jacob reported high levels of self-efficacy as they relate to centering equity within TIEP. Jacob shared

that when he thinks of equity, he thinks of the “classic image of kids peer peering over a fence” and described equity as “Getting supplemental resources to try to get the equal springboard into opportunities.” Jacob described equity-centered TIEP as “doing our best to … just meeting kids where they’re at.” He described key aspects of this are addressing students' social (e.g., building relationships) or physical needs (e.g., hunger) in order to reach academic goals.

> And then also I found that a lot of times they won't even be ready academically until they're socially feeling at home. And even kids coming in with no food in their bellies, then that's like you're just talking to a brick wall at that point. So, trying to just build those relationships early on. And then once you have that, then you kind of have them in a good spot to actually listen and want to learn and want to do well for you and for themselves. … The best phrase I've kind of heard about classroom management is ‘[The] best classroom management is just relationship building.’ So [if] you have that then you can work from there and then try to get them up academically.

Jacob also described using small groups and other practices to ensure each student is able to fully engage in course activities. Jacob also shared feeling confident in centering equity through facilitating conversations around equity through course content. He shared this was not something he always felt confident about and that he perceived his identity as a “white guy” served as a barrier at first, but after facilitating the conversations several times students became more comfortable and he became more confident.

> Yeah, now I do [feel more confident facilitating equity conversations]. At first, I was very kind of nervous about it. In the first year I read this article in class with them and it was right after, it was right during the pandemic after the summer with George Floyd and just read an article [that] an NFL player posted something on this Player's Tribune

website. And [the students] were kind of, I think like, [taking a] step back and 'I don't really know if we can talk about this stuff,' but then just me kind of starting the conversation and addressing the elephant in the room, then they will follow kind of after that. And I don't know if there's a lot of time where not just them, but we as teachers really will engage in that. And so, I've never had a negative experience with it. And so, as that kind of happened, I felt more and more [comfortable] … that's not something I would open with in September, but I think as we get more comfortable as a class, we can get into it a little bit later in the year.

RQ3: Factors that Impact Self-Efficacy Towards TIEP. When asked what impacts his self-efficacy for TIEP, Jacob first shared that the positive impacts of TIEP on his students contribute to his level of confidence towards implementing these practices. Jacob also shared how the positive feelings he experiences after implementing TIEP such as "inspiration and energy" positively impacts his TSE for TIEP. He said:

> So, it's just very energizing and affirming to see stuff actually work and … there's some days when things go really well and kids are on it and they seem like they enjoy the day, like I feel like I could run through a brick wall. It's very, very, I think energizing.

Jacob described the broader school context and school leadership, as well as his prior experiences as significantly impacting his self-efficacy. Specifically, Jacob describes the school leadership and policies and practices in place support his self-efficacy for TIEP.

> And then Walkerville School just has done I think a good job of following through with those consequences … and expectations or else it's kind of like a house of cards and that's kind of what it was in [Jacob's prior school] because we couldn't afford to lose a kid. We were so low on numbers. So, I think that might, as a teacher, I feel at Walkerville School

> way more confident in our administration because the rules in our student handbook actually holds weight. It means something. And they know that too because my dealings with the situations at hand aren't different at all at either place. Yet the student reaction and improvement after incidents, that is just way better at Walkerville School.

He went on to emphasize how the resources at Walkerville School and support from leadership supports his self-efficacy.

> The resources I've gotten at Walkerville School are just so refreshing and both behaviorally with our administration, I know that they not only will kind of back us as teachers, and that gives me confidence, but that they're also going to handle it with the mindset of benefiting the kid as best they can if I have to, which does happen if I have to send a kid out to the dean, I know that they're in great hands and that they're going to be treated well and that they're, the issues are going to be addressed and that the resolving of the conflicts will be handled as best as it can be. And that's a new thing I've felt here.

Jacob also mentioned hearing recognition from leadership that this is "difficult work" and they are there to support teachers "re-energizes those [TIEP] practices." These findings are further evidenced by Jacob's ARTIC survey responses. Jacob reported high levels of personal support (6.75) indicating that he feels positively and confident about the effectiveness of TIEP. Additionally, he reported the highest positive attitudes towards system support (7) meaning he endorses feeling system-wide support for implementing TIEP in his school.

Case 3 - Cindy

Cindy is a white woman who has been teaching for roughly 20 years and loves working with middle school students– "I fell in love with middle school kids. There's something, and it's probably because I'm so quirky, that I love middle school kids. I just love that whole time

period." Cindy has lived and taught in the area for several years before working at Walkerville and similar to Jacob she volunteered at Walkerville before working there. Throughout our conversations Cindy draws on prior teaching experiences at her previous public school near Walkerville School and other schools in more "affluent" areas of the city.

Cindy described trauma as various negative experiences, particularly interpersonal experiences such as neglect, abuse, loss of a loved one, exposure to violence, and bullying. She also mentioned experiencing poverty as a type of trauma. She shared that she has had several professional development training and in-class experiences to practice her use of trauma-informed practices, including learning about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE). Cindy shared that she uses a lot of knowledge from previous jobs in other fields like psychology, law, and victim advocacy to inform her practices. She shared that from these experiences she has developed the following view of trauma and its impacts on individuals:

> And at the end of all of that … they're never going to be the same. That person is never the same. And that's how I look at these children. They will never be the same as what they were before whatever trauma happened.

RQ1: Self-Efficacy Towards TIEP. Overall, Cindy described high self-efficacy beliefs for implementing TIEP. Specifically, she described feeling very confident in developing connections with her students by finding "commonalities with kids" and facilitating connections between her students. For example, she talked about how she felt she could relate to her students because of her limited socioeconomic status growing up in addition to the loss of her father. Throughout our conversations she described feeling confident in her abilities to create a predictable classroom environment by creating routine and maintaining predictable responses to student behavior. She also described a few activities she uses to empower students. As an

example of several of these practices, Cindy shared an activity she does where she names a new student each week as the “Most Valuable Person.”

> I've done this my entire teaching career called ‘The Most Valuable Person.’ So that's a predictability thing too. And they loved that. They just thought that was great. It's like a star of the week kind of thing. So, I would just draw a name out of the hat for the first one, and then after that, we would treat that person special. I would use my own money, give them a little something. They would answer questions from their peers … just get to know each other and to build within the classroom a community. But they always expected that. By the end of the school year, probably around April, we ran out of names. So, we were finished with the whole thing. But it's really fun to do that. It really does get you, everybody, me, and also their peers within the classroom [to] get to know each other through that as well.

Cindy also shared feeling confident in responding to trauma and knowing when to seek assistance from support staff.

> You have to assess to see, do they need to go to a counselor right then if they're doing highs and lows and something like that comes up. Is it immediate? So of course, I would always turn them over to a counselor if necessary. I know all enough to do that. But right there on the spot to acknowledge love, kindness, affirm them, and also with the kids, but then not dwell on it to where you have to get back to what you're educating.

These findings are further supported by Cindy’s survey results. Cindy reported high levels of self-efficacy beliefs towards working with students who have been exposed to trauma (6.3). She also responded favorably to responding to trauma responses with safety and flexibility (5.5) and

for underlying causes of student behavior (5), meaning she sees her students behavior as malleable and focuses more on their strengths.

RQ2: Teacher Self-Efficacy Towards Equity-Centered TIEP. When describing her understanding of equity and equity-centered TIEP, Cindy shared, “To me, it's what we talked about yesterday, and just recognizing that there definitely are differences with different people's living situations, their socioeconomic backgrounds, their culture.” Cindy reported high levels of self-efficacy as it relates to recognizing when students are experiencing inequities and feeling capable to respond and “meet them where they are at.” Throughout the interview she shared that she believes the students at Walkerville School experience higher levels of trauma in comparison to students at other schools in the city. She described feeling confident in being responsive to what resources her students do and don’t have access to as she creates lesson plans and assignments.

> So as a teacher, I remember that, and we don't assign certain homework because they don't have the ability to do it at home. I'm talking about simple things like, Okay, so I have a History project, I'm just saying. I used to do a History project in public school, [an] affluent school where they had to create something at home. Well, they [Walkerville students] don't have all the supplies at home, so I'm not going to assign that.

Cindy also shared feeling confident in preventing trauma, predominantly in terms of bullying, from occurring in her classroom.

> Bullying, with kids, making comments to each other, and they do that out loud. They will say things to each other, and it's in the middle of class and you're just like, ‘Okay, got to deal with this,’ 'cause you can't keep on with the lesson because everybody's looking at

you. They're all looking at the teacher like, 'What is Ms. [Cindy] going to do with this?' So, you have to address it on the spot. I feel confident doing that.

Despite maintaining high self-efficacy as it relates to centering equity within trauma-informed practices as well as deep care for her students, Cindy made some comments that implied deficit-based assumptions about her students and their communities. For example, she seemed to view her students predominantly by the trauma they have experienced: "They come from all these home situations and everything that they're carrying all this as to why they're not interested in learning or can't learn or whatever. It's important to be able to reach all these kids." Cindy often acknowledged many of her students' living situations as "inequitable" and "traumatic." She shared, "So to me, even their living environment every single day is traumatic." However, Cindy did not acknowledge the role of the broader systems of oppression that cause these inequitable living situations. Moreover, despite recognizing that the students in this predominantly Black community experience higher levels of trauma – "That's my experience, having been a teacher now for almost 20 years and teaching in different parts of the [local city], I would say that the students that are in Walkerville School experience way more trauma on a daily basis," she insisted trauma "is not discriminatory towards one group over another." Cindy often attributed poor student academic outcomes to their home environment.

I would have to say that while I recognize that they're usually, like I said, many are a grade level below, and that's a result of where they live.

Cindy often positioned the school as a place for students to escape traumatic home life and that some of these students did not want to learn. For example, when talking about her experience in a nearby public middle school, Cindy shared the following:

> You have to teach with all of this going on as well. There are some kids that want to learn. At that school, I would say that maybe half wanted to learn, I mean truly wanted to learn. The rest of them were there just to get into it or just be away from their families. It was not to learn. It's very difficult when you have a few upfront that want to learn and the other ones are coming in with that kind of mindset.

RQ3: Factors that Impact Self-Efficacy Towards TIEP. Cindy described several factors that impact her self-efficacy for TIEP, including the school context, her previous experiences, and identity (specifically her age and race). In terms of the school context, Cindy shared that overall, she felt supported by the leadership and school policies. For example, she shared that it is typical at Walkerville School for students to ask for a "reset" and meet with a school support or leadership staff member, and that this practice is helpful for her. She also shared throughout the interviews that she attributed much of her confidence to her prior work experience. Below she describes how this supported her in supporting two of her students who recently experienced a severe trauma.

> Honestly, thankfully, I'm older, thankfully I've had a lot of teaching experience behind me. I had worked with crime victims, I worked in the court system, in the prosecutor's office. I really do believe all of that helped prepare me, besides my psychology background, all of that prepared me for the fact that I needed to go in there and act normal, talk with those two, just see where they were with their lives before they go home and get this information.

In our conversations, Cindy shared that sometimes her identity as an "older white lady" can sometimes serve as a barrier to connecting with her students who are predominantly Black, but that overtime she feels confident developing strong connections with her students.

> So because of that [her racial identity], it takes the kids a little bit longer to trust me, if that makes sense. Again, I'm not bothered by that, I just keep plugging along. So, I wouldn't say it's a confidence thing, it's more reality. I don't know if that makes sense. … It's not really a lack of confidence. It is more of the challenges of the way I look, but it's pretty quick that they realize that I love them.

These findings can be further contextualized by Cindy's survey responses. Cindy reported high levels of personal support (6.3) indicating she feels confident about the effectiveness of TIEP. She also reported highly positive attitudes towards system support (6) meaning she endorses feeling system-wide support for TIEP. However, in the open-ended item on the survey she indicated that school leadership personnel are sometimes mis-aligned and because of this "teachers can sometimes feel unsupported."

Case 4 - Scott

Scott is a white man from the local area. He has been teaching for almost 20 years, and has spent almost half that time at Walkerville School. Scott has been at Walkerville School since the very early years of their development. Scott also shared that he has participated in several trauma-informed professional developments throughout his time at Walkerville School. Scott shared that Walkerville School has been doing these training sessions from very early on during his time there. When asked how he defines trauma, Scott shared "I would define trauma really as any experience that someone goes through that has an impact on them, psychologically, physically, to the point where they are carrying that experience with them in some way."

RQ1: Self-Efficacy Towards TIEP. Overall Scott reported high levels of self-efficacy towards TIEP. Specifically, a prominent theme in Scott's transcripts was his high self-efficacy for connecting with and empowering his students. Scott shared that sometimes developing these

connections takes time, but that he is able to build trust by sharing more about himself and difficult times he has experienced. This can be shown in the quote below.

> And that goes back to me being really vulnerable and open with them. And I'm like, I will tell you all of it. I'll tell you what it felt like when I was laying on the hospital bed and the doctor said, go get a priest because you're going to, might not need to read him his last rights. I was like, that's raw, that's real. And it's scary as hell. I'm like, but I can talk about that. 'Cause I went through and I can do that. And you can do that too if you want. You don't have to, but it's like it's there. We're all there on that level of man, we're just trying to be there for each other.

Scott also shared times when he felt confident in empowering his students by giving students options and creating a flexible learning environment.

> I'm just like, I'm trying things. If I do something and you don't like it and it doesn't work, if you tell me I won't do it again. And I was, I feel like so much of what our kids struggle with is a feeling of hopelessness and lack of control and power in their own lives, in their day-to-day, just get all that stuff. And so, any opportunity that I can provide them with a little bit of that, I go for it because I'm just like, why not? There's no downside to that. And we're preaching education and bettering yourself and all these things, but if you don't feel like it's yours and that you own that, it's really hard to see the benefit. And so those little things where it's just constantly looking at it, changing things up, I think is really important.

During our interviews Scott discussed the benefits of using teaching practices that empower students rather than practices aiming to manage or control students.

> ‘Cause I feel like when I got into education, it was kind of right at that time where you had the old versus the new schools of doing things and all that. And the idea of student empowerment wasn't really discussed the way you and I are talking about it now. It was kind of like [you] got to have control and management and yeah, I get that. I mean, sure they have to respect you as a teacher or as a person or else they're going to run all over you. But I guess I don't have, for whatever reason, I don't know. That hasn't ever been a big thing for me. … Because usually, control comes across as threatening for kids and man– and that management, kids don't want to be managed, adults really don't want to be managed that much either. So how the way you go about that really sets the tone for the whole thing, I think.

Lastly, Scott described having high self-efficacy for creating a predictable learning environment and how that was “stabilizing” for his students. He shared one important practice for him was conducting “temperature checks” every day to see where students are at.

> So, for me, in the mornings, that's the first thing I do is, and teachers call 'em temperature checks, starters, whatever it is. It's the process of knowing that when the kids know that when they sit down and things start, the first thing I'm going to do every day and I change it up. I don't do the same thing every day, but it's just a check-in and then an identification of ‘Where are we?’ ‘Who is struggling right now?’ And it can just be anything. It's like, ‘Are you tired?’ Right? Can– ‘Did you not sleep last night?’ ‘What was going on?’ Whatever. Just get a baseline and then even if it's thumbs up, thumbs down, whatever, well that's great because that's a starting point now. And then I'll base off of that, ‘Okay, some people were really struggling.’ We're going to have to come,

> now we can identify out of the 16 in the class who's present versus who is here but struggling, that kind of thing. But that's, that's daily. Yeah, that's every day.

These findings are supported by Scott's survey results. In the ARTIC scale, Scott reported the highest level of self-efficacy (7) for working with students experiencing trauma. Additionally, he reported high levels on the responses scale (6.5), meaning he feels it is best to focus on creating a safe environment for students and be flexible. Lastly, he reported positive attitudes on the underlying causes subscale (6) indicating he sees student behavior as malleable. In the open-ended item, he shared the following sentiment "With each new day comes new challenges. Be flexible and attentive whenever possible."

RQ 2: Teacher Self-Efficacy Towards Equity-Centered TIEP. When sharing his understanding of equity, Scott shared that to him, it is largely about equal access to opportunity. This can be demonstrated in the quote below.

> Well, equity as a whole, just being equal– or equal opportunity. Yeah. I mean the equality part as far as what it apply, if it's in a situation where it's a, people are looking for something more and they have access versus having to take a place, so to speak in line, well, you're here and I'm here and you don't get what, that kind of thing. But yeah, equity when it comes to, it can be anything, but it's just do you have the same opportunity and chance?

Similar to his colleagues, he shared the sentiment of "meeting students where they are" for his understanding of equity-centered TIEP. Scott shared that the school size contributes to being able to easily get to know your students and who has been subject to trauma, and that to him equity-centered TIEP, is gaining an understanding of what students are going through and making a plan to move forward.

> Then going from that identification onto a plan or just, ‘How are we going to approach this?’ That's always based, I start with just, ‘Who are you and what are your circumstances? What is your environment? What are the factors that caused your trauma? Where did that come from?’ And then how do we move forward with that after kind of obtaining all the information we can.

Overall, Scott described high levels of self-efficacy as it relates to centering equity in TIEP. In our conversations he discussed his growth in this area over his years of teaching experience, and how he now feels confident in adjusting his lessons so that all students fully engage in the material, while maintaining high expectations for all of his students.

> I didn't do that all the time at first. And I was trying to really individualize every little part, best intentions thinking, oh, one kid was reading at, I was teaching an eighth-grade class and one kid was reading on a first-grade level. And so, I was like, well, he needs these different things. These kids don't need that. Well, I don't know that, I was assuming these things. And looking back on it, I was like, wow, I was wrong. I was wrong. I should have it. Because it did, it felt unintentional. They were categorized. They categorized themselves. They almost put themselves into these categories because, well, ‘this is what Mr. Scott thinks.’ Yeah, it has to be that they all were all on the same page or else [it] might look different for other people. But that's a different thing than saying, I'm going to treat you differently. … And I didn't really grasp that. I didn't know what that looked like. I'd gone, I mean, I've been taught that in school and all the things, but when it was happening live, it was very different.

Again, similar to his colleagues, Scott reported feeling confident in preventing trauma in the classroom, particularly as it relates to bullying. Specifically, he talked about relying on TIEP principles such as connection to prevent trauma.

> So, the things that I have found that have been really good, it goes back to the relationship part of establishing that before anything else. I'm not going to teach anything until I know where everyone is on the spectrum of feelings and stability, emotionally, mentally, before we can do anything. And I pay attention to body language and the nonverbal cues, you can really get a better understanding.

He went on to share that predictability in his expectations supports a positive classroom and environment as a means of prevention.

> It has to come from me that these are expectations. This is part of being in this class, is that you're not judging anybody based on whatever, and you're not rating anybody and you're not doing any of that because we all have our own stuff. And when I always start with myself as, look, this is where I've been, this is where I am today. It's kind of how I got here. So that the preventative part becomes more of a culture thing within the room.

RQ3: Factors that Impact Self-Efficacy Towards TIEP. Scott described his personal beliefs and prior experience with TIEP and prior knowledge, collaboration with colleagues, and the school and community context as largely impacting his self-efficacy for TIEP. For example, Scott shared throughout our conversations how important he thought TIEP are particularly as it relates to equity:

> I don't know if it's, it's just probably as far as that goes, equity is crucial. I mean, I can't– it's something that I don't stress enough. That you meet– If you're really meeting everybody where they're at, then that should also be in the forefront.

He also shared that implementing TIEP can sometimes bring up some feelings of anxiety based on his own personal experiences with trauma and also some for fear of "opening up a can of worms" with students. However, Scott shared that feelings of anxiety make him "double down on the process" and help identify what may be important to address in himself and his students.

> Oh, I mean, it just makes me double down on the process itself. The details, you don't run from it, you kind of run towards it. That if something triggered me that [is] a sign to me that this is obviously important. If it's feeling this way, imagine what the kids might be feeling and that I can articulate it. I can do all those things they can sometimes. So, so it's like this is something that [for] me is significant or whatever. And then also know if any of that had caused me anxiety to have a fallback. This might be the idea, it might lead to this. So, you might have to pivot and go a different direction, be ready for that kind of thing.

Scott also shared how impactful it is to see these practices work. This is evidenced in the following quote:

> Seeing the result when doing some things and then seeing the growth out of the kids, that's the ultimate success for me because they're in a better place. The eyes tell you so much and you see it, the bigger eyes [the] more [they are] tuned in, that's priceless because they can't fake that.

Scott also shared that even when he feels the TIEP he used were not successful, that he is saddened by this, but that ultimately, it does not impact his belief in his capabilities to support his students.

> Yeah, I mean it's more of, it just hurts just my soul, I guess. I don't know which way, how to say it, but it doesn't change my confidence or anything like that because I separate, I'm

> able to separate the two. And in knowing that not every outcome is going to be the outcome you want. I have to know that if I'm doing all that, I think I can do, at that time on that day, this is what I have to work with, this is what I'm doing. It's all towards the betterment of the kids and it doesn't work out. It sucks and it hurts, but it's not from a lack of effort and best practices. It's not just throwing random stuff up on the wall. I put my trust into people that study this stuff and that work at it really hard because I know how hard it it's. And so, if I'm taking what they're giving me and I'm doing the best I can with it, then that has to be enough for me. I have to be able to, good or bad. Okay. Cause some days you win and some days you know, [you] don't. But it's like, okay, you know, just keep going.

Scott also shared that being able to collaborate with his colleagues supports his self-efficacy beliefs. He shared that the broader school culture at Walkerville School fosters collaboration and knowledge sharing across the schools. This is evidenced in the following quote:

> People have a lot of resources available to 'em and they don't understand or they don't feel comfortable accessing it or asking for it. We do a really good job at our school of just making sure everybody understands. I guess for some people it goes back to the pride part of I'm supposed to know and I don't need help. And I don't see that at Walkerville School. I don't feel that it's just a community based on sharing and all those things. So yeah, it's huge. Huge.

He went on to say that the school has a more intimate and "family kind of feel" that makes receiving feedback from leadership and support staff a positive experience that supports his self-efficacy.

Throughout our conversations, Scott shared how over the years the larger community has impacted his belief in his capabilities to support students using TIEP. Similar to Jacob, he talked about how developing relationships with the families that Walkerville School serves supports his self-efficacy by providing him context of what his students are experiencing. In the following quote he talks about how developing these as trusting relationships can take time.

> I rely a lot though on being able to communicate with people outside of the school for sure. Phone calls, texts, emails about what's going on. But you're never going to get as much as you want out of that because people are defensive and understandably they're not– I've had parents tell me, it's weird for them to talk to their seventh-grade kid history teacher about the fact that, 'Hey, we are homeless right now.' You know what I mean? That's not a normal conversation that they have. And I respect that and completely understand it. And it's like, okay, absolutely just here to help. But there's a level there of, 'Dude, what are you doing?' And 'stay in your lane' type of stuff. But what I have also found is if you're continuous and persistent with the communication, that wall comes down because I'm not viewed as a threat at the beginning. I'm up here and then it just slowly works because, oh, he's harmless. I'm not going to judge and I'm not going to preach. It's just like, is there anything we can do [to help] kinda deal.. and slow- and that takes time. So you got to be patient with it, but it's usually for the best.

These findings on the factors that impact Scott's self-efficacy are further supported by his survey responses. Scott reported positive attitudes toward personal support (6.3), suggesting that he endorses being supportive of, and confident about, implementation of TIEP. He also reported positive attitudes towards positive feelings of system support (6.3) to implement TIEP.

Table 3

Themes and Sub-themes

Research Question	Theme/ Sub-themes
1. How do middle school teachers describe their self-efficacy beliefs towards trauma-informed educational practices?	High TSE for connecting with and empowering students Mixed TSE towards responding to student trauma
2. How do middle school teachers describe their self-efficacy beliefs as they relate to centering equity in trauma-informed educational practices?	High TSE for centering equity within TIEP Mixed TSE for preventing trauma Preventing bullying Preventing trauma/retraumatization through TIEP (predictability, connection) Preventing harmful practices/ policies Equity Centered TIEP at an Individual Level
3. How do middle school teachers describe factors that impact their self-efficacy beliefs towards trauma-informed educational practices?	Prior knowledge and experience School context Community and state-level context Successful use of TIEP
a. How do middle school teachers describe COVID-19 and its consequences impacting their self-efficacy towards trauma-informed educational practices?	Negative impact on student trauma Impact on teacher beliefs Teacher burnout Increase perceived importance for TIEP
b. How do middle school teachers describe the continued displays of racial and social injustice and responses to them as impacting their self-efficacy as they relate to centering equity in trauma-informed educational practices?	Impact on students Negative impact on student trauma Confidence to discuss issues of inequities Impact on teacher beliefs Higher self-efficacy for facilitating conversations around race

Cross-Case Findings

Following within-case analysis, I conducted cross-case analysis to identify how key themes compared across cases. I examined the transcripts from both interviews and participants' questionnaire responses. The following section will summarize categories and key themes across all four participant cases organized by research questions. See Table 3 for a table summary of these themes aligned by research questions.

RQ1: Self-Efficacy Towards TIEP

Overall, these four middle school teachers generally described maintaining moderate to high levels of self-efficacy for trauma-informed practices, particularly for fostering connection and student empowerment. However, self-efficacy levels were mixed towards responding to student trauma. I will describe these themes in detail below.

Theme 1 - High Self-efficacy Towards Connection and Empowerment. Overall, the teachers at Walkerville School felt very confident in establishing connections and relationships with their students. All four teachers shared examples of times where they felt confident in their abilities to establish relationships with their students. They did this through a variety of avenues. Both Jacob and Cindy mentioned allowing space for students to express themselves through poetry and other art forms helped to build these bonds. Scott, Emily, and Cindy all emphasized the importance of finding ways to connect with students over their interests, such as sports and music. For example, Cindy shared: “So they make playlists for me on my phone, and then we play that when we have some downtime. So, I find ways to connect with them.”

A sub-theme that emerged regarding teacher self-efficacy for connection as an aspect of TIEP was the emphasis on developing trust overtime with students and their families and in some cases, the role of teachers' identities. For example, similar to his colleague, Cindy, Scott

shared that when his students and their families first meet him, he is “rightfully so, viewed as an outsider [and] there isn’t trust” largely due to his identity as an “old white guy” but that overtime with persistent communication and vulnerability, he can confidently build trusting relationships with both his students and their families. Similarly, Jacob shared that his students may not be as comfortable having conversations around equity because of his identity as “the young white guy” but after continuously opening the door for those conversations they began to seem more comfortable.

All four teachers described feeling highly efficacious towards empowering their students as a means of implementing TIEP. Emily, Scott, and Jacob shared several examples where they felt confident in empowering students by providing them with options in course activities. Jacob shared his thoughts about these practices and their impact on students who have experienced trauma.

> And so even just the simple thing of giving two or three options [for] an assignment, it doesn't feel like they're being told what to do. I think even if it was just one thing and on a good day they would be really excited about it, but if you give them those other opportunities or options, they're going to feel like they have more of [a] say and kind of empowerment as well.

Additionally, both Scott and Cindy emphasized the importance of empowering students in small ways by showing respect to students and saying things like “thank you.” Scott described:

> And you being able to say thank you, that seems so small. But I was like, there's actually power in that, when I can [say], ‘thank you.’ I think about the different levels, and … These [are] little things, I was like, but we start to add 'em up. I was like, they really helped.

Theme 2 - Mixed Self-Efficacy as it Relates to Responding to Trauma. Findings were mixed across the four cases in terms of their self-efficacy as it relates to responding to student trauma. For example, as previously mentioned, Emily shared feeling confident in responding to student trauma in small groups or one on one conversations, but had lower levels of confidence when it came to responding to trauma in front of the whole class. Jacob on the other hand, shared times where students' emotions expressed in the classroom have been overwhelming, but with more experience he has felt more confident in responding and supporting his students through that. Both Cindy and Scott described having high levels of self-efficacy towards responding to students' trauma responses. For example, Cindy shared that she had "no problem" responding and attributed much of that confidence to her prior work experience.

> No problem. No problem. I just, again, I think it's just because I've just been around for so long. And my crime victim work really, I guess I'm not shocked by [it] as much as maybe I would have been if I had not had that. I mean, I ran a homicide support group, so back in my day in the commonwealth attorney's office. So that's not to say that I take that lightly. I'm still affected by all of that as a human being.

Scott shared a similar level of confidence and stressed the importance of responding to students' emotional needs before moving on with his lesson plans.

> Because that's what I used to do [not checking in to see where students are at emotionally]. It used to be 'bell rings, start of the day, here we go, we've got to do this and that.' And if you're not in that space to be able to receive it, I might as well be speaking Mandarin to them [the students]. It's just whatever, man. And so, at the cost of even instruction time, I've all, I just come back to that because they have at least an

> opportunity to learn. And if you're dealing with other things, it's just you're not going to be able to.

RQ2: Self-Efficacy Towards Equity-Centered TIEP

The teachers in this study reported generally high levels of TSE for centering equity within their TIEP. However, participants reported mixed levels of TSE as it relates to preventing trauma. Additionally, by analyzing participant responses through the lens of my conceptual framework, particularly, SysTIP, it became apparent that teachers predominantly discussed their self-efficacy as it relates to equity-centered TIEP at an individual level rather than at a systemic level.

Theme 1- High Self-efficacy for Centering Equity in TIEP. Broadly, the majority of the teachers described feeling capable of centering equity in their trauma-informed practices. For example, Cindy often described her students' living situations as “inequitable” and shared that she feels confident in responding to that, particularly by adjusting class assignments. When asked about what equity-centered TIEP means to her, Cindy shared the following:

> To me, it's what we talked about yesterday, and just recognizing that there definitely are differences with different people's living situations, their socioeconomic backgrounds, their culture. Taking all that into consideration is one thing, but then, I think that, because trauma can happen with anybody. I mean, it's going to touch everybody, anybody, it's not discriminatory towards one group over another. I just believe that in the group of people that we deal with, the students that we deal with, it's way more than what other communities would experience. That's my experience, having been a teacher now for almost 20 years and teaching in different parts of the [local city] area, I would say that the students that are in Walkerville School experience way more trauma on a daily basis.

As described in the within-case analysis, Scott, Emily, and Jacob shared common understandings of equity-centered TIEP. For example, they all talked about the importance of recognizing students' social and physical needs prior to focusing on academics as a means of equity-centered TIEP.

Emily shared she felt confident centering equity particularly through course content. For example, she shared that she would often encourage students to be confident about their work so that they could engage in the activity.

> I would really try to go over and check their work. And just say, 'Hey, you should go up and do number 9,' you know, like 'you should go and do that,' and I feel like, in some sense, that was a way of me trying to show equity [so] everyone kind of was accomplishing the same goal. But I wanted everyone to feel that same confidence. But I also needed everyone to participate out of fairness, or everyone too, and even to build that confidence.

Scott also talked about doing this through course content. He also shared a specific time where some of his students were triggered by being in a new environment on a field trip. He shared he felt confident in responding to them and helping them through their emotions so that they could fully engage in the class activities.

> And I was like … 'You're all so angry. You're angry at me, you're angry at each other, you're angry at them and you don't even know them. Can we get this out?' And I was like, so I was like, 'I think some of you just want to hit something. Scream, just release'. I was like, 'So do it … Bang the table, put the chair down,' and I had the room to ourselves and [it] felt like an hour, I think it was probably 10 minutes, but I was just like 'Release it, just get it out.' And everybody had the opportunity to do it.

He went on to share how he worked with these students to make a plan for how best to support them in the future.

> Now we had to go back the next day. So, the next school day I got all of them together again and I was like, 'We need to talk about this because we can't do this every time. These people were very gracious and allowed us this time to get you right. How do we approach it next time?' And so, it turned out I needed to pick certain people up— like I had to come up with a schedule. Some people needed more time to adjust for an activity outside of school. I didn't realize that that was kind of a trigger for some of the girls being away from their house at night. That- they were edgy. And I was like, okay, 'I can respect that. What do you need from me?' Kind of thing.

Jacob also shared feeling confident in equity-centered TIEP through providing additional support to students who may need it. He also shared times where he leveraged course content to create opportunity for conversations around equity:

> But I found, especially as an English teacher, trying to find good texts that maybe open up the door for conversation about that kind of stuff. And then just trying to optimize that academic talk and those kinds of conversations in general and making them feel comfortable. 'Cause coming from me, the young white guy, they may not feel comfortable at first talking about that kind of stuff. And just having enough repetitions and chances to just get in the weeds of the tough conversations I think is helpful too. But also, frankly, I don't know if there was a quick fix to make the classroom perfectly equitable and make kids all the way up to the standards, I think I'd be making millions off it [if I had a quick fix]. There's really not that– that's kind of the million-dollar question in

a lot of ways too, but just going back to making them feel comfortable with talking about stuff, I think can go a long way.

Theme 2 - Self-efficacy Towards Preventing Trauma. In my conversations with the teachers I asked about their self-efficacy towards preventing trauma in the classroom as a means of centering equity in their TIEP. Teachers described preventing trauma by relying on earlier mentioned TIEP (connection, predictability). All of the teachers described feeling pretty confident in preventing bullying in their classroom. For Emily, she mentioned this is something she got more confident in as she gained more teaching experience.

> For the most part, I was somewhat, and this was probably later in my teaching career as a new teacher, I was not good at this, but shutting down some of the ne-, and I think I'm more specifically thinking of the talk and the verbal words or bullying or things like that of I slowly was able to recognize it more and know how to kind of shut it down or realize that it required more administrative kind of stepping in to make sure that it didn't continue. So, for example, if a student's getting bullied, maybe I would try, or if I start to hear a negative comment, I would shut it down immediately. If that didn't work, I would send them to an administrator to shut it down.

Both Scott and Jacob talked about preventing bullying in their classroom by using TIEP such as connection and responding to students' emotional needs. This can be seen in the following quote from Scott:

> So, the things that I have found that have been really good, it goes back to the relationship part of establishing that before anything else. I'm not going to teach anything until I know where everyone is on the spectrum of feelings and stability, emotionally,

> mentally, before we can do anything. And what I, you pay attention to body language and the nonverbal cues, you can really get a better understanding.

Jacob also talked about preventing bullying through connection and modeling positive behavior. He also emphasized the importance of talking these issues through with students and empowering them rather than relying on discipline. Jacob elaborated:

> And that has come in mostly the form of, I mean unfortunately there are decent amount of fights that can and have broken out. Just bullying in general can be very traumatic for kids. I think, you know, [so I] model good relationships with my coworkers and just being positive and good problem solving there, trying to foster good classroom environments and make kids feel like they're part of the team. And I think make holding kids accountable in a way. So, if you see some stuff bubbling up, pulling 'em aside in small group and not trying to, not crushing 'em with it, even if it might merit some discipline, but try to talk 'em through just the soft skill kind of gray area thing too. Try to talk through the issue, especially with boys, I've found this, I've enjoyed trying to help 'em with this, trying to treat them an adult in these situations and young boys to be called men, it makes 'em feel empowered.

Cindy also shared feelings of confidence for preventing bullying. She shared examples of this where students who were exploring their gender identity were experiencing bullying.

> If there [are] other students that were, ‘Oh, he's gay,’ or, ‘She's this or that,’ I shut that down. I just don't accept bullying. I immediately turn [to] talk to that person that's doing it, and then I turn them over to Coach [redacted]. I just don't accept that.

Cindy shared that she does not have to stop and address student conflict often because she has “already set the tone in the classroom that it’s not going to be allowed.”

Recognizing and disrupting policies and practices that may unintentionally cause harm to students as another means of preventing trauma were also discussed in some interviews. While Emily shared she does not feel comfortable recognizing these harmful practices, she pointed out that sometimes there can be "gray areas" with student behavior and school policy responses.

> I feel like I was not very good at that. And I think that was partly, partly maybe just because I like having a system in place. And so sometimes recognizing that if we're going [through] the system, having a disciplinary, not hierarchy, but if this student does this one thing, it's going to result in a suspension, right? Sometimes for me, that makes it easier to kind of understand. But I also can see, and I think we've had times where there was a lot of gray areas of students' behavior and not knowing, and I think we touched on this a little bit, but not knowing, yes, we have this policy, but is their behavior due to some sort of something related to trauma? And where's—how do we do that? How do [we] as a school be successful, but then also have the same expectations for the students, but then also recognizing some students might need a little extra support or … I don't know. Yeah, there's more to their behavior than just they were purposely trying to do this one action.

Emily went on to share that she does not "feel equipped and informed" enough to be able to disrupt policies that may be harmful to students. Scott shared that he feels Walkerville School is really flexible and responsive to student trauma and does not have any policies or practices that harm students. He did share that if there were practices he felt he should speak out against that "At Walkerville School I, I'm lucky enough to be in a position where I could be like, this is not cool." Cindy shared that she believed if teachers taught in a way that leaned one way or the other politically, that these practices could be unintentionally harmful to students. This is evidenced in the following quote:

> So, I think policies ... So, I just know that there are some teachers– they lean more towards the way the students are thinking or they verbalize as to what they [are], and not give the other side too. And that can be harmful in my opinion because then you're, and that goes in any school as well, but in this school, you have all Black kids. And so again, it's not diverse. When I'm in history again, lends itself more to discussion. So, during those discussions, they rarely heard another side from each other. And that's really troublesome to me because that's not the way the world is. And so, if you go out there, they're going to be shocked.

Theme 3 -Equity Centered TIEP at an Individual Level. As discussed above, the teachers in this study shared several experiences where they felt highly efficacious in their use of equity-centered TIEP particularly at an individual level. However, less frequently discussed were recognition of the systems of inequality that cause trauma and teachers' roles in responding to those systems. For example, Jacob was the only participant to discuss the role of broader systems in inducing trauma. He shared:

> And not even in terms of the school context, but just the neighborhood itself, it feels like if I see kids in the neighborhood getting up to stuff or hanging out with other kids that I'll see or know about, sometimes it does feel a little bit helpless in the case we do all we can to make up all this ground at school. And then some of the issues at home, which I think arguably could be you or state induced, whether it's directly or indirectly, you just take more steps back. And that could be more so of the effect of what's going on at home, which is because of state institutions or rules or societal outcomes. That's been the case for decades and decades, but it feels like this bigger wave that we're constantly just

> pushing back against, which I think we do a really good job helping to combat, but it's kind of this giant monster that we have no control over at the same time.

However, the role of systems of inequality were still absent in the majority of participant interviews. This was evidenced in participants' definitions of equity and trauma. For example, teachers often described equity and equity-centered TIEP at an individual level. For example, Jacob, Cindy, and Scott all talked about equity in terms of "meeting students where they are at." Emily talked about "providing each person with what they need in order to attain [goals]." Additionally, the equity-centered practices mentioned above predominantly respond to inequities students are facing at an individual level. Similarly, as shown in within-analysis, when defining trauma all of the teachers described it predominantly in terms of individual experiences with individual or interpersonal trauma such as abuse, neglect, or exposure to violence. Furthermore, teachers often focused on trauma that occurs in the home and often positioned the school as a place to escape trauma.

RQ3: Factors that Impact Self-Efficacy Towards TIEP

Aligned with Social Cognitive Theory, teachers described several personal, behavioral, and environmental influences that impact their self-efficacy towards TIEP. Additionally, teachers described the powerful influence of mastery experiences, social persuasion, and vicarious experiences on their self-efficacy beliefs as well. I will discuss the most prominent themes across the cases below.

Theme 1 - Prior Knowledge and Experience. Across all four cases, teachers mentioned how their prior knowledge and experiences gained from teaching or other professional experiences as well as pre-service and in-service education significantly impacted their self-efficacy for TIEP. For example, Scott shared this sentiment, "What impacts my confidence is my

level of preparation, my access to information. I think those are the two major things." Jacob shared how his pre-service training supported his self-efficacy: "Yeah, I just had such competent and committed professors that even though it was kind of a … felt like a crash course in some ways, looking back, [I] definitely got a lot of very, very legitimate prep for it." Some of the teachers also mentioned that learning about how trauma impacts students through professional development and other training supported their self-efficacy. This can be seen in the following statement from Cindy about her experiences learning about the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) research:

> Yeah, I would say that I think when I first learned about the ACEs, it was helpful to kind of say, oh yeah, to help you understand that for me it was there are specific words that are used or terms that are used for something that somebody has experienced, a negative something that people have experienced and then that if you have so many of them, you're really struggling. So, I think it was helpful for me to learn that.

Scott shared a similar sentiment and shared how learning about trauma emphasized the importance of this work.

> And then once … specifically with trauma, once I learned a little and then, it got pulled back, the curtain got pulled back a little bit, I realized that I didn't know anything and that I was like this— and it's so critical where we are. And there's trauma everywhere. I was like if I want to be able to do the job and continue to do it and not burn out and feel all of the weight of it, be able to maintain it. I need to be in on this, that that's always been big.

Emily shared throughout our conversations that her previous teaching experience made her feel more confident in her use of TIEP. She also shared that she felt these practices were important

and useful but that receiving more knowledge and training would help her to better understand student behavior and how best to support them.

> I think it is. If I had a better toolbox of them, I feel like I have some of the tools. I just, again, haven't called it that, but I just don't think I ever had the toolbox to use it. So I do think it's really important because I think it would solve some of the behavior problems that we just automatically, naturally just label as, oh, this person's a behavior problem, instead, sheds a new light on it. And I also feel like it allows more understanding of the situation, but I feel like I never was really good at that, of having that toolbox and then being able to verbalize that this is what I'm doing.

Some of the teachers also shared that having knowledge about what their students are experiencing supports their confidence for TIEP. For example, Jacob mentioned “Being informed on what kids' IEPs are and how much help they're going to need” supports his capabilities to be flexible with his instruction. Emily shared she would watch the local news most days before school so that she could be aware of what her students may be experiencing to better prepare herself.

> I think most days I would check the news before school just to see if there's anything that is happening in the community that students might come in either talking about or might know someone, or I think just to be aware of just what situation we're going to be going into that day. And not that it always was, but I think just being aware of stuff that's going on in the neighborhood because there's a good chance because our students are spread out from a few different areas of [local neighborhood] that someone might have been impacted by it.

Cindy also shared throughout our conversations the importance of teachers knowing what trauma students may be experiencing.

> I think it's most important for the teachers on the front line to be informed by whoever gets that information … I know there's all this discussion about privacy and all that kind of thing, but I don't think that should be the reason you don't tell teachers things.

Theme 2 - School Context. The four teachers in this case study all emphasized the role of the school context as supporting their self-efficacy. Specifically, the school culture and the school-wide practices and policies. For example, Emily and Scott both emphasized the collaborative environment and Walkerville School as positively impacting their self-efficacy. Emily shared this statement: “People walking through the hallways, people! Yeah, like, if I was in a hallway having a conversation with a student, someone else stopping by being like, ‘Do you need help?’ Or just little things like that.” Similarly, Scott shared how being able to collaborate with his colleagues contributes to his confidence in centering equity in TIEP. He shared the impact of collaboration and vicarious experiences in the quote below:

> And then there's the confidence that I have to do it because I've been around good people and I've had good people come in and talk to me about these different things and show me different things and all that. So, I feel like it's not just, I hope this works. It's like this actually has a good chance to work. That kind of mindset helps with putting yourself out there and trying things.

Jacob shared similar beliefs and emphasized how this collaborative culture is supported by the leadership at Walkerville School.

> The head of our curriculum, always sending us updated information about these different studies going on, and she'll pop in and check stuff out. I just feel like the proactivity I and

> support isn't just helpful, but it's also contagious and that there's just this, for our school specifically, there's a culture of picking each other up and help each other out, which not just trickles to the staff, but I think also then goes down to the students as well. And there's just constantly new thoughts and ideas that we can work with and discuss and try to implement. And so, the proactivity on their end has a really direct sort of effect on the classroom.

Emily, Scott, and Cindy all mentioned in our conversations how working in a smaller school supports their self-efficacy for TIEP, specifically in regards to developing relationships with their students, being able to recognize when students are experiencing trauma, and gaining support from leadership and support staff. This is evidenced in the following quote from Cindy,

> It's a much smaller group in our school, and so we can watch out for them in a more deliberate [way] and ... Each kid, we're going to know better than we would in the public school, and so I think that that is helpful.

Lastly, all of the teachers discussed how the school-wide practices and policies impact their self-efficacy for TIEP. For example, as mentioned in the within-case analysis, Jacob shared his thoughts about how his confidence in the administration at Walkerville School supports his practices and success with TIEP, in comparison to his previous school

> So, I think that might, as a teacher, I feel at Walkerville School way more confident in our administration because the rules in our student handbook actually holds weight. It means something. And they know that too because my dealings with the situations at hand aren't different at all at either place. Yet the student reaction and improvement after incidence, that is just way better at Walkerville School.

Emily and Cindy both mentioned a school-wide policy for student behavior where teachers can try to support the student in class and then if they need to students can take a “reset” and meet with a support staff member. Cindy discusses in the quote below how she uses this practice.

> So as the teacher, I have said, ‘Do you need to go reset?’ Or they'll say, ‘I need to go reset. I need to go talk to Coach [redacted].’ ‘I need to go to Coach [redacted],’ she's the principal. Go for it, because it's better, better for you to go reset and then come back when you can learn than for me to try to calm you down in class. So, we're so fortunate that we have that avenue at Walkerville School, so that's also helpful.

Theme 3 - Community and State-Level Context. A common factor that came up in conversations with Scott, Cindy, and Jacob was the impact of the broader community and state-level context on their students and their self-efficacy beliefs for TIEP. For example, they all shared that the community that Walkerville School serves experiences a heavy amount of trauma. This can be demonstrated in the following quote from Cindy:

> Again, it's not all the time that they're going to see that [trauma], but they are exposed to that much more regularly than other communities. In my opinion, that is inequitable, and that's the Walkerville School students that I deal with, and different than other students that I have dealt with in communities that don't have that general environment that they have to live in. That to me is inequitable, just that alone.

For Scott, this high prevalence of trauma in their community emphasized the importance of TIEP:

> Yeah, I mean, I think more so it's kind of incremental each year because of the community, because of the circumstances in that community where there's just more

> trauma than other communities. It just magnifies everything, including the importance of being prepared because it's daily and there are just so many things that happen.

Scott also shared that in his experience at Walkerville School they have found people and organizations to learn more about how best to students. He talks about this in the following quote:

> And so, it was more of just being open, trying to find anybody that wanted to talk about it, anybody that could shine some light. We were all just in all ears teach us. So been, and then it's just kind of steadily every year become [a] little bit more little pieces here, there, whatever kind of adding to the bag, so to speak. So, it's been really good.

However, he mentioned some other community or government agencies are more reactionary:

> Yeah, I don't have a lot of contact with social services or any of the groups that are trying to help the kids because a lot of that stuff is more reactionary. They come after the fact and it's cleanup and it's that kind of mess.

In terms of the state-level context, Emily, Jacob and Scott perceived state policies as having little impact on their use of TIEP and beliefs towards these practices. For example, Jacob shared the following "Yeah. Yeah. I don't really necessarily interact with any of the state policy in terms of the public school." Emily shared a similar sentiment,

> Yeah, I'm gonna be honest, I have no idea. Well, like I can't think of a policy that, like or I mean, I guess I can think of one right now. But like, how? How I thought about that when I was teaching, and if I saw the impact of it. Yeah, I don't know if I fully do know.

However, as mentioned above, when asked about the impacts of state-level policies, Jacob did share he feels "the indirect effects" of state policies on the local community. Specifically, he mentioned the impacts of the broader state and community contexts on student trauma and how

this can sometimes feel “helpless” and “deflating” for his self-efficacy, but that addressing these issues are part of why he wanted to be in this role and it “just takes a little bit of self-meditation to remember that.”

Theme 4 - Successful use of TIEP. Emily, Scott and Jacob shared that previous successful experiences, or mastery experiences using TIEP positively impacted their self-efficacy beliefs. The first thing Jacob mentioned when asked what impacts his confidence for TIEP was “I think positive results, seeing it work well.” This was also evident in the following quote from Emily:

> But then when there were days when, ‘Oh, I'm going to try this new solution to try to help this student who was successful,’ [and] it felt really good, and especially if I was able to catch it before it really became a problem or became a disruption or even offering, I mean, ‘Hey, just go get some water quickly,’ and they came back and were fine. You're kind of like, all right, awesome. ‘Yeah, I need to keep trying strategies like this.’

Emily, Scott, and Jacob shared that these mastery experiences also impact their desire to persist in their use of TIEP.

RQ3a: Impact of COVID-19. When discussing the topic of COVID-19 two prominent themes emerged, (1) the impact of COVID on student trauma and (2) the impact on teacher beliefs. Specifically, teachers shared the compounding impacts of COVID-19 on student trauma and emphasized the need and importance of TIEP.

Impact on student trauma. All four teachers shared ways COVID-19 impacted student trauma. Emily and Cindy both mentioned how COVID-19 increased students' exposure to cyberbullying and made it difficult to prevent this type of trauma. For example, Emily shared the following:

> I mean, I think this scary thing about it, I really feel like COVID-19 has made the digital world so much more accessible to young kids. And I think the bullying, the verbal use, the videos they can have access to has really just impacted them on just this emotional social level too. And it's hard because we don't even get to see that, as opposed to when I was in high school or middle school, if there was an argument, most likely it would happen somewhat at school kind of thing. But a lot of times I feel like especially this past year, you would hear of stuff happening over social media and then playing out in school if that makes sense, so it didn't start at school, so it's like we weren't able to catch it early on.

Cindy echoed some of these thoughts and shared the following sentiment:

> And COVID has made that worse because that [social media] was their lifeline. That's what they did as well as computers, gaming. Gaming for boys in middle school is a big problem. And actually, they come into school with beefs with each other because of what they did on their gaming system. I mean, it's crazy just what spills over from the use of social media and electronic stuff at home, which is a whole 'nother battle for schools.

Scott and Jacob both discussed how COVID-19 and its consequences had a compounding impact on student trauma for their community. For example, Scott shared the following:

> Man, so much. Isolation. I think not understanding at the time, what kind of impact long periods of isolation, what that was going to do to kids, let alone adults. And you see it with the adults still, but with the kids. Yeah, COVID-19 that and then the inequity that our kids face, that only got worse. And they're just all the things outside of, I mean living circumstances, kids getting kicked out of apartments and homes and families being separated and moved. All those things, we just, more and more comes out, it feels like

month and month. And just post-COVID, getting kids to school. We've seen the attendance has been, just fluctuates massively. Oh yeah, a kid might have a cough. Well, we might not see him for three weeks and stuff like that. That didn't happen before that. That's big now. So, all of that.

Cindy shared her concerns regarding COVID-19 stay at home orders as placing students at higher risk of being exposed to more trauma.

> We also felt like during COVID, because the kids were inside with their families and at home in their communities, they were going to probably be subject to trauma more regularly because they were in their communities rather than in our school, is the case.

Impact on teacher beliefs. Throughout our conversations the teachers shared with me how COVID-19 and its impacts on them and their students impacted their use and attitudes towards TIEP. For example, Emily shared that she has felt low energy "post-COVID" and how this has negatively impacted her practices:

> I feel like just me personally being exhausted, not having the light energy sometimes to have to even like going back to that decision. That fine line of knowing 'Is this discipline? Is this having to use a trauma-informed care practice?' And it's like I don't have the energy to know right now. Because of just everyone's own exhaustion, and putting in all this effort and having to like, I'm having to teach more emotional social things that I maybe previously had to on top of all that other stuff so I think it's just kind of like, I think, in some sense, educators, exhaustion. I'm sure, it is impacting their ability to be consistent with trauma, because there's, we're still wanting to like– We still have to teach, we still have to do this. We have to do this. All our kids are behind academically, and we want to catch up. So, it kind of just makes it challenging.

Cindy shared that the effects of COVID-19 made it difficult to connect with kids in the way they used to. For example, she shared:

> Well, I think obviously COVID, you can't really see expressions when you have a mask on. So, I think that when you're talking about trauma and kids, to see a kid's face, whether they're sad or angry or whatever else, I think that prevented kids and people in general, I think it prevented people from being as really themselves, honestly with COVID. So, I think that was difficult. It was also difficult because we didn't see kids every single day.

For Scott, the impacts of COVID-19 on his students emphasized the importance of TIEP. This is demonstrated in the following quote:

> Yeah, it's another reminder that if some of these kids are spending so much time outside of school when they should be in school, once again, most of that's not within their control. Someone's making these decisions for them a lot of times. So … when they do come back, they're feeling less than and more anxious. And it's up to me to see that, to recognize it, and then to implement some sort of strategy to make them feel whole, to try and help them feel solid that, okay, I can get through this day, I can get through this class at least, and get to the more little goals, stuff like that to really help with that.

For Jacob, he shared that the effects of COVID-19 influenced his trauma-informed practices by emphasizing the importance of maintaining high expectations for students in order to best support them. This can be demonstrated in the following quote:

> So yeah, I guess I started teaching right when that happened. So, I didn't really have much of a baseline to really compare it to. But I think more than anything, patience was kind of my mantra for the beginning and just working with it. But now I've realized that, and after talking with people, a line that I like is the, one of the biggest insults you can

> give somebody is low expectations. And so, I think this year that warm demeanor and high expectation is going to be kind of how I want to set the tone, because they're not going to be given patience and second chances over and over and over again in high school and beyond. So of course, work with them and of course, don't be unforgiving, but just to hold them to a higher standard to try to get them to a good point where they'll be in high school.

RQ3b: Impact of Social and Racial Injustice. Similar to the impact of COVID-19, themes emerged regarding the impact of racial injustices on students and on teachers' beliefs. Teachers shared that these events had a negative impact on their students emotionally, but also gave their students confidence to discuss issues of race and equity in the classroom. Teachers again reported these events emphasized the importance of TIEP, and they also reported that they began to feel more comfortable facilitating conversations around race and equity.

***Impact on Students*.** When asked how continued displays of social and racial injustices and public responses to them impacted student trauma, Emily shared that she doesn't know "how it fully impacted the trauma of students" but that "I know they, the middle schoolers, were hearing and seeing a lot of how their parents reacted. Or people, in their community, or whatever, and so kind of coming in with that." Cindy shared that she felt these events were "very traumatizing." Jacob shared he felt along with COVID-19 and its impacts these events were negatively impacting students and adults and promoting an apathetic mindset.

> I think, and maybe even not just students, but it feels like the tone or the mindset of a lot of the country just in general is just raised levels of apathy. It's kind of like, 'well, no matter what I do or what we do, nothing's going to be good or be different. So, screw it, I'm not going to do it.' And that on top of kids being inside for a long time, not getting

a chance to play sports or be active, it is just– and I also, just thinking back to my years in middle school, it feels like the overall just interest and drive to succeed or to be, not just academically, but even on the court or the field, it feels like there's not a lot of as much drive as there was just on the student level or the kid level. And I think the adults too.

Scott shared that these events gave his students confidence to talk about these injustices and that this opened opportunities for teachers to address the ways students were feeling.

> It put it all out there. It really was a springboard for a lot of my kids. And in a way, it gave them confidence to speak about it that maybe they wouldn't have earlier because it was like, oh, well, this is what we're doing now. This is what the world's doing now. 'The world's burning. Well, I feel like I'm burning. My whole day to day is just shit. But look what they did to George Floyd.' So we had lots of conversations about that, and I was like, yeah, you see it. And it was also very relatable to them. Like, 'oh, I'm not alone in my feelings'. And I think that was really important. I think we helped a lot of kids actually earlier than we would have. It was more of the catching it in the beginning stages because they didn't realize that what they were telling on themselves in a way, the best possible way, what they were really saying was, 'I need help.'

Impact on Teacher Beliefs. Cindy shared that she felt and that the public response after the death of George Floyd prompted discussions in her class. She shared she was very comfortable in being a part of those conversations and validating her students' feelings.

> And I think, again, I'm just the type of person that would just say, it is awful. I mean, I was jumping in there with them. 'That's terrible that that's how a police officer would treat somebody. Or that's how a white person would treat somebody. That's terrible and there's no excuse for that.' So just to affirm how they were feeling during the heightened

piece of all of that. And then also as a history teacher, I would try to remind them that, you know, you got to experience some of this stuff and then never go back to it. That's what history's all about. You want to make sure that you change these things as you go forward. And unfortunately, it's painful at times.

However, Cindy also shared that she felt it was important for teaching to not be "slanted" politically. On this topic, she shared the following:

> But that's not all there is to the world, to America and Black Lives matter, all of that. It's so important to show all of that, but then also show the other side as well. Same with police. And I think that Walkerville School recognized that they brought police in to befriend Walkerville School kids, not just the images that were on the TV and things like that.

Similarly, Emily shared that she wanted her students to "keep an open mind." She shared one example whereas students shared they wished a political figure would die and how she encouraged her students to think differently.

> But I think just helping work through our kids with our kids of some of the things that they're hearing and recognizing. Yeah, there are bad people in the world or people that want to do harm, or people that we really, really, really don't like. But how? But yeah, like, how do we? How can we verbalize? 'Hey, I don't like this person' without saying, in some sense causing harm or something, and that's just one, I think. One conversation I had again. I don't know if I had the best response, and I in no way wanted to fully shape in any way the way they're thinking, or for them, or to share like. I don't. I did not share how I view anything politically, but just how that I for me personally, it's like, well, I'd rather love than cause hate on someone so I don't know. I don't know.

That's a great response, or whatever. But it was just yeah. It was one of those things again, like, sometimes it's like you hate being in situations like that, because we're I personally, because it's like, Oh, I wanna make sure I'm giving a good answer. But and like wanting to make sure that it's yeah, they're just seeing different perspectives on things.

Jacob shared that he feels the impacts of the public displays of social and racial injustices and responses to them on students and society at large have made it difficult for him to keep students engaged and negatively impacts his confidence for motivating his students.

And so, it just is trying to even get them interested in working in general. And that might come in the form of being a performer while teaching, trying to just make it exciting, trying to come up with stuff that will actually interest them. But the lack of desire in general is a bit alarming.

Scott shared that these events and students' responses to them helped highlight these injustices and learn. He shared an impactful moment he had with one of his students in the quote below.

And I might not have known that as quickly because of this social unrest and understanding. I was one of my students, I'll never forget, she was like, 'Well, Mr. Isn't it? Couldn't you say that Black people have always had trauma since we got here?' And she's like, 'Isn't that kind of what Black Lives Matter is saying to the world?' I was, [like] shit, you're 13. Wow. I was like, 'Yeah, you could say that.' And I was like, and 'The fact that [you] are saying that, what does that say about you? Look how well-informed. Look at your mind. Look at what you're doing.' I was, yeah, that's so awesome. But it also is a huge boom. Yeah, pay attention, man. This is what's going on. And for people in their

> bubbles, just because your bubble isn't impacted by that doesn't mean it's not happening. I think that too, that conversation, getting that out there was huge. For sure.

For Scott, he shared these experiences positively impacted his self-efficacy for equity-centered TIEP by emphasizing the danger of leaving equity out of his practices may communicate to his students that they don't matter. Specifically, he shared:

> This is what happens when you don't pay attention. And I was like, we'll take that on a smaller scale with the kids. And if I'm not tuned in and I'm not equitable with my practices and my attention to them, then I'm really saying, you don't matter or you're not worthy of my attention right now. Maybe I'll get back to you later. None. And none of that's fair. None of that's right. So, it was more about like, hey, every day, the consistency, all of it, because this is what we're seeing as look at what's happened here. That could be us.

He went on to share in his follow-up interview that these events and their impacts on students emphasized the need to be prepared for these conversations.

Conclusion

The overarching purpose of this study was to examine teacher self-efficacy beliefs towards TIEP particularly as it relates to centering equity, and what impacts those beliefs. In this chapter findings from four participant cases demonstrated these teachers maintained high levels of self-efficacy for TIEP particularly as it relates to empowering their students and developing connections with their students. Teachers had mixed self-efficacy beliefs towards responding to student trauma in the classroom. Overall, these four teachers reported high levels of self-efficacy as it relates to centering equity within their TIEP. Findings were mixed in terms of preventing trauma as a means of centering equity. In terms of the factors that impact teachers' beliefs,

teachers frequently mentioned prior knowledge and experience, including successful use of TIEP. They also discussed their school and community contexts as largely impacting their self-efficacy. Teachers discussed the impacts of recent societal events such as COVID-19 and continued public displays of racial and social injustice as negatively impacting student trauma. Moreover, they shared that these events impacted teachers in several ways. Specifically, one teacher mentioned the impact of COVID-19 and its consequences on teacher burnout. Teachers also shared how these events emphasized the importance of TIEP and how social injustice events created opportunities to enhance their self-efficacy for engaging in conversations around race and equity.

Chapter V: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to better understand middle school teacher self-efficacy (TSE) beliefs towards trauma-informed educational practices (TIEP) particularly as those beliefs relate to centering equity, and what impacts those beliefs. Specifically, I sought to better understand how teachers perceived recent events such as COVID-19 and its consequences and the continued public displays of social and racial injustices impacted teachers' experiences and beliefs. To address this, I conducted a qualitative collective case study with four teachers from an independent faith-based middle school in an urban city within a southeastern state. I analyzed data within each participant (case) including their demographic questionnaire, two interview transcripts, and results from a brief teacher beliefs questionnaire. I then analyzed findings across cases (cross-case analysis) to identify commonalities and differences. In this chapter I will discuss the four significant takeaways I identified through analysis and connect them to the broader literature. Specifically, findings indicated: (a) more support is needed to enhance TSE for responding to and preventing trauma; (b) the influence of teacher racial identity in TSE for TIEP; (c) teachers are prepared to address equity at an individual level; and (d) the crucial role of environment for enhancing TSE towards TIEP. I will also discuss implications of the findings and conclude with limitations and recommendations for future research.

More Support is Needed to Enhance TSE for Responding to and Preventing Trauma

The four teachers interviewed for this study reported high levels of self-efficacy for TIEP especially as they relate to building connections with and empowering their students. For example, Emily shared that even when she is unable to form a strong connection with one of her students she is confident in ensuring they have at least one other adult to connect with in the school. Emily’s experience highlights a really important aspect of TIEP, which is the importance

of students having not just one, but several trusted adults to form strong relationships with (Perry & Szalavitz, 2017; Venet, 2021). Emily, Scott, and Cindy all shared feeling confident in fostering community between students' peers within the classroom as well. This extends the current literature by emphasizing the importance of assessing TSE towards relationship building not just with their students but fostering relationships between students, their peers, and their teachers. It makes sense that these four teachers who all have self-reported experiences with trauma-informed training and professional development, have high self-efficacy as it relates to building connections as the importance of relationship building is emphasized in the broader trauma-literature (Thomas et al., 2019). However, the teachers in this study reported mixed levels of self-efficacy towards responding to and preventing student trauma.

Responding to Trauma

While all of the teachers in this study reported generally high levels of self-efficacy towards recognizing when students are experiencing trauma, mixed levels of self-efficacy were reported as it relates to responding to trauma. Specifically, Cindy, Jacob, and Scott all reported maintaining high levels of self-efficacy for responding to student trauma most of the time and attributed much of this confidence to experience. Emily however, described feeling less confident to respond to student trauma in front of the whole class, as opposed to one-on-one. She mentioned that she feels she did not get much training on "conflict resolution as a whole classroom." Emily provided an example of a practice done often at Walkerville School called "highs and lows." She shared that sometimes this activity can open the door for students to share some really difficult and potentially traumatic experiences. These activities can be a great way for teachers to identify student needs, however, they should be conducted with caution, as students' stories may trigger a trauma response in other students. Emily shared how this can

sometimes be difficult to respond to and that she sometimes avoids it by conducting the activity using sticky notes. Asking students to share their highs and lows privately on a piece of paper may be a helpful way of maintaining this opportunity to check-in on students while still maintaining a safe space for all students.

Given the literature on trauma and recommended strategies promoted by organizations such as the Department of Education over the years have been found to be "unclear or not explicit" on whether the recommended strategies were backed by empirical evidence (Thomas et al., 2019, p. 443), it is unsurprising that not all teachers felt confident in their use of strategies to respond to student trauma. These findings extend on the current literature by identifying specific trauma-informed practices that may need more attention in trauma-informed education and professional development. Additionally, teachers who reported high TSE for responding to trauma attributed those beliefs to prior experiences, which emphasizes the importance of experiential learning for developing teachers' self-efficacy. Of course, in order to best support students it is ideal if this experience can occur through pre-service training so that teachers are prepared to respond to trauma when they have a classroom of their own.

Preventing Trauma

Centering equity within TIEP also requires teachers to recognize that trauma does to only happen outside of school but that schools can be a place of trauma. For example, trauma can occur in schools as a result of inequitable practices or harassment and bullying among students (Venet, 2021). The teachers in this study reported mixed levels of self-efficacy towards preventing trauma in schools. For example, all of the teachers in this study talked about preventing trauma through preventing bullying in their classroom. However, these teachers reported different ways of doing this. Cindy and Emily shared ways of shutting down bullying

and harassment in their class. This is of course an important skill, but to truly be preventive, teachers should rely on proactive trauma-informed strategies such as the four principles of TIEP (predictability, flexibility, connection, empowerment; Venet, 2021). All of the teachers in this study shared times where they have felt confident creating consistent expectations, fostering a sense of community within the classroom, and checking in with students emotional and mental well-being frequently. It is likely these practices prevented trauma in some cases. This finding extends on the current literature by identifying potential gaps in teacher education specifically, the importance of training teachers how to use proactive TIEP strategies to prevent trauma such as bullying and re-traumatization.

Trauma-Informed Response Vs. Discipline

Findings from Emily's within-case analysis revealed a potential important gap in pre-service and in-service trauma-informed education for teachers. Specifically, Emily described recognizing some "gray areas" regarding student behavior and determining if it is a trauma response. She described in situations like these, having low TSE for knowing when student behavior warrants a disciplinary action or a trauma-informed response. Emily's beliefs towards these practices represent a larger issue of the danger of schools and teachers misunderstanding student trauma responses as "bad behavior" and may respond with exclusionary and disciplinary practices (Alvarez, 2020) that may contribute to the cradle-to-prison pipeline (Delale O'Connor et al., 2017). This finding is related to recent research conducted by Loomis and Panlilio (2022) who identified in a small sample of preschool teachers that higher TSE towards TIEP (measured using the ARTIC scale) significantly related to lower perceptions of children's behavior as disruptive and thus influencing expulsion decision risk. This relationship however, was only statistically significant for expulsion decision risk for white children and was not significant for

students of Color. The current study contributes a teacher's lived experience regarding this issue and suggests that teachers may not receive training on recognizing students' responses to trauma in the classroom and how to respond using TIEP.

Taken together, in order to enhance TSE for TIEP pre-service education programs and professional development should prioritize providing educators with the skills to effectively respond to and prevent trauma through proactive TIEP rather than emphasizing the awareness of student trauma as this may perpetuate a deficit narrative of communities and students that experience trauma (Golden, 2020).

The Influence of Teacher Racial Identity in TSE for TIEP

One interesting finding of the current study related to connection was that Cindy, Jacob, and Scott all discussed in our conversations how their white racial identity can sometimes serve as a barrier to connection with their students but that overtime they can build connections and trust through vulnerability (Scott) or continued openness to conversations around race (Cindy and Jacob). These findings build on the research of Blitz and Mulcahy (2017) who found teachers teaching in a racially diverse, high-poverty high school also had high self-efficacy beliefs for responding to student's emotional needs and behavior. However, contrary to the present study, Blitz and Mulcahy (2017) identified that the teachers in their study seemed unaware that they may be mistrusted by their students based on their racial identity. It may be that teachers are becoming more aware of this potential mistrust since the recent protests in response to continued racial injustice.

When asked about how recent social and racial injustices have impacted TSE for TIEP, teachers talked about how these events prompted conversations with their students around race and equity. Jacob, Cindy, and Scott shared they felt confident in facilitating these conversations.

Similar to what was discussed above, they each discussed how they felt their racial identity somewhat served as a barrier but that by creating multiple opportunities for these conversations, validating their students, and being vulnerable allowed them to build trust with their students and comfortability facilitate these conversations. Cindy and Emily both discussed their perceived importance for sharing opposing views during these conversations. This finding may emphasize the importance of preparing teachers to facilitate these conversations in a way that validates students experiences and responses to trauma.

Teachers are Prepared to Address Equity at an Individual Level

The four teachers in this study described having high self-efficacy beliefs towards centering equity within TIEP. For example, many of the teachers in this study talked about equity-centered TIEP in terms of "meeting students where they are at" and providing individual support. Specifically, they provided examples of adjusting course content and structure to best fit the individual needs of their students. Decades of prior research indicates that exposure to trauma significantly impacts students' academic achievement (Perfect et al., 2016). Thus, for schools and teachers to be equitable towards students impacted by trauma it is imperative to structure classroom instruction and school environment to meet student needs and prioritize their safety (Venet, 2021). When teachers like Scott and Jacob use practices like "temperature checks" to assess and respond to students' physical, social, and/or emotional needs they are creating a safer place for their students to be able to fully engage with course activities alongside their peers.

As discussed above, in order for TIEP to center equity, teachers must work to prevent trauma. Through our conversations, I asked some of the teachers about their belief in their capabilities to recognize and disrupt school practices and policies that may unintentionally harm students. Teachers were mixed in terms of their self-efficacy beliefs to recognize and disrupt

these practices and policies. For example, while Scott and Cindy felt confident in recognizing and disrupting harmful practices, Emily shared that she does not feel comfortable speaking out about these practices. This finding may indicate that some teachers may feel confident at preventing trauma at the individual or interpersonal level (such as bullying) and less confident to do so at a more system level (school-wide policies and practices). This finding may suggest that teacher education programs and professional development on TIEP may not emphasize the ways in which schools can promote adversity for some students, and what teachers' role in preventing this may look like.

Another interesting finding that emerged was teachers' perceived importance for having knowledge of what trauma students were experiencing through notification of leadership or support staff (Cindy) or through watching the local news (Emily). This makes sense as dominant frameworks in the trauma education literature often focus on increasing awareness of trauma through measures such as the ACEs checklist (Winninghoff, 2020). Consistent with historical approaches to trauma that privilege individualistic and biomedical views of trauma (Petrone & Rogers Stanton, 2021), this finding might also suggest that the training the teachers in this study received might have emphasized addressing trauma at an individual level rather than implementing universal and proactive approaches to trauma. While it may benefit TSE to gain a better understanding of students' experiences and broader context (Delale-O'Connor et al., 2017), teachers do not need to know the details of what trauma each student may be experiencing and asking students to share this information may be harmful (Venet, 2021). The truth is, a trauma-informed approach does not require teachers to know individual trauma experienced by each student, and should benefit all students (Winninghoff, 2020). Perhaps especially considering some students who may experience trauma and never ask for support, the idea is for trauma-

informed practices to be proactive and responsive to student needs while minimizing barriers to access to this care (Venet, 2021).

Cindy also expressed concern that during the school closures due to COVID-19 students were likely exposed to more trauma due increased time at home rather than in school. While the NCTSN reported families may be at risk for increased conflict during the early pandemic where families had less social support and prolonged quarantine measures (Absher et al., 2021), comments such as these without implicating the larger systems at play may reflect deficit-based assumptions about students and their families. This finding aligns with recent work conducted by Goldin and colleagues (2022) who identified a pattern among "trauma-informed" educators relying on deficit framing of students and their communities. These findings highlight the ways in which trauma-informed frameworks by focusing on may lend themselves to deficit narratives regarding students who have experienced trauma. Additionally, findings emphasize the importance– perhaps particularly in the wake of COVID-19 and its impact on students, of enhancing educator awareness of the role of systemic inequalities on trauma in teacher pre- and in-service preparation.

Similar to research conducted by Goldin and colleagues (2023) with pre-service teachers, while these teachers were able to identify inequities that their students were experiencing, the role of structural issues such as racism and discrimination as the cause for such inequities and student trauma were often missing from our conversations. For example, while recognizing that students were facing inequities Cindy failed to recognize the role of race and racism in these inequities and shared that "[trauma] is not discriminatory towards one group over another." While it is true that the majority of students experience trauma, these experiences may be compounded by experiences of structural violence for marginalized groups. Again, this color

evasive view of trauma is largely reflected in the larger trauma education literature and if not addressed teachers with this view may unintentionally pathologize students, particularly students of Color (Alvarez, 2020). Moreover, focusing on trauma at the individual level for students and families may prevent teachers from identifying and disrupting the systems within and outside of schools that are perpetuating trauma (Goldin et al., 2022; Venet 2021). Additionally, Cindy's comments that suggest that some students do not come to school to learn, may signal a misinterpretation of students' trauma response (Delale-O'Connor et al., 2017). This finding may indicate that teachers are not receiving training or education on these more structural causes of trauma such as racism and discrimination. This is unsurprising as a recent review of the trauma education literature indicated that the trauma education literature largely ignores the racialization of trauma and typically efforts to address trauma focus on supporting students after a traumatic experience rather than addressing the impacts of structural sources of trauma such as poverty or racism (Alvarez, 2020).

Given the traditional views of recognizing and addressing trauma at the individual level that are present in the trauma literature (Petrone & Rogers Stanton, 2021), it is no surprise that the teachers in this study predominantly described trauma and equity-centered TIEP at an individual level. For example, Emily and Jacob both referred to the popular photo of kids peeking over a fence standing on different levels. Aligned with prior research on trauma-informed approaches (Goldin & Khasnabis, 2020; Petrone & Rogers Stanton, 2021), this may suggest that popularized views of equity may lead to a focus on teachers addressing impacts of inequities predominantly at an individual level. This sole view of trauma at an individual level can be dangerous, because simply the recognition of trauma without situating students and their families within the nested systems of systemic oppression, may lead to framing entire

communities, particularly communities of Color only by the trauma they have experienced (Goldin & Khasnabis, 2020). For example, when talking about her experiences with professional development on the ACE's study, Cindy talked about how this and prior work experience has influenced her view of the impact of trauma: "That person is never the same. And that's how I look at these children. They will never be the same as what they were before whatever trauma happened." This finding may further evidence prior critiques from scholars who argued that the ACEs framework reinforce stereotypes and low expectations for marginalized communities (Winninghoff, 2020).

Taken together, and to echo Goldin and Khasabis (2020), trauma should absolutely be addressed at the individual level, however, without naming the role of systemic inequalities and oppression, trauma-informed practices are "incomplete" (p. 2). Specifically, the dominant narrative of trauma-informed practices in literature and reflected in popularized approaches to trauma that center individual views of trauma (Petrone & Rogers Stanton, 2021) and omit the role of race and racism (Alvarez, 2020) may lead to the weaponization of trauma-informed practices (Goldin et al., 20203). My recent systematic review of the literature identified no research examining TSE beliefs for equity-centered or related trauma-informed practices (Wallace, 2023). Therefore, these findings contribute to the literature a novel understanding of teachers' self-efficacy beliefs as they relate to centering equity within TIEP. Taken together in order to best support students impacted by trauma, teachers should be supported to implement TIEP in a way that centers equity through prevention practices and maintaining an asset-based lens.

The Crucial Role of Environment for Enhancing TSE for TIEP

Aligned with Social Cognitive Theory and the conceptual framework used in this research, the teachers in this study reported several factors that impacted their self-efficacy beliefs across personal, behavioral, and environmental influences (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). For example, the teachers in this study reported knowledge and prior experience contributed significantly to their self-efficacy beliefs related to TIEP. This is consistent with prior research demonstrating the positive relationships between TSE for TIEP and teachers' knowledge about trauma (Loomis & Panlilio, 2022), years of teaching experience (Alber, 2021; Shooks 2020), exposure to trauma-informed professional development (Arnold et al., 2021; Berger et al., 2016; Kim, 2021; Law, 2019; MacLochlainn et al., 2022; Stegall, 2020; Stipp 2019; Waggoner 2018) and pre-service training (Lombardi, 2020; Rodger et al., 2020).

Additionally, the significant impact of mastery experiences with TIEP was a common theme across three of the participants. This aligns with prior research that has identified mastery experiences as the most influential source of self-efficacy (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Interestingly, one teacher in this study, Scott, discussed how even in experiences where their use of TIEP was unsuccessful they remained motivated and confident in their abilities to support students using TIEP. However, Scott also held high personal value for TIEP. This finding may suggest that sharing the value and importance of TIEP with teachers may support their self-efficacy and persistence for implementing TIEP. More research is needed to understand the relationship between successful and unsuccessful experiences with TIEP and TSE. These findings extend on self-efficacy research by contributing lived experiences of middle school teachers and how their mastery experiences with TIEP impacted their TSE. Encouraging teachers to persist in their use of TIEP may create more opportunities for success and thus enhance self-

efficacy for TIEP. However, environmental influences had a significant impact in all four cases and will be discussed below.

School Environment

Many of the teachers in this study touched on how the school context at Walkerville School supports their self-efficacy for TIEP. Specifically, the collaborative environment, the small size of the school, and the school-wide policies and practices significantly impacts their self-efficacy for TIEP. This finding is aligned with Social Cognitive Theory and empirical research that have identified vicarious experiences and feedback or social persuasion as powerful sources of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Shunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). These findings extend upon the current literature by identifying experiences such as hearing from colleagues about their successful experiences with TIEP (vicarious experiences) and gaining feedback from colleagues and leadership about one's use of TIEP (social persuasion) may be useful ways of supporting TSE for TIEP. Specifically, school's may support TSE for TIEP by providing opportunities for feedback from colleagues and leadership and vicarious learning experiences for their teachers.

Teachers in this study also shared that there were school-wide practices enforced by school leadership to respond to student behavior that allowed students to take breaks and work with support staff in order to address behavior and emotional needs. These practices were known by students allowing them to advocate for themselves when they need a break. These practices likely provided students with a sense of empowerment and predictability. These teachers shared that feeling supported by their leadership and that they could count on these school-wide policies being enforced supported their self-efficacy for TIEP. Additionally, while not directly mentioned by participants as something that influences their self-efficacy towards TIEP, Walkerville School has many policies and practices that aim to address barriers that many of their families face due

to their economic standing. For example, they provide tuition funding for all of their students with financial need, they provide all students with transportation, and uniforms. Moreover, Cindy shared that during the COVID-19 lock-downs, they provided students with computers and hotspots so that they could attend class. In this way, Walkerville School was responsive to structural barriers many of their families were facing (Groski, 2016). This finding suggests that not only do school leadership efforts to minimize structural barriers to quality education and care support students and families, but may also support TSE for TIEP.

This work builds on research conducted by Davis and colleagues (2022) who identified that teachers' level of confidence in system level support from their school and/or division for addressing teachers' own trauma after returning to school following the COVID-19 related school closures, was the strongest predictor of TSE for addressing student trauma experienced during the pandemic. These findings may highlight the importance of, in addition to schools addressing teacher trauma (Davis et al., 2022), maintaining consistent reliable practices to respond to student behavior that promote predictability, student empowerment, and minimize barriers to quality education.

Community and State-Level Environment

Three of the teachers in this study identified aspects of the community context as impacting their self-efficacy towards TIEP. For example, the high levels of trauma experienced in the community was disheartening for these teachers, but also emphasized the importance of this work for Jacob and Scott. Cindy frequently described students' community context as "inequitable" but remained confident in her equity-centered TIEP. When asked about the impact of state policies Jacob, however, was the only teacher who recognized the larger state or societal level conditions that may have caused some of these conditions, and shared that these impacts

can sometimes feel overwhelming. These findings contribute to the literature teachers' lived experiences and perceptions of an urban southeastern context as impacting their self-efficacy beliefs for equity-centered TIEP.

The teachers in this study also talked about connecting with students' families and the broader community as supporting their self-efficacy beliefs. For example, as discussed above in the within-case analysis, Jacob shared that developing a relationship with student families has supported his relationships with his students. Scott and Jacob in this study also talked about their self-efficacy towards and perceived importance of connection with students' families and the broader community. These finding highlight family and community engagement as an aspect of TIEP to examine when measuring TSE for TIEP and could inform the current studies conceptual framework. This finding also affirms Delale-O'Connor and colleagues' (2017) argument that "teachers develop stronger senses of self-efficacy when they are partnering with community members, families, and outside-of-school organizations" (p. 183). This may be especially true if teachers take the time to gain a deeper understanding of students' lived experiences and critically reflect on some of the long-standing structural challenges that may perpetuate trauma for some families (Delale-O'Connor et al., 2017; Milner 2015).

In terms of the state-level context, the majority of the teachers in this study shared they perceived little to no impact of state level policies on their trauma-informed practices. This finding may indicate that policy conversations around equity may have little impact on teachers of independent schools. Future research should be done to see how policies enacted regarding equity impact public school teachers' use of TIEP. However, this finding may also indicate that teachers are not perceiving the impact of these policies on students and their families. For example, as mentioned earlier in chapter three, this community is still facing unequal opportunity

to resources due to state-level redlining practices. In line with calls from Goldin and colleagues (2023) preservice education and in-service trauma-informed education should push against historical views of trauma-informed practices that address trauma at the individual level, and highlight the ways in which trauma is situated and thus impacted by state policy.

Implications

Building on the education trauma research the present study extends on the current understanding of TSE beliefs towards trauma-informed educational practices. Specifically, this study provides a novel understanding of teachers' self-efficacy beliefs as they relate to centering equity. As such, there are several implications for practice and theory.

Practical Implications

The middle school teachers in this study described having high self-efficacy beliefs for TIEP particularly as they relate to developing connections with and empowering their students. However, TSE for responding to students' trauma were somewhat mixed. Further, one teacher highlighted a broader issue discussed in the trauma-literature of schools and teachers relying on exclusionary and disciplinary actions to respond to student trauma (Alvarez 2020; Delale-O'Connor). I echo Delale-O'Connor and colleagues (2017) recommendations to promote teachers gaining a more contextual understanding of students' lived experiences and broader communities to inform their self-efficacy. I argue that not only will this support TSE for classroom management (Delale-O'connor et al., 2017) but for equity-centered TIEP. Finding ways to enhance TSE for TIEP may support teachers' ability to respond to student behavior using TIEP and reduce disciplinary or exclusionary practices. However, careful attention should be paid to how these practices differ across racial groups (Loomis & Panlilio, 2022).

Furthermore, while the teachers reported high self-efficacy beliefs for preventing trauma in schools some of the teachers reported doing so with a reactionary response (e.g. shutting down bullying). However, to truly prevent trauma, school leadership, professional development and pre-service education should promote practices relying on TIEP such as connection and predictability to prevent trauma in the classroom (Venet, 2021). Additionally, the teachers in this study reported mixed self-efficacy beliefs for recognizing and disrupting harmful practices and policies in schools. Schools and teacher preparation programs should support and empower teachers to identify and disrupt policies and practices such as disciplinary responses for subjective student behavior or discriminatory dress codes, in schools that may be unintentionally harming students as a means of preventing trauma.

Findings from this study indicate that these teachers are confident in their capabilities to address equity and an individual level, however, teachers may need more support in identifying ways to address equity at a systemic level. For example, teacher preparation programs should work to push teacher candidates to recognize the importance of seeing students and their families from an asset-based lens and situate individuals within the broader systems in order to highlight the oppressive systems they and their students are operating in (Goldin et al., 2023).

The teachers and this study largely attributed their self-efficacy beliefs to the larger school context. Thus, schools, policies and practices should aim to cultivate a collaborative learning environment and promote resource sharing. Further school leaders should prioritize creating opportunities for teachers to receive feedback from colleagues and leadership. School leadership may also be able to promote opportunities for teachers to gain a more contextual understanding of their students' lives through family engagement efforts. Specifically, the teachers who participated in this study advocated for the following to better support TSE for

TIEP: (1) reducing teacher responsibility, (2) promoting collaboration, (3) constructive feedback on teachers TIEP (4) opportunities for self-reflection, (5) and more concrete strategies for responding to student behavior.

Theoretical Implications

Exploring TSE for TIEP particularly as they relate to centering equity is critical for researchers to consider in order to best prepare teachers to support students. The current study demonstrates that examining this issue using the proposed conceptual framework and theoretical frameworks (SCT, Bandura, 1986; SysTIP, Khasnabis and Goldin, 2020; Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, 1979) is a useful tool to examine TSE for TIEP. Specifically, collecting and analyzing data using SysTIP allowed me to identify the ways in which the teachers in this study were able to identify trauma as situated and often caused by systemic racism and injustice (Goldin et al., 2023) and how this may be impacting their self-efficacy beliefs as they relate to TIEP. Using this conceptual framing, I was also able to view the teachers in this study as situated within the broader context. This view allowed me to consider the ways in which trauma-informed practices have historically been taught through pre-service education and professional development and how this may systematically influence educator beliefs about trauma and TIEP. Additionally, exploring TSE for TIEP with the lens of Social Cognitive Theory, specifically the Triadic Reciprocality framework, allowed me to identify the behavioral, environmental, and personal influences, including the four sources of self-efficacy, impacting TSE for TIEP. Specifically, by developing my methods and analysis using SCT, I was able to inquire how teachers perceived their behavioral, personal, and environmental influences as impacting their self-efficacy for TIEP. The findings of this study point to the importance of

mastery and vicarious experiences as well as social persuasion from colleagues and school leadership for supporting teacher implementation of TIEP.

Using a collective case study design allowed for a rich understanding of how individual teachers perceive the urban school and broader context as impacting TSE for equity-centered TIEP. Conducting both a within-case and cross-case analysis allowed for rich exploration of how these perceptions aligned and differed across teachers. Furthermore, adding a teacher beliefs questionnaire further contextualized identified themes. Additionally, analyzing teacher beliefs in this homogeneous sample, particularly in terms of their white racial identity led to important implications. Particularly, given: (a) the predominantly white U.S. teaching force (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021); (b) the disproportionate impacts of trauma on communities of Color (Sacks et al., 2014); and (c) the dominant race-evasive views on trauma (Alvarez, 2020), exploring white teacher perceptions of TSE for TIEP in a school with a predominantly Black student population has important implications. For example, findings identified important gaps in these teachers' self-efficacy to respond to and prevent trauma. Additionally, three of the teachers discussed the role of their racial identity in TSE for TIEP. The role of teacher identity should be considered in future studies theoretical or conceptual framing.

Taken together, the findings in this study emphasize the ways in which trauma-informed practices are discussed in the literature have real life impacts on teacher education and later teacher practices. Furthermore, given the dearth of literature examining TSE for equity-centered practices (Wallace, 2023), much more research should be conducted to more thoroughly examine this issue to support teachers and students. Specifically, researchers should focus their efforts on ways in which to promote TSE for equity-centered TIEP.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

There are several limitations to this work that should be considered. In the current study, comparing across school contexts proved unfeasible at the time of data collection. While findings provided a rich description of how teachers from the same school compare in their interpretation of the broader context and how it influences their self-efficacy beliefs, future research should be conducted to consider how teachers in different school contexts (e.g. rural, suburban, larger schools, public schools), develop their TSE for TIEP. A potential reason participant interest was limited from the approved public school may be due to the current sociopolitical climate of southeastern states. Specifically, as discussed in chapter two, many policies are being enacted in these states that prohibit programs and practices aimed at addressing inequities. It is possible this climate influenced teachers' willingness to participate in a study relating to equity. Future researchers and education policy makers should work to address these harmful policies and prioritize education policy that dismantles systemic inequality that promotes adversity for students and families.

This study is limited to the perspectives of four white teachers. Prior work has identified racial differences in TSE for TIEP (Davis et al., 2022). Moreover, SysTIP draws heavily from tenets of Critical Race Theory (Goldin et al., 2023). Thus, future work should consider drawing more closely from these tenets to better understand how teachers' racial identities and those of their students influences TSE towards TIEP within a racialized context using a socio-historical lens. Additionally, while I did not explicitly collect participant socioeconomic status, one teacher shared how their socioeconomic status growing up helped to develop connections with students. Future research may consider collecting socioeconomic background as part of a demographic questionnaire. Lastly, the majority of the teachers in this study had over 16 years of experience

and several experiences related to trauma-informed professional development. Readers should take this into consideration when interpreting the findings.

This study also may have been subject to nonresponse bias, meaning teachers who were interested in trauma and trauma-informed practices may have been more likely to respond to recruitment efforts. Future research should be done with larger samples to gain a more full understanding of TSE beliefs towards TIEP. Additionally, the teacher belief questionnaire used self-report items meaning participants may have been subject to social-desirability bias and skewed their reports to be less reflective of their true beliefs. Furthermore, teacher assessments of self-efficacy beliefs were self-reported and thus may overestimate actual performance (Dunning et al., 2004; Schumann & Sibthorp, 2016). Future research should consider including participant observations or third-party reports to gain an understanding of how teachers' self-efficacy beliefs relate to actual ability.

A key takeaway of this work was the lack of recognition in participant interviews around the systemic inequities that cause and perpetuate trauma. While I asked questions regarding school policies and practices, as well as state-level policies and their role in TIEP, future studies may consider inquiring about the impacts of state-level policies in other ways that may be more relevant to educators. Additionally, in terms of the impact of social and racial injustices on students and teachers, the teachers in this study primarily discussed the impacts of racial injustices. Future research should further explore how other social injustices such as anti-LGBTQ+ policies and practices being implemented in schools, particularly in southeastern states, are impacting TSE for equity-centered TIEP.

Finally, I was the sole data collector and analyzer. In an effort to address researcher bias or reactivity, I included a second coder to help calibrate the codebook. Additionally, while my

repeated presence with the participants and transparency about the purposes of this research may have helped to establish trust, it is possible this may have led participants to respond differently. Moreover, my positionality may have influenced my conceptual framing and the way I interpreted the data. Readers should take this into consideration as they interpret the findings. Related to data analysis, due to time constraints I conducted the in-depth member checks within one-to-two days of the first interview. Thus, in-depth analysis of participant transcripts predominantly occurred after the in-depth member checks. This limited my ability to share in-depth interpretations of participant responses in these member checking interviews. Future research should allow for more time in between interviews and provide participants summaries of their responses and the researchers interpretation of those responses.

Conclusion

Decades of research demonstrate the high prevalence of student trauma. However, less is known regarding teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards trauma-informed educational practices, particularly as they relate to centering equity within those practices (Wallace, 2023). The purpose of this study was to contribute to this emerging literature middle school TSE beliefs towards equity-centered TIEP. Additionally, this study explored how recent events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the public displays of social and racial injustices and public response, impacted these beliefs. Using a qualitative collective case study design, I interviewed four teachers from a small faith-based school in a southeastern state of the U.S. Triangulated with evidence from a brief teacher beliefs questionnaire, findings indicate that these teachers maintained generally high levels of self-efficacy towards equity-centered TIEP and presented opportunities for further development to better support students experiencing trauma. Specifically, going beyond recognizing when students may be experiencing trauma, teachers

demonstrated a need for more support and training around responding to student behavior in a way that avoids disciplinary or exclusionary practices. Further, it is evident from these findings that professional development and pre-service education may be missing the role of structural and societal causes of trauma for students and how teachers and schools may begin to address this using TIEP. Schools should support teachers in developing an asset-based lens that lends itself to identifying and dismantling the structures that cause and perpetuate trauma for students within and outside of schools. The teachers in this study overwhelmingly pointed to school-wide system support as having the most significant impact on their self-efficacy beliefs towards TIEP. Teachers and students will likely benefit from school leadership creating a collaborative environment for teachers to support TSE for TIEP.

Taken together, the present study gives insight into middle school teachers' reality in an urban faith-based school in a southeastern U.S. context in developing their self-efficacy for equity-centered trauma-informed educational practices. While recent events such as COVID-19 and continued social and racial injustices have emphasized the importance and need for this work, I want to conclude by echoing a comment made by a participant in this study, Scott:

> It's not a fad. It's not because of, it's not because of COVID, it's not [because] of Black Lives Matter. It's in relation to. It always—and it's always been this way. We're just noticing more 'cause we're paying attention more … and to remember that everybody carries their stuff with them whether they want to or not.

Indeed, student trauma is not new. Student trauma as a result of inequities is not new. Recent events have certainly highlighted the need and importance of this work, but this has always been important work. I am eager to join the diligent scholars conducting trauma education research

that centers equity and to see this literature grow, particularly as it relates to teachers' self-efficacy beliefs towards equity-centered trauma-informed practices.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Email

Hello,

My name is Margaret (Maggie) Wallace and I am a doctoral student in the School of Education at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). I am looking to recruit interested middle school teachers to participate in individual interviews as part of my dissertation research. The purpose of my study is to better understand middle school teacher self-efficacy beliefs (or beliefs in their capabilities) towards trauma-informed educational practices. Each participant will be interviewed two times, each interview lasting roughly one-one and half hour(s) via Zoom. Participants will be compensated for their time.

To be eligible for participation, interested individuals must meet the following criteria: (1) over the age of 18, (2) current middle school teacher, (3) experience working with students exposed to trauma, and (4) perceived use of trauma-informed practices or practices that recognize, respond to, and prevent trauma.

If you are interested in participating, please fill out the linked interest form at your earliest convenience. Please contact Maggie Wallace with any questions at Wallacem4@vcu.edu or 919-537-1826.

Thank you for your consideration!

Maggie Wallace

Appendix B

Interest Form

Interest Form

Thank you for your interest in being a participant for my dissertation research! The purpose of my study is to better understand middle-school teacher self-efficacy beliefs (or beliefs in their capabilities) towards trauma-informed educational practices. Each participant will be interviewed two times, each interview lasting roughly 1 hour via Zoom. Participants will be compensated between $25-50 for their time. The following questions will assess your eligibility to participate in this study.

If you are eligible, I (Maggie Wallace) will contact you via email to set up a time to conduct two 1-hour interviews.

Email*

_____

Are you above the age of 18?

- Yes
- No

Are you a middle school teacher?

- Yes
- No

As a middle-school teacher, have you worked with students who have or are experiencing trauma?

- Yes
- No

Do you have experience using trauma-informed care or trauma-informed educational practices (practices that aim to recognize, respond to and prevent trauma) with your students?

- Yes
- No

Demographics and Background

Thank you for taking the time to answer the eligibility screening questions. Based on your answers, you are eligible to participate in this study. The following demographic questions will be used in my data analysis to better understand how teacher self-efficacy beliefs for trauma-informed practices vary across school contexts and individual characteristics.

What is your gender identity?

Open ended

What is your ethnic identity?

Open ended

What is your racial identity?

Open ended

How long have you been a middle school teacher?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 20+ years

Please describe your experiences with trauma-informed training, professional development, or education.

Open ended

Appendix C

Participant Information Sheet

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

STUDY TITLE: Teacher Self-efficacy for Equity-Centered Trauma-Informed Educational Practices: A Qualitative Multiple Case Study

VCU INVESTIGATOR: Margaret Wallace (Student/Trainee Investigator)

You are invited to participate in a research study about teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for trauma-informed educational practices. Your participation is voluntary.

You will be asked to fill out a brief demographic questionnaire and participate in two semi-structured individual interviews with the VCU investigator (Margaret Wallace) via Zoom sometime over the next several months. The interview will be focused on teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for trauma-informed educational practices, particularly as it pertains to centering equity, and the factors that inform those beliefs. The interviews will last approximately one- one and a half hour(s). Again, your participation is absolutely voluntary and you may skip any questions during the interview.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about this study now or in the future, please contact Margaret Wallace, wallacem4@vcu.edu, 919-537-1826.

WILL I BE PAID TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY?

You will be paid $50 by gift card for each study visit, and if you complete all scheduled study visits, you will have received a total of $100. If you withdraw before the end of the study, you will be paid $50 per completed study visit.

Appendix D

Interview Script

In your own words, how do you define trauma?

In your own words, how do you define equity?

You've defined trauma and equity, I'm curious to hear from you what equity-centered trauma-informed practices means to you?

Probes: How do you relate your definition of equity to trauma-informed practices?

[Build off participants definitions] Equity-centered trauma-informed practices can also include predictability, empowerment, flexibility, and connection.

Can you tell me about a time when you've felt confident building connections and relationships in your classroom?

Probe: What about being predictable in your instruction or responses?
Probe: What about being flexible in your instruction?
Probe: What about empowering student voice and agency?

Examples ready:

- *Connection*: allowing space for students to be fun and silly together. Door greetings, community circles etc.
- *Predictability*: Creating flexible routines, remaining consistent in your expectations of students.
- *Flexibility*: Making lesson accommodations to support student's well-being while maintaining learning goals.
- *Empowerment:* involving student voice in classroom and school-wide decisions (e.g. focus groups, committees, etc.).

Can you describe your confidence level for preventing trauma in schools?

Probe: What contributes to that level of confidence?
Probe: What would make you feel more confident in preventing trauma?

Considering those practices you just named, what do you feel contributed to these feelings of confidence?

On the other hand, can you tell me about a time where you felt less confident in using trauma-informed practices?

Probe: What do you feel contributed to these feelings of less confidence?

I'd like to revisit for a moment the definition of equity that you provided. [Draw upon participant definition of equity] Can you share with me about a time you felt confident or capable centering equity in your classroom?

[Reactive responses]

Probe: How do you center equity in your responses/or interactions with students? How do you do this on a day to day basis?
Probe: How do you center equity in your responses/or interactions with student responses to trauma in the classroom?
[Proactive structures]
Probe: Can you tell me about how you structure your classroom so that equity is centered?
Probe: What do you feel contributed to these feelings of confidence?

Examples ready:

- Equity-centered trauma-informed relationships: critically examining the social dynamics at play in your student-teacher relationships.
- Avoiding taking away empowerment with statements like "You have to do this because I'm the teacher and I said so" .
- Avoiding deficit views that place the trauma, students, or families as reasons for student's challenges rather than naming the structures that cause the trauma or your role as the teacher to address it.
- Avoiding a savior mentality, or the view that teachers are positioned to save students from trauma they may be experiencing at home.

On the other hand, can you tell me about a time where you felt less confident in centering equity in your classroom?

Probe: Are there times where you have felt less confident centering equity in your responses/or interactions with students?
Probe: Are there times where you have felt less confident centering equity in your responses/or interactions with student responses to trauma in the classroom?
[Proactive structures]
Probe: Describe an experience, if any, where you have felt less confident in structuring your classroom so that equity is centered?
Probe: What do you feel contributed to these feelings of less confidence?

The next few questions are focused on the factors that support or thwart your confidence or feelings of capabilities to use trauma-informed practices.

What do you feel impacts your confidence in using trauma-informed practices?

[PERSONAL INFLUENCES]
How useful or important do you feel it is to use trauma-informed practices?

When using trauma-informed practices what impact do you expect to have on students?

[Physiological/Emotional Affect]
What feelings come up for you when using or implementing trauma-informed practices?
Probe: How does this impact your confidence/ use of trauma-informed practices?

[BEHAVIORAL INFLUENCES]

[Mastery Experiences]
You talked about earlier about a time where you felt confident in your use of trauma-informed practices. Did you feel successful in your use of trauma-informed practices at this moment? Are there other times where you felt successful in your use of trauma-informed practices? How did this experience impact you?

Probe: How did this experience impact your confidence for using trauma-informed practices?

[ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES]
How does your school's available resources impact your use of trauma-informed practices?

Probe: How does it impact your confidence for using trauma-informed practices?
Probe: How could they better support your confidence/ use of trauma-informed practices?

How does your school/division's policies or practices impact your use of trauma-informed practices?

Probe: How does it impact your confidence for using trauma-informed practices?
Probe: How could they better support your confidence/ use of trauma-informed practices?

[Vicarious Experiences]
How have experiences of observing colleagues using trauma-informed practices, if any, impacted your use of trauma-informed practices?

Probe: If you have not had these experiences, how do you think observing others would impact your use of trauma-informed practices?
Probe: How did this/would this experience impact your confidence when using trauma-informed practices?

[Verbal Persuasion]
Can you describe an experience, if any, where a colleague or supervisor provided feedback on your use of trauma-informed practices?

Probe: If you have not had this experience, how do you think gaining feedback from a colleague could support your confidence in using trauma-informed practices?
Probe: How did this impact your use of trauma-informed practices?
Probe: How did this impact your confidence in using trauma-informed practices?

How does the broader context, such as state policies impact your use of trauma-informed practices?

Probe: For example, policy conversations around equity?
Probe: How has the broader context impacted your confidence in your use of trauma-informed practices?

In what ways do you feel the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted student trauma?

How has COVID-19 impacted your use of trauma-informed practices?

Probe: What about the consequences of COVID-19 (e.g., financial crisis, COVID-19

related illness/death, disruption of in-person learning etc.)?
Probe: How has this impacted your confidence when using trauma-informed practices?

How have recent protests and other conversations around social justice informed your use of trauma-informed practices?
Probe: How has this impacted your confidence as it relates to centering equity in trauma-informed practices?

Appendix E

Follow-up In-depth Member Checking Protocol

Hello [INSERT INTERVIEWEE NAME]. Thank you for agreeing to meet with me again. This meeting is to ensure I have accurately captured your perspective and gives you an opportunity to expand, correct or change anything we talked about last time. Additionally, I have a few follow-up questions I have to ensure I have a clear understanding of your perspective.

Again, your participation is completely voluntary, you can skip any question or topic you would like. Please refrain from sharing any personally identifying characteristics about your students.

Are you comfortable if I start recording?

After reading through the transcript from our last meeting the following is a summary of how you described your confidence beliefs towards trauma-informed educational practices.

[INSERT SUMMARY]

Probe: Is there anything I have inadvertently misrepresented?
Probe: Is there anything you would like to expand upon?

After reading through the transcript from our last meeting the following is a summary of how you described your belief in your capabilities as it relates to centering equity within trauma-informed practices.

[INSERT SUMMARY]

Probe: Is there anything I have inadvertently misrepresented?
Probe: Is there anything you would like to expand upon?

After reading through the transcript from our last meeting the following is a summary of how you described the factors that impact your confidence beliefs for trauma-informed practices.

[INSERT SUMMARY]

Probe: Is there anything I have inadvertently misrepresented?
Probe: Is there anything you would like to expand upon?

There are a few other topics I would like to follow up on and go into a bit of depth with you.

[INSERT FOLLOW- UP QUESTIONS]

Appendix F

Teacher Beliefs Questionnaire

Teacher Experience Study

Hello! Thank you again for participating in my study. I learned so much from you in our conversations together. As one last step, please respond to the following questions. Your responses will remain confidential. Your participation is voluntary.

Instructions: For each item, select a circle 1-7 between the two options that best represents your personal belief during the last year of teaching experiences.
* Indicates required question

Please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Margaret (Maggie) Wallace

wallacem4@vcu.edu

Email*

_____

What is your name?

_____

This is a sample item. If the respondent wanted to report that they believe that ice cream is much more delicious than disgusting they may select the number 2.

I believe that...

Ice cream is delicious	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○	Ice cream is disgusting

I don't have what it takes to help my students	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○	I have what it takes to help my students

I have the skills to help my students	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○	I do not have the skills to help my students
I am most effective as a teacher when I focus on a student's strengths	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○	I am most effective as a teacher when I focus on a student's problem behaviors.
Focusing on developing healthy, healing relationships is the best approach when working with students with trauma histories	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○	Rules and consequences are the best approach when working with students with trauma histories
Many students just don't want to change or learn	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○	All students want to change or learn
Helping a student feel safe and cared about is the best way to eliminate undesirable behaviors	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○	Administering punitive consequences is the best way to eliminate undesirable behaviors
Students could act better if they really wanted to	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○	Students are doing the best they can with the skills they have
I feel able to do my best each day to help my students	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○	I'm just not up to helping my students anymore
When managing a crisis, enforcement of rules is the most important thing	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○	When managing a crisis, flexibility is the most important thing
I am able to carry out all my responsibilities with respect to using a trauma-informed care approach	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○	I am not able to carry out all my responsibilities with respect to using a trauma-informed care approach

I cannot manage a trauma-informed approach in my classroom	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○	I can manage a trauma-informed approach in my classroom
Students react positively when I use a trauma-informed approach	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○	Students react negatively when I use a trauma-informed approach
I do not have enough support to implement equity-centered trauma-informed care	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○	I have enough support to implement equity-centered trauma informed care
When I feel like I can't handle this alone, I can go to my colleagues and/or supervisor(s) for help	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○	There is not much support from my colleagues and/or supervisor(s) for trauma-informed work
Using equity-centered trauma-informed approaches are effective for my students	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○	Using equity-centered trauma-informed approaches are not effective for my students
I have the support I need to work in a trauma-informed way	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○	7 ○	I need more support to work in a trauma-informed way

Is there anything else you would like to share?

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Appendix G

Codebook

Category	Sub Category	Code	Abbreviation	Definition
Self-efficacy for Trauma-Informed Practices		Trauma understanding	Trauma_understanding	Teacher describes their understanding of trauma
		Self-efficacy low	General_SE_low	Teacher describes their SE for TIEP as low.
		Self-efficacy high	General_SE_high	Teacher describes their SE for TIEP as high.
		High SE for proactive TIEP	Proactive_SE_high	Teacher describes feeling confident in their capabilitels to implement proactive trauma-informed structures in their practices
		Low Self-efficacy for proactive trauma-informed practices	Proactive_SE_low	Teacher describes feeling less confident in their capabilities to to implement proactive trauma-informed structures in their practices
		High SE for Responsive TIEP	Response_SE_high	Teacher desribes feeling confident in their capabilities to respond to trauma in the classroom
		Low SE for responsive TIEP	Response_SE_low	Teacher describes feeling less confident in their capabilites to respond to trauma in the classroom.
		High SE for Connection	Connection_SE_high	Teacher describes feeling confident in their capaabilities to foster connection
		Low SE for Connection	Connection_SE_low	teacher describes feeling less confident in their capabilities to foster connection
		High SE for creating connection within the classroom	ClassroomConnection_SE_high	teacher describes feeling confident in their capabilities to foster connection or a sense of community within the classrrom (e.g. fostering peer connections)
		Low SE for creating connection within the classroom	ClassroomConnection_SE_low	teacher describes feeling less confident in their capabilities to foster connection or a sense of community within the classrrom (e.g. fostering peer connections)
		High SE for creating connection within the school	SchoolConnection_SE_high	teacher describes feeling confident in their capabilities to foster connection or a sense of community within the school (e.g. fostering connections between students andother teachers)
		Low SE for creating connection within the school	SchoolConnection_SE_low	teacher describes feeling less confident in their capabilities to foster connection or a sense of community within the school (e.g. fostering connections between students andother teachers)
		High SE for empowerment	Empowerment_SE_high	Teacher describes feeling confident in their capabilities to empower students
		Low SE for empowerment	Empowerment_SE_low	Teacher describes feeling less confident in their capabilities to empower students
		high SE for flexibility	Flexibility_SE_high	Teacher describes feeling confident in their capabilities to be flexible in their practices.
		low SE for flexibility	Flexibility_SE_low	Teacher describes feeling less confident in their capabilities to be flexible in their practices.
		high SE for predictability	Predictability_SE_high	Teacher describes feeling confident in their capabilities to be predictable in their teaching practices
		Low SE for predictability	Predictability_SE_low	Teacher describes feeling less confident in their capabilities to be predictable in their teaching practices
		high SE for recognizing trauma	Recognizing_SE_high	Teacher describes feeling confident in their capabilities to recognize trauma responses.
		low SE for recognizing trauma	Recognizing_SE_low	Teacher describes feeling less confident in their capabilities to recognize trauma responses.
		low SE for engaging with families	Family_SE_low	teacher describes feeling less confident in their capabilities to engage with families as part of their TIEP
		high SE for engaging with families	Family_SE_high	teacher describes feeling confident in their capabilities to engage with families as part of their TIEP
		high SE for balancing predictability and flexibility	Balancing_SE_high	Teacher describes feeling confident in their capabilities to balance predictability and flexibility in their classroom.
		low SE for balancing predictability and felxibility	Balancing_SE_low	Teacher describes feeling less confident in their capabilities to balance predictability and flexibility in their classroom.

Category	Sub Category	Code	Abbreviation	Definition
Self-efficacy for Equity Centered Trauma-Informed Practices		Understanding of equity	Equity_understanding	Teacher describes how they understand equity
		Understanding of equity-centered TIEP	ECTIEP_understanding	Teacher describes how they understand equity-centered trauma-informed pracitces
		Low self-efficacy for equity-centered TIEP	EquityGeneral_SE_ low	Teacher describes feeling less confident in their capabilities to use equity centered TIEP
		High self-efficacy for equity-centered TIEP	EquityGeneral_SE_high	Teacher describes feeling confident in their capabilities to use equity centered TIEP
		low SE for proactive equity structures	Equity_Proactive_SE_low	Teacher describes how they understand equity-centered trauma-informed pracitces
		high SE for proactive equity structures	Equity_Proactive_SE_high	Teacher describes feeling confident in their capabilities to use proactive equity centered TIEP
		low SE for reactive equity-centerd responses	Equity_Reactive_SE_low	Teacher describes feeling less confident in their equity-centered TI responses
		high SE for reactive equity-centered responses	Equity_Reactive_SE_high	Teacher describes feeling confident in their equity-centered TI responses
		low SE for preventing trauma	Prevention_SE_low	Teacher desrbies feeling less confident in their capabilites to prevent trauma
		high SE for preventing trauma	Prevention_SE_high	Teacher describes feeling more confident in their capabilites to prevent trauma
		high SE for preventing bullying as a type of trauma	Prevention_bullying_SE_high	Teacher describes feeling more confident in their capabilites to prevent trauma in terms of bullying
		low SE for preventing bullying as a type of trauma	Prevention_bullying_SE_low	Teacher describes feeling less confident in their capabilites to prevent trauma in terms of bullying
		high SE for recognizing policies/ practices that perpetuate trauma	Equity_practice/policy_SE_high	Teacher describes feeling confident in recognizing practices and policies that perpetuate trauma/harm.
		low SE for recognizing policies/ practices that perpetuate trauma	Equity_practice/policy_SE_low	Teacher describes feeling less confident in recognizing practices and policies that perpetuate trauma/harm
		high SE for disrupting harmful policies/practices	Equity_disrupt_SE_high	Teacher describes feeling confident in disrupting policies/practices that perpetuate trauma/harm
		low SE for disrupting harmful policies/practices	Equity_disrupt_SE_low	Teacher describes feeling less confident in distrupting policies/practices that perpetuate trauma/harm.
		high SE for centering equity within the curriculum	equity_curriculum_SE_high	teacher describes feeling confident in centering equity in their curriculum
		low SE for centering equity within the curriculum	equity_curriculum_SE_low	teacher describes feeling les confident in centering equity in their curriculum
		Saviorism	Saviorism	Teacher indicates they maintain a saviorism mentality
		using discipline rather than TIEP	Discipline_response	teacher describes using a discipline response to a possible trauma behavior
		high SE for dicsipline or TIEP response	TIEP/Discipline_response_SE_high	Teacher describes feeling confident in deciding wheather a student behavior needs a discipline or TIEP response
		low SE for dicsipline or TIEP response	TIEP/Discipline_response_SE_low	Teacher describes feeling less confident in deciding wheather a student behavior needs a discipline or TIEP response
		Deficit framing	Deficit	Teacher describes students or community using deficit framing

Category	Sub Category	Code	Abbreviation	Definition
Factors Impacting Self-efficacy Beliefs	Personal influences	percieved usefulness	Useful_factor	Teacher describes percieved usefulness of TIEP as impacting their SE
		percieved importance	importance_factor	Teacher describes percieved importance of TIEP
		Physiological/emotional affect	Emotion_factor	Teacher describes emotions or physicological state during TIEP as impacting their SE
		Outcome expectations	Outcome_factor	Teacher describes the expected outcomes of using TIEP as impacting their SE
		social comparisons	SocialComparissons_factor	Teacher describes social comparissons as impacting their SE
		attributions	Attributions_factor	Teacher attirbutes their ability to use TIEP to themselves or something eles
		knowledge	knowledge_factor	teacher describes previous learning experience or knowledge they have as impacting their SE
		Knowledge of student trauma	StudentTraumaKnowledge_factor	teacher describes knowing the types of trauma students expereince as impacting their SE
		Social identity	SocialIdentity_factor	teacher describes how their own social identity impacts their SE
	Environmental influences	covid	Covid_factor	Teacher describes how covid and/or its consequences impacted their SE
		Covid impact on student trauma	CovidStudent_factor	Teacher describes how covid and/or its consequences impacted students and how that impacted their SE
		covid poisitive outcome	CovidPositive_factor	Teacher describes positive consequences of COVID-19 impacting thier SE
		covid burnout	CovidBurnout_factor	teacher describes how covid impacted their energy level, patience etc
		social/racial injustices impact on student Trauma	SocialInjustice_Student_factor	Teacher describes how public displays of social/racial injustices impacted student trauma, and how that impacted their SE
		social/racial injustices	socialInjustice_factor	Teacher describes how public displays of social/racial injustices impacted their SE
		state level context	StateLevel_factor	Teacher describes how the state level context impacts their SE
		community context	Community_factor	Teacher describes how the community level context impacts their SE
		Vicarious experiences	Vicarious_factor	Teacher describes being able to observe someone else's practices as impacting their SE.
		school context	School_factor	Teacher describes how the school context broadly, impacts their SE
		School resources context	Resources_factor	Teacher describes how available resources impact their SE
		School practices/ policies	School_practice_factor	Teacher describes how the schools practices/policies impact their SE
		School culture	SchoolCulture_factor	Teacaher describes how the school culture/climate impacts their SE
		small school	SchoolSize_factor	Teacher describes how the size of the school impacts their SE
		feedback	feedback_factor	Teacher describes gaining feedback from colleagues as impacting their SE
		School leadership	Leadership_factor	Teacher describes level of support from school leadership as impacting their SE
		role models	Rolemodel_factor	Teacher describes a role model who impacts their SE
		collaboration	collaboration_factor	Teacher describes being able to collaborate with colleagues as impacting their SE.
		classroom_context	classroom_factor	Teacher describes the classroom context as impacting their SE
	Behavioral influences	Choosing to engage in trainings/PD	Engage_factor	Teacher describes engaging in trainings/ professional development as impacting their SE
		Persistence for implementing TIP	Persistence_factor	Teacher describes their persistence for implementing TIEP as impacting their SE
		prior experience	Experience_factor	Teacher describes their prior experiences as impacting their SE
		unsuccessful use of TIEP	NoSuccess_factor	teacher describes an unsuccessful use of tiep as impacting their SE
		Successful use of TIEP	Success_factor	Teacher describes successful use of TIEP as impacting their SE
		other responsibilities	Responsibilities_factor	Teacher describes other responsibilites, tasks, or things they have to do in their role as impacting their SE